

THE OLD PATROON;

OR,

THE GREAT VAN BROEK PROPERTY.

BY

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"THE THREE COUSINS," ETC., ETC.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—MR. JULIUS VAN BROEK MAKES AN UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE IN THE LAND-AGENT'S OFFICE...	23
II.—THE PATROONS OF NEW YORK STATE.....	36
III.—JULIUS VAN BROEK PROVES HIS IDENTITY BEFORE THE COURT IN A SINGULAR AND UNEXPECTED MANNER.....	42
IV.—HOW "GOOD SOCIETY" RECEIVED THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE PATROON'S MARRIAGE.....	53
V.—MRS. VAN BROEK MAKES HER FIRST APPEARANCE AT STUYVESANT HOUSE.....	59
VI.—MRS. MALCOM ENLIGHTENS MRS. VAN BROEK RESPECTING THE IDIOSYNCRACIES OF THEIR FELLOW-BOARDERS, AND MEETS WITH AN UNPLEASANT INTERRUPTION.....	66
VII.—MR. VAN BROEK HEARS NEWS OF AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE, AND VISITS THE NEW YORK HOSPITAL AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE FIVE POINTS IN CONSEQUENCE THEREOF...	78
VIII.—NANCY SLOWBURY RELATES THE HISTORY OF HER GIRLHOOD TO THE PATROON.....	94
IX.—NANCY SLOWBURY CONCLUDES HER HISTORY, AND LEAVES THE PATROON IN A STATE OF PERPLEXITY.....	111
X.—THE PARSONAGE HOUSE AT ACTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE.....	118
XI.—AT HOME IN THE PARSONAGE, AND AMONG THE PASSES OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.....	129

CHAPTER	PAGE
XII.—SETH COULTER DELIVERS HIS OPINION OF THE "INJINS," AND OF THINGS IN GENERAL.....	142
XIII.—THE DONATION PARTY AT ACTON PARSONAGE..	147
XIV.—AN UNEXPECTED LETTER REACHES GEORGE NEVILLE AT THE PARSONAGE.....	154
XV.—HOW ELLEN UPTON BECAME MRS. JULIUS VAN BROEK.....	161
XVI.—BOARDING-HOUSE GOSSIP—MRS. DOCTOR BEN- SON IS DISAPPOINTED OF A "SCENE"....	168
XVII.—GEORGE NEVILLE'S FIRST VISIT TO NEW YORK —A STROLL THROUGH THE CITY.....	181
XVIII.—AT THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE.....	193
XIX.—MR. PUFFINGTON'S INTENSE PATRIOTISM AND THOROUGH DEMOCRACY.....	205
XX.—MESSRS. NETTLETOP AND SWOOP HOLD A CON- SULTATION, AND MR. SWOOP CONCEIVES A PLAN.....	216
XXI.—THE NIGHT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION...	220
XXII.—CAPE COD—CAPTAIN JACK'S COTTAGE.....	226
XXIII.—CAPTAIN JACK IN SEARCH OF A HOUSEKEEPER..	233
XXIV.—MR. SWOOP MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY, AND CONCEIVES A NEW IDEA.....	238
XXV.—WHAT OCCURRED ON BOARD THE CARS FROM TROY TO NIAGARA FALLS.....	247
XXVI.—WHAT OCCURRED AT NIAGARA FALLS.....	259
XXVII.—MR. NETTLETOP VISITS AMOS JEPSON AT THE SAILOR'S SNUG HARBOR ON STATEN ISLAND..	272
XXVIII.—THE UPTONS MAKE A DISCOVERY, AND QUIT NIAGARA FALLS FOR SARATOGA SPRINGS.....	281
XXIX.—MR. SWOOP WRITES A LONG LETTER TO HIS PARTNER, TAKING CAPTAIN JACK FOR HIS THEME.....	286
XXX.—THE UPTONS AT SARATOGA SPRINGS.....	293
XXXI.—MR. VAN BROEK AND MR. UPTON HOLD A CON- VERSATION TOGETHER.....	301
XXXII.—THE END OF THE YEAR.....	309

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXXIII.—CONSTERNATION AT WELLFLEET, CAPE COD— THE DEPARTURE OF CAPTAIN JACK FOR NEW YORK.....	315
XXXIV.—MR. SWOOP ADVERTISES, AND RECEIVES A STRANGE VISITOR AT HIS OFFICE IN NAS- SAU STREET.....	321
XXXV.—MR. SWOOP'S MIDNIGHT VISIT TO THE OLD BREWERY.....	328
XXXVI.—MR. SWOOP DERIVES IMPORTANT INFORMA- TION FROM DIGBY, AND QUILTS THE OLD BREWERY IN TRIUMPH.....	340
XXXVII.—THE STRANGE VISITOR TO THE MANSION IN THE FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.....	349
XXXVIII.—CAPTAIN JACK FINDS HIMSELF IN A STATE OF PERPLEXITY RESPECTING HIS MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.....	357
XXXIX.—WHICH TELLS HOW MATTERS WERE FINALLY SETTLED, AND WHAT BECAME OF CERTAIN PARTIES WHO HAVE FIGURED IN THIS HIS- TORY.....	375
XL.—CONCLUSION, IN WHICH COLONEL WILTON SPEAKS PROPHETICALLY.....	382

THE OLD PATROON.

CHAPTER I.

MR. JULIUS VAN BROEK MAKES AN UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE IN THE LAND-AGENT'S OFFICE.

ONE fine afternoon in the summer of 184— the customary crowd of idlers, hotel touters, cab drivers, and carmen, and boys of various ages, eager to earn a few cents out of any chance job that might come to hand, were collected on the wharf at Albany, the capital of the State of New York, to watch the arrival of the steamboat which had left New York city at an early hour that morning. The boat was crowded with passengers, and as soon as she came to her berth alongside the wharf, the usual scene of bustle and confusion ensued. Habitual and well-seasoned travellers coolly entered the omnibus sent from the hotel at which they intended to put up, or walked off quietly with their valises or carpet-bags, undisturbed by the touters and *gamins*, who recognised such travellers at a glance. But strangers, and foreigners, and unprotected females were regarded as lawful prey, and were surrounded by cab-drivers who offered to convey them to any part of the city, and beset on all sides by agents who urged the superior excellence of this or that hotel, and by pertinacious urchins who insisted upon carrying their baggage whether they would or no, and who were with difficulty prevented from snatching it out of their hands, until at length the unfortunate victims grew

bewildered, and were led away in triumph by their persecutors wheresoever the latter chose to convey them. One passenger, however—a tall, handsome, well-dressed gentleman, apparently about forty years of age, with dark hair, whiskers, and moustache, whose features were those of an American, though his sunburnt complexion betokened that he had lived for a long time in a tropical clime, and whose baggage consisted solely of a small valise which he carried in his hand—pushed vigorously through the crowd, forcibly shoving aside those who impeded his progress, until he reached Broadway, the main street of the city of Albany (named after the great thoroughfare in New York). Here he stopped and looked around him, and presently beckoned to a boy who had quietly followed him at some little distance in hope of a job.

"Here, my lad," he said, when the boy drew near; "take hold of this valise, and follow me to Donovan's Hotel."

He passed the valise to the boy as he spoke, and the urchin trotted along by his side until they reached the hotel in question.

Here the stranger received back his valise, tossed the youngster a ten-cent piece, and entered the hotel.

The clerk offered him the visitors' book, that he might inscribe his name and residence, according to the usual custom in America.

"No; it's not worth while," said the stranger. "I return to New York by the night boat. Show me to a room that I may wash my hands."

A waiter was summoned, and ordered to show the gentleman to No. 42, where the stranger washed his hands, made some slight change in his dress, and then returned to the office and handed his valise to the hotel clerk. "Take charge of that valise for me," he said, "until it's time to go down to the wharf. At seven o'clock the boat starts, doesn't it?"

The clerk nodded assent.

"And now," continued the stranger, "I want you to direct me, by the nearest way, to the office of Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop."

"The lawyers and land-agents, sir?" inquired the clerk.

"Exactly so; the lawyers and land-agents," answered the stranger.

"Well, sir—the *nearest* way—are you acquainted with Albany, sir?"

The stranger smiled.

"Twenty years ago," he replied, "I knew every street, lane, and alley; ay, almost every stone in the streets. Twenty years have made some difference in the city, no doubt, as time during that period has made some difference in me. But I hardly think I should lose myself in Albany, even on the darkest night."

"In that case, sir, you had better cross Broadway, and take the narrow street right opposite; follow the street to the end, then turn to the left until you get into State Street; that will lead you to the Capitol, and right opposite the Treasury Department you will find Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop's office. That way will be nearer than if you keep down Broadway to the Post Office, and then climb the whole length of the steep hill to the Capitol."

"Thank you," said the stranger; and, quitting the hotel, he crossed the broad thoroughfare and, turning into the narrow street pointed out by the clerk, was soon lost to sight.

He had a long and fatiguing walk before him at the best. Albany is a large and handsome city, finely situated at a point where the Hudson river is no longer navigable to shipping. The Capitol, which stands on the summit of a steep hill, and commands an extensive and beautiful prospect of the surrounding country, far surpasses any public building in New York, alike in its imposing appearance and in its architectural elegance and purity;

and the surrounding capacious Government offices and handsome private mansions impart to this portion of the city an appearance of refinement and magnificence that no portion of the great commercial emporium of the United States can pretend to. But let the visitor once leave the level Broadway, and seek the quarter inhabited by the Knickerbocker aristocracy, and he will need the wind and endurance of an Alpine traveller to long continue his explorations. What could possess the obese, slow-moving Dutchmen who originally founded the colony of New Amsterdam to pitch upon this hilly spot for the site of their capital, is one of those mysteries which must for ever remain unsolved.

The active stranger, however, soon passed over the ground, and found himself in front of a house which was partitioned off into numerous offices, as was indicated by the long list of names painted on a black board in the gateway. But prominent above all others were the names of—

“MESSRS. NETTLETOP AND SWOOP,
ATTORNEYS, SOLICITORS, LAND-AGENTS, ETC., ETC., ETC. ;”

while a gilded sign, pointing toward the main entrance, indicated that these gentlemen occupied the principal rooms on the ground-floor of the building.

Entering the door, which stood open, the stranger found himself in the presence of half a dozen clerks, who were seated on high stools at a long desk, all busily engaged in writing.

“I wish,” he said, “to see Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop ;” addressing the clerks generally.

“Mr. Swoop is in the private office, sir,” replied one of the clerks: “Mr. Nettletop is at Schenectady, superintending the erection of a new house on the Van Broek property.”

“Oh, indeed! Ah, yes—the Van Broek property,” replied the stranger. “It’s an extensive estate—this Van

Broek property. How far may its nearest boundary be from Albany?”

“About fifty miles, sir, by the Schenectady Railroad. If you will favor me with your name, I will take it to Mr. Swoop, who will be happy to see you.”

“My name? No; never mind my name,” replied the stranger. “Tell Mr. Swoop that a gentleman wishes to see him upon business of importance.”

The clerk delivered the message, and presently returned and said—

“Will you step into the private office, sir? Mr. Swoop is disengaged at present, and will be happy to see you.” The stranger followed the clerk into an inner office, the walls of which were completely covered with plain and colored plans, plates, and drawings of different portions of the great Van Broek property. Maps and plans, on various different scales, of the farms and roads, and building-lots, and woods and forests, and streams and water-courses on the estates, were spread out upon the tables and strewn over the floor. A range of shelves which occupied one side of the room was filled with japanned boxes, labelled “Leases, Van Broek Estates;” “Claims, Van Broek Estates;” “Mortgages, Van Broek Estates;” etc., etc., etc. Truly it appeared that the management of this vast property engrossed the time and attention of the land-agents to the comparative neglect of all other business.

Mr. Swoop was seated at a desk, pencil and compass in hand, intently studying a plan that lay before him, and comparing it with another plan on a minor scale by its side. He was a short, stout man, about sixty years of age, with a florid complexion, and with a good-humored expression of countenance; though the quick, keen glance of his small, restless, gray eyes, and a habitual nervous twitching of the corners of his mouth, impressed one with the notion that he was keenly alive to his own

interests. His head was bald at the temples and on the crown; his face was clean shaven; and he was clothed in a professional suit of black, and wore a limp, loose white neck-cloth, in the folds of which his fat double chin was completely buried.

He received the stranger in the most complaisant manner (speaking, however, in a voice that was too soft and wheedling in its tones to be agreeable), and begged him to be seated.

The visitor complied; but, before he could sit down, he had to remove the plan of a road across some fields, which occupied the nearest chair, all the other chairs in the room being similarly occupied.

"You appear to be fully employed in the supervision of these large estates, Mr. Swoop," said the stranger, as he seated himself in the chair.

"They are a great charge, sir; I may say, a *very* great and onerous charge," replied the lawyer, rubbing his hands together in a manner expressive of intense enjoyment, as if he rather liked the onerous duties of which he complained. "We are always doing the best we can," he went on, "exerting ourselves to the utmost to improve the property for the benefit of the heirs at law—when they are found, Mr.?—he-hem. My clerk did not mention your name, sir."

"No matter just now," replied the stranger. "The fact is, I have called to make some inquiries relative to this property. It is entirely under your management at present, I believe?"

"Entirely, sir; and you could not have called at a more favorable time. We have been effecting great improvements of late, and, should you wish to take a lease, you may do so just now on most advantageous terms. There are some excellent farms not yet taken up, and several really superior sites for the erection of mills to be worked by water-power. The water-power on the property is

unequalled in any part of the State of New York. There are extensive sand and gravel pits near the north-western boundary, which a gentleman possessed of a little spare capital might work to great advantage. Perhaps, sir, you would like to look at some of our plans?"

"Thank you, no; not at present," replied the stranger; "though I may wish to examine your plans and drawings, or even to go over the property, before long. Just now I have called more especially to ask for some information relative to the presumed heir or co-heirs of this vast property. Have you received any fresh information of late?"

"None, sir; none," replied the lawyer, in an affected tone of disappointment. "There were hopes at one time that the great grandson of the old patroon Cornelius Van Broek might be discovered. But all our endeavors to trace him ended in disappointment, and now we have every reason to believe that he died abroad many years ago."

"If that be the case, the family is, I presume, extinct?"

"Exactly so, providing he left no issue, and if the descendants of the junior branches of the family are also deceased; and as, if the reports we have heard be correct, the lineal descendant died while quite a youth, and unmarried, the probability is that—as you observe—the family is extinct."

"And in that case?"

"In that case, of course, the property would fall to the State; but not until after a long lapse of years, unless positive proof can be adduced of the death of the heir or heirs at law."

"But is it equally probable that the descendants of the collateral branches of the family are extinct?"

"It is believed that they are. There were two great-grand-nephews of the old patroon—a sort of far-off cous-

ins of the direct heirs—wild, dissipated young men, who have not been heard of for many years, and who, in all probability, are dead. Of course, if living, they, or one of them, rather, would now be the heir to the property. But, even if such claim were made, we should require most convincing proofs of the death of the direct heir, which, although the fact is almost positive, would be difficult to prove.”

“I have heard,” continued the stranger, “that this great-grandson of Cornelius Van Broek’s went to sea when a mere lad. Is it so?”

“So it is believed,” replied the lawyer. “The boy’s parents died in Pennsylvania, in great poverty, leaving their only child, then an infant, utterly destitute. The child was adopted by an old servant of the family, who took pity upon his destitute condition, and at a proper age he was sent to sea. He never—so far as is known—returned to the United States.”

“But,” said the stranger, “supposing that he *should* return, and put in his claim to the property of his great grandfather? You will understand that I am putting the case to you as a lawyer for my own information. Supposing he should return (he would still be, comparatively speaking, a young man), and *I* had taken a lease from *you*, and had gone to great expense in the erection of mills or other buildings, or in any way had laid out money upon the property: how could I be satisfied that he would ratify your agreements? How could I be certain that I should not be compelled to give up my lease, or to leave behind me the mills or other buildings I had erected, without being entitled to claim the slightest compensation? Such an event *might* occur, and in such case might involve me, and others besides me, in one common ruin.”

The lawyer smiled.

“If that is the only reason that deters you from taking a lease, sir, or that causes you to hesitate to make an invest-

ment which cannot fail to prove highly advantageous, I assure you that your fears are groundless. In the first place, your supposition is very improbable. I may, indeed, tell you—in confidence—that it is the next thing to impossible; for we possess almost certain proofs of the young man’s death, though we have our own reasons for not bringing them forward at present. Then, again, should the heir present himself, and make good his title (and he would find *that* a difficult task), I have not the least doubt that he would be glad, for his own sake, to hold binding any agreements or settlements that had been made by us in his behalf.”

“You speak confidently, Mr. Swoop,” replied the stranger. “But it is idle to beat about the bush in this fashion. You asked to know my name. I will tell it you.” He rose from his seat as he spoke, and stood confronting the lawyer. “*I*, sir, am Julius Van Broek, the great-grandson and only living descendant of the old patroon Cornelius Van Broek. I am the sole heir to Van Broek Manor, and all the property thereunto appertaining, and *I do not think* that I shall find it a *very* difficult task to prove my title to the estates of my forefathers. If, sir, you will glance over this document” (he handed the lawyer a folded paper as he spoke), “you will perhaps be of the same opinion. It is a copy, a *copy* merely,” he added, emphasizing the word *copy*: “the original is in the hands of my own lawyer.”

Mr. Swoop’s rosy face became pale as ashes. His hands trembled so that he could hardly unfold the paper, and a choking sensation in his throat almost stifled his breath. But he struggled against his agitation, and read the document slowly twice over. He held the paper open in his trembling hands, and glanced furtively over it at his visitor with an expression of countenance that betrayed his wish that he could annihilate him on the spot. His fingers tingled with a desire to tear the document to atoms.

But then it was but a copy, and, even had it been the original, its destruction might have been unsafe while its owner lived to bring fresh proofs of his identity. He felt that even to betray his own feelings might be injurious to him, and that, until the stranger's claim was really made good, there was yet hope. Controlling his feelings, therefore, with a strong effort, he said, as soon as he could find breath to speak—

"I am really, truly glad—that is, we shall be most happy, Mr. Nettletop and I, to see you restored—that is, I should say, placed in possession of the family estates. I—I beg that you will resume your seat, Mr. Van Broek. It sounds strange," he added, "to address the name to a living person after so many years."

The stranger, whom I may in future style Mr. Julius Van Broek, resumed his seat.

"May I ask," continued the lawyer, "whether you have—though of course you *must* have—other proofs and witnesses besides this document?"

"Sufficient proofs and witnesses will be forthcoming if *you* think it necessary to demand them, Mr. Swoop," replied Mr. Van Broek.

"My dear sir, you misunderstand me," answered the lawyer, who had now sufficiently controlled his agitation to speak in his usual tone of voice.

"It is not for myself, nor for Mr. Nettletop, that I speak; but you must be aware, however perfectly *we* may be assured of your identity, that, where such a vast property is concerned, the courts will demand that the strictest investigations shall be made."

"I can only repeat that ample proofs of my identity and of my rightful claim will be forthcoming when called for," said Mr. Van Broek.

"And why, my dear sir," the lawyer asked, in an insinuating tone of voice—"why did you not make your existence known to *us* in the first place? I think it would

have been the better plan, we being agents for the property, and having made so many efforts to discover the heir. Besides, it might have saved *you* much trouble."

"I might answer that I had reasons of my own," said Mr. Van Broek; "but really I had not. I had but a vague idea, until comparatively lately, of the existence of the property, and the lawyer whose name is appended to that document was chosen by me merely by chance."

"You have been abroad, I presume, all these years?"

"I have been in India many years. In fact, I only arrived in New York, from Calcutta, on Thursday fortnight, the 10th inst., on board the 'Montezuma,' Captain Higsby. Do you wish to ask any more questions, Mr. Swoop?"

"No, sir," replied the lawyer. "To tell you the truth, Mr. Van Broek, this information, coming to me so suddenly and unexpectedly, has taken me by surprise; and I cannot but think that it would have been only courteous on the part of your own lawyer to have acquainted us with the facts that *he* must have been cognizant of for some time."

"That rests between you and him, Mr. Swoop. You will acknowledge that *I* have lost little time before visiting you. I might have written you a few days earlier, certainly; but I considered that a personal interview would be more satisfactory on both sides; and again I assure you that until a short time before I left India—though I have held some vague notions since my early childhood that I was entitled to the possession of large property, from which I was debarred by some, to me, mysterious means—I knew neither the nature of that property, nor where it was situated, nor that *you* were in any way connected with it."

"Of course, sir, you are now aware that it is through the consequences of a tedious course of litigation that the estates have been so long held in abeyance, and through

no act of mine or of Mr. Nettletop's, nor, indeed, of any private individual's?"

"The facts have all been explained to me, Mr. Swoop. I blame the tedious action of the law, arising, in the first place, out of its unsettled state in relation to landed property, and nothing and no one else. And now, sir, I have nothing further to say, except that I am happy to have had the pleasure to meet you, and that I shall instruct my lawyers to communicate with you relative to the arrangement of my affairs as soon as possible, and I trust to you to assist them to the utmost of your ability in bringing matters to a speedy settlement."

The lawyer bowed, and Mr. Van Broek continued—

"I must now wish you good day, as I return to New York by the night boat which leaves the wharf, I believe, at seven o'clock. It is now" (looking at his watch) "nearly six. The copy of the document I placed in your hands you may keep. Mr. Nettletop may wish to see it. I will write to you, or probably wait upon you again, in a few days. Meanwhile, here is my card. Any communication you make by letter to me will reach me at that address."

He handed the lawyer his card as he spoke, shook hands with him, and, again wishing him "Good day," quitted the office, and returned to the hotel where he had left his valise.

"A cool hand, that, and a determined fellow, I should say, if I'm any judge of physiognomy," muttered lawyer Swoop as he stood at the door of his office watching the retreating form of his unexpected, and apparently unwelcome visitor, as long as he remained in sight; "one, I should say, whom it would be dangerous to attempt to play tricks with, if he has firm ground to stand upon; and it really looks like it;" and he again perused the document left with him by his visitor. "Yet he does not in the least 'favor' any of the portraits of the sleepy-

headed Van Broeks that I have seen. However, that may well be: he's of long descent from them if he be the great-grandson of the last patroon, and I should say he's led an active and very different kind of life from theirs." He glanced at the card the stranger had handed him. "Julius Van Broek," he said; "and written in pencil beneath, 'Astor House, New York.'"

The lawyer returned to his office, and, reseating himself in his accustomed easy-chair, gave himself over to a fit of musing.

"It's very annoying, to say the least of it," he soliloquized, or rather thought aloud; "and *very* awkward just now. I wonder what Nettletop will say!" And, notwithstanding his own evident vexation, there was something so ludicrous to him in the thought of what Nettletop would say, that he actually laughed aloud, though there was a strange bitterness in the tone of his merriment.

Presently a fresh thought struck him, and he touched a small hand-bell that stood on his desk.

One of the clerks responded to the summons.

"Barton," said the lawyer, "run round to the 'Phoenix,' and ask them to lend you the 'New York Shipping and Passenger List,' from—yes—from the 5th or 6th of *this* month. Be smart, now." The clerk disappeared, and in a few minutes returned with the "List" in question.

"That'll do, Barton," said the lawyer. "I'll call you to take it back in a few minutes."

He cast his eyes over the "List."

"Let me think. Ha! Thursday, the 10th, he said. Here it is: "'Montezuma;' Higsby, master; from Calcutta, February 12th. Arrived at New York, Thursday, June 10th. Passenger List.' Hem! all New York mercantile names. No Van Broek—yes; here it is, sure enough: 'Julius Van Broek.' The very last name in the

list. Well, so far he has told the truth." Again he touched the bell.

"When does the mail close for Schenectady?" he asked of the clerk who appeared at his summons.

"At half-past six, sir."

"At half-past six! It's nearly that now?"

"Wants five minutes, sir. But if I take the letter to the depôt by seven o'clock, it will go."

"Very good. Run back to the 'Phoenix' with this 'List,' Barton, and when you return I'll have a letter for you to take to the depôt."

The letter was soon ready. Mr. Swoop wrote only a few lines. "That will bring him to Albany fast enough," he said, as he folded the letter, and directed it to "Jabez Nettletop, Esq., Van Broek Manor, near Schenectady, N. Y." "I never trust explanations to black and white," he muttered to himself, "when a *viva voce* explanation can be given. We lawyers ought to know, if anybody does, the mischief that frequently arises from a too free use of pen, ink, and paper."

The clerk was despatched to the depôt with the letter on his return from the "Phoenix," and then Mr. Swoop quitted his office in no very cheerful mood, and went home to his private dwelling.

CHAPTER II.

THE PATROONS OF NEW YORK STATE.

IN those days gone by, when the present State of New York was a colony of Holland, when the city of New York was known as Nieuwe Amsterdam, and when the Knickerbockers (immortalized in Washington Irving's celebrated "Knickerbocker History of New York") held

undisputed sway over the territory, the vast and fertile lands in the northern and western districts of the State—then a wilderness of impenetrable forest—were portioned out amongst, and held in proprietorship by, a class of men known as patroons, who had, in the first instance, received these lands as grants from the crown of Holland.

These patroons were originally similar in many respects to English country squires of the last century—a burly, rough, hospitable, ignorant set of men—half gentlemen half farmers, partial to field sports, and more conversant with the best mode of rearing and fattening cattle than with books and literature. As, however, the colony increased in wealth and importance, and the lands in value, the vast possessions of the patroons raised them to the position of great territorial seigneurs. Towns and villages sprung up upon their lands; the rivers that coursed through their claims were rendered navigable to barges and small vessels; the timber of their woods and forests found a rapid sale; stone quarries and beds of minerals were found beneath the soil, and their wealth became incalculable.

From these patroons have sprung the families of the Van Rensaellers, the Ten Broeks (*Anglicé*, Breeches, *Scotticé*, Brecks), the Ten Eycks, the Beekmans, Bleekers, Livingstones, and others whose names bespeak their high Dutch lineage, and who are known as the "Knickerbocker," or ancient landed aristocracy of New York State, in contradistinction to the wealthy families who have, in the majority of instances, acquired their fortunes by trade, and who, with that quaint and not over-refined humor peculiar to the American people, are nicknamed the "Cod-fish aristocracy."*

*Some years ago a Knickerbocker ball, was given in New York city. Cards of invitation were issued only to such persons as could claim pure Knickerbocker descent—all others were ineligible. Many who attended the gathering were poor, struggling professional men, with their wives and daughters, while some of the wealthiest families of the

The conquest of the colony by Great Britain made no change in the condition of these territorial seigneurs, who were permitted to retain possession of their original grants. In course of time, however, difficulties and troubles arose which led to frequent and sometimes to ruinous litigation. "Squatters" (so termed) — families who settled down on portions of wild waste or unreclaimed forest land, and brought it under cultivation, and who were not only uninterrupted but were freely welcomed and encouraged at first, in consideration of the increased value their labor imparted to the land—were no sooner required to pay rent, than they boldly claimed the land on which they had settled, and which they had rendered valuable, as their own property, under the right of "squatter sovereignty." This right, until comparatively of late years (when the United States Government itself laid claim to all wild or waste lands, and sold them as low, in remote districts, as half a dollar an acre), gave to any "squatter" the tenure in fee simple, for himself and his heirs for ever, of any unclaimed, waste, or wild land, or forest which he had brought under cultivation, and upon which he had resided for a certain number of years. Many of the lands held by the patroons had never been properly surveyed. In fact, in many instances the lands

city, whose escutcheons were sullied by the bar-sinister of trade, were excluded; and, although the wealthy merchants and traders of New York frequently affect to despise the proud and often poor Knickerbockers, so great was the desire to secure the "mint stamp" of gentility which an invitation conferred, that not only were false pedigrees assumed, but in many instances vast sums were offered for tickets, and admission was sought to be obtained by bribes. Such endeavors, however, were vain. The names of all invited guests were submitted to a competent committee for approval or rejection, and the true Knickerbockers were obdurate.

The epithet "Cod-fish aristocracy" was originally applied to the magnates of the sperm-whale fisheries, resident at New Bedford and other towns on the coast of Massachusetts, who had made vast fortunes by their dealings in sperm-oil, and who, being generally uneducated men, affected great pretensions. The term was subsequently applied in derision to all men who had risen from a lowly condition through successful industry.

had never been visited by the proprietors, who were frequently unable to define the actual boundaries of their own estates. In the disputes which took place lawyers on one side argued the rights of the patroons, and on the other side those of the squatters. These latter insisted that the wild forest lands, unsurveyed and often untrod-den by man, and to which the nominal owners had no other claim than that conferred by the ancient grants of foreign governments, (the boundaries of which grants were frequently vaguely defined, and sometimes even unknown), were open to squatter settlement and sovereignty. The judges of the law courts were often as divided in opinion as the lawyers. Even where the rights and privileges of the patroons were allowed, it was frequently found to be impossible to eject the new settlers. When force was resorted to riots ensued. Incendiary fires light-ed up the forests, and bands of armed men, with their faces blackened, or disguised as Indians, waylaid and maltreated, and in many instances fired at and fatally injured those persons who were sent by the patroons to occupy the lands they (the squatters) had reclaimed from the wilderness. Thus the squatters were in many cases left to enjoy the fruits of their labors, though the law had decided against them; but they were liable to be perpetually harassed and to be forcibly ejected at any moment when the officers of the law felt themselves sufficiently strong to effect their purpose.

On the other hand, so tedious and so costly was frequently the progress of litigation, that funds to continue the contests were found wanting; and, meanwhile, the estates thus held in dispute between the patroons and the squatters were suffered to go to ruin, and the owners and their families were reduced to utter poverty. Thus had it been with the once wealthy family of the Van Broeks, whose estates, after having been in litigation for several generations, were at length "held in abeyance," for lack of funds

to continue the contest. The old patroon and his immediate descendants died in poverty. The family became dispersed, and were at last lost sight of and forgotten, and the vast estates in the northern district of the State of New York, comprising some hundreds of thousands of acres, became a wilderness, upon which squatters settled wheresoever they chose, and felled the timber and hunted the game at their own will and pleasure.

Many years passed away. The grandson of the old patroon, had he been living, would have been a very, very old man, when one day the judges of the Supreme Court of the State suddenly woke up from their customary lethargy, and, why or wherefore no one knew, declared that the vast estates situate in the northern district of the State of New York, and commonly known as the "Great Van Broek Estates," were hereby released from abeyance, and that the heirs of the patroon Cornelius Van Broek were entitled to take immediate possession of the said estates, and to enjoy the rentals thereof, and all the rights and privileges thereunto appertaining.

Great was the stir and excitement among the lesser legal fry of the State. What pickings there would be for the firm that could discover the heir or heirs, and lift them out of the obscurity into which they had subsided, and ingratiate themselves into their confidence. But, unfortunately, no heirs were to be found. To be sure many Van Broeks came forward and preferred their claims; but, when these claims were looked into, it was found—to use a homely expression—that they had not a leg to stand upon. All that could be satisfactorily proved was that, some twenty years previous to the decision of the Supreme Court, the great grandson of the patroon Cornelius Van Broek was known to have been serving as a common seaman, or, as some asserted, as a cabin-boy on board an East India "country ship," which traded between Bombay and Sumatra. And it was furthermore

asserted, by the only witness that could be found who had any knowledge of the family, that the said great grandson of the patroon was an ignorant lad, who, to the best belief of the witness (himself an old sailor, whose father had been in the old patroon's service), was unconscious, until informed by the witness himself, who had sailed on board the same ship with him, that he was in any way connected with the patroon Cornelius Van Broek, and who had no idea of the high estate from which he had fallen. Thus the lawyers found themselves in an awkward dilemma. Nevertheless, there were many who would have immediately despatched their agents to the East Indies to hunt up this lost heir, to whom the wealth of his ancestors, immeasurably increased by the greatly advanced value of land, and timber, and other property, had at length descended. But the judges of the Supreme Court, whose fatherly care had nursed the estates—after a somewhat rude and step-fatherly fashion, it must be confessed—through so many successive generations of their own august body, here stepped in, and, greatly to the disgust of the lawyers, who had determined upon sacrificing their time and money, and devoting their untiring energies to the discovery of the rightful heir, appointed Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop, of the city of Albany, in the State of New York, to act as sole trustees, solicitors, and agents, etc., etc., etc., of the said Van Broek estates, for, and in behalf of, the heir or heirs to the said estates, whenssoever such heir or heirs should appear to make good their claims.

And Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop, of the city of Albany to wit, having fulfilled the demands of the law by sending out to the East Indies a fitting advertisement of the decision of the Supreme Court, and by notifying the heirs to the estate of this decision, "wheresoever the said heirs, if in existence, may be," felt that they had done their duty; and having, after a lapse of years, received

no reply to this advertisement, the lawyers set themselves diligently to work to clear the land of non-rent paying squatters, and to duly enforce the payment of the rent from those tenants who were suffered to remain on the land, and to improve the estates in every way that would increase their value, and thus tend to the benefit of the heir whenever he should make his appearance; or, as envious people said, to the benefit of Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop and their heirs, who, it was surmised, would derive the chief benefit from the increased and accumulating rents, until, in due course of time, the estates themselves, in default of the appearance of legal claimants, would revert to the possession of the sovereign State.

Thus matters rested, when, as recorded in the previous chapter, the lost heir suddenly and unexpectedly made his appearance before Mr. Swoop, in the office of Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop, in Albany, greatly to that gentleman's vexation and annoyance, and announced himself as Julius Van Broek, great grandson of the last patroon, Cornelius, of that name.

And now, having made this necessary explanation, I will proceed with my story.

CHAPTER III.

JULIUS VAN BROEK PROVES HIS IDENTITY BEFORE THE COURT IN A SINGULAR AND UNEXPECTED MANNER.

WHEN the news spread abroad that a claimant of the great Van Broek property had made his appearance, and that his claim was immediately to be tested before the Supreme Court, it created, as a matter of course, a great deal of interest and excitement in the community. It was a piece of good fortune to the newspapers, especially to those of

Albany, and of the northern portion of the State, though the New York city journals interested themselves in the matter almost in an equal degree. The editors took different views of the cause. Some, especially the editors of those journals published in the Northern districts of the State, espoused the cause of the claimant. It was to the interest of the inhabitants of that portion of the State that the estates should be restored to the descendants of the Van Broek family, while the New York editors, as a general rule, were on the side of the State, which was in the position of a defendant in this cause. However, there was no time for a lengthened controversy; for within a fortnight after Mr. Julius Van Broek had presented himself before lawyer Swoop, in his office in Albany, the cause was brought before the Court for adjudication.

Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop, as in duty bound, exerted every effort in behalf of the State to throw out the evidence of the plaintiff, and to render his claims untenable, though they privately assured him that they wished him success, and that nothing but their lively sense of duty led them to oppose him in court.

All their efforts, however, proved fruitless. The claimant produced the register of his birth and the certificate of his baptism in an obscure village in the State of Pennsylvania. The clergyman who had officiated at his christening, and who had attested to the certificate, was still living. The clergyman produced in court the registers of the death and burial of the plaintiff's parents, in the same village, while he (the plaintiff) was still an infant. His parents had died in extreme poverty, and the old servant of the family—now very aged and almost blind—who had taken compassion on the destitute grandson of her old master, came forward to prove that she had reared the infant as her own child until he was of an age to go to sea.

"I was too poor to send the child to school," said the

old lady, "but I did the best I could under the circumstances, for his fam'ly's sake. And when he went to sea, I sewed them sartificates of his birth and christenin' in a bag, and told him to keep 'em so long as he lived, and p'raps, some day, they'd make a gentleman of him."

The old seaman, Amos Jepson, who had on a former occasion given such testimony before the court as he was able to afford, was sought for, and found among the inmates of the "Sailors' Snug Harbor," on Staten Island, N. Y. The old man, who, despite his eighty years, was still hale and hearty, testified to the fact that, some twenty or twenty-five years ago—more or less—he kept no count of dates), he had sailed as "bo'sen" on board the country ship "Fakeer," that traded between Bombay and the Island of Sumatra, and that while on board the 'Fakeer,' he had been struck with the wonderful resemblance between the lad who acted as cabin-boy on board to the grandson of the old patroon Cornelius Van Broek, when the patroon was about the cabin-boy's age.

"How came you, Amos Jepson, to be so well acquainted with the Van Broeks?" inquired the judge.

"My father was a servant in the fam'ly, yer honor," replied the old man; "and many a day I've been out boating on the Hudson with the old patroon's grandson Julius when we wor both lads."

"What resulted from this resemblance—fancied or real—between the son of your father's master and the cabin-boy on board the 'Fakeer'?"

"Why, yer honor," said the old seaman, "I tuk an opportunity to arx the lad what was his name—for he was called 'Jack' aboard ship—and he said how he b'lieved his right name was Julius Van Broek; but he couldn't say whar he wor born, nor who his father was, nor nothin'. He wor a terr'ble ignorant lad, yer honor. But he showed me some papers as were sewed up in a black silk bag as he wore tied round his neck wi' a string,

and he said how his mother had gi'n him them papers, and told him never to lose 'em; and I ripped open the bag and looked at the dockyments, and seed how they were stifificates o' birth and baptism o' Julius Van Broek of Rilstone, in Pennsylvanny; and I sewed 'em up agin, and bid him take mighty good care on' em."

"Had the lad himself any idea of the nature of these documents?" asked the judge.

"No, yer honor," answered the old seaman, "not a shadder of a idee. Maybe he might think they wos charms to keep him from drownin'; and I couldn't at first get the meanin' on 'em into his head, nohows I could fix it."

Here the plaintiff recalled to the old man's recollection several conversations that had taken place between them on the voyage from Bombay to the Island of Sumatra, and several incidents that had occurred during the stay of the "Fakeer" in the harbor of that island. He then stated that it was the story of the wealth that his great-grandfather had possessed, told him by Amos Jepson, that had awakened his ambition to improve his condition, and led him to quit the sea and seek a situation on shore. He obtained a situation in the office of a native merchant in Colombo, after many fruitless endeavors to obtain employment in various places, and set to work to teach himself to read and write. His progress was slow and painful, but he succeeded in course of time in interesting a missionary in his favor. This good man brought him forward, and eventually procured him less menial and more remunerative employment in Singapore. Here he acquired the esteem of his employer, who sent him to school, and in the course of years he rose to a better position, saved money, and eventually became a partner in his employer's firm. After the death of the gentleman who had so generously befriended him, he went to Calcutta, embarked in various speculations, and acquired a small fortune. This

he invested in shipping, and was unfortunate. One vessel that he owned was lost, and others in which he had shares were unsuccessful. It was while he was in this position that he chanced to see an old newspaper which contained the advertisement that had been inserted six years before by Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop, of Albany. The advertisement recalled to his mind the story he had heard so many years before from the old sailor, and he was led to believe that it related to himself—that he, in fact, was the lost heir who was thus sought after. By the advice of friends, he wrote to a lawyer in Philadelphia, and the reply he received to that letter induced him to turn the remnant of his property into money, and return home to America, where an interview with the lawyer, in the city of Philadelphia, perfectly satisfied him that he would have little difficulty in proving his identity, and obtaining possession of his great-grandfather's estates. He then visited Albany, and the subsequent events relative to the matter were, he said, known to the court.

Mr. Bradford, the plaintiff's attorney, produced the letter he had received from Calcutta, and stated that the investigations he had secretly made at the desire of his client had satisfied him that the writer of the letter was the real heir to the vast property that had been so long held in abeyance. He had written to urge his client to return to America, and had hunted up the evidence produced of the death and burial of his client's parents, and had sought out the witnesses who now appeared in court. To him, he said, it appeared that not a link in the chain of evidence was wanting to prove his client's claim to the property in question.

The plaintiff was asked why, after the story he had heard from the old sailor, which had had such an effect upon him as to induce him to improve his condition in life, he had not earlier made investigations which would have led to his discovery as the lost heir to the Van Broek estates?

He replied that, though at the time he heard the story he had felt an ambition to improve his condition, he had subsequently placed little faith in it. Still, some years later, he had made inquiries of a gentleman from New York, whom he had met in India, relative to his great-grandfather, Cornelius Van Broek, and had been told that such a person had once possessed vast property in New York State, but that it had all gone to rack and ruin, and none of the old patroon's descendants would ever be a "red cent" the better for it.

The story of the plaintiff's early struggles, related by himself, as it appeared, in a straightforward, manly manner, enlisted the sympathies of the court and spectators strongly in his behalf. Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop saw this profitable agency about to pass from them forever, and they experienced no little uneasiness relative to the investigations that might take place, and the revelations that might be made, when they should be called upon to render an account of their stewardship, when matters took a turn which shed a gleam of hope upon their fainting spirits, and seemed to render it yet doubtful whether, after all, the plaintiff would not lose his cause at the very moment when it seemed to be won.

The difficulty turned upon the question of personal identity, for it was reasonably supposed that both Abigail Copley—the old dame who had adopted the infant—and Amos Jepson—the old seaman who had known the boy—would be enabled to recognise some feature or lineament in the person of the plaintiff.

"Mrs. Copley," inquired the judge, "what was the age of the child, Julius Van Broek, when he left your care to go to sea?"

"'Bout nine year, your honor, 's nigh 's I can guess," answered the old woman.

"You recollect his personal appearance?"

"He were very young, your honor. Bless his heart,

I reckon how he hedn't much parsonal experience in them days," replied the old woman, who was somewhat deaf, as well as nearly blind.

"His per-so-nal *ap-pear-ance*," repeated the judge, in a loud, distinct tone of voice. "I mean, you remember his features? You recollect whether he resembled his father or his mother, or not?"

"Oh—eh—yes, your honor," said the old woman. "He were the very spit of his feyther, bless him. There feeters, and har, and complexion were as like as two pigs'-heads is like one another."

A laugh arose in the court.

"Describe the child as you remember him, Dame Copley," said the judge.

"Well, he was a sweet child, your honor. I see him now before me, puddling his little head in the gutter in front of the house, which it was in a court off the main street of the village, and allers had a dirty pool of water in front, and the s'lect-men, they wouldn't do nothin'—"

"Keep to the question, my good woman. Describe the child's features, the color of his eyes, hair, and so forth," said the judge, interrupting the old dame's account of the inconveniences of her village home.

"Well, your honor, I were a comin' to that. He were fair complected, and jist a bit pock-pitted—nothin' of consekens, and would wear away in course o' years, I des-say—wi' light, yellar har, and the pootiest little bloo eyes as could be. A little, podgy figgur, as bid far to grow up stout and portly, and not over tall, like to his feyther, and all the fam'ly of the Van Broeks as ever I know'd."

Much amusement was created in court by the old woman's description of the graces of her adopted child, especially as it was impossible to conceive that such a child as she described could grow up to become the tall, well-formed, dark-haired, black-eyed, and decidedly good-looking gentleman who preferred his claims to the Van Broek estates.

"Look well at this gentleman, Mrs. Copley," said the judge (pointing out the plaintiff), "and say whether you can trace any likeness in his form or features to the child you have described. Thirty years would necessarily effect a thorough transformation in the appearance of any human being, especially when during those thirty years childhood has passed into middle age. Still the eyes of a parent, or a foster-mother, are frequently able to trace out certain lineaments which neither time nor change have been able to efface."

"Bless your honor!" exclaimed the old lady, "I ain't been able to discover a body's feetur fur ten years past. When I put on my specs I can jist discern your honor and the other gentlemen, like so many shadders afore me, and that's all. But I heern the gentleman speak, and he's got the Van Broek v'ice esatterly. I'd a most recognise the v'ice if I heern it in my grave."

"Amos Jepson," said the judge, addressing the old sailor, "you knew the great-grandson of the patroon Cornelius Van Broek at a later period of life. What might have been the age of the lad you knew on board the 'Fakeer'?"

"Can't say, yer honor," replied the old man. "I were a matter o' twenty, or mebbe twenty-five year ago. I han't kep' no count o' time—"

"I was eighteen years of age, your honor, when I knew the witness, Amos Jepson, on board the 'Fakeer,'" interposed the plaintiff.

"An age," rejoined the judge, "when the form and features are to a certain degree set. Years, and climate, and different habits of life may, and doubtless have, effected great changes in the person and general appearance of the plaintiff since that period; nevertheless, there must be many traits of resemblance that you, Amos Jepson, cannot fail to trace. Can you perceive in the gentle-

man in whose behalf you appear as a witness any resemblance to the sailor lad Julius Van Broek?"

"That's what takes me down, yer honor," said the old man, vehemently. "I'm reg'lar flummuxed when I looks at him. The old lady ar spoke pooty correct barrin' the pock-pits, which I don't recollect. Howsomever, she says how they wor nought to speak on, and mought ha' worn away wi' the chafin' o' time. But the lad I know'd wor the very spit of his father at his age—a short, chunky young fellar, wi' yaller har, and light blue eyes; some'at slow in his ways, and drawlin' in his glib. This 'ere genelman has got the *vice* o' the Van Broeks, and he's told me o' the very conversations we had together on board the 'Fakeer,' and the very things as happened in the port o' Sumatry; and them 'ere docyments looks to be the same docyments, in the very 'dential iled silk-bag as young Julius Van Broek ('Jack,' we used to call him fur short) weared round his neck. But, though I'm nigh on to eighty, I'm got my eyesight and my senses as 'cute as many a young man; and yet I can scarce make it out! I wouldn't swar false fur no man, and I never seen years, nor climate, nor nothin' else make sich a mighty change in a chap. I never knowed as they'd change a man's eyes from blue to black, to say nothin' of his har, which, beggin' yer honor's and the genelman's pardon, mought be dyed. And then, again, I'd as soon 'spected the stump of a lower mast to shoot up into a sky-sail pole as to ha' seed the lad Julius shoot up into sich a tall, fine-lookin' genelman. It *ar* a puzzle, sartingly."

The court appeared to be as much puzzled as the honest old sailor, and an awkward silence ensued, during which the judge conversed in whispers with his co-adjutors on the bench. Suddenly, however, the old sailor slapped his hand upon the table with a sound that startled every one present.

"I has it, yer honor," he cried. "If the gentleman

can show what I ax him, I'd swar he wor the real Julius Van Broek if he 'peared in the shape of a Chinyman, or even a Guinea Nigger. Yer honor knows what tatooin' is? Well, I've got a nat'ral gift fur tatooin'. I larnt it when I was ashore fur three year 'mongst the S'ciety Islanders. I beat *them* as larnt me out and out, and reg'lar tatooed all the chiefs of all the islands round. I guess I mought ha' been a chief myself if I'd ha' staid wi' em. They thought so much on me, 'cos o' my nat'ral gift, d'ye see? Well, on board the 'Fakeer' I tatooed the arm o' Julius Van Broek in fust-rate, slap-up-style. I tuk more keer and pains wi' that job nor ever I tuk afore or since, out o' kind o' respec' fur the fam'ly, d'ye see? What I ha' once tatooed never wars off. And if the genelman's what he says he is, he's got that 'ere tatoo on his arm now."

"Describe the marks or figures, old man," said the judge.

"It's on the right arm, yer honor," the old sailor went on to say. "Thar's the figger of a mermaid bootifully drawed out in red and bloo inks. Atop o' the mermaid thar's a liberty cap in black, and on one side a horn o' plenty in green and bloo, and on tother a coopid, in bloo, a holding a 'merican Union Jack in the proper colors; and below thar's a bloo dolphin, and the letters J. V. B. in black. It stretches from the elber near up to the shoulder, and is altogether sich a horniment as a king mought be proud on."

"Do you possess this wonderful personal adornment, sir?" said the judge to the plaintiff, with a doubtful smile.

Without speaking a word, the plaintiff threw off his coat and drew up his shirt-sleeve. The judges on the bench bent curiously forward, and the audience rose in their seats in a body. As for the old seaman, he was unable to restrain a cry of delight and wonder, while a

suppressed murmur ran through the crowded court; for there, plainly visible to all—the colors quite faded by time, yet the forms clear as ever—were the figures that Amos Jepson had described, extending from the elbow to the shoulder of the right arm, and drawn with a degree of skill and an amount of artistic finish that justified the old man's boast.

"Ef that beant Julius Van Broek, I beant Amos Jepson," cried the old seaman in triumph. "I don't b'lieve thar's another livin' man could do that ar in that bootiful style."

A cheer arose from the audience, which the officers of the court were unable for some time to repress; and when at length silence was restored, the decision of the court was given in favor of the plaintiff, Julius Van Broek.

"JULIUS VAN BROEK v. THE STATE OF NEW YORK" was the heading under which the newspapers of the next morning published a full account of the trial; and now that the decision was given in favor of the claimant, even those editors who had most strenuously opposed what they were pleased to term his "impudent pretensions" were loud in their congratulations on his success. A few harmless jests were made respecting the physiological changes produced by climate, and the advisability of the foundation of a school of tattooing, with the object of more readily identifying lost heirs, and it was proposed that Professor Amos Jepson should be placed at its head. But the early descriptions of the old seaman and the still older foster-mother were regarded generally as the mistaken impressions of age, and laughed at. Messrs. Nettle-top and Swoop resigned their agency, and in a very short time Julius Van Broek, the new patroon, took formal possession of the estates of his forefathers, and became the acknowledged proprietor of Van Broek Manor.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW "GOOD SOCIETY" RECEIVED THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE PATROON'S MARRIAGE.

NEARLY two years had elapsed since the day when Julius Van Broek had made his unexpected and unwelcome appearance at the office of Messrs. Nettle-top and Swoop, in the city of Albany.

The excitement created by the return of the lost heir to the great Van Broek property (which had proved more lasting than an ordinary nine days' wonder) had long ago subsided, and had gradually almost died away. The affair had ceased to be the constantly recurring topic of conversation at fashionable assemblies, watering-places, and other popular resorts, and had given place to fresh marvels.

There had been one especial reason wherefore the "Van Broek affair," as it was termed, had created a greater amount of interest than usual—particularly among ambitious match-making mammas and marriageable young ladies—and now that reason no longer existed. The new patroon of the Van Broek Manor was a bachelor when he entered into possession of that vast property, and it was, naturally enough anticipated that Van Broek Manor would soon want a mistress. There were several young ladies belonging to the charmed and exclusive circles of wealth and fashion (which have their existence in simple republican as well as in proud monarchical and aristocratic communities) who would have joyously accepted that, in their estimation, enviable position at the shortest reasonable notice.

But alas for their hopes! Alas for the stability of the *châteaux en Espagne* of which they dreamed! Their hopes were blighted in the bud. The "castles in the air"

never assumed material shape, but vanished as they appeared, in unsubstantial shadow!

Julius Van Broek, within two years of the date of his accession to the estates and fortune of his ancestors, wedded—a “young person” far beneath him, as people said, in wealth and social position, and quite out of the pale of those exclusive circles of “young ladies” (*jeunesse dorée*) wherefrom it was his duty to choose a wife.

Some eighteen months after the decision of the law-courts in favor of his claims, and what time anxious mammas were beginning to chide his tardiness, and to wonder when he would make up his mind, and more than one eligible young lady was anticipating the day and hour when a certain flattering question would be asked, the patroon suddenly set out on a tour through the New England States, and on his return, after a few months’ absence, brought back with him a fair young bride, the daughter of a New Hampshire country clergyman. Violent was the storm of indignation that burst forth in “good society” when this astounding intelligence became known. The ladies, one and all, old and young, resented this dereliction from duty on the part of the good-looking and wealthy bachelor, and mothers and daughters alike, forgetting their previous jealousies, made common cause against him.

“It is dreadful to think of, my dear,” said Miss Flora McFlimsy, of Madison Square (a lady whose fame as a New York belle has been the theme of the poet’s song), to her bosom friend and confidante, Miss Laura Pinchbeck, of the Fifth Avenue, at the mansions of whose parents the patroon had been a frequent and favored guest, and between whom, in the opinion of good society, the patroon’s attentions had been pretty equally divided. In fact, these two young ladies, bosom friends from infancy, and throughout the days of school girlhood, had been quite estranged in consequence of their mutual jealousy

of the patroon’s attentions to the other. But they had made up the quarrel, and, regarding themselves in the light of two innocent doves who had both been wounded by the wanton fowler’s darts (in fact, Miss Pinchbeck had written a very pretty set of verses to that effect), they were now greater friends than ever. “Yes, it is dreadful to think of, my dear,” repeated Miss Flora. “Poor dear Mrs. Harris, who met them at Niagara while they were on their wedding tour, was quite shocked. She was walking out near the suspension-bridge with her six daughters, when who should she see coming towards her but Julius Van Broek! Neither she nor her daughters had heard of his low marriage, and—you know, dear, what impulsive creatures the Harrises are—they were delighted to meet him.

“‘Happy to see you, ladies,’ he said, quite calm and cool, as if he had nothing to reproach himself with. ‘Allow me,’ he went on. ‘Ellen, my love,’ to a young person who stood near, staring in a vulgar manner at the Falls, whom they had supposed to be some country creature from the Canada side—‘Ellen, my love, come here. My wife, ladies,’ leading forward the young person by the hand. ‘These ladies, my dear Ellen, are Mrs. and the six Misses Harris. I hope you will be good friends.’ That was all. Mrs. Harris says you might have struck her down with a feather, and that sweet, sensitive girl, Lucy Harris, who, you know, is all heart and nerves (not that *she* ever had the *least* chance, poor dear homely thing!) gave a little scream, and turned pale. Mrs. Harris was afraid there’d be a scene on the bridge, which would have been excessively vulgar and annoying. Of course, my dear,” continued Miss Flora, tossing her head proudly, “he was at liberty to marry whom he pleased, who would accept him; and if he had married a young lady, I shouldn’t say a word, though I *might*, with good reason, after what passed one evening when he and I were sitting

in the back parlor, beneath the gas-fixtures, and ma came blundering into the room, just when she should have kept away; and again that night when we went to Jenny Lind's concert—you recollect the occasion, dear—when I told pa that I really and truly had nothing to wear. No matter; he's a perfidious deceiver, that's all. And perhaps it's a lucky escape. But fancy a dowdy country-girl holding up her head as the mistress of Van Broek Manor, forsooth! That's what annoys me."

"It is absurd to think of, dear Flora," replied Miss Laura. "But, speaking of *reasons*, dear, I don't know what reasons *you* had, but I'm sure that night when he spoke to ma, and said—well, I won't say what he *said* about my *nose*—and then the Saturday evening when right out, before pa—but, la! there, what can one expect from a man who has been brought up as a common sailor? Faugh! I always fancied a smell of tar when he came near me. Did you ever remark it, Flora? But I wonder what the Harrises thought of *her*?" continued Miss Laura. "I suppose, dear, she hasn't the least notion of dress?"

"Dress!" exclaimed Miss Flora. "What do you think Mrs. Harris told me? Now don't be shocked, Laura dear. Mrs. Harris solemnly assured me that Mrs. Van Broek told her in confidence, at Niagara, that she had never worn a Parisian bonnet in her life!"

"You don't say so! How excessively ridiculous! Perfectly incredible. One could scarcely believe it of a civilized being. I've heard, by the way, that the marriage was quite a romantic affair. Something like what one reads of in books. Mr. Van Broek rescued her from wolves or robbers, or something. I detest everything romantic. Don't you, Flora? It's so vulgar."

Oh, *awfully*, dear. And as to books, I seldom read any books but French novels, to improve myself in the language. Ma says, one is apt to waste so much time

over books, especially if they require thought. But, speaking of dress, I want you to come round to Madison Square, to look over those sweet new patterns that Mrs. Harris brought from Paris with her. So put on your things and come away, Laura."

And elsewhere, wherever the fairer proportion of "good society," assembled to gossip over the news of the day, similar conversations ensued, and similar envious sarcasms were cast upon the poor minister's daughter. Even the disparity of years between her and her husband was made an occasion of ridicule, though Mr. Van Broek's forty years would have been no obstacle to his marriage with the youngest and fairest of the daughters of his detractors.

The gentlemen, also, if more off-hand, were equally sarcastic in their remarks, and equally censorious; and the new patroon and his young wife were the target against which the shafts of the coarse wit of the billiard and smoking rooms of the city were discharged for nine days.

Some wondered whether the girl had money or beauty, and ridiculed her as a regular down-east Yankee, who, in all probability, spoke through her nose, and loved "pumpkin pie;" while once it was seriously proposed, at the club at Delmonico's, that the patroon should be "cut" by good society when he returned to New York.

To this reply was made by one more worldly wise than his fellows. "All very fine, my dear friends, but, you perceive, good society can't afford such costly vengeance against a breach of its rules. If Van Broek were some poor beggar of good family, who was rather in the way than otherwise, why, *then* good society might punish him, and teach a lesson to others. It would be a famous opportunity to lop off a decayed branch from some old family tree. But where a fellow like Van, with broad lands, and an old name, and lots of tin, is the offender, why,

good society must just grin and bear the affront, and magnanimously extend the hand of fellowship and reconciliation."

And, while good society was thus expressing its disappointment and indignation, the unconscious objects of its vituperations returned from their wedding tour, and took up their abode at the Astor House, New York, with the intention of taking a suite of apartments in some first-class family boarding-house until the new mansion that was being built at Van Broek Manor was ready for their reception.

Thus it occurred that, one afternoon in the early autumn of the year of Julius Van Broek's marriage, that Mrs. Lyman, the mistress of Stuyvesant House—a fashionable family boarding-house on Brooklyn Heights—announced to her assembled boarders, as they were seated at the dinner-table, the gratifying intelligence that she anticipated a speedy increase to the number of her "guests," in the persons of the patroon of Van Broek Manor and his young wife; and the boarders at that exclusive and select establishment, who always expected that they should be made acquainted with the anticipated advent of an addition to their social circle, that they might raise their voices against the admission of poor or undesirable parties, were pleased to express their satisfaction thereat, and to declare that they should regard it in the light of an honor conferred upon themselves, individually and collectively, to dwell beneath the same roof with people of such great wealth and high social position as the Van Broeks of Van Broek Manor.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. VAN BROEK MAKES HER FIRST APPEARANCE AT STUYVESANT HOUSE.

"VAN BROEK MANOR" was the modern name given to the entire Van Broek property, which consisted of—I am afraid to say how many—thousands of acres of land of every conceivable variety, from ornamental grounds and richly-cultivated arable soil, to vast, dark, apparently interminable forests, and extensive morasses, and stone and gravel pits which extended far into the still sparsely settled western portion of the State of New York, and to which probably no one knew the exact limits.

The name of Van Broek Manor was, however, especially given to that portion of the property which was under cultivation, and upon which the old manor-house of the ancient patroons still stood.

This portion of the property alone would have cut up into half a dozen tolerably large English estates, though the amount of rental derivable therefrom was very disproportionate to its extent. Probably forty thousand dollars, or about £8000 a year, was, at the period of which I write, the average rent-roll of Van Broek Manor.

The old mansion-house was a very large, rambling solid brick building, looking more like an immense overgrown cottage or farmhouse than the seat of a gentleman of large fortune. It was full of gable-ends and corners, and had several entrances, each with porches attached, the porches being covered with creeping plants and monthly roses; and it boasted of almost innumerable small narrow windows, and quaint twisted chimneys, with the oddest-looking old-fashioned weather-cocks that can be conceived, while the interior was portioned out into such an abundance of rooms of every shape and size,

approached through such queer, narrow, intricate passages, that one had to be well accustomed to the place before one could find the way readily from one part of the building to another. The outer brickwork had grown dark and dingy with age and exposure to the weather; still, in summer, the old mansion presented a delightfully snug, and cosy, and picturesque aspect. The house stood in extensive pleasure-grounds—large enough to be fitly termed a park—and some of the old trees were magnificent in size, and truly venerable in appearance; but the grounds had probably never been very tastefully laid out, and for some generations they had been left to themselves, until the park had become a very wilderness. Here, in the good old Dutch times, the ancient patroons had lived in a sort of rude state, upholding a bountiful but rough-and-ready hospitality, and maintaining a kind of patriarchal dignity over their numerous dependants.

Mrs. Van Broek had not yet visited the Manor. Her husband had made up his mind to build a new modern mansion, near the site of the old manor-house, which was still left standing, and to have the old park thoroughly renovated under the supervision of a skilled landscape gardener, before he brought his young wife to her future home.

Thus it happened that the patroon directed his lawyer and man of business, Mr. Bradford, to secure him a suite of rooms at some first-class boarding-house in or near New York for the season; and the lawyer could find no place apparently more eligible in every respect than Stuyvesant House, Brooklyn Heights.

Stuyvesant House had been originally built for his own private residence by a gentleman who had commenced the active business of life as a journeyman tailor; but who, possessing a soul above the vulgar drudgery of the shop-board, and a genius for speculation, had amassed a large fortune by the manufacture and sale of "universal

life pills" (concocted, as he averred, from a recipe purchased by him at enormous cost from an aged Blackfoot Indian squaw, the "medicine-woman of her tribe,") warranted not only to cure, but to prevent most of "the ills that flesh is heir to," if only taken in time and in sufficient quantities!

On the decease of this gentleman, in the sixtieth year of his age (he was travelling in Europe at the time of his death, and had unfortunately neglected on leaving home to supply himself with a sufficient stock of his own pills) his family, following the march of fashion, had removed to Madison Square, New York; and Stuyvesant House, being too spacious and costly a residence save for a very wealthy man with a large establishment, remained for a long time unoccupied, until it was leased to Mrs. Lyman, at an annual rent of fourteen hundred dollars, and turned into a family boarding-house. Mrs. Lyman was a widow-lady of forty, with children of tender years, a boy and a girl.

Her husband, who had risen from being a country storekeeper to become, as was supposed, a wealthy wholesale grocer in New York, had died suddenly, and left her nothing more, after his debts were paid, than a wretched pittance of one hundred and fifty dollars a year, the rent of a small house in the suburbs of the city. The widow had been used of late years to an extravagant style of living, and she took this downfall deeply to heart. Still her pittance, trifling as it was, enabled her to boast of her "small independence;" and with true Yankee spirit, she resolved still to live in style on the profits of a boarding-house, and to lay by for her children into the bargain. It was a great risk to run, but the widow was equal to the occasion. She professed to be no common boarding-house keeper, but a lady with a small independence, who having been accustomed to a spacious mansion and a large establishment, found it necessary, as well for her

children's health as her own, still to maintain such an establishment; but, as the house was too large for her small family, and she had always been accustomed to, and delighted in, good society, she was willing to permit a few "select" persons and families to occupy her spare apartments, they, of course, contributing their share towards the expenses of the establishment for the "privilege" they thus enjoyed. To have styled the widow Lyman a boarding-house mistress would have mortally offended her, and, had a servant or tradesman dared thus to insult her, the former would have been turned out of the house speedily, and from the latter she would have withdrawn her custom. She professed to regard herself as the equal in all respects of her numerous "guests;" but, barring these little peculiarities, the widow was a good sort of woman enough, and, on the whole, an excellent landlady.

Stuyvesant House was a spacious, lofty, red-brick mansion, with a brown-stone front, and a noble flight of stone steps, which led to the front entrance. It had all the modern appliances and improvements that conduce to elegance and comfort, and was handsomely furnished throughout from basement to attics. It stood in its own grounds, of some three acres in extent, a little back from one of the finest streets on the Heights. The grounds were elegantly laid out, and supplied with arbors and summer-houses, and contained a flower and kitchen garden and a small orchard, and from the upper windows of the mansion there was a glorious view of New York bay, with its shipping and its numerous beautiful islands, and of the picturesque shores of New Jersey in the distance. I think, therefore, I may justly claim for it the title of a first-class family boarding-house.

The day came round when the new boarders were expected to arrive. The gentlemen of the house were usually absent from home, on business or pleasure, during

the hours that intervened between breakfast and the five o'clock dinner hour; but the ladies were all on the *qui vive* to catch the first glimpse of the patroon and his young wife. Greatly to their disappointment, however, soon after breakfast Mrs. Lyman received a letter from Mrs. Van Broek to inform her that Mr. Van Broek had been suddenly and unexpectedly summoned to the Manor, but that she (Mrs. Van Broek) would leave the Astor House in the afternoon, and join the family at Stuyvesant House at dinner.

So the lady was coming at all events. That was some consolation; and about 3 P. M. a carriage stopped opposite the door, and the ladies who flew to the drawing-room windows and peeped through the blinds saw a tall, slender female, plainly but elegantly dressed, and wearing a veil and a black silk cloak, alight from the carriage and trip lightly up the stone steps. Her veil was down, so that the ladies could not see her features, but they acknowledged that so far as they could see her appearance was prepossessing.

Mrs. Lyman received the new boarder at the front door, and escorted her to the suite of rooms that had been engaged for herself and her husband, with which, in a very sweet voice, she expressed herself perfectly well satisfied.

"You received a note from me this morning, Mrs. Lyman?" she said, lifting her veil and disclosing a youthful, pretty, and intelligent, though somewhat pale and thoughtful face.

"Yes, madam," replied the landlady.

"Ah! I was so sorry," the young lady went on to say. "It was quite unexpected. My husband, Mr. Van Broek, received a letter this morning from his steward, which required his immediate presence at Van Broek Manor. I fear he may be detained three or four days. It is very awkward to come by myself among strangers."

"Will you descend to the drawing-room, madam, and allow me to present you to the ladies of my little family? They will be rejoiced to meet you," said the landlady.

"Thank you," replied the young wife; "but please excuse me just now: I will go down to dinner. I was so glad to leave the bustle and confusion of the hotel, and now I would like to rest awhile. Oh! what a delightful view!" she cried, springing to the window. "This *is* charming. I can see the water and the fields, and I seem to breathe freer from the very sight. I am afraid you will think me very foolish," addressing the landlady, "but, though we have been only a fortnight in New York, I felt quite stifled in the great city. I am a country girl, and have been used all my life to the country, and I can have them all here. Not *quite* like the country, you know; but I can fancy all that is wanting. Can't I, Mrs. Lyman?"

There came such a bright and sunshiny smile to her lips, such a sparkling light to her large blue eyes, and such a happy expression to the fair young face, which looked pale and weary when she first lifted her veil, and there was so much sweet music in her voice, and such child-like innocence and eagerness in the tone in which she put the simple question, that she quite won the heart of the kind, though somewhat world-worn widow. The young wife's history was well known at Stuyvesant House, and Mrs. Lyman had perhaps anticipated that the country minister's daughter, having, by her marriage with the patroon, been suddenly withdrawn from seclusion, and raised from comparative poverty to wealth and affluence, and exposed to the temptations incidental to one who thus finds herself in a high position and the object of secret envy from others, would give herself airs of importance, and expect flattery and subservience from those less fortunate than herself with whom she came in contact.

"I hope, I do really and truly hope you will be happy here, and wherever you may go; for I think you *deserve* to be happy, my dear," answered the widow with an unwonted impulse of feeling. Then she added—

"So you had rather not go down to the drawing-room now?"

"No, if you please. I would rather rest awhile and enjoy this pretty view. My maid will be here soon, and if you will be good enough to send her up to me when she comes, I will come down to dinner."

So the landlady returned alone to the drawing-room, full of praises of her new boarder.

"Such a sweet, pleasant-spoken young creature," she said, in reply to the questions that were put to her. "As innocent as a child. Indeed she looks a mere child. She doesn't look to be eighteen years old, though I've heard that she's nineteen. But when she's not speaking there's a sort of serious, thoughtful look in her eyes that I should hardly have expected to see in so young a wife. I *do* hope she's happy, poor thing. She's quite won my heart all in a minute like."

And when the gong sounded to announce that dinner was on the table, Mrs. Lyman slipped up-stairs to the young wife's bed-room and brought her down, and introduced her to the assembled boarders, male and female, and then led her to a seat between herself and a young lady about the bride's own age, which seat she begged her to occupy until, on the arrival of Mr. Van Broek from Schenectady, some other arrangement might be made. And the boarders at Stuyvesant House indorsed the opinions of the landlady. They were all, and especially the gentlemen, prepossessed in favor of the girl-like wife, who bore her newly-acquired honors and dignity so meekly and unconsciously.

But all remarked the thoughtful—nay, sometimes timid, half-frightened look, which rested on the lady's face

when she was silent, and fancied herself unobserved, and yet which did not seem habitual to her, since the slightest excitement would chase it away. It rather appeared to them as though some painful thoughts or memories crossed her mind when she was left to herself; and, like the landlady, they also thought the expression strange and unnatural in one so young, and who had so lately become a wife.

CHAPTER VI.

MISS MALCOLM ENLIGHTENS MRS. VAN BROEK RESPECTING THE IDIOSYNCRASIES OF THEIR FELLOW-BOARDERS, AND MEETS WITH AN UNPLEASANT INTERRUPTION.

MRS. VAN BROEK rose from the table with the rest of the ladies, and withdrew with them to the drawing-room; but, after a very brief sojourn, and before the gentlemen had returned from the verandah in the rear of the house whither they usually assembled to smoke after dinner, she pleaded fatigue, and retired with her maid to her own apartments. During the following day she was chiefly occupied in re-arranging the furniture of her rooms to suit her fancy, and in writing to her parents and sisters, and to her husband. In fact, she scarcely appeared to any of the boarders, excepting at meal-times. She had however, already formed a friendship with Miss Malcolm the young lady next to whom she was seated at table. Miss Malcolm had visited her in her own rooms, and when, on the third day after breakfast, Mrs. Van Broek accompanied the rest of the ladies into the morning sitting room, that young lady led her to an ottoman near the bow-window and seated herself by her side.

"I have brought you here," she said, "to have you all

to myself. I see you are a stranger yet to most of the ladies."

"You are right," replied Mrs. Van Broek. "I have hardly exchanged a word with any one but Mrs. Lyman and yourself, except at table. I feel so lonesome in a strange house without my husband. However, I received a letter from Mr. Van Broek this morning, and he writes that he will be at Stuyvesant House by dinner-time to-day. When he comes I shall be more familiar, I hope. As it is, though Mrs. Lyman mentioned the names of the ladies to me, I have really forgotten most of them."

"Then I will appoint myself your instructress, and refresh your memory," said Miss Malcolm. "Ah! Miss Dunlop"—she addressed herself to a young lady about her own age who was standing near—"come and sit beside us. There is plenty of room on the ottoman. We will take you into our confidence. Miss Dunlop and I," she said to Mrs. Van Broek, "are the only unmarried females among the boarders, and we are great friends."

Miss Dunlop, a tall slender brunette of seventeen or eighteen years of age, who had more the appearance of a native of Southern Europe than of an American girl, seated herself as requested, and Miss Malcolm went on to say—

"You must know, Mattie, that I've taken it upon myself to enlighten this lady respecting the names and specialties of some of our fellow-boarders—the ladies, I mean, of course. I shall leave Mrs. Van Broek to acquaint herself with the gentlemen through her husband. Who shall I begin with?"

"When is Mr. Van Broek expected to return from the Manor?" asked Miss Dunlop, interrupting Miss Malcolm. "This afternoon," replied Mrs. Van Broek. "I received a letter from Schenectady this morning."

"The Manor is near Schenectady, I believe?" continued Miss Dunlop.

"So I am told. I have never visited it. We passed within a few miles of the place on our journey from Niagara Falls to Saratoga Springs. But my husband says I am not to visit the Manor until the new house he is building is completed and ready for our reception."

"When *you* have finished catechizing Mrs. Van Broek, Mattie," said Miss Malcolm, "I will commence my self-imposed duties. You shall correct me if I go astray."

"Go on, then, Jane dear," said Miss Dunlop.

"Unfortunately," commenced Miss Malcolm, "there are few of our younger ladies present. The fine weather has tempted them over to New York to see the new autumn fashions. However, you see that tall, thin lady, with false curls and a Roman nose, and with gold-rimmed spectacles, who is reading, and ever and anon glancing upwards to the ceiling, and squinting this way all the time? That is Mrs. Doctor Benson. She is one of our characters. She is what is termed a strong-minded woman, and is an advocate of 'woman's rights.' She gives lectures on the subject occasionally, and stands up for the superiority of the feminine over the masculine intellect, and is deeply versed in all the 'isms' and 'ologies' of the day. She wore the Bloomer costume for nearly a twelvemonth, though her form is ill-adapted to suit it; and, though she made herself such a guy that all the children in the streets used to run after her, she would have persisted in wearing it to this day, I believe, only that one day a man stopped right before her, and told her to her face that she was the homeliest human creature he had ever come across. She couldn't stand *that*, and so she left off wearing the costume, under protest, charging the necessity to the supineness of the feminine sisterhood, who were afraid to assert their rights in consequence of their cringing terror of that tyrant man. Mrs. Benson was left a widow about ten years ago, with 50,000 dollars, and two infant children; but about two years ago she married

an English radical, a surgeon by profession, who was glad enough of her 50,000 dollars, and took her and her incumbrances into the bargain. She married him because he fell into a rhapsody over Bunker Hill monument. Of course it was all pretence on his part. I should *hate* him for it. I should hate any foreigner whom I heard running down his own country as that man does England, American girl as I am. But *she* believes in him, and is very fond of telling the story of her courtship: you'll hear it before you've been here a week. Mrs. Benson is the only woman in the world whom I thoroughly dislike. I can see through her, and she knows it; so there is little love lost between us. Enough of *her*: you'll know both her and her husband by-and-by. *That* dear old motherly-looking lady, with white hair, who is sitting knitting near the piano, is in all respects—in mind and disposition, as well as in person—the very antithesis of Mrs. Benson. Her name is Whittaker. She is the happy wife of a wealthy New York merchant, and her husband is as perfect an old gentleman as she is the lady. I couldn't tell you how much they give away in charity every year; and I never heard either of them speak ill of any person. Every body loves Mrs. Whittaker who knows her; but as good people never require such a lengthened biography as bad people, I'll pass on to the next lady——"

"Has she no family—Mrs. Whittaker, I mean?" asked Mrs. Van Broek.

"She has several married daughters," interposed Miss Dunlop; and, glancing archly at Miss Malcolm, the young lady added, "She has one son in the United States army, whom Jane always seems to forget, though he visits Stuyvesant House whenever he can get a furlough."

Miss Malcolm, blushing deeply, replied, "No, Mattie, I never forget those whom I like. Mrs. Whittaker's daughters I have never seen. Captain Whittaker, who is a brave soldier, and who distinguished himself in

Mexico, often visits us, and I don't hesitate to say that his own parents are not more glad to welcome him than I am." She smilingly returned Miss Dunlop's glance as she spoke, and then went on.

"Next comes that comfortable-looking body seated at the opposite window." The young lady stopped short. "Oh, Mattie dear," she said, "I was almost outraging the proprieties. I forgot that that lady is your aunt."

"Go on, Jane," replied Miss Dunlop. "I know what you are going to say about her, and I assure you I dislike to listen to my uncle and aunt when they mount their favorite hobbies quite as much as you do. I only wish somebody would have the courage to shame them out of their idle boasts."

"Well, Mattie," said Miss Malcolm, "if I'm free to speak of your aunt, I must first speak of you, my dear. This young lady—Matilda Dunlop—Mrs. Van Broek, though she is heart and soul an American girl, was born in Italy, and her mother was an Italian. Mr. Dunlop, her deceased father (for my dear Mattie is an orphan), was the brother of Mrs. Latham—the lady near the window—and was for many years United States Consul at the place where Matilda was born. After the death of his brother-in-law, Mr. Latham made interest with the party in power at Washington to secure the consulate, which he retained for eight years. During the time he held this office he travelled with his wife and his niece, whom he had adopted, over great part of Europe, and, according to his own account, was hand-in-glove with all the noblemen he met. Mr. and Mrs. Latham are very excellent people, barring that little peculiarity. But Mr. Latham has a most exaggerated idea of the position and duties of a consul, and you cannot speak of Europe without his interposing and bragging of the number of counts, dukes earls and marquises, and princes, and what not, that he is upon terms of the most intimate friendship with. Of

course, it's all nonsense. Any one who knows what are the duties attached to a consulate knows also that, though a respectable, it is, comparatively speaking, an inferior position. These very dukes and counts would scorn to notice him very likely. And what makes it worse is, his wife follows when he has started the subject, and is as replete with her anecdotes of countesses and baronesses as he is with those of lords and barons. Now I hate sham of every description, and what offends me more is this grovelling worship in Americans of foreign titles. I hold that a true American gentleman is the equal of any man on earth, and the superior of any prince or lord who depends upon his rank and title alone for his claims to gentility. Still, as I have said, barring this ridiculous servile weakness, Mr. and Mrs. Latham are very worthy people, and Mrs. Latham, especially, is rather a favorite of mine."

"A letther for Misthrus Van Broek, av ye plaize," said the Irish lad who did duty as butler, footman, and page at the Stuyvesant House establishment, entering the room at this juncture with a plated salver in his hand, on which the letter reposed, and marching up toward the lady.

Mrs. Van Broek started from her seat.

"A letter for me!" she exclaimed. "From whom can it have come? I heard from home, and also from my husband, this morning."

It was a square-folded, strange-looking letter, without an envelope, and directed in a large round hand, like that of a child, or a person unused to writing. Mrs. Van Broek shuddered as she glanced at the superscription, and seemed to shrink from taking it from the salver which the servant held out to her.

"Av ye plaize, ma'am," said the man, "'tis no reg'lar post as brought the letther, as ye'll persave whin ye see there's nary postmark an it. A feymale brought it from New York, ma'am, and said she'd wait for an answer; but

she althered her mind, and wint aff in a jiffey. 'Betther not, p'raps,' she sez. 'See that ye give the letther into the lady's own hand. There's mebbe more depinds an it nor ye think;' and wid that she wint aff like a shot out ov a gun. She was a poor, disthressed, disreputable lookin' feymale, ma'am, wid a bit colleen along wid her, an' she was weepin' bitterly. Sure me heart was disthressed for her."

With pale face and trembling hands, Mrs. Van Broek took the letter from the salver, and, tearing it open, moved nearer the window to read it. The servant still stood in the centre of the room, as if awaiting an answer though the messenger had departed.

"Leave the room, instantly, Brian," said Mrs. Lyman, scandalized at the man's forwardness. "How often am I to tell you to deliver a message, and then instantly leave the room? You are neither required to give your opinions nor to repeat the conversation you may hold with persons at the door."

"I thought maybe, ma'am, the lady wud be after lavin' a message for the feymale av she called agin," said the in no respect abashed factotum, as he slowly withdrew.

"Oh, those Irish domestics!" exclaimed Mrs. Lyman, raising her clasped hands and looking upwards towards the ceiling, with an air of martyr-like resignation. "They're the plague of one's life. We can't hire Americans to perform menial service. We must have *them*, or colored servants. In my poor dear husband's time, when of course my establishment was much more extensive than it is now, I was almost worn to a shadow——"

If the widow had been almost worn to a shadow during the life of her husband, she had certainly wonderfully recuperated since the worthy grocer's decease. However, she was arrested in the midst of her objurgations against the stupidity and obstinacy of Irish servants by a cry of alarm from Miss Malcolm.

"Look at Mrs. Van Broek," cried the young lady. "She is ill!"

Every eye was directed to the bow-window where Mrs. Van Broek stood. Her cheeks were blanched, her lips parted, and her teeth clenched. Her eyes were fixed with a vacant stare upon the opposite wainscot, and her form seemed perfectly rigid. The hand which still held the letter she had been reading, the perusal of which had evidently been the cause of this seizure, had fallen to her side, and the other hand tightly clutched the curtains of the window, as if she had caught at them to save herself from falling.

A simultaneous cry of terror arose from the ladies all of whom, with the exception of Miss Malcolm, were for the moment paralysed with fright.

"It is catalepsy!" exclaimed one. "It is epilepsy!" exclaimed another. "Ring for the servants!" "Send for the doctor!" "Where is Dr. Benson?" cried others, as soon as they found breath to speak. Miss Malcolm, however, had sprung to the side of the poor lady and caught her round the waist, only just in time to save her from falling to the floor; for her form suddenly relaxed from its rigidity, the letter fell from her hand, and with a faint cry, she gazed around her for a moment with a frightened look, and then her eyes closed, and she fainted in Miss Malcolm's arms, her head resting on the young lady's shoulder. Miss Malcolm, assisted by Miss Dunlop, bore her to the ottoman, from which she had risen to read the letter, and the other ladies crowded round, each suggesting some remedy. Mrs. Whittaker busied herself in loosening the fainting lady's dress, while the others suggested burnt feathers, brandy, eau-de-cologne, and other remedies. One pinched her ears, another slapped her hands, and another applied strong smelling-salts to her nostrils.

"Send for the doctor. What a pity Doctor Benson's

not at home!" said the wife of that gentleman; "but it's ever the case," she went on. "Men are always in the way when they are not needed, and out of the way when they are wanted." Mrs. Lyman moved to ring the bell, but she was prevented by Mrs. Whittaker.

"There is no need, ma'am, to make a fuss, and alarm the house," said the old lady. "If the ladies would not crowd so much about her, poor young thing! but would give her air, and leave her to Miss Malcolm, who seems to manage her very nicely, she'll soon be better. It's a mere fainting fit, from which she'll soon revive."

In fact, Mrs. Van Broek already showed symptoms of returning consciousness. A tremor passed over her frame. She moved her hands and arms, and gave utterance to a faint moan, more of weariness, however, than of pain. Mrs. Lyman, at the suggestion of Mrs. Whittaker, left the room to procure brandy and other restoratives, in case they should be needed.

"It will be better," said the thoughtful old lady, "than to call the servants. Servants *will* talk, and perhaps Mrs. Van Broek would not care to have her illness talked about, and all sorts of reasons assigned for it, by the people in the kitchen."

This was well meant on the part of the old lady, but her words had the effect to stimulate the curiosity of Mrs. Benson, who was perhaps capable of more mischief than the poor ignorant servants all put together.

"It is most singular what could cause this seizure," she said, watching the now manifest symptoms of returning consciousness exhibited by the sufferer, who moved her head about uneasily as it lay in Miss Malcolm's lap and sighed frequently and heavily. "It must have been caused by that letter—a strange-looking epistle it was for a lady to receive—that Brian brought in; and I shouldn't wonder if that restless, half-frightened look, that sometimes appears on her face, has some connection with the matter, whatever it is."

The letter, which had fallen, unnoticed, from Mrs. Van Broek's hand when she fainted away, had dropped near the ottoman, and had remained unnoticed and concealed beneath the skirts of her dress as she lay. At this moment Mrs. Lyman returned with brandy and other stimulants. The fainting lady had opened her eyes once or twice, though without appearing to recognise any one, and had panted as if she found it difficult to draw her breath.

It was suggested a little brandy-and-water might revive her, and assist to restore animation; and the landlady mixed a small quantity in a tumbler, and placed a teaspoonful of the liquid between her lips. A slight disarrangement of the folds of Mrs. Van Broek's dress, as Miss Malcolm raised the poor sufferer's head that she might swallow the brandy-and-water more easily, revealed the dropped letter. The keen eyes of Mrs. Benson discovered it at once, and she secretly resolved to possess herself of it. Drawing gradually nearer to the ottoman she contrived to conceal the coveted epistle beneath the skirts of her own dress, and then, under the pretence of taking one of Mrs. Van Broek's hands in her own, she stooped down to secure her prize. Mrs. Benson's movements had, however, aroused the suspicions of Miss Malcolm, who guessed at that lady's object, though she herself had not perceived the letter. She watched her closely, and, observing her other hand moving towards the floor, she stooped forward, and picked up the letter herself just as Mrs. Benson had seized it. In fact, she snatched it out of that lady's hand, at the same time casting upon her a look of scorn and contempt.

"That letter belongs to Mrs. Van Broek, Mrs. Benson," she said, quietly; and, re-folding the letter carefully, unperceived by the other ladies, she placed it securely in Mrs. Van Broek's pocket.

Mrs. Benson gave the young lady a spiteful glance, but dared not to make reply.

In a few minutes, Mrs. Van Broek recovered consciousness. She raised herself from her recumbent posture, opened her eyes, and looked anxiously around her, pushing back her hair, which had become loosened, from her forehead.

"Where am I? What has been the matter?" she murmured. "Have I been ill, or am I dreaming?"

She passed her hand over her forehead, and continued, in a low voice, audible only to Miss Malcolm, who still supported her head, "No, no, it was no dream: that letter!" She started, and, raising herself, glanced over the floor, and from one to another of the surrounding ladies, with a look of alarm.

"Be calm, my dear Mrs. Van Broek," whispered Miss Malcolm; "the letter you seek is safe in the pocket of your dress. I picked it up from the carpet. No one has seen it; believe me, no one but yourself has seen a word of its contents."

Mrs. Van Broek gratefully pressed the young lady's hand. "Thank you," she murmured; "you are very kind. I may trust *you*, I am sure. I could trust your voice and look."

She sank back for awhile, and in a few minutes made a strong effort to recover herself and control her agitation. She sat up, and assured her companions she was almost well again, though her struggles to assume a composure she did not feel were painfully apparent.

"My nerves are very weak," she said, in apology. "I am afraid I have given you much trouble; but of late a trifle upsets me. The letter I received came so unexpectedly, and contains news which has distressed me—the illness—of—of—" she added, but then paused, and her pale cheeks flushed as she spoke, for she felt that she would be practising deceit. "I think I will go to my room and lie down a while, and then I hope I shall be able to meet you at the dinner-table quite restored. Mr. Van Broek

will, I expect, be here by dinner-time. May I beg of you to say nothing to my husband of my foolish illness? It would alarm him to no purpose. I will tell him—I will show him the letter myself."

She moved towards the door, but her limbs trembled beneath her slight weight, and Miss Malcolm offered to assist her to her room.

Mrs. Van Broek thankfully accepted the offer, and the two left the room together.

Miss Malcolm did not rejoin the ladies in the parlor, but remained upstairs with Mrs. Van Broek, with whom she descended to dinner. Mr. Van Broek, who had been looked for an hour earlier, had not yet arrived, and his young wife, who had anxiously expected him, and from whose face almost every trace of her illness had departed, seemed greatly disappointed, and even alarmed. The gentlemen, however, reassured her. One gentleman said that he had heard that an alteration had been made that day in the railroad time-tables for the winter months, and probably, he added, Mr. Van Broek might not have been able to leave Albany at the time he had intended; and others said that there would be three or four trains due before ten o'clock that night, and Mr. Van Broek might if unexpectedly detained by business, avail himself of one of these later trains. So Mrs. Van Broek, though her appetite seemed to have failed her, appeared almost as cheerful as usual, and seemed to have forgotten the cause of her trouble in the earlier part of the day. She retired to the drawing-room, with the rest of the ladies, and remained for an hour or two, expecting her husband to arrive every moment. But when eight o'clock came round, and he had not made his appearance, her anxiety and uneasiness became manifest; and when at length the clock struck nine, and the guns were fired from Governor's and Bedloe's islands, and still there was no sign of his coming, she could remain in the drawing-room no longer,

and pleading fatigue, and with difficulty restraining her tears, she requested her maid to be summoned, and sought the privacy of her own apartments.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. VAN BROEK HEARS NEWS OF AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE, AND VISITS THE NEW YORK HOSPITAL AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE FIVE POINTS IN CONSEQUENCE THEREOF.

"EXTRAS! Extras! 'Ere's yer extras, 'Herr'ld,' 'Tri-bune,' 'Times!' Great noos from Europe! 'Ere's yer hextras. On'y two cents—hextras!"

The New York newsboys—little, ragged, sharp-eyed, keen-visaged urchins, ranging from five to fifteen years of age, and chiefly of Irish parentage, though of American birth—were rushing from the different newspaper offices in full cry, each with his bundle of the half-sheets, or more frequently mere slips, under the title of "extras," which the newspaper publishers of the United States are accustomed to issue on the arrival of a mail steamship, the occasion of a railroad accident, the breaking-out of a fire, the result of a battle or a pugilistic combat; in fact, upon any and every occasion—sometimes to the number of half a dozen or more in as many hours—that will furnish them with an excuse to increase the revenues of their journals with the chance coppers of the public.

"Buy a hextra, sir—'Herr'ld' hextra, sir? Latest noos out. Great an' 'portant noos from all parts of Europe, jist arrived," said a sharp-looking lad, who rushed forth from amidst a group of his fellows to accost a tall, dark-complexioned gentleman, who had just alighted from a street railroad-car at the terminus near the park, and was hurrying into Broadway. The gentleman carried a

carpet-bag in his hand, and had, apparently, from his dusty appearance, just arrived off a journey.

He was hastening on in the direction of the Brooklyn ferries, and was seemingly anxious to get home. Nevertheless he stopped for a moment as the boy overtook him opposite Barnum's Museum, and said—

"What's that, my boy? Fresh news from Europe, eh?"

"Yes, sir; fresh an' 'portant noos from Europe, jist arrived. On'y two cents."

"Here—quick—give me an extra, then," said the gentleman, feeling in his pocket for the money. "Stay, though; I've been duped by you scamps often enough. Show me where this important news is."

"Yes, sir," replied the boy. "I never tricks nobody, sir. Some on 'em does. Wait a minute: I'll soon p'int it out." And he began to turn the half-sheet about, under pretence of looking for the news, while waiting for the gentleman to put the money in his hand.

The gentleman, however, was too wary to pay the two cents beforehand.

"I see no European news, you young rascal," he said, glancing over the sheet.

"Yes, sir. I'll show yer, sir. 'Portant noos, it sez;" and, having apparently discovered what he had been searching for, he held out the extra in one hand, and opened the other to receive payment.

The gentleman read the large print IMPORTANT NEWS:—

"THE U. S. MAIL STEAMSHIP 'NIAGARA' IS REPORTED TO HAVE ARRIVED OFF SANDY HOOK AT TWO O'CLOCK P. M. IS THOUGHT THAT SHE BRINGS IMPORTANT NEWS FROM EUROPE. WE SHALL ISSUE AN EXTRA AS SOON AS WE RECEIVE THE MAILS."

"You young rogue!" he said. "Do you call that news from Europe?"

"Yes, sir; *noos*—'portant *noos*. Don't it say so?"

"Be off with you. You ought to be horsewhipped, and the editors too. It's an imposition upon the public."

"Tain't on'y two cents, sir, and there's a shockin' sooicide wot's worth the money."

"Buy a 'Times.' Buy a 'Tribune,' sir," cried several other boys, who had been watching the ill-success of their fellow-newsvender. "Them 'Herr'd' hextrys ain't of no account."

"Be off, all of you," said the gentleman, walking rapidly away.

"Carry your portmantle, sir—carry your valise? On'y charge yer five cents to the ferry," cried a chorus of boys, finding that they could not dispose of their extras. "Carry it for *three* cents?"

The gentleman hurried on, taking no notice of these offers, and the pleadings speedily changed to vituperations.

"Thar goes a swell wot reads the noos fust, and then wun't buy a hextra. He gets *his* readin' cheap, *he* do," cried the first lad, whose trick had been discovered. The other boys followed in chorus. "Yah! g'long. *You* wants to buy a hextra! *You* calls yerself a genelman, does yer? A genelman wot gits his noos for nothin', and carr's his own portmantle! Yah-h-h!"

"Chut! let him alone, poor beggar," said one of the beggar lads. "I guess how he ain't got no money. Hey mister, do yer want to borrar a trifle? I don't mind lendin' on yer a cent to pay the ferry." "Hey! g'long. Yah-h-h-h!" yelled the whole of the lads in chorus, as the gentleman passed on, taking no notice of their abuse, though the prolonged yell, common to the "rowdies" and *gamins* of the United States, rung in his ears as long as he continued in sight of his tormentors.

Arrived opposite Wall Street, he looked up at the clock of Trinity Church, and compared the time with that of his watch.

"I shall be late," he muttered to himself. "I shall hardly reach Brooklyn Heights by dinner-time."

Again his ears were saluted with the cry of "Extras." In the present instance the newsboy was endeavoring to force the sale of his sheets by crying the most interesting items of news.

"'Rival o' the 'Niagary!' great noos from *Europe*! shockin' sooicide in Jarsey city! 'lections in Ohio! terrible accident in Centre Street! squatter troubles in the northern district o' the State! all for two cents!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the gentleman; "the squatters at their work again? That may interest *me*."

"Here, my lad; an extra—quick," he called to the boy, who ran across the street and handed him the half-sheet.

He gave the lad a five-cent piece and walked on, without waiting for the change, glancing over the columns of the extra as he walked. Suddenly he stopped short, as if he had been pulled up by main force. Had any passer-by looked into his face at that moment, he would have supposed that he had been suddenly seized with illness. His complexion assumed a sickly, yellowish hue, and for a moment his strength seemed to fail him. The cause of his alarm, however, was not the brief report of a trivial affray between some of the State militia and a party of squatters, which had occurred in a distant part of the State, but a short paragraph which referred to a serious accident that had occurred on the previous day, and which read as follows:—

"A man named Miles Slowbury, who, it is said, has recently returned from India, met with a severe and probably fatal accident yesterday afternoon. The unfortunate man was knocked down and run over by a street railroad-car in Chatham Street, and was picked up senseless, and taken to the New York Hospital. We learn that he recovered consciousness soon after he was received in the

hospital; but it is thought, that he is seriously injured internally, and doubts are entertained of his recovery."

"Miles Slowbury!" muttered the stranger when he had recovered in some measure from the shock which the perusal of the report had occasioned—"Miles Slowbury! lately returned from India! He, of all men, to come, as it were, to life, and to turn up in New York just now! There can hardly have been two Miles Slowburys in India; and Miles had relations in New York. I thought he had been dead for years. Why should he have returned just now from India, even if I have been mistaken in supposing him to be dead? And why has he not acquainted *me* with his return? He must have heard that I am in New York. Where is he?" The stranger whom the reader will recognise as Julius Van Broek, glanced at the sheet again. "Ha," he said; "carried to the New York Hospital. I must see him, even if I don't reach Brooklyn to-night. It is best to know at once whether he means mischief. Let me think. Where is the hospital? Ha, I recollect: off Broadway, on the left-hand side going up."

Turning about, Mr. Van Broek proceeded to retrace his steps. He stepped, however, into the Howard House as he was passing, and called for a glass of wine and left his valise, promising to call for it in the course of an hour or two, and, thus disencumbered of the weight of his baggage, walked on more swiftly until he reached the hospital. Here he inquired for a patient named Slowbury, who had been received into the hospital on the previous afternoon.

The hospital steward looked at his entry-book. "Miles Slowbury," he read, "aged forty-two. Compound fracture of right arm above the elbow. Admitted to accident ward 6 P. M. yesterday. Removed by his friends at 8 A. M. this morning."

"You see, sir," said the steward, looking up from the book, "the man has been removed by his friends."

"Yes. Can you tell me the address of the persons who have removed him?"

"The warden can, I dare say, sir," replied the steward. "I will send and inquire. Will you please to take a seat?"

Mr. Van Broek seated himself, while a negro attendant was sent with the message to the warden.

"You appear to take great interest in this poor man, sir," said the steward.

"Yes," replied the visitor; "I knew him, if he be the man I suspect he is, in India many years ago. I am glad to hear that he is in a condition to be removed. From the newspaper report I should have judged the accident to have been more serious."

The steward shook his head gravely. "The accident was serious enough," he replied. "The poor man was picked up for dead. He was sensible when he was brought in, though he afterwards relapsed into unconsciousness. A compound fracture of the arm is no trifling matter, sir; and this poor fellow has, I have heard, received serious internal injuries besides."

"Yet he is well enough to bear removal?"

"That speaks against him, sir. The doctors would not have permitted a man in his condition to be removed had there been any hope of his recovery. When nothing can be done for a case, and the friends desire it strongly, in the crowded state of the hospital—it needs enlarging sadly, and there is a subscription being made with that object—the removal of one patient gives room for another."

The negro now returned with a slip of paper, on which was written—

"Miles Slowbury, *ætat.* 42. Occupation unknown. Entered 6 P. M., 5th inst.; removed 8 A. M., 6th inst. Compound fracture of right arm; reduced. Fatal internal

injuries; no prospect of recovery. Address, 27 Orange Street, New York."

"You see, sir, it *is* as I said," said the steward. "A low neighborhood, Orange Street; hardly a place that a gentleman would care to visit;" glancing at the fashionable exterior of his visitor.

"The poor fellow's friends may be in need," replied Mr. Van Broek. "In such cases as this no one should hesitate about trifles. I'll call and see the poor man, at any rate."

He rose to take his leave, when the steward directed his attention to the contribution-box.

"Gentlemen who visit the hospital sometimes contribute to the funds," he said. "We depend a good deal upon voluntary contributions. And now that we are about to add two or three new wards, any trifle, however small, will be acceptable."

"Certainly—certainly," replied Mr. Van Broek, and, taking a double eagle from his vest pocket, he dropped the coin into the box, wished the steward good day, and walked away through the hospital grounds into Broadway.

"Now there goes a gent who has got a feeling heart," said the steward, gazing after the retreating figure of his visitor. "We shouldn't want for funds if everybody was as liberal as he. Many call out of curiosity, and think they've done famous when they leave a dollar behind 'em. And then to think of a gent like him taking such interest in a poor man!"

"'Tain't eberybody dat am got dere goold double-eagles to t'row about dat ar ways, Massa Stourd," said the negro. "Make my heart jump for see dat ar twenty-dollar piece go into de conterbootium-box. S'pose I t'ink ob it, I arx'um gib lilly moonaration to de messumger. But den, dar, I hab no s'picion he wor so free wid his

money. Dat de way wid some folks—allus miss dere opportunity—don't hab no luck like oder folks."

The visitor, however, did not hear these eulogies, as in deep thought he again retraced his steps down Broadway. Crossing the park into Chatham Street, he stopped opposite the steps of the City Hall to watch some children engaged in their merry gambols, and gazed at them so intently, and seemed meanwhile so absorbed in thought, that he attracted the notice of a policeman who was passing by, and who thought he was ill. The man civilly asked him if he felt unwell.

"Unwell!" he exclaimed, abruptly starting from his reverie. "No, my man; I am well enough. I was but watching those little children at their play, and thinking—bah! thinking of nothing," he added, in a different tone of voice, and walked hastily away.

The man looked after him in astonishment, then shook his head and muttered, "Well, that's a queer customer. I guess he ain't all right here;" and he tapped his forehead with his forefinger.

Meanwhile Mr. Van Broek had crossed Chatham Street, and was walking towards the Bowery. "I feel strangely softened to-night," he muttered to himself as he passed along. "The man I am going to see (who they tell me is dying) and I once played together as little children on that very spot where those children are playing to-night. I seemed to see myself and Miles, as I stood watching them, as *we* were then—innocent and happy. How many scenes have we passed through since, and what a difference between our fortunes! He, poor, maimed, and dying; I, rich and envied—yes, envied by thousands; and yet one breath from this man, whom I believe to have been dead for years—Well, well. Many men would have acted just as I have done, had they been placed in similar circumstances; and at the time I believe, at least, that I was wronging no one. And, after all, perhaps

Miles means no harm. He *may* be ignorant of my return from India, as I was of his being still in life; and *he* may not know what I have but lately learned: still it looks suspicious—this return from India just now. In poverty, too!" He tried to shake off his gloomy feelings, and quickened his steps, until at length he turned into the street he sought.

"No. 27," he muttered, as he looked at the slip of paper he had brought with him from the hospital. "Faugh! 'tis a miserable hole, and No. 27 must be near the bottom of the street; however, there's no help for it, so here goes."

It began to grow dusk before he reached the middle of the long narrow street, which is chiefly inhabited by laborers and others of a still lower class, several families of whom occupy rooms in the same dingy, though lofty brick houses. In the doorways and on the steps men and women (chiefly foreigners, British immigrants of the poorest class, Germans, Swiss, Scandinavians, people from all the northern nations of Europe, but no French, Italians, or Spaniards, the immigrants from Southern Europe congregating in a locality by themselves) were standing chattering together, while the narrow side-walks were thronged with laborers returning home from the work of the day, and the centre of the street was crowded with dirty, ragged children who were romping with each other or rolling in the gutters. There were many negroes among them, as well as among the gossipers on the door-steps; for in these localities at least, the descendants of Ham are admitted on terms of equality denied to them by most American citizens of a superior class, even though in theory the most ardent supporters of the rights of the negro race to political and social freedom and equality. Here, however, there was no distinction. The white man and the negroes, or *vice versa*, stood together, in many instances, in the close relationship of husband and wife, and the child of pure Caucasian

type romped and played with his or her companions of every degree of shade, from the bright mulatto to the sablest son or daughter of Ethiopia, in the closest terms of childish friendship. The appearance of a gentleman in that neighborhood, at that late hour, attracted the attention and excited the curiosity of the grown people, who whispered together, and wondered what the strange visitor wanted, while the children stayed their rude sports to gaze upon him.

He stood for a moment and looked earnestly at a house on the opposite side of the street to that on which he was walking.

"How everything seems to have stagnated in this vile locality!" he thought to himself. "I could almost fancy that it was but yesterday when I visited this street for the first and last time until now, and looked from the windows of that very house; and yet it was twenty—ay, more than twenty years ago. I am changed since then. The city seems like another place; but this street and neighborhood, the houses and the surroundings—nay, the very men and women and children—appear the same. Had that visit not been made, how different might have been my career! I might never have visited India. If—psa! what is the use of moralizing? Like Cæsar, I may say I have crossed the Rubicon, and I cannot return without humiliation that I dare not submit to. After all, perhaps I am alarming myself for nothing. *Audaces fortuna juvat, timidosque repellit*, as we used to say at Harvard. All that is necessary to man is to show a bold front, and he may smile at the frowns of fortune. Still, this is an unpleasant *contre-temps*."

The foulest pit has its upper and lower depths. Mr. Van Broek had by this time passed through the upper and fairer portion of the foul street, and, poor and dingy as were the houses, and squalid and miserable as were the people he had passed by, the houses were now mean-

er in appearance, and their inhabitants were, generally speaking, of a more degraded class. He was now drawing near to the notorious Five Points, the Alsatia of the metropolis of the western world, the chosen or the enforced abode of the most miserably poor, or the vilest outcasts of the city. The dress and ornaments worn by the strange visitor were gazed upon by greedy eyes that evidently coveted their possession. The stranger, however, walked boldly on, conscious that his surest chance of safety depended upon a show of fearlessness. To follow the numbers of the houses was now impossible. Some had no number, others were numbered irregularly. Besides, it was now nearly dark. At length he inquired which was No. 27 from a group of men and women who were assembled together on a door-step.

"Nomber twenty-siven is it ye'r axin' fur?" replied a brawny, bullet-headed, broad-shouldered, thick-set man, with the physiognomy of a dissipated pugilist, at the same time scanning the appearance of the querist with an expression which seemed to imply a doubt whether he should return a civil or a rude answer. "An' f'what wud the loikes o' ye be wantin' wid nomber twinty-siven, may I make bowld to ax?"

"Don't be sp'akin' to the loikes ov *him*, Jem," said a woman standing by. "Maybe 'tis a dirty blaggard peeler he is."

"Hould yer whisht, 'oman," replied the man, "or maybe it's a wipe o' the soide o' the head I'll be afther givin' yez; mukin' and meddlin' as ye do bez allus. Sure the loikes o' me ought to know a peeler whin I see him."

"I wish to see a man named Miles Slowbury, who has met with a bad accident, and who lives, I am told, at No. 27," the stranger explained.

"'Tis Nance Slowbury the genelman wants, uncle," bawled a younger female from the next doorway. "Is it a missioner ye are, sir?" (to the stranger.)

"A missioner!" sneered the man who had first spoken. "Och! but ye're a fool, Bet. Did yez iver see won o' the city-missioners wid a goold chain, an' wid a dimint ring un his finger? 'Tis a doctor he is," added the fellow, confidentially, to a man standing near him; and then, addressing the stranger, he said, "'Tis the fust doore, down below, yander, afther yez pass the coort, and Nance Slowbury lives on the top floore."

Some whispering ensued, and the late speaker replied, "No, b'ys, I tell yez; 'tis a docther he is. Let the docther go in p'ace. Maybe 'tis one ov us might be wantin' a docther some day, and thin——"

The stranger took a half-dollar from his pocket, and tossed it to the group, and passed on, amid a shower of blessings on his generosity, and cries of "Lang life to yer hunnor!"

He entered the house to which he had been directed without knocking; for the door stood wide open to afford free ingress and egress to the numerous tenants. Several children were playing in the dark, dirty passage, and of one of these he inquired the way to Mrs. Slowbury's room.

"Donno mister," replied the boy to whom he had put the question.

"Does such a person live in this house?"

"How should I know, mister? Best go and see for yerself."

"Give us a copper, mister, and I'll show yer over the house, and yer kin ax the lodgers," put in a dirty little urchin of some eight years old.

Boldly as Mr. Van Broek had entered the house, he shrank from the idea of ascending the narrow, broken staircase, in almost perfect darkness, and on a doubtful and, at the best, disagreeable errand. He stood irresolute for some moments until a little girl said—

"Please, mister, do you mean Nance Slowbury? I know where's *her* room: it's right upon the top floore."

"Yes, my girl," said Mr. Van Broek; "it is *she* I am seeking. If you'll guide me to her room I'll give you a five-cent piece."

"You'll tumble through and break yer legs on the stairs, widout a light, if yer don't know where to tread, sir," said the child.

"Can you get me a light, my little girl?" asked Mr. Van Broek.

"If yer'll give me a cent, I kin buy a candle at the corner grocery," replied the child.

Mr. Van Broek gave her a cent, and she went off to procure the candle.

"I arxed yer fust, mister," said the boy who had first spoken, as soon as the little girl was gone. "What fur didn't yer say *Nance* Slowbury, and then a fellar'd ha knowed? I'll show yer now for a cent, widout a candle. Sall 'ull cut off with that cent; see if she don't, mister."

The child, however, speedily returned with the candle and three or four lucifer-matches which she had thoughtfully borrowed. She lighted the candle, and disclosed to Mr. Van Broek a bright, intelligent face, which would have been pretty but for the dirt with which it was covered, while the luxuriant brown hair which might have added to her beauty, matted and dishevelled as it was, gave her a wild, gipsy-like look.

"Now give us the candle, and g'long, you Sall," said the boy, offering to take the candle out of the child's hand. "I'm engaged with the gentleman, and you kin foller arter if yer like."

"Be off with you, you impudent little rascal," said Mr. Van Broek. "Now, my dear" (to the little girl), "lead the way, and I'll follow you."

"Take keer, Sally. He'll chouse yer out o' that five-cent bit, see ef he don't," cried the boy. "I'd be paid

afore I started a fut, if I wor you. I guess he ain't got five cents in his pocket. Here, mister; say—want change of a dollar bill, eh? 'Cos, ef yer do, I kin't giv it yer. Happened misfortinitly, as I paid all my small bills inter the bank this 'ere wery arternoon. Heh—heh—heh! g'long. Yah-h-h-h!" and, with this concluding chorus joined in by all the children following him, Mr. Van Broek and his little guide commenced the perilous ascent of the dilapidated staircase, which, as the child had warned him, he found to be so full of holes that he most assuredly would have fallen and broken his legs had he ventured up alone in the dark. How they managed to carry the poor patient from the hospital, he could hardly conceive.

On reaching the first crazy landing, he was led by his youthful guide along another passage, with doors on both sides. Some of the doors were open, and as he passed by he looked into the wretched, bare rooms, occupied by sallow, unshaven, villanous-looking men, and pale-faced, blear-eyed, sickly, and slatternly women, and ragged, dirty, blowsy children. Some of the inmates of the rooms came to the doors and peered out after him; but none molested him in any way, and, from the whispers he heard, he discovered that he was generally supposed to be a doctor come on a visit of charity to the sick man.

Soon he came to another staircase, still more dingy and dirty and rotten than the first. At the top of this staircase the child stopped awhile to get her breath; and as the light fell full upon her face, Mr. Van Broek could not help a feeling of pity that a child so fair and innocent should be left to lead the life that in all probability would be her lot. She assured him that there was yet another passage to traverse and yet another flight of stairs to ascend before he would reach Nance Slowbury's room, and he took the opportunity to ask her a few questions.

"How long have you lived in this house, my little girl?" he said.

"Oh, ever so many years, sir. All my life," was the reply.

Mr. Van Broek smiled as he thought of the length of years that must have elapsed since her birth. "And what do you do? Do you go to school?" he said.

"No, sir. Leastways, I goes to Sunday-school. Nobody else in the house of all the childer goes but me; but on week-days I does chores for mother, 'cos she's sick."

"You, so young! Why, how old are you, little one?"

"Eight years next thanksgivin', sir. But I 'arns sometimes a dollar a week, besides broken wittles."

"Is your father living?"

"No, sir; I never seen him. Mother was better off when *he* was livin'. She does sewin' now; but she can't 'arn much, 'cos she's sick."

"And what does Nancy Slowbury do for a living?"

"She does sewin' too, and sich-like. She comes and helps mother sometimes. Please, sir, I like Nance Slowbury, and folks do say how she was a lady oncest."

"Does she live alone?"

"Yes, sir. Leastways, she did. But a big man and a little gal came to live with her a little while ago. The man is him what she brought home from the hospital to-day."

"She's very badly off, I suppose?"

"I guess she be, sir, now."

"Whose little girl is it that lives with her—her own?"

"No, sir. She ain't married. The man brought the little gal. But I ain't on'y seen her oncest. Nance won't let her come down stairs, on'y with *her* when she goes out on err'nds. She's younger nor me; but she's dressed most like a lady."

The child again led the way. But Mr. Van Broek had now something else to puzzle him.

"Miles Slowbury brought a little girl home from India with him!" he thought to himself. He could not under-

stand it. But very soon, now, the mystery that perplexed and troubled him would be explained.

Up another flight of stairs, along another dark passage, and at the end of the passage the child stopped opposite a closed door.

"Nance Slowbury lives here, please sir," she said, dropping a curtsy as she spoke. "Shall I knock, sir?"

"No, never mind, my dear," replied Mr. Van Broek. "I'll knock myself. I've come to see the sick man."

"Oh, you're a doctor, then?" said the child. "I guessed how you was, though I knowed you warn't the district doctor as comes to see mother."

Mr. Van Broek did not attempt to disabuse the mind of the little girl. In the character of a doctor he thought he would be more secure from molestation than in any other. He dismissed his little guide with two silver half-dollars, and the child thanked him, and, overjoyed in the possession of her treasure, bounded away to exhibit her wealth to her sick mother.

Mr. Van Broek listened at the door for a few moments. Even now he felt a strange reluctance to make his presence known to the inmates of the room.

"What," he thought, "if I am alarming myself to no purpose? What if, after all, Miles should be ignorant of my presence in New York—or even of my being still in existence? What if he should not be the Miles Slowbury whom I suspect, after all? But there can hardly have been two Miles Slowburys, both in India, and both having friends in New York."

Again he listened, and fancied he heard voices in the room.

He tapped lightly at the door.

"Arrah, now, Biddy," cried a voice from within, apparently that of an aged woman; "if that's ye, come in wid ye at oncest, and don't be afther schamin'. F'what

mighty foine manner ye're getting a houl't ov, all ov a suddint!"

"Surely," thought Mr. Van Broek, "the child must have mistaken the room. That can't be the Nancy Slowbury of whom she spoke!" Nevertheless he tapped again. This time the door was opened by a young and neatly, though poorly dressed, and very intelligent-looking woman, who appeared to be suffering alike from ill-health and deep grief. She started when she perceived that her visitor was a strange gentleman, but immediately recovering herself, said, in a voice broken with emotion, yet which was evidently the voice of a person of education and refinement far above her apparent condition—

"If you are a doctor, sir, I thank you kindly for calling; but I am sorry to say you are too late. My poor uncle is—dead."

CHAPTER VIII.

NANCY SLOWBURY RELATES THE HISTORY OF HER GIRLHOOD TO THE PATROON.

"DEAD!" exclaimed the patroon, with a start of painful surprise. "Dead!" he repeated. "Poor Miles!" I little thought to find him already dead."

Men are singularly constituted beings. Hardly two hours had elapsed since Mr. Van Broek had honestly believed that Miles Slowbury had been many years dead. If he had been informed but a few days before that he had been mistaken, and that his old acquaintance was still living, and on the following day had read an account of his sudden death, he would have experienced a feeling of relief and satisfaction. Only a few minutes earlier he would gladly, had he possessed the power, have banished

the man he was hastening to visit to the uttermost corner of the earth, and kept him there a close prisoner for life; and possibly, had he read in the extra he had purchased that Miles Slowbury had been killed on the spot by the accident that had befallen him, he would not have deeply grieved; yet he now felt for the moment as great a shock as though he had heard of the sudden death of a beloved friend. It however quickly passed away, and was followed by a sensation of relief, which in its turn was succeeded by feelings of doubt and dread lest words had already been spoken by the now dead man which might create suspicion, and be productive of serious trouble to himself.

The young woman regarded her unknown visitor earnestly, and with a look of surprise. She had been struck with the tone of sympathy expressed in the stranger's voice, and with his look of concern, and his familiar mention of her deceased uncle's name.

"Were you acquainted with my uncle Miles, sir?" she asked, perceiving that he remained silent after his first expressions of surprise and sorrow.

"Yes," answered the patroon; "that is, if he be the Miles Slowbury whom I met in India many years ago. I heard but an hour or two since of the accident he met with yesterday, and I hastened to the hospital to learn whether it was the person I had known of old who had been injured, and to offer such service as I might be able to afford. The steward of the hospital directed me here."

"It is very kind on your part, sir," said the young woman. "My poor uncle had not many friends. He has been absent in India these twenty years, and only returned to America a few weeks ago."

"Twenty years!" said the patroon. "I was right in my surmise then. I thought it impossible that two indi-

viduals should bear the same somewhat uncommon Christian and surnames."

"You are not a doctor, then, sir, I presume," said the young woman. "But will you not step in?" The conversation had hitherto been carried on at the door. "It is a poor place into which to invite a gentleman to enter," she added. "But perhaps you would like to see my poor uncle?"

The patroon accepted the invitation, and seated himself on a chair the young woman had placed for him.

It was a tolerably large room, but as its tenant had said, it was, indeed, a poor place. The floor was uncovered, except by a small scrap of carpet beneath the solitary window; and, though the wooden boards were clean they were ragged and worn, in some places even into holes. The walls and ceiling, which had probably been white-washed when the house was built, did not look as if they had been touched since, and in many places the plaster had fallen away, leaving the bare laths exposed. Three or four chairs, a chest of drawers, a table that had seen better days, a cast iron stove from which the smoke was conveyed to the chimney by pipes which ran through a hole in the wall, a few cheap pictures on the wall, a row of plates and dishes and other crockery on a shelf at one end of the room, and a bed, which stood in an opposite recess, comprised the entire furniture. But, so far as it had lain in the power of the occupant of this wretched apartment, everything was scrupulously neat and clean, and the crockery and the few pictures, which were the only articles of ornamental furniture in the room, were arranged to the best advantage. The stove, in which a small fire was burning—for the autumnal evenings were beginning to grow chill—was well polished, and the curtains, and counterpane and pillow-cases on the bed, were neatly spread, and as fresh and clean as if they had been newly washed. Two of the chairs near the stove were

occupied by two aged Irish crones, apparently inmates of the crazy tenement, who had been attracted to the room by that strange morbid feeling, so frequently found to exist among females of their class, which leads them, ghoul-like, to scent out the chamber of death, and to gloat, as it were, over the presence of a corpse. They had been trained in many a "wake" in the "ould" country. It was one of these women who, probably anticipating a visit from some one of her cronies, had spoken when the patroon first tapped at the door. These wretched, toothless, wizened hags, whose wrinkled visages, and scant, gray, tangled, elf-like locks, streaming over their skeleton shoulders, rendered them no inapt personification of the fabled witches of Macbeth, were drinking whiskey, which they poured from an old spoutless teapot into a cracked teacup, both of which articles, as well as the spirits, they had brought in with them. They were talking and crooning in mournful tones as they crouched, almost bent double, before the fire, or occasionally rocked themselves to and fro.

The room was dimly lighted by two flaring tallow candles placed on a stool at the foot of the bed, which disclosed the dismal outlines of the figure of the corpse, decently covered with a clean white sheet, and stretched upon the bed, and also the slender form of a little girl, apparently about six or seven years of age, who knelt at the bedside, her face buried in the counterpane, and her bright golden hair streaming over her neck and shoulders. The child uttered neither word nor moan, but an occasional hysterical sob, succeeded by a perceptible tremor, which seemed to shoot through her slender frame, attested to the intensity of her sorrow.

"Whisha now, alanna," croaked one of the old hags, as a sob louder than usual caught her ear; "av ye'd jist sip the laste dhrop ov whiskey it ud cure the grief and dhry up yer tears. Och, but the whiskey is the cratur to

cheer the disthressed heart! Come now, acushla, jist the laste taste in the worrld."

The child only answered with a shudder and a long-drawn sigh, and the young woman begged her evidently unwelcome visitors to desist from importuning the poor little thing. "If you will but leave her alone, poor darling," she added, "perhaps she'll sob herself to sleep."

"Thin take a taste yerself, dear," replied the hag. "Shure 'tis the best cure in the worrld for the sorer and throuble. It'll warm the heart of yes, alanna."

The young woman, however, declined the well-meant offer, and the two old crones helped themselves to the last drains of the vile spirits that remained in the teapot.

The place looked dismal enough. So thought the patroon, as he cast his eyes around the comfortless room, and noted the murky walls and smoke-stained ceiling, and the angular outlines of the corpse stretched on the bed, and the weeping child, and the two squalid, half-tipsy hags near the stove, and the flaring, smoking candles whose dismal glare rendered all this poverty and misery dimly visible. Dismal and poverty-stricken enough it appeared, despite the evident endeavors on the part of the poor tenant of the chamber to make it as decent as possible. The visitor's eyes now rested upon the young woman, who had risen from her seat and gone to the bedside, and was striving to comfort the child, stroking her glossy, silky hair, and patting her head and whispering gentle words in her ear. He noted, now that he had an opportunity to scrutinize her appearance more narrowly, that her features were comely and even handsome, although her face was pale and grief-worn, and her dress, though clean and neatly worn, was threadbare and faded. He had heretofore remarked the superiority of her manners and language to her apparent condition, and wondered what had brought her to such poverty, and what

was the real connection that existed between her and Miles Slowbury and the child; for it was inexplicable to him that a niece, whom the dead man could not have known before his recent return to America—for she must have been a mere infant, if, indeed, she was born, when last he had quitted his native shores—should take so much interest in him as to bring him home from the hospital to die at her miserable lodgings.

The young woman, who had succeeded in pacifying the poor child, but who could not induce her to leave the bedside, kissed her and returned to her seat. Neither she nor her visitor had exchanged a word with each other since the latter had entered the room. Each was apparently waiting to be addressed by the other, and the silence was growing awkward. Mr. Van Broek, in fact, knew not how to introduce the subject upon which he wished to speak. The young woman, however, presently afforded him the opportunity he sought, though in a way he little expected.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said, "but I have been thinking, since you have been in the room, that you perhaps, are Mr. Van Broek?"

"I—yes—that is my name," stammered forth the patroon, with a slight change of color, and with a degree of agitation that he was unable wholly to conceal. "I was not aware," he went on—"that is, I did not think I was known to you?"

Had the young woman, who was seated opposite her visitor, been a skillful physiognomist, she might have read, in the expression of his features, in the nervous twitching of his nostrils and the corners of his mouth, and in the furtive glance of his eyes, that he was not a little troubled and alarmed at her knowledge of his name. But Nancy Slowbury was no skillful physiognomist. She was simply a young woman—a very young woman to have become so careworn and weary-looking—who had evidently seen

better days, yet who bore her poverty uncomplainingly, and made the best of such poor means as she possessed.

She attributed the agitation of her visitor to his grief at the death of her uncle and his sympathy with herself, and she felt grateful to him. Poor thing! she had had so few friends during her brief experience of life that she was thankful and grateful for the least show of friendship or sympathy. It was under the impulse of these feelings, therefore, that she replied—

"It was but a surmise on my part, sir. I could think of no one else who was likely to interest himself in my poor uncle."

"What, may I ask," said Mr. Van Broek, as if with an effort, "induced you to make this surmise?"

The young woman glanced towards the two old crones who were seated by the stove.

"Perhaps, sir," she answered, in a lower tone of voice, "you would not choose that I should speak before these people; though I don't know that a gentleman, such as you appear to be, will care for them. But *I* do not care that my poor uncle's affairs shall be made the gossip of the neighborhood, as they would be if *they* got hold of anything relating to them. They *forced* themselves upon me, sir," she added, apologetically. "I do not associate with them. They came partly out of curiosity, and, perhaps, partly out of kindness, and I did not refuse them admission; for, after all, it is dreadful to be alone in the presence of death."

"Cannot you persuade them to leave the room?" asked the patroon. "You might get them to return by-and-by. I should like to speak a few words with you relative to my—to your uncle."

"I do not *wish* them to return, sir," answered the young woman. "Yet I dare not bid them go. They might become violent and abusive. Scenes of violence are common in this neighborhood, and such a scene would

be shocking here just now." She glanced, as she spoke, towards the bed where her uncle's corpse lay.

"My good women," said the patroon, rising from his seat, and approaching the old hags, who were now crooning in a melancholy tone over the empty tea-pot, and knowing no other way to induce them to move quickly,—"My good women, you seem to be here for the mourning. I see you have drunk up your liquor. Here is half-a-dollar. Go and get yourselves a glass of something hot and strong."

This was making bad worse; but, muttering blessings which had as well been curses, on the stranger's head, the two hags hobbled out of the room; and then the young woman said, "I did not care to speak before *them*, sir; but since you have been sitting here I have thought it might be yourself that my uncle Miles came back from India purposely to see."

"To see *me*!" exclaimed the patroon, again betraying symptoms of agitation. "Why, then, did he not make his return known to me? What reasons have you for thinking that such was your uncle's purpose? Did he ever speak to you of me?"

"No, sir," replied the young woman. "It was not until this morning, indeed, that I knew the name of Van Broek; and it was not until you had seated yourself in this poor room that I associated the name with you."

"Explain yourself, young woman," said Mr. Van Broek, reseating himself, with an assumed air of composure and indifference. "How long had your uncle been in New York when this unfortunate accident befell him?"

"Five weeks have not yet elapsed, sir, since he arrived," said Nancy Slowbury, "and since then he has been living with me, and sleeping in the adjoining room, which he hired the day after he landed."

"You could hardly have remembered your uncle," said the patroon, "if he has not visited America since he left

the country twenty years ago. You are not more than twenty years of age?"

"Twenty-one years old, sir," replied Nancy. "But, as you say, I had no personal knowledge of my poor uncle. I know not even what was his occupation in India; but I know, as you, sir, are perhaps aware, that some years ago he met with a sad reverse of fortune, and has since led a life of constant struggling with misfortune."

"I am aware that Miles Slowbury was at one time in a position to do well in India," said Mr. Van Broek; "but I lost sight of him many years ago, and subsequently heard that he had died. But pray go on with your story, Miss Slowbury. I am anxious to know why you associate your uncle's return from India with a desire to see me."

"I may be quite mistaken, sir," continued the young woman. "My story is a brief and a sad one; but, if you care to listen, I will explain my reasons for thinking as I do."

The patroon inclined his head in token of assent, and Nancy Slowbury related the following brief sketch of her life.

"My uncle," she began, "was my deceased father's elder brother. My mother died when I was an infant, and at her death, my father, who had a fair practice as a physician in the country, removed to New York city. When I was about fourteen years old my father died, somewhat suddenly, and I came home from school to attend his funeral. I did not afterwards return to school. Until that period I had had no idea of the state of my father's circumstances; but I found that he had died in great poverty, and had left me absolutely penniless. My uncle Miles had been in the habit of sending both myself and my father valuable presents from India, and I have reason to believe now that my father's circumstances became impoverished after his removal from the country, and that

my uncle not only contributed largely towards my father's support, but likewise kept me at school. I had been taught to think a great deal of my uncle from a child; and when I was left an orphan he became all in all to me. I could not recollect that I had ever seen him; nevertheless I had pictured to myself his form and features, and now he was father and uncle and brother to me. He was the only relation I had—so far as I knew—in all the wide world. In my distress I wrote to him, and told him of my destitute condition, and I received by the return mail a kind letter in reply.

"He sent me a little money, but he spoke of his own altered circumstances, and said his chief regret was, that now, when I needed assistance more than ever I had done, he was less than ever able to befriend me as he would wish to do. I had, therefore, to help myself as best I could. No easy task for a girl of fourteen, who had been well brought up, and who was without friends. I was too young, and my education had not been sufficiently perfected, to enable me to take the place of a governess; I had learned no useful art, and I was quite unfitted for manual labor. However, I will not now speak of that bitter period of my life. It is enough to say, that, by taking in a little plain sewing, and by book-folding, and various similar occupations, I contrived, after a while, to maintain myself decently. My uncle wrote to me frequently. He always wrote kindly and hopefully, and sometimes sent me a little money. I did pretty well, until I over-exerted myself and fell sick, and was obliged to go to the hospital. When I became convalescent, I found that I had spent nearly all my little savings; and as I was still too feeble for close work, I soon fell into the deepest distress, and was compelled to remove to these miserable lodgings. I leave you to imagine what sufferings I have endured—to what humiliations I have been subjected. I have known what it is to

feel the keenest pangs of hunger, and sometimes I have not been able to earn wherewith to pay the rent of this wretched apartment, and did not know but that I might be turned into the streets, without a moment's warning, to wander through the night, without shelter from the rain and cold. I was often sorely tried. But I am thankful indeed that I was preserved in many troubles.

"For two years I had not heard from my uncle. I believed that I was alone in the world; when, one day, in the hour of my bitterest trial, I received a letter directed in his well-known handwriting, and bearing the Calcutta postmark. It contained an order for fifty dollars; and, what rejoiced me still more than the receipt of the money I so much needed, my uncle wrote that he was coming *home*—that by the time that I received his letter he should be well on his way. He wrote that he was still poor—so poor that, when he had sent me the fifty dollars, and paid his passage money to New York, he would be almost penniless; but he added that I need not trouble myself about that, for he had the means of helping himself as soon as he should arrive in the United States.

"He did not want much, he said—only sufficient help to enable him to take a small farm in the country, where he and I could live quietly and happily together; and this help, he said, he could claim from a friend. He concluded by saying that, two months after the date on which I received the letter, I might look daily for his arrival.

"I never felt so happy as I felt that day, and during the two months that followed. My health became almost completely restored, and I looked forward with ecstasy to the time when I should leave the crowded city for ever, and take up my abode with my uncle in the quiet country. The two months expired, and, almost to the day, I received a letter which informed me that my uncle had arrived off Sandy Hook, and that the ship would be at her wharf

in New York city early the next morning. I was in an ecstasy of joy. That night I scarcely slept, and day had hardly begun to break the next morning ere I was down to the Battery to await the vessel's arrival. Several ships were entering the harbor, and I asked an old sailor if he knew which was the 'Georgian' (that was the name of the vessel that my uncle was on board of). The man pointed out one of the largest of the vessels.

" 'That is she,' he said; 'she's from India.'

" 'To which wharf will she come?' I asked.

" 'Most likely,' said the sailor, 'she'll lie out in the stream awhile before she comes into the wharves.'

"I explained that I had a relation—a passenger on board the ship, and asked how I could get on board to see him; and the man told me that the passengers would be landed at a wharf near the Battery; and he pointed out the spot.

"Thither I went, and waited until the ship came to an anchor; and though it seemed to me to be a very long time first, in course of time boats began to leave the ship with the passengers and their baggage.

"I looked earnestly at each passenger, as, one after another, they stepped out of the boats and ascended the steps to the wharf. I had pictured my uncle to resemble my father, and I saw no one whom I could suppose was he whom I sought. Some went away immediately with their friends, and others seemed to be expecting friends to meet them who had not come. Among these latter was a tall, sun-browned, heavily-bearded man, about forty years of age, who was leading a pretty, fair-haired child by the hand. I had not the least idea that this man could be my uncle, and, almost ready to cry with disappointment, I was about to return home, for no more boats seemed to be leaving the ship, when this man, who had once or twice looked hard into my face as he passed me by, came up to me and said—

"Is your name Slowbury, miss?"

"It is," I replied. "I am looking for my uncle; are you acquainted with him, sir?"

"Why, my dear Nancy," cried the stranger, throwing his arms round my neck and kissing my forehead, "I am your uncle Miles! Don't you recognise me? But of course you don't. How should you?"

"I recognised a resemblance to my father's voice in that of the speaker, and I was rejoiced to see my uncle, though I was still a little disappointed in his personal appearance; but that disappointment quickly passed away.

"I think he guessed the thoughts that were passing through my mind, for presently he smiled and said—

"You didn't expect to find your uncle such a rough-looking fellow, Nancy?"

"I fancied you would be more like my father, uncle," I replied; "and I had no idea that you were married."

"Married!" he exclaimed. Then he added, laughingly "Oh, ah—yes. You didn't expect to see your cousin, eh? Well, you must look upon her as your sister, Nancy. You'll find her a good little girl;" and he led the little girl to me, that I might take hold of one of her hands.

"And she is a dear little child, sir," said the young woman, earnestly. "I love her as much as I could have loved a little sister if it had pleased God to give me one. But she is neither a sister nor a cousin."

"Not your cousin," interrupted Mr. Van Broek. "She is not then the daughter of Miles Slowbury?"

"No, sir," replied Nancy.

"Whose child is she, then, that your uncle should have taken so much interest in her as to bring her from India with him?"

"That I do not know, sir."

"Are her parents living, or is she an orphan?"

"That I cannot say either, sir. My uncle never directly told me so, yet I have sometimes thought, from what he has hinted, that she has a father living either in India or in the United States. However, I cannot say that it is so."

"It is strange," said my uncle, after we had walked a short distance, "but, though a very little thought would have told me that you must be grown a young woman, I, when I landed, was looking about me for a little girl to call me uncle not much bigger than little Alice here. That is why I did not recognize you sooner, my dear!"

"Well, sir," said Nancy, "to make my story short, for you will be tired of listening to matters which possess interest only to myself, my uncle told me when we reached home (and he was surprised to find me in such miserable lodgings) that he had very little money, but that he had no doubt that the old friend he expected to meet would be only too glad to pay him the debt he owed him, and then we should go into the country to a farm that he intended to rent or purchase."

"Why did your uncle not go at once to this friend?" asked Mr. Van Broek, whose impatience would not let him listen calmly to the young woman's explanations.

"I cannot rightly say sir," she replied. "My uncle like my poor father, was very incommunicative. Only sometimes, when he was irritated or impatient, he would drop hints, from which I was able to gather some meaning; and I have an idea that after he wrote the letter which announced to me that he was about to return to the United States, he was disappointed in not obtaining some address, which, I imagine, was the address of the father, or at least of some relation of the child's, and that he wished to get this address before he sought out the friend he spoke of. I know that for a fortnight after his return he was continually searching post-office directories, and making inquiries of strangers whom he met; yet though

always kind and affectionate in his conduct and behavior both to me and the child, he never confided anything relating to his family affairs to either of us; and dear little Alice believed him to be her father, and now mourns him as such.

"At length, about a fortnight ago, my uncle, who had been abroad all day, returned home in the evening in a very bad temper. It was the first time I had ever seen him out of temper, and the first time I had seen him in the slightest degree elevated by drink. Even then he was kind as ever to the child and me, but from what he said I fancied that, tired of vain researches after information relative to the friends or relations of little Alice, he had determined to go to the friend to whom he had alluded in his letter, and make known to him his presence in New York. I gathered from his words that, excited by drink, he had conceived the idea that this friend, from whom he had expected so much, had either slighted him or had denied himself to him; for it appeared that in his unwonted excitement he had forced himself into the presence of a lady at the Astor House, and had said something to this lady that he deeply regretted, and subsequently had been ejected from the hotel. The next day he was very unwell, and he grew worse and worse until he was obliged to take to his bed, and for ten days he was unable to rise. He was subject, he told me, to these sudden attacks of illness after any undue excitement; and sir" (the young woman's voice was broken with emotion as she spoke the words), "he went abroad yesterday afternoon for the first time since he was taken ill, and met with the accident which caused his death. No doubt he was too weak, from the effects of his illness, to get out of the way of the vehicle, which struck him down and passed over him."

Nancy Slowbury was silent for some moments, and before she recommenced her story she rose from her seat

and went to the child, who had sobbed herself to sleep on her knees by the bedside.

"I will put the poor little thing to bed in the next room," she said, with difficulty restraining her tears; "it was my poor uncle's room, but I had *him* brought in here; and Alice and I must sleep in his room to-night."

She went away with the little girl in her arms, carrying her as gently and tenderly as a mother would have carried a sleeping infant. Presently she returned, having partially succeeded in checking the emotion which the last words of her story had created.

"I have laid little Alice, all dressed as she is, on the bed," she said. "Poor little thing! she is almost dead with sleep, and yet the tears are wet on her eyelids, and her bosom still heaves with sobs."

"I am afraid I have wearied you, sir," she went on to say, when she had resumed her seat; "but I have little more to tell."

"Tell me before you begin again, Miss Slowbury," said the patroon, "on what day of the month was it that your uncle called at the Astor House?"

"I cannot say, sir," replied the young woman; "it was about a fortnight ago."

"Think—was it not last Tuesday fortnight?"

"It was, sir. It was on a Tuesday. I recollect the day, though not the day of the month. My uncle regretted deeply something that he had said or done on that occasion. He spoke of his regret to himself as he lay ill; and I think his object in going out so soon, while he was still feeble from the effects of his illness, was to seek out the gentleman of whom he used to speak, and to repair the mischief he had done, or to apologize for his conduct. He told me, only this morning, after I had brought him home from the hospital, that he *had* called at the hotel again to see the gentleman, and had been told that he was absent from home, and that the lady

(his wife) had removed to Brooklyn Heights only a few days before. He was returning home, after having made this call, when the accident occurred.

"He seemed," continued the young woman, "to be uneasy in his mind after I brought him home from the hospital. He made me bring him pen, ink, and paper, and, suffering as he was, and using his left hand, he wrote a short letter, and folded and directed it as well as he was able, and then begged me to take the letter to Brooklyn at once, and ask that it be immediately delivered into the lady's hands.

"Ah, sir! I did not then know that my poor uncle was dying. I did not suspect that he was even dangerously injured. I thought that the fractured arm was the chief injury he had sustained, and from that he said he now felt little pain. Still I objected to leave him alone. But he insisted that I should go, and seemed to be so anxious that at last I consented."

"Take little Alice with you," he said; "the walk and the sail across the ferry will do you both good. The lady must have the letter *to-day*. She will show it to her husband on his return, and then he will call."

"I don't like to leave you, uncle," I said. "The letter might go by post."

"No," he replied; "the lady will not get it to-day by post, and they said at the hotel that her husband would return to-night. To-morrow may be too late."

"At least, uncle," I urged, "let little Alice remain with you."

"No, my dear," he replied. "I feel quite easy, and free from pain. The day is fine. Poor little Alice looks pale, as well as you. The walk will cheer you up; and he added, with a smile, poor fellow! 'You can cheer me up when you return, my dear; and meanwhile I will try and get a little sleep.'

"We made ready to go, as best we could, and, before

we left the room, he called us to him and asked us to kiss him. I never had known him to do so before. We kissed him—little Alice and I—and, before I closed the door, I said that I hoped he would sleep quietly until we came back."

"I went to Brooklyn Heights and delivered the letter (which was directed to 'Mrs. Van Broek, Stuyvesant House') into the hands of a man-servant, and requested him to take it to the lady directly; 'for' said I, 'it may contain matter of importance.' And then I hurried back home with little Alice.

"I felt strangely uneasy, though I could not tell why, for I had not been much more than an hour absent; but, oh, sir, you may imagine—I cannot describe my grief and dismay, and the terror and anguish of poor little Alice, when, on entering the room on our return, we found my poor, unfortunate, kind, generous uncle lying dead in his bed."

CHAPTER IX.

NANCY SLOWBURY CONCLUDES HER HISTORY, AND LEAVES THE PATROON IN A STATE OF PERPLEXITY.

FOR some minutes Nancy Slowbury was too much overcome with grief to continue her story, and, anxious as her last words had made the patroon, he could not, in common decency, urge her to proceed. At length she said, her bosom still heaving with sobs—

"Can you wonder, sir, that when I thought of the direction of the letter I took to Brooklyn this morning, it struck me that *you* were the gentleman to whom, I presume, my poor uncle alluded when he spoke of the friend

upon whom he had a claim, and the husband of the lady to whom the letter was sent?"

"No, no. It was reasonable that you should suppose so, replied Mr. Van Broek. "Your uncle was, as I have said, an old acquaintance of mine in India, and I should have been glad to have assisted him had I known that he was living and in distress. It is a great pity that he did not make himself known to me. This misery might have been spared. I will do all I can to help you now; but tell me, had you any idea of the contents of the letter he penned this morning?"

"Not the least idea, sir. As I have observed, my uncle was extremely reticent in relation to his private affairs. I know nothing respecting them beyond what I have told you."

"You have alluded to some person whom you imagine to have been a relation or friend of the child. Are you sure that your uncle held no communication with this person?"

"I think not, sir. I believe that the person he sought could not be found, and that my uncle was greatly disappointed in consequence. Though it is merely a suspicion of my own that this person was related to little Alice.

"By what name—by what other name besides Alice is the little girl known?"

"My uncle gave her his own name of Slowbury, and I never heard him speak of her by any other name; nor have I heard him speak of her friends by name. Once I asked him what was the child's real name, and he replied that he had given her his own name when he adopted her. He did not seem to like to be questioned on the subject."

"Has your uncle left no papers, no letters, no documents of any kind, that may throw some light upon the state of his affairs?"

"None, sir—at least, none that I am aware of. He merely brought from the ship the clothing that belonged to him. I have never seen him with a letter or paper of any kind, beyond the newspapers he read, and a few letters that he wrote to postmasters and others."

"And you do not know the nature of the inquiries he made in those letters?"

"I have no idea whatever, sir, beyond what I have already stated."

"Had your uncle no friends, no acquaintances in New York, or in other parts of the United States?"

"None that I am aware of, sir. None but the friend he spoke of, when, as I have surmised, he alluded to yourself. Nor do I know the names nor the residences of his friends in India, if he had any."

"Miss Slowbury," said Mr. Van Broek, after a pause, "You will pardon me for putting the question. In your present circumstances it would be wrong either for you or for myself to stand upon foolish and false delicacy in such a matter. Look upon me in the light of an old friend of your uncle's, when he knew better days than he appears to have known of late years, and tell me candidly whether you are in need of money?"

A blush came to the young woman's pale cheeks as she replied in faltering tones—

"I am very poor, sir. It would be alike false and foolish to deny that. I would not remain in this wretched abode a day if it were otherwise; but I am not absolutely destitute of money. My poor uncle had a little money when he returned from India, and it is not all spent. I have enough left—" (here her voice broke down; but presently she went on)—"I have enough left to bury him decently; and then I must work for myself, and the child he has left to my care. Heaven will help me, as it has helped me hitherto, in even severer straits."

"But that must not be, my poor girl. You must not be left to your own resources, under such circumstances as these, and with an additional burden to bear," said Mr. Van Broek, whose voice betrayed his deep sympathy. "Take this now, and I will see, to-morrow, about the funeral. That must not be left for you to arrange, and, when that is over, I must see what I can do for you."

He took a twenty-dollar bill from his portmonnaie as he spoke, and offered it to the young woman; and, perceiving her reluctance to accept it, he added—

"Nay, you must not refuse me. You must not look upon a former friend of your uncle's as a stranger. Besides, I am well able to afford such assistance as I feel it my duty to offer."

The young woman thus urged took the bill.

"You are very kind, sir," she murmured. "I thank you with all my heart. I—am—very—poor." A fresh burst of tears choked her voice; but presently she looked up, and added, with a wan smile, "Did I not say Heaven would help me? And already it has come to my relief."

"I must leave you now, Miss Slowbury," said the patroon, rising and looking at his watch. "Nothing can be done to-night. Early to-morrow I will see you again, and make such arrangements as are necessary. After the funeral you must leave this wretched place, you and the child. Nay, no thanks," he added, as the young woman strove to express her gratitude amid her sobs and tears.

"Will you not," she faltered—"will you not look at my uncle before you go? You have not yet seen him."

It was true. Though Mr. Van Broek had entered the room ostensibly for the purpose of looking upon the face of the deceased Miles Slowbury, he had not yet approached the bed upon which the corpse lay. Even now he seemed to shrink from the ordeal. But, nerving himself to the trial, he said—

"Yes; I must look upon the face of my old friend, though I shudder at the sight of a corpse."

He stepped to the bed, hesitated a moment, and then drew aside gently the sheet from the face of the dead man, and gazed for a few moments at the calm, rigid features.

"I think—I hope—he must have died easily—without pain—while he was sleeping," said Nancy Slowbury, between her sobs.

"He has a smile upon his lips, and looks happier, and better, poor fellow, now that he lies dead, than I have ever seen him look."

There was a smile on his rigid features, which were those of a middle-aged man, who had once been handsome, but upon whom years of hardship and trouble and poverty had set their seal. The hair and whiskers and beard were slightly grizzled, and the face was sunburnt; but even in death the smile that lingered on the lips imparted a happy expression to the countenance.

"Poor Miles!" murmured the patroon: "I should hardly have recognised him. Still I can trace the old familiar features."

Then, reverently replacing the sheet over the dead man's face, he said—

"Miss Slowbury, I should like to see the face of the child, if it will not inconvenience you. Perhaps I may be able to recognise *her* features, for it is not improbable that I may have known some of her relatives or friends."

Nancy Slowbury led the way, without reply, into an adjoining room, which contained little furniture besides the bed on which the child lay sleeping, still dressed as she had been during the day.

"This was my poor uncle's room," said the young woman. "He has slept here since he has returned from India. Poor fellow! he slept here only the night before

last, little thinking he was so soon to sleep the sleep that knows no waking."

She led the way to the bed, and drew aside the plain white curtains; for, miserable and wretched as was the room and its surroundings, the bed, with its simple furniture, was as neat and clean, and even tasty in its arrangement, as was everything else that came under Nancy Slowbury's care. The child was lying with one small hand beneath her cheek, her face turned towards the patroon and the young woman.

She was a fair-skinned, delicate-looking little creature, with pretty, intelligent features, and with a profusion of silky, golden hair, which curled over her fair, broad forehead, in which every blue vein could be traced beneath the pure white skin, and streamed over her neck and shoulders. Her eyebrows were arched and delicately pencilled, and much darker than her hair, and her long, fringed eyelashes were almost black in comparison.

"She is a dear, pretty little thing," murmured the young woman, as she gazed upon the sleeping child with a look in which pity, love, and admiration were blended.

The little girl was lying quiet now, but she seemed to have been weeping in her sleep, for tears still clung to her eyelashes, and occasionally her bosom heaved with sobs.

There was a slight resemblance to Miles Slowbury in the contour of her face; for Miles, as I have said, had been very handsome in his youth; but Mr. Van Broek actually started when he looked upon her, and with difficulty restrained an exclamation of surprise. Nancy Slowbury, had she not been absorbed in her own grief, must have remarked the peculiar look with which he gazed upon the child. He however quickly assumed an appearance of carelessness; and when the young woman asked if he could trace any resemblance in the little girl's features to any one he had known in India, he replied—

"I trace a resemblance to your uncle, Miss Slowbury. I could almost fancy that she was his child."

"Yes," said Nancy, "the forehead and the form of the face are those of my poor uncle. I have remarked that, and sometimes thought that she is related to our family in some way; but my uncle positively assured me she was not his child."

"Children sometimes bear fanciful resemblances to grown persons," replied Mr. Van Broek. "There is some faint resemblance in the child's features to some one whom I have known, independently of her likeness to poor Miles. I must question the poor little thing when I see her awake. By that means I may be enabled to obtain some clue to her relatives, if she have any living."

He and the young woman returned together to the room they had quitted.

"You must not remain here by yourself, my poor girl," said Mr. Van Broek. "Better put up with the society of those wretched old crones than watch by yourself throughout the long night."

"There is a young woman below, sir, a decent, poor girl, who has promised to sit up with me to-night," replied Nancy. "I will go to her when you go away. I do not want those miserable old women to return."

"That will be better," said the patroon; and, wishing the poor solitary mourner good night, and reiterating his promise to see her again early on the morrow, he quitted the house by the way he came, guiding his steps with difficulty, but meeting with no interruption nor annoyance; for it had gone abroad among the miserable tenants of the dwelling that he was a doctor, who had been induced by feelings of pity and charity to visit the sick man; and, generally speaking, even the vilest and rudest of mankind respect these feelings, when they believe them to be genuine. He hastened through the now silent and deserted streets into Broadway, and, calling at the

Howard House for his valise, hurried on to the ferry. But his countenance wore an anxious, troubled look.

"The man is dead, and so far well," he muttered to himself, as he paced along; "though it is shameful in me to find a source of comfort in that. But that visit to the hotel when I was absent! I remarked Ellen's troubled look on my return home, though she mentioned nothing of the occurrence to me. I have fancied since that she has seemed silent and thoughtful, and have been unable to conceive a reason for the change that has come over her. I wonder what he said? And that letter to-day! I must know all to-night; and—yes, I may be enabled to quiet her fears if Miles has elsewhere kept his counsel to himself. The child, too. How strong the resemblance! It must be so. Well, she and the young woman must be provided for: I must see them both to-morrow. But that letter. I would sooner have lost a thousand dollars than Ellen should have received it, whatever may be its purport, in my absence. However, perhaps all may be for the best.

Thus muttering these disjointed sentences, he crossed the ferry, and hastened on to Stuyvesant House; but it was long past nine o'clock before he reached his new boarding-house, where, as the reader is aware, his young wife had been momentarily looking for his arrival since four o'clock in the afternoon.

CHAPTER X.

THE PARSONAGE HOUSE AT ACTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE.

THE little village of Acton, New Hampshire, is situated in a secluded portion of the State, at the base of one of the loftiest ranges of the White Mountains. The

country in its vicinity—which is remarkable for the romantic beauty of its scenery—was originally settled by a party of agriculturists, who crossed the Atlantic ocean on board the far-famed "Mayflower." They were among the first of that band of Puritan emigrants who, in the earlier portion of the seventeenth century, quitted their native land for conscience' sake, and who were willing to sunder all family ties, to resign the comforts and the security of civilization, to bear hunger, thirst, and fatigue, to suffer from the extremes of heat and cold, to wrestle with the wilderness for the bare means of subsistence, and to battle for their lives with the savage beasts of the forest, and the still more savage aborigines of the soil, that they might be free to worship God according to their own peculiar views, free from the persecutions of those who differed from them in their religious opinions, and that they might leave to their children a heritage of freedom in the new land of their adoption.

Honest and zealous themselves, sincere, yet intolerant, even to the persecuting of their religious opponents, and stern and unyielding of purpose, they were the men of all others best fitted to become the pioneers of a new civilization in the land of the heathen and the savage. It needed men of such stern mould to subjugate the country, to clear the land of the dense, apparently interminable forest with which it was encumbered, and to bring under cultivation a soil which, at the best, yields but a scant return—compared with other parts of the United States—to the labors of the husbandman.

As the red-men whom they had supplanted had heard the voice of their "Manitou" in the sighing of the wind among the trees of the forest, and in the roar of the foaming cataract that shook the ground beneath their feet, and had trembled at his chiding when the thunder rolled amid the clouds, and its echoes reverberated among the mountain passes, and the fiery lightnings

flashed amid the awful darkness of the midnight storm: so did these pilgrims from a far distant land believe that the awful presence of God was *especially* manifest to *them*, as to the children of Israel, when, His glory hidden by a cloud, He thundered in His wrath as they lay encamped beneath the shadow of Mount Sinai, and as when, on the desert plains of Arabia, He led them onward in the likeness of a cloud by day and as a flame of fire in the night. They saw signs in the heavens, and listened to weird voices in the air. *They*, too, heard the voice of God in the whispers of the wind, and trembled beneath His anger when the tempest darkly lowered and the thunder rolled high above their heads, and the vivid lightning flashed around them. They communed with Him in spirit in the gloomy solitudes of the forest, and rejoiced with nature when the summer sun lighted up the earth with gladness and clothed it with living beauty.

Yet, though they believed themselves to be a chosen band of God's people, they held that they were chosen to fulfil their appointed duties amidst doubt and darkness and peril; and they trembled amidst their rejoicings lest they should stumble and fall, and looked askance upon all worldly amusements, and visited with a stern judgment all human frailties; for they thoroughly believed in the presence of the spirit of evil in their midst, and that he was permitted to strew their path with pitfalls to snare them to the destruction of body and soul. This living creed of the early settlers of New England (whose persecutions had failed to teach them mercy and forbearance) necessarily stamped them with a peculiar individuality which time and change, although they have softened and modified its severity of outline, have failed altogether to eradicate, and which is still perceptible among their descendants, especially in the more remote and secluded country districts. These early Puritan settlers, who performed their duties patiently, earnestly, and

faithfully, were the progenitors of a race of men whose industry, shrewdness, and energy of character have had a marked influence in moulding the destinies of their country.

Tradition still points out the spot, near the village of Acton, where formerly stood the "Meeting-house" in the forest, in which the forefathers of the present generation were wont to assemble for public worship on the Sabbath, the men and grown lads carrying with them their muskets and broadswords, while, turn by turn, one of their number kept watch and ward without the lowly edifice, lest any sudden attack should be made upon them by their wily foes, who frequently chose the hour of Divine worship, when they thought the settlers would be off their guard, for their ferocious assaults. The sites of the block-houses and stockades are still to be traced, in which many a long-protracted siege was sustained, with more or less loss on the part alike of the assailants and the besieged. And around the blazing wood-fires on the ample cottage hearths tales are still told on winter nights, by the aged inhabitants of the village, which make the eyes of the listeners dilate, and cause their hair to stand on end with horror: tales of flaming cottages, and fields laid waste, and well-stored crops consumed; of bloody massacres, and cruel, lingering deaths by frost and famine, and of bitter vengeance taken upon the fell despoilers. But these days of sore trial have passed away. The red Indian, once an object of such terror, has died off the face of the earth, or has retreated before the advancing steps of the white man, and departed westward toward the setting sun, there to seek fresh hunting-grounds whither his pale-faced foe cannot follow him. Vain hope! The day is not far distant when, throughout the length and breadth of the north-western continent of America, the ancient inhabitants of the soil shall find no rest for their footsteps, and shall vanish away as they

have already vanished from the soil of New England, where, only now and then, a wretched, half-starved Indian, or a miserable squaw, with her patient infant strapped to her back, and shrouded from the heat or cold by the coarse blue blanket which constitutes its mother's sole garment, is to be met with, wandering through the forest, or lingering about the village, seeking alms or food from the strangers who have supplanted them and possessed themselves of their birthright.

The name of Acton was given to the settlement, which has grown to become a populous and thriving village, in accordance with the custom which formerly prevailed in New England of bestowing upon a new settlement the name of the town or village in Great Britain from which the first settled minister of the settlement originally came. Hence the frequency of old English names among the towns and villages of the New England States. But the minister who gave the village of Acton its name has, many long years ago, passed to his eternal rest, and at the period to which this history relates the Rev. William Upton was the village pastor, and a pretty white-stone church occupied a spot not far distant from the site of the old log-built "meeting-house."

The Rev. William Upton was a Congregationalist minister, and a native of the New England States. But, shortly after he had received a "call" to preside over the church of Acton, he had paid a visit to some distant relatives in old England, and had brought home with him a fair young English bride. He had, at the period to which my story refers, been settled at Acton about a quarter of a century, and was about sixty years of age. His wife was about five years his junior, and his two daughters, Ellen and Mary—all that were left to him out of a family of nine children—were aged respectively nineteen and seventeen years.

One afternoon, towards the close of a fine day in the early autumn, a young man, apparently about twenty-five years of age, whose broad chest, and full face, and fair, fresh complexion, and brown hair, and blue eyes, gave him the appearance of an Englishman rather than of a native of New England, might have been seen approaching the village from the direction of the mountain path. He carried a fishing-rod in one hand, and in the other a light wicker-basket, which, however, seemed to be quite empty. He was walking slowly and lingering occasionally to gaze upon the beautiful scenery by which he was surrounded. On one of these occasions he stopped altogether, and, dropping his rod and basket, stood with folded arms watching the beautiful effects produced by the rays of the setting sun among the gorges and upon the peaks of the mountains. The foreground of Mount Washington—one of the loftiest peaks of the White Mountains—was bathed in a glow of brilliant crimson and purple light, while the background was steeped in shadow, and the lower peaks were already partially enveloped in the gathering mists of the evening, and the clefts and hollows of the mountain-side appeared, from the strong contrast, to be shadowed in the blackness of night.

The young man was so completely absorbed in the contemplation of the singularly startling effects of light and shadow thus produced that he did not hear the approaching footsteps of a stout, comely, white-haired, elderly gentleman, who, notwithstanding his venerable appearance, stepped up to him with the lightness and activity of youth, and, laying his hand upon the young man's shoulder, said in a hearty, cheerful tone of voice—

"So I have trapped you at last, truant. Upon my word, Master George, this is pretty work! What time do you expect to get home to tea at this rate of progress? I declare you have been standing stock-still for full ten

minutes, ever since I caught sight of you when I turned out of the lane. We've been waiting tea this half-hour, and your aunt began to get anxious, and to fear that you had met with some mishap. She insisted that I should go in search of you, though I assured her you were only watching the sunset, or something of that sort; and I was right, eh, boy?"

"I am sorry that I have kept you and my aunt and cousin waiting tea, sir," replied the young man. "But really I have no notion how the time was slipping away. Do, uncle William, look at the glorious effect of the lights and shadows on yonder peak! See, they have not altogether passed away yet."

"It is very fine, George," said the old gentleman. "So you do find *something* to admire in our New Hampshire scenery, eh?"

"I find *much* to admire, sir," replied the young man, earnestly.

"Ah," said the old gentleman, "wait, my dear boy, until the autumn is a little more advanced, and you will be charmed with the wondrous beauty of our forest scenery. The autumn is the most delightful season of the year with us. You have nothing in England, nothing in Europe to compare with it. The varied hues of the foliage, the continuous and delightful serenity of the weather, the clear, cloudless sky, with just the lightest and thinnest possible haze—not sufficient to obscure the atmosphere in the slightest degree, but just enough to temper the too ardent rays of the sun at noonday—and then the glorious autumnal nights, the air calm and still, the sky a perfect blaze of twinkling stars, the full moon appearing to be suspended between the earth and the heavens, no longer looking like a flat surface, but like a ball of pale, silvery light. Why," continued the old gentleman, warming with his subject, "I have been assured by European artists that they dare not attempt to transfer

to their canvas a representation of the gorgeous colors of our autumnal foliage lest they should be charged with gross exaggeration."

While the old gentleman was speaking, he and his youthful companion passed from the open fields into the narrow lane which led to Acton Parsonage. Here they were met by a young lady of seventeen years of age, who came tripping lightly towards them, her brown hair, which had escaped from its fastenings, floating over her neck and shoulders. Her features possessed the Grecian regularity and delicacy of contour, and her form the lightness and grace so frequently met with in young American females, but which are too often apt to degenerate into sharpness and angularity of outline in later life, to be succeeded, however, by a comfortable matronly fullness when middle age is turned.

As this young lady drew near she cried—

"Why, dear papa, I've been sent to look after *you*. The tea is cold, and the cakes are burnt, and, while mamma and I were looking out of the window after you, Jessie got upon the table and lapped up the cream and broke the butter-dish; and cook says the fire's out in the kitchen, and we can't have any more hot water; and mamma's in *such* a rage that I thought it best to get out of the way. But you've found the truant, I see, at last."

She peeped into the basket the young man was carrying.

"Well, now, I declare," she laughingly continued, "cousin George hasn't caught a single fish, after being out with his rod for hours! A pretty angler you are, sir!" (to her cousin.) "Suppose now, sir, that we were depending upon your success for our supper to-night?"

"You'd be compelled to fast and go hungry," replied the young man; "though from *your* account, cousin Mary, I should imagine you *were* dependent upon some miraculous supply of provision."

"Oh, I dare say mamma will fix up something. She's too indulgent. I wouldn't. I wouldn't encourage such idleness."

"Hush, cousin," said the young man, "you must charge my idleness to the beautiful scenery I have been visiting to-day. I was better employed than if I had been intent upon hooking the mountain trout."

"Ha! so you confess that there *is* something to admire in America, sir?"

"Why, cousin Mary, your father has just asked me a similar question. Did I ever assert that there was *nothing* to admire in America?"

"Only by implication and comparison, sir. Comparisons are odious, you know; and you and mamma are always talking about England, and its green fields and country lanes, and its pigs, and cattle, and farmyards, and poultry, and what not, as if there was no other country worth living in. Why, I have been told that the sun only shines once a year in England, and then the people all take a holiday to look at it, and the housekeepers take the opportunity to air their linen! Really, George, Captain Jefferson told me so; and he's a great and *veracious* traveller, as you well know."

The young man shook his fishing-rod playfully at his cousin; and now the party came in sight of the parsonage, at the gate of which a stout, matronly lady was awaiting their arrival.

If this lady had been in a great rage, as her daughter had declared, she had wonderfully cooled down in a short space of time, for she received the trio with a pleasant smile, and asked her nephew if he was not well-nigh famished; and when she led the way into the snug parlor, they found the tea-table comfortably re-arranged—a fresh supply of smoking-hot tea-cakes had just been brought in, and the tea-kettle was singing cheerily on the parlor stove; some fresh cream had been provided, and

everything was in the neatest possible order. The countenance of Betsy, the cook, who had just set down the fresh supply of hot cakes, alone betrayed symptoms of displeasure; for Betsy looked sulky at being put to extra trouble—an imposition apt to be resented by the independent "hired help" of New England.

George glanced from the well-ordered tea-table to his cousin with a triumphant smile.

"Mamma, you are really *too* kind and forgiving," said the young lady. "You'll never bring cousin George to reason, and teach him the virtue of punctuality, unless you take harsh measures with him. He ought to be made to fast to-night. It's of no use *my* trying to train him to order if *you* upset all my teaching by indulging him in this way."

"I think I know somebody else who requires bringing to reason quite as much as cousin George," said the good-humored lady, laughing and patting her daughter's cheek; which playful correction the young lady returned with a kiss, and an arch smile at her cousin; and the family, all on excellent terms with each other, seated themselves at the table.

When the tea-things were removed, the minister retired to a private table, and set to work to revise his manuscript sermon for the following Sunday. Mrs. Upton and her nephew commenced, as usual, an animated conversation about old England; for the minister's wife, though she had been twenty-five years in America, and had never since her arrival revisited her native land, still retained for it a warm place in her heart, which was large enough and loving enough to retain a warm place for everybody she knew and everything with which she was brought into familiar contact; and her nephew, George Neville, the orphan child of her only brother, had only left England some two months before, to pay a long anticipated visit to the aunt he had never seen.

Cousin Mary sat at her needlework, demurely listening to the conversation, and, notwithstanding her pretended indifference, wishing with all her heart that she could pay a visit to her mother's native land, and see for herself the wonders and beauties of which she heard such enthusiastic eulogy. And by-and-by the minister laid his manuscript aside, and joined in the conversation; and then cousin Mary sat down to the cottage pianoforte, which the minister had bought at a bargain on the occasion of one of his rare visits to Boston, and which his daughter fingered deftly and prettily enough, closing her performance on the instrument with the "Star-spangled Banner," her father's favorite air, which she accompanied, with her voice, and with "God save the Queen," to please her mother and cousin; though she protested to the latter that she only played *that* tune because it was set to a favorite American hymn called "America." And then, when the pianoforte was closed, the two maids, and the man-servant who looked after the garden and the minister's horse, were summoned to the parlor, and the family Bible was brought forth, and a small Bible, with the psalms in metre attached, was handed to each person, and a psalm was sung, and a chapter from the Bible read, each person present reading a ~~verse~~ in turn, and the minister knelt in prayer; and when they rose from their knees all the household retired to rest. And so ended the day at the quiet, secluded country parsonage, as each day had ended since George Neville had been one of its inmates, and as the days had ended with its inmates, day after day, for many, many peaceful happy years.

CHAPTER XI.

AT HOME IN THE PARSONAGE, AND AMONG THE PASSES OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

THE parsonage was a large roomy cottage, built of wood, and painted white with a slated roof, and with bright green jalouses to the windows. This was the style of most of the better class of houses in the village; and, though the general effect was too glaring, and not so pleasing to the eye as is the aspect of the neatly-thatched cottages of an English country village, the place presented an appearance of thrift and prosperity that made full amends for the lack of the picturesque.

The parsonage, also, like most of the better class of houses, stood in its own garden; but, though the village of Acton was almost surrounded by woods and forests, the gardens were generally denuded of shade trees, and, to the eye of a stranger, presented in consequence a naked, cheerless aspect. This is a remarkable peculiarity in New England, and in a greater or lesser degree throughout the United States; and the only reason that can be assigned for it is that the Americans, and the Yankees* in particular, had, in earlier days, so much trouble to make clearings in the dense forests that originally covered the soil, that they learned to regard the too close proximity of trees as an evil to be avoided if possible; and the dislike to the presence of trees, or to any kind of shade, near their dwellings, thus engendered among the early settlers, has been transmitted to their posterity. The parsonage, however, boasted of a rustic porch, over which roses and woodbine and honeysuckles were trained, and of a glazed

* The author of this story wishes it to be understood that the term Yankee, whensoever used, is not applied in derision. The New Englanders themselves are proud of the appellation, and boast that they are the only true Yankees. The word, as many of our readers are aware, is supposed to be derived from the Indians, who, in their broken dialect, called the English "Yengese."

shed, which did duty as a conservatory; and these, together, served in some measure to redeem the otherwise unsightly angularity and barrenness of the dwelling itself.

One morning, a few days after the events narrated in the preceding chapter, George Neville, on entering the breakfast-parlor, remarked an unusual air of preoccupation in the faces of his uncle, aunt, and cousin. The morning meal, during which the family were wont to converse of the duties and occupations of the day, was hurriedly despatched, and after breakfast Mr. Upton, contrary to his usual custom, immediately retired to his study, and Mrs. Upton hastily quitted the room. Her daughter Mary was about to follow her, when she suddenly addressed her cousin, saying—

"Cousin George, do you intend to take a long walk to-day?"

"Why do you ask, Mary?" replied the young man. "I have hardly made up my mind in what manner to occupy myself."

"Because I think you'd *best* take a long walk somewhere. You'd better stay away till late in the afternoon. We shall not have any regular dinner; so you can tell Betsy to cut you some sandwiches, and put them in your pocket. Then you'll be out of the way, you know. We've got papa locked up in the study."

"Upon my word, cousin Mary," said George, laughingly, "this is cavalier-like treatment. You've locked my uncle in the study, and you order me out of the house. I shall stand upon my dignity. I won't stir a peg unless you give me good reason for your ungracious behavior."

"Why," said cousin Mary, "don't you know? Hasn't mamma told you?"

"Hasn't mamma told me what? I know nothing, only that every body seems out of sorts this morning, and the house seems as if it were turned upside down."

"You silly fellow! Well, then, there's a surprise donation party coming this afternoon, and we've caught them, and shall be beforehand with them."

"Worse and worse. What on earth *is* a surprise donation party? and how have you *caught* them? and what shall you be beforehand with?"

"Well, I'm sure!" exclaimed the young lady, "those are pretty questions to ask. It's easy to see that you are a benighted Englishman, cousin George. However, I'll explain. A surprise donation party is a—surprise donation—How stupid of you, George, to be so ignorant! I really cannot explain. You must ask mamma. And here she comes. Mamma" (to Mrs. Upton, who at this moment entered the room), "I've been explaining to George what is meant by a surprise donation party, and he *won't* understand; and he's so obstinate, he won't go out of the house. I wish *you'd* try to make him understand, mamma;" and, in answer to the call of one of the servants, cousin Mary quitted the room.

"Oh, George," said Mrs. Upton, "I was looking for you, my dear. Andy, who was at the post-office early this morning, brought word back that he had heard that preparations were making yesterday throughout the parish for a donation party, and that they intend to make it a *surprise*. That, of course, accounts for our not having heard a word about it. They'll be here this afternoon; but, instead of catching us unawares, as they anticipate, they'll find us prepared to receive them; though, of course, we shall not let them perceive that we anticipated the visit, if we can avoid it. Now, as the house will be, as I may say, turned inside-out, and will not be a very comfortable place for those who are not busied in the preparations, I think you'd better go and take one of your long walks, my dear. Take a good luncheon with you, and mind and be home by five o'clock; because I

want you to meet the party, and I shouldn't wonder if a good many young ladies come expressly to be personally introduced to you. I've got the minister locked up in the study with the cold beefsteak pie we had for dinner yesterday, and a bottle of cider, and I've got the key in my pocket. I'll lock *you* up with *him*, if you prefer it, dear, or I can put you in the lumber-room; but I suspect you'd sooner go for a walk."

"By all means, aunt," said the young man, laughing in spite of himself (for Mrs. Upton was quite serious) at the idea of being locked up with his uncle in the study. "I've no wish to be locked up in a close room this fine day; besides, in that case we should want some more cider, even if the pie would serve us both. But, dear aunt, what *is* it all about? I really don't understand a single word you have said."

"I thought Mary said she had explained to you, dear?"

"Cousin Mary explained!" exclaimed the young man. "She told me, as you have done, aunt, to get out of the way until the afternoon; and when I asked her reasons for making such a request, she said there was to be a surprise donation party, and that a surprise donation party meant—a surprise donation party. At least such, I presume, would have been her explanation had she finished the sentence, instead of which, however, she ran away when you entered the room."

Mrs. Upton smiled at her nephew's perplexity.

"I will sit down and rest ~~me~~ awhile, my dear," she said, "for Andy brought the news soon after daybreak, and I have been stirring about ever since, and I'll try to explain to you what a donation party means. Of course *you* don't know. How should you know, just coming from *home*?" (The kind-hearted lady, like many people in America who are not English by birth, always spoke

of the "old country" as "home."*) "You must know, George, that it is the custom in New England, and in some other parts of the United States, for the well-to-do members of the country churches to get up a party, once or twice a year, with the object of making up the deficiency in the ministers' salaries. The farmers and other folk, with their wives and daughters, pay a visit to the parsonage, and bring with them presents of every description—some one thing and some another, and generally they they make up a little purse besides. Then they have a feast out of a portion of the good things they have contributed, and spend the evening at the ministers' house. It's very troublesome when it's an *ordinary* donation party; but sometimes they make it a '*surprise*'—that is, they get up the party secretly among themselves, and the first the minister's family knows of it is when the house is suddenly invaded by a throng of people, who come on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, from all parts of the parish. They catch the family unawares and enjoy the confusion and astonishment, or rather *surprise*, that their appearance creates. Fortunately, to-day we shall be prepared for them; for it's very annoying to be caught *en déshabille*, though we musn't let them think we've been preparing for them, or they may feel affronted."

"I should say that it is you who have the greatest reason to feel affronted, aunt, at such a Vandal-like invasion into your domestic privacy," replied the young Englishman. "To my mind the custom seems a most humiliating one to the recipients of this eleemosynary bounty. It is simply a charitable subscription, on the part of the congregation, towards the support of the minister's fam-

* I have often heard elderly American gentlemen, whose parents were Americans, and who had never set foot beyond American soil, after having made up their minds to undertake a long-contemplated journey to the "old country" express themselves to the effect that "They were going to take a trip *home* at last."

ily. Why do not the church members pay their ministers a sufficient salary to enable the latter to dispense with this bounty?"

"They *will* not, George," replied Mrs. Upton, "In the large towns and cities the ministers of religion are generally well, and frequently munificently, remunerated, but in country places their salaries are usually small, and frequently very irregularly paid. Our farmers are well off and independent; but their wealth consists in land and stock, and in the produce of their fields. Ready money is scarce among them, or, at all events, they cling to it with miserly tenacity, and are unwilling to part with it unless in the purchase of additional land. The desire to possess large farms, even though the high price of labor prohibits them from working half their acres, is a mania among our New England farmers. I have known them to pay, year after year, heavy taxes for land they are unable to render productive. These taxes keep many of them poor; and the craving to increase the size of their farms causes all of them to hoard every dollar they can get hold of. I don't know what some poor ministers would do but for the donation parties; and yet they are a source of great annoyance. The farmers generally bring a supply of their most abundant crops; consequently each family is liable to contribute the same description of produce; and I have known ministers' families at one time to be overwhelmed with potatoes, at another time with apples or with turnips, and to be so abundantly supplied with certain provisions, of which they had already a sufficient supply on hand, that they have not known what to do with them. The money value of the gifts would be vastly more acceptable.

"But, aunt," said the young man, "why do not the ministers unite and insist upon a fair remuneration for their services?"

"My dear boy," replied Mrs. Upton, "such an attempt

would result in utter failure. As I have observed, it is frequently difficult for the ministers to collect their salaries. Your uncle's church members are frequently in arrears; and, but that we possess a little independent income of our own, we should sometimes be hard put to it to make both ends meet at the end of the year. I will give you an instance that will explain to you the difficulties of which I speak. You recollect meeting Mr. Hurlbert—the minister of Stanton—soon after you came to us?"

George nodded in assent.

"Well," continued Mrs. Upton, "Mr. Hurlbert is an excellent preacher, who, I dare say, could obtain a 'call' to some city church if he wished it, and therefore—though he has got attached to his people, and don't care to leave them—he is able to tell them some wholesome truths when he chooses. They dare not take affront, because they are afraid in such cases he would leave them, and they don't want to lose him."

"Well, Mr. Hurlbert was 'called' to Stanton about fifteen years ago. He was a young minister; indeed it was his first 'call,' and he went on trial at a salary of one hundred dollars a year, and to board round at the farmers' houses. At the end of a year his salary was increased to two hundred dollars, and soon afterwards he got married. Of course then he wished to live in his own house, and his salary was raised on that account to three hundred dollars, and he had a house rent free. In the course of three years more his family was increased by the birth of two children. His salary was altogether insufficient for his support, and he made application for an increase, and with some difficulty obtained the promise of an additional hundred dollars. His fame as a preacher got abroad. His church was always well filled, and people came from a distance to hear him. The Stanton folk were proud of their minister, and one day, when he had been about

eight years in the parish, the 'select men' called a meeting, and proposed voluntarily to raise his salary to five hundred dollars a year, and it was resolved that the welcome intelligence should be publicly announced to the minister at the close of the next Thursday evening lecture which was usually given in the school-house. The Thursday evening came round. The lecture was brought to a close, and, as soon as Mr. Hurlbert had resumed his seat, the leading elder rose, and, with a pompous flourish, announced to the minister the generous determination at which the 'select men' had arrived; and no sooner had the elder sat down than Mr. Hurlbert rose to reply, and to the astonishment of every one present, instead of expressing his sense of their generosity, he said—

"Dear sisters and brothers, I am grateful for the good-will which has doubtless induced you to make me this generous offer of an increase of salary. I am proud of the proof it affords of your appreciation of my services; but I respectfully beg to decline its acceptance; and at the same time permit me to express a hope that, so long as I remain with you, you will never again think of increasing my salary."

"The congregation stared at each other in amazement. They were well aware that their minister was solely dependent upon his salary, and they had a shrewd suspicion that he was sometimes sorely troubled to avoid getting into debt. At length the presiding elder again rose, and begged the minister to explain why he refused the offer.

"My friends," said Mr. Hurlbert, "if you insist upon an explanation, I will give it. I came among you, eight years ago, a *very* young man, at a mere nominal salary of one hundred dollars a year. It was punctually paid. At the end of a year my salary was, voluntarily on your part, raised to two hundred dollars. It was still paid with tolerable punctuality. I married my present wife,

and I asked for an increase of salary. Three hundred dollars a year were offered, and accepted. Then my troubles began, for you were frequently in arrears with your payments; nevertheless, everything was generally fairly settled up at the end of the year. My family increased; I found three hundred dollars a year insufficient for my support. I asked and was *promised* an increase to the amount of four hundred dollars a year. Since that period I have had the utmost difficulty to get my quarterly payments; you have frequently been half-a-year in arrears, and I have found myself more sorely pressed for money than ever I was before my salary was raised. I have grown attached to the parish, and to my people. I do not wish to leave you, if I can help it. But I am very much afraid, if I permit you to increase my salary to five hundred dollars, that I shall never be able to get any money at all out of you."

"Some were offended at the minister's free speech. Some felt shame at their own meanness, and others laughed at the joke; however before another twelve months had elapsed, Mr. Hurlbert's salary was voluntarily raised to eight hundred dollars, and it has ever since been punctually paid in regular quarterly instalments." *

"Well, aunt said George, "that anecdote tends to give strength to my proposition. If all country ministers were to speak out boldly as Mr. Hurlbert did the result might be similar in all cases."

"Not so, my dear," replied Mrs. Upton. "Mr. Hurlbert is one in a thousand. The church members would not have brooked such a severe reproof from an ordinary preacher; but they were well aware that Mr. Hurlbert could, had he so chosen, have obtained a call to Boston, and a salary of one, or perhaps two thousand dollars a year, whensoever he chose to accept it. But I am sitting

* A literal fact, known to the writer, though the name of the minister and the locality of the church are changed.

chatting here when there a hundred matters to be looked after. Go, my dear, and take a long walk—only be sure to be home by five o'clock, and you will see what to you will be a novel and an amusing sight."

Mrs. Upton left the room to look after her multifarious duties, and George took his hat, and, with his gun under his arm, sallied forth to take a long ramble among the mountain passes. Sometimes clambering up the mountain sides, at other times forcing his way through dense brushwood and thicket, and hoping that he might be fortunate enough to fall in with a bear, or a wild-cat, or even a deer, that he might have something to boast about on his return home, and yet keeping a cautious look-out that one or other of the first-mentioned animals might not fall in with him when he was unprepared to meet them. George penetrated more deeply into the mountain solitudes than he had ever done before. He might however, have spared himself his hopes and fears; for, though bears and wild-cats, or "painters" (panthers), as they are termed by the country-people, are still to be found in the forests and among the fastnesses of the White Mountains of New Hampshire, they are rarely to be met with now-a-days even by the professional hunter, unless early in the spring of the year, when the bears sometimes venture out of their solitudes in search of the wild strawberries which grow in abundance in the Northern States of America, and of which these animals are immoderately fond.

At length he ascended to a plateau from which he hoped to obtain an extended view of the surrounding scenery; and his exertions were not unrewarded. The mountains shut out the view on one side, but on the other side he looked down into a valley several miles in length, though scarcely half a mile in breadth. The elevation of the plateau on which he stood was nearly one thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the

valley lay extended beneath him as if its lines were traced out upon a map. He gazed down upon forests of larch and pine and cedar, clothed in various sombre hues of evergreen—the topmost branches of the tallest trees scarcely reaching to half his elevation—and upon numerous cascades which had their source from springs on the mountain side, and which swirled and foamed, and tossed and tumbled from rugged point to point, until their waters mingled in the rocky, shallow bed of the narrow, tortuous stream that wound its erratic course through the centre of the glen, the waters still foaming, as if with rage against the obstacles they had to encounter, until they forced a passage through the intricate channel. Not a sound was audible in the air above and around him; and the low murmurs of the falling water beneath him, mingling with the rustling of the leaves of the forest trees, and the occasional hoarse cry of a raven, as it winged its dusky flight from ledge to ledge, or the fall of a stone dislodged from its bed in the mountain side, which bounded and rebounded from rock to rock, awakening the slumbering echo of the glen, until it fell with a plash into the foaming torrent—which were the only sounds that broke the solemn silence of the spot—seemed to him to increase the almost oppressive sense of solitude that he experienced. He seated himself on the edge of the steep declivity near which he had been standing, and gave himself up to the thoughts suggested by the—to him—novel and impressive scenery. On the opposite rising ground the deciduous trees and shrubs had already changed the bright green foliage of summer for their many-hued autumnal garb, and the brilliant colors, ranging from golden-yellow to orange, or from pink to bright scarlet or rich crimson, or still deeper red, formed a lively contrast with the sombre evergreen of the forest trees in the glen.

"I could almost fancy" thought the young English-

man, "that this spot had rested in silent solitude since the Indian pitched his wigwam on the plateau on which I sit, and walked forth in the bright moonlight, after his return from the chase, to gaze into the dark valley beneath, and commune with the *manitou*, who had there taken up his earthly abode.

"I can fancy him, when the storm raged furiously and the thunder reverberated among the mountains, and the forked lightnings illumined the glen, listening, awe-struck, to the voice of the great Spirit, expressed in the awful sounds, or fancying that the wail of the wind among the forest trees, and the rush of the swollen mountain torrents, and the wild echoes that resounded from the valley, were the voices of his ancestors whose shades haunted the secluded solitudes, holding solemn conclave in their mysterious depths.

"But centuries have passed away since the red-man roamed over the mountains, and through the forests, lord of all he surveyed. The pale-faces have claimed the land as their own; and, driven from the hunting-grounds of his forefathers, the poor Indian had passed away for ever, or only lingers—a wretched outcast on the soil!"

The young man had spoken his thoughts aloud in his enthusiasm, when he was startled by the sound of a voice which in a moment scattered his romance to the winds.

"What's that I heern yer sayin' 'beout Injins, friend? Seen any o' the varmints 'reound?"

The head and shoulders of a lanky, sallow-faced individual suddenly appeared above the edge of the plateau, and George, who was at first somewhat disconcerted by the stranger's sudden appearance, and not well pleased to have his fanciful reverie thus interrupted, soon recollected that he had frequently seen the intruder upon his privacy in church, and in the streets of the village. The man was almost out of breath with scaling the nearly

perpendicular precipice, but, as soon as he got one arm over the ledge, so as to rest himself, he went on—

"Yere, stranger, ketch a hold o' this pesky rod, and these yere trout," handing the young Englishman half-a-dozen mountain trout, strung together by the gills with a thin withe, and a fishing-rod formed from a peeled willow-wand. "It's an awful pull up this steep, 'specially with a load tew carry."

Freed from his incumbrances, the intruder now raised himself up with both hands, and sprung on to the ledge and, seating himself by the side of the young Englishman, he wiped the perspiration from his brow with a pocket handkerchief which he took from the crown of his broad-rimmed straw hat, and then, replacing the hat and handkerchief upon his head, he said—

"You're the minister's nevey, I guess? My name's Seth Coulter. I live at the farm-'us on the Plainfield road, 'beout half a mile eout beyond the village, when I'm tew hum. Seen me afore, I reckon? But what's that I heern yer say 'beout Injins? Ain't *reely* seen none o' the pesky varmints reound abeout, hev yer?"

"No," replied George, "I wish I had. I was foolishly talking to myself, I believe, and wishing I *could* see the Indians as they existed two centuries ago, when the red-man was lord of the soil."

"Yer ain't got no *call* tew wish nothin' o' the sort, I reckon, friend," answered Seth. "Mought lose some o' yer har ef yer seen the critturs as they wor *then*. We don't want none o' the miser'ble, thievin' wretches yere—that's a fac'. As tew thar bein' lords o' the sile, I reckon heow the sile b'longs to *us*; and we ain't got no lords in this yere country—and don't want any. But, I tell yer, yer skeered me pooty consider'ble when I heern yer speak o' Injins. I've got a druv o' hogs eout in the woods, back o' the village, and if any o' them pesky In-

jins was p'iterin' reound, I reckon heow I'd hev a short account o' the critturs."

"Are they such determined thieves, the Indians?" asked George.

"Detarmined thieves!" exclaimed Seth. "I b'lieve yer. Why, 'twa'nt on'y last fall, 'beout this time, they stul a beef-crittur o' Deacon Willis's. The deacon found the skeleton-kercass o' the crittur arterwards deown in the gully t'other side o' the red barn. I reckon heow deacon lost twenty dollars by that ar job. But, come, mister, be yer gooin' on tew hum? It's gittin' late, I guess, by the look o' the sun. Ef yer a-goo'in' on tew the parsonage, I don't keer if I walk 'long with yer for company."

George looked at his watch, and found that he would hardly reach the parsonage by five o'clock, and, fearing that he would again lay himself open to a charge of want of punctuality, he rose to his feet, took up his gun, and he and Seth Coulter set out homeward together.

CHAPTER XII.

SETH COULTER DELIVERS HIS OPINION OF THE "INJINS" AND OF THINGS IN GENERAL.

"You stigmatize the Indians as thieves, Mr. Coulter," said George, as he and his Yankee companion descended from the plateau together. "What are the poor creatures to do? How are they to live? Dispossessed of the land which is their birthright, driven from the hunting grounds of their ancestors, hunted down like wild beasts wherever they attempt to make a settlement, what wonder if they believe themselves entitled to claim a portion of the produce of the soil that was once their

own—or that they should resort to a system of treachery to cope with the treachery and oppression of which they have been the victims, or that, like the oppressed of every race, they should become a crafty and dissimulating, as well as a despised people?"

"You deon't kneow nothin' beout the Injins, friend," replied Seth. "Ef ye'd bin eout west, es I hev, and ef yer know'd as much 'beout the Injins es I dew, you wouldn't speak up fur 'em. Es tew the land, it's eourn by right o' possession, and I guess heow it deon't b'long to nobody else—that's a fac'. 'Tain't reasonable as all this yer great country was made fur a lot o' varmint Injins to live in. They wor on'y put in till we wor ready tew -claim it, and thar ain't one o' 'em neow as has got a right tew a single rood on't, no more'n no other stranger hes. I've hearn the subjec' talked over many a time by them as orter know, and that's the 'pinion as wor al-lus arruv tew. They're a dirty, thievin', cowardly set o' pesky varmints, that's what the Injins air. They ain't reg'lar hooman critturs, no more'n niggers be; and since ye can't make the use on 'em ye kin of a nigger, it'll be a mighty good reddence when the last o' them is toted off—squaws, papooses, and all."

George perceived that it was useless to argue in favor of the Indians with his Yankee friend, and he sought to change the topic of conversation by alluding to the string of fish that Seth was carrying.

"Yes, they *air* a pooty lot," answered the Yankee, in reply to the young man's remarks. "I ketched the hull lot in tew hours, jest at the head of the torrent deown to the glen. But *you* don't 'pear tew hev had much sport," glancing at his companion's gun.

"I've been too much occupied in admiring the romantic scenery among the mountains to think of much else," replied George.

"Neow, dew tell! I wanter know!" exclaimed Seth.

"Neow, tew my thinkin', a good piece o' level sile is better'n all the pesky mountings put tewgether. But I reckon ye never seen a mounting tew hum. What *do* ye think of eour country, neow, mister?"

"I've seen but little of America yet," replied George. "I came direct to Acton on landing at Boston; but I like the country very well, so far. I admire the immense forest scenery very much, and I like the contrasts between English and American scenery, generally."

"Ay," answered Seth, "and yer breathe the a'r o' liberty, and ye tread on the sile o' freedom. Ye ain't got tew tetch yer hat tew lords and perleesemen, and sich-like, I reckon?"

George could not repress a smile at the ignorance that he had already found to exist among the less educated classes in America respecting the political institutions and the social habits of the "Britishers"—an ignorance that is fostered, as has been observed by Washington Irving and by Mr. Goodrich, and other honest American writers, by the school-books that are put into the hands of children in the State schools, and that is encouraged by low-class politicians in their "stump speeches," and by ribald writers in certain of the most popular newspapers.

It was on the eve of a presidential election, respecting which I shall have more to say in subsequent chapters; party politics ran high, even in the most remote districts of the country: for every American is more or less a politician; and George Neville was much amused by the singular and absurd notions that Mr. Seth Coulter had formed of the state of affairs in Europe, and particularly of the condition of Great Britian, and with his ideas of the immense advantages possessed by the Americans over any other people on earth.

The young Englishman knew that it would be vain to attempt to refute his companion's opinions, though Seth's intense admiration of American liberty, and his boasts of

the freedom enjoyed by all who trod American "sile," were somewhat at variance with his previous remarks respecting the helot "niggers" and the outlawed "Injins."

George, however, listened in silence, and Seth, construing his companion's silence into assent, was encouraged thereby to give free expression to his absurd opinions and impossible theories.

At length, when, wearying of the subject of his discourse, or of his companion's silence, Seth spoke of matters with which he was really well acquainted, George was much pleased with the shrewdness of his observations; for Seth in his younger days had roamed amid the forests and over the prairies of the Far West, and was perfectly familiar with woodcraft, and with the various mysteries of the chase.

"You hain't ben to New York yet, I reckon?" said he, when at length the latter topic was also exhausted.

"Not yet," replied George.

"Dew tell! But you *will* go, in coorse?" said Seth. "Thar's a city, neow. I reckon heow thar ain't nary sich another city as New York—not tew be its ekal—not in the hull o' Europe. I hain't ben *thar* myself. I'm *ben* tew Bosting. Thar's a *city* for ye. But I reckon heow Bosting don't come up to New York no heow you kin fix it."

"I shall probably visit New York in a short time," said George.

"Waal, I should admire tew go tew York wi' yer, mister. To show ye reound like. I should admire, *some*, tew go to Europe—not to *stay*, mind ye, but jist tew see heow them aristocrats they tell on in the noospapers dew fix the people. But I guess the Queen wouldn't 'low me tew land in England, not ef she and her ministers know'd, 'ithout I wor tew giv a sort o' parole like not tew be sayin' nothin' 'beout liberty, to be stirrin' up the

people—eh, mister? I mought git put inter the dungeons in the Tower o' London?"

George, however, assured his companion that he believed he might venture to visit England in perfect safety.

"Waal, I tarn off here, mister," said Seth, as they entered the lane that led to the parsonage. "Seems to me heow thar's company up tew the house. Ah, I recollect neow. I heern suthin' 'bout a donation party. But I disremembered heow 'twould come off tew day. Ef 'twarn't too late I'd tote up these yere fish. But I must be gittin' on tew hum, or the old 'oman 'll be gittin' skeary. I'll gin *you* the fish to tote up, ef ye like, friend?"

George politely declined to accept the gift.

"Waal, jist as ye like," replied Seth. "'Tain't no odds tew me. I reckon thar'll be fixins enow 'ithout 'em, and mebbe, if I go hum 'ithout nothin' tew show, arter bein' out all day, the old 'oman 'll be fur combin' eout my har agin the grain. Well, good day, mister, and thankee fur yer company."

"Good day," said George; and the Yankee turned into the high-road, and passed on, with his long, slouching steps, in the way of his own home.

The lane, as well as the high-road in the vicinity of the parsonage, was thronged with saddle-horses and with vehicles of every description. It was not without some difficulty that George threaded his way through the narrow thoroughfare. As he drew near the dwelling the hum of many voices, and the sound of occasional bursts of hearty laughter, saluted his ears. He could see through the open door and windows that the hall, and apparently all the rooms in the house, were crowded to their utmost capacity; as well they might be, if the occupants of the numerous carts and carriages, and the riders of the many

saddle-horses, had united themselves with the number of visitors who had walked from the village near by.

"I don't wonder at my aunt feeling annoyed at the idea of such a visitation of Goths and Vandals," thought the young Englishman, who was not yet accustomed to the great social freedom that prevails in America, especially in these more remote country districts, where inequality in social position is hardly yet recognised.

His cousin Mary, who had been for some time awaiting his return, saw him enter the garden gate and came forth to meet him, arrayed in her best attire, and looking very different from the harassed and annoyed and somewhat pettish young lady she had appeared to be in the morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DONATION PARTY AT ACTON PARSONAGE.

"Come in, George!" said Miss Mary, taking her cousin by the hand, and leading him towards the kitchen-door. "The hall is so crowded," she added, "that you'd hardly be able to push your way through the front door. I'm so glad that you have come that I won't scold, though you are, as usual, nearly half an hour behind your time. There have been so many inquiries about you that mamma and I have had enough to do to frame excuses for your non-appearance to the many young ladies who live at a distance, and have, as yet, only had the honor to meet you in church on Sundays. They are half disposed to feel affronted at your uncavalier-like conduct in absenting yourself; for I believe we owe this unusually large gathering chiefly to your visit to the parsonage. Certainly we

never had so many *young* women assemble before that I can recollect."

Thus cousin Mary ran on, without affording George an opportunity to put in a word.

"I must go up-stairs," he said, at length, "and wash my hands, and make a few alterations in my dress. A shooting-jacket and gaiters are not exactly the habiliments in which to be presented to ladies at a party."

"Nonsense!" said Mary; "nothing of the kind is necessary. Those are some of your finnikin English notions; well enough in New York, or Boston, I dare say, but out of place among us plain country-folk. Besides," she went on to say, laughingly, "you can't do anything of the sort. There's a party of young ladies eating dough-nuts and drinking currant wine up in your bedroom, and your ewer is full of greengages, and your basin is heaped with hickory-nuts, and you can't get to the sink in the kitchen because the men have gone into the kitchen and washhouse to smoke, and the sink is full of winter turnips, and so is the boiler, and all the pails in the house are occupied; so *en avance, monsieur mon cousin*, and let me lead you in and introduce you at once."

George was obliged to comply with as good a grace as possible. On entering the rear of the passage, however, he very nearly fell headlong over a sack of potatoes, and endeavoring to catch himself from falling, he clutched at a table which he knew to stand on the opposite side of the dark passage, and struck his hand through the crust of a huge apple-pie.

"Oh, *you* clumsy!" exclaimed cousin Mary. "Is that the manner in which the people are accustomed to enter a house in England? Oh, you uncivilized being!"

"It's not generally the custom in England to lumber up the entries to a house with sacks of vegetables," replied George, a trifle vexed, for his shirt-cuff, as well as the cuff

of his coat, was soaked with the sticky juice of the pie. "I am sorry, though," he added, "that I've spoilt aunt Ellen's pie."

"Oh, the pie's of no consequence," said cousin Mary. "There are seventeen of them in the house that I know of—perhaps more. It's *your* clumsiness that I'm thinking of; and see what a 'muss' you've made of yourself! Here, take my handkerchief and rub it off the best way you can, and throw the handkerchief under the table."

"There now—that must do. Now come along," she went on, when George had cleansed his wrist and hand as well as he was able. "Fortunately it's your left hand;" and, again taking her cousin by the hand, the young lady led him through the dark passage, merrily warning him against the numerous obstructions, until they reached the parlor without further accident.

The room was thronged with visitors, who were for the most part gathered round a long table, brought into the parlor for the occasion, which was loaded with eatables and drinkables of every conceivable variety, placed in juxtaposition without any regard to congruity. Those of the visitors who were fortunate enough to find places at the tables were helping those who stood behind them to all sorts of viands gathered up hap-hazard, while some of those who were crowded out were stretching over the shoulders of their more fortunate friends, and snatching at anything that first came to hand. Some of the elder ladies were assisting Mrs. Upton to pack away stores of various kinds in the cupboards, while Mr. Upton stood at a sideboard loaded with demijohns of cider, bottles of home-made wine, glasses, etc., etc., assisting his thirsty guests to such liquids as they most favored. The unceasing din of so many voices rendered it impossible to discover the general tenor of the conversation, though the frequent merry bursts of laughter from the younger

visitors, and the cheery recognitions of the elders, proved that all were on good terms with each other and that all were enjoying themselves thoroughly.

"Now, George," said cousin Mary, "make yourself as agreeable as possible. Stay: I'll introduce you to the company."

"Ladies and gentlemen, my cousin, Mr. George Neville, from England! There, that will do. Now I shall leave *you* to amuse the young ladies, and go and help mamma."

Cousin Mary led George to a group of females of various ages, and the minister's "nevey" became at once the object of general attention. He was obliged to shake hands all around, and then to shake hands again and again, as fresh relays of visitors came pouring into the parlor from the other apartments, until not a spare inch of standing-room was available, and to reply over and over again to innumerable questions as to how he liked the country, what he thought of the American people generally and of the people of New Hampshire in particular, how long a time had elapsed since he had left England, what was his object in coming to America, where he expected to go next, what he expected to do, whether he had attended donation parties "tew hum," whether he intended to return to the "old country," and, if he intended to return, when, and what were his notions of the country, and of the American people. Besides all these questions, he had to reply to various invitations to visit sundry of his uncle's guests at their own homes. Deacon Willis, who was a leading elder, a justice of the peace, a "select man" of the parish, and a Captain of the State militia—in fact, one of the great "guns" of the district—gave the young man a pressing invitation to attend his "apple-paring,"* which was to come off during the en-

* An "apple-paring" is a gathering of friends and neighbors to assist in paring, cutting up, and stringing winter apples for pies, "sarce," etc., etc., and is always a festive meeting.

suing week; and Miss* Deborah Parton, a widow-lady in independent circumstances, something of a blue-stock-ing, partial to "isms," and suspected of strong-mindedness, gave him a general invitation to her Wednesday afternoon "quilting-bees;"† while the younger women took stock of his personal appearance, and giggled and tittered as if he were some novel specimen of the *genus homo*, the like of which they had never seen before, though many of them shrunk away when he addressed them, and blushed, and hung their heads, as though they were the most timid creatures in the world.

However, the young Englishman passed through the ordeal with tolerable success, and generally succeeded in making a good impression upon the visitors.

The eating and drinking and gossiping continued until darkness began to creep over the scene; then a few set speeches were made. Deacon Willis presented a purse of thirty-five dollars, with some flowery remarks upon the esteem in which the minister and his family were held by the members of the church; to which the minister briefly responded, and at the same time expressed the pleasure he and his family had experienced in thus meeting their friends, and their gratitude for the numerous donations. A chapter was read from the Bible, a hymn was sung by the united voices of the party, and the minister knelt in prayer. Then bonnets and hats and overcoats and shawls were sought for, the ladies were assisted to the vehicles or mounted on their pillions, amidst much joking, and tittering, and occasional feminine exclamations of amusement or pretended affright;

* The term "Miss" is applied in the country parts of New England to single and married women and widows alike, in every condition of life.

† A "quilting-bee" is an assemblage of females at a neighbor's house for the purpose of quilting, or joining in some other needlework, or feminine mystery, and improving the opportunity by gossiping over the news of the village. Gentlemen sometimes attend to read to the ladies, join in the gossip, and escort them home in the evening.

the gentlemen got into the carriages or mounted their horses; mutual farewells were spoken; and, in the serene, starlit beauty of an American autumn night, the party all set forth together for their several homes, their loud conversation and merry laughter being borne on the light evening breeze to the ears of the minister's family long after they had reached the end of the lane, and had passed out of sight from the parsonage. The surprise donation party was over. And what if the object of these donation parties, though well intended, be reprehensible? Happy are the people who can find sufficient amusement in, and can look forward with pleasant anticipation to, the return of such Arcadian festivals, and who seek not after, because they know nothing of, more exciting and less innocent pleasures.

The donation party was over. Not so the troubles of the inmates of the parsonage-house—the victims of this well-intended inroad upon domestic privacy. The household had been thrown into such a state of confusion, and was so lumbered up with bulky provisions of every description, that the night was far advanced before even a semblance of the customary order and neatness was restored. As to packing and stowing away, that was of necessity left to the next day. Mrs. Upton declared that the family would have to live upon apple-pasties for a month to come. As to apples, potatoes, and beans and cabbages—with all of which the household had been sufficiently supplied previous to the party—it was impossible to conjecture how they should be consumed before they were spoiled. The crops had been abundant. Everybody in the village was well supplied. The green vegetables would not pay the cost of carriage to the Boston market, and yet it was a shame to give them to the pigs and cattle. The jellies and preserves were well enough, also the home-made wines. “A minister's wife,” said Mrs. Upton, “can always find use among the aged,

and sick, and feeble, for any quantity of such stores.” But, after all, the donation in money was the thing that was really acceptable, and one-fourth of the market value of the rest of the gifts would have been more desirable.

“Oh, dear me!” exclaimed Mrs. Upton, as she looked with dismay upon the piles of cabbages, and carrots, and other perishable articles that lay heaped up in every corner. “What *shall* we do with them.”

The poor lady was perfectly bewildered with the plethora of good things with which her house was stored, and at length she was obliged to give up all thought about their future disposal for the night, and to seek her well-earned rest.

Thus ended the day of the donation party at Acton Parsonage.

And George Neville, as he laid his head upon his pillow that night, and thought over the events of the day, and his conversation in the morning with his aunt, agreed fully with her that a fourth of the monetary value of the donations would have been more desirable, and that, at best, a donation party, though sanctioned by custom, was neither more nor less than a plan for the bestowal of charity, in a manner that must be humiliating to its recipients; and that it would be far more satisfactory to all concerned if, on the principle that “the laborer is worthy of his hire,” the ministers' salaries were raised to such a degree as to render such eleemosynary donations unnecessary.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN UNEXPECTED LETTER REACHES GEORGE NEVILLE AT THE PARSONAGE.

It was at a later hour than usual that the family at Acton Parsonage rose from their beds on the morning after the donation party. The minister and his wife and daughter had assembled in the breakfast-parlor before George Neville made his appearance; and Andy, the minister's serving-man—an importation from the Emerald Isle—who had just returned from the post-office with the letters and newspapers, was directed to go to Mr. George's room and tell him that breakfast was waiting.

"And here, Andy," said Mr. Upton, selecting a letter from three or four others that lay on the table, "give Mr. George this letter. It's from New York," he added, speaking to no one in particular; "at least, it bears the New York post-mark. I didn't know that George was acquainted with any one in New York. It must be a private letter, favored by some passenger from England, who has detained it since the English mail arrived four days ago, and who has at length slipped it into the post-office in New-York. Very silly practice, for the sake of saving twenty-five cents postage, to run the risk of having the letter miscarry or lost altogether, to say nothing of the penalty incurred, and the fraud perpetrated against the post-office. Still people will be penny wise and pound foolish to the end of time."

While the minister was delivering himself of this monologue Andy O'Hara had gone to George's room, and tapped at the door.

"Who's there?" cried George, in a sleepy voice.

"Sure it's meeself, Misther George; Andy O'Hara sure," answered the serving-man. "The Masther bid me tell yez that breakfast bes waitin', and it's eight o'clock."

"Well, I'm getting up," said George, somewhat sulkily, as people are apt to speak when suddenly aroused from a pleasant slumber, and springing out of bed as he spoke. "You needn't have thundered at the door in that fashion. Say that I'm dressing, and will be down-stairs directly."

"Sure I only tapt oncest, and that so gintle it wouldn't have killed a fly," said Andy. "But ye must come to the doore av ye plaize, surr: I've got a letther for yez."

"A letter for me! From whom? I received letters from England by the last mail, only four days since. Another European mail cannot have arrived."

"Troth, it's meeself wouldn't know where it came from, surr, betoken, I haven't opened the letther; and av I done so, it's not the slivers ov handwrite I'd be afther r'adin'. But I heard the minister say that it was from New York, surr."

"From New York! A letter for me from New York!" cried George, throwing his dressing-gown over his shoulders, and opening the door. "It must be a mistake."

He received the letter from Andy, bade him assure his aunt that he would be down in a very few minutes, and returned to his dressing-table.

"It bears the New York post-mark, at all events," he soliloquized. "I don't recognise the handwriting, and I don't know a soul in New York, that I'm aware of. It can't be from my cousin Ellen. I've never seen *her*, and why should she write to *me*? Besides, it's unmistakably a man's hand; and I'm sure the patroon, as they call him, wouldn't write to me, a total stranger. Well, at all events, I've no duns to dread on this side the Atlantic," he said, with a smile; "so here goes to solve the mystery."

He tore open the envelope, opened the letter, glanced

at the signature and shook his head, and then proceeded to read the contents of the epistle.

The letter was very brief—only a few lines. Nevertheless, it seemed to require a great deal of study; for it was not until he had read it three times over, with many manifestations of astonishment, that the young man laid it aside, and proceeded hurriedly to finish his toilet.

"It's strange," he muttered to himself the while: "I had no idea of such a thing. There will, however, be no harm in replying to it. But I'll first hear what my uncle says."

In a few minutes he descended to the parlor, where Mr. and Mrs. Upton and their daughter were already seated at table. The minister had waited for him before commencing morning family prayers, after which he asked, "Have you any fresh news from home, George? I saw that you had a letter from New York this morning, and, as I never heard you say you had friends there, I suppose it is a letter from England posted in that city?"

"No, sir," replied George. "It is a letter from New York."

"Ha! then you have acquaintances there; some English friends, I suppose?"

"No, sir; I am not personally acquainted with anybody in New York. The letter is from a total stranger, whose name I am still unacquainted with."

The minister and his wife and daughter looked at the young man with surprise, when he handed the letter in question to his uncle, saying—

"I wish *you* would read it, sir, and tell me what you think about it. I will be guided by your advice, though I dare say its contents will astonish you, as they did me."

Mr. Upton put on his spectacles and read the letter.

"Dear me!" he ejaculated. "Is it possible? I had no

idea—I am perfectly astonished." Then, looking up over his spectacles at his nephew, he asked—

"But is it as the writer states, George? Or is it a mistake? Of *course*, though, it's a mistake. He has mistaken you for somebody else. Though your name is not a common one."

"Nor are there two George Nevilles in Acton, New Hampshire, uncle," said George. "It is right enough. I plead guilty to the count."

The minister pulled off his spectacles, polished the glasses, replaced them, and stared at his nephew with an expression of bewildered amazement that was ludicrous to contemplate. George could hardly refrain from laughing, but, remarking the equally amazed looks of his aunt and cousin, he said—

"You can read the letter aloud, if you please, uncle, and then I shall be obliged to you for your opinion as to the course I ought to pursue."

Mr. Upton read aloud as follows:—

"Chatham Street, New York, Sept. 10th, 1852.

"If the author of the excellent and well-written letters on the present political position of Europe, sent to the 'Broadway Gazette,' over the signature of 'George Neville,' and published in the 'Gazette' in compliance with the author's especial request—without signature, would feel inclined to accept an engagement on the New York press, he may obtain such an engagement if he will write immediately to the proprietor or editor of the above-mentioned journal; or it would be more desirable if he favor the proprietor or editor with a personal interview at his earliest convenience. The proprietor and editor of the 'Gazette' deem it advisable to explain that the engagement of which they speak does not refer to their own journal—the staff of which is completely filled—but to a new journal which is about to be started immediately;

a connection with which may prove advantageous to the writer of the letters in question.

"GEORGE NEVILLE, Esq.
"Acton Parsonage, New Hampshire."

Mrs. Upton and her daughter still seemed bewildered; but the minister said—

"Is it possible, George, that those letters on European politics, of two columns each in length, which have appeared weekly in the 'Gazette' for the last three weeks, are yours?" The "New York Broadway Gazette" and the "Boston Courier" were the only secular newspapers to which he subscribed.

George nodded assent.

"I remember," the minister went on, "how pleased I was with the views of the writer, and with the perspicuity of his style, when the first letter appeared. You recollect, my dear" (to Mrs. Upton), "that I said to you that I recognised a fresh hand on the 'Gazette?' And *you*, George! Why, you sly fellow, I asked you to read the first letter aloud to your aunt, after I had read it myself. I had no idea that *you* were the writer."

"I don't suppose you had, uncle," said the young man, with a smile.

"What put it into your head, George? How came *you* to write for the 'Gazette'?" So admirably well, too! Have you ever written for the press before? But you must have done so."

"I have sometimes written for the provincial press in England, sir," replied George, "but solely for amusement. It was merely to occupy my leisure that I wrote to the 'Broadway Gazette.' I had no ambition—no thought, indeed, to become a professional writer. In fact, I didn't think I had sufficient knowledge or ability. The question now is, what would you advise me to do in this matter?"

"Well, my dear boy," said the old gentleman, "I hardly know what to advise. You know you have a

small independence of your own, which saves you from the necessity of accepting employment which is unsuitable to you. Still a young man like you ought not to be idle, and if you have, both inclination and ability—as it would appear—for employment of the nature that is offered, if I were in your place I would accept it. You can give it up at any time if it should prove distasteful to you, and it will afford you, at any rate, an excellent opportunity to study the nature of our institutions and the character of our people. Mind you, I don't tell you to accept the offer. Use your own judgment in the matter. If, indeed, I were speaking solely for myself, I should advise you to decline it, because I don't want you to leave us yet. I had hoped that you would remain with us, at least, through the winter. But use your own judgment, my dear boy."

"The income I derived from my father is a very small independence, uncle," replied George, with a smile; "and when, on my poor father's death, I accepted my aunt's invitation to pay a visit to America, I came with no intention—if I remained in the country—to remain in idleness. The writer of the letter, however, speaks of a new newspaper to be started immediately. What sort of a newspaper will it be, I wonder?"

"I should say it is an election paper, George," said the old gentleman; "a class of newspaper peculiar to the United States. They are started on the eve of a presidential election, especially with a view to support one of the party candidates through thick and thin. Sometimes, if successful, they are continued after the election is decided; but, as a general rule, they cease to exist at the close of the struggle. However, the 'Broadway Gazette' is one of the most respectable newspapers in America—though not, perhaps, one of the most popular, as it eschews that scurrility in regard to its political opponents which is too common in our American newspapers, and is,

I regret to say, too much relished by the great mass of our people. I should think the recommendation of the 'Broadway Gazette' would be, therefore, a sufficient guarantee of the respectability of the paper in question. Consequently, I say again, my dear boy, use your own judgment."

Mrs. Upton and her daughter, who had by this time begun to comprehend the nature of the conversation between the minister and his nephew, were not at all satisfied with Mr. Upton's advice. They did not like the idea of George's leaving them to go to New York, though Mrs. Upton was soon brought to entertain a reasonable view of the matter.

Not so cousin Mary.

"I say it is a great shame to leave us, George," said that young lady, "as if you were weary of our society. I should think the editor might find plenty of stupid people in New York to write for his paper. Besides, cousin George, you *positively* can't go to New York for weeks to come. You wouldn't tell stories, and break your promises? And you know that you promised to accompany me to Deacon Willis's 'apple-paring' next week, and to take me to Mrs. Parton's 'quilting-bee' on the Thursday of the week after, and I heard you make several other engagements that will occupy your time for weeks to come."

"Those promises were made conditionally, under reservation, cousin Mary," replied George, smiling at his cousin's petulance. "Besides, they might pack me back to Acton. Who knows? I may not suit. Or the employment may not suit *me*. The offer may be one that I may be unwilling even to accept. All these matters have to be taken into consideration, my dear cousin."

"I hope they won't make you an offer at all. I hope they will pack you back again," replied the young lady. "What induced you to go and write these letters to the

newspapers? It's really too bad, George. I call it shameful."

"But you know, my dear," said Mrs. Upton, "George will have an opportunity to see his cousin Ellen, and that will be something. He will be able to write and tell us how Ellen looks, and all about her. And then New York is not so very far off but that he can come and pay us a visit now and then. I would rather he'd remain with us through the winter; still I wouldn't stand in the way of his advancement. So we must, I suspect, make up our minds to part with him for a short time, if he thinks it best."

Thus it was settled that George Neville was to reply to the letter he had received, and was to start for New York—provided the answer to his letter proved favorable—early during the ensuing week. And then the party rose up from the breakfast-table, and separated, to pursue their several avocations. George retired to write his letter to the editor of the "Broadway Gazette;" the minister went to his study; and Mrs. Upton and her daughter had occupation enough for the day in stowing away the presents they had received from the donation party, and in setting the house in order after the confusion created by the inroad of the previous day.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW ELLEN UPTON BECAME MRS. JULIUS VAN BROECK.

THE marriage of Julius Van Broeck with the daughter of a New England country parson had been stigmatized as a "romantic affair" by those who were jealous of the young country girl, who had gained what they regarded as so great a prize in the matrimonial lottery. George

Neville had heard the story at different times in his conversations with his cousin Mary, and he too was fain to confess that there was a touch of romance in the affair, which was brought about in this wise:—

The village of Acton, though beautifully situated in one of the most picturesque parts of the White Mountain district, was not, for some inexplicable reason, often visited by the tourists, who were accustomed to resort in great numbers, during the summer season, to other and much less eligible spots in the vicinity. Early in the preceding spring, however, a stranger had taken up his residence at a farmhouse about half a mile from the parsonage, and equidistant from the village and the mountains, to enjoy the sports of shooting and fishing free from the frivolous observances of etiquette in dress and such-like matters which are too apt to be maintained at American watering-places and country retreats, even when the visitors have come professedly to enjoy the immunity from such observances of fashion that the country, and the mountains and forests, or the sea-side, are supposed to afford. The advent of a stranger, with the manners and appearance of a gentleman, to a place so secluded and so rarely visited by strangers as Acton, of course created no little curiosity amongst the farmers and villagers. It was soon generally known that the stranger's name was Van Broek; that he had been many years abroad in far-distant climes, and had lately returned to America to claim and take possession of vast estates in New York State; in fact, that he was no less a personage than the patroon Julius Van Broek, who had not long before been the subject of so many interesting paragraphs in all the newspapers of the country, and whose wealth had, as is always the case under such circumstances, been unduly magnified.

Several attempts were made to cultivate the patroon's friendship by the more ambitious among the farmers; but,

though he was civil to all whom he met by chance, in his excursions to the mountains, Mr. Van Broek rather held himself aloof from the people of the village, and seemed to prefer to ramble in solitary freedom wheresoever he listed. He had, however, attended the village church on the two Sabbath days during which he had been at the farmhouse, and only on those occasions had he been seen by any of the members of the minister's family. The season happened to be an uncommonly early one; the weather was warm, and the wild strawberries, which grew in abundance in the valleys, were more than usually abundant. One morning Ellen and Mary Upton, the two daughters of the minister of Acton Church, went out strawberry-gathering, a favorite recreation among the girls of the village. Usually, however, the girls took with them on these occasions a male companion, as a safeguard in case they should fall in with bears, which animals are, as I have heretofore observed, remarkably partial to wild strawberries, as well as to wild honey, which they will run any hazards to obtain. Indeed, they have frequently been known, so great is their fondness of honey of any kind, to make an inroad upon the domestic beehives in the farmyards and gardens of the villagers to get at their favorite food when wild honey has failed them. To protect them, therefore, from these animals, and from snakes, and other unwelcome denizens of the glens and valleys, the girls in the village had been in the habit of taking with them on their strawberry-gathering excursions a male companion, and of going in large parties.

In later times, however, the bears had been shyer than usual. Years had elapsed without more than one or two of these animals having been seen, and these had been found only by hunters who had penetrated deeper than usual into the solitudes of the mountains and forests; and the young women, and even the children of the vil-

lage, had grown less cautious and timid, for it was generally believed that the bears and other wild animals had been frightened away into the less accessible mountain fastnesses. Thus it was with Ellen and Mary Upton. They had risen at an earlier hour than usual, and gone out alone. Attracted by the abundance of the fruit on an elevated plateau on the mountain side, the surface of which was so covered with the berries that it glowed with crimson in the early morning sunshine, they ascended to the plateau, which was almost surrounded by dense "bush," and commenced to fill their baskets with the ripe, fragrant fruit, chatting merrily with each other the while. Suddenly they were startled by a loud crash, and, springing up from their stooping position, were terrified to behold a large she-bear advancing, growling, towards them, followed by two young cubs that seemed to be but a few weeks old. The young girls uttered a loud shriek, and took to flight. The bear pursued, her eyes glaring like living coals, and in her terror Ellen stumbled over a root, and fell to the ground. Mary stopped, and stood utterly paralyzed with fright, unable to help her sister or to save herself. The bear, growling savagely, rose on her hind-legs, and in this attitude approached the prostrate girl, who fancied already that she felt the hot breath of the savage beast upon her cheeks, and felt herself encircled in its terrible crushing embrace. She said afterwards that she was perfectly conscious the whole time, but was unable to move a limb, or even to breathe a prayer. She resigned herself to inevitable death.

At this moment the report of a gun was heard, the sound reverberating among the mountains as if a hundred pieces had been fired simultaneously. A bullet whistled past, within a few feet of the cheek of the younger sister, and penetrated the lower jaw of the bear at the moment when she was raising her powerful forelegs to pounce down upon her prey, and hug the victim in her deadly

grasp. A gentleman in a hunter's costume pushed through the bush and sprang towards the two girls, both of whom were now senseless with terror, when the bear, which had dropped, but which had only been momentarily stunned by the bullet, rose, and, with the blood dripping from her broken jaw, rushed with a roar of pain and fury upon her assailant. A bullet from the second barrel of the hunter's gun penetrated the chest of the infuriated brute, and she staggered and fell dead at the stranger's feet; not, however, before she had inflicted a frightful wound on his left shoulder with her terrible claws (for she was within a few feet of him when the second shot was fired), and had thrown herself upon him as she fell, bringing him to the earth with her.

"Two capital shots for a novice in bear-hunting," said the stranger as he rose to his feet after having disengaged himself from the weight of the prostrate brute. He lifted Ellen to her feet, but, finding that she was too faint to stand, he supported her with his right arm. The girls soon came round, and were profuse in their thanks to their preserver, and in their praises of his courage. Then, for the first time, they saw that his left arm was hanging nerveless at his side, and that his shoulder was bleeding.

"You are severely hurt, sir?" said Ellen, anxiously.

"I *have* got an ugly scratch," said the hunter, "but I don't apprehend that it will prove anything very serious."

He strove to make light of the wound, though his pale face and compressed lips showed the pain he was suffering. The two girls bound up the wounded arm with their handkerchiefs, and the hunter—in whom they recognized Mr. Van Broek, the gentleman they had seen in church—assured them that he was quite able to escort them home.

"I must have the hide of that shaggy brute as a trophy," he said; "but I can't wait to strip it off now. I must send my man to get it for me."

The two cubs, just able to walk, were meanwhile sniffing and whining over the dead body of their dam.

"It seems a pity to harm these young things," said the hunter, "but they'll pine and starve to death;" and, raising his gun by the barrels, with his right arm he killed each of the cubs with a slight blow from the stock.

"We must leave them all where they are for the present," he added; "but the fur of the cubs will make each of you ladies a muff, whereby to remember your fortunate escape."

The gentleman and the two young ladies returned together to the parsonage; but by the time they reached the house the gentleman's arm had become fearfully swollen and inflamed. The pain of the wound was excruciating, and he was so ill that he found it out of the question to proceed to the farmhouse where he lived. A surgeon was sent for, and he was put to-bed at the parsonage; and, though the swelling was soon reduced, and it was discovered that the wound was not positively dangerous, a month elapsed before he was able to leave his room. *He* would have gone home to his lodgings, but neither the minister nor his wife would hear of his quitting the parsonage until he had quite recovered his health.

During that month of pain and illness Ellen Upton (who, though equally beautiful as her sister, possessed an entirely different style of beauty; Ellen being a dark-eyed brunette, like her mother, whom she resembled in her gentleness of disposition, as well as in person; while Mary resembled her father, and was of a livelier and more mercurial temperament than her younger sister) assisted her mother in nursing the invalid. She read to him, played music to him, and sought in every way to amuse him and to lessen the tedium of his confinement. Though much the young lady's senior in years, Mr. Van Broek was a handsome man, still in the very prime of

life; and it is therefore nothing wonderful, under the peculiar circumstances that brought them together, that a mutual attachment sprang up between them. Omitting the tedious and common-place, often nauseating, details of a love-story, suffice it to say that, within six weeks of the day on which they had met on the plateau on the mountain side, Julius Van Broek and Ellen Upton were betrothed to each other, with the full consent of the parents of the young lady. The minister and his wife had objected at first. They had thought the disparity of fortune, as well as of years, too great; but Mr. Van Broek said he had fortune enough for both himself and his bride; and Ellen declared that she cared nothing for the disparity of years; for Mr. Van Broek, if older than herself, was youthful in appearance, and as healthful and active as she. So the minister and his wife were induced to give their consent. The minister made the necessary inquiries, and found that the statements of his son-in-law elect were truthful. A fortnight later the marriage was quietly celebrated in the little village church, four young village girls being chosen as bridesmaids, and the minister himself officiating at the ceremony.

Thus it came about that Ellen Upton became, in her nineteenth year, the wife of Julius Van Broek. It was a great match for the daughter of a plain country village parson; and many of the young ladies of the village, as well as many ladies of loftier pretensions, envied the, in their opinion, fortunate bride. Shortly after their marriage the bride and bridegroom departed on a tour to Niagara, Newport, and Saratoga Springs, and on their return settled down in New York, or rather, I should say, at Stuyvesant House, Brooklyn Heights, until the new mansion that was in progress of erection at Van Broek Manor should be ready to receive them.

CHAPTER XVI.

BOARDING-HOUSE GOSSIP—MRS. DOCTOR BENSON IS DISAPPOINTED OF A "SCENE."

It was the custom at Stuyvesant House to keep late hours; and the evening—to use a familiar phrase—had only just commenced, and the gentlemen had only just begun to drop in from the verandah, whither they had retired to smoke after dinner, when Mrs. Van Broek—as related in a preceding chapter—unable any longer to conceal her anxiety on account of the prolonged absence of her husband, retired from the drawing room at eight o'clock. Notwithstanding the endeavors of the young wife to conceal from her fellow-boarders the cause of her agitation and distress of mind on reading the letter brought to her by the servant in the earlier part of the day, and notwithstanding her forced endeavors to appear at her ease at the dinner-table, she had failed in her object.

They had seen through the flimsy veil of cheerfulness that she had assumed. They had remarked the anxiety and the continuous changes in the expression of her countenance, that betrayed the constantly-recurring painful thoughts now ruffling the ordinary quietude of her outward demeanor. Her sudden retreat from the drawing room had been the signal to a certain coterie of the boarders to establish themselves in a quiet corner of the room, and relieve their minds by a discussion upon the strange occurrence which had disturbed the usually monotonous quiet of the household.

"Do you perceive—she has left the room, and gone up-stairs?" observed Mrs. Doctor Benson to the lady of the ex-consul from Italy. "I can see through folks at a glance. I should admire to see the young chit like she who could throw dust in *my* eyes, my dear. Did you ob-

serve how pale she looked at dinner? And I watched her closely, and noticed that she hardly swallowed a mouthful. She sent her plate away every time almost untouched. Depend upon it my dear ——" (here she whispered in her friend's ear, and screwed up her thin lips, and closed her eyes, and nodded her head till her false curls shook, to give effect and emphasis to her whisper). Then, again speaking aloud, she went on, "And so you'll see by-and-by."

"Do *tell*!" ejaculated Mrs. Latham, using a frequently heard New England expression of surprise or dismay; for both these ladies were natives of the New England States.

"Yes," rejoined Mrs. Benson; "I'd lay my life on it. I'm seldom or never wrong in my conclusions." (She looked at her husband, whom she had taken into her confidence, and who was the only male member of the coterie.)

"No," said the Doctor, replying to his wife's look. "Mrs. Benson is a wonderfully clever woman—"

"*Clever*! Doctor Benson," retorted the wife, with a contemptuous toss of her head. "I hope you don't apply that term to me in its *proper* meaning? There is no class of people I hold in greater contempt than your silly, easy-going, *clever* folk, whom people call good-tempered because they haven't got a mite of spirit in their bodies. Me *clever*, indeed! when did *you* ever see me clever, Doctor Benson!"

"Pardon me, my dear," said the Doctor: "I stand corrected. I used the term *clever* in accordance with our old-country acceptance of the word. No, my dear; I didn't mean to say that you are what is termed a *clever* woman in this land of universal progress. What I did mean to say, Mrs. Latham" (addressing himself to that lady), "is that Mrs. Benson is a wonderfully *smart* woman. I never, in the whole course of my experience,

met with a female in whose discrimination, in whose quick perception of character, in whose thorough knowledge of human nature—in a word, in whose *smartness*—I would put greater confidence than in Mrs. Benson's."

"Very good, Doctor Benson," replied the lady. "But when *will* you learn to forget those used-up, old-world expressions? And how often am I tell you not to apply the ojus term *female* to me, nor to any of the feminine sex? Such vulgarity is perfectly awful! In the presence of company, too."

The Doctor was silenced, and Mrs. Benson, having administered what she considered a sufficient reproof, and vindicated herself from the charge of being a female, and at the same time received from her husband a confirmation of her "smartness," continued—

"Of course, my dear, we can't tell *who* is to blame. If I could have got hold of the letter! But that bold, forward minx, Jane Malcolm, actually snatched it out of my hand, and no doubt slipped it into the bosom of her dress, to read at her leisure. That girl is awfully vulgar."

"It is strange that Mr. Van Broek didn't arrive at the hour appointed," said Mrs. Latham; "or, if he found himself delayed at Albany, or at Schenectady, that he didn't write."

"I'd admire to see *my* husband act in such a manner!" replied Mrs. Benson, with a severe glance at the Doctor. "However, there's no fear: a dutiful husband would know better what is due to his wife. But, my dear, do you fancy that Mr. Van Broek *has* been to Albany, or that he *is* unavoidably detained? He's been to Albany as much as *my* husband has. If *he was* my husband, I'd fix him, I guess. He wouldn't hear the last of it in one while. But that poor chit hasn't a mite of spirit in her. Now, what I want to know is how *we* ought to act about this letter?"

"I don't exactly take your meaning," said a lady who made the fourth in the little coterie.

"My meaning is plain enough," replied Mrs. Benson. "Is it not due to ourselves that we should, in some way or other, acquaint Mr. Van Broek, when he *does* come, of the fact that a letter was received by his wife in his absence, and that she took on awfully about it?"

"Well, perhaps it is, now you put it in that light," said Mrs. Latham. "But, then, it mayn't be anything, you know. And since the poor young thing doesn't wish her husband to learn that she fainted away, and since she said *she* would show him the letter herself—"

"In the first place, my dear," interrupted Mrs. Benson, "I don't believe she's got the letter to show. I believe that Miss Malcolm has it safe enough. A likely thing she gave it up when once she got hold of it and had a chance to read it! Then I disapprove of complicity in these matters. I conclude how we ought, out of respect to ourselves, and for the credit of the house, either to insist that Mrs. Van Broek shall deliver up the letter to us, or shall make us acquainted with its contents; and I think a note should be written to her to tell her the conclusion at which we have arrived, and to assure her that, if she fails to satisfy our curiosity on this point, we shall feel it our duty to acquaint her husband with the *facts*."

"I wouldn't be *too* hard upon the poor young creature," replied Mrs. Latham. "We'll keep our eyes about us, and be guided by circumstances. We'll see what kind of a man the patroon is. He's awful rich, they say——"

At this moment the wheels of a cab were heard rolling over the stones. The vehicle drew up opposite the house, and Miss Dunlop, who had been looking out of the drawing-room window, joined the little party in the corner of the room.

"Oh, aunt!" exclaimed the young lady, addressing the ex-consul's wife, "Mr. Van Broek has come. I fancy

it is he. I saw him alight from the carriage—a tall, fine-looking man, though it is too dark to see his features. Hark! he's rung the door-bell."

Mrs. Lyman, who was seated near them, rose at this announcement, and hastened to the hall to welcome her new boarder; and the other ladies rushed in a body to the landing, and stood looking down over the balusters, each eager to get the first glimpse of the wealthy patroon of Van Broek Manor.

Miss Malcolm, who had gone to Mrs. Van Broek's room a short time before, fearing that she might be ill, now came down-stairs and requested Mrs. Lyman, from Mrs. Van Broek, to inform that lady's husband that she was not very well, and was lying down on her bed, and to beg him to go to her room as soon as possible.

Mrs. Benson, who, with the other ladies standing near, heard this request, glanced triumphantly at Mrs. Latham.

"I told you so," she whispered in that lady's ear. "There'll be a scene."

Mr. Van Broek, whom the reader will recollect we left, in a preceding chapter, on his way to Brooklyn after this interview with Nancy Slowbury in Orange Street, New York, was not altogether at ease in his mind. A great and secret dread, the nature of which we shall leave to the course of events to disclose, had come suddenly and unexpectedly upon him! and, though the death of Miles Slowbury had relieved him to a certain degree, he had heard and seen sufficient in the course of his visit to Nancy Slowbury's lodgings to fill his mind with anxiety. Then there was the letter that Nancy had informed him she had delivered at the house for his wife; and, even if he could have intercepted the letter, or supposing—which he felt was improbable—it had not yet been read, still, according to the young woman's story, there remained the interview that had taken place at the Astor House, between his wife and Miles Slowbury, to be ex-

plained; and, what made the affair more difficult and perplexing, he, though he had perhaps some inkling of the matter, was in reality ignorant of the nature of the contents of the letter, and ignorant also of the tenor of the words that had been spoken at the interview. He only knew that for several days past his young wife had manifested a degree of reserve and thoughtfulness, almost of timidity, in his presence, for which he had been unable to account, but which appeared now to be explained. Still he was a man fruitful in resources, and he hoped yet to explain matters in a manner that would prove sufficiently satisfactory. All, however, depended upon the nature of the contents of the letter. He thought that possibly the letter had not yet been opened; or if it were merely sent to himself, under cover to his wife, all might yet be well.

He entered the house, and in a distraught manner responded to the somewhat fulsome compliments of the landlady.

He had hoped that his young wife would come, as usual, to meet him. But she did not come; and this omission, or possibly purposed neglect, on her part, strengthened his fears.

The landlady offered to conduct him to his rooms.

"They are the best rooms in the house, sir," said the widow. "It happened most opportunely that when your agent, Mr. Bradford—a most gentlemanly man—applied to me for a suite of apartments for yourself and your lady, the suite on the second-floor back, which had been occupied by Senator Hopkins and his family, were just vacated. The Senator was obliged to 'locate' himself in Washington, in order to attend to his senatorial duties. The sitting-room commands a charming prospect of New York Bay and the Jersey shore. Your good lady was perfectly enchanted with it. The bed-room, where you will find Mrs. Van Broek, who, I trust, is but

slightly indisposed, is on the floor above, over the front drawing-room, and faces the street. I have had the apartments newly 'fixed up' in the most elegant and *recherché* style. Will you not just step into the drawing-room, sir, and look at the furniture and 'fixings,' before you go up-stairs?"

They had reached the landing, and the group of lady-boarders, who had been curiously scanning the dress and appearance of the patroon from their coigne of vantage, had flown into the drawing-room upon the near approach of the gentleman, with a flutter of muslin and crinoline that made as much noise as would the flight of a flock of startled doves (?). But Mr. Van Broek had hardly listened to a syllable of the landlady's harangue; his mind had been otherwise occupied; and, when she again asked him whether he would not step into the drawing-room for a moment, he answered, with an abstracted air—

"No, I thank you; never mind. The rooms will do well enough, I dare say. The bed-room is—I think you said?"

"Over the front drawing-room, sir. The third door on the left hand."

"Ah yes, thank you. The *third* door? Here, just take my valise; I'll go up-stairs at once," and dropping his valise at Mrs. Lyman's feet, he sprang up the next flight of stairs, taking two steps at a time.

"The man's a brute! a perfect brute!" muttered the discomfited and slighted landlady, tossing her head. "To ask *me* to take hold of his valise, indeed! as if I was a hired servant. Ho! Brian," she called over the balusters to the Irish factotum, "come up-stairs and take this valise the gentleman has left on the landing into his sitting-room."

The tone of voice in which the widow issued this mandate was intended to instruct her new lodger that

she was not accustomed to act in the capacity of porter to the gentlemen and ladies who formed part of her select establishment. Mrs. Lyman was a great stickler for the proprieties, and she expected that her new boarder would stop in his ascent and turn round and apologize for his discourtesy. No such thing, however. Mr. Van Broek proceeded on his way, and the landlady re-entered the drawing-room with head erect and folded arms, carrying her portly person with the dignity of a queen.

"The man has no manners," she repeated to the assembled ladies. "Never listened to a word I said about the rooms, though I expect there are no such rooms anywhere else on the Heights. He wouldn't stop a moment to look at the new 'fixings;' and he actually *chucked* his valise at *me*, and expected me to carry it into the sitting-room for him! I really don't wonder at his poor young wife's taking on so, I shouldn't wonder, now, if that letter to-day that flurried her so, poor thing, was nothing more than a notice that he was coming back, and *she* knew what she'd have to put up with *then*."

"Ah!" sighed Mrs. Benson. "That letter," she said to her friend Mrs. Latham, *sotto voce*, "related to something very different from *that*, or my penetration is very much at fault."

"Mrs. Whittaker here stepped forward as a peacemaker.

"Be calm, my dear Mrs. Lyman," said the old lady. "Mr. Van Broek is, no doubt, weary after his long journey, and perhaps anxious about his young wife, whom he knew to have been expecting him home earlier. I dare say he didn't think what he was saying. I'm sure, though, Mr. Whittaker and I never had a downright quarrel in our lives, he's often come home a little out of sorts, when he has been overworked in the city, or when something has gone wrong in business; and I dare say we should have had many little tiffs if I had resented these little

outbursts of irritability. But I used to soothe him, and try to make his *home* peaceful and happy, at least; and very soon he began to come to me in all his troubles, and we would talk them over together, and we made a bargain that we would always confide everything to each other, and you can't think how well that plan has answered with us. Mr. Whittaker and I have had no secrets between us for twenty years, and we never disagree about anything."

Mrs. Benson shook her head.

"I agree with you," she said, "that it is not only desirable, but it is the bounden duty of a husband to keep no secrets from the wife of his bosom. But I do not approve of the soothing system. It is apt to encourage husbands to give themselves airs. It might answer with some men, but it would never do with *my* husband. In fact, I make it a point never to soothe Doctor Benson. Then, as to a system of *mutual* confidence between husbands and wives, I cannot say that I look upon that with approval. There are many little matters which a *wife* prefers to keep to herself. At all events, I hold that the wife should be free to exercise her own judgment as to whether she shall disclose them to her husband or not. The masculine intellect is, as a general rule, so obtuse, that men are utterly unable to sympathize with the feminine sex with regard to the more delicate and refined affairs of social life. There are many things, for instance, that *I* should never think of confiding to Doctor Benson."

Mrs. Whittaker replied with a smile to the remarks of Mrs. Benson.

"At all events, ladies," she said, "don't let us judge too harshly of our own sex. It has really pained me to hear certain allusions that have been made to the young wife up-stairs. She seems to me to be a very amiable girl, and she is *but* a girl. I cannot see what *we* have to

do with a matter of the nature of which we are perfectly, absolutely ignorant."

To this speech, which was especially directed to Mrs. Benson, that strong-minded lady made no immediate reply. Subsequently, however, she stigmatized Mrs. Whittaker as an impudent, intermeddling old busybody, and, with many nods and winks, and compressing of the lips, and upraising of the eyes, as much as to imply that she was not as other women, she assured her particular friends that they would soon discover who was right and who was wrong, and then seated herself near the door that she might listen to any voice that might, in the heat of argument or recrimination be indiscreetly raised higher than usual. All, however, was silent in Mrs. Van Broek's room up-stairs. The lady got out of patience, and, under the pretence that the drawing-room was unpleasantly warm, she went out on the landing to breathe the cooler air. Presently she heard the door open on the landing above. She heard the sound of footsteps coming along the passage towards the stairs, and she was about to beat a retreat into the drawing-room when the sound ceased.

Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek had stopped at the top of the staircase, and were conversing in low tones. Mrs. Benson crept softly to the foot of the stairs and strained her ears to listen.

"I feel so *much* relieved, Julius," she heard Mrs. Van Broek say. "You cannot think what a relief you have afforded me. I was *so* glad when you spoke of that letter——"

"Silly girl to trouble your mind about it!" Mr. Van Broek coaxingly replied.

"Nay, Julius," the young wife went on to say; "you acknowledge yourself that I had reason. And I had made *up* my mind to show you the letter, and also to tell you of the former trouble. I could no longer keep the secret. I think I should have pined to death—I was so

miserable. Yet I knew not how to begin, and when you spoke first it opened the way at once, and when you explained the matter it was like a reprieve from death. I really thought I was very ill," she added, with a pleasant little laugh, "and I felt well, and strong, and happy, all in a moment. I feel pity for the poor man, too. How much he must have suffered to have been driven insane! and how strange it is that insane persons should so often take a dislike to those who have been their best and dearest friends, and imagine all sorts of ridiculous things concerning them. I have read of such things before, but this is the first time I have actually known of a case in point. You must do something for that poor young woman, Julius."

"So I intend, my love."

"Don't you think, Julius, it would do well for *me* to call upon her, or to write and ask her to call upon me? Perhaps I might learn from her how we can best aid her. She may be bashful and timid, poor thing, with you?"

"I think not, my dear. I certainly could not think of permitting you to call upon the young woman where she now resides, and I doubt whether she would care to visit you. She has evidently seen better days, and shrinks from the idea of communicating with strangers. Now she *has* already spoken with me, and will not have the bitter ordeal to pass through again. You can advise me, after I have seen her again, and learned what are her own views; and perhaps, at some future day, when she will be in better circumstances, you may see her."

"Poor creature! Well, perhaps you are right, Julius. By-the-bye—the child. Did you see the child?"

"The child!" exclaimed Mr. Van Broek. "What child? I never spoke to you of a child."

"No, dear; but Brian said the poor young woman had a child with her, and that the child was crying. I thought perhaps it might be her own?"

"Her own child, my dear Ellen! She is a young girl—not much older, I should say, than you. Now you mention it, however, I recollect seeing a child who was in the room when I called, but who was taken away before I left. The child of some neighbor, I presume."

"Well, dear Julius," said the young wife, "I'll never trouble myself to keep a secret from *you* again. How much pain and anxiety had been spared me if I had acquainted you with the fact that the poor man had called at the hotel in your absence, a fortnight ago. Perhaps, too, you might have sought him out and relieved him, and this accident might not have happened. The poor man might yet have been living. Oh, I have been very wrong!"

"You have been very *foolish*, my dear Ellen, to trouble your little head about nothing. That is the extent of your wrong-doing, my love," replied Mr. Van Broek. "But come along down-stairs. I thought our explanations were over in the bed-room, and here we are having a second edition on the stairs. I am afraid, too, that I was not over-civil to our landlady when I came in: I was so anxious about *you*. Let us go into the drawing-room for an hour or so—it is not yet ten o'clock—or our fellow-boarders will fancy that we are very strange and reserved with them."

Mrs. Benson had heard every word of the above conversation, and she was not altogether satisfied with it. She was, in fact, disappointed. She certainly had discovered that there *had* been a secret. But that secret had been disclosed, and *she* was none the wiser. Indeed, the secret appeared to have been one of comparative non-importance. The husband and his youthful wife were evidently on the best possible terms with each other, and there would be no "scene" after all. She had staked her reputation for discernment on the result of the meeting between Mr. Van Broek and his wife, and

she had lost the stake. She now hastened back to the drawing-room, without being seen by the husband and wife, who first went into their own room, and, seating herself on a sofa, she resolved in her own mind to say nothing respecting the conversation she had heard—at least, for the present. The time might come, she thought, when she might obtain some clue to its elucidation, and with that object in view she resolved to alter her pre-arranged tactics, and to use her best endeavors, in spite of Miss Malcolm—whose interference she dreaded—to cultivate the friendship of Mrs. Van Broek.

Later in the evening Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek entered the drawing-room arm-in-arm.

The anxious, abstracted look the patroon had worn when he entered the house an hour or two previous had disappeared from his face. He introduced himself and his wife to the assembled boarders, adding—

“I presume, however, that Mrs. Van Broek has already made your acquaintance, ladies and gentlemen. For my part, I have to apologize to you, and to Mrs. Lyman, for my non-appearance at dinner-time to-day. My wife has told me that she informed you that I should arrive from Albany in time to meet you at the dinner-table. The fault was mine. I was unavoidably detained.” He then expressed to Mrs. Lyman his perfect satisfaction with his apartments, and, by his easy, affable manners, not only succeeded in obliterating from the mind of the sensitive landlady the brusqueness which had given her offence, but left a pleasing impression of himself on the minds of all the boarders. As to the young wife, she appeared like a different creature. The timid, thoughtful look, which had been a topic of general comment among the boarders, had disappeared from her features. Her eyes sparkled with gladness, a smile rested upon her lips and dimpled her cheek, and she appeared radiant with happiness. She was once again the light-hearted Ellen of the old par-

sonage-house at Acton—the girlish vivacity of those days gone by slightly toned down by the graceful dignity which sat so well upon her in her new position as a young married woman, and the mistress of Van Broek Manor.

And Julius Van Broek forgot his cares, and lulled himself in fancied security. The Nemesis, who had suddenly, and when least expected, made her appearance, had lain herself again to rest, as he hoped and believed for ever; and, casting from his bosom all care for, or fear of the future, he gave himself up from that period to the pleasures and enjoyments of life which his newly-acquired wealth and position enabled him to indulge in to his heart's content.

CHAPTER XVII.

GEORGE NEVILLE'S FIRST VISIT TO NEW YORK—A STROLL THROUGH THE CITY.

THE events of the past few days appeared like a dream to George Neville, when, at half-past eleven o'clock on Tuesday night, he stepped on to the platform of the railroad depot in Grand Street, New York. A few days before he had had no thought of visiting New York city before the ensuing spring or summer. A few clever papers, written, as he had truthfully told his uncle, to amuse his leisure hours, had changed the whole programme that he had laid out for himself. There had been the hasty decision, the few parting visits to friends and acquaintances, the more earnest and sorrowful yet hopeful “good-byes” to his uncle, aunt, and cousin; the hurried journey, occupying a whole night and day, over the iron road; and he stood alone, a stranger, in the great commercial emporium of the Western World.

He had quitted the village of Acton at an early hour on the morning of the previous day; but even ten years ago railroads had not extended their lines over the more remote districts of the New England States, nor formed the net-work of iron they form at present, and he had made the long journey from Acton to Plainfield in his uncle's waggonette, the minister himself driving the old-fashioned and somewhat rickety vehicle. Thus it was nearly mid-day when he took his seat in the cars at the Plainfield Depot, and it was not until half an hour later, when the train was ready to start, that Mr. Upton, who had entered the cars with his nephew, finally shook hands with him, and, re-entering the waggonette, prepared to start on his homeward journey. Then the "Conductor" of the train shouted forth the well-known signal to the passengers, "All aboard!" The driver responded, "All right!" The conductor cried "Go ahead!" and the long line of cars glided slowly out of the depot, gradually increasing their speed until the regular rate of twenty-five miles an hour was attained; and the train soon passed out of sight of the idlers who had assembled to watch its departure.

Even then the young man experienced no loneliness of feelings. The cars were crowded. People were passing over the connecting platforms from one car to another; friends were recognizing each other, and forming snug travelling-parties by turning over the seats of the cars, so that four persons could sit comfortably *vis-a-vis*; some were talking politics, others were speaking of the visits they were going to pay to distant friends, or of the visits from which they were returning home; the newsboys and girls, and book, and fruit, or ginger-pop venders were passing to and fro from car to car selling their wares; children were running about from seat to seat: everything was so different from English railroad travelling that the novelty of the ever-changing scene fully occupied the

young man's mind. True, he had travelled over an American railroad before from Boston to Plainfield, but the journey had been comparatively short. He had left Boston after nightfall, and had arrived at Plainfield before daybreak. American railway travelling was, therefore, yet a novelty to him, and it was not until he found himself alone amidst the population of a vast city that he experienced, as all persons experience under similar circumstances, a sense of utter loneliness and solitude.

Late as was the hour, he found, on emerging from the depot, that the streets still presented a busy, lively aspect. Crowds of people were returning from the theatres and other places of amusement, and the public-houses, and the coffee-houses and restaurants, and the confectioners, and tobacconists, and druggists' shops were still open, and blazing with gas-light. Several hotel carriages were drawn up in front of the depot, and one of these carriages George Neville entered; other passengers followed, and presently the carriage started, and, after traversing several streets, was brought up suddenly in front of a palatial edifice, in a broad thoroughfare.

"Here yer are—Me-tro-pol-itan—gentleman," said the conductor of the carriage, opening the door of the vehicle. "Any gentleman as has got baggage at the depot, ef he'll gin me his checks, 'll find his baggage all right in the mornin'."

George now recollected that, on delivering up his luggage at the Plainfield Depot on the previous day, he had received three or four brass counters, numbered each with different figures, and that he had seen the railway porter affix corresponding counters, "or checks," to each trunk or package. These he now delivered up to the driver of the carriage, observing that his fellow-passengers did the same thing, and that the man had the name of the hotel in brass letters affixed to his cap as a guarantee for his honesty. The next morning he found every

item of his baggage safe in the hotel, without the slightest trouble on his own part; and, recollecting the trouble he had often found in looking after his luggage on English railroads, he wondered why a similar system—saving time and trouble alike to passengers and railroad officials—was not adopted in his own country.

When, however, he alighted from the carriage and entered the hotel, weary and sleepy after his long journey, his first thought was to secure a bed-room and go to rest. He walked up to a sort of counting-room at the end of a long, marble-floored vestibule, where several clerks were busied over day-books and ledgers, as though they were connected with a banking-house, and following the example of other passengers, asked for a bed.

A large ruled book was pushed toward him.

"Please to enter your name and residence, sir," said one of the clerks.

George did as he was requested, and wrote—

"George Neville, Acton, New Hampshire."

To this name the clerk affixed a number, and then summoned one of the host of waiters who were standing round.

"Any baggage, sir?" he asked.

"The gentleman's baggage 'll be here by'm-by. Iv'e got his checks," said the driver of the hotel carriage.

"All right. Pete" (to the negro waiter), "show this gentleman to No. 314."

The clerk handed the waiter a key, with 314 stamped upon it, as he spoke.

"Take supper, sar?" asked the waiter.

"No," replied George. "I'll go to my room at once."

"Got any baggage, sar?"

"Only this carpet-bag with me."

"All right, sar. Dis yere way, if yer please; and the waiter took the carpet-bag from the young man's hand, and led the way up flight after flight of marble stairs, and

along passage after passage, until he reached a room with the number in question painted on the door.

He unlocked the door, delivered the key to the young man, with an injunction to lock the door inside when he went to bed, and asked at what hour he wished to be called in the morning.

"At what hour do you breakfast?" asked George.

"De gong sound at seben o'clock, sar, for fust breffust. From dat time till ten o'clock dere is breffust at de *table d'hôte*."

"Very well," said George, "I'll rise when the gong sounds;" and the waiter went his way, and in less than half an hour George Neville was sound asleep.

He was awakened by the sound of the gong in the morning, and, rising and dressing himself, he descended to breakfast. His bed-room, as is the case in most large American hotels, was small, and though comfortably, by no means luxuriously furnished. But, when he descended to the lower floors of the hotel, he was struck with amazement at the vast size and great number of sitting and drawing-rooms on both sides of the wide passages, and with the costly furniture and gorgeous appointments of these rooms. The doors seemed all to be open, as well to display the interior as to admit the morning air. He had been astonished at the extent and the costly fittings of the Revere House, at Boston—at which hotel he had put up on his first landing in America—but what he now beheld threw the glories of the Boston hotel completely into shade. Turkey, Brussels, and tapestry carpets of the most elaborate patterns; white and colored marble-topped tables, side-boards, and mantle and chimney-pieces; mahogany, and rosewood, and gilded chairs, with velvet and damask seats; sofas, and ottomans, and other articles of furniture adapted to luxurious repose of which he knew not even the names, occupied every room. The walls were covered with immense mirrors, in heavy and

elaborately carved and gilded frames. Huge gilded chandeliers, with innumerable cut-glass pendules, depended from the painted ceilings, and reflected the rays of light in every variety of color. The plate-glass French windows, which opened into marble-pillared balconies, were shaded with curtains of the most costly fabrics and of the finest texture.

Marble statues, after the antique, occupied every niche and corner; those on the stairs bearing gilded lamps and candlesticks in their hands. Gilding, and marble, and plate-glass, and valuable pictures, and silk and velvet tapestry—all that is rare and costly in the way of furniture or ornament—appeared in such lavish profusion as to fairly dazzle the eyes and bewilder the senses of persons unaccustomed to such display; and George Neville almost fancied that he stood beneath the roof of one of those magnificent palaces of which he had read in the "Arabian Nights," and other Oriental tales that had charmed his fancy in his boyhood; and that the negro waiters, who—all clad alike, in white jackets and trousers—passed to and fro with noiseless steps and in perfect silence, and who appeared, as if by magic, at the slightest sign, were the attendant mutes, who guarded the enchanted palace; and that the ladies who glided by in their white morning robes were the princesses and fairies whom they served. On the lower floor the vestibule was thronged with gentlemen, smoking, chatting, and reading the morning papers; and in the office the clerks were still busy as he had seen them the night before, pouring over ledgers and account-books, and receiving and changing money, and providing newly-arrived guests with rooms. The dining-room in the rear of the office was also well filled with guests, who were breakfasting at the *table d'hôte*; and the display of cut-glass and plate, and the variety and abundance of the viands upon the tables (which extended the whole length of the room, and were

capable of dining four hundred persons at one time), the vases of fresh-gathered flowers which perfumed the air, the array of dark-visaged, lightly-clad waiters, who moved in silence and with military precision at the sign of their chief, and the general air of costly magnificence that pervaded the place, impressed the young Englishman with the idea that his purse would be deeply drained to pay for all this splendor, until he looked at one of the printed bills of fare which lay upon the table, and discovered that he could breakfast, dine and sup, and sleep at the "Metropolitan," and use the public sitting-rooms, and read the newspapers and periodicals of America and Europe, at the moderate cost of two and a half dollars a day.

It was a stirring time. As I have heretofore observed, a presidential election was pending; and Daniel Webster, the great American lawyer-statesman, and General Scott, with the laurels gleaned on the fields of Mexico still evergreen on his brow, were formidable rivals to the candidates of the Democratic party, albeit *they* had brought forward a soldier and statesman combined, in the person of the veteran General Cass, to head their list.

It was, however, decreed that neither one nor the other of these rival candidates, influential as they were, and great as were the acknowledged services that each and all had rendered the State in the course of their long lives, should win the great prize and occupy the presidential chair. A party divided against itself can no more stand than can a house in a similar unhappy condition.

The Democrats were divided among themselves, as were the whigs; yet, though there was more than one Richmond in the field on every side, the Democrats were more united in the main, and, by biding their time, and seizing upon the favorable moment, they succeeded in "running" their candidate by bringing forward a comparatively young man, Franklin Pierce, a lawyer from

New Hampshire, who was scarcely known beyond the limits of his native State, and who was elected with a greater unanimity than ever was President elected before. Hence the city was crowded with visitors. Every hotel was thronged with guests. Politicians, and office-holders, and office-seekers, and "stump orators," and journalists, and reporters, and senators, and members of Congress and of the State's Legislative Assemblies, mingled with idlers who had come up to New York to watch the progress of the contest in the city whose wealth and population rendered it a more ambitious and important political arena than even the Federal capital of Washington itself. Many ladies and pleasure-seekers had come up from the country to attend the numerous parties and balls to which the occasion gave rise, and to enjoy the stir and bustle and excitement incidental to the election. Last, not least, were voters whose political bias was to be controlled by the amount of dollars that their votes would put into their pockets, and who, in spite of the boasted incorruptibility of the secret suffrage system, could be bought and sold as readily, and with less probability of detection than if they had been compelled to cast their votes *viva voce*; rowdies, too, and pugilists who could "hit straight from the shoulder," and whose valuable services *might* be required by either party, to frighten timid electors from the polls. All these different classes of people were to be met intermingling with and jostling against each other in every street, or grouped together at every corner; while the numerous foreign voters, naturalized citizens, chiefly from the Emerald Isle and from the Faderland (though the shores of the Baltic, and of the North Sea, and of the sunny Mediterranean, and the great cities of every nation of Europe had each and all contributed their quota), assembled at the gathering-places of their respective nationalists to glory over their newly-acquired political status, each in their

own vernacular, contributed to swell the crowd, and to fill the air with a perfect Babel of sound.

It was through a crowd composed of these heterogeneous materials that George Neville, after having partaken of breakfast at the hotel, pursued his course down Broadway. Slight as had been his connection with the press, he was aware of the fact that he was not likely to meet with the editor or proprietor of a popular daily journal at his office at that early hour of the day, and he had made up his mind to take a stroll through a portion of the great city, and thus pass away the time until the afternoon, when he intended to call at the office in Chatham Street.

He wandered eastward, toward the river, admiring, as he passed along, the splendor of the shops on either side of the great thoroughfare, and wondering at the glaring and, to the eyes of strangers, unsightly signs suspended above almost every shop, or "store." The centre of the street was thronged with vehicles of every description, from the private carriage, with its liveried menials (for the sight of servants in livery—once held to be inconsistent with republican simplicity—is now, and has been for many years, common enough in New York), to the hackney-coach and the carrier's wagon; and the broad, well-flagged *trottoirs* were crowded with well-dressed people of both sexes—the ladies, early as was the hour, appearing abroad in a style of dress and with a profusion of ornament such as European ladies usually reserve for the drawing-room and for evening dress. Not one ragged, hardly one shabbily-attired individual was to be seen. There *is* poverty—wretched enough poverty—in New York, as there is in every great city; though there is doubtless far less poverty in New York, and in other American cities, than in the cities of overpopulated Europe, and beggary in America is almost unknown; but poverty shuns the glare and glitter of Broadway.

Crossing between the Astor House, and the City Hall, the young Englishman's attention was arrested by the appearance of three or four volunteer target companies, a sight to be met with nowhere else than in American cities.

First, at the head of each company, marched a band of musicians in faded military uniforms; then followed, arm-in-arm, a score or more of citizens in plain clothes, who strove, as they marched, to keep time and step to the music. These gentlemen were the friends and patrons of the company—some of them, perhaps, the employers of the young men who followed. They were to act as umpires, and carried, exposed to public view, the prizes for which the marksmen were to contend, comprising silver watches, chains, brooches, pieces of plate, boxes of cigars, perhaps a hat or two, etc., etc.—all of which prizes they had provided for the occasion, and it would be *their* duty to award them to the successful competitors. Then marched the company itself, consisting of young men (all employed by the same firm, or in the same office), varying in number from twenty to forty or fifty (sometimes, indeed, the military band outnumbered the company). These young men were dressed as nearly as possible alike, though rarely in military uniform, beyond a soldier's shako, and perhaps a red stripe sewed on to the seams of their trowsers, and a belt round their waists. They carried muskets, hired by the year from some militia depot, and their officers—elected and re-elected annually by themselves, on the true Democratic principle—carried drawn swords, and were distinguished otherwise by strips of gold lace instead of the red cloth of the privates. Last of all marched a stalwart negro—the blacker and glossier the better—who carried over his shoulder a huge gaudily-painted target, ornamented with ribbons, and surmounted by an immense bouquet of flowers, the ribbons

and flowers being the gift of female friends of the company.

George stood and watched them as they marched past—vehicles and pedestrians alike, by conventional custom, giving place to them. He was told by a looker-on, to whom he put the question, that they were bound to Hoboken, or the Elysian Fields, or some other rural locality on the Jersey shore or in the environs of New York city, where they would choose a site for their target, and commence by firing for the prizes. Then they would assemble at some tavern in the neighborhood, to the proprietor of which information of their coming had been previously sent. After dinner the prizes would be awarded, and the remainder of the day would be spent in mutual enjoyment; and towards nightfall they would reassemble in line, and march home as they had marched out, to the clang of martial music; only on the homeward march the prizes would be carried by the victorious competitors, conspicuously exposed to view, and probably neither the umpires nor the company would keep step *quite* so well as on the outward march. The muskets would then be stored in a room hired for the purpose, wherein the company assembled at stated periods to learn the musket and broadsword exercise and other martial lessons, until the next autumn brought round another holiday.

"You see," said George's informant, "the target companies generally take their holiday in the fall, and any day in the week in that season you may meet a dozen of them in different parts of the city."

And, even as he stood, George saw four different companies march past. First came the "Eagle Fireman's Target Company" (the young men of this company wearing their fireman's uniform), then the Vestal Fire Insurance Target Company," then the "Weekly Times Target Company," and lastly the "Jones and Robinson Whole-

sale Clothiers Target Company; "and when, at length, the young Englishman resumed his stroll, he mused over the national love of military display manifested, travestied, if you will, in the exhibition of these bands of peaceful, hard-working clerks and artisans, thus playing at soldiers for amusement. How few of those young men how few of the lookers-on, thought that little more than ten years would pass over their heads ere those among them who would be still living would be called upon to become soldiers in earnest, and to array themselves in mortal combat, not against a foreign foe, but against their own countrymen!

Yet there were many thoughtful, earnest men who even then could read the signs of the times, and who felt that the "irrepressible conflict," of which newspaper men wrote, and "stump-orators" and party politicians talked so flippantly, was not a mere myth, a bugbear, or a bunkum simile, to be introduced into a leading article, or to create a sensation at a public meeting at election-time, or during an anti- or pro-slavery demonstration, as the case might be, but a terrible reality. The dark shadow in the distance was every day looming more darkly, and assuming a more tangible shape and more gigantic and frightful proportions—a spectral shadow, that was only biding its time, sooner or later, to assume substantial form, and to stride forth and spread ruin and desolation, misery, despair, and death, throughout one of the fairest lands on the face of the earth; that would bring fratricidal hatred in its train, and array father against son, and brother against brother, in deadly strife; that would steep the soil in blood, and carry mourning and desolation to almost every domestic hearth. The unthinking multitude dreamed nothing of all this, but, in blind security and ambitious pride, were ready to sacrifice justice, right, freedom, everything for the sake of maintaining the Union. It was a right object, but the nation had yet

to learn the folly and danger of seeking a right end by unrighteous means.

Yes; there were some wise and thoughtful men who even then foreboded what has since come to pass; and some men, thoughtful and far-seeing, but, alas! *not wise*, who foresaw what would come to pass, and strove to hasten its coming! though let us hope they were blinded in their frenzy to the nature of the horrors they sought to let loose to run havoc over their native land. But, at the period of which I write, the great body of the people would have laughed the prophecies of the wise and thoughtful to scorn, and have deemed them impossible.

But was not this passion for military title and martial display, which has ever been prevalent among the people of the United States of America, symbolical of the actual military spirit that pervaded a people whose government was professedly a government that inculcated peace and moderation, and who had had as yet, since the dark days in which they achieved their independence—happily for themselves, and perhaps happily for surrounding nations—comparatively little experience of the stern, dread realities of war?

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT THE NEWSPAPER-OFFICE.

CROSSING the street from the railings of the park towards Barnum's Museum—which, decorated with the flags of all nations, and with immense gaudily-painted pictures, larger than life, of the wonderful curiosities to be seen, or supposed to be visible within, draws the attention of the passers-by by the clang of its brass band; the

musicians, seated in the balcony in front of the building, pouring forth, almost incessantly, a succession of shrill, though not always harmonious strains—George Neville continued his stroll down Broadway. As he passed Trinity Church, opposite Wall Street, the clock pointed to the hour of ten, and, perceiving that he had still some hours to spare ere he could reasonably expect to see the editor of the "Broadway Gazette," he walked on, through Washington Square, into the Battery Park. The breeze blew fresh off the river, and the young Englishman was delighted with the prospect from the promenade within the enclosure. For the first time that morning since he had set forth from the hotel on his stroll, he lost that sense of newness which pervades everything in the cities of the United States, and which, however advantageous it may be in reality, is not pleasing to the eye of a stranger. The trees in the Battery reminded him of those in the old parks at home, and the shade they afforded, and the fresh sea-breeze that blew from the harbor, and the view of the harbor itself, dotted with shipping, and with the beautiful shores of Staten Island in the distance, and of Governor's and Bedloe's Islands and forts near by, were alike grateful to him after his long, dusty walk through the city. From the Battery he passed on along the wharves on the shores of the East River, at which lie the largest vessels that visit the port of New York.

With the wharves, however—dirty, dingy, frequently dilapidated wooden structures—he was greatly disappointed. He had expected to find the accommodations for the shipping in such a port as New York—the largest in the Western Hemisphere, and one of the largest in the world—commensurate with the size and importance of the city. But magnificent stone wharves and stately docks are not absolutely necessary in New York, where the ebb and flow of the tide is comparatively trifling, and where the ships

are protected from heavy seas and destructive storms by the natural formation of the harbor. It will generally be found that, where immense sums of money have been expended in constructing magnificent and costly docks and wharves, as in London and Liverpool, Montreal, or Calcutta, they have been needed for protection and security in the first place. Still strolling onwards until he reached the Fulton Ferry, he turned up Coenties (Quinties) Slip into Wall Street, whence he once more emerged into Broadway, opposite Trinity Church. It was now nearly time to visit the newspaper-office; but first he called at the General Post-office, to see if any letters were awaiting him there. Here another disappointment awaited him, not with regard to his letters—for there were two letters from Acton awaiting his call—but in the post-office itself, which was an old church situated in Nassau Street, one of the narrowest and most crowded thoroughfares in the business portion of the city; a dilapidated, dirty, ill-ventilated building altogether, and in every respect inadequate to the requirements of such a city as New York.

"Chatham Street, New York," muttered George Neville, glancing at the letter he had received from the editor and proprietor of the "Broadway Gazette," as he came forth from Nassau Street. "Now whereabouts is Chatham Street, I wonder?" He was again standing opposite Barnum's Museum. A stalwart policeman, habited in a uniform closely resembling the undress uniform of a naval officer, with a formidable truncheon openly exposed at his side, and with a light switch-cane in his hand, was still intent upon the pleasing duty of assisting well-dressed ladies across the crowded and somewhat dangerous thoroughfare between St. Paul's church and the museum, as he had been when the young Englishman passed him on the same spot a couple of hours earlier. George wondered whether the man was prompted by his native gallantry, or whether this was really his official

duty; though he had his doubts as to the probability of the latter explanation, inasmuch as he remarked that unless an unfashionably-dressed female chanced to be young and remarkably good-looking, she was invariably overlooked by the gallant officer in smart blue surtout and bright gilt buttons.

Watching his opportunity, however, at a moment when the policeman was disengaged, he stepped up to him and inquired the way to Chatham Street.

"Vat is't dat you haf no eyes dat you can't zee dat der Chadham Street ist der street to der richt ven you skall pass der City Hall?" answered the policeman in a surly tone of voice. "Vat vanst you den, wid der Chadham Street?"

"I want the office of the 'Broadway Gazette.'"

"Ya! Der 'Proughtvay Gazette?' Goot. You skall go down der street to der richt, and you skall see von pig house, mid a lamp before der door to der left den you skall ask der little boy, dey skall tell you vich ist der 'Proughtvay Gazette.' Ya!"

George was surprised to hear the tones of High or Low Deutsch proceeding from the lips of a New York policeman, but subsequently he ascertained that, despite the ample pay and the really handsome uniform of the American police, the office is considered as something of a degradation in the estimation of the native-born Americans, and the ranks of the lower order of policemen are chiefly filled by adopted citizens—natives either of Ireland or Germany, as a general rule.

He found, however, that he had been rightly directed. He was close to Chatham Street, which branched off from Broadway, on the opposite side of the City Hall, as he might have seen for himself had he used his eyes. Why he should ask for information of a "littel boy," when he had reached the building in which the office was situated, was, however, a mystery to him, until he found

that the house was occupied by the editors of several newspapers, each of whom had separate flats. The "Broadway Gazette" editorial rooms were on the first floor, and its printing-establishment was in the rear; the ground-floor was occupied as an advertisement-office, and the upper floors were let out to weekly newspaper proprietors, whose journals were printed at the "Gazette" office.

George was directed to the advertisement-office, the door of which stood open. The office was crowded with men and women offering advertisements for insertion, and behind the counter which crossed its centre two clerks were entrenched, both of whom were as busy as possible.

"Situations—four lines or less—three insertions, fifty cents," said one of the clerks, in reply to a question put by a young woman, who looked like a servant out of place, as George entered the office.

"All ads. must be prepaid," the clerk went on; "and all ads., except situations wanted, are ten cents a line each insertion."

"Letters for 'T. S.,' please?" cried a young woman, who was vainly endeavoring to push through the crowd to the counter. "There's a many, I see, in the box" (meaning the lettered pigeon-holes behind the clerks).

"Stand back, miss. Wait your turn," said the clerk. "Ads. first served. Them's money down. Answers must wait."

"I paid money down when you took the advertisement," answered the girl. "You was ready 'nough to tend on me then."

"In course I was. Your money had to *come*: now it's been *paid*. Come, you're a good-looking girl. Here's your letters—three of 'em. I wish you luck. Now stand back and make room for others."

The girl retired with her letters.

"Now, sir, what can I do for you?" asked the clerk, addressing George.

"I wish to see the proprietor of the 'Gazette,'" answered the young Englishman.

"Oh, you do, do you? Well, then, mister, you'd best take the cars, or the steamer if you want to go cheap, to Albany to-night; and to-morrow morning, about ten o'clock, I guess you'll find the boss lobbying in the House of Assembly. If he aint' there, you'll find him in the Senate a-palavering with some old senator—eh, Jinks?" (to his fellow-clerk), and both young men laughed aloud.

"Can I see the editor, then, if the proprietor is not in town?" asked George.

"Which editor? There is half a dozen on 'em."

"I don't know his name; but I have a letter from the editor and proprietor, in which I am requested to call at the office."

"Oh, a letter? He must mean the Kurnel—eh, Jinks?"

"Ay; I guess so," said the second clerk.

"Third door down the court, mister; up two flights of stairs; turn to the left; second door to the right ag'in, is the Kurnel's room. Now, boss" (to a stranger who entered the office at this moment), what do *you* want?"

George Neville left the office, and, turning into a court near by, followed the direction until he came to a landing, from which two passages diverged. Both, however, were on the left-hand side, and both were equally dark and narrow. He took the nearest to the stairs, and followed it until he came to a door upon one of the panels of which "Editor's Room" was painted. Here he tapped, and a voice answered, "Come in."

Entering at the word, the young Englishman found himself in a large, carpeted room, one side of which was occupied with well filled bookshelves, and the other three

with desks, at each of which a gentleman was seated, busily writing.

"I wish to see the editor of the 'Broadway Gazette,'" said George, addressing the gentleman nearest to him, who, now looking up from his writing for the first time, said—

"The editor—which editor, sir?"

George was puzzled.

"I have received a letter apparently written in the joint names of the editor and proprietor of the paper," he replied. "They wished to have an interview with me in New York. I have come expressly to see them from Acton, New Hampshire."

"Ha! New Hampshire? Anything about the election? I have received a hint that the Democrats are about to bring forward a New Hampshire man?"

In a moment the attention of every one in the room was directed towards the visitor, whom they evidently believed had come with some secret information respecting the movements of the Democratic party, the "Broadway Gazette" being a "Henry Clay Whig" journal—*sang pur*.

"No," answered George, smiling at the notion of his being taken for an electioneering agent, or rather for a secret emissary, a spy from the enemy's camp. "I have come on private business of my own."

"The gentleman must want to see the Colonel," said the spokesman of the party. "What name was signed to the letter, sir?"

"No name was signed to the letter," said George. "The editor or proprietor wished to see me."

"Hem! Judge Winterbury is up at Albany," continued the speaker. "I am the city editor. That gentleman," glancing at a gentleman in a clerical-looking garb, seated near him, "is the literary editor. But perhaps if I saw the handwriting?"

George handed the letter to the speaker.

"Ha!" he said. "As I suspected. That is the Colonel's fist. You have taken the wrong turning, sir. The chief editor's—Colonel Wilton's—room is at the end of the other passage. Doctor Jenkins," he said, addressing a young man seated at the farthest desk, "be so good as to show this gentleman to the Colonel's room."

The gentleman thus addressed rose, and requested George to follow him; the other editors resumed their writing, and George bowed and left the room with his conductor. The doctor led the way, by a short cut, to a door at the end of the next passage, on which the word "Private" was painted. Here he tapped gently.

"Who is there?" cried a voice from within.

"Doctor Jenkins, sir," was the response.

The door was unlocked from the inside, and an elderly gentleman, with a pleasant and somewhat jovial expression of countenance, and with white hair, beard, and whiskers, who wore a green shade over his eyes, said—

"Come in, Doctor. News from Albany, eh? Has Winterbury telegraphed? Ha!" (catching sight of George). "This is Mr. Jackson, I presume? Glad to see you, sir. How does the railroad bill progress? When did you see the Judge? Winterbury wrote yesterday that I might expect to see you if all went well. So I take your appearance as an augury of good news."

The Doctor had retired, and George, who, amidst the confusion of colonels, doctors, and judges, was somewhat bewildered, said—

"You are mistaken in me, I suspect, sir. My name is Neville—Mr. George Neville."

"Neville—Neville—Neville from Albany!" repeated the editor, with a puzzled air. "Did I catch the name aright, sir? I don't recollect a Neville in the Assembly, and you are too young for the Senate."

"Mr. George Neville, from Acton, New Hampshire,

sir," explained George. "You wrote me a letter the other day, I believe?"

"Oh, ah, yes—yes, to be sure," said the editor, after a moment's thought. "Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Neville. Step in and take a seat. We are just now greatly interested in a railroad bill that Judge Winterbury is trying to lobby through the Assembly at Albany, and I was a little puzzled. I was expecting a visit from one of our State Assembly men. Yes, I wrote you a letter. You sent me some very excellent papers, which I was glad to publish. I am only sorry we have not a vacancy in our staff. But we *may* have, soon. Excuse me, but I suspect you are an Englishman?"

"I am, sir, and but very lately from England," replied George.

"I thought so. Something in the style of your writing. Well, no matter: I don't care a fig what countryman a man is if he's smart. We Americans like to lend a helping hand to a 'clever' young fellow, as you would say in England; and, excuse me if I'm wrong, I thought to myself when I read your article, 'Now here's a young fellow wants to get an engagement on the press. He's got the stuff in him, and I'd like to give him a lift.' So I spoke to Winterbury. We couldn't find a vacancy just at this moment on the 'Gazette.' But the Reverend Mr. Wilmot, our literary editor, has had a 'call' to a church in Ohio, and we expect he'll accept it and be leaving us soon. So I happened to know that an election paper that is just started wanted a smart sub-editor, and I thought I'd give you the chance—that is, if you really want an engagement?"

"The offer, and the interest you have taken in a stranger, are certainly very kind on your part," said George. "I will candidly confess that I am not, as you have supposed, looking out for an engagement on the press. I have come to America on a long-anticipated visit to my

uncle, the Rev. William Upton, of Acton of New Hampshire, and the letters I sent you were written to amuse my leisure hours. Still, though not driven by necessity to seek employment of any kind, I had determined, if I remained in America, not to waste my time in idleness; and, having been educated for the law, which I dislike, I hardly know for what other profession I am adapted. If, however, you think that I am competent to fill such a situation as you propose, I know of no employment that will suit me better."

"That is well," said the editor; "candidly spoken, and I like candor. As to being fit, I am surprised to hear you say that you are not a member of the press. Your letters led me to think otherwise. I thought you had had long experience as a newspaper-writer. I have influence to obtain for you the post of which you ask. But I must be candid in my turn. The newspaper to which I allude may prove but an ephemeral affair. It may, or it may not, last over the election. It is not like a regularly-established newspaper, and the emoluments will consequently be comparatively small. Still the post will give you a capital opportunity to study our political system; in fact, it will give you an insight into the nature of American politics that you might not otherwise acquire in a ten years' residence among us. There is one thing, however, that I must ascertain: what are your political proclivities?"

"As an Englishman, I am not deeply versed in American politics, and have no political bias," answered George.

"I think much," replied the editor. "So much the better. Fortunately the paper to which I allude is a Democratic organ. I am a staunch Whig. However, as I have said before, if Mr. Wilmot should leave us, and you should dislike the party with whom you will be connected, or if the paper should die after the election as

is very probable, I will try and get you a post on the 'Gazette.' And now another question; do you think you can accommodate yourself to write up the Democratic party and their candidates?"

"As well as I could accommodate myself to write up any other party or candidate," said George; "having no predilections for, or prejudices against, any party. I rather think I shall like trying my hand at such work, though I am somewhat doubtful of success."

"No fear of that. Dash boldly in, and don't stand upon trifles," said the editor. "I will warrant your ability. Of course there is no necessity to let them know that you are an Englishman."

"I will do my best," replied George, "and I will support the interests of the paper as far as I can conscientiously agree with them."

"Well, then, call here to-morrow at this hour, and I will walk round with you to the nominal proprietor of the paper. I will not mention its title till to-morrow. And now let me give you a little insight into the character of the people you will have to deal with. The Democratic party, or rather certain ambitious and moneyed members of the party, will find money to carry on the paper, at least till the election is decided. The nominal proprietor of the paper is a shrewd printer, who will gain all and lose nothing by the venture. He has been the nominal proprietor of half a score of such newspapers already, and has made money out of all of them. You will easily manage matters so far as he is concerned. He is close, but he will be glad to get hold of a smart writer. With the editor you will have more difficulty, unless you are willing to permit him to claim the credit of your articles; for I may as well tell you at once the man is a pompous ignoramus, and you will really have to edit the paper. The difficulty will be that you will have to submit to his dictation. However, as an Englishman and a stranger,

without, I may say, any fixed ideas of your own respecting American politics, that may not give you much annoyance. I thought of that when I wrote for you. A real smart Yankee would hardly answer to fill the post. And now I will wish you good day, for I am very busy. You can think over what I have said, and if, after due reflection, you come to the conclusion to accept the post, call, as I have said, to-morrow, and I will introduce you to your future colleagues. I promise you that you will meet some originals; and if, as is often the case with your countrymen, you choose to take up one or two singularities as a sample of the peculiarities of our people, and to describe a few absurd scenes and an original character or two—such as may be met with any day in any society in England—you will be qualified, in the course of three or four weeks, to write a book upon America which will be about as truthful, and as characteristic of American society, as most of the books written by Englishmen—ay, and by Frenchmen too—after a six weeks' tour through our country."

The editor spoke these last words in a tone of vexation and bitterness that was strangely at variance with the tone and matter of his previous conversation, and that inclined George to imagine that he had, at one time or another, been made the butt or victim of the *cacoëthes scribendi* of some ambitious British tourist.

"I assure you, sir," said the young Englishman, with a smile, "that I have not the most distant idea of writing a book about America."

"I hope not; I hope not," replied the old gentleman. "At least, I hope you will not think of such a thing until you have lived some years among us and have learned to know us thoroughly."

"Then, to-morrow at this hour, Mr.—Colonel ———" The young man hesitated, somewhat embarrassed.

"Either Mr. or Colonel," said the editor, smilingly,

offering his hand to his young visitor. "Our supposed fondness for titles has been a favorite comment with European scribblers. However, I am a colonel of the New York State Militia."

"Then, Colonel Wilton," said George, as he took the editor's offered hand, "I will wait upon you to-morrow at this hour. I thank you very sincerely for the kind interest you have manifested in my behalf. It is as much as I could have looked for from a friend—more than I could have expected in a total stranger."

"I am glad to be able to make you the offer," replied the old gentleman. "I should, perhaps, be better pleased if, as I anticipated, you really needed help. I mean," he explained, with a smile, "if I had given help to one who really needed it—not that I *wish* you needed help. Whatever they may say of us Yankees," he went on, as if some secret injury he had received were still predominant in his memory, "we are always ready to lend a helping hand, without waiting to be asked, to those who need it and deserve it, let them be our own countrymen or strangers."

He again shook hands with George, and the young Englishman took his leave, and returned to his hotel to await the promised introductions on the morrow with no trifling degree of interest and expectation.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. PUFFINGTON'S INTENSE PATRIOTISM AND THOROUGH DEMOCRACY.

GEORGE NEVILLE was true to his appointment on the following day, and, on entering the editor's private room at the "Broadway Gazette" office, he was introduced by

the Colonel to a stout, portly-looking gentleman of about fifty years of age, with a florid complexion, and with features expressing a good opinion of himself.

"Good morning, Mr. Neville," said the Colonel. "Mr. Puffington," (addressing the stranger), "permit me to introduce you to Mr. George Neville, the young gentleman of whom we were speaking, and in whom I have no doubt you will find a valuable coadjutor, if, as I dare say will be the case, you and he can come to satisfactory terms."

"Glad to make Mr. Neville's acquaintance, Colonel," said Mr. Puffington, rising and offering his hand to George in a pompous, patronizing manner. "Though we differ in our political opinions, Colonel," he continued, "it is one of the happy prerogatives of our common country, sir—upon whose sacred soil the genius of Liberty has planted her foot, and over which she waves the banner of freedom, inviting the oppressed of all nations to gather beneath its glorious folds—I say it is one of the prerogatives of our common country that, though standing upon different political platforms, and entertaining different views as to the means whereby the spirit of liberty may be diffused abroad, far beyond the boundaries of our native land, carrying happiness and healing on its wings to the benighted and down-trodden millions of other nationalities; though over your platform presides the immortal Clay, while over mine hovers the spirit of the no less immortal Jackson,—so elastic is the nature of our Constitution that our political dissensions do not tend to the disseverance of those socialities which unite us as one common people; and such, sir, is my esteem for you, such my admiration of your abilities, that I am proud to accept as a coadjutor in my labors a gentleman whom you have recommended to me."

The Colonel bowed, but made no reply to this fine speech.

"And now, sir," continued Mr. Puffington, addressing himself to George, "I presume that our mutual friend has acquainted you with the nature of the duties you will be called upon to perform?"

"Colonel Wilton has given me a hint as to their nature," answered George; "but as yet I am ignorant even of the name of the newspaper of which you are the editor."

"I thought it best to leave you to make the necessary explanations after you had seen the young man," interposed the Colonel.

"Very good," replied Mr. Puffington. "You must know, then, young sir, that on Friday next (this day week) I purpose to publish the first number of a new Democratic paper, which will, I anticipate, fill up a void in political journalism that has long needed filling, and that will, in progress of time, become the guiding star of the great Democratic party, not only of this State, but of this great country—not only of this country, but of the world.

"To be the editor of such a paper as this, sir," continued Mr. Puffington, rising from his seat in his enthusiasm, and assuming a commanding attitude—"to stand the acknowledged champion of the great party it will represent, I hold to be a position superior to that of the President of this great country. Yes, sir, superior to any man's on earth."

Mr. Puffington resumed his seat, and looked at George as if he expected him to reply.

"I can readily conceive, sir, that the man who stands the acknowledged leader of the Democratic party—the party of progress I presume I may term it—must occupy a proud and, to ambitious minds, an enviable position."

"Very good, sir; very good," said Mr. Puffington. "I am glad to hear you make that acknowledgment. The party of progress; yes, very prettily expressed. I'll just

take a note of that. Now, sir, with Colonel Wilton's permission, I'll read the prologue with which I intend to usher the new journal, which I have called the 'Herald of Freedom,' into the world. The prologue is very brief, but I flatter myself it is terse, and to the point.

Again rising from his seat and stretching forth his right hand in an oratorical attitude, while he held a sheet of foolscap in his left hand, he commenced to read—

"*Aut Cæsar aut nihil.*" You will perceive I begin with a Latin quotation."

"I beg your pardon," said George. "I think you mean to say *Aut Cæsar aut nullus*?"

"*Nihil* is Latin, young man," said Mr. Puffington, frowning severely. "It means 'nothing.' I looked the word out in the dictionary. I was in hopes, sir, that you were a Latin scholar."

"*Nihil* is certainly a Latin word," answered George.

"But I thought merely you had made a slip in writing the quotation, which is usually written *Aut Cæsar, aut nullus*: 'Cæsar or no one—nobody.'"

"Of course it is, young man," said Mr. Puffington, severely; "but I consider 'nobody' a vulgar term. *Nihil*, nothing, is, in my opinion, more elegant and more original."

"More original, decidedly," said George.

"Ha! you acknowledge *that*? Well, sir, originality is everything nowadays. However, on second thoughts we'll expunge *nihil*, and insert *nullus*."

"*Aut Cæsar aut nullus.*" This was the expression made use of on a great occasion by the conqueror of the ancient world. He would be Cæsar, first in the world, or nobody. We apply the quotation to the great Democratic party—the party of universal progress—which must be *first*, or *nowhere*."

"In starting a new Democratic organ, it will be our chief object, as it is our proud resolve, to exalt that party

to its proper position, through its exponent, the "Herald of Freedom." We purpose—and, no doubt, we shall triumphantly effect our purpose—to elect a Democratic President, to elect a Democrat as the Governor of the Empire State, and to put Democrats into office everywhere. "To the victors belong the spoils" was the motto of the immortal Jackson. The principles that he held are *ours*, and we shall not rest contented until every policeman, every porter in the Government offices, is a true Democrat. And, having established Democracy on a firm and lasting foundation in our own State and country, it shall be our province to revolutionize the world, and make Democracy—glorious Democracy—the dominant principle in every country. Fellow-citizens and fellow-Democrats, to you we make our appeal. To accomplish this glorious result, it is only necessary that you shall rally round the "Herald of Freedom." Support us with your subscriptions, paid in advance. Support us with your advertisements. Let every Democrat persuade his friends to subscribe to the "Herald of Freedom." Let him spare no pains to uphold and encourage us—for *our* cause is *his own* cause—and the day is won. Democracy will stand triumphant, and, like the boa constrictor, will rear its proud head and hiss forth its jubulations, while it crushes its foes and vilifiers in its terrible coils. As a newspaper, the "Herald of Freedom," will yield to no journal, whether in the ability and scope of its leaders, the copiousness and exactitude of its domestic intelligence, or in the excellence and abundance of its foreign correspondence. In a word, it will be the aim of its editors and publishers to make it the leading journal of the day, while its price will be only two cents a copy."

"Then," continued Mr. Puffington, "I end as I began, with a Latin quotation: '*Nemo me impune lacessit.*'"

"Now I call that prospectus or prologue neat and to the purpose. I read it at Tammany Hall last night, and

the allusion to the boa constrictor was received with three cheers. What say you, young sir?"

"I really am as yet unqualified to give an opinion," replied George. "I should have thought that the passage you speak of were better left out. To me the simile—likening the party to a boa constrictor—is not very complimentary."

"Ah, you don't understand us yet. The Colonel has told me in confidence, that you're an Englishman. You are not used to the flowers of speech that are so much admired in this free country."

"Perhaps not, answered George. "But you asked for my criticisms. With respect to the final quotation, I really don't see the application."

"Oh, it can be taken any way that people like. Very few will understand it. I didn't exactly understand it myself. I took it out of a book. A Latin quotation, you see, looks well."

The Colonel and George exchanged a smile.

"Now, Mr. Puffington," said the former, "had not you and this young gentleman better come to some agreement? About duties, and terms, and so forth, I mean."

"Well, as to terms," replied Mr. Puffington, "of course our expenses will be heavy till we get fairly started, consequently the remuneration will be small at first. But, if Mr. Neville does his duty satisfactorily, I don't mind saying fifteen dollars a week to begin with."

"What will be the duties required of me?" asked George.

"Well—the duties. Let me see. Yes. You'll be expected to write a leader occasionally, when I'm too much occupied, you see; and to report at public meetings and at the courts, and so forth; and, of course, to attend to the foreign correspondence when the ocean steamers arrive."

"Rather heavy duties," said George, with a smile.

"However, I'll try my hand. But I don't exactly understand about the foreign correspondence. Do you mean that I shall arrange the letters for publication? Or will they be written in foreign languages, and need translation? In the latter case I must know what correspondence you have, that I may know whether I shall be capable to undertake the task."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the editor of the "Herald of Freedom." "I understand from the Colonel that you were acquainted with foreign languages. If you are not, I must look up somebody who is, and there's little time to spare."

"I merely judged from Mr. Neville's letters that he was familiar with French and Spanish—possibly with German," said the Colonel.

"So far you were right, sir," answered George. "Though my knowledge of German is limited. Still I dare say I can translate a German letter freely, if not literally."

"And what more will be required?" said the editor, rubbing his hands, and appearing to be greatly relieved.

"Then I am to understand that your foreign correspondents will write, each in his own language?" said George.

"Oh no, my dear sir. You are quite in error," returned the editor. "In fact, they won't write at all. Dear me, no! We couldn't afford foreign correspondents on a newly-started Democratic paper. It would be ruinous, my dear sir—absolutely ruinous."

George was completely nonplussed.

"I understood you to say that I was to look after the foreign correspondence of the newspaper?" he said.

"Just so. Perfectly right. You see—between ourselves. I don't mind the Colonel: he's up to the move, I dare say. But we new beginners ain't like him. He can have real correspondents in all parts of the world.

We can't do no such thing. Fact, you and I, Mr. Neville, will constitute the whole staff of the paper, for a time, at least. Now I'm not up to any foreign lingos. I don't mind telling *you* so, in confidence. So I'll subscribe for the leading English and foreign journals, and when the mails come in you'll make up a spicy letter out of their columns. Translate anything that'll take, you know, and put in the form of a letter. D'ye see what I mean.

"I understand," said George; "and I dare say I could undertake the task, though it will be a difficult one. But will it be honest?"

"Honest?"

"Yes; honest to your readers, whom you lead to believe that you will have established correspondents abroad?"

"But, my good sir, the public believe no such thing. They know that it is the usage sometimes to throw foreign items into the epistolary form. This is a practice not unknown in Europe. We *may* have foreign correspondents some day, if the speculation is successful."

"That makes no difference in the dishonesty of the practice in my opinion," said George. "However, that rests between you and your readers. If they understand that this 'correspondence' is not at first hand, but compiled from various sources, they deceive themselves. *Populus vult decipi et decipiatur*. I will undertake the duties that you propose, but not for the remuneration you offer. I am happily not driven to that. And if I do undertake the task, and the question as to the reality of the correspondence is put to me, I will tell the truth."

"It ain't likely anybody'll ask," said the editor; "and though you drive a hard bargain, still it ain't easy to get anybody to do the duty required; so I suppose I'll have to make a rise. What do you say to twenty dollars, young man?"

"I will take upon myself the duties you propose for a salary of twenty-five dollars a week," answered George. "Not for a cent less."

"Well, then, I suppose we must say twenty-five dollars," replied the editor. "There are some parties in Wall Street who will have to pay the damages, that's one comfort. Now, one word more, young sir. You are aware that the great object of the 'Herald of Freedom' will be to support the candidates of the National Democratic party in the coming election? You have, I presume, no Whig or 'Know-nothing'* proclivities?"

"I have no proclivities of any kind. I speak, of course, of American politics. So far, therefore, as I am concerned, I am free to exert myself, to the best of my ability, to support the candidates brought forward by the Democratic party, always providing that I am expected to write nothing that is repugnant to my notions of right and justice."

"That is well. You see," continued the editor, "I shall be so steeped in business, my time will be so much occupied, my position will lead me so much into society, that I shall not often have time to write up my articles in my customary pointed and polished style. What I chiefly require is the assistance of a person of education, who will take up my crude ideas and put them into shape in a concise and elegant manner. I will furnish you with *material*; and if you can furbish up my ideas in a satisfactory manner, we shall agree famously. But I must go now. I have a thousand matters to attend to. If you will call at the office of the 'Herald of Freedom,' in Nassau Street, to-morrow, say at two P. M., we will arrange matters for the appearance of the first number of the journal."

George promised to call at the office at the appointed

*The "Know-nothings" was the quaint name given to a party during the election of President Pierce, whose object was to exclude foreigners from the right of American citizenship. It soon fell to pieces.

hour, and Mr. Puffington, after shaking hands with the Colonel, and performing the same ceremony in a more pompous manner with the young Englishman, hurriedly quitted the room.

"Now there goes one of those men who bring ridicule and contempt upon our country," said the colonel. "Men of his stamp are, of course, to be found in every country; but with us, from the peculiar construction of our social system, they have an opportunity to raise themselves to a more prominent position than they could attain to in Europe. Selfishness and conceit are at the root of that man's every action. His pompous pretensions, a certain ponderosity in his appearance and in his style of speech, a self-sufficiency of manner, combined with a very superficial knowledge of politics, and a certain degree of innate shrewdness which enables him to take advantage of every turn in the tide of affairs, give him weight with those classes who form the bone and sinew of the Democratic party of the North; yet he would sell his party to-morrow if he could see clearly that by so doing he could reap any immediate personal advantage to himself. However, you will get along with him well enough, provided you make him see that you are useful to him and do not become too subservient to his will."

"No fear of that, sir," said George. "But I have taken a pretty heavy task upon my shoulders."

"Perhaps a heavier task than you are aware of," replied the Colonel. "I very much doubt whether you will not have to *find* ideas, as well as to lick *his* ideas into shape. However, if you can manage the work for a few months, you will have the best possible opportunity to study the workings of our Constitution during the forthcoming election; and, take it all in all, you got better terms out of him than I expected. You will have some difficulty with him, though, unless you are firm. Some of his notions are preposterous. What do you think he was argu-

ing when you came in? There have lately been several new appointments to professorships in some of our colleges, and a gentleman, every way fitted for the post, has been appointed to a professorship in Girard College, Philadelphia. Now Mr. Puffington is a Pennsylvanian, and the gentleman to whom I allude is opposed to him in politics. He was lamenting over this gentleman's preferment, which he insisted he never would have received had the question been put to a fair vote of the people.

"'But, my dear sir,' said I, 'surely you would not have men elected by the vote of the people to scientific preferments? Nine-tenths of the people could not have the slightest knowledge of the fitness of a candidate for such an office.'

"'I would, decidedly I would,' he replied. 'I would confer degrees, I would appoint men to professorships, I would elect men to every office, no matter what might be the nature of that office, by the popular vote, and in no other way. *Vox populi*, Colonel, the popular voice is the only one that should be listened to in a free republic.*

"To attempt to argue with him on his folly was vain, and I was really growing angry with him when you fortunately entered the room and put an end to the absurd argument."

"You don't give me much encouragement, sir," said George, laughing at the idea of submitting men of scientific attainments to a popular vote. "However, I will do my best. It will be both employment and amusement to me; and if I find the task I have undertaken too laborious or irksome, I can but resign my engagement. But I rather think I shall like it."

"And recollect," said the Colonel, as he and George

* A literal fact. The writer may take this opportunity of stating that, in mentioning political parties or personages, he does so with no purpose either of praise or blame, but solely because he could not avoid introducing names, in giving a truthful report of his own observation and experience in the States at that period.

shook hands at parting, "should a vacancy occur on the 'Gazette,' you have the refusal of it. I have taken a fancy to you, and I shall be glad to serve you in any way that may be in my power."

CHAPTER XX.

MESSRS. NETTLETOP AND SWOOP HOLD A CONSULTATION, AND MR. SWOOP CONCEIVES A PLAN.

GEORGE NEVILLE entered with spirit upon the various duties he had undertaken to perform, and, during the two months that elapsed before the election-day came round, he contrived to gain a pretty fair insight into the working of the political system of the United States; and, moreover, as he was really necessary to the chief editor, he was enabled to stand his ground, and successfully to resist any attempt at imposition on the part of Mr. Puffington.

He corresponded regularly with his uncle and aunt and his cousin Mary, and had arranged to pay them a visit in the ensuing spring, and he was also a frequent visitor at Stuyvesant House; but though he was urged by his cousin Ellen to take up his residence with them, he resisted her solicitations, and contented himself with a less expensive domicile than the Widow Lyman's select and luxurious establishment. Meanwhile, matters were progressing in other quarters which had an important bearing upon the *dénouement* of this history.

Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop, whom we have entirely lost sight of for some time, had passed into comparative retirement after they had resigned the stewardship of the Van Broek property.

It was generally believed that there were good reasons

why they had quietly resigned the remunerative agency without making the slightest effort to retain office under the new patroon. Their friends declared that they had been shamefully treated by Mr. Van Broek, who had placed the agency of the estates in the hands of a stranger, after they had held it for so many years and had so vastly improved the property; but there were others, and these were in the majority, who held that Mr. Van Broek had acted very leniently in not demanding a strict account of their stewardship, which would have led to disclosures by no means favorable to their character for honesty and integrity; they believed that Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop were only too glad to retire from the stewardship without question, and that they had contrived, during the many years the property had been under their control, to acquire an independence for themselves. Be this as it may, these gentlemen had conceived a bitter enmity towards the new patroon, and even affected to doubt, notwithstanding the overwhelming proofs brought forward to establish his identity, whether he was really the lawful heir.

They had removed their office from Albany to New York, where they occupied retired chambers in Nassau Street, nearly opposite the office of the "Herald of Freedom," and they now confined themselves to "criminal practice"—that is to say, to the defence of criminals of the meaner order; a lucrative, but by no means reputable branch of their profession. When the criminal courts were not sitting, one or the other of them was always travelling to and fro no one knew whither: in fact, their secrecy, and reticence, and the apparent mystery that surrounded their occupation, had become a matter of jest as well as of curiosity amongst their brethren of the profession in New York.

A few days before the general election Mr. Swoop was

seated alone in his office—for the partners kept no clerks now—when Mr. Nettletop arrived off a railway journey.

"Well, what news, Nettletop?" asked Mr. Swoop, before Mr. Nettletop had laid aside his mackintosh.

"None. Hunting after a mare's nest, was Mr. Nettletop's reply. "I'm beginning to think," he added with some acerbity of tone—"I'm beginning to think we've started on a false scent, and I've a good mind to do nothing further in the matter."

"You can get no information respecting the child, then?" said Mr. Swoop.

"Not a tittle. For my part I believe it's all moonshine. We're spending money to no purpose, Swoop, and I'll not consent to go to any further expense. I don't believe in the existence of the child."

"Still that letter?" said Mr. Swoop.

"Pooh!" An anonymous letter!" We don't know who was the writer. If he or she had anything to tell, why did we receive no reply to our letters and advertisements?"

"That is strange, I allow," replied Mr. Swoop. "Still let us have patience a little longer. Let us make one more effort. If that fail, I'll consent to give up the affair as a bad job."

"And waste more money in a wild-goose chase?"

"By spending a little more money we may regain what we have expended—increased tenfold."

"Or lose more than we have lost already?"

"You are too easily dispirited, Nettletop. You and I examined all the old family portraits at the Manor-house. They all bear a family likeness, and correspond—allowing for the difference of age—with the description, given by Dame Copley and Amos Jepson, of the personal appearance of the great-grandson of the old patroon Cornelius Van Broek, in his childhood and youth. Not one in the least resembles the present possessor of the property."

"Yes, one," replied Mr. Nettletop. "There is one that might have been painted for the present patroon when he was a child. The resemblance is marvellous."

"And that one nobody knows the history of. In my belief that portrait is a likeness of one of the junior branches of the family, not of one of the direct line."

"But think of the marks on the arm; the conversations held on board the 'Fakeer' with old Jepson; the possession of the certificates; the testimony of the witnesses. Depend upon it, Swoop, we're on a false scent."

"I never *will* believe in the miraculous change in personal appearance," persisted Mr. Swoop. "I do not believe we are at fault in our suspicions, notwithstanding the proofs of identity brought forward before the court; and there was an earnestness in that letter, which appeared to have been written by a person smarting under disappointment, which constrains me to have faith in it, in spite of our having received no further communications from the same party. He or she might have afterwards arranged matters with the patroon, and have had golden reasons for keeping silence. Now listen. I've conceived a plan since you've been away. Let us carry that out. I'll explain it to you by-and-by. If that fails, I promise to give in. But, having gone so far, and incurred so much expense, it would be a pity to draw back when, perhaps, we are on the very eve of success."

"Well, well, be it so. But you are too sanguine, Swoop. You always were. It was you who started this wild-goose chase after a child whom I believe to be a myth."

"And whom I believe to be a reality. Bah!" exclaimed Mr. Swoop, contemptuously; "you are the most faint-hearted creature, Nettletop, that ever I met with."

"Well, have your own way," replied Mr. Nettletop. "You always *will* have it, anyway. But, mind ye, the next shall be the last endeavor, so far as I am concerned."

You can prosecute the search as long as you please at your own expense, and at your own risk. *I* don't want to get into trouble, and we may both get into trouble before we have done with this foolish business; nor do I want to bring myself to ruin."

"No fear of either," said Mr. Swoop, as the two lawyers quitted their office together.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NIGHT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

THE election day came round at last; the great, the important day, big with the political destinies of the great republic; the day, early in the dark month of November, on which, ere the clock struck the hour of five P. M., it was decided which of the candidates in the field was to occupy the presidential chair on the ensuing 4th of March, and to which political party the destinies of the country were to be intrusted during the next four years. The Democrats had been so divided, and so split up into minor factions, that until within a few weeks of the great day, the Whigs, notwithstanding the early predictions of their certain defeat, had begun to hope for success. It certainly did seem strange that, with such a tower of strength opposed to them as the veteran statesman Daniel Webster, to say nothing of other candidates, the divided Democrats could hope to stand their ground; and it is probable that they would have lost the election had they not perceived their peril in time. But, fortunately for themselves, they did see their peril, and rallied and united their forces; and, discarding the well-known candidates, whose appearance had created the late jealous feelings among themselves, they brought forward a can-

didate of whom none were jealous, since little or nothing was known of his antecedents until they were now made public. Hope, however, lingered to the last in the breasts of the Whig party, and they still exerted every energy to secure success, though the country felt they were defeated before the polling had begun, while the Democrats, now confident of success, were frantic with glee.

All day long the office of the "Herald of Freedom" had been beset with eager questioners anxious to learn the state of the polls throughout the State and the country at large, reported every hour by telegraph from all parts of the Union. All day long liege Democrats—multitudes of whom were hardly able to speak the language of their adopted country, or who spoke it with a rich brogue that plainly told of their importation from the Emerald Isle—who had been brought up in shoals from the railroads, and canals, and public works, and dockyards, by train, and on board steamboats, and in barges, that they might poll their votes under the eyes of their leaders, had been rolling about the streets in a state of high jollification and semi-intoxication.

All day long flags and streamers had been flying from places of popular resort, bearing triumphant mottoes, and various devices that were intended to foreshadow the anticipated victory. All day long Tammany Hall had been ringing with cheers, as speaker after speaker had addressed the crowd outside from its balconies, while other speakers within had addressed those who gained admission to the ample assembly-room; and the "Pewter Mug"* adjoining had been overflowing, as relays of thirsty poli-

* The "Pewter Mug" is the name of a public-house adjoining Tammany Hotel, much frequented at election time, and on other exciting occasions. The writer, in these references to the disorderly classes in New York, means no disrespect to the American people. Similar scenes he has too often witnessed at English elections. In both countries he hopes that progress has been made within the last few years.

ticians sought its—for this day only—hospitable bar. And when the early darkness of the November day began to overshadow the city, and (though the votes were not yet counted) it was known that New York city, at least, had returned an overwhelming Democratic majority, the elation began to exceed the bounds of decorum.

The State had yet to be heard from; but—"As goes New York city, so goes the State!" was the jubilant cry. Bands of music, followed by joyous, exultant crowds, paraded the streets after dark by torch-light, and cheered and serenaded the Democratic newspaper-offices and assembly-rooms as they passed by. The city firemen (then chiefly Democrats) brought out their engines, gaily decorated with artificial wreaths and with flags of various colors; and the men, arrayed in their red shirts and helmets, many carrying a flaming torch, dragged the engines through the streets, their bells ringing merrily as they rattled over the stones, and the men cheering vociferously. Guns were fired from the Park and from the Battery. Bonfires were lighted in the streets, and the city *gamins* danced their wild war-dances around the flames, and yelled forth their delight in a style that would have done credit to a party of Sioux Indians about to set forth on a war-trail; and everywhere throughout the city rang forth the jubilant cry—

"Hooray for Franklin Pierce! Three cheers for Franklin Pierce! Hooray! hooray!"

And as it grew later, and the reports began to come in from the different sections of the State—and from every city and every district came the news of a Democratic majority—the excitement and tumult increased. The newspaper-offices, especially the offices of the Democratic newspapers, were thronged within and surrounded without by excited multitudes; the most staid and sober individuals were unable to restrain their feelings. It was impossible to get inside the office of the "Herald of Free-

dom; it was almost impossible to approach the office from the streets without. So eager were the crowd to hear the news that, on the arrival of every fresh telegram, a clerk had to mount a barrel and read it aloud to the excited populace; and every fresh telegram announced another triumph—was greeted with a shout that rent the air, and seemed to shake the surrounding buildings.

And when, still later in the evening, the reports began to come in from distant States, and every State, and almost every city and district in every State, announced an overwhelming Democratic vote, the people became frantic in their demonstrations of delight. Some laughed hysterically, some sobbed, some wept aloud with joy.

"That I should live to see this!" some voice would cry aloud. "Such and such a city, or district" (naming the place), "that has always voted Whig for a long succession of years, has gone over to the Democrats! What a triumph!" Congratulatory speeches were heard on all sides, and at each such speech three cheers were called for and given in honor of the returning city or district. Men who were perfect strangers to each other—who probably had never met before—seized each other's hands and wrung them in silence, too much overpowered by emotion to utter a word. At that moment to be a democrat was to be bound with Democrats in the bonds of friendship and brotherhood; and when, at last (not until long after midnight), the whole country was heard from, and it was known that, with one or two exceptions only, every State, and every section of every State, throughout the Union had given an overwhelming Democratic vote, and that the hitherto obscure country lawyer—Franklin Pierce, of the little village of Concord, New Hampshire—had been elected President of the United States by an overwhelming vote, such as never President had heretofore received, the triumph of the Democratic party was complete. It seemed to many too great a tri-

umph to be real, and the crowds that had thronged the streets began to disperse and to retire to their homes, apparently staggered by this unexpectedly decisive, unexampled party-victory.

On the following day, when the excitement began to cool down, vast sums of money changed hands; for many people in the United States, in this respect only too, much resembling certain classes in "the old country," are accustomed to bet heavily upon the results of the elections. Not only men of one party against men of another, not only for or against a certain candidate, but Whig will bet with Whig, and Republican with Republican, and Democrat with Democrat, and each and all one against another, upon the vote of such a State, or county, or town, or upon the number of votes such a candidate will receive, or upon the results of the election of a certain candidate—in any way and every way in which a bet can be made and money can be lost or won.

And then, when, at length, the returns from all the polls throughout the Union were complete, and the excitement had cooled down and began to die away, many who had been the most carried away by the frenzy of the moment, began to ask themselves, "Who is this Franklin Pierce over whose election we have made ourselves frantic with joy?" and to wonder at their enthusiasm.

Then came the cry, sadly ominous to many, "To the victors belong the spoils!"

The words sounded heavily in the ears of office-holders under the still existing Government. Well might they look blank; for full well they knew that no mercy would be shown by the victorious party. No plea would serve their turn. They might urge in vain that they had well performed their duty; that they had just mastered the difficulties of their post, and were, of all others, best fitted to fill it with satisfaction to the people and with bene-

fit to the State; that upon their exertions a wife and infant children, or aged parents, or infirm sisters, depended for their support, and that their dismissal from office would render them and theirs penniless: all would be in vain: "To the victors belong the spoils;" and every office-holder, from the heads of the Federal Government departments, or the United States ministers and consuls abroad, to the humblest clerk or porter, in the post-offices or custom-houses, would have to turn out on the ensuing 4th of March, to make way for their Democratic successors. And office-seekers also began to look blank; for well they knew that, for every vacant Federal office, however humble, there were twenty applicants at least, each one of whom considered that his claims upon the Government were greater than those of his rivals; and hundreds—ay, thousands throughout the Union—must be disappointed. And so, for several weeks, the excitement was kept up—though in another form; for weeks and months elapsed before it was really known who, amongst the numerous claimants, would be appointed to the vacated offices; and still, therefore, the "Herald of Freedom" flourished, for its columns were still required to keep the names of the aspirants for political appointments before the public, and to put forth their praises. And when at length, the 4th of March came round, bitter was the disappointment of those who found the doors of office closed against them.

Their fate, at the best, was to retire into obscurity and wait patiently for another term of four years, and meanwhile to plot and scheme in secret for the next Presidential election. For, in the United States, where a quadrennial rotation of Federal Government office is regarded as a matter of course, there is a large class of men in every grade of society who make a trade of politics. These men, if of the humbler classes of politicians, lead for the most part, a miserable, starveling sort of existence,

and, for the mere chance of obtaining a four-years' tenure of office, are compelled to resort to the poorest shifts and subterfuges, and often to submit to disappointment term after term, living meanwhile by their wits as best they can. And when, among the poorer classes, the coveted prize is obtained, they are often so deeply involved in debt that they find themselves utterly unable to repair their shattered fortunes before they are again cast adrift to await the turn of fortune. Yet, like gamblers, whom they in some sort resemble—like gamblers, as in a certain way they are, these men are content to live this miserable yet exciting life. They are, in fact, generally speaking, unfitted for any other occupation; for it is rarely the case that a man, be he a professional man, a clerk, or a mechanic, who has once quitted his profession or calling to wrestle for a prize in the arena of politics, is ever again able to turn his attention to any steady, industrial pursuit. As politicians, sometimes basking for awhile in the sunshine of office, much oftener struggling for bare existence, they live and die.

CHAPTER XXII.

CAPE COD—CAPTAIN JACK'S COTTAGE.

CAPE Cod, Massachusetts, situated about forty miles southward from the city of Boston, is a narrow, horn-shaped promontory, about one hundred miles in length from the village of Yarmouth to its extreme end, and varying from three or four miles to ten or twelve miles in breadth. Its outward curve serves to shelter a wide surface of water, known as Barnstable Bay, from the rude waves of the North Atlantic Ocean, and to render the

bay a safe and commodious harbor, capable of affording shelter to a fleet of a thousand vessels at a time, and protecting them from storms, from whatever quarter they may arise.

To the navigator out at sea, the southern and eastern shores of Cape Cod present a cheerless, desolate aspect. Nothing but sand-banks are visible, in some places level with the water's edge, in others rising to the height of from fifty to a hundred and fifty feet, but in all places serving merely as a breakwater to the waves of the ocean when lashed into fury by the force of the wind. There are no harbors along this line of coast, and no human habitations are to be seen, save where here and there, at wide distances apart, a wreck-house is visible, adding to the general aspect of desolation rather than enlivening the prospect. For these wreck-houses are mere strongly-built wooden sheds, erected by the Government for the purpose of affording temporary shelter to unfortunate seamen who may have suffered shipwreck on this dismal coast, until they are able to communicate with the inhabitants of the neighboring villages. The very sight of them sends a chill to the heart of the seaman; for though in time of peril and distress they would afford him shelter, they tell dismal tales of shipwreck and suffering, which, if his vessel stands nearer in shore, the coast itself will verify; for there is scarcely a mile of sand-bank without its signs of wreck, in the shape of the broken timbers of some ship that has at one time or another been cast upon the shore. These wreck-houses are simply supplied with a strong door, and a windowless aperture, with equally strong shutters. Each house contains a large stove and a supply of fuel; and, on ordinary occasions, this is all.

When, however, wintry storms have long prevailed upon the coast, and disasters at sea are anticipated, blankets and tarpaulins, and a quantity of provisions, under the

charge of a wreck-master, who visits from one wreck house to another, are supplied to relieve the immediate necessities of those who may be unfortunate enough to need such relief. Yet, dismal as is this coast, there stands at the extreme end of the promontory a lofty lighthouse, whose beacon-light can be seen far out at sea, which points the way to the secure shelter of Barnstable Bay; and within the bay there are several small snug fishing-ports, and, barren as the eastern coast of the Cape appears, its opposite shore is lined with pleasant, thriving villages, its soil within the line of sand-banks is sufficiently fertile and the scenery is in many places really picturesque. The male inhabitants of Cape Cod are half farmers and half fishermen, and the Cape has always been regarded as the nursery of United States seamen. In summer-time most of the able-bodied adults of the Cape are absent with their fishing-vessels on the banks of Newfoundland, and in the winter and spring they attend to their little farms on shore, leaving them to the care of the women in summer, and generally returning home in time to gather in their autumn crops. They are a hardy, frugal race of people, generally in comfortable circumstances; for, though few of them are accounted wealthy, even according to their modest notions of wealth, few or none are too poor to own a cottage, and a few acres of land and a share in a fishing-vessel.

There is, however, an aristocracy even upon Cape Cod. Many of the young men, too ambitious to confine themselves to the narrow duties of a fisherman's life, leave home and take long voyages to distant countries. Among these, some rise to be captains or owners of large vessels, and, after having acquired a competence, return to end their days in peace and quiet amongst the scenes of their youth; and these old skippers are the aristocrats and oracles of their native villages. Then, again, in the summer season, some few pleasure-seekers from the cities,

who prefer the quiet and simplicity, and perhaps the comparative cheapness of living, at Cape Cod, to the more costly and fashionable resorts of Niagara Falls, Newport, or Saratoga Springs, come to reside for a few months at some one of the pretty little villages on the Cape, and thus impart to them something of the aspect of a watering-place. So, after all, Cape Cod is by no means an undesirable spot whereupon to reside.

Some time about the date at which my story commences, there came to reside on Cape Cod a middle-aged sea-captain, who went by the name of "Captain Jack." Captain Jack took up his abode in the vicinity of the little village of Wellfleet, where he purchased a snug little cottage, and some half-dozen acres of land, part of which he turned into a garden, while part served as pasture-ground for a cow, and for a farmyard, in which he kept pigs and chickens. His cottage was plainly but comfortably furnished, after the style of the cottages of the other sea-captains who lived near him, and the few pieces of ornamental furniture which adorned the parlor and bed-rooms were of a similar description to those to be found in the cottages of his neighbors.

Nautilus and other choice sea-shells from foreign shores ornamented the mantelpieces. The jaw-bone of a shark, a stick made out of a shark's back-bone, and the dried, tattooed head of a South Sea Islander ornamented the parlor-walls, together with a few pictures representing nautical scenery. On the sideboard were arranged a cup formed from an ostrich-egg, a dried flying-fish with extended wings or fins, the tooth of a whale, several models of ships, Indian pipes of every variety, and a number of similar curiosities too numerous to particularize, but all possessing a salt-sea flavor; and over the chimney-piece hung a musket, a pair of pistols, and a ship's cutlass.

The captain was a widower—or so he represented himself to be, after he had resided for some time at Wellfleet.

But, though a sufficiently jovial companion when in company with his brother-skipper in the parlor of the "General Washington" tavern, where he and some half-dozen others of his class were wont to assemble every evening to smoke their pipes and drink their grog, and tell long yarns of days gone by, he was somewhat reticent respecting his early life. The utmost that was known about him, after he had lived at Wellfleet for two years, was that he was not, as were most of his companions, a native of Cape Cod, or at least, he was not so far as he knew; for, though he was an American by birth, he had some doubts as to what part of the United States he was born in.

In fact, Captain Jack seemed to be a man of doubts; for, as it was evident that he was sufficiently well off in the world, and as he was a widower and childless, and moreover as he was stout and hearty, and far from being either an old or an ill-looking man, certain of the Cape Cod widows (and, owing to the somewhat hazardous lives led by the male population, Cape Cod is famed for an undue proportion of widows) laid siege to the captain's affections before he had been many months a resident of the village. However, they received no encouragement, and gradually they gave up the attempt, and looked upon him as not a marrying man. One widow, with two small children, was more persevering than the rest. Again and again she returned to the charge, even going so far as to speak of the advantages he, who was so fond of children, would gain by accepting her hand, and becoming at once both a husband and a father. At length the poor, persecuted captain was driven to the wall. It seemed to him that he must either accept the widow and her two children, or show some good and sufficient reason why he was unable to do so.

"Marm," he said to the widow, one day when she had been more than usually pertinacious in her advances, and

proved to him the numerous advantages he would gain by again entering into the bonds of matrimony,—“Marm, all what you says is, I dare say, very true. I *am* fond o’ children—that’s a fac’; and if I wor so disposed, I mought as well take *you* for a wife, with the fam’ly all ready to hand, as nary ’nother. But, marm, if you must know, I’m not sartin if I *am* a widderer; and I don’t want to be ’dighted fur bigamy, or whatsumever they calls it. And more’n that, marm, thar’s objections which makes the matermonial question quite onpossible. But I tell you what: if ever them objections is clar’d up, and I’m in the same mind, and don’t see nobody as I prefers, I’ll give *you* the refusal.” And after this explanation the captain was no more troubled by the Cape Cod widows.

Captain Jack’s household consisted of himself, an elderly female who looked after the household duties, and a very aged man-servant, named Bill Brail, who had been a sailor all his life, and had sailed with the captain for many years. Bill Brail looked after the garden, milked the cow, and fed the pigs and chickens, taking his time about all these tasks—for he was growing very feeble—and smoking his pipe in the chimney-corner when they were finished. Several attempts were made by the villagers to learn something respecting the antecedents of the captain by questioning Bill, at the same time bribing him with a glass of grog; but Bill, who was very deaf, was still more taciturn than his master. He drank the proffered grog, but turned his deaf ear to the questions, or returned totally irrelevant answers. Bill, as was most probable, knew nothing respecting the early life of the captain, or if he did know anything about it, he chose to hold his tongue. Thus matters stood until Captain Jack had been a resident of Wellfleet for nearly three years when suddenly his old housekeeper sickened and died.

There were, no doubt, many respectable females in Wellfleet who would have been very glad to take, and

who were very able to fill, the old housekeeper's place. But Captain Jack had a will of his own. The young women of the village didn't think it proper to reside alone in the cottage of a single man; the captain would not have a married woman for a servant, and, as he averred, he was afraid of the "widders." So he resolved to advertise in the New York papers, and to get a housekeeper from that city.

His advertisements brought him one letter, among others, that took his fancy. The writer said that, though she was very young, she believed herself fully competent to take the situation of housekeeper to the advertiser, as, though of late years she had suffered severely from poverty, she had seen better days. She said that a gentleman and lady residing in Brooklyn would bear testimony to her respectability, and would pay all her expenses to Wellfleet; but there was one thing that might prevent the gentleman from engaging her. She had in her charge a child—not her own child, but an orphan cousin—a little girl of six or seven years old, who, she (the writer) believed, had not a relative nor friend, excepting herself, in the world. If, she added, the child would not be looked upon by the advertiser as an incumbrance—and she was a very good and a very pretty child—she (the writer) would be ready to set out for Wellfleet at any moment; for she was a country-girl, and was sick and weary of the city.

Now there were two or three things in this letter which touched the feelings of the kind-hearted captain. The writer had said that she had suffered severely from poverty, and that she had known better days; and, though Captain Jack was very indifferently educated himself, he had sense enough to perceive, from the handwriting and style of the letter, that the young woman told the truth. Then the writer was young, and he liked to have young people about him, and there was a child—a pretty little

girl—towards whom he (the captain) could act the part of a father without having a "widder" to look after in the bargain. So Captain Jack determined to take a trip to New York, and see for himself what the young woman and child were like, and, if he were pleased with the young woman's appearance, to engage her at once, and bring both her and the child back with him to Wellfleet.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPTAIN JACK IN SEARCH OF A HOUSEKEEPER.

CAPTAIN JACK, like most sailors, was prompt and decided in action when once his mind was made up. Without having replied to the letter from the young woman who had responded to his advertisement, he came on forthwith to New York, sought out the lodgings—over a milliner's shop or "store" in Grand Street—whence the letter had been dated, and inquired for Nancy Slowbury, which was the name the writer had signed.

He was introduced to a young and interesting-looking woman, and a pretty, intelligent, blue-eyed, fair-haired little girl, both of whom at once took his fancy.

Nancy Slowbury had removed, after her uncle's funeral, from her former miserable lodgings in Mulberry Street, and had been supplied by Mr. Van Broek with money to clothe herself and the child in a respectable manner, the patroon insisting that his former friendship with her uncle gave her a claim upon him which it was his duty as well as his pleasure to respond to.

Even amidst her misery, grief, and destitution, Mr. Van Broek had been struck by the neatness of the young woman's appearance and the refinement of her manners and speech, and now she looked both ladylike and grace-

ful. Captain Jack felt satisfied at the first glance that she would suit him; still he was too old a sailor to strike his colors without a parley, and too blunt not to come to the point at once; while there was something so honest and truthful in his voice and appearance that forbade any one taking offence at what, in other persons, might have been resented as impertinent vulgarity.

"I guess you'll do, my lass," he said, after looking at and scanning her from every point of view, as he might have done a boat that he wanted to purchase. "You pear ship-shape and all ataunto. But you're very young: you're little mor'n a gal yourself."

"I am nearly twenty-one years old," replied Nancy, smiling in spite of herself at the Captain's bluntness of speech, "and I shall grow older every day."

"Very true, *my* lass—very true," said the Captain. "Truer words worn't never spoken. So you *ain't* the mother o' the little gal? I thought not. You're too young."

"I did not say that I was the mother of the child, sir," replied Nancy.

"No; very true. But d'ye know, my lass, I half suspectit you was a widder, and was comin' the dodge over me 'bout the cousin? Well, I likes yer looks, my dear, and I likes the looks o' the little 'un; and so, if yer aint no objections, we'll come to tarms at oncest. As to wages, we shant' quarrel 'bout wages. I kin afford to pay good wages, and I mean to, and I'll be a father to the little gal."

"My references——" the young woman began; but the Captain stopped her at once.

"Don't talk to me 'bout references, my dear. I take no count o' references and characters. Never shipped a hand afore the mast from a character in my life. Never wor tuk in when I trusted to my own judgment—very

often ha' been, when I trusted other folkses. If you like my looks so well as I likes yourn, the matter's settled."

Nancy was pleased with the Captain's honest, truthful face, and only too glad of the chance to get away from the city in which she had suffered so much misery. She replied that she would be very happy to accept the situation if she found matters as they were represented in the advertisement.

"If you don't, it's easy for ye to come back to New York," replied the Captain. "I ain't much to look at, and I ain't got no gift o' talkin'; but I'm upright and down-straight, and 'bove-board, and I take it how you're sim'ler. As to this little 'un" (taking the child's hand), "I've taken a great likin' to she, and I guess how we'll be fast-rate chums. What's your name, my dear?" (to the child).

"Alice, please sir—Alice Slowbury," replied the little girl.

"Alice!" exclaimed the Captain, the name wakening up the old train of doubt and mystery. "Now that's sing'ler, that is—that's uncommon sing'ler! Alice is a mighty pooty name, to my idees; and if I've got a child—of which I'm suthin' doubtful—and that child is a gal, most like that child's name is Alice! That's on-common sing'ler! And whar wor ye born, my dear?"

"Please, sir, I don't remember," timidly replied the child.

"Ah, very like not—very like not," said the Captain. "It's the same with me. I ain't got the least recollection where I was born."

"I believe little Alice was born in the East Indies, sir," said Nancy Slowbury; "but her parents—her father, at least—was, I suspect, an American."

"Humph! Now that *is* remarkable," said the Captain. "That is one o' the most remarkable sarcumstances as ever I knowed on! Do you know, my lass" (addressing

Miss Slowbury), "if ever I had a child, and that child a gal, that gal would ha' been born in Injee, and might be, more'n less, about the age o' this child. But, hark'ee my dear; if so be as the little girl is your cousin, surely you knows suthin' about her parints? Unless" (and Captain Jack beat the air with his forefinger, as if to give emphasis to his words) — "*unless, mind ye* — what I know from experience may well be the case—you hev your doubts 'bout the hull matter?"

"Little Alice, sir," explained Miss Slowbury, "is, to the best of my belief, the orphan child of an old friend of my lately deceased uncle. I am even doubtful as to her actual relationship to myself."

"Ah! yes, my dear—I see," said the Captain, as if Miss Slowbury's last words had settled the matter, and there was nothing more to be said about it. "It's one o' them 'ere cases o' doubt of which thar ain't nothin' to be knowed. Poor little crittur! Maybe she didn't hev no parints to remember."

"My uncle adopted her as his own child, sir, on the death of her parents, and I now claim her as my cousin," said Miss Slowbury.

"Very cred'able to bouth o' yer feelin's, my dear," replied the Captain. "In coorse yer couldn't let the child starve. 'Tud been right agin' natur."

"A gentleman," continued Miss Slowbury, "who knew my deceased uncle many years ago, in India, has been very kind both to me and the child. It was he who pointed out your advertisement in the 'Herald of Freedom' to me. His wife—though I have never seen the lady—has also been very kind."

"Very cred'able to *thar* feelin's," said the Captain.

"It is that gentleman and lady," Miss Slowbury went on to say, "who offer to become my references, and who have promised to pay my expenses to Wellfleet, should I accept the situation you offer."

"Avast a bit thar, my lass," replied the Captain.

"I told ye afore I want no references. I allus refer to a man's or a woman's featur's and voice and, gen'ral aspec'; and when I makes an engagement I pay expenses. *You* say you're willin' to accept the berth; I say how I'm willin' for to accept *you* for to be my housekeeper down to Wellfleet, and to take the little 'un into the bargain. If you don't 'prove 'o the rules and regulations o' the sarvice after a fair trial, you ain't no need to sign articles for the v'yage; d'ye see? You can return to port. If you *do* approve, why, thar ain't no reason why we should not sail aboard the same ship for years. So that's settled. Now, when can you be ready to weigh anchor from this n'isy city?"

"Sir?"

"When can you be ready to start—you and the young un?"

"I beg your pardon, sir: I did not exactly understand your meaning at first," said Miss Slowbury. "We can be ready at any moment: to-morrow morning, if you please."

"To-morrow mornin' be it, then, my lass; for I'm keen to git back to hum ag'in. Now you'll be wantin' some money, I guess, to buy your kit, and come down all ship-shape and 'spectable?" and the Captain pulled out his purse as he spoke.

"I thank you, sir," said Miss Slowbury; "but I'd rather not receive any money just now. For the present, I'm sufficiently provided. I would like, however, to have my salary fixed upon, so that I may know what I am to receive for my services?"

"To be sure, miss," said the Captain. "If we suit each other, 'tain't no fixed rates, wages as 'll stand between us. But s'pose we say for the time bein' twenty dollars a month, and grub, and small stores, and 'bacca—I beg your pardon, I forgot; I didn't mean to say 'bacca—

but everything *reasonable* in the way o' small stores found?"

"Twenty dollars a month are more than I could have expected," returned the young woman. "I shall be more than satisfied, sir."

"A month's wages in advance," said the Captain, placing a twenty-dollar bill on the table, and positively refusing to take it back. "It's allers been my custom when I've been shipping fresh hands," he explained, "and I take it a 'greement ain't no 'greement 'ithout it."

Then, saying that he considered the bargain settled to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned, Captain Jack shook hands with Miss Slowbury, kissed the child, and left half a dollar in her hand; and, informing his new house-keeper that he should call with a carriage to put her and the child and their traps aboard the cars at ten o'clock in the morning, he bade her good-bye and left the house.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. SWOOP MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY, AND CONCEIVES A NEW IDEA.

It was late in the month of March, and the Spring had already commenced, when Nancy Slowbury and little Alice returned with Captain Jack to Wellfleet. The ceremony of the inauguration of the new President had taken place at Washington. The fortunate office-seekers had taken the oaths of office under the Federal Government, and usurped the "places" of their predecessors, who had retired into obscurity, to wait, as patiently as they might, until the unceasing whirligig of politics should again bring *their* party uppermost. Hundreds of disappointed politicians had grumblingly retired to their

homes to groan over the neglect with which men of genius and ability are ever treated; to complain of the ingratitude and favoritism displayed by the heads of Government departments, who had been—as they averred—hoisted into power by the efforts of the very men they had so shamefully neglected. Those of them who had joined in the election not from principle, but for personal ends, would now probably begin to pick holes in the character, and decry the ability, and use every effort to overthrow (when the opportunity should offer) the men whom, but a few months before, they had bespattered with praise.

The "Herald of Freedom" had served the turn of its supporters, and was no longer needed. Its chief editor, Mr. Puffington, was among those disappointed men who were loudest and most violent in their denunciations of the ingratitude of the Democracy; for although Mr. Puffington had averred that he would rather be the editor of a leading Democratic newspaper than President of the United States, he would have been very willing, in the fervor and unselfishness of his patriotism, to serve his country in a much lower office than that of President. He had expected, at the least, the secretaryship of the embassy to the court of St. James's or the Tuileries, and had been offered, after much asking, the consulship of Timbuctoo! This offer he had indignantly rejected, until it was too late; for when at length he had consented to accept it, he was informed that the appointment had been given to another. This rendered him furious. He assailed the government, day after day, in the columns of his newspaper in the most vituperous terms. He likened himself (without much regard to anachronisms) to Alcibiades and Aristides, and blind Belisarius, and other heroes and statesmen of antiquity who had been unjustly treated by their countrymen; coming out every day as a fresh proof, in his own person, of the inherent injustice of

mankind, and bemoaning his sorrows after a fashion that greatly amused both his political opponents and his successful friends.

Still the "Herald of Freedom" lingered on a kind of languishing existence, supported chiefly by a few successful Wall Street speculators, who, having made money, were now ambitious for high office, and who hoped to make its columns serviceable at the next election of State officers.

George Neville, however, had grown weary of his post, now that the novelty and excitement of his situation had passed away; and, though he still did the duties of sub-editor, and (saving the daily column devoted to the editor's woes) of editor and reporter into the bargain, he had resolved to send in his resignation to the new proprietors as soon as the spring was a little more advanced. He was not, fortunately for himself, absolutely dependent upon his exertions for his livelihood; moreover, he had been offered an appointment on the "Broadway Gazette," by his friend the Colonel, which would be vacant in the course of a few months, and, meanwhile, he had determined to pay his uncle, aunt and cousin a visit, and to join a party that had been formed to visit the Falls of Niagara, during the ensuing month of May.

Nancy Slowbury and her little adopted cousin had found a comfortable and happy home at Wellfleet, in the household of Captain Jack. Nancy, under the influence of a mind at ease, and freedom from the corroding cares of poverty, and breathing daily the pure country air, freshened as it is at Cape Cod by the cool sea-breeze, had wonderfully improved both in health and appearance. Captain Jack was delighted with his new housekeeper, and was growing every day more fondly attached to little Alice Slowbury, who, he informed everybody who visited him, and who admired the beauty of the child, was "the very spit of his own darter, if he had a child, and if

that child was a gal, and born in Injy—of which he had his doubts."

Nancy Slowbury, on leaving New York, had made no one acquainted with the change in her abode, excepting her generous patrons, Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek. In fact, the poor young woman had no other friends in the great, crowded, busy, selfish, solitary city, in which she had wasted so many of the best years of her young life. Nevertheless there *were* others who were well acquainted with her movements, and were watching her, and the child under her care, as the spider watches the incautious fly that it hopes soon to find entangled in the toils it has spread to effect its capture, though the object of this careful watching was known as yet only to the watchers themselves.

Nancy Slowbury had inserted an advertisement in the "Herald of Freedom," on her own account, previous to her reply to the advertisement of Captain Jack.

One day, when George Neville happened to call at Stuyvesant House to visit his cousin Ellen, Mr. Van Broek had said to him—

"Neville, you can do me and my wife a favor, if you will?"

"Of what kind?" asked George.

"I'll tell you," said the patroon. "My wife and I are much interested in a poor young woman, who has seen better days, and has received a tolerably good education; but who, poor creature, has been reduced to desperate poverty. I knew some of her friends in India, many years ago, and I should like to obtain for her some respectable situation in the country, at a distance from New York, where she can recruit her health, which has suffered severely from the hardships and troubles through which she has passed. She has a child with her—a cousin, I believe—a pretty, intelligent little creature, whom it would be a real charity to get out of the city to

a place where she can breathe pure country air. The young woman has advertised, or, at least, *I* have advertised in her behalf, for a respectable situation, as housekeeper or nursery governess, or something of that sort. Now *you* can do as you like in the columns of the 'Herald of Freedom?'"

"Pretty much," said George, with a smile.

"Well, then, if you would just write a few lines, editorially, you know, recommending this young woman, and speaking of the child whom she has adopted from motives of pure charity, you would be doing *them* a service, and would greatly oblige your cousin and me."

"I do so wish, Julius dear, you would permit me to call upon the poor creature," interposed Mrs. Van Broek. "It's really too bad. You've interested me in them so much, and I do so particularly wish to see the child; and yet you won't let me go near them. He won't even tell me where they live, George," she added, addressing her cousin.

"My love," said Mr. Van Broek, "they have but lately removed from wretched lodgings, in a close, unhealthy portion of the city—in a miserable tenement house, that sheltered, I dare say, twenty poor families. I can't say that they have not about them the seeds of some infectious disease, which, although innocuous to themselves, and from which they may in course of time altogether purify themselves, might *not* be innocuous to *you*. I should never forgive myself if you were to catch any disease through visiting them. I promise you that you *shall* see them, some day, if you wish; but do not ask to visit them at present, my dear."

Then, again, addressing George, he said, "But if *you* will do what I ask, George, you will perform an act of real charity."

And George had promised to do the favor, and had actually written a paragraph calling attention to the ad-

vertisement, and speaking highly of the young woman to whom it referred; and, though neither the advertisement nor the paragraph had proved of any immediate avail, at all events in the way that was hoped for (for on the very next day after the paragraph appeared Nancy Slowbury had replied to Captain Jack's advertisement), they had caught the keen eye of Mr. Swoop.

This gentleman, it will be recollected, had told his partner, Mr. Nettletop, at a time when the latter had arrived off a weary and fruitless journey in search of a certain child (which child Mr. Nettletop had said he believed to be a mere myth, only existing in Mr. Swoop's vivid imagination), that he had conceived a plan which he hoped would prove successful, and, if that plan failed, he (Mr. Swoop) would give up the affair as a bad job.

Whatever that astute plan might have been, it *had* failed; and Mr. Nettletop was, some time after, exulting over his own superior discernment, which had led him to believe, from the first, that a certain anonymous communication they had received was a mere hoax, when Mr. Swoop placed a copy of the "Herald of Freedom" in his partner's hands, and pointed triumphantly to a paragraph in the leading columns of that journal.

"Well, Swoop," growled Mr. Nettletop, after he had read the paragraph in question, "I don't see much to crow over in that."

"Oh, you don't, eh?" said Mr. Swoop. "Refer to the advertisement, my good sir."

"Well," said Mr. Nettletop (having perused the advertisement to which the paragraph referred), "I don't see anything in *that*, either. A young woman wants a situation as housekeeper or nursery maid, and says that she has a young child under her care whom she must take with her wherever she goes; and the editor, or somebody else, most likely for the sake of a few dollars, writes a lot of blarney about the young woman having seen better

days. The more fool he, and the more fool the young woman to think anybody that wanted a servant would be bothered with a child into the bargain. I see nothing in either paragraph or advertisement."

"But I saw something, Mr. Nettletop," said Mr. Swoop; and, more than that, I found out that there *was* something in it. Thinks I to myself, 'It's uncommon strange that a gentleman and lady in Brooklyn'—you know it mentions *that*—and the editor of a paper, should simultaneously take such interest in a young woman and a child as to recommend them especially as objects of charity, out of the hundreds that apply every day for similar situations.' Then, you know, we've *heard* of a young woman and a child, and we *know* of a certain gentleman and lady who are living in Brooklyn. Well, I put this and that together, and, a day or two afterwards, I stepped over to the newspaper-office and asked to see the editor.

"'You can see the sub-editor,' says the clerk, and in I walked to this sub-editor's room, where I saw a young man busy writing.

"'Your business, sir' says he.

"'I've called,' said I, 'about that young woman whom you have recommended.'

"'You are too late,' says the editor: 'the young woman has accepted a very excellent situation.'

"'Indeed!' said I, pretending disappointment. 'I'm sorry. I should like to have seen her and the child. Perhaps she may not yet be finally engaged?'

"'She's gone to her situation to-day,' says the editor—'gone to a place called Wellfleet, on Cape Cod, with a retired sea-captain.'

"'It's a pity,' said I. 'However, I suppose it can't be helped. I should have liked to have engaged her myself, for a friend. She was so well recommended too. By-the bye,' I added, carelessly, 'is there any harm in

asking the names of the lady and gentleman—at Brooklyn, I believe—who are so much interested in her and the child?"

"'No, I presume not,' said the editor. 'They are relatives of mine—Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek.'

"'The Van Broeks of Van Broek Manor?' said I.

"'The same,' said the editor.

"Just what I hoped, yet hardly expected," continued Mr. Swoop to his partner. "I could have clapped my hands for joy. But I bowed and came away."

"Well, that *is* something, Swoop," said Mr. Nettletop. "You've got a head on your shoulders, and cute brains in it, Swoop: I *will* say that. But, after all, it may *come* to nothing?"

"And it *may* come to something, Nettletop. Why should Van Broek interest himself so particularly in a woman and child that must be strangers to him? and why should any one trouble himself or herself—though it was a man's hand—to send *us* a letter telling us of the existence of a child whom Van Broek would 'wish to be at the bottom of the ocean?' Those were the words, I believe; but we've got the letter in the safe."

"And why," replied Mr. Nettletop, "should any one send a letter that answered no purpose as it *was*, and neglect, or refuse, to communicate anything further? All the letters we sent to the address mentioned were returned through the post-office, marked 'No such person to be found.'"

"Yes; that's a mystery, certainly. The job will be to solve the mystery. But I've not told you all yet. While you were in Philadelphia last week, I thought I'd just take a trip to Wellfleet and see this young woman and child, and question the woman if I could get a chance. I went down to Cape Cod, and I discovered that the woman—Nancy Slowbury—is housekeeper to a queer amphibious sort of chap who is known as Captain Jack,

who lives in a snug cottage near Wellfleet, and who is reported to be pretty well to do. I tried to get speech of the young woman, but she was shy and timid. I could do nothing with *her*. Then I tried to make friends with the old salt; but somebody had told *him* that I was a lawyer, and he told me to my face that nothing could induce him to have any dealings with a lawyer; so, to use his own words, I had to 'sheer off.' I saw the child, though, and a pretty little thing she is."

"You ought to have been a detective, Swoop," said Mr. Nettletop. "It was cunningly conceived out of a bit of a newspaper paragraph."

"Yes; I think I should make a smart detective officer," replied Mr. Swoop, evidently pleased with his partner's admiration.

"Still, after all," continued Mr. Nettletop, "so *far*, we've discovered nothing, and it may prove a mere will-o'-the-wisp in the end?"

"No," replied Mr. Swoop. "After all, as you observe, we've made no very material discovery, and the whole affair may turn out to be a mare's nest. But I've one thing more to tell you. I learned that the old skipper has taken quite a fancy to his new housekeeper and the child she calls her cousin, and that he intends next month to visit Niagara Falls, and to remain at the Falls for a few weeks, and he is going to take the young woman and the child with him. Now I have a notion to take a trip to the Falls myself: I want a little relaxation from buisness, you know. I shall accommodate myself to go at the same time they go; and if I can find out the day on which they intend to leave Wellfleet, I'll endeavor to catch their train of cars at Albany, and we'll journey the rest of the way together. Folks generally open their hearts when they're out pleasure-taking, and if I put up at the same hotel in the village, and manage well my *p's* and *q's* it'll go hard with me if I don't learn

something, and at least satisfy myself whether there *is* anything in this affair or not."

"*Upon* my word, you are a smart fellow, Swoop; you've got a head, *you* have," said Mr. Nettletop. "'Tain't many as would have worked a thing so far, out of that scrap of information" (pointing to the newspaper). "You ought to succeed, *you* ought. When do you start for Niagara?"

"Time enough yet, for weeks. I must first learn when *they* start; and meanwhile depend on't I shan't be idle in case any other circumstance should turn up."

So it was settled, between the two crafty lawyers, that Mr. Swoop should visit Niagara Falls at the same time with Captain Jack and his housekeeper and little Alice Slowbury.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHAT OCCURRED ON BOARD THE CARS FROM TROY TO NIAGARA FALLS.

"Now then, ladies and gentlemen, all aboard if you please: cars start in less 'n five minutes."

Thus spoke the conductor of the Niagara Falls train, at the railway depot in the city of Troy, N. Y., one morning about five weeks after the date of the events recorded in the preceding chapter.

"This way for the Niagara cars, ladies; t'other's the down-train to New York. Stop to Albany, ma'am? Yes; we start exact at eight: we shall be to Albany at a quarter past, and we start from Albany exact to the half-hour. You'll hev time to run inter Broadway if ye be smart. Now, ladies and gentlemen, all aboard, all aboard!"

There was a hurry-scurry of passengers, many of whom had come from a distance, and had slept at Troy during the night. Among these were two groups, the members of which were apparently strangers to each other, who entered the same car and were apparently alike bound to Niagara Falls.

One of these parties, whose baggage was marked "Acton, N. H.," consisted of a stout, hale, elderly gentleman whose garb proclaimed him a clergyman; his wife, a stout, comely matron, apparently some years younger than himself; his daughter, a pretty, fair-haired, blue-eyed girl of eighteen years; and a tall, good-looking young man of five or six and twenty, who seemed to pay particular attention to the younger lady, whom he addressed as "cousin Mary." The baggage of the other group was marked "Wellfleet, Cape Cod, Mass.," and the party comprised a short, stout, burly, middle-aged man, whose weather-beaten visage would have proclaimed him a sailor, even had not the fact been manifest in his dress and manner and his peculiar nautical phraseology; a lady-like young woman, with a very prepossessing cast of countenance; and a pretty little girl of some six or eight years of age, whose wealth of silky golden hair, and bright blue eyes, and childish grace had attracted the attention and called forth the admiration of many of the travellers, as they stood on the platform waiting for the cars, and whose exuberant delight at the novelty of travelling seemed to be infectious, and to communicate itself to those who gazed upon her. Several persons had stopped to speak a few words of kindness to the child, and had presented her with cakes and oranges, until the numerous natty little pockets in her cloak and dress were unable to contain all the gifts. The oranges were continually dropping out, and rolling about the platform. As fast as the child secured one, another broke adrift, and called for another chase after it; and so the game

continued, seemingly quite as much to the child's delight as to her annoyance.

At length, as soon as these two parties had entered one of the cars, a portly, smooth-faced gentleman, wrapped in a large blue Spanish cloak, whose baggage consisted simply of one valise, which he carried in his hand, and who had been, apparently, particularly interested in the gambols of the child, and had followed her about with his eyes whithersoever she went, said to the conductor, who was pointing out to him a seat in another, and a less crowded car—

"No, thankee, conductor. I guess I'll follow into *this* car. I like plenty of company when I'm travelling. If I find it too close I can shift into another car by-and-by."

"Don't be too sure o' that, mister," replied the conductor. "We shall be chokeful o' passengers when we leave Albany. If you'll take my advice, you'll get into a good seat while you can."

The traveller, however, was not to be persuaded. He persisted in entering the already crowded foremost car, and took a seat immediately behind that occupied by the seafaring gentleman and the little girl, the seat in front of *them* being occupied by the young woman of their party. On a range with them on the opposite side of the car sat the party in which the reader may have recognized George Neville and the minister of Acton, with his wife and daughter; the seats they occupied being so disposed that they could sit two and two, facing each other.

Presently the train was in rapid motion, speeding towards the city of Albany—six miles distant—at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour.

"A very pretty city, that we have just left," observed Mr. Upton, to a gentleman on the seat behind him.

"Yes, a mighty pooty city, Troy, with Mount Ida at one end, and Mount Olympus at t'other, and with its

terraces of houses rising, one terrace above another, from River Street to Eighth Street," replied the stranger; "and a thriving city *too*. I'm a Trojan born and reared, and, I can tell *you*, we Trojans are proud of our city."

"The street along the bank of the river seems to be the chief business street," said Mr. Upton.

"Yes," answered the stranger. "River Street's the main business street. The terraces up to Eighth Street are mostly occupied by private houses. With our thirty thousand inhabitants, I reckon we do pretty nigh as much bus'niss as Albany with three times as many."

"What description of business, chiefly?" asked Mr. Upton.

"Oh, mister, pooty nigh everything. Hardware, railway-car building, shirt and collar making 'mongst the women folk, and a good spiece of the carrying trade in grain and such-like on the river, down to New York. Then I guess we calculate on havin' the handsomest and largest railway depot in all York State."

"We seem to be travelling over classic ground, at all events," said George Neville, as with a smile upon his face, he glanced his eyes over the long printed slip of paper, containing a ticket to be delivered up at each station on the route to Niagara, with which each passenger had been furnished on paying the fare at Troy. "We've just left Troy, with Mounts Ida and Olympus, and I perceive that we shall pass through Rome, Syracuse and Utica in the course of our journey."

"Jes' so, mister," replied the gentleman from Troy; "and thrivin', pushin' places all on 'em. Not old tumble-down ruins, sich as them places air in the old world. I reckon how you're from the old country, friend?"

George smiled assent.

"Never been to Niagara afore, I s'pose?"

"Never, sir. This will be my first visit."

"I," said Mr. Upton, "am an American born, and yet

I almost feel shame to say I have never seen Niagara. Neither has my wife, nor my daughter."

"Nor me, neither, shipmet," put in the seafaring gentleman, in whom the reader will have recognised Captain Jack. "I'm a 'Merican, I rayther think, though I may have my doubts upon that ar p'int, and I've been all over this yere 'varsal world eenamost, yet I've never been to Niagara."

"It is a singular fact," observed Mr. Upton, "that, although no foreigner who visits our country is easy until he has seen Niagara Falls, there are thousands of Americans, living within easy travelling distance of the wonderful cataract, who have never seen it—thousands who live and die without having visited it."

"And I presume," said George, "that every American traveller who visits England makes it his special business to visit Stratford-upon-Avon; yet there are thousands, even among educated Englishmen, who have never visited Shakspeare's birthplace and grave. Still, Niagara Falls being considered as one of the grandest of the world's wonders, I am surprised that the falls are not more thought of by the American people."

"You ain't no *call* to feel surprised, stranger," said the Trojan. "We'm got so many mighty big things in this great country o' ourn, that we don't think nothin' of what would astonish a stranger from the old world. Look to our forests, our prairies, our rivers, our lakes, our mountains! I tell you, stranger, natur's on a grand scale in this country, and *we* air a mighty tall, go-ahead sort o' people. I reckon how the great American people themselves air the biggest wonder to the hull world besides."

"I have longed since childhood to visit Niagara Falls," said Miss Slowbury, now speaking for the first time since she had entered the car. "It has been a craving with me. I have dreamed of the cataract night after night. In my dreams I have been carried over the watery pre-

cipice into the black, unfathomable depths beneath. I have sailed over in ships. I have seen the waters of the torrent dancing in the bright sunlight, and gliding along, calm, smooth, and swift, beneath the cold, clear, placid light of the moon; and I have watched them when lashed into fury by the midnight storm, and at such times I have woken in terror, bathed in perspiration, and every nerve quivering—fancying that I still beheld the lightning's flash, and heard the awful thunder mingling with the loud, sullen roar of the cataract. The sound of the wind and rain on stormy nights, when—a child—I lived on a lonely part of the sea-coast in the State of New Jersey, has frequently conjured up such visions to my sleeping fancy; and though, while lying awake afterwards, I trembled in my bed as I recalled these visions to memory, I still used to long for a recurrence of such dreams; and now I dread lest, when I see the Falls, I shall be disappointed, as I have heard many people have been in finding that the reality did not equal the conceptions of their imaginations."

"I believe," said Mr. Upton, "that though some persons profess to have felt disappointment at the first sight of Niagara Falls, no one ever yet quitted Niagara, after having visited the cataract again and again, without acknowledging that, after the first, and on every subsequent visit, they were more impressed with the solemn, awful grandeur of the ever-changing scene than they could have been by the realization of any picture their imaginations had conceived."

"That is some consolation, in case my fears should be verified, sir," replied Miss Slowbury, with a smile. "I dare say," she went on, "you will think me a very silly, romantic young woman, but I want to feel awe-stricken with the scene. I wish to feel as I have sometimes fancied I should feel on such an occasion—that I am standing in the presence of the great Spirit of Creation, and

for the time being to forget all else in that awful presence thus manifest in one of the grandest of his works."

"Beg pardon, miss," interposed the stranger who had so pertinaciously followed Captain Jack and his party into the car at Troy, and whom the reader may now be informed was our old acquaintance Mr. Swoop—"I beg pardon, miss; but didn't you say you came from Jersey State? I'm a native of Pennsylvania, near the Jersey border myself. May I ask from what part of Jersey State you hail from?"

Whether Miss Slowbury was annoyed at the stranger's impertinent curiosity, or whether she recognized in the voice—notwithstanding the disguise of a totally different style of dress—that of a person who had on a previous occasion pestered her with impertinent questions, to which she did not care to reply, she answered curtly, and with visible annoyance—

"I left New Jersey when quite a child, sir, and have few recollections of the names of places. Moreover, I cannot conceive how it can interest a stranger to be made acquainted with the name of my birthplace."

"If you hev your doubts 'bout your birthplace, my lass," said Captain Jack, "which is a sarcumstance I can well understand, seeing that it is the same in my case, I dont see how you ar' called upon noways to cl'ar up them doubts agin your will even if you wer' able so to do;" and, having delivered himself of this lucid speech in his customary oracular style, the Captain faced about, and favored the prying lawyer with a penetrating and somewhat threatening stare.

"No offence meant," he muttered, and thenceforward he remained silent until the cars were leaving the depot at Albany. He had quitted the car for a few minutes, and, on his return, he offered Miss Slowbury a small paper of fancy biscuits, and asked her whether she would like a glass of wine, at the same time directing her at-

tention to a small flat bottle that he carried in the breast-pocket of his coat.

"No, thank you, sir," answered the young woman. "I stand in no need of refreshments at present, and we have with us all that we are likely to require during the journey to Niagara."

In no wise abashed, Mr. Swoop now offered to take the vacant seat by Miss Slowbury's side, when Captain Jack, who had been watching the lawyer's proceedings rose from his own seat beside little Alice, and, darting an angry look at the intruder upon the privacy of his party, said—

"I tell'ee what, my lass: if we tarn over that ar seat o' yourn, as these genelmen and ladies *opposite* hae done, thar'll just be room for us three and your carpet-bag; and then we shall sit *wees-a-wee*, as they call it, and hev our own company to ourselves, snug and comfor'ble, and keep out strangers."

Suiting the action to the words, he turned over Miss Slowbury's seat, and thus effectually shut out the stranger, who, so long as there remained a vacant seat in the car (and, notwithstanding the prognostications of the conductor, there were several), could not in common decency force his society upon them.

Mr. Swoop, however, made no further attempts to do so, and, throughout the remainder of the long day's journey of three hundred miles, he remained silent, though his ears were open to catch every word that was uttered by his travelling companions.

It was near midnight when the cars drew near Niagara. The passengers were thoroughly weary after the long day's journey, during which they had travelled on incessantly, with the exception of two stoppages of half an hour each at Rome and Syracuse. One-half the people in the cars had fallen asleep; nevertheless, they all waked up *now*. Many of them had never visited Niagara; and

these were eagerly looking out into the night to catch the first glimpse of the Falls, and straining their ears to catch the first sound of the roaring waters. A general feeling of awe seemed to impress the whole of the travellers though some were more affected than others. The lamps suspended from the roof of the car shone upon many a pale, eager face, peering anxiously into the midnight gloom.

Those who had visited Niagara before became oracles for the moment. Among these was a gentleman from Troy, with whom, and with each other, both Mr. Upton's and Captain Jack's parties had frequently conversed during the journey.

"Take my advice, ladies and gentlemen, and don't look out of the car till I tell you," said the Trojan, who, though he had seen Niagara a score of times, was little less excited than the rest. "We're a good fifteen mile from the village yet, and you won't hear nothing of the roar of the cataract at this distance, with the rattling of the cars, and with the wind here away at sou'-west. It's all gammon 'bout hearing the noise of the Falls forty mile off, as some silly school-books say. I did hear the sound thirty mile off *once*, but it was on a calm day, and what little wind was stirring was blowing right from Niagara; and I wasn't on board a railway car, nuther. But wait: we'll take a turn in the track directly—I'll *tell* you when to look—and then, in a gap through the woods, you'll see the Falls, twelve mile off. Ay, and you'll hear the noise of the waters, too, if you listen; for there's a cleft in the rocks, in a straight line from that turn which somehow conveys the sound."

"How far distant is this turn or curve in the road of which you speak?" asked Mr. Upton, almost in a whisper, as if he felt that it were a sort of sacrilege to speak aloud at this moment.

"Only three miles," replied the gentleman from Troy.

The three miles were soon sped over. Presently the Trojan rose from his seat and stood gazing out of one of the open windows of the car.

"Be ready—I'll tell you when. Don't look till I give the word," he said, now speaking in a low tone of voice, as if awed himself by his near approach to the stupendous cataract, or impressed by the awe-stricken looks and the silence—broken only by the quick, short breathing—of his companions. Again he gazed from the open window, while the eyes of his fellow-travellers were fixed upon him.

"Now! Look! look!" he presently cried, without moving from his position, but raising his forefinger, and keeping it raised and pointed in the direction of the Falls.

In a moment every eye was gazing out of the open windows of the car into the midnight gloom. A dense mass of forest scarcely discernible amid the darkness was all that was visible; but the next moment the train flew round a sudden curve on the track, a wide gap appeared in the mass of dark foliage, opening into a long vista of perspective, and in the far distance, seeming to extend from the earth to the heavens, clearly defined against the black, rugged rocks, and the almost equally black midnight sky, appeared a belt of light amidst which silvery coruscations perpetually danced and played, now brightly flashing, now fading into indistinctness, and then again flashing forth into brightness and dazzling the eyes of the fascinated gazers. The moon had just risen above the level of the forest trees as the train flew past the gap, and her pale beams played upon the belt of light, increasing its intensity and adding to the brilliancy of its coruscations, lighting up some portions of the long vista, and throwing other parts, by contrast, into deeper gloom; while, borne upon the midnight air and softened by the distance into a strange, weird, unearthly melody, there sounded in the

ears of the breathless listeners the sullen, ceaseless roar of the mighty cataract.

"Niagara!" exclaimed the gentleman from Troy, softly, yet distinctly, as, turning from the window, he faced his travelling companions, though his finger still pointed towards the Falls.

"Niagara!" repeated a dozen awe-stricken voices, in a similar low, distinct whisper; and one or two of the more susceptible female passengers, whose pale faces, as seen by the feeble light of the lamp suspended from the roof of the car, betrayed the intensity of the emotions they experienced as they drew near the great waterfall, sobbed forth hysterically, as if relieved from a tension of feeling that had become almost unendurable, "Niagara at last! Niagara!"

All this passed in the space of a few moments. No sympathy with human emotions had the iron steeds of the fast-flying train. The gap in the forest was soon shut out from view; again the cars plunged deep into the shadow of the dark, impenetrable "bush" that lined the railroad on either side, and whirled onward towards their destination. A few minutes more, and the train neared the depot at the village of the Falls; and now, though the cataract was not visible, the roar of the rushing waters was distinctly heard, reverberating in the ears of the strangers like the boom of distant thunder. The ground, as they alighted from the cars, seemed to shake beneath their feet, and the roof of the depot, and the surrounding houses, to vibrate sensibly with the concussion of the air. It seemed strange to the travellers to see the carters and porters at the depot seeking for fares, and urging the superior excellences of this or that hotel, as if Niagara Falls were a hundred miles distant. They wondered how these men could thus ply their trade, as if they were in some ordinary village. They could not conceive that, to the inhabitants of the Village of the

Falls, the mighty cataract is but a mere common-place attraction to draw strangers to the spot, and add to the prosperity of the place. They neither hear nor heed the thunder of the Falls, nor the grandeur of this mightiest of nature's handiworks. To them Niagara is an everyday affair, a place of business and dollars.

The two parties had agreed during the journey to go to the same hotel, and they chose the International. At this hotel they were speedily set down, and supper was ordered; for they were hungry as well as fatigued with their long journey. But they could not rest content without paying an immediate visit to the Falls while their supper was being prepared; and, hiring one of the loungers about the hotel to show them the way, though the sound might have guided them to the spot, they set forth, after midnight, to get their first near view of the stupendous cataract. A few minutes' walk was sufficient to carry them to the place they sought. The moon was now shining brightly, high in the heavens, and shedding a halo of silvery light over the village, and as they drew nearer and nearer to the shores of the Niagara River the sound of the falling waters was almost deafening to their unaccustomed ears. Still it was not until they were close to the brink of the precipice that rises from the fathomless depths of the narrow river that they could *see* the Falls. At length, however, they took a sudden turn from the road, and there, full before them, apparently not a hundred yards distant from the height on which they stood, they beheld, disclosed in all its indescribable majesty and beauty, the magnificent Horse-shoe Fall.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHAT OCCURRED AT NIAGARA FALLS.

THE midnight party to the Falls and the Terrapin Tower consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Upton, George Neville and cousin Mary, Captain Jack and Nancy Slowbury. Little Alice, overpowered with sleep after her long railroad journey, was left to rest on a sofa in one of the parlors of the International Hotel, under the charge of one of the waitresses. The weather had been rainy for several days (so the party were informed by their guide on the way from the hotel), hence the waters of Lake Erie were unusually high; the currents of the rapids above the Falls ran with extraordinary velocity, and consequently the volume of water that swept over the wide, grand curve of the great Horse-shoe Fall was much greater than on ordinary occasions. The moon, by the time they had reached the Falls, had risen high in the heavens, and the glorious scenery was lighted up almost with the brilliancy of daylight. The steep, rugged defiles, between which the seemingly sluggish, yet really treacherously swift, and in some places (it is said) unfathomably deep, Niagara River flows silently onward towards the terrific, and often fatal whirlpool—four miles below the Fall; the groves of arbor vitæ and maple which overhang the rugged steeps; the thickets of cedar and acacia spread over the heights; the slender lines of the suspension bridge apparently light and delicate as the threads of a spider's web, which stretch from shore to shore, below the Falls, and rest upon the dark towers on either bank; the foaming, seething cataract, shimmering in silvery light near its summit, and appearing of inky blackness near its base; and the pillar of spray, rising like a shadowy mist high above, until it seems to mingle with the fleecy

clouds in the heavens—were all clearly discernible in the bright soft moonlight. Half a dozen rainbows crossed and recrossed each other in the midst of the spray, appearing and disappearing, and, again reappearing, each time in different figures of marvellous grace and beauty. The thunders of the Falls, mingling with the roar of the rapids, deafened the unaccustomed ears of the visitors; the earth perceptibly trembled beneath their feet; and for some time their senses were bewildered with the novelty and sublimity of the scene around, above and beneath them. They were silent; for even had they wished to converse with each other, their voices would have been unheard amidst the wild tumult of sound; and so wrapped up were most of the party in the sublimity of the scene that they took no note of time, and might, perhaps would, have lingered for hours gazing upon the ever-changing panorama, had not Captain Jack, more sensible to the necessity of creature comforts than his companions, warned them by pulling out his watch, and pointing to the hands on the dial—perfectly visible in the bright moonlight—that it was half-past one o'clock and that the supper they had ordered at the hotel would be awaiting their return. Then, slowly and reluctantly, they retired, and, soon after they had regained the hotel, partook of supper and went to rest, and slept soundly in spite of, perhaps soothed by, the sullen murmur of the rapids almost beneath their bed-room window.

The scenery of Niagara, apart from the Falls, is singularly romantic and beautiful. Deep defiles, steep cliffs, dense pine and cedar forests, thickly-wooded glens, picturesque vales, impervious thickets, deep rivers, and narrow, eddying streams, meet the eyes of travellers whichever way they wend their footsteps from the immediate vicinity of the Falls.

I do not purpose, however, to give a description of Ni-

agara Falls. Hundreds of abler pens than mine have made the attempt, and—failed, failed absolutely, universally. It is impossible to picture in words any semblance to the reality of the Falls or of their surroundings. It is impossible to convey an idea, to those who have not visited the spot, of the wild, savage grandeur of the rapids in the vicinity of Goat Island, just above the American Fall (more picturesque than the Horse-shoe, though inferior in all other respects), where with resistless momentum the water comes down, leaping over sharp, projecting rocks, surging between stony ledges, seething and foaming and rushing madly onward in ceaseless turmoil, as if urged by some unseen power, until, in one vast sheet of crystal, it leaps the precipice, and pours down with terrific roar into the fathomless depths beneath—

“As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread—a matchless cataract!”

The painter, who in depicting other scenes has so many advantages—he

“Whose magic force
Arrests the phantom’s fleeting course”—

is even less, far less successful than the poet in his attempts to depict Niagara Falls. No scenery on earth is more sublimely beautiful in its reality than that of Niagara: nothing is more vapid and spiritless than the paintings of Niagara Falls.

Early in the morning after their arrival, the minister’s and the Captain’s parties—the several members of which had formed a mutual friendship—revisited the cataract; and day after day, for many hours every day, they wandered about from point to point, seeking fresh points of view from above and below the Falls, and often lingering in silent abstraction for an hour at a time in one spot. Miss Slowbury confessed that even the first view of the cataract, when she had almost anticipated disap-

pointment, exceeding her liveliest prior conceptions, and that the oftener she visited the Falls, and the longer she gazed upon them, the more deeply was she impressed with a sense of their sublimity.

"It was the paintings and engravings that I had seen of Niagara that led me to dread least I should feel disappointed when I visited the spot," said Miss Slowbury to George Neville one day, when she was wandering over Goat Island with the young Englishman and his cousin, "The various descriptions I have read of the Falls, though they failed to give me a correct impression of the reality, always left my imagination free, and sometimes fired it to conjure up a Niagara of my own fancying; but I never yet saw a picture of the Falls that did not damp my enthusiasm. In fact, no picture that ever I met with gives even the faintest idea of Niagara Falls as they really exist. How is it that artists always fail when they choose this, one of the grandest works of creation, for their subject?"

"I suppose," replied George, "it is because painters cannot depict sound and motion, and upon *sound* and *motion* the grandeur and the sublimity of Niagara Falls essentially depend."

"Yet," replied Miss Slowbury, "I have seen a painting of a storm at sea—whether faithfully represented or not, I am, of course, incompetent to decide—but so thrillingly depicted that I fancied I could hear the howling of the wind and the roar of the angry billows. I could fancy that I saw the vessel tossing hopelessly to and fro amidst the raging waters, and I have shuddered at the sight, as I might have shuddered had I witnessed the dread reality. And, again, I have seen landscapes so vividly depicted that I have brought myself to feel that I was really standing in their midst. I remember once going to see a painting that was on exhibition in New York. It represented, I think, a scene in Switzerland. An avalanche was roll-

ing down a mountain side, uprooting trees and crushing cottages as it pursued its resistless course. High in mid-air, among the mountain peaks, an eagle was soaring; the only living creature in the awful, silent solitude. You raised your eyes to the upper portion of the canvas, and all was calm, and still, and motionless. One could fancy the eagle, monarch of the silent solitude, resting in his aerial flight, and, conscious of his own security, gazing down serenely upon the devastation going forward in the valley beneath. There all was noise, confusion, and terror. The contrast was startling. The horror-struck peasants were rushing forth from their doomed cottages. I could fancy that I heard the hoarse shouts of the men calling to each other, and the shrieks and prayers of the women as they fell on their knees and appealed to Heaven for help. I could hear the crash of the trees as they were uprooted and hurled into the swollen mountain torrents. I could hear the rushing of the waters as they leaped from rock to rock into the foaming rivulet that swept through the valley, laden with wreck. I stood for I knew not how long gazing upon this picture, and the impression it made has never faded from my memory. Now in both these pictures the painters had successfully represented sound and motion. Why, then do painters fail so utterly in their endeavors to depict Niagara Falls?"

"Because," said George, "they have sound and motion to depict, not merely to imply. In both the pictures you have mentioned you saw both cause and effect; and the accessories enabled the artists to suggest to the mind of the spectator the ideas of sound and motion, which gave the semblance of reality to the scenes they sought to depict. The dark, murky, cloud-laden sky, and the foam-capped billows of the troubled sea, suggested the idea of storm and tempest; and the position of the ship on its beam-ends, its sails rent and torn, its masts and spars

split, its cordage in some places strained to its utmost tension, at others dangling loosely in mid-air, the attitudes of the seamen on board, the pieces of broken timber and wreck strewn over the surface of the sea, all implied that the vessel was helplessly tossing to and fro amidst the raging waters. In the Swiss landscape there was a sense of gloomy grandeur and solitude in the lofty mountain peaks, piercing the very clouds, and in the solitary eagle resting calmly on his wings; while the uprooted trees, the crushed and ruined cottages, the terrified peasants, and the swollen waters of the mountain torrents, all tended to suggest that which the artist sought to represent—viz., the destructive power of the avalanche as it pursued its course down the mountain side, the avalanche itself being the creation of the accumulated winter snows (thawed and loosened from their fastnesses by the warmth of the summer sun), the effects of which were visible in the swollen mountain torrents.

"Now in depicting Niagara Falls the artist has none of these accessories to aid him in his task, and to enable him, as it were, to idealize his picture. In fact, he is compelled by the peculiar nature of his subject to shun such accessories as do sometimes present themselves. Everybody who has visited Niagara knows that the Falls are seen to much the greatest advantage on a fine, calm, sunshiny day, or on a moonlit night, when the air is calm, the sky clear, and when nature is at rest. Now if, as we know, Miss Slowbury, clouds and storm; which serve to give so much effect to a certain class of paintings, deteriorate from the grand effect of the Falls in reality, how much more would they do so in a picture? No artist in his senses would attempt to paint the Falls of Niagara on a cloudy, stormy day.

"Thus you see that the artist who would give an adequate idea of Niagara must *paint* sound and motion (an utter impossibility); not merely *suggest* or *imply*

sound and motion, as he can do, and does in other pictures, by means of external objects.

"The artist, in fact, is in this case left without the ordinary resources of art. There are no towering heights, no lofty mountains to depict, and to impress the spectator with an idea of the grandeur of the scene. There are other cataracts, vastly inferior in every other respect to those of Niagara, which fall from a much greater height. Take the Fall of Montmorency, near Quebec, for example. There is beautifully romantic scenery surrounding Niagara Falls; but in painting the Falls it is not possible—nor would it be politic—to paint in much of this scenery, since, in opposition to all other pictures of the kind, the scenery would detract from the majesty and beauty of the Falls, which the painter must mainly keep in view.

"In fact, all paintings of Niagara are, and must be, comparatively speaking, mere daubs—caricatures of the inimitable original. It is useless to call photography in to lend its aid. Photographs of Niagara Falls are quite as illusive as paintings. The beauty and the sublimity of Niagara alike depend upon natural causes, altogether beyond the power of art to supply. Stand at any point and view the great Horse-shoe Fall. All above and around is still and peaceful. You gaze upon a moving precipice of water, which has poured down incessantly since the formation of the continent, and never cease to pour down, at the rate, it is estimated, of 100,000,000 tons an hour, until the world shall come to an end, and Nature shall suspend her operations. Does the picture remain for one moment at a stand-still? The flashes of light are changing continuously. Who can hope to transfer them to canvas? Who can hope to convey to others a correct idea of the scene? There is no wind, no thunder in the atmosphere; not a cloud is visible in the sky, not a leaf is stirring on the trees; yet there comes a ceaseless roar, louder than all the surges of the ocean when it rages

most fiercely; louder and more deafening than a thousand peals of thunder, or the discharge of an entire park of artillery. There is no pause—no rest. By night and by day this deafening roar never ceases. The ground trembles beneath the feet of the awe-struck spectator. He feels that there is some secret, hidden power at work, over which neither man nor Nature herself can hold control; and it is this secret, hidden power which imparts to Niagara its fascinating terrors. The spectator feels here, more perhaps than in any other position in which he could be placed, the utter insignificance of man and man's works in comparison with those of Nature, and seems, as he stands or sits, wrapped up in the contemplation of the scene, that he is holding awful commune with Him 'who holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand.'

"Here come papa and mamma," said Mary Upton, interrupting a conversation which had assumed a gravity akin to the genius of the place: "let us go and meet them, George."

"I don't see the Captain, though," replied George. "I thought, as he was not with you, Miss Slowbury, he had joined my uncle and aunt in this walk?"

"No," exclaimed Miss Slowbury; "that person who was so intrusive in the car the day we came to Niagara persuaded Captain Jack to accompany him to the Indian village to-day. I don't like that man. His name, I have learned, is Swoop, and I believe he is a lawyer or land-agent. I *thought* I had seen his face before, and now I am confident, though he was then very differently dressed, that he came down to Wellfleet, where the Captain resides, soon after I went there to live, and actually tried to force himself upon both Captain Jack and myself."

"I thought the Captain didn't give him much encouragement in the car?" said George, with a smile.

"No," answered Miss Slowbury; "but, by some means

or other, he has forced himself upon Captain Jack within the last day or two. I suspect he wants the Captain to purchase some land he has for sale, or something of that kind. I only hope, if such be the case, that the Captain won't be cheated; for I can't help thinking that there's something bad about this man."

"Where is little Alice to-day?" asked cousin Mary.

"She is gone with Captain Jack and Mr. Swoop," replied Miss Slowbury. "It is strange: at first this man's attentions were chiefly directed toward *me*; but latterly he has left me to myself, and interested himself in little Alice and the Captain. I'm not at all sorry to get rid of him, I assure you; still, I don't know why, but I fancy that it's for no good that he has followed us, as I am satisfied that he did, from Albany to this place, purposely to get acquainted with us. I do wish somebody would warn the Captain of him. I don't like to interfere myself; but Captain Jack is as simple as a child in some respects, and might easily be cheated."

George Neville, likewise, had fancied that he had, somewhere or other, seen the stranger's face before, and the words spoken by Miss Slowbury shed some light upon the matter.

"Swoop did you say this man's name is?" he asked of the young woman.

"Yes; so he calls himself," she replied. "Do you know who he is?"

"I have some notion," said George, who now recollected to have heard that Swoop was the name of one of the attorneys who had been intrusted with the management of the Van Broek property, previous to the appearance of the present inheritor. He also recollected that this was the man who had called at the office of the "Herald of Freedom," and made the anxious inquiries respecting a young woman who had advertised in that newspaper, and in whom both Mr. Van Broek and his cousin Ellen had

taken so deep an interest. He now for the first time identified this young woman with Miss Slowbury, and Captain Jack with the retired sea captain, to whose advertisement for a housekeeper she had responded, and with whom she had gone to reside. He wondered now that he had not identified Miss Slowbury before, inasmuch as he had been aware that she had come from Wellfleet, and also that Wellfleet was the name of the village on Cape Cod to which the young woman in question had gone to reside.

He had, however, supposed Miss Slowbury to be some relative of Captain Jack's, and even now he thought he might be mistaken; so, having replied that he had some notion who Mr. Swoop really was, he added, as if carelessly, "I suppose you are a relation of the Captain's, Miss Slowbury?"

"Oh no," replied the young woman; "no relation whatever: indeed, I have known Captain Jack but for a very short time. I am merely his housekeeper; but he has behaved very kindly to me and to my little cousin, and he treats us both as if we were relations."

George was satisfied now that he was right in his surmise, but he wondered what had induced Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek to interest themselves so strongly in Miss Slowbury's behalf, and he now remembered that this lawyer, Mr. Swoop, had asked, in a manner that he had thought strange at the time, who were the lady and gentleman in Brooklyn who had offered to bear testimony to the young woman's respectability. He was satisfied that there was something in all this, that he could not comprehend, and his curiosity was somewhat piqued. He would have questioned Miss Slowbury further, had he had not been afraid lest she should think him as impertinent as lawyer Swoop himself. This fear kept him silent, and for several minutes not a word was inter-

changed between the trio who formed the party, and who were soon joined by Mr. and Mrs. Upton.

Leaving the ladies together, George walked forward with his uncle, and, full of the mystery which he fancied he had discovered, he took an opportunity to speak of it to Mr. Upton by making some allusion to the absence of Captain Jack and little Alice.

"Yes," said the minister; "your aunt and I saw the Captain and his little girl leave the hotel this morning with that somewhat suspicious-looking stranger, who, I really believe, intended, from the moment he entered our car at Albany, to force an acquaintanceship with the Captain's party. I don't like the look of it. It was very evident that the Captain resented the stranger's impertinence at first, yet for the last day or two they have been constantly together. Now Captain Jack—by the way, what a singular nomenclature that is! It's not Captain James Jack, or Thomas Jack, though either would sound strangely enough, nor is it Captain Jack something else, but simply Captain Jack! However, setting his nomenclature aside, Captain Jack is a simple, honest, unsuspecting man, who might be easily cheated by a designing rascal; and neither your aunt nor I like to see this ill-assorted intimacy, although it is no business of ours."

"Have you reason to think this stranger's intentions are mischievous or evil?" asked George.

"Why should he force himself into the car the Captain occupied, when I heard the conductor advise him to enter another?" replied the minister. "Why should he endeavor rudely to intrude himself upon Miss Slowbury? Why, when he had received a pretty broad hint that his companionship was not desirable, should he follow the Captain to the International Hotel? and why and how has he contrived, in the course of a few days, to overcome the Captain's repugnance, and to become closely intimate

with him? I am a stranger to Captain Jack myself, yet I am half inclined to warn him to beware of this man."

"I have felt as you do, sir," replied George; "but a few minutes since I heard something from Miss Slowbury which leads me to believe that, although this stranger has, no doubt, some sinister motive in thus forcing an intimacy with the Captain, it is not of the nature you suppose."

"Why? How? Do you know who or what this man is?" asked the minister.

"I have just learned," said George, "his name is Swoop, and I have not the least doubt that he is the same Mr. Swoop who was interested in the management, or, as has been pretty broadly whispered, the mismanagement of the Van Broek estates, before Mr. Van Broek came forward to prefer his claim."

"He is a lawyer, then?"

"Yes, sir, he is a lawyer; but I have understood that both he and his partner, Mr. Nettletop, have long given up the regular practice of their profession."

"He is known, then, to Miss Slowbury, and of course to the captain. That makes a difference. Yet, in that case, it is singular that they should in the first place have regarded him with so much coolness, not to say rudeness."

"He is known only by name to Miss Slowbury," returned George, "and his name he himself acquainted the young lady with. She does not know the nature of his profession; neither is it a matter of course that being known to Miss Slowbury, he should be known to the Captain. Until just now I supposed, as no doubt you do, that Miss Slowbury and little Alice were near relations of Captain Jack's. Such is not the case. And, moreover, what makes the matter more mysterious is that Mr. Swoop's original object was to ingratiate himself for some purpose or other, with Miss Slowbury and the little child, without reference to the Captain; but, having been re-

pulsed by the young woman, he *has* succeeded in ingratiating himself with the Captain, and now seems to be careless respecting the young lady. And then, again, I am not sure, whatever may be Mr. Swoop's object, that my cousin Ellen and Mr. Van Broek are not in some way or other, concerned in the matter."

"Mr. Van Broek! your cousin Ellen! my daughter concerned in the matter!" exclaimed Mr. Upton. "What connection can possibly exist between them and Miss Slowbury or Captain Jack?"

"That," replied George, "it is impossible for me even to surmise. I will, however, tell you how I came to learn what I have related to you."

George then acquainted his uncle with the brief conversation he had just before held with Miss Slowbury; how that young woman had told him that no relationship existed between herself and her little "cousin" and Captain Jack; how she had stated that Mr. Swoop had followed her to Wellfleet when first she went to reside at that village, and had annoyed her with impertinent questions; how she had recognized his features immediately he entered the car at Albany; and how concerned she was about his present intimacy with the Captain, simply because she suspected him of some sinister intention, though she had no suspicion of its nature. Moreover, he related how Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek had, a few months before, interested themselves deeply in Miss Slowbury's welfare: how they had requested him to indorse her advertisement in the "Herald of Freedom;" how Mr. Swoop, on the very day that Miss Slowbury had gone to Wellfleet, had called at the newspaper office, and had made urgent inquiries respecting her, and had subsequently asked the names of the persons in Brooklyn who were interested in the young woman, and, on being told that Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek were the persons, had appeared to be so well pleased to learn that fact that he

(George) could not help remarking his expression of satisfaction; and how Mr. Swoop had gone down to Wellfleet to see Miss Slowbury and the child forthwith.

Mr. Upton, on hearing all this, acknowledged that it was a strange and somewhat complicated concatenation of circumstances, and repeated that he did not like the look of it; and George determined, as soon as he could do so without apparent rudeness, to question Miss Slowbury more closely. When the party returned to the hotel, they found that Mr. Swoop and Captain Jack and little Alice had just got back from the Indian village, and the Captain and the lawyer were in deep conversation in the parlor.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. NETTLETOP VISITS AMOS JEPSON AT THE SAILOR'S SNUG HARBOR ON STATEN ISLAND.

Not far distant from the Quarantine Station and the Seamen's Hospital, on the picturesque shores of Staten Island, in New York Bay, stands the "Sailor's Snug Harbor"—a cosy retreat for seamen of good character, who have been disabled by wounds or accidents incurred in the discharge of their duty, or whom length of years has rendered unfit for service. The frequent visitors to Staten Island during the summer months are fond of conversing with these aged men, who have done battle with the elements, or with their country's foes, for so many years; and who have visited the most remote corners of the earth, and are frequently more familiar with foreign lands than with their own native shores. And those old seamen (where are the old seamen to be found who are not?) are glad and proud to tell of the wonders they

have witnessed in the course of their adventurous lives, and to astonish the ears of listening landsmen with their marvellous stories. When their tales are ended, a small gift in money or tobacco will make the aged veterans happy; and where is the man so churlish as to withhold the paltry fee?

A few days after the day on which Mr. Swoop had visited the Chippewa Indian village with Captain Jack, a tall, elderly gentleman, who stooped slightly in his walk, though evidently more from habit than from weight of years (and whose wrinkled, sharp-featured visage, and narrow forehead, and keen gray eyes, set closely together beneath his pent brows, gave his countenance an air of cunning, despite his venerable white hair and his immaculately neat and precise attire), was wandering on the sea-shore in the vicinity of the Sailor's Snug Harbor. Presently he stopped and held a brief conversation with a knot of sailors, who were critically watching the evolutions of a large vessel in the bay, and then walked onwards to a bench on which a very aged seaman was seated alone, his attention also fixed upon the afore-mentioned vessel. Here the old gentleman stopped again, glanced at the aged seaman's features, and then gazed himself at the vessel, as if deeply interested in her movements.

"A fine large vessel *that*, my friend," he presently said, addressing the sailor.

"Eh—what? Wer ye speakin', mister?" replied the old man, holding his hand to his ear in the manner of a deaf person. "You must speak louder, mister: I'm suthin' hard o' hearin'."

"I was speaking of the vessel in the bay," answered the old gentleman, taking a seat on the bench by the side of the seaman, and speaking—not much louder, but more slowly and distinctly—as one would speak who was accustomed to adapt himself to human infirmities of every variety, and knew how to modulate his voice to

suit the ears of a deaf person. "I should suppose," he went on, "that she's a homeward-bounder; from India, say, now?"

"How she's a hum'ard-bounder any fool of a land lubber mought see," replied the old seaman, who was none other than our old friend Amos Jepson; "and it don't want much gumption to see how she's off a long v'yage. But whether she's from Injee, or from round the Horn, or from Australy, would be a hard matter to tell from here away. Them land lubbers thinks they're orful cute," chuckled the old man to himself; "but, bless yer heart, *they* don't know nothin'."

The three years that had passed over Amos Jepson's head since he had given his evidence in favor of the plaintiff in the case of "Van Broek v. The State of New York" had left their impress on the old sailor's form and features. His form was bent; his face was more deeply indented with wrinkles; his lips had fallen in over his toothless gums, causing his nose and chin to assume an undue prominence; and but a few scant, gray locks now played loosely in the wind, as he sat, bare-headed, beneath the shade of a silver maple tree. He was growing deaf, as I have shown, and two stout sticks that lay on the bench beside him hinted sufficiently that he was either very feeble or lame; his eyes alone sparkled with all their former brilliancy from beneath his shaggy brows—keen and penetrating, and undimmed by age; for Amos Jepson was eighty-three years old now, and the last three years had done the work of any ten years of his previous life. Still the old man would not confess to his infirmities, and the surest way to gain his good-will was to praise his youthful activity and sprightliness.

"You don't recollect *me*, Master Jepson," said the elderly gentleman. "My name is Nettletop—Jabez Nettletop, formerly of Albany."

"Nickemoff—eh—Japers Nickemoff?" said the old

seaman. "No; can't say as I do, mister. I've heerd o' sich outlandish names in Rooshy. 'Tain't 'Merican?"

"Net-tle-top, my friend—Ja-bez Net-tle-top. You remember the great Van Broek case, three years ago? But I'm sorry to find you so much changed. You were a sprightly young man *then*," added the lawyer, making an attempt at a joke. "But years *will* tell upon us all."

The old man turned his bright eyes full upon the lawyer's face and gazed at him intently for a few moments.

"Eh!" he ejaculated. "I reckernises ye now. But I shouldn't if you hadn't told me. You worn't *much* to look at *then*, and you're wonderful changed, surely. You look twenty years older, mister. You've got one fut in the grave, as they say. You should take car' o' yerself. This yere see-breeze ain't fit for the likes o' ye poor shiverin' mortials. And lawyers is so terrible scarce; 't'd be a pity to lose any on 'em for want o' car'."

The latter part of his speech the old sailor muttered to himself, chuckling over his own wit.

Mr. Nettletop perceived that he had given offence to the old man, and he hastened to correct his error.

"*You* are not so much changed as I am, then," he said; "though I perceive you are fond of your joke. I was merely alluding to your deafness; for I believe, if my memory serves me, you showed no symptoms of deafness when we last met?"

"Yer mem'ry ain't *altogether* failed you, then," the old sailor went on, and still only half pacified. "I worn't deaf *then*, and I *ain't* deaf now. Leastways my hearin' 'll come round, I reckon, with the warm weather. I cotched cold in the winter, and a cold allus 'fected my hearin' sence I wor a boy. And" (glancing at the sticks on the bench) "I'm got a twinge o' the gout, I guess. 'Tain't rheumatis. Don't yer *think* how it's rheumatis, mister. I'm heerd tell how my feyther was subjec' to

the gout. Younger men has the gout as well as old uns. It'll war off with the warm weather, I guess."

"Your eyesight is good, at all events," said Mr. Nettle-top.

"Ay, that's whar it is, yer see. I've heerd as doctors says how, so long's a man's eyesight stands good, thar ain't no signs o' the infarmities o' age on him; and thar ain't a man with better eyesight in 'Merica than I've got, though I says it."

"Well, then, suppose we step round to a tavern, and drink a glass of grog, and smoke a pipe together, for old acquaintance' sake, Mr. Jepson?"

"To yer sarvice, mister," replied the old man. "You wor a-jokin' jist now 'bout my infarmities, I reckon, and I don't mind to say how I wor a-jokin' too. I don't b'ar no malice, and, though I wor never a drunkard, I aren't the man as wouldn't drink a glass with an old acquaintance."

So speaking, the old man rose from the bench, gathered up his sticks, and hobbled along by the lawyer's side at a pretty fair speed, considering his years.

The Vanderbelt Tavern (Staten Island is famous for its Dutch names and proclivities) was close at hand, and into the snug private parlor of the tavern the lawyer and the sailor entered together. Mr. Nettle-top called for hot brandy-and-water, and pipes and tobacco, and in a few minutes the ill-assorted pair were chatting together as cosily and as confidentially as if they had been the most intimate friends.

"So it was through Julius Van Broek's influence that you got this berth in the Sailor's Snug Harbor?" said Mr. Nettle-top, in response to some observation made by his companion.

"No, 'twarn't," replied Amos: "'twar my own long sarvices, and character, and sich."

"It would have been just on the part of Mr. Van

Broek to have done something for you," said Mr. Nettle-top.

"Well, p'raps so. But I didn't arx him for nothin'. If I had, perhaps he'd 'a gi'n it me."

"Very likely," said the lawyer, with a smile. "It wouldn't have cost him much. But do you know, Jepson, though of course I was glad to see the property restored to the family, I've always had my doubts about the identity of this Julius Van Broek?"

"Why so, mister?" asked the old seaman. "Warn't there the dockermments, and the stifificates, and regesters, and sich?"

"Exactly so. There were, as you say, the documents and certificates; but I can't conceive of such a *physical* change taking place after a man has come to years of maturity; for you and he both allowed that he was eighteen years old, at least, when you met each other aboard the 'Fakeer.' It would have been strange enough if the change had occurred between infancy and manhood: in the other case it is something marvelous."

"I never *heerd* as a man could *physic* hisself into a change of feetur, either," said Amos; "but if the 'boy Jack,' as we used to call him in them days, did *physic* hisself into sich a fine-lookin' genelman, I don't go for to blame him, seein' as he wor a genelman born, d'ye see?"

"When I speak of a *physical*, I mean a personal change. I can't conceive such a thing possible. I allow that it would be a difficult matter to set aside the many proofs of personal identity; but, as to those tattooed emblems on the arm, there is at least a *possibility* that the operation was performed by some other person than yourself, and that the emblems were copied from some pattern or from memory."

"I'd liefer b'lieve a Chinaman or a nigger could change

hissself to a white man than I'd b'lieve as anybody *livin'* could ekal that ar tattooin'," said the old sailor, earnestly. "Thar ain't nobody *livin'* as knows the way to make them ar 'delible colors, to say nothin' of the elegance o' the design, which was gener'ly admired. Why, mister, Jack (I allers think o' the patroon as the boy Jack when I calls them old days to mind)—Jack wor laid up for near two months with that ar arm afore the inflammation went down! 'Twor a job that I took pleasure in for the sake o' the family. Sich a job as that ain't to be done every day, mister."

"And when once done is never to be undone," said the lawyer.

"No, mister," cried Amos, enthusiastically, striking his clenched fist upon the table, and making the glasses ring: "thar's the booty o' that sort o' thing. Tain't never to be *ondone*. The colors is 'delible."

"But about this boy Jack, as you say you used to call him. According to your idea, he'd naturally have grown to be, by this time, a stout, burly, sailor-like man not over tall, with sandy hair and whiskers, and blue eyes, and a sunburnt, somewhat freckled, face. That's the sort of man you'd have expected to see, in place of the tall, well-built, dark-haired, dark complexioned, gentleman-like man, who appeared in court to prefer his claims."

"Exactly, mister. You've described the figur' o' the *old* patroon as I recollect him, barrin' the sunburnt look and the freckles, which, in course, worn't to be looked for in a genelman sich as he. But, ye see, mister, the real 'boy Jack' has turned out a different sort o' man."

"So it appears at present. But let me ask you one question, Mr Jepson. I don't, for a moment, doubt your skill in the art of tattooing; but if there is nobody *living* as you say, who could have made such a finished piece of work, is there no one, now *dead* who, when he *was* living, was able to rival you in this art?"

"Anan, mister?" said the old man, raising his hand to his ear. "I don't jist exactly onderstand your meanin'."

"You have said," repeated the lawyer more distinctly, "that there is no man *living* who could rival—that is, who could equal or excel you in the art of tattooing. Have you known no man, now *dead*, who, when living, *might* have equalled you—might, for instance, have copied some of your figures?"

"I won't go fur to deny as thar was one young chap—as smart a young chap as ever lived, mister—who moughtn't arter a little more 'sperience ha' comed up pooty nigh to ekal me; but he wor lost at sea, and never more heerd on, when he worn't more'n twenty year old or so. Ha, he was a smart chap, wor poor Miles Slowbury."

"Slowbury!" exclaimed Mr. Nettletop. "Was that the name of this young man who was so skilled in the art of tattooing?"

"*Miles* Slowbury, mister," said Amos Jepson. "Sure *you* didn't know nothin' on him?" added the old man, surprised at the eagerness with which the lawyer had spoken.

"No," replied Mr. Nettletop; "I knew nothing of the young man of whom you speak. But the name of Slowbury is not a common one, and I know—that is, I have some knowledge of a person bearing that name. Possibly some relation?"

"Belike, mister," said the old seaman. "I've heerd Miles say how he had relations to hum in the States."

Soon afterwards Mr. Nettletop paid the tavern bill, gave the old sailor a dollar to buy tobacco, and returned to New York city in the Staten Island ferry-boat. He had been induced to make this visit to old Amos Jepson in consequence of some statements made in a letter he had received that morning from Mr. Swoop. He had not expected to gain much by the visit, but Mr. Swoop

had thought it advisable to freshen the memory of the old seaman, in case his testimony should be again required. This Mr. Nettletop had done, and had found the old man's intellect as clear as ever. He had, however, accomplished more than he had anticipated, and was evidently well pleased with the result of his journey.

"A couple of dollars well spent, I calculate," he muttered to himself as he paced to and fro on the deck of the steamboat on the return trip. "The plot thickens. I think Swoop will give *me* credit for a little shrewdness in making *this* discovery. Not that I exactly see, as yet, what Swoop is after. But it's a pretty little intricate affair as it stands. It will be quite a pleasure to work it out. There's that Captain Jack whom Swoop has discovered. I'd lay my life that *he* is the real man we want, the 'boy Jack' of the—what is it? Ha, the 'Faker.' Then there's the young woman and child of whom we heard through that anonymous letter, Nancy Slowbury and Alice, in whom the Van Broeks were so strangely interested; and now *I've* found out that there was a young fellow named Slowbury, who was a shipmate of old Jepson's, and of this 'boy Jack's,' or of Julius Van Broek's, and was as well able to disfigure a man's arm with that hideous tattooing as old Jepson himself, and who I have no doubt, was related to the young woman and the child. Upon my word, I can't unravel the mystery. But it's a very pretty affair as it stands. I must write off immediately and acquaint Swoop with my discovery. Yes; I think Swoop *will* give me credit for my cuteness in this matter;" and, as soon as the ferry-boat reached the landing, near the battery, Mr. Nettletop stepped on shore and hastened to his office, and, in the course of an hour, posted a letter to "Isaac Swoop, Esq., International Hotel, Niagara Falls."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE UPTONS MAKE A DISCOVERY, AND QUIT NIAGARA FALLS FOR SARATOGA SPRINGS.

THE visit of the Uptons and George Neville to Niagara Falls was drawing to a close. Captain Jack, however, intended to remain a week or two longer at the International Hotel, in the village of the Falls, and, of course, Nancy Slowbury and the child were to remain with him. Mr. Swoop also seemed inclined to prolong his visit, and it was the belief of the Uptons and of Nancy Slowbury that the lawyer intended to remain solely to keep up his intimacy with the Captain, and perhaps with the hope of being invited to accompany him home to Wellfleet.

The intimacy between the Uptons' party and Miss Slowbury had increased during their stay at the International, until it had ripened into a feeling of warm friendship. Captain Jack, likewise, was as friendly as ever with the Uptons when he met them; but, after the first week of their sojourn at Niagara Falls, the Captain had become so much taken up with Mr. Swoop that even Miss Slowbury and little Alice saw but little of him, and were thrown, in consequence, almost constantly into the society of the Uptons, who, in the course of conversation with the young woman, became acquainted with much of her previous history.

With this history the reader has been made familiar in a preceding chapter, wherein Nancy Slowbury acquainted Mr. Van Broek with the story of her misfortunes, on the occasion of the patroon's visit to her miserable lodgings in Orange Street, New York. There were, however, certain matters relative to her family connections, of which Miss Slowbury spoke in the course of her conversation with the Uptons, that she had not mentioned to Mr. Van Broek (probably because she believed him to be

familiar with them through his former intimacy with Miles Slowbury), yet which have an important bearing upon the *dénouement* of my story.

The young woman had spoken of the death of her mother while she was an infant, and, happening to mention the fact that she had not, that she was aware of—now that her uncle was dead—a single relation living, Mrs. Upton had inquired, with much sympathy, whether all her mother's friends were dead.

"I cannot say," replied Miss Slowbury. "To me they are dead, because I never knew them; nor am I aware that any of them ever knew me. As I have heard the story, though I cannot say how or from whom I heard it, my father, when a very young man, and before he commenced the practice of his profession, made a tour, prolonged over several months, through the then sparsely-settled districts of the Far West. In the course of this tour he met my mother, who was, I believe, the orphan child of a poor settler in Wisconsin, then only a territory of the United States, though since admitted as one of the confederation of independent States. My mother is said to have been a very beautiful woman, and a small painting on ivory, which I inherited on the death of my father, and which in all my distress I never parted with (it is at Wellfleet, and some day, perhaps, I may show it to you), bears out this assertion. It was painted the day after her marriage with my father, when she was only seventeen years old. When my father first became acquainted with my mother, she was living in a log cabin in the heart of the forest with her grandparents, who died very soon after her marriage. My father possessed a pretty pencil-drawing, executed by himself, of the log cabin and its surroundings, with my mother standing at the door caressing a deer-hound. I well recollect the drawing. It used perfectly to fascinate me when I was a child. I don't know what became of it. I never saw it

after my father's death. My mother, after her marriage, went with my father to the little village on the coast of New Jersey where I was born; and on the death of her grandparents she never heard anything more of her friends or family. She may have had—I believe she had—cousins, and uncles, and aunts out West; and some of them may be living still—I cannot say. But, be they still living or dead, they have ever been strangers to me."

"Had your father no other relation than his brother Miles, my dear?" inquired the minister's wife.

"The only relation I have ever heard of, besides my uncle Miles," replied Miss Slowbury, "was a great-aunt—an aunt of my father's—who married a missionary named Martin, and went abroad with him to a place called Bangalore, in the Madras Presidency, in the East Indies, before I was born. Mr. Martin, I have heard, had brothers and sisters in India, some or all of whom were reported to be in wealthy circumstances. Somehow or other, however, my father ceased to correspond with his aunt soon after she went to India—though she had always been very fond of her nephews previous to her marriage—and, when my uncle Miles left Yale College, soon after my father's marriage, my uncle, who was many years younger than my father, took it into his head to go as a sailor to India, to try and find out this aunt, or some of her relatives. He was, however, unsuccessful, and he returned to the United States shortly after I was born. That was the only occasion on which he saw me until his return to New York only a few days before his death; for after his first return, he sailed again for India, left his ship in Calcutta, and remained abroad twenty years. But he, was always kind and generous. While he was in good circumstances he was profuse in his presents, both of money and other valuables, to my father and to myself; and after my father's death, when he, poor fellow, fell

into poverty, he did not forget *me*, but assisted me to the best of his ability—often, I fear, beyond his ability without injuring himself. He was a good, kind uncle to *me*—my uncle Miles.”

“Did he never, at a subsequent period—after his return to the East Indies, I mean—discover his aunt or any of her friends?” inquired Mr. Upton.

“Not that I am aware of, sir,” replied Miss Slowbury. “And yet I have sometimes had a faint suspicion, from words he has let drop, that the person whose address he was so anxious to discover, before he made himself known to the friend upon whom he said he had a claim, was in some way connected with my great aunt’s family, as well as with little Alice. Still, it is but a suspicion; for, as I have observed, my uncle was extremely reticent on all matters relating to his private or family affairs. Perhaps it had been better had he been more communicative. Perhaps, poor fellow, had he suspected that his death was so near, he *would* have been more communicative. But we must believe that Providence orders all things wisely and for the best.”

“And this friend, upon whom your uncle expressed himself as having a claim, was, you believe, Mr. Van Broek?”

“I believe so, sir; merely because of Mr. Van Broek’s and his wife’s great kindness to me after my uncle’s death. Mr. Van Broek said he had known my uncle in India, and he paid the expenses of the funeral, and befriended both me and little Alice. My uncle’s claim upon him was, I am inclined to think, merely the claim of former intimate friendship.”

“Why, in that case, did your uncle not apply to Mr. Van Broek before he sought, as you believe, to find out some other person?”

“I cannot say, sir. It was a whim of my uncle’s, probably. He was singular in such matters.”

“I may appear rude in putting these questions, my dear Miss Slowbury,” said the minister; “but, when I tell you that Mrs. Van Broek is my daughter, and the sister of your young friend Mary——”

“Mrs. Van Broek—your daughter, sir!” exclaimed the young woman, interrupting the minister, in her surprise at this piece of information.

“Yes, my dear young lady—my daughter,” continued the minister; “consequently I am naturally interested in everything that relates to her or to her husband. The question, therefore, that I wish to put is this: I think you mentioned that your uncle sent a letter—the last letter he ever penned—to my daughter, Mrs. Van Broek?”

“He did, sir, on the morning of his death; but the letter was, I believe, sent really to Mr. Van Broek, under cover to his wife; my uncle having heard that Mr. Van Broek was absent from home, and would thus get the letter sooner. I have since thought that my uncle knew that he had not long to live, and so wished—since he could not discover the information, whatever it might be, that he had been seeking—to see his former friend before he died, little thinking, however, that his death was so near.”

“Perhaps so,” replied the minister. “Yours has been a life of sorrow and misfortune, my dear young lady. Let us hope, however, that your misfortunes are at an end; and let us firmly believe that he who never afflicts without a sufficient purpose has acted both wisely and mercifully in thus trying you in the furnace of affliction, and be ever thankful that, amidst all your troubles, he supported you, and gave you strength to withstand the temptations before which so many have fallen.”

And so the conversation ended. Shortly afterwards the Uptons took a kindly farewell of Miss Slowbury; and her friend the Captain, and little Alice, and quitted Niagara Falls to return home to Acton, with the inten-

tion, however, of stopping at Saratoga Springs for a few days on their way. Before they left the hotel, however, they gave a pressing invitation to their new friends, and to Miss Slowbury particularly, to visit them at Acton Parsonage during the ensuing summer.

"I am sorry to leave Niagara Falls," observed Mr. Upton, when at length he and his party were whirling over the railroad in the cars, and taking a last lingering look from the windows at every point of interest: "but I cannot deny that I am glad to get rid of the presence of that man, Swoop. I don't know why, but that man has sat like an incubus upon me since I first met him in the cars at Troy." Presently he added, "It is strange that Miss Slowbury's uncle should have sent a letter to Ellen from his death-bed. It was for her husband, of course—still it was strange. You perceive, George" (addressing his nephew), you were right about Miss Slowbury being the young woman in whom Mr. Van Broek took so deep an interest. Your words had slipped my memory until Miss Slowbury spoke of the fact this morning. That, however, is explained; Van Broek knew her uncle in India. Still, I don't know why, but there seems to me, to be an undercurrent of mystery in the matter, that I do not like."

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. SWOOP WRITES A LONG LETTER TO HIS PARTNER
TAKING CAPTAIN JACK FOR HIS THEME.

THE following extract from a long letter written by Mr. Swoop to his partner, after the former had received the letter containing the information Mr. Nettletop had

derived from his visit to the Sailor's Snug Harbor, will save pages of explanation:—

"The information you have obtained relative to a person deceased, or supposed to be deceased, of the name of Miles Slowbury," wrote Mr. Swoop, "may or may not be of service to us. I do, to a certain extent, give you credit for the cross-questioning which brought it out. But you think too much of it, my dear fellow; and another thing let me tell you—although it happened to turn out well, you acted your part clumsily. With a man of a more suspicious disposition than old Amos Jepson, the way you put the question might have defeated your object, and sealed the man's lips altogether. They are 'kittle folk' to deal with, these 'ancient mariners.' In some respects they are free and open as the ocean upon which the better portion of their lives has been passed; in others deep and unfathomable as some parts of that ocean's depths, and as uncertain as the elements with which they have been used to do battle. One never knows where to take them, and, as a general rule, I have found them to entertain a most absurd prejudice against us of the legal profession. The fact is they are, in general, *too* honest and truthful. If there is one man more than another with whom I hate to have anything to do, in relation to an intricate or delicate piece of work, it is your thoroughly honest, open-hearted man—be he seaman or landsman. I don't mean the man who makes a *profession* of his honesty and integrity. Such men are the best subjects in the world to help one out in these delicate matters. Hold out a sufficient bait to them, and they will shy and play round it for a time, as the gudgeons play round the bait of the skillful angler, but they are sure to bite, and swallow the hook, sooner or later. No; I mean the *real* honest man. You are sure to catch a rogue tripping, in the end, whether he be one of the thorough-going or the sanctimonious class;

but your really and truly honest man's strength consists in his simplicity. You can't find a flaw in his statements wherewith to overthrow him. Now there is this man-Jack (excuse the pun) of whom I spoke in my last letter. I was a long time before I could get a civil word from him. He seemed to bear a sort of instinctive dislike to me. In vain I flattered him, and spoke of his travels in distant lands, and expressed my admiration of sailors generally. It wouldn't do. The best answer I could get was a sort of grunt, and I was well off if I didn't receive a sneering reply.

"At length, however, I found out that he had been married, and had some strange notions in his head, that his wife might be still alive, and that he had, or ought to have, a child living. I saw that he was fond of children, and so, by baiting my hook anew, in a manner that you will hear more of anon, I contrived to get on his blind side; and now, I think, I have got him safe. It is somewhat singular that, when I set out on this business, I thought *only* of the child, and my hope was to curry favor with the young woman, Nancy Slowbury, that through her I might get to a knowledge of the child's history. It was not until I entered the car at Troy, and heard from the conversation going forward, that the Captain had been many years in India, and that he had led a remarkably adventurous life, that my attention was directed to *him*. Then the singularity of his name, and his strong likeness to a certain family that we have had some acquaintance with, struck me forcibly, and it was not long before I was satisfied that this man was a more important personage to our little drama than either the woman or the child. With Nancy Slowbury, therefore, I have hardly exchanged a dozen words since I have been at Niagara. I can see that she dislikes and distrusts me more than ever; but if my suspicions are well founded, *her* dislike and distrust are of a very little consequence.

"To return, however, to this amphibious being who goes by the name of Captain Jack. I have discovered that he signs himself, when he does take pen in hand, which, I take it, is very seldom, as 'John Jack,' and that Jack is his pseudo-surname, and not simply his baptismal name, as I at one time fancied.

"I say his pseudo-surname because I have discovered that it is, to say the least, doubtful whether either John or Jack are his real names.

"The first day on which I contrived to get into friendly conversation with him, I said, as if carelessly—

"'Yours is rather an uncommon name, Captain, and, with the title of Captain prefixed to it, has a very singular sound.'

"'Brother,' he replied (he has a very peculiar and quaint nautical style of phraseology)—'brother, Jack is a name as is easy said and easy writ, and to my mind John tackles on uncommon well 'longside o' Jack. The names are kinder simultaneous. But hark'ee, brother. I'm had great many "purser's names" in the course o' my 'sperience, and Jack wor the name as allers suited me *best*. Fur to tell the truth, I hev my doubts as to my reel name.'

"'Indeed!' said I. (Here was another point gained, do you see?) 'Indeed! but surely your baptismal register would easily settle that question?'

"'Don't know as I hev one, brother,' replied the Captain. 'Don't know as ever I wor baptised. I mought ha' been, and then, ag'in, I moughtn't. I hev my doubts.'

"'But, Captain,' I went on to say—for my object was to draw him out—'it's a matter of importance that you *should* know, for many reasons. You could easily make the necessary inquiries at the place of your birth, and, if you *really* do not know, could ascertain the names of your parents.'

"Well," returned the Captain, "I reckon how you're right thar, brother. I s'pose I must ha' *had* a place o' birth some'eres or other; and I s'pose, in the reg'lar coorse o' natur, I must ha' had parents—two on 'em, I reckon like other folks. 'Tain't to be s'posed as I come into the world wi'out 'em more'n another. But I never knowed my parents, and I ha'n't no recollection whatsumever o' them."

"Supposing," said I, "you had a fortune left you; how could you claim it if you don't know the name of your parents?"

"'Tain't likely, brother; 'tain't likely," replied the Captain; "and more'n that, I don't want a fortun'. I've got two thousand dollars a year cl'ar money every dollar on't honestly arned, and that's as much as I car's to spend."

"But you say you were married, Captain?" said I.

"Yes; *that ar* a fac'," answered the Captain. "Twor in Injee, at Seringapatam. Thar ain't *no* doubts 'bout that in *my* mind, though I've lost the sartificate."

"Well, then, in what name were you married?"

"Name o' Jack, in coorse," said the Captain, somewhat impatiently. "My wife wor Mrs. Jack—Mrs. Alice Jack—and her name afore that wor Alice Martin. Them names were on the sartificate."

"I've heard you say," I went on, "that you are not certain whether your wife is dead or not; and you are not sure whether you have, or ever had, a child."

"No; them are doubtful p'int," answered the Captain, shaking his head sorrowfully. "I wish they were cl'ared up—specially 'bout the child."

"Then the child's name would, of course, be Jack?" said I.

"The child's name, if ever I had a child, would be Alice Jack, if so be that child wor a gal, and John Jack if so be that child wor a boy," said the Captain oracularly;

"but I expect, if ever I *did* hev a child, it wor a gal I had," he added.

"Well, now," said I, "supposing you *have* a child living, and were fortunate enough to discover that child; and then suppose you had a fortune—a large fortune—left: would it not be desirable, for the child's sake, that you should, if possible—and I am confident that it is possible—ascertain the names of your parents and the place of your birth?"

"I made sure I had him there, and any ordinary human being would have had his curiosity awakened by my impressive manner of speaking. But there's where it is with these sort of people. As I have said, you never know where to take them. The Captain grew restive, and I found that I had almost gone too far. A little more, and I should have spoilt the game."

"I've told yer," he said, "as I have fortun' enow. If yer can help me to find the child, as yer says yer thinks yer can, well and good. I'll be thankful, and yer shan't hev no call to complain: but I don't like this 'ere cross-questionin', and, more'n that, I wunt hev it, mister. So now I'm told yer my mind on that p'int. That's why I don't like you lawyers; you allus seems as if you wasn't ersactly spakin' up yer minds."

"I changed the topic of coversation, of course, and brought the Captain round to a good-humor again; but I did not again allude to the child."

"I have much to say that I cannot explain *in*, nor would I trust it *to*, a letter. You shall hear all when we meet. The Captain and Miss Slowbury and the child leave this for Cape Cod this day week. I shall go with them as far as Albany, and there take the boat or the cars to New York."

"And now, Nettle-top, let me warn *you* to keep a still tongue in your head. Don't allow an inkling of this affair to get abroad. It might ruin all. You know, as well

as I do, that you are apt to talk too much. I am almost sorry now that you went to Staten Island. Old Jepson's suspicions may be aroused. However, I will trust to your discretion in this matter. You will see me, probably, about a week after you receive this letter. Until then, believe me,"

"Yours faithfully,

"ISAAC SWOOP.

JABEZ NETTLETOP, Esq.,
"Nassau Street, New York,

"Yours faithfully," muttered Mr. Nettletop when he had finished the reading of this long epistle, which occupied three sheets of post paper.

"*Very* faithfully, I calculate! He's almost *sorry* I went to Staten Island? I guess he *is*! Didn't *he* ask me to go? It's just like him. He hardly says a word about my finding out about the man Slowbury, though I expect he's better pleased about that than all he's done himself. He'll turn it to account, and then he'll take all the credit to himself, as usual. *Me* blab! When did *he* ever know *me* to blab? I should like to ask him that, before witnesses—yes, before witnesses. He's always going on at *me*, yet it was *me* that brought the money that first gave the firm a start.

"Still he is a cute, smart coon. There's no denying that. But I do wish he'd let me deeper into his secrets. Even now I really don't know what track he's upon. I have a general idea of what he's up to, and that is all. But I *will* know when he comes up to New York. I *will*, so sure as my name's Nettletop; or else—I'll sting him. Ha, ha! very good that. I'll *sting* him. He shall find Nettletops can sting; as well as worms will turn; when they are trampled upon;" and, somewhat restored to good-humor by his pun, Mr. Nettletop—according to advice—carefully burned the letter, and then quitted his office for the day.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE UPTONS AT SARATOGA SPRINGS.

THE season at Saratoga Springs was just commencing when the minister of Acton, and his wife, daughter, and nephew, arrived at that fashionable summer resort from Niagara Falls. The Uptons, as is the case with thousands of American families, in a respectable position in society, who live in remote country districts, had never, since their eldest child was born, been absent from home for a week at a time. It was not for want of means; for, as I have heretofore hinted, the minister possessed a small independent income exclusive of the salary he received from his church. Neither was it for lack of interest; for there had been scarcely a year, since Mr. Upton had brought his young wife from England, wherein they had not fully made up their minds to take a long holiday, and visit all the most prominent places within reasonable distance of their abode—*next year*; and an ample supply of money for the purpose had been laid aside a dozen different times, and had been as many different times expended in some other manner. It was rather because, like many other married couples in their rank of life, they had become settled down into a sort of domestic groove from which they found it difficult to swerve. Once start them out of the regular beaten track, and they would have gone anywhere and everywhere, so far as their comparatively limited means would have carried them, and would have enjoyed themselves vastly, and all the more on account of the scarcity of their holidays. But, until the somewhat romantic marriage of their eldest daughter, nothing had occurred to disturb the even tenor of their lives.

Week after week, month after month, year after year—every day had brought its appointed duties, and to the

best of their ability the pastor and his wife had fulfilled those duties. They had rejoiced over the birth of their children, and they had sorrowed over their death, and these had been their brightest rejoicings and their bitterest sorrows. Their greatest earthly happiness had been to watch over the infancy and childhood and dawning womanhood of the two children who had been spared to them. The education of these two children had been their heaviest, yet their most pleasing source of anxiety. Thus had it happened that their great holiday had been so long deferred. When the girls were infants their mother *could* not leave them; while they were young children she did not like to leave them; and when they grew towards womanhood both father and mother thought it better to wait a *little* longer, and then the girls could go with them. So for twenty-five years Mr. Upton had satisfied his craving for change of scene with his annual visit to Boston to attend the religious meetings held in that city during the month of May; and once, during those twenty five years of wedded life, Mrs. Upton had accompanied her husband to Boston, and on that occasion Mr. Upton had extended his ordinary three weeks' holiday to a month, by returning home to Acton by way of New York, and spending a few days in the latter city.

Then came round the great event of their quiet lives, their daughter Ellen's marriage; and, ere the excitement caused by the marriage had died away, George Neville arrived on a long-promised visit to his aunt.

So it was finally resolved that, if nothing unforeseen should occur to prevent it, the minister and his family should, during the ensuing summer, pay the long-deferred and oft-postponed visit to Niagara Falls.

The subsequent visit to Saratoga Springs was a concession on the part of the minister to the importunities of his wife and daughter. *He* would gladly have remained at Niagara until the full term of his holiday had

expired; but Mrs. Upton—good matronly lady, loving and devoted wife, and indulgent mother, as she was—had been seized with a natural feminine longing, in Eve-like curiosity, to pay a visit, just for once in her life, to the great resort of fashion, Saratoga Springs, and not to mingle with, but just to hover round for awhile, the votaries of the fashionable world. Cousin Mary, of course, supported her mother. It would be so nice," she said, "just to see the fashions, and learn how to make up their things to the best advantage. It would save so much money to her father, and so much time to herself and mother." The minister called upon George Neville to support his views but he found or declared that his nephew had been tampered with by the ladies. George declared that he thought they would all derive much benefit from drinking the mineral waters at the Springs. The minister found himself decidedly in the minority, and, as majorities are supposed always to govern in the United States, he was forced to yield.

"Mr. Van Broek and dear Ellen will meet us at Saratoga Springs," said Mrs. Upton to her husband, in the course of their journey, in the hope of bringing him round to her views. "I wrote to ask them, and I received a reply this morning. Ellen writes that she and her husband have taken rooms at the United States Hotel, and they will be at Saratoga on Thursday—that is, you know, this day—the very day upon which we shall arrive. Only think, my dear; we haven't seen dear Ellen since she left us the day after she was married!"

"I shall be very glad indeed to see *her*," replied the minister; "but, my dear wife, I'd much rather meet her and her husband at our quiet home at Acton."

"Ellen writes in excellent spirits," continued Mrs. Upton, evading a direct reply to the minister's insinuation. "They've taken a suite of rooms, and Mr. Van Broek, she says, has insisted upon her purchasing I don't

know how many new dresses, and has presented her with some magnificent necklaces and bracelets. I shouldn't wonder," she added, after a pause, "if Ellen attracts a great deal of attention."

"As the young wife of the wealthy patroon I dare say she will, my dear," sententiously replied Mr. Upton.

"On account of her own beauty I meant, my dear," said Mrs. Upton, with a mother's pride. "Dress and jewelry will set off to advantage dear Ellen's dignified, thoughtful, and regular features, and her clear olive complexion, and graceful, and somewhat stately form. Now our darling Mary has that style of beauty which I think appears to the best advantage the more simply she is attired. Mary never looks better than when dressed in plain white muslin, and with that old-fashioned gold necklace, that belonged to her grandmother Upton, round her neck. I do think, my dear William, that *our* daughters will be among the most admired of all the ladies, married or single, that will be assembled at Saratoga."

"My dear, good wife," said Mr. Upton, "I don't like to hear you talk in that manner; and, since we are going to stay a week at Saratoga, I could almost wish that Van Broek and Ellen were not to be there, much as I long to see my dear child. I would sooner see her at any other place, especially since Mary is with us. I know Mary is very fond of her sister, and I don't think the dear child has a particle of envy in her disposition; still she will be exposed to sore temptation. She will see her sister richly dressed every day, and admired and courted as the wife of the patroon more than on account of her own worth and beauty, good girl though Ellen is; while she—Mary I mean—will be made to feel her poverty, and will be neglected. Nay, perhaps Mr. Van Broek—perhaps even Ellen herself—may feel ashamed of us and our comparative poverty amid the gay and extravagant society at the Springs."

"Never, dear William; never!" exclaimed Mrs. Upton indignantly. "Ellen will never be ashamed of her parents and her sister—dear child!"

"Well, I hope not, my love," said the minister: "I was only expressing my fears of what may be. I regret sometimes that Ellen married so wealthy a man as Mr. Van Broek. I humbly hope that Mr. Van Broek's visit to the White Mountains, through which he became acquainted with our daughter, may not prove the source of future anxieties. I almost wish that Ellen could have made up her mind to accept Henry Willis, the deacon's eldest son. We then should have had her, in a manner, still with us, and she would not have soared above the station in life in which she was born and bred. At all events, had I known that you intended to ask Mr. Van Broek and Ellen to meet us at the Springs, I should have objected to your doing so."

The above conversation took place at the hotel in Albany in which the party were awaiting the arrival of the Saratoga train. Mr. Upton rose from his seat and walked about the room evidently annoyed; but, perceiving that his wife was hurt by his remonstrances, he came towards her, and laying his hand gently on her shoulder, he said—

"At all events, we must make the best of it now, my dear Ellen. Only I wish you had told *me* that you were going to write to our daughter, and then I should have advised you to say nothing about our purposed stay at Saratoga, but rather to have invited her and her husband, if he chose to come, to meet us at Acton on our return home. However, what is done can't be undone. We must just make the best of it. I was only speaking for yours and for the children's sakes, my dear."

"I'm sure," said Mrs. Upton, "Henry Willis is not half good enough for such a girl as our Ellen, nor for Mary either."

"Well, well, my dear; perhaps not," replied the minis-

ter. "But the Saratoga train will be here in ten minutes. We ought to settle where we shall put up. We can't think of the United States or any of the other great hotels, where there are balls every night, and where the ladies are expected to change their dresses three times a day at least, even if we were willing to incur the expense of these crowded resorts?"

"I have heard that there are family boarding-houses at Saratoga," replied Mrs. Upton, "at which single visitors or families who may desire either to escape the constant round of gaiety, or the expense of the hotels, may find comfortable board and lodging at a very moderate cost. Not more than one dollar a day for each person; a lady was telling me so the other day."

"One of these houses will best suit us for other reasons besides the expenses of the great hotels," said the minister. "But——"

"But will dear Ellen like to find us lodging at one of these humble places, you were going to say, William?" interposed Mrs. Upton. "Now I'm sure Ellen—dear girl, unless she is wonderfully changed, would prefer to live in one of these quiet houses herself."

"No, my dear wife," said Mr. Upton; "I was going to say, will Ellen's *husband* like people to know that his wife's parents are lodged so humbly? I dare say Ellen would be glad to see us anywhere; but she has another person's pleasure to consult now. And that is why I could have wished that you had not written to Ellen, my dear. Then we could have put up at some private boarding-house, and walked about, and drunk the waters, and amused ourselves by watching all that was going on, without attracting the notice of any one, and without being ourselves an annoyance to any one. However, my dear, we must do the best we can, and I'll promise to say no more about the matter."

"Any ladies and gentlemen for Saratoga Springs?"

inquired a waiter, putting his head in at the door of the waiting-room. "The kerrige is at the door. On'y jist time to get to the depot and ketch the train. Cars start in less'n a quarter of an hour."

Mr. and Mrs. Upton hurried to the door, where they found George and Mary awaiting them.

"Come, aunt, get into the carriage," said George. "We're the last. All the other carriages have gone off, loaded with passengers, to the depot. We shall miss the train."

"All right, sir. Time enough, on'y be smart," said the driver. "Now then, jump in, ladies."

The party entered the carriage, and in five minutes arrived at the depot, where the conductors and porters were hurrying the passengers into the cars.

They quickly responded to the cry of "All aboard!"—now grown familiar to their ears—and in a few minutes were flying at express speed over the Albany and Saratoga Railroad. An hour and a half sufficed to whirl them over the fifty miles' distance between the capital and Saratoga village; and during the rapid journey the question was debated whether or not the Van Broeks had yet arrived at Saratoga from New York city, and whether, if they had arrived, they would be at the depot to meet the Albany train.

It was a question soon settled. The train had not been brought to a stand-still within the depot when the quick eyes of Mary Upton recognized her sister Ellen amongst the throng of visitors who make it a practice at Saratoga Springs to await the arrival of the trains, either in the hope of meeting their own friends, or merely for the sake of excitement.

"Mamma—mamma—I told you so. There *is* Ellen!" exclaimed the young lady, and immediately the cars stopped she sprang out on to the platform. The crowd of spectators had been left behind by the advancing

train; but Ellen also had seen and recognized her sister, and in a few moments she and Mary were in each other's arms.

"Here are papa and mamma and cousin George," said Mary, a few moments afterwards, as she led her sister to the car from which the party were alighting, and a mutually affectionate greeting and embrace ensued between the parents and their married child.

"We only arrived from New York an hour ago," said Ellen, as Mr. Van Broek came up and shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Upton, and George and Mary; "but I persuaded Julius to come to the depot, for I felt certain that you'd come by this train. We're at the United States. Of course you'll come to the same hotel? You must, you know; for Julius has engaged rooms for you. I made him engage rooms for *you* at the same time that he was engaging ours."

Mrs. Upton shook her head. "We are going to a private boarding-house, my love," she said.

"O, mamma! after we've engaged rooms for you. It's too bad."

"A fashionable hotel is hardly so suitable to a clergyman, my love, as is a private boarding-house."

"Oh, if that's all," cried Ellen, "there are four of the most fashionable preachers in New York at the United States, and four more at the Congress Hall. Aren't there Julius? We've learned that already."

"But your papa is *not* a fashionable preacher, my love," said Mrs. Upton. Then, whispering in her daughter's ear, she added, with a smile, "And my Ellen forgets that *she* is a fine lady now, to whom expense is a matter of little moment. We must study cheapness, my dear. Our journey to Niagara has already cost your papa a great deal of money."

Still Ellen was disappointed.

"I was building upon our being in the same hotel together," she murmured.

Meanwhile, however, Mr. Van Broek and Mr. Upton had arranged it between them that, since the former had engaged rooms, they would have to be paid for for one week at least, the Uptons should go to the United States Hotel for the week of their proposed sojourn at Saratoga, and, meanwhile, if they thought of remaining longer, they could look about them for rooms at some comfortable boarding-house.

So Mr. Upton did put up at one of the great hotels after all; and Ellen said gleefully to her mother, as they quitted the depot—

"Papa is going among the fashionable preachers, you see, mamma; and I'm sure he's as much *right* to be a fashionable preacher *himself* as the best among them."

CHAPTER XXXI.

MR. VAN BROEK AND MR. UPTON HOLD A CONVERSATION TOGETHER.

AT Saratoga George Neville made the acquaintance with a new phase of American society. It is, comparatively speaking, only of late years that the mineral waters of Saratoga county have become so widely famed, though there is no doubt that the medicinal virtues of these waters were known and prized by the Indians centuries ago, and long before the country was visited by Europeans.

The soil for miles around the present village of Saratoga Springs is impregnated with mineral salts in marvelous abundance and in great variety; but these waters were little resorted to by strangers, until it occurred to

some enterprising genius that it would be a good speculation to found a fashionable watering-place in the vicinity of the spring.

Of course the first proceeding was to build a hotel. Balston, a village about five miles from Saratoga, was the spot originally fixed upon as the site of the new watering-place; and there is no doubt that, as regards its picturesque scenery, Balston possesses advantages over Saratoga. But it was soon discovered that the springs were more numerous and more readily accessible at Saratoga, and that Balston was too hilly, and too much exposed to bleak winds, to make it a desirable resort for invalids or idlers who came to lounge about and drink the waters. Hotels consequently sprang up like magic at Saratoga, Balston was forsaken; and the original speculator met the too frequent fate of originators, and found himself a ruined man, while others profited by his experience. Balston sunk into its former obscurity, and the little village of Saratoga Springs soon became the most fashionable summer resort on the American continent. Saratoga village consists of a main street about a mile in length, lined on both sides with ordinary-looking houses, such as are to be found in any American village, besides narrow lanes and by-streets, in which the houses are of a poorer class.

The great features, however, of Saratoga Springs, as the village is designated, are its mammoth hotels and its numerous mineral springs. The large hotels are seven or eight in number, though the United States and the Congress Hall far surpass the others in size, each being capable of sleeping and dining from seven hundred to eight hundred boarders. All these hotels, however, as well as most of the private houses in the village, are built of wood. The guests begin to arrive at Saratoga early in June, and during the months of July and August numbers of visitors are unable to find accommodations at the

hotels, and are obliged to crowd themselves as best they may into the already crowded boarding-houses. In September visitors begin to thin off, the tide of fashion then setting towards Newport, Rhode Island, a fashionable sea-bathing place; the invalids, or those who came really to drink the waters, alone remaining at Saratoga. And from the beginning of October to the beginning of June—a period of eight months—the great hotels are closed, and Saratoga is deserted by all except its permanent population. This permanent population amounts to about five thousand souls, but in the full flow of the season the population of the village is increased to forty thousand or fifty thousand.

The resident population of the village are all in some way or other connected with the hotels or with lodging-house keeping. Every householder, almost without exception, lets out a portion of his or her house during the busy season. The profits are so great that even the most exclusive of the inhabitants are contented to pocket the humiliation during the few months of the great rush. Many of the householders are, in fact, connected with the hotel-keepers, and accept lodgers on behalf of the hotels, until the guests can take the rooms vacated by persons who have gone away. Others, as has been intimated, let lodgings at a lower rate to quiet families who do not wish to mingle in the gaieties or to incur the expenses of the great hotels. The mineral springs—chalybeate, iodine, sulphur, etc., etc., etc.—are nine in number: some—although totally distinct in their medicinal properties—are situated within a very few yards of each other; but the famous Congress Spring (chalybeate) is situated in a spacious, well laid out, and well-kept park, which is open all day long to visitors who wish to drink the waters, free of expense.

During the season the village resembles a vast fair. Jewellers and fancy dealers from New York bring down

their most showy and attractive wares, and display them for sale in booths, or in small shops, in some instances temporarily erected for the purpose. The side-walks and even the centres of the streets, are occupied by dealers, who display their wares in baskets or barrows. Indian squaws, wrapped in their blankets, with their infants strapped to their backs, pass to and fro, endeavoring to sell their bead and basket work; and the sellers as well as the buyers in this Vanity Fair comprise varieties of all the "peoples" that have made the United States their adopted country. Good-humor and merriment everywhere prevail. Music is heard in every house and at every street-corner. People visit Saratoga with money in their pockets, determined to enjoy themselves, and to spend their money freely, and often extravagantly; and as a general rule they do so. Indians encamp in the outskirts of the village, and hold a fair of their own bead-work and basket-work; while the best-looking amongst the young squaws entice strangers into their wigwams to have their fortunes told. In fact, the Indians possess many of the attributes—physically as well as mentally—of the gipsies of Great Britain.

On the road to Saratoga Lake—a magnificent piece of water, surrounded by romantic scenery, about five miles from the village—carriages are passing and repassing all day long; for this is the only pleasant drive that Saratoga affords.

It is, however, after dark when the "amusements" of Saratoga commence in earnest. Theatres, and gymnasiums, and lecture-rooms, and wild-beast shows are open to visitors, and all have their share of patronage. There is a ball at every large hotel, and there are balls in many of the lodging-houses. There is music in the hotel gardens, and music at the Springs, for the benefit of those who choose to steal out from the heated rooms and enjoy a quiet moonlit stroll in the parks. The hotel balls

are open to any respectably-dressed person who chooses to look in, and the guests at the different hotels pass from one ball-room to another at their will and pleasure.

The day is thus divided, as a general rule, by the ladies:—They rise tolerably early, and, in loose morning-dresses, they go, attended by the gentlemen of their several parties, to drink the waters. On their return they dress for breakfast; then they spend the forenoon in lounging about or shopping until luncheon, after which they dress for the afternoon, or, as it is styled, "the morning drive" to the Lake. On returning from the drive they dress for dinner, and after dinner they dress again for the evening ball; and, as it is considered *de rigueur* never to wear the same ball-dress twice, it may well be imagined that a fashionable lady visiting Saratoga Springs needs a small wagon-load of band-boxes and baggage.

Thus are the hours of the week-days divided; and, as there are at Saratoga numerous churches belonging to the various leading religious denominations, and as there are always a goodly number of the leading clergy of these denominations stopping at the different hotels,* the visitors to the Springs consider it proper to attend church on Sabbath mornings, and to listen to a sermon from the lips of a fashionable preacher, and so to begin each week in a most approved manner. No duty of this kind, however devolved upon Mr. Upton. Few of the plain country farmers, or of the members of their families, in the quiet, retired New England villages, ever visited Saratoga; and at the end of the week he and his party set out on their homeward journey. Ellen would gladly

* The most fashionable churches in New York (and there are churches which are essentially fashionable) are generally closed during the heat of the summer, when the leading members are absent at the watering places and the sea-side, and the ministers of these churches frequently accompany their flocks during this season of recreation. There are also ministers and people of more solid stamp, but the outward aspect of life at Saratoga is truly depicted in the text.

have accompanied her parents and sister on a visit to her old home, for she was beginning to weary of the continuous round of pleasure in which she found herself embarked, in her position as the wife of the wealthy patroon; but this was impossible, and she was obliged to content herself with the hope of being enabled to visit Acton with her husband when the season was over. She had yet to follow the giddy crowd of pleasure-seekers to Newport, Rhode Island.

Mr. Upton had mentioned to his son-in-law the discovery he had made at Niagara Falls of the young woman and child in whom Mr. Van Broek had interested himself.

"Ha! yes," the patroon had carelessly replied; "a very interesting young woman and a pretty child. I knew a relative of the young woman's in India, years ago. Poor fellow! he died in great poverty, and under painful circumstances; yet when I knew him in India he was doing well. So you met them at Niagara Falls, eh? By the way, may I ask how they came to make themselves known to you—in connection with myself, I mean?"

"They did not make *themselves* known," replied Mr. Upton. "George Neville, my nephew, recognized the young woman as having applied at his office about a situation as housekeeper to a sea-captain—which position she now occupies—through her conversation, I believe. But what struck me as singular was that one Mr. Swoop, who, I understand, was formerly one of the trustees of the Van Broek property, was evidently endeavoring to ingratiate himself with the young woman, and also with her employer—the latter a plain, simple-minded seaman—I fear with some sinister object in view."

"Swoop! what Swoop—the lawyer of the firm of Nettletop and Swoop?" exclaimed Mr. Van Broek. "Was he at Niagara Falls with you?"

"He went down from Troy in the same car with my party and Captain Jack's," replied the minister, "and was evidently, from the first, determined to force himself upon Miss Slowbury, and the Captain. I regret to say that he has, apparently, succeeded in gaining Captain Jack's confidence. The young woman was too wary for him. We left him at Niagara Falls with them. I thought I would mention the circumstances to you, because, if you know anything of the young woman's affairs, you may be able to thwart this young man's object, which I feel instinctively is evil. The young woman spoke of some person whom her uncle was endeavoring to seek out. Whoever that person may be, he might have owed her uncle money; and, possibly, this man knows where to find him, and is trying to get the money for himself. This, of course, is mere suspicion on my part; but yet it may be true."

"Did she—did Miss Slowbury mention to you the name of the person whom her uncle wished to discover?" asked Mr. Van Broek.

"No" replied the minister. "She said her uncle kept his affairs very secret. But he wrote several letters, and, as it appears that one of these letters was written to you, or rather was directed to Ellen for you, I have thought that possibly you might know something of the matter."

"Did Miss Slowbury mention *that*?" said, Mr. Van Broek. "Yes, now I think of it, Ellen *did* receive a letter from the poor fellow—her uncle. He wrote it in a state of great excitement, wishing to see *me*. He had heard, it appears, that I was in New York. I am afraid the poor man's mind was affected by his troubles. The letter was for me, but it annoyed Ellen very much. I wish I could have seen poor Miles before he died. But I really know nothing of the friends of whom you speak, and I have never spoken to Ellen about the letter since. Indeed, she was so much annoyed by it that I would not

let her visit Miss Slowbury, lest the young woman should speak of it."

"I am glad, then," said Mr. Upton, "that I did not speak of this matter to Ellen instead of to you."

"So am I," replied Mr. Van Broek. "I would not mention it to Ellen. She is very nervous. But Swoop, you say, is at Niagara with these people?"

"We left him there."

"And up to no good, I warrant. Mr. Upton, I might have sent these people, Nettletop and Swoop, to the State Prison at Sing-Sing, had I been so minded. They have wronged both myself and the State, and enriched themselves by the plunder of the property while it was under their control. But I thought it best, though I was not acting justly, to let the matter pass, since they would have no opportunity for future plunder. But I am glad you have mentioned this matter to me. I think with you that this fellow Swoop can be after no good, and I shall make it my business to caution this man—Captain Jack."

Now this was all that was said on the subject between Mr. Upton and his son-in-law, and Mr. Van Broek's explanation was apparently open and above-board. Still it did not satisfy Mr. Upton. He fancied that there was something constrained in Mr. Van Broek's manner. And then, though he had stated, as Mr. Upton had supposed, that the letter Miles Slowbury had written on his death-bed *was* for himself, the minister could not conceive why Miles Slowbury had not *directed* the letter to the husband instead of to the wife. Then why, he thought, should the letter, in any case, prove a source of annoyance to his daughter, Mrs. Van Broek? Why could not Mr. Van Broek have explained the nature of the letter? To a stranger that would have been unnecessary, and perhaps unadvisable; but certainly it would have been more

satisfactory to have explained to the father the cause of his daughter's annoyance.

Of course, after this conversation, the minister could not speak to his daughter about the letter in question; but he did not like the look of things, and, though he could conceive no cause for uneasiness, he *was* uneasy, and he quitted Saratoga, in consequence, in no very happy state of mind. He felt that he might be mistaken—that he might be troubling himself about a matter of no consequence; but, as he had said to his nephew on leaving Niagara Falls that he did not like the look of things, so now he might have repeated his words with double emphasis. He did *not* like the look of things. He could hardly say why. Nevertheless, he was troubled in mind, and his doubts and uncertainties, though, after all, he believed that they might be without any foundation, interfered very materially with the pleasure he would have otherwise felt on returning to his own quiet country parsonage, after a longer absence than he had ever known since his visit to England a quarter of a century earlier.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE END OF THE YEAR.

THE remaining summer months passed away without the occurrence of any event of sufficient importance to disturb the ordinary routine of life in the families of the minister of Acton, or of Captain Jack at Wellfleet. The minister and his family arrived safely at Acton towards the close of the second day after they quitted Saratoga Springs; and just a week after the Uptons left Niagara Falls, Captain Jack, Miss Slowbury, and little Alice also took their departure, and were accompanied as far as the

capital of Albany by Mr. Swoop, who, on his arrival in that capital, immediately set out for New York on board the "Isaac Newton" steamboat, leaving the Captain and his party to go on to Cape Cod alone. On his return to New York, Mr. Swoop had a long interview with his partner, Mr. Nettletop, which led to no other apparent result than the posting of several official-looking letters to different parts of the East Indies; and, this task accomplished, the lawyers, to use the expression of Mr. Swoop (probably he had acquired the nautical style of the expression from the Captain), "rested on their oars," and awaited patiently as might be the reply to these letters.

Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek did not, as had been anticipated, pay a visit to Acton Parsonage in the ensuing autumn; for it happened that, early in the month of September, an infant heir was born to Van Broek Manor. Prior to this interesting event, the select social circle at Stuyvesant House had to regret the departure of the patroon and his wife, who in the month of July removed to the new mansion just completed at the manor, where they were visited by Mr. and Mrs. Upton and cousin Mary. The christening of the infant heir, at which ceremony Mr. Upton officiated, and bestowed upon his grandson the name of Julius William Upton, was the commencement of a round of festivities, which were continued, with few intermissions, throughout the autumn, and until Mr. Van Broek and his lady removed in the winter to the handsome town-house in the Fifth Avenue, New York, which the patroon had rented for the season.

George Neville returned with his uncle and aunt and cousin to Acton from Saratoga Springs, and remained at the parsonage for several weeks, renewing his acquaintance with Seth Coulter, rambling either alone, or with his uncle, or cousin, among the forests and glens, and attending his cousin to "apple-parings," "quilting-bees,"

and such-like cheerful, harmless country festivals, until he found himself becoming almost a New Englander in habits and feelings.

At length, however, either growing weary of this rural life or feeling ashamed of his idleness, he, much to the regret and vexation of his aunt and cousin, returned to New York a few weeks prior to the birth of the infant heir to Van Broek Manor, and accepted an appointment upon the "Broadway Gazette." He found, on his return to the city, that his old newspaper, the "Herald of Freedom," was still in existence; in fact, it had just recovered from a State of alarming collapse which even its best friends had feared would prove fatal, and had taken apparently a new lease of life. The biennial election of the Governor of the State of New York was just at hand. The contest between the Whig and Democratic candidates for the gubernatorial dignity was likely to be closely contested. The triumphant success of the Democrats at the late presidential election had exalted their political pride, and rendered them overbearing. They boasted that, with scarcely an effort, they would as triumphantly carry the State elections, while the Whigs were resolved to exert every influence to defeat them. A great Whig orator was that afternoon to hold forth in the Rotunda of the Battery upon the superexcellency of Whig principles, and the abuse of Democracy; while several other speakers were expected to address the vast multitude who could not find room in the Rotunda, in the open air in the Battery Park. It was anticipated that at least fifty thousand people would assemble, and George Neville resolved to be present on the occasion. To the Battery Park, therefore, he wended his way, where, early as was the hour, he found several groups of citizens already assembled, and eagerly discussing, beneath the grand old trees, the prospects of the approaching political campaign.

For an hour or two he strolled to and fro, amusing himself in watching the animation of the scene and the general excitement of the people, and congratulating himself that he no longer belonged to the staff of the "Herald of Freedom," and had, therefore, no occasion to mingle in the approaching newspaper warfare.

The proprietors of the "Herald," driven to their wit's end, had contrived to get hold of a successful and ambitious dealer in fancy stocks, who had suddenly acquired great wealth by selling out his shares in an imaginary lead-mine in Pennsylvania at a premium just five weeks before the illusory character of the scheme was discovered, and the shares were declared not to be worth a cent. This Wall Street millionaire had suffered himself (very willingly) to be persuaded that he was the most fitting person to offer himself as the Democratic candidate for the gubernatorial office, and also that his election was certain, provided he were willing to expend a few thousand of dollars to support the "Herald of Freedom;" the editors of the said journal promising on their part to keep his name constantly before the public, and to take every opportunity to extol his patriotism, his liberality, his industry and energy, and, above all, his thorough-going Democratic proclivities, as a man who had himself sprung from the lowest ranks of the sovereign people.

It was a most successful speculation—at all events, to the "smart" newspaper proprietors and editors; for, though none of them voted for the stockbroker, who appeared in a miserable minority, they excused their delinquency on the ground that, as it was evident, when it came to the test, that their patron would have no chance of election, and therefore it was not possible their votes could materially benefit him, they thought it advisable not to appear in the light of unscrupulous partisans, to the detriment of the future prospects of the journal. And, although the poor dupe had been induced to expend, in one way

or another, no less a sum than forty thousand dollars in the endeavors to gratify his ambition, the "Herald of Freedom" had benefited so much by this free expenditure of cash, that notwithstanding the fact that it was originally started on credit, the shares and goodwill were sold at the close of the election for a very large sum of money to a patent-medicine vender, who wished to use it as an advertising sheet for his wares. Thus the editors and proprietors shared between them several thousands of dollars; while the would-be Governor relapsed into his original obscurity—a poorer, and probably a wiser, if not a better man.

Captain Jack fell into his former quiet ways after his return from his brief tour and smoked his pipe and drank his grog as usual every night, with his friends, in the snug parlor of the General Washington Tavern at Wellfleet, and Nancy Slowbury and little Alice were comfortable and happy in their pretty cottage home. The Captain, after he had parted with Mr. Swoop at Albany (as Miss Slowbury fancied, with much satisfaction at the thought of getting rid of him), never mentioned the lawyer's name; in fact, though invariably kind to Miss Slowbury and more and more satisfied with her in her position as his housekeeper, and daily growing fonder of the child, Captain Jack was more reticent and taciturn than ever; so much so, indeed, that his brother skippers frequently remarked to each other when he was not present, "that Cap'n Jack had suthin' on his mind. They hoped how 'twor all right wi' him, and that his conscience worn't struck 'bout nothin'. But it wor strange he never would talk much 'bout old times, and he had some mighty queer notions. Yes; 'twor evident he had suthin' on his mind."

Mr. and Mrs. Upton did not remain long to participate in the festivities at Van Broek Manor. The minister said that his duty to his flock forbade him to make a long

visit, especially as he had but lately returned from a tour of several weeks' duration; nor would he permit his daughter Mary to remain at the manor, or to accept Mr. Van Broek's invitation to come to them at their new town house in the Fifth Avenue, and spend the winter in New York; and Mrs. Upton was, regarding this matter, of her husband's opinion. The good folks were afraid lest their younger daughter might lose her relish for the homely country life in which her lot was likely to be cast, if she was permitted to mingle too freely in the gay doings at the Manor House, and at the Fifth Avenue mansion.

If the affection and devotion of her husband could have made Ellen Van Broek happy, there would not have been a happier woman in the United States; and to a certain extent she was happy; but she had been too much habituated to the calm quiet life she had led at the country parsonage to take pleasure in the gaieties and splendor to which her new position introduced her, and already she began to weary of them. Besides, she had another source of anxiety. She fancied that her husband was anxious and disquieted, though he strove to conceal his anxieties from her. This anxiety, she fancied, had been growing upon him since the day on which he had fallen in with the niece of his unfortunate former friend, Miles Slowbury. She knew that shortly after that period he had written to the East Indies, and that he had received letters thence which seemed to have increased his anxiety. Though cheerful in her presence, she had sometimes found him, when she came suddenly and unexpectedly into his study, deep in apparently painful thought.

Fearful of adding to his anxieties, she kept her troubles to herself, earnestly hoping that her husband's uneasiness, from whatever cause it might arise, would soon pass away, and devoted all her spare hours to her infant child, feeling it the greatest of all reliefs to escape from

the whirl of fashionable dissipation in which she found herself involved to the homely quietude of the nursery. Though little more than a year had elapsed since she had been inducted from the quiet country parsonage in which her childhood and girlhood had been spent into her present envied position, she had already learned that wealth and splendor alone do not constitute happiness; and believing, in her simplicity, that her husband's wealth was the real source of his anxiety, she already wished in her secret heart that, both for his own sake as well as hers, he were a poorer man.

Such was the position of affairs when, towards the middle of the winter, circumstances occurred which exercised a material influence upon the fortunes of more than one of the personages of our story.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONSTERNATION AT WELLFLEET, CAPE COD—THE DEPARTURE OF CAPTAIN JACK FOR NEW YORK.

WELLFLEET is seldom disturbed by events or rumors of events in the outside world. It is only at long intervals that anything occurs to vary the quiet monotony of the place, the annals of which may be truly said to be "short and simple." Never since the year 1812, when, the United States and the mother country being at war, a party of lawless British seamen, as duly and faithfully recorded in the archives of the village, "did land on the shores of Wellfleet, and, contumaciously and wickedly (in the absence of the men of the village, who were at sea in their ships), ransack and destroy cottages and gardens, and did audaciously kill the sucking-pig of Dame Coffin, the wife of the Reeve, and did roast the same

with fuel made of the door of the dame's barn, and did eat thereof in her presence, at the same time most irreverently insisting that the dame and her daughters should attend them with cider and other liquors of the dame's own brewing, and did, at afterward of the same day, carry off on board of their ships provisions and liquors they had shamefully and disgracefully purloined"—never since that calamitous epoch had the village of Wellfleet been in such a state of excitement as in the early part of the month of January of the year following that on which Captain Jack visited Niagara Falls. The excitement commenced by the arrival at the post-office of a singularly official-looking letter, directed to "Captain John Jack, Wellfleet, Cape Cod."

This letter was duly delivered to the Captain (who was accustomed to take his own letters from the post-office on those rare occasions when letters awaited him), whereupon the Captain, after having adjusted his spectacles for the purpose, spelled the letter carefully twice over; and then (the truth must be told), swearing roundly, as he had never been heard to swear before, he tore the offending missive to atoms, saying that he had had enow and to spare of that cunning lawyer's palaverins, and, carrying the pieces to the wharf near by, tossed them into the waters of the bay.

Two days afterwards a second letter was received, being an exact counterpart of the first, which met the same fate—the Captain, while devoting it to destruction, seeming more annoyed than on the former occasion—and again two days later came a third letter, similar in every respect to its predecessors, which was also similarly destroyed, the wrath of the Captain on this last occasion being, according to the report of the postmaster and other witnesses, "tremenjous and orful to behold." On the evening of that day the Captain came, as usual, to the parlor of the General Washington; but he sat silent

and moody, and, when his brother skippres strove to cheer his spirits, he quarrelled with them, one after another, though in general a most peaceful man. In place of drinking his regular allowance of two goblets of rum-and-water at proper intervals, he swallowed the first—all scalding hot as it was—at a single draught, and seemed quite to have forgotten to call for another, until reminded by the landlord that it was past the hour for ordering the second tumbler, and that he might make himself ill by such unaccustomed abstinence. However, he then called for his second "jorum," swallowed the scalding hot liquid at a draught, as before, and walked away home without bidding good-night to his friends, and without even speaking to the landlord. The next night—for the first time since he had taken up his abode at Wellfleet (excepting, of course, Sunday nights, and those rare occasions when he was absent from the village)—Captain Jack failed to make his appearance in the tavern parlor. On the following morning a party of strangers landed at Wellfleet from the Boston steamboat, and, led by one of their number, who seemed to be well acquainted with the village, proceeded at once to Singapore Villa, as the Captain had named his cottage.

The leader of the party was recognized by the people of the village. He was our old friend lawyer Swoop, who had, as the reader will call to mind, visited the village on a former occasion. By the lawyer's side the old sailor, Amos Jepson, hobbled along on crutches; for the poor old man's "gout" had either not left him with the return of summer weather, or, if it had, had come back again with redoubled vigor when the summer had passed away. The third individual, who completed the party, was a tall, spare, sallow-visaged personage, who looked as if he had been dried to a mummy by long residence in a tropical clime. He might have been of any age between forty-five and seventy; for, though his

features were those of a man in the prime of life, he seemed scarcely able to bear the fatigue of walking from the wharf into the village; and, though he was enveloped in furs from head to foot, he shivered with every blast of the keen January wind, and complained bitterly of the cold, and of the lack of every kind of accommodation that he had found to exist since he had landed in America only a few days before. A crowd of children followed the party at a respectful distance to Singapore Villa, and Captain Jack, who had seen the approach of his visitors, and had recognized the features of Mr. Swoop, opened the door of the cottage himself, and seemed more than half inclined to resent this intrusion upon his privacy by a resort to open violence. A glance, however, at the features of the gentleman in furs, and a second keener glance at those of old Amos Jepson, had the effect of changing his tactics. At first he started back as if in dismay, and appeared very much disposed to take to flight. Then, recollecting himself, he sang out for Bill Brail, and, on the old sailor's appearance, directed his attention to the strangers by pointing towards them with his forefinger, and staring at his old servant with half-open mouth and half-frightened look. Bill Brail, for the moment, seemed to be as much surprised and as much frightened as his master, or his "Boss," as he always termed the Captain; but presently a grim smile of recognition came over his wrinkled, weather-beaten visage, and, looking round at the Captain, he exclaimed—

"It's *them*, Boss; livin' or dead, it's them as I never 'spected for to see no more in this world."

The next moment he seized old Amos Jepson by the hand, and, finding that the member was one of real flesh and blood, however withered it might be, he wrung it heartily, and the two old sailors greeted each other with every mark of friendship and gladness.

"Tain't a phantasmagory, then, Bill?" said Captain Jack. "It's reel, is it?"

"Reel flesh and blood, Boss," replied Bill; "reel old chums, and no mistake, sich what I thought was parted for ever."

"Wharsomever they've come from, they're welcome," replied Captain Jack; "but, Bill, I thowt—yes, I did—I thowt as 'twor a phantasmagory."

With this the Captain sprang forward, and, almost capsizing the lawyer as he pushed him aside, he offered a hand to each of the strangers, and, amidst various exclamations of doubt, surprise, and gladness, hauled them into his dwelling-place, the lawyer following, as it were, upon sufferance.

The door was closed, and the wondering group outside, who had been amazed spectators of the proceedings, retired to acquaint their friends with what they had witnessed.

Again, on that evening, Captain Jack absented himself from the parlor of the General Washington; but the lights were burning until a very late hour of the night at Singapore Villa, and people who passed by the cottage, or who visited it out of curiosity, reported that there were merry and noisy doings within, until long after midnight.

The next morning the strangers, together with Captain Jack, Miss Slowbury, and little Alice, embarked on board the steamboat for Boston, leaving the cottage in charge of Bill Brail and a young village girl, who, on the arrival of Miss Slowbury, had been engaged by the Captain in the capacity of a "hired help," or, in other words as a servant-of-all-work, to perform those menial duties of the household which the Captain had had sense to perceive were unfitted to his new housekeeper.

The villagers, and particularly the Captain's more intimate friends and comrades, took this conduct of his in

high dudgeon. Such a thing had never been known in Wellfleet before, as a family going off without acquainting their neighbors whither they were going; and, what made the matter worse, Bill Brail wouldn't, and the "hired help" couldn't, give them any information respecting the Captain's contemplated movements. Bill Brail was deaf to all questions, and all that the "hired help" could say was, that there had been sich-like goin's on as she never see. Bill Brail, which allus sot in the kitching, had been summoned to the parlor, and then sich drinkin' and sich goin's on! The yaller-lookin' man hadn't drunk much, no more hadn't the lawyer chap; but the old sailor, who, she guessed, had been a shipmet o' the cap'n's in years gone by, had sot drinkin' and smokin' alonger the Cap'n and Bill Brail ontill late into the night, and tellin' sich yarns as she never heern; and th' Cap'n and th' old sailor chap had gone to sleep on thar cheers, and Bill had slep' on the kitching dresser, and the lawyer chap and the yaller man had ta'en the Cap'n's and Bill's beds; and in the mornin' Miss Nance had packed up thar things, and fixed up the parlor and locked it, and had told *her* how they wor goin' on a journey, and would, perhaps, be away two or three weeks.

When asked whether she knew where the Captain had gone, the "hired help" replied that she had heern Miss Nance tell how when they come tew Bosting they should start aboard the cars for New York, and that wor all she know'd 'beout it.

So the good people of Wellfleet were left to form their own conclusions with respect to Captain Jack's singular behavior and his sudden journey.

Meanwhile the Captain and his family and friends were speeding swiftly over the waters of Barnstable Bay on their way to the good city of Boston, Massachusetts.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MR. SWOOP ADVERTISES, AND RECEIVES A STRANGE VISITOR AT HIS OFFICE IN NASSAU STREET.

THE "hired help" at Singapore Villa was quite correct in her statement that Captain Jack and his visitors, and the housekeeper and child, had departed for the city of New York, *via* Boston. On the arrival of the party at New York, the Captain, with Miss Slowbury and little Alice, took up their abode at respectable private lodgings in West Broadway; the "yaller-lookin' man," as the "hired help" had called the stranger, returned to the rooms he had quitted at the Brandreth House; Amos Jepson retired to his comfortable quarters at the "Sailor's Snug Harbor;" and Mr. Swoop went direct to his office in Nassau Street, and held a secret conference with his partner. Nevertheless, scarcely a day passed by on which Captain Jack, and Amos Jepson, and the stranger did not meet—usually at the Captain's lodgings—to smoke their pipes, drink their grog, and chat together about old times, and tell marvellous stories of former adventures in distant lands.

The result of the secret conference in the lawyer's office was the appearance day after day, for more than a week, in the columns of the popular newspapers, of strangely-worded advertisements, sometimes in the form of a jumble of incomprehensible hieroglyphics, sometimes in mysterious ciphers, but most frequently in what was surmised to be "thieves' Latin." Apparently unmeaning questions were asked, and these were responded to by apparently equally meaningless replies. These advertisements created quite a popular sensation. They were looked for by many people the first thing in the morning, and hundreds of persons vainly occupied themselves in the endeavor to discover their meaning. Some

people imagined that they had reference to the doings of a mischief-meaning secret society; others, that they referred to some filibustering expedition to Cuba, Mexico, or Ireland; and others, again, that they contained the germ of some Roman Catholic plot to overthrow Protestantism in the United States and to establish Papacy, with its head-quarters in Grace-church "Cathedral!"

To the active imagination, however, of Mr. Swoop alone were they really due; and that a certain class of "gentry," who lived in certain notoriously retired quarters of the city of New York, were competent to decipher their meaning was manifest, after the first day or two of advertising, by the appearance, night after night, at the lawyer's office, of a class of visitors whose prominent characteristics were shabby clothing, foreheads narrow and "villainously low," broken noses, scarred faces, small, deep, and, closely-set light gray or blue eyes, with a curiously restless movement, and a form of head in which the destructive and secretive organs were singularly conspicuous. These gentlemen never called until a late hour of the night, and consequently Mr. Swoop seldom left his office at this period until midnight. One night, eight or ten days after the first of these mysterious advertisements had appeared, Mr. Swoop was seated in conversation (about ten o'clock) with a visitor of the above-mentioned class, whose closely-cropped, rusty-red hair gave evidence either that he had but lately recovered from a fever in which his head had been shaved, or that but a few days had elapsed since he had had his residence in a certain massive country mansion at Sing-Sing, on the banks of the Hudson River. He was about as ill-favored a visitor as any the lawyer had been in the habit of receiving of late, nevertheless he seemed to be an old acquaintance of Mr. Swoop's, and he met that gentleman with a sort of dogged sullenness in which respect and audacity were strangely intermingled.

"Well, Doggett," said the lawyer, when he had ushered in his visitor, and closed and bolted the door, having first listened in the passage to make sure that he and his visitor were alone in the building; "you are true to your time to-night; but how is it that you did not respond to my advertisement sooner?"

"How could yer expect as I'd answer it till I seed my vay clear?" was the reply of the visitor, whose conversation, however, was interlarded with oaths and execrations with which I dare not sully my pages. "I s'pose yer was lookin' for me at the country house?"

"I was, and I heard of your escape. Hence my advertisement. That would not have been needed, had I found you there as I had anticipated.

"How am I ter know as t'aint a plant to trip me up and lodge me in quod ag'in?" said the man, looking about him uneasily. "How am I to know yer ain't got a perleeceman in hidin', fur to git the reward? Better not try that dodge, though;" and, pulling aside the lappet of his shaggy coat, he displayed the butt-end of a pistol he had in his pocket. "I've swore I won't be tuk alive, and I won't," he added.

"Cease that nonsense, Doggett," Mr. Swoop sternly replied. "I didn't want to meet you to bandy words with you. You know that I've saved you from punishment many a time, and that I am perfectly fearless of your threats or scowls. I want you to do me a service, and I'll reward you for it; and you know that I'll keep my promises for good or evil. As to wishing to do you harm, where would you be now but for me?"

"'Tain't no compliment," returned the ruffian, though not in such a defiant tone as before. "Yer allus got yer pay, and yer'd jest as lief gone agin' me fur pay. Yer didn't save me from six years at Sing-Sing last time; on'y I tripped it."

"I saved you from worse than six years' lodging at

Sing-Sing, and you know that I could send you back there in spite of yourself, if I choose. No more of this. Give me now such information as I seek, and such assistance as I need, and you shall receive a reward that will enable you to put yourself out of harm's way—go to Texas, or to California, if you choose—and lead a new and better life for the future. Refuse me, and I give you my word, if you come to need my services again I will not give them. Now take your choice."

"I must know what it is first."

"You must trust yourself to me. I'll make no other bargain."

"At least, you must promise that yer wun't arx me to peach agin' any o' my pals. Ef yer do, I cry quits. I'm bad enow, I know, Muster Swoop. I don't pertend to be nuthin' else. But I wun't turn informer—no, not to save my own neck, I wun't."

"I shall ask you to do nothing of the sort, Doggett. I want to *find* one of your comrades, and I want *you* to guide me to him; but I give you my word that I wish to render him an essential service rather than to harm him."

"Well, go ahead, mister," said Doggett. "But, mind yer, I don't peach for nothin' yer could offer me."

The lawyer rose from his chair, and whispered a few words in his visitor's ear.

The man started. "How did yer come to know that?" he asked.

"I know much more, if I choose to tell it," returned Mr. Swoop.

"But it wor years and years agone—twenty year or more. He wor a great swell then; but he's come down terr'ble low."

"I know that, and I know that he's in hiding, and I know that you know his hiding-place. All this I learned from other sources. I know that a man named Miles

Slowbury, lately dead, met this Digby, who then went by his true name, at a certain house in Orange Street, as you observe, now some twenty years ago. I also know that on that occasion a third party was present, and that certain matters of business passed between them. This man Digby had just then gone into hiding. I know that he afterwards went abroad, and that he returned, hoping that his offence was forgotten. Perhaps it might have been. But necessity probably again tempted him to evil courses: he was detected, but escaped. His former offence was raked up against him, and he has since been living a life of crime, though he has escaped the grasp of justice, and I am given to understand that he is in great destitution. He is believed to be dead; but, as I have said, he is living, and *you* know where. I have learned all this at a great cost of time, trouble, and money. All that remains is for me to have a private interview with this man. Under no circumstances will I do him harm; but if he deal truthfully with me, I will do him great service. Now will you guide me safely and secretly to this man's hiding-place? None save yourself and he need be the wiser. You have my promise, and you know that I will keep it."

"I had nothin' to do with his offences at the time yer speak on, mister. It wor sich as is altogether out o' my line. It wor altogether too high for sich as me. He've come down since then. I don't know even his reg'lar name."

"I am aware of that. Neither do I wish to speak of that offence, nor any other that concerns you. I wish to see him on altogether a different and a comparatively harmless matter. Now go you to him. Tell him what I have told you. Assure him that I *will* see him, by force, if he will not admit me to an interview by fair means (and you know I have but to call in the aid of the law to do this, in spite of him or you); and conduct me to his abode.

Do this, and I will now give you twenty dollars. One hundred dollars more shall be yours the day after I have had the interview I seek."

"No harm 'll come out of it, mister?"

"I have told you that he will, if he chooses, derive great benefit from the interview."

"One more question, mister. How come you to know as I know'd where to find the chap?"

"I learnt that from other parties who answered my advertisements, as you have done, and who gave me a variety of information; but they said that you alone knew Digby personally, and where he was hiding."

"When do you want to make this' ere call, mister?"

"As soon as possible. The sooner the better for all concerned. To-morrow night, say. You can see him meanwhile, and find means to let me know his decision."

To this arrangement the man Doggett was brought to give his assent. Mr. Swoop then paid him the sum agreed upon, and he cautiously quitted the lawyers' office and returned by various by-ways to his secret haunt.

"Pah!" exclaimed Mr. Swoop, as soon as he had closed the door on his visitor. "These fellows foul the very atmosphere they breathe. It's disgusting to have anything to do with such wretches. Still they are necessary evils. I don't know what some of us would do without them. Now I must nerve myself for a more difficult and disgusting, and perhaps perilous task to-morrow night; and then, if I am successful, I shall have the game in my own hands, and I shall play my cards into the hands of the highest bidder. I flatter myself there are few men who could have searched into, and traced out and managed such an intricate affair, so secretly and so successfully. Everything will, I trust, soon depend upon my will. I can send this amphibious sea-captain back to his sand-bank, to vegetate as he did before, and everything may remain *in statu quo*, and none need be the wiser, if a cer-

tain party is wiser for his own interest; if not, it *may* cost trouble but I can ruin him—yes ruin him, and turn him adrift in the world a beggar and a branded cheat. Nettle-top would have revenge. Pooh! Nettle-top is an ass. What do I want with revenge, if I can line my pockets by quietly pocketing an affront? Money is the main thing. Money I *must* have from either party; and he who is *sure* to be the loser, if the matter is pushed, is more likely to be the better paymaster than he who *may* be the gainer."

Mr. Swoop rested his head on his hand, and sat for some minutes absorbed in thought; then he rose, looked at his watch, and prepared to take his departure.

"Near midnight," he muttered to himself. "I have been working hard of late, and I find that it is telling upon me. Well—well. Let us hope that the day of rest is at hand. This affair settled, and I will give up this sort of work. I will retire from business and take a nice little farm somewhere in the country. There are strange reverses in life. I began life as an errand-boy; and this man, now brought so low, whom I hope to meet to-morrow, was bred a gentleman, and, as I have heard, graduated with honors at Harvard! It may not answer to trust too much to fortune. Let me be successful once again, and I'll wash my hands of all dirty work, and, as Falstaff says, 'will live cleanly, like a gentleman.'"

Thus soliloquizing, and sometimes muttering his words half aloud, Mr. Swoop locked up his office and went home to his lodgings.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MR. SWOOP'S MIDNIGHT VISIT TO THE OLD BREWERY.

EXACTLY as the city clocks, in a dozen different tones, chimed the hour of ten P. M., a mysterious-looking man, wearing a large dark cloak, which entirely concealed his outer garments and the outlines of his form, and a broad-brimmed sombrero pressed low down on his forehead, leaving little of his face visible save an immense pair of black whiskers, and a black moustache and beard of equally imposing dimensions, turned down into Orange Street, New York. Near the centre of the street he stopped for a few moments, and gazed earnestly at a house on the opposite side of the way, as if to fix its position in his memory, and then passed on until he reached the spot where the street diverges into the ill-famed locality known as the Five Points. Here he again waited for a short time, until apparently growing impatient, he whistled in a low note, and, receiving no response, whistled again. This time there came a low whistle in response from a dark alley near by, and presently the man Doggett, came forth from the alley and confronted the stranger.

Seemingly he was not satisfied with his inspection: for, muttering something to himself in a low tone of voice, he was returning to his covert in the alley, when the stranger addressed him thus:—

"Hillo, Doggett!" said he, "Are you so poor a hand at seeking out disguises that you do not recognize me?"

"What, Mister Swoop!" replied Doggett, on hearing the voice: "pon my word, I didn't reckernize yer. I see'd yer a-comin' down the street, and I dodged yer onbeknownst. Thinks I, 'That's Mister Swoop, surly;' but when yer came nigh the lamp, and I seen yer face, sez I, 'No, 'tain't he, though the figger's his'n.' So I

dodged inter this alley, and I watched yer to the corner, and when I heern ye whistle I thinks fur sure that's him; but then, again, when I seen yer face I couldn't b'lieve it."

"Did you suppose that I was coming on such an errand as this without disguising myself?" said the lawyer.

"Mark me, my good fellow: I don't want to be known. Don't mention my name now, nor hereafter, as having come to this place to-night; and now lead on as quickly as possible."

"Yer ain't up to no dodge, mister?" said Doggett. "Yer knows what I told yer last night. I don't purtend to nothink; but I'm not agoin' to stand to yer if yer means anythink off the square, long of my comrades. So I tell yer at oncst."

"Lead on," replied Mr. Swoop, sternly. "Hark ye, my man: I explained to you last night what I wanted you to do, and you agreed to do it. I have pledged my word that no harm shall come to you or your friends from this visit. I don't go back from *my* promise; you fulfill yours and you shall be rewarded. Hesitate or doubt me again, and I leave you. I will find other means to accomplish my object—depend upon that; and *you* must take the consequences of your obstinacy. You may find yourself at Sing-Sing, my friend, or somewhere else—*where* I will not say—before you are aware of it."

Doggett muttered some threats between his teeth; but, Mr. Swoop, who had first risen into notoriety on account of his popularity as a pleader in the criminal courts, knew well the nature and character of the man he had to deal with.

The ruffian was cowed, and he led the way onward without another word of remonstrance.

They turned the corner of Orange Street, and found themselves in the region of the notorious Five Points.

The long, narrow street through which Doggett led the way was lined on either side with houses which might have been respectable in their day, but which had been permitted to fall into a state of general dilapidation and decay; yet even in this condition the houses paid probably a higher rent to their landlords than they had paid when tenanted by people of respectability; for every floor, and, in most cases, every room on every floor, in each house, was let to a separate family, and the aggregate rent, rigidly extorted every week, amounted to more than the rent of a well-appointed mansion in the fashionable quarters of the city. The cellars or basements of these wretched tenements were generally fitted up as sailors' dance-houses, and the saturnalia of the night had just commenced.

The ears of the lawyer were greeted with the execrable scraping of fiddles, the twang of harps, and the jingle of tambourines and castanets, as he passed along in company with his guide. The doors of these cellars were open, and through them, as well as through the curtainless windows, a full view could be obtained of all that was going on within. A description of one will suffice for all. Let the reader imagine a large, square cellar, paved with bricks, and dimly lighted by several flaring tallow candles, some in battered tin candlesticks, others in sconces fixed against the walls, which walls had once been plastered and whitewashed, but the plaster had been left to decay, and the whitewash had not been renewed for many years. Walls and ceiling were alike black and grimy with smoke and dirt; the plaster had fallen away in patches, leaving the bare lath-work exposed; and wherever it was possible to find space on such parts of the surface as were still whole and smooth, blasphemous and obscene phrases and couplets, hideous caricatures, indecent figures, and rude drawings of gibbets, with men hanging beneath them, were written or sketched in col-

ored chalks or charcoal. At one end of the cellar was a rude bar, consisting of a counter and a row of unpainted, dirty shelves, on which decanters and glasses, and bottles of the vilest and most fiery liquors, were ranged, together with pipes, and tobacco, and cheap cigars. Behind the counter sat a fat, bloated, bleary-eyed female, who dealt out the liquors at the low rate of three cents a glass—*argent comptant*. For a rhyming notice, of which the following is a copy *verbatim et literatim*—

“ When I was young and handsome, to my sorrow,
I trusted folk as said, ‘ We’ll pay to-morrow; ’
But now I’m older, and more ‘ humbly ’ grown,
I sarves no lickier but for money down ”

—announced the fact no credit could be given under any circumstance; and, to judge from the present appearance of the landlady, many years must have elapsed since the period of her trustful simplicity.

Opposite the bar, at the other end of the cellar, upon a stage of deal boards laid across empty barrels sat the musicians, consisting of a couple of fiddlers, a harpist, a flageolet-player, and a tambourinist—four shabby, miserable-looking objects, who were remunerated for their services by voluntary contribution, either in the form of money or intoxicating drink. On benches along the walls such of the company as were not dancing or drinking were seated: these consisted of half-tipsy sailors, clad in red shirts, and canvas or dark trousers belted round the waist and of flauntingly-dressed, dissipated-looking females of various ages. From some of these latter every appearance and characteristic of womanhood, except the garb they wore, had departed; the features of others still bore traces of their former good looks: while a few of the younger females would have been good-looking still, but for the bold, hard expression of their features, and the redness and inflammation caused by intoxicating drink, or the haggard sallowness which was the result of continuous dissipation. Over the features of a few of these,

young women there came, now and then, a thoughtful sorrowful look, as though they were haunted by remorseful feelings; but these fitful shadows quickly passed away as, with an evidently forced gaiety, and with bursts of loud laughter that had no sound of mirth, they strove to banish the recollections of the days—perhaps not long gone by—when they were yet innocent and happy; perchance the light, and joy, and pride of homes that they had rendered desolate; the beloved of fond and doting parents, whose gray hairs had since descended into the grave in bitter sorrow for their fall.

Besides these, there were a number of hang-dog, villainous-looking men, thieves by profession, whose task it was to lure the sailors to these foul haunts, and to plunder them, when they were sufficiently intoxicated, of their hard-earned wages, and drive them forth, almost in a state of beggary, into the streets. The shuffling of many feet as the sailors and their partners danced wildly on the brick floors to the strains of the harsh music; the loud calls for drink; the uproarious conversation, interlarded with oaths and obscene expressions; the shrill yells of laughter; the continually recurring jars and quarrels; the staggering and reeling of drunken men and women; the occasional crash of broken glass, when a bottle or tumbler fell, or was flung from a drunkard's grasp; the evil expression of most of the faces, and the dissipated looks of all—made up a collection of sounds and sights that would have befitted a Pandemonium; and if the reader can imagine such scenes and such sounds in almost every house in a long and narrow street, he will be enabled to form some idea of the streets occupied by sailors' dance-houses in the back-slums of the city of New York; though the scenes must be witnessed, the sounds be heard, to be fully realized.

Scenes somewhat similar may probably be found in the great cities and seaports of all countries; but each indi-

vidual city has, nevertheless, its own peculiar characteristics of low life.

Sharp, scowling glances were occasionally cast upon the stranger and his guide, by groups of revellers who were on their way to some favorite haunt; and probably, had Mr. Swoop been alone, he might have been interrupted, and perhaps rudely treated. But whensoever any difficulty seemed likely to arise, a word of explanation from Doggett, in a strange dialect, of which the lawyer, with all his experience of the language and habits of the class, was ignorant, satisfied the questioners, and he and his companion were permitted to pass on without molestation, until they reached a still more squalid locality, in the heart of the Five Points. It was a miserable square, surrounded by mean houses, all of which were, more or less, in a condition of dilapidation and decay. The doors were, in many instances, hanging by a single hinge, and were wide open, notwithstanding the late hour, for the simple reason that it was impossible to close them. The frames of the windows, as well as the window-panes, were broken, and the latter were stuffed with rags, old clothes, and even with wisps of straw. Everything about them was wretched and woe-begone beyond description. The gutters were choked with stagnant water; the streets were strewn with refuse of every kind, and the stench that arose from them was sickening to an almost unendurable degree.

In the centre of the square was an enclosed space which had once been a plot of greensward, planted with trees. It was now a receptacle for filth and ashes, old rags and foul garbage of the vilest description; and the trees had long since perished through the malaria, and presented only their decayed stumps, adding to the general aspect of wretchedness and misery beyond compare. Five streets—through one of which the lawyer and his guide had just passed, and which gave the

name of the "Five Points" to the locality—besides several dark courts and alleys, diverged from the square, and at the end of one of these courts a lofty, dismal-looking building towered high above the surrounding houses.

It was a fine, clear winter's night, and the bright full moon, and the myriad twinkling stars which shone in the clear sky, illumined every portion of the open space, and rendered the foulness and rottenness of the spot more palpable in the contrast it presented with the calm serenity and purity of the heavens.

The lawyer shuddered, in spite of himself, as Doggett led the way into one of the darkest and foulest of the courts above mentioned, which was reeking with damp, though the day had been bright and sunshiny and which, notwithstanding the moonlight, was rendered so dark by the shadow of the overhanging houses on either side—only kept from falling in by poles and props—that not a footstep of the way was discernible.

Here, for the first time, Doggett produced a dark lantern from beneath the folds of his overcoat, and turned the light of the bull's-eye full upon the entrance to a long, narrow passage.

For the first time, also, Mr. Swoop now hesitated to follow his guide. He stood irresolute on the door-step, and gazed around him. The brilliant glare from the bull's-eye of the dark lantern was yet unable to penetrate the thick darkness of the passage, although it served to increase the surrounding gloom, and, as it were, to make the darkness visible.

"Where are we? What place is this? Where are you leading me?" he asked, and the tremor in his voice was not unheeded by his guide.

"What place is this?" repeated Doggett, in a bullying tone of voice. "The old Brewary,* sure. I thought,

* The "Old Brewery" was pulled down shortly after the period to which this story relates, and a home for the destitute and a city mis-

Mr. Swoop, as you knowed this yere locality better nor you seem to."

The lawyer perceived the sarcasm manifest in his guide's voice and manner, and felt that to be successful he must regain his moral influence over the ruffian with whom he had associated himself.

"Ha! I see now. It is the Old Brewery," he replied in as firm and natural a tone of voice as he could assume. "Lead on, Doggett, my good fellow. Really, this place is more dismal than ever. I did not recognise it in the gloom of night."

"Then you *have* been here afore, Mister Swoop?" said the guide.

"Do you suppose," replied the lawyer, "I could so often and so successfully have defended you and your associates, unless I had made myself familiar with your haunts?"

"Well, I dessay not," said Doggett, thoughtfully. "That never struck me afore. It is a rummy place, mister. I heern say as how they're thinkin' o' pullin' it down. Ef they don't, I reckon it'll tumble down afore long. But it ain't a place for the likes of *us*, arter all mister. Few on *us* ever comes here, onless we're druv to the last, or is in hidin'. They're mostly nothin' but miser'ble paupers, as ain't fit for nothin' else, as takes up their lodgin's at the Brewery; and I hev know'd old uns, and widders, and sich-like, as onst thought theirselves very 'spectable, as come to the Brewery at last. Keep close, mister, and mind yer steps, and don't be skeered at nothink."

sion-house have been erected on its site. The Five Points and the surrounding neighborhood have been much improved of late years, and the above description of the locality must be regarded rather as a description of its past than of its existing condition. It is no longer one of the terrible and disgraceful "sights" of the city. The worst class of its former residents have been scattered abroad, and those who would see the condition of things that was once to be seen at the Five Points must now seek a place known as the "Rookery," and other localities on the banks of the East River.

So saying, Doggett turned on the full light of his lantern, and led the way along the dark passage to a narrow staircase, the hand-railing of which had been torn away. Many of the planks also were rotten and full of holes, and the stairs creaked, and bent, and trembled beneath their weight as they ascended.

At length they reached a crazy landing, where the air which entered from an aperture where once a window had been—laden though it was with vile odors—was grateful to them after the close, reeking atmosphere of the passage and staircase. They turned from this landing into another passage, the boards of which were so rotten that the most extreme caution was requisite on their part, in order to guard themselves from breaking through and falling into the dark, cavernous depths beneath. This dilapidated passage was, however, soon traversed, and, ascending a second flight of stairs, they came to another and wider passage, into which several rooms opened. Doggett entered one of these rooms, the stifling atmosphere of which would have betrayed the fact that it was crowded with human beings, had not the light of the lantern disclosed their sleeping forms, and had not their heavy breathing been audible. The floor of the room was, in fact, actually covered, so that there was hardly room to tread, with sleeping figures, huddled together for the sake of warmth, and appearing like so many bundles of foul rags. Some were snoring, some moaning and groaning as if in pain, and throwing their arms wildly about, while others lay silent and motionless as death. One or two only, startled out of their slumbers by the glare of the lantern, sprang to a sitting posture, and, with dilated eyes and terrified looks, gazed upon the intruders; but only for a moment. They seemed so utterly worn out, so given over to despair, as to be careless of what befell them, and, with a deep sigh that seemed to denote their utter weariness of life, and

their wish that they could slumber on to wake no more to the misery, want, and pain that the daylight would bring, they sunk into their former recumbent position.

Even Mr. Swoop's heart was softened with pity as he gazed upon these wretched creatures, and then cast his eyes over their miserable lodging-place. The atmosphere was heavy with the effluvia of so many breaths, and the condensed moisture trickled in dirty streams down the walls wherever the plaster had not entirely crumbled away. Yet even this wretched abode of human misery was shared by the rats that infested the dwelling, and which, terrified by the unaccustomed glare of the lantern, could be heard squeaking loudly, as they scampered in droves among the laths and plaster.

The lawyer's repugnance was so manifest that he shrank back as if unable or unwilling to proceed.

"Come on, mister; come on," said Doggett, perceiving this repugnance, but attributing it to fear. "There ain't nothink to be feared on with these miser'ble critturs. Them's mostly immigrants and sich, as has l'itered round the city till they've spent their money, and has come to this. Sarves 'em right. Sich folks ain't no business in the city. They orter ha' gone into the country in time. There ain't none o' *our* folk among *them*. So come along mister."

Avoiding to trample upon the wretched sleepers only by the utmost care in placing his footsteps, Mr. Swoop crossed the room into another passage beyond, and, ascending another flight of stairs, that were almost concealed in wainscoting, and might have been passed unperceived, even in broad daylight, by a person unfamiliar with the premises, he found himself in a part of the building in much better repair than those portions he had already traversed. Here there was another passage, but it was much lighter and cleaner than any of the former

ones, and, though several rooms entered into it, the doors of these rooms were tightly closed.

"Now, mister, keep dark and close," said Doggett. "Don't speak a word. If anybody axes any questions, I'll make all square."

He had hardly spoken the words, and Mr. Swoop had not walked half a dozen steps along the passage, before several of the doors were cautiously opened, and faces, male and female, peered out—some pallid and careworn, some defiant and brutal as can well be conceived.

It soon became apparent that Doggett was recognized, and questions were put to him by several persons, to which he returned brief, but seemingly satisfactory replies. The lawyer was unable to comprehend the gibberish that was spoken; but when they had reached nearly the end of the long passage, Doggett stopped short, and, turning about, and facing his companion, said—

"Now, Mr. Swoop, harkee. I've brought ye so fur, and I've purtended to my pals how yer was a missioner, come fur to see a sick cove as worn't easy in his mind. Digby *is* sick, and he ain't ersackly our sort—he's qualmish sometimes—so it took. Now mind, yer must stick to it if yer axed, or else, maybe, I couldn't purtect yer, onless I wor to say at onest yer was lawyer Swoop. You'd be safe enow then. But then yer don't want to be known."

"Not on any consideration, just now, Doggett," replied the lawyer. "But we must surely be at our journey's end? It would seem as though the passages in this crazy building were interminable."

"They ar' peoty consider'ble many," answered Doggett; "But we're just about thar now. I an't ersackly come by the reg'lar way, cós I should ha' had to answer twice as many questions if I had, and mebbe some on 'em would ha' found yer out, spite o' yer disguise. But here's the room. I'll knock at the door and give the word. I've made it all right with the wamin-folk. You go in,

and I'll wait for yer in the outer room. Be as quick as yer kin, and I'll be ready to lead yer out again; and mind, now, mister, no foul play; no attempt to peach, or to make any one else peach; or I'll go agin' it let whatsomever come on it, and it'll be worse for yerself."

"I have given my promise," said Mr. Swoop, sternly; and Doggett tapped twice with his knuckles, in a peculiar manner, at the door of the furthest room. A girlish voice responded; and, in a few moments, the voice of an elder woman—though still young—was heard. The last speaker put some questions, in an unintelligible gibberish, to Doggett, who replied in the same mysterious language.

Mr. Swoop's conscience, if he had any left, must have had a twinge when he heard that he was to pass for a missionary. Yet it was a strange testimony to the work of the good men who carry the gospel of mercy to the haunts of the most depraved and outcast. Even among the vilest there is a respect for the self-denying charity of those who follow the example of Him who came to seek and to save the lost. The very idea, though here falsely used by bad men, throws a gleam of light on this dark chapter of our story.

The door was then cautiously opened, and Doggett, taking the lawyer's hand, led him across a dark room, and into a passage beyond. Here another door was opened; he entered a room lighted only by a solitary tallow candle, and, the door having been closed behind him, he found himself alone with a woman, of coarse but not repulsive features, and about thirty years of age.

"*He* is there," said the woman, pointing to a bed in a recess, which had hitherto escaped the lawyer's notice. "He knows you are coming. Doggett has told him, and we have prepared him for it. But he is very weak and feeble. Don't tire him too much. I will leave you for a quarter of an hour alone. Then you must go."

The young woman left the room as she was speaking, and Mr. Swoop heard the click of the lock, as the key of the door was turned on the outside, with a tremor that he could only with great difficulty control. He approached the bed, and, drawing aside the curtains, saw a man, half sitting, half reclining against the pillows, which had been purposely arranged to support him in that posture. The man appeared to be fully sixty years old—though illness might have made him look much older than he really was—and in his features, notwithstanding his emaciated condition, and the distortions that bodily pain, and possibly mental anguish likewise, had wrought, a remarkable resemblance could be traced to those of Captain Jack.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MR. SWOOP DERIVES IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM DIGBY, AND QUITS THE OLD BREWERY IN TRIUMPH.

"DIGBY," said Mr. Swoop, addressing the invalid, upon whose features, now that he scanned them more closely, the lawyer fancied that death had already set his seal—"Digby, they have informed you that this interview was insisted upon by me?"

"Yes, yes; against *my* will," replied the invalid, in whose voice both pain and apprehension were manifest. "Why do you seek me? What do you want? I don't know *you*," he went on, in disjointed sentences, drawing his breath with difficulty. "Who are you?" he murmured after a pause, falling back on his pillow as he spoke, from sheer exhaustion. "Why cannot I be left to die in peace? My life has not been such a happy one that rest should be denied me now."

There was something singularly at variance between the language, and even the looks of the invalid, and the miserable lodging in which he was spending probably his last days on earth; for though, as has been stated, his features resembled those of Captain Jack, they were much more delicately formed; and a long course of dissipation, and a desperate struggle with poverty, and a long period of bodily, and perhaps mental suffering, all combined, had not entirely obliterated the natural air of refinement which rested upon his countenance.

"Who I am matters not now," said the lawyer. "Perhaps before we part you may learn; at all events, I know who *you* are, and that your name is not Digby."

The invalid raised himself to a sitting posture, as if with a sudden accession of strength, but the next moment fell back gasping for breath. The lawyer was alarmed; he feared that he had spoken too rashly, and that the man was dying.

"Digby," he said, bending over the sufferer, "I intend you no harm: I rather wish to serve you. Answer me one or two questions faithfully and truly, and, if you wish it, you shall be removed from this wretched place. Good care shall be taken of you, the utmost skill shall be engaged to promote your recovery to health, and, if you *do* recover, you shall pass the rest of your days in ease and comfort."

"Too late! too late!" gasped the invalid. "As I have sown, so must I reap. I don't know you. Perhaps you are a clergyman? If so, I thank you for coming; but it is too late! too late!"

"You shall be removed from this, and both a doctor and a clergyman shall see you if you will," said Mr. Swoop. "I am neither; but my business with you is to further the ends of right and justice. You will aid me so far as lies in your power to do this?"

"I don't understand you," gasped the invalid. "What

can I do now to further the ends of justice? Speak, and speak quickly."

"You are acquainted with Julius Van Broek?" said Mr. Swoop, drawing the only chair in the room to the bed-side, and seating himself close to the sick man.

The latter shook his head faintly, but made no reply.

"Nay," continued Mr Swoop; "it is vain to attempt to deceive *me*. To prove it to you, I will tell you that I know that *your* name is Van Broek, and that you have two cousins of the same name. It is to do justice between them, through you, that I have sought you out. Help me to do this, and you will atone for past faults."

"Atone for my past faults—my *crimes*! Why should I mince matters now?" murmured the sick man. "Death," he added, "will very soon release me from the dread of earthly retribution. But what atonement can I make where atonement alone will avail me? Too late! too late!"

Neglectful as he had long been of religious duties, and hardened by keen and incessant worldliness, Mr. Swoop yet had knowledge enough to understand the dying man's reference to other atonement being required than any reparation of earthly wrong. He felt himself entirely out of his element. He wished to say to the sufferer that he could at least make such restitution as he was able to those whom he had wronged on earth. But he was utterly unable to frame the words to express his meaning.

"It is not yet too late," he said, after several vain efforts to express himself as he wished: "*both* your cousins are still living."

The invalid, who had lain back on his pillow and closed his eyes, as if to shut out any further conversation, now opened them again, and fixed them upon the speaker with an expression of mistrust and incredulity, yet with some slight gleam of hope. He made one or two efforts

to speak, and then motioned to the lawyer to hand him a mug of water that stood on a rickety table near by.

Mr. Swoop handed him the water, but first poured a small quantity of wine into the cup from a phial he had brought with him in case of any emergency in which it might be required.

The invalid drank greedily, and immediately appeared to be much revived; showing that, ill and feeble, perhaps dying as he might be, still much of his feebleness arose from the lack of proper nourishment, and such stimulants as are necessary to a man in his condition.

"Both living!" he presently exclaimed. "Both living! and *I* not know it?"

"You have been in close hiding for years," said the lawyer, "else you must have known, at least, that *one* of your cousins was living, and in the possession of great wealth."

The sick man looked at the speaker with an expression which seemed to say, How do you know that I have been in close hiding?

"Your proofs—your proofs," he gasped.

"Proofs in abundance you shall soon have," answered the lawyer. "Meanwhile, that you may be removed hence to a more comfortable place, and that such proofs may be afforded you, you must respond truly to the questions I am about to put. You feel revived already. Who knows what care and attention may do for you? And, mark this, I would not speak harshly before, nor do I wish to speak harshly now; but I have little time to remain with you on this present visit. If you answer me honestly and truly, I pledge you my word that not only will you forward the aims of justice, but you will relieve yourself from all earthly cares, and restore yourself to comfort and respectability. If you refuse, or if you prevaricate, so surely as I know your name will I find means to come at the truth in a manner that will be disagreeable

to you. All rests with yourself. I wish to befriend you, and to bring friends around you, if you will let me. Now answer me:—

"On a certain winter night, some twenty years ago, more or less, you met by appointment, in a certain house in Orange Street, your cousin, Julius Van Broek—who had then just completed his studies at Harvard—and one Miles Slowbury, who had been a former schoolfellow of yourself and your cousin?"

The sick man started with surprise, and looked at the speaker as though he were almost endued with supernatural knowledge; but he simply nodded his head in assent.

"And on that winter night," continued the lawyer, "Miles Slowbury, who had just returned from India, sold to you certain papers and documents, letters and so forth, that he had brought with him from abroad, which had belonged to another cousin of yours—the great-grandson of the patroon, Cornelius Van Broek—who was supposed to be dead? Those papers, letters, and documents you parted with at a subsequent period—at the same place—to your cousin Julius, for a certain consideration, the nature of which I need not specify; but the bargain was made in the presence of a third individual, who is still living?"

"The cousin to whom those documents had belonged was dead," replied the sick man. "He was lost at sea, while on board the same ship with Miles Slowbury. The documents belonged to *me* of right on my cousin's death."

"No matter. You acknowledge that such a bargain as this of which I speak was made?"

A gleam of triumphant cunning lighted, for a moment, the features of the sick man, making it doubtful whether his contrition was not rather the result of illness and despair than a genuine feeling of penitence.

"Some such bargain as you speak of *was* made," he replied; "but the documents were not transferred. They have never passed out of my possession."

"Not transferred? What do you mean, *Charles* Van Broek?" asked the lawyer, for the first time addressing the sick man by his rightful name. "I have seen these documents, or certificates were the better name."

For a few moments the sufferer lay silent. Gradually the gleam of triumph passed from his face. Then, again, he muttered the words, "Too late! too late!" and looking up into the lawyer's face, he said—

"Tell me truly, as you would answer a dying man: *is* my *elder* cousin Julius, still living, as you seem to infer?"

"He is, and he is near at hand. I have seen him this day—him and his child," answered the lawyer.

"Him and his *child*!" muttered the sick man, looking into the lawyer's face, as if he would read from its expression whether he was telling the truth, or seeking to deceive. Apparently satisfied that the former was the case, he went on, talking to himself, "If it be so indeed, it has been a foolish scheme throughout." He lay back for some moments, lost in thought. Then, rousing himself, and speaking in a firmer voice than Mr. Swoop had thought possible to him, he said, "It is vain to contend against truth and right. Tell me who *you* are. Let me know by what *right* you ask these questions. If I am satisfied, I will make a clean breast. I will tell you all—more than you know, with all your strangely-acquired knowledge of the past. I will place myself in your hands. It will be hard indeed if I suffer more than I have done."

"You will do well," replied the lawyer. "My promises shall be fulfilled to the letter. My name is Swoop, and I was one of the trustees of the Van Broek property that was so long in abeyance."

"I recollect—Nettletop and Swoop. *Was* one of the trustees?" asked the sick man, with great earnestness.

"*Was* one of the trustees," replied the lawyer. "The estates have been for more than three years in the possession of your younger cousin, Julius."

"By means of those documents of which you have spoken?"

"By virtue of those documents."

"And *I* did not know this three years ago," murmured the sick man, again speaking, as it were, to himself. "But it was too late, even then. Listen, Mr. Swoop," he went on, earnestly. "I will confess all. I place myself in your hands. It will, at all events, ease my mind of a burden, if no good comes of it. If you know so much of my antecedents as you appear to know, you are aware of my skill with the pen, practised" (he said, with a sigh) "to my own ruin at last, and leaving me an outcast—a criminal—a disgrace to my name and kindred. I transferred to my younger cousin Julius *copies* of the documents that had belonged to my elder cousin of the same name. He (the younger cousin) believed the copies to be genuine, and hoped, if ever the estates of the old patroon were restored to the family, to secure them to himself, through the possession of these documents. You tell me that he has succeeded, though, at the time, I laughed at the idea of this restoration; at all events, until you and such as you had squeezed them as dry as a squeezed lemon. Still, in case fortune should play such a prank, though by my conduct I had barred myself from the succession, I determined to hold the whip-hand over him, who, in case of my elder cousin's death, would, after myself be the rightful heir. Both Julius and I, and I believe, Miles Slowbury also, really thought the great-grandson of the old patroon *was* dead."

"I transferred the *copies* I had made to my cousin. He, in a measure, forced them from me. *You* understand

me, I have no doubt. I retained the originals myself. I have them now. I intended at the last moment to destroy them. Several times I have been on the point of doing so, but I refrained. I don't know why. Because, I presume, it was decreed by a mysterious power that they were not to be destroyed, but were one day to be produced to establish the truth, and to demonstrate the folly and feebleness of human villainy. The genuine documents are safe. I will trust them to you; and I trust that, in recompense, you will keep the promises you have made. Remove me from this fearful place. Let me die, if die I must, in peace and quiet. My existence for the past twelve months—ay, for the past four years—has been a living death."

As he spoke he drew from under his mattress a soiled and tattered pocket-book, and placed it in the lawyer's hands. Mr. Swoop seized it eagerly. He could scarcely refrain from open demonstrations of his delight; for, if these were the genuine documents, his success was far beyond his utmost anticipations. He had a power placed in his hands that he had not dreamed of. With trembling fingers he opened the rusty clasp of the pocket-book, and drew forth the parchments, yellow with age, and so creased and soiled that they were hardly legible—yellow-er and older-looking by far than those which had deceived himself, the court, and the witnesses. He wondered now that suspicions had not been awakened, at the time, on account of the comparative newness and cleanliness of the parchments and papers—the *copies* that had been produced.

A brief, but keen examination soon satisfied him that he actually held the real documents in his possession: and, striving to dissemble his intense satisfaction at the result of his visit, he carefully replaced the documents, secured the pocket-book in an inner pocket of his vest,

and reiterated his promises to befriend the poor wretch who had bestowed the treasure upon him.

"You shall be removed to comfortable lodgings as soon as possible," he said, as he pressed the poor man's hand; "meanwhile" (handing him a ten-dollar bill), "take this for your present necessities. But keep the money safe: you may be robbed of it."

"It will be safe in the possession of the young woman who admitted you, Mr. Swoop," said the sick man. "Poor creature, she has been my only friend! She is my wife. You may trust anything to her. But I have fully trusted *you*. Do not deceive *me*. I may yet be of further service."

"I will not deceive you; rely upon that," said the lawyer, as, again pressing the sick man's hand, he turned to leave the room.

"Stay," cried the poor wretch, and he struck his hand thrice against the wall. "That will bring her in. You cannot leave until she opens the door."

The woman appeared in answer to the call; a poor, miserable creature, yet still bearing traces of good looks, and with something gentle and womanly in the expression of her countenance.

"Did you want me, dear Charles?" she inquired, going to her husband, and bending over the bed.

"This gentleman wishes to leave, Agnes," said the invalid: "is Doggett within call?"

"He is, dear."

"This gentleman will hand you some money, Agnes," continued the sick man. "See if you can get more light, the candle burns dim. Get some coals, too, and light a fire—it is very cold—and some food; food for yourself, Agnes dear. Let us have light, and food, and warmth once more."

Mr. Swoop placed in the woman's hands the ten-dollar bill he had offered to her husband, and, promising

immediately to take measures for their removal to better lodgings, he shook hands with the grateful wife, and quitted the room.

Doggett, who awaited him in the passage, conducted him safely out of the house and neighborhood into West Broadway, where he left him; Mr. Swoop bidding him (Doggett) to call at the office for his promised reward on the morrow; and the lawyer then hastened home, heartily rejoicing over the unexpected success of his expedition.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE STRANGE VISITOR TO THE MANSION IN THE FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

It was the night of a festive gathering at the splendid town mansion of Julius Van Broek, Esquire, situated in the Fifth Avenue, New York. It was the night following that on which lawyer Swoop had paid his midnight visit to the Five Points. The Fifth Avenue, and the Five Points! Ah, what a difference between the two localities!

Some people who entertain primitive notions of republican simplicity, doubtless imagine that there is little of that extravagant display to be found in the entertainments given by the wealthy classes—the "Upper Ten Thousand" of the United States, that is to be met with in the entertainments given by the corresponding classes in the empires and monarchies of the Old World. Never were people more foolishly mistaken. There is not, assuredly, anything in the United States like the courtly splendor, or the show and glitter of wealth, rank, and station, to be seen in the receptions, levees, or drawing-

rooms held by the rulers of European courts. There is perhaps, in the public receptions and levees held by the Federal, and the different States governments, too little display of splendor, too little formality, to ensure due respect. For it is natural to mankind, in this as in other things, to be influenced by externals. It is natural to connect authority with outward symbols of it, whether amongst those nations that boast of the highest civilization, or amongst the rudest barbarians; and all the wisdom in the world will never change man's nature, or crush out his barbaric instincts.

In little more than three-quarters of a century, the United States have risen from a weak and poor confederation of independent States to become a great and powerful nationality, one of the greatest and most powerful on the face of the earth; yet, to the present day, the Federal and States governments—so far, at least, as pomp and show are concerned—are conducted on the same economical system that perforce prevailed three-quarters of a century since. Whether this is a wise plan or no; whether, while the people and the country have grown rich, and are every day growing richer, the Government, or at least the rulers, should be more restricted in their means than their predecessors were, when the *same* salaries were paid, and money was at least *twice* the value it now is; whether by adopting such a course, the highest offices in the gift of the sovereign people are not held open as baits to needy politicians, to whom the comparatively paltry salaries, and the small opportunities for display these salaries afford, are objects of desire, rather than rendered the proud and lofty goals to the ambition of the greatest minds in the republic, it is not my province here to say; though it is certain that many, among the Americans themselves, hold that the remuneration the chief magistrates and the highest officers of State

receive is a shame to the people at home, and a disgrace to the country in the eyes of foreign powers.

But, setting aside the gala occasions of the Federal and States governments, the wealthy aristocracy of republican American vie with all but the proudest and wealthiest aristocracy of the Old World in the magnificence of their establishments, the pomp of their equipages, and the splendor of their social gatherings. A few years ago it was a rare thing to see servants in livery riding behind private carriages, even in New York, where there was always more latitude permitted in the way of such pretentious display than in any other city in the Union: now livery servants are as common, not only in New York but in every large city in the United States, as in England or France, as is every other outward appurtenance to wealth and distinction; and the glitter and gewgaw of fashion is fully as prominent in the wealthier and more aristocratic and exclusive portions of the city of New York as in the corresponding portions of the cities of London or Paris.

Thus, on the present occasion, it was sufficiently apparent to the passers-by that a grand ball was being given that night by one of the wealthy residents of the proud Fifth Avenue, than which a nobler street of private mansions is not to be found in any city in the world. A spacious and lofty mansion was brilliantly lighted up from the basement to the upper story. Crowds of elegantly-dressed people could be seen moving about among the costly furniture of the gorgeous apartments; handsomely-appointed carriages lined the street; and groups of liveried menials, fully as self-important as their counterparts, in the Old World, were waiting about the mansion.

Strangers, attracted by the gaiety and splendor of the scene, stopped to inquire who it was that was giving a party that night, and were told that it was the wealthy

patroon of Van Broek Manor. It was the opening party of the season. Mrs. Van Broek had been unwell. The family had been late in coming to town, and, as it was the first time that Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek had taken their position as householders among the magnates of the city, no expense had been spared by the patroon to render the "house-warning" worthy of the occasion. Still it was remarked that the patroon, though friendly and hospitable in his treatment of his guests, looked careworn and weary, despite his endeavors to assume an aspect of cheerfulness, and that even his gentle and amiable young wife seemed as if she had some secret trouble on her mind that marred her enjoyment. It was remarked with general regret; for the minister's daughter had, by her graceful kindness, and her quiet, unassuming, ladylike manners, succeeded in overcoming the aristocratic prejudices with which she had at first been received into the select circles of fashion, and was generally liked and admired by all, save a few of the more spiteful and envious.

The ball was at its height. The music, filling the street with its lively strains, was distinctly heard a long distance off through the windows, which were thrown wide open in consequence of the great heat of the crowded rooms; and, although it was near midnight, the pavement in front of the mansion was thronged with people listening to the music and watching, as well as they could, the figures of the dancers as they flitted to and fro. The butler had just announced the fact that supper was on the table, and two footmen stood, as a sort of body-guard, on each side of the doorway of the dining-room through which the gay company marshalled two and two. Mr. Van Broek had just offered his arm to a stout lady in a yellow turban, to lead her in to supper, when a servant approached him and said that a gentleman wished to see him on urgent business for a few minutes.

"On urgent business at this hour!" exclaimed the patroon. "Who is he? What can the man want?"

"He gave the name of Swoop, sir, and says you know him," replied the servant. "I've showed him into the reception-room."

"Swoop!" exclaimed Mr. Van Broek, slightly changing color: "what can *he* want? Go—no—stay, John, I'll see him. Madam, pray excuse me" (to the lady), whom he gave into the charge of a friend, at the same time saying, "Livingstone, my dear fellow, do take the head of the table for me in my absence. Some important news from the Manor, I suspect."

Then he whispered a few words to his wife, and hurriedly quitted his company and went down-stairs to the reception-room, where he found Mr. Swoop awaiting his coming.

"Mr. Swoop," said he, with an assumption of composure and dignity that he did not feel, "this is a strange hour at which to call; and on such an occasion, too!"

The lawyer bowed and muttered some apology; then, seating himself in a chair without having been asked to sit, he went on in a tone of voice that, notwithstanding a parade of deference, had in it a degree of assurance that he had never shown to the patroon since the day of his first interview with him at the office in Albany.

"I shall not detain you long, Mr. Van Brock; but I have called a meeting at my office in the morning, and its result will depend upon the nature of our conference."

Then he briefly narrated certain circumstances that had lately occurred, of the nature of which my readers are already familiar, and was proceeding at greater length, when the patroon interposed, and stopped him in a manner that he had little anticipated:—

"Mr. Swoop," said he, "I have long suspected this. These circumstances have not occurred without some inkling of their nature having come to my knowledge. Our

conference to-night may soon come to an end. My friends await me, and I have no time to spare. To-morrow I will enter into the matter more fully. You are aware that, when I made the claims that resulted in my being acknowledged as the heir to the Van Broek property, though I falsely—I shame to confess it—personated my cousin, I still believed myself to be the only living heir. I was led to doubt this a twelvemonth ago, and since then *I* as well as *you* have been making secret researches which have convinced me that I have not the claim to the property that I once believed I possessed, though I was ignorant until *now* of much that you have told me. What I *have* learned has annoyed me greatly. I have not latterly slept on a bed of roses, I assure you; and I had come to the resolution to make more definite inquiries, and, if my suspicions were well grounded, to resign my claims. If what you tell me be true, no further inquiries, on my part, will be necessary. I will, with your permission, wait upon you at your office to-morrow, and then, if I am satisfied that the true heirs are living, I will make the resignation at once. I have suffered in mind too much for some time past to wish to contest the rights of my cousin, whom I believed to be deceased. I will now, if you please, wish you good night, and return to my company."

Mr. Swoop was completely taken aback by this declaration of the patroon's.

"But, my dear sir—my dear Mr. Van Broek—why such haste?" he said. "I have called as a *friend*. There is not—that is, there *may* not be—any necessity for this action on your part. You *may*, provided you and I can come to terms, hold the estates against all the world. I can quash every claim of these people. I have not yet told *all*. Listen to me a few minutes longer, I pray."

The lawyer then went on to speak of his visit on the previous night, and its strange and unexpected result.

"You see," he said, in conclusion, "the affair is in our hands. With possession on your part, and these documents that have come so strangely into my hands, the pretensions of the adverse parties are like so many puffs of wind."

"Mr. Swoop," said the patroon, haughtily, and rising from his seat as he spoke, "our present conference is at an end. I have been guilty enough. *You* have not got clean hands, as well you know. But you would make *me* a scoundrel in spite of my better feelings. I will listen to you no longer to-night. To-morrow I will meet you at whatsoever place you may appoint."

"But, my dear sir," said the lawyer, "consider the alteration in your circumstances. Think what the world will say."

"I have already thought of that. I must expect to suffer from the scorn and contumely of many who now profess themselves my friends," said the patroon.

"But your wife, Mr. Van Broek," said the lawyer—"consider *her* feelings, think of her friends; and then, I trust, you will recall your decision."

"My wife, Mr. Swoop," replied the patroon, "knows all that I have hitherto suspected. She has behaved nobly" (his voice faltered as he spoke. "She has advised me to resign my title to the property. Nay, I believe she would wish me to do so even if the claims of which you speak are not well founded. For a long time I kept her in ignorance of the anxieties that afflicted me. I was a coward in her presence. I felt as if I could never confess to *her* the duplicity of which I have been guilty, even supposing that my cousin were dead, and I were the lawful proprietor of Van Broek Manor. She, however, perceived my anxiety. I could not hide my trouble from her, with all my endeavors to appear cheerful in her society. At length I summoned up courage, and told her all my doubts and fears; for they were still but doubts

until to-night, when, if what you tell me be true, there is doubt no longer. My wife urged me to institute every possible inquiry, and seemed to wish, so far as she was concerned, that we should be called upon to resign this wealth and splendor for a lowlier, and, as she believes, a happier sphere of life. You have my answer, Mr. Swoop. I have anticipated this, and, to-morrow, I will either meet you at my office, or you shall hear from me more explicitly. To-night I have other matters to attend to."

The patroon wished the lawyer good night, and, without another word, quitted the reception-room and returned to his company.

The whole interview had not occupied much more than ten minutes. Mr. Van Broek was already in the frame to receive Mr. Swoop's communication without preparation or surprise. His anxious mind was not in the gay scene where his bodily presence moved, when he received the summons from Mr. Swoop. No sign of agitation appeared; in fact, he felt relieved rather than otherwise. And when alone with his wife, after all the guests had gone, it was even as he had said to the lawyer:—

"We shall be happier, my dear husband, even if we be poorer," Ellen replied when her husband had told her all. "For my part, dear Julius, I shall feel no regret to resign this wealth with the burdens it entails;" and the patroon, with tearful eyes and tremulous voice, had answered that his greatest doubts and anxieties had been on her account. And on this night, when the gay company had gone, and her husband had told her that he believed that now her words would soon be put to the test, the young wife had replied that she had spoken as she truly felt; and so the patroon and his wife slept in peace, with the prospect of loss of fortune and position thus unfolded to their view.

"Fool that I was to make this offer, and greater fool *he* not to listen to it!" muttered Mr. Swoop as he returned

home through the dark and deserted streets. "I called, too, at a moment when I imagined the prospect of loss of fortune and social position would appear most terrible to him. That was why I called to-night. He may have me at a disadvantage now. But *I* shall triumph after all; and, under any circumstances, I shall come off a winner. But I must lose no time: he will meet me to-morrow, he says. Before he meets me to-morrow he will have ceased to be the patroon of Van Broek Manor.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CAPTAIN JACK FINDS HIMSELF IN A STATE OF PERPLEXITY RESPECTING HIS MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.

THE unlooked-for, and (to himself) disappointing result of Mr. Swoop's unexpected midnight visit to Mr. Van Broek's town residence in the Fifth Avenue, New York, induced the lawyer to postpone the proposed meeting of witnesses and others at his office. He hoped that he might yet be enabled to induce the patroon in possession to alter his determination, and to adopt measures more consonant with his own interests. With this object in view, Mr. Swoop waited upon Mr. Van Broek, at the patroon's house, on the morning after the party, and had a long interview with him, in which the subject was discussed in all its bearings. Subsequently several letters passed between the lawyer and the patroon. Thus it was not until noon on the fourth day after the night of the party that the meeting we have referred to was convened at the office in Nassau Street. There were present on the occasion, besides the two lawyers themselves, Captain Jack, Miss Slowbury, the little girl Alice, Mr. Martin the Captain's brother-in-law, Amos Jepson,

the old dame Abigail Copley, and the clergyman from the country village in the State of Pennsylvania, who had been summoned as witnesses for the plaintiff on the occasion of Mr. Julius Van Broek's first appearance as a claimant of the Van Broek property. Each and all of these, with the exception of the child, whose large blue eyes were opened wide with wonder, looked as uneasy and uncomfortable as fish out of water—to use one of Captain Jack's nautical similes—or as a party of comparative strangers generally look, who have assembled together with but a very confused notion of the purpose for which the meeting had been convened.

Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop had held a consultation at an earlier hour, that had been by no means satisfactory. Not only had Mr. Swoop failed to alter the determination at which the patroon had arrived, but the firm had been disappointed of the profits of a lawsuit. They (Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop) had been put to enormous expenses in their endeavors to obtain proof that the patroon's claims to the Van Broek property were untenable; and instead of paying them handsomely to quash the whole affair, or, failing that, instead of at least disputing his newly-discovered cousin's identity, and contesting his claims (one or other of which courses the lawyers had felt assured that he would pursue), Mr. Van Broek had that very morning sent in to them (as his cousin's solicitors) a written renunciation of his previous claims, and had expressed his regret that he had for a term of three years held possession of property to which he had no right, and declared his intention, without an appeal to the courts immediately to make such restitution as lay in his power. Now this was, of course, excessively provoking.

"I have made a thorough investigation of your statements," Mr. Van Broek had written, "and, being now fully satisfied that you spoke the truth on the occasion of our first brief interview, I have resolved forthwith to re-

sign my claims; and I wish you to inform my cousin Julius that I shall take an early opportunity to wait upon him in person, and express my regrets that he has been so long kept out of the property, and congratulated him upon his accession to the estates of his great-grandfather;" and without further remark he had affixed his signature to the letter.

"Who would have imagined he would be so soft as to give up the property so readily?" said Mr. Swoop to his partner. "There really was no occasion to bring up these people from Pennsylvania. *They* must be paid; and then, altogether, our expenses have been enormous! All that remains to us now is to squeeze the most we can out of this amphibious animal who calls himself Captain Jack, and who walks over the course so easily. Ha-ha! A precious patroon *he* will make, too! Van Broek is a dolt, a fool!"

"I don't know, Swoop," Mr. Nettletop had replied to this burst of indignation from his partner. "Don't you observe the patroon writes, 'Being now fully satisfied that you spoke the truth on the occasion of our first brief interview?' Now, of course, he implies by that expression that you are *not* in the habit, as a general rule, of speaking the truth. In fact, he hints pretty broadly, Swoop, that you are an habitual liar. It's as clear a case of libel as I ever saw. Don't you think you could bring an action against him for defamation of character? It strikes *me*——"

"It strikes *me* that you're a fool, Nettletop—as big an ass as Van Broek himself," broke forth Mr. Swoop, rudely interrupting his partner's speech. "I should make myself the laughing-stock of the whole country, and I should richly deserve it. People would say—and perhaps truly—that the cap fitted; for neither you nor I are very great sticklers for the truth, if a perversion of it suits our purpose. It's folly to try to deceive ourselves. No

we must make the best bargain we can with this half-cracked sea-captain;" and the two lawyers sat silent and moody until the arrival of the party above mentioned. When the visitors had taken their seats, and had sufficiently stared at each other, Mr. Swoop rose, with Mr. Van Broek's letter in his hand, and, addressing the Captain, said—

"Captain Van Broek—for I scarcely need say that by that, your right and legal name, you will henceforward be known——"

"'Vast heavin' thar, shipmet'; vast heavin'," interrupted the Captain. "Jack's my name, and John Jack's the name what I mean to be known by. That ar is the name I've 'dopted these fifteen year, and that ar's the name I'll stand to."

"But, my dear sir," pleaded the lawyer, "you were born a Van Broek, and you were christened Julius. That fact these certificates prove. And Julius Van Broek was the name you bore in your infancy."

The Captain shook his head sagely.

"I ha'n't no rekerlection o' what ye call my infancy," he said. "I reckon how I'm got suthin' of a idea of bein' a child, and bein' wolloped; but tain't a kinder pleasin' rekerlection, noways; and sometimes I has my doubts whether I wor a child, or a boy when I wor wolloped so bad."

"You *must* recollect being called by the name of Van Broek," persisted the lawyer. "I appeal to this good lady." (He turned to Dame Copley as he spoke.) "She will, doubtless, be enabled to recall to your recollection some of the events of your infancy, or, at least, of your early youth?"

The lapse of years had had their effect upon old Dame Copley. She was nearly blind when she was brought forward on a former occasion. Now she was almost childish. She, however, pricked up her ears at the men-

tion of the name of Van Broek, and, when Mr. Swoop, addressing her, said—

"You, madam, will recollect the infancy and childhood of the gentleman of whom I speak?"—

"Captain Julius Van Broek," she replied, her head shaking the while as though she were afflicted with the palsy. "'Tain't on'y the same as yesterday. Bless his little heart! I reccollects him well. A sweet, interestin' infant he wor, for *sure*. I sees him now afore me, a-dabblin' his little head in the puddle, afore the door, till it wor full o' muck, a-purtendin' he was a-washin' hisself and spilin' his pinafores all the while."

Captain Jack looked extremely foolish at this sally, "while the rest of the party could not forbear laughing—all but little Alice, who looked up into the Captain's face, her large blue eyes dilated with wonder at the idea of *his* dabbling his head in the puddle before the old lady's door.

Again Mr. Swoop was about to speak, when the Captain interrupted him:—

"Avast a minit, and just look'ee here, brother," he said. "This little darlin's my own child that I were grievin' so much arter." (He was sitting with little Alice on his knee, one of his arms thrown round her small waist.) "You told me that down to Wellfleet, and brother Martin here proved it. Aren't it so, brother?"

"It is, certainly," replied the lawyer. "She is the child of your deceased wife Alice Martin."

"I felt how she wor suthin' akin to me when first I seed her," continued the Captain. "I were *drawed* to her, as a ship's drawed by the under-current agin a lee shore. Well, I've *got* the little gal, and I don't want *nothin' else*. 'Twor what I come back to 'Merica for. I don't *want* no fortun', and I ain't *fit* for no fortun'; least ways, I won't take the fortun' and lose the child."

"You will not lose the child," said the lawyer.

"In coorse I shall; leastways, I shan't be her father, which is all the same," replied the Captain.

"How, my dear sir, will you be no longer the father of your own child by taking possession of property which is yours by birthright?" asked Mr. Swoop.

"Now, shipmet, I thought how you were a lawyer," replied the Captain. "'Pears to me you're not very 'cute fur a lawyer. You tells me how I can't take this here fortun' onless I takes the name o' Van Broek. Now the little gal were the darter o' my wife, Alice Martin, as were Alice Jack when she were married, and the little gal is named Alice Jack arter her mother. Now I want to know how I kin be the father o' Alice Jack ef my name is Julius Van Broek? Don't yer see, brother? It don't stand to reason."

"My dear Captain," said Mr. Swoop, "your name was not *really* John Jack when you married your wife; it was, as it now is, Julius Van Broek. You bear the same name as your cousin the late patroon."

"Then yer mean ter say how I warn't the husband of my own wife, Mrs. Alice Jack?" said the Captain.

"By no means," answered Mr. Swoop. "I mean to say that your wife *really* became Mrs. Van Broek, not Mrs. Jack, when you married her. The little girl on your knee is Alice Van Broek, not Alice Jack," explained the lawyer; "and truly," he added, "I think *she*, at all events, will not regret the change when she grows up."

"Tain't so, I tell yer," cried the Captain, now really angry. "'Tain't so on the sartificate; and I ain't sich an idyet as not to know that weddin's and chris'enin's ain't nothin' 'ithout sartificates. The sartificate says 'Alice Jack, darter o' John and Alice Jack.' Brother Martin's got the sartificate, and I read it not more'n a week since, and tuk a hull day to Parn it by heart. Show 'em the sartificate, brother," (to Mr. Martin), "and conwince 'em and prove the fac'. Tain't as you says: I'm John Jack,

'cordin' to lawful sartificate, and Alice Jack is my darter, and I won't gin up my darter for no fortun'; no, nor if 'twor the wealth of the Indies."

It required a great deal of reasoning, and a vast amount of persuasion on the part of Mr. Swoop and Mr. Martin, to make the Captain understand that his real name was the name he bore at his birth, and to convince him that, in coming into possession of the estates of his family, and reassuming his real name, he by no means falsified his marriage certificate, nor invalidated the legitimacy of his child.

At length, however, he was convinced, or rather he was brought to acknowledge that he supposed they were right, though, for his own part, he could not comprehend it: "it had," he said (meaning the law), "more twistings and twinings than a Turk's-head knot." *

The Captain having been brought to silence, and having promised to listen patiently, Mr. Swoop proceeded to explain how he had been led to entertain suspicions as to the legal right of the late patroon, and how he had acquired the information which led to the discovery of the real heir.

As, however, many of the proceedings of Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop are already familiar to the reader, I shall confine myself to such explanations as are necessary to the elucidation of the plot of my story.

Only the day before Miles Slowbury met with the accident which resulted in his death, Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop, as has been heretofore hinted, had received an anonymous letter, in which the writer had informed them, in somewhat ambiguous language, that there was in New York a female child, who had lately been brought from the East Indies, who was the rightful heiress to the Van Broek property. This child, he, (the writer) went

* A fancy-knot used on board ship, for ornamental purposes chiefly. It somewhat resembles a turban, and is very intricate.

on to say, was under the charge of a young woman of his acquaintance; and if the lawyer chose to reply to his letter, and to express a wish for further information, they must address to "M. S., Post-office, New York."

Mr. Nettletop pooh-poohed this anonymous epistle; but Mr. Swoop, who had always doubted the validity of Julius Van Broek's title to the property, had replied to it, and, of course, had received no response, since the death of the writer had meanwhile occurred. This silence, however, on the part of the writer had only served to stimulate Mr. Swoop to further effort; for he conceived the idea that some arrangement had been made between the author of the letter and Julius Van Broek, by which the lawful heir was to be defrauded, and he resolved to watch Mr. Van Broek's movements as closely as he could, without attracting observation. Time passed away, and he could make no new discovery until he read in the newspapers the advertisements of Nancy Slowbury, wherein she stated that she had a child under her charge who must necessarily accompany her to any situation she might accept. This struck the lawyer as being a singular advertisement, and just such a one as the young woman to whom the anonymous writer had alluded would insert if, through the illness or death, or possibly the departure to some foreign land, of her relative or friend, she were thrown upon her own resources with the child to care for. On making inquiry at the newspaper-office, he discovered that the young woman had obtained a situation at Wellfleet, and also learned that Mr. Van Broek had deeply interested himself in her welfare, as well as in that of the child. From this moment he was satisfied that his suspicions were correct. He followed the young woman to Wellfleet, but, as the reader is aware, failed to gain any additional information; but subsequently followed her to Niagara Falls, some words that fell from the lips of the sea-captain—her employer—while in the railroad car, led

him to suspect that the Captain himself was in some way connected with the Van Broek family.

With much difficulty he, at length, succeeded in ingratiating himself—though only in a limited degree—into Captain Jack's confidence. He thus learned the main points of the Captain's history; and the more he heard the more fully satisfied he became that Captain Jack himself was, in reality, the lost heir to the Van Broek property; especially as the circumstantial evidence in favor of this theory seemed to be corroborated by the Captain's strong personal resemblance to the family of the old patroon Cornelius, as represented in the old pictures at Van Broek Manor.

Captain Jack's earliest distinct recollections were of going to sea. His recollections prior to that period were confused and indistinct; but beyond the facts that the Captain, as a child, had possessed certain documents and papers, which had been given to him by an old woman, and that these papers had been shown to a sailor on board a ship in the Indian seas, and had subsequently been lost, Mr. Swoop had been able to learn very little of the Captain's early life.

Whether through obstinacy, suspicion, or ignorance, Captain Jack could not be brought to mention names, and any endeavor on Mr. Swoop's part to press him too closely in this respect was sure to give offence. The Captain had forgotten, or he had never known, or more probably he refused to tell, the name of the old woman who had given him the papers in question, or that of the sailor to whom he had shown them, or that of the vessel on board which he was sailing at the time. He professed to be ignorant whether the old woman with whom he had lived before he went to sea was related to him or not; also of the name of the place at which he had lived before he went to sea, and of the port from which, or the vessel on board of which, he had sailed. He had lived *somewhere*

in the United States, and had sailed from *some port* of the United States. This was all that could be got from him. A more impracticable subject the lawyer had never met with, whether in or out of a witness-box.

In relation to the events of his later life, however, the Captain was more communicative. When about nineteen years old he had been shipwrecked in the China seas, and, as he believed, had alone out of all the crew escaped with life; but, having thrown off his clothes to swim on shore, after the ship had struck, he had lost the papers he had been told to set such store by, and with them the hopes of the future benefits to be derived from them. He was picked up by a party of Malays, who were out with their canoes, and, although kindly treated, was detained by the Malays for three years. At length he made his escape on board an English ship, and was carried to Calcutta, where he landed, utterly penniless. He, however, again went to sea, and took the name of John Jack, partly out of a whim, and partly because he had been known as "the boy Jack" on board the ship that had been wrecked. This name he had ever since retained, and as he averred, intended to retain as long as he should live. By dint of energy and industry he rose to command a ship in the country trade, and eventually to become part owner of three or four vessels; and when about thirty-five years old he married a young woman named Alice Martin, the daughter of a merchant at Bangalore, in the Madras presidency.

Six months after his marriage he sailed for China, in command of one of his own ships, which was laden with a valuable cargo, which chiefly belonged to his wife's brother, Henry Martin, a merchant at Colombo, in the island of Ceylon. He reached the port of his destination in safety, and sold his cargo to advantage; but on his return voyage his ship was driven on shore amongst the islands of the Indian Archipelago, and those of the crew

who were not drowned were enslaved by the savages of the islands. Captain Jack was thus again detained a prisoner for two long years. At the end of that period he effected his escape to Calcutta, where he expected to find his wife, who was to have embarked from Madras for that port soon after her husband sailed on his voyage. He now learned that the vessel on board which his wife had sailed from Madras had foundered during a typhoon in the Bay of Bengal. Some of the passengers and crew had been saved by clinging to portions of the wreck until the gale abated, when they were picked up by other vessels; but there was every reason to believe that his wife was numbered amongst the lost, as she had never since been heard of, and it was reported by certain of the passengers who had been saved that a lady, supposed to be the wife of a sea-captain, had given birth to a child a day or two before the commencement of the typhoon. Another report was that the infant child had been saved by one of the passengers who was said to have been a relation of the lady's, and that the infant had been seen, some months later, at Pulo Penang, under the charge of an ayah, or Hindoo nurse. The Captain made every endeavor to verify the truth of these reports. He wrote to his wife's brother at Colombo, and advertised largely in the Indian newspapers; but all to no purpose. Mr. Henry Martin believed that his sister had perished on board the "Poonah," and he knew nothing of any relative of his sister's, likely to have been on board the vessel. He wrote that neither he nor his sister had, that he was aware of, any relations living in India, and their relations in the United States they had never seen; though, he added, he had heard that some person, supposed to be an American, had about the time when the "Poonah" was lost, been making inquiries in Calcutta relative to his sister and himself.

These inquiries, however, if ever they had really been

made, had since ceased, and the person said to have made them had disappeared. It was, therefore, not *impossible* this person had found out his (Mr. Martin's) sister, and had perished with her on board the "Poonah." Captain Jack read this letter, and from that time forward he became a man of doubts. He was doubtful whether he had, or had had, a child; or, if he had a child, whether that child was a boy or a girl; and he was doubtful whether his wife was living or dead. He argued that if any person had saved his wife's child, that person *might* have saved his wife also; and if the child had been saved, and had since been lost sight of, so might it be with his wife. His brother-in-law endeavored to persuade him that the probability was that the report—which originated from some coolies who had been saved from the wreck—was false, and that there was little likelihood that the life of so young a child could have been saved. The Captain, however (the hope being father to the belief) pertinaciously clung to the idea that the report was true; and, finding that his inquiries in India were of no avail, he took a notion into his head that this doubtful American relative had returned to the United States, carrying the infant with him. He therefore determined to sell his ships and shares, to turn all his property into money, and to return to his native land, and settle down there for the remainder of his life, trusting that some day, by some means, he would discover his lost child in the United States.

This was the substance of the story that Mr. Swoop had gleaned from Captain Jack; and the lawyer was almost as well satisfied in his own mind that little Alice was the Captain's lost child, as he was that the Captain himself was really the great-grandson of the patroon Cornelius Van Broek. Could he have satisfied himself that Captain Jack was tattooed on the arm in a similar manner as was Julius Van Broek, he would not have had a doubt

in the latter case. He knew that the Captain had, like many sailors, tattoo marks upon his person; but when one day at Niagara he ventured to ask Captain Jack to show him the marks on his arm, the Captain was so affronted at what he termed the lawyer's impudence, that he dared not again revert to the subject. Unknown to the Captain, however, Mr. Swoop wrote to Mr. Henry Martin, in India, and acquainted that gentleman with his suspicions respecting the Captain's claim to the Van Broek property, and with his belief that a little girl, known as Alice Slowbury, was really the Captain's child. The answer received to this letter was in every way satisfactory.

Mr. Martin replied that some eighteen or twenty months previous a man who had somewhat the appearance of a sailor had called upon him in Colombo with a little girl, and had claimed relationship with him, stating that his name was Slowbury, and that he came from New York, and also stating that the little girl was his (Mr. Martin's) niece, who had been saved from the wreck of the "Poonah." This person, Mr. Martin wrote, had told a strange story. He said that he had come out to India to find his aunt's family many years before, but, failing to do this, he had turned his attention to various industrial pursuits, and had made a great deal of money. At length he learned that a certain Captain Jack had married his aunt's daughter, Alice Martin, and after many difficulties he found out his cousin, the Captain's wife at Madras, shortly after her husband had sailed on a distant voyage.

He satisfied his cousin Alice of his relationship, and embarked with her to join her husband on his return from his voyage, at Calcutta. On the voyage his cousin gave birth to a little girl, and a few days after the vessel foundered in a terrific typhoon. He did his best to save his cousin and her new-born infant, by lashing her to a spar, and by securing the babe to his own person. In spite of all his efforts, however, his cousin was drowned;

but he got safe on shore with the infant. As soon as it was possible, he made inquiry after the child's father, and learned that the Captain was believed to have been lost with his ship on his return from China, as no tidings had, since he left Canton, been heard of him. He had since then adopted the child as his own; but latterly he had received information which had led him to believe that the Captain had not been lost with his ship, and, moreover, that he (the Captain) was a very old acquaintance of his, with whom he had sailed on board a vessel called the "Faker," and whom he had believed to have perished when the "Faker" was lost many years before; that, if such were the case, the Captain's name was not Jack, but Van Broek, and he was the rightful heir to a large property, which had been taken possession of by a cousin who bore the same name—Julius Van Broek. "When I first heard this story," wrote Mr. Martin, "I believed this person to be insane. He added that he had latterly lost a great deal of money, and was going to the United States with the child, and he wished me to furnish him with the address of Captain Jack. This latter request I could not comply with since the Captain has not written to me since he left India. I don't know that I should have furnished this person with the address, even had I been able to do so, for I thought the entire story too wild to be credible. And yet, if the man was mad, there was some method in his madness, and I do not doubt that he is related to our family, as my mother's maiden name was Slowbury, and she had relatives in America. He did embark for New York shortly after his interview with me, but I have heard nothing of him since. In fact, I thought little about him after he left me. Your letter, however, seems perfectly to establish the truth of his story, and it is to be regretted that his death occurred so suddenly, and so soon after his arrival in New York, before he was able to institute the inquiries

he intended, or make the necessary researches. I trust, however, that you will take the matter up, and, if wrong has been done, will see that it be righted, if only for the sake of my poor sister's child. Though I write you this long letter, I hope shortly to meet you and my brother-in-law in New York. I have long contemplated a visit to the United States—the native land of my parents—and the receipt of your letter will hasten my departure from India. I shall set out in the course of a week or two, for Europe, by the overland route, and immediately on reaching Liverpool I shall embark for New York. You will probably see me very soon after, if not, indeed, before you receive this letter. It is somewhat singular, as well as fortunate, that I should have arranged to visit the United States at this period."

On the receipt of this epistle Mr. Swoop had considered it advisable to keep its contents secret, and to await, at least for a reasonable period, the arrival of the writer; and within a fortnight Mr. Henry Martin landed in New York. Captain Jack was then formally summoned to appear at Mr. Swoop's office in New York, there to be made acquainted with certain matters of very great importance to his interests. And, finding that the Captain took no notice of a thrice-repeated summons, Mr. Swoop, knowing the Captain's eccentric character, arranged the visit to Wellfleet, which had resulted in the Captain being borne away in triumph, with Miss Slowbury and little Alice, to the city.

Mr. Swoop furthermore acquainted the assembled party that, in the course of his researches—through means that it was unnecessary to disclose—he had ascertained that there were *two* of the descendants of a junior branch of the Van Broek family living in New York, both of whom were distant cousins to the legal heir to the property. These persons had been well educated, and had graduated with honors at Harvard University;

their families having embarked in trade, and thus having preserved themselves from the desperate poverty into which the descendants of the elder branch of the family had fallen when the disputes arose in relation to the family property. The elder cousin, Charles Van Broek, had, however, fallen into evil courses early in life, and, though he had evaded the penalty of his crime, he had been outlawed. The younger cousin, Julius Van Broek, was now in unlawful possession of Van Broek Manor.

Through his (Mr. Swoop's) influence over a certain person whom he had more than once defended before the criminal courts, and had frequently saved from condign punishment, he had learned that a transfer to the elder cousin of the documents taken by Miles Slowbury from the clothing of the lineal heir, after the wreck of the "Fakeer," when the said Miles Slowbury, and the said lineal heir, each believed the other to have perished (according to the statement of Miles Slowbury to Mr. Martin, as furnished to Mr. Swoop after Mr. Martin's arrival in New York), had taken place at a certain house in Orange Street, New York, on the return of the said Miles Slowbury from the East Indies some twenty years previous—Miles Slowbury having been a schoolfellow of, and intimate with, both the cousins; and that a short time afterwards, at the same house, the elder cousin (who in case of the restoration of the estates held in abeyance by the State, would have been the legal heir to the property, supposing the lineal descendant to be deceased) had transferred the said documents to his younger cousin, for the sake of a consideration that it was not needful to specify—he, the elder cousin, being, in consequence of his outlawry, unable to avail himself of the privileges of his birthright.

Availing himself, therefore, of the power he possessed over this and other informants, he (Mr. Swoop) had induced this said informant, who was a companion of Charles

Van Broek's, to lead him to the abode of this the elder cousin, who, under an assumed name, had been for many years leading a life of poverty and wretchedness. He had found Charles Van Broek at a miserable lodging at the Five Points, in a state of extreme destitution, and seriously ill. To his (Mr. Swoop's) amazement, however, Charles Van Broek, instead of verifying the fact of the transfer of the aforesaid documents to his younger cousin, Julius Van Broek, had produced the original documents and certificates, which bore ample evidence of the damage they had sustained by the action of the salt water at the period of the wreck of the "Fakeer," twenty years previous. At the same time Charles Van Broek had asserted that the documents he had transferred to his younger cousin, Julius—believing his elder cousin of the same name to be dead—were worthless, though well executed counterfeits.

Thus the original documents, taken from the clothing of the elder Julius Van Broek, who had adopted the Christian and sur-name of John Jack, were in his (Mr. Swoop's) possession, ready to be produced at any moment. He (Mr. Swoop) was aware, as a lawyer, that Julius Van Broek, the patroon in possession, might yet give a great deal of trouble, if he chose to contest the claims of his cousin, though there was no doubt he would eventually be compelled to give up the property. But it appeared that he had determined to resign the said property to his cousin, without an appeal to the courts. There was, therefore, little more to be said touching the matter. He had been at great trouble in collecting witnesses to no purpose, and these witnesses might now return to their homes. It remained only for Captain Julius Van Broek, the present patroon of Van Broek Manor, to take into consideration the expenses he (Mr. Swoop) had incurred, and the pains he had been at in bringing about the present happy consummation.

This was the substance of Mr. Swoop's speech, to which the Captain replied, when, after a great deal of explanation, he had been brought to entertain some notion of the real state of affairs, that he was in no way obliged to the lawyers for their pains and trouble.

"Hark'ee, shipmet," he said to Mr. Swoop: "I'm petickler obleeged to yer for findin' my little darter, though thar wor suthin' all along which drawed me to the child, and told me she were akin to me. But it ain't no ways conwenient for me at my time o' life to change my name and come into a fortun'. I prefers the name o' John Jack, an I've got fortun' enow for myself, and for her. Besides, 'pears to me, if cousin Julius thought I wor dead, he'd a right to the fortun'; and he's better fitted for it nor me; so I'll go right away back to Cape Cod, and I wun't ha' none of it."

"Thar's one matter troubles me astonishin'," put in Amos Jepson. "It's that ar tattooin'. I can't git over it noways."

"Mr. Van Broek has acknowledged," explained Mr. Swoop, "that the tattooin' on his arm was the work of Miles Slowbury, with whom he went to India, after he had obtained possession of the false documents. He had the painful operation performed in India, that, in case of his wishing to personate the lineal descendant of the old patroon, he might do so more readily."

"It's wonderful, though," said the old sailor. "Miles wor a smart chap; but I never thowt how he could ha' come to ekal me in that ar art. It deceived my own eyes, spite o' the feeturs o' the genelman's face bein' altogether different."

"You seem to have forgotten, brother," said Mr. Martin, addressing the Captain, "that you've found a new cousin in this young lady, Miss Slowbury, who was related to your wife—my poor, unfortunate sister."

"No, I ha'n't," replied the Captain. "It's that, and

the child, as reconciles me to all this here pother. Miss Slowbury's welcome to a home with me as long as I live, and, afore I die, I'll purwide for her. We'll all go back to Wellfleet together, she, and the child, and I, and leave the lawyers and cousin Julius to settle this here bizness betwixt tharselves."

It was vain on the part of Mr. Swoop, or Mr. Martin to try to argue the Captain into a different state of feeling just then, and the meeting broke up, leaving Mr. Swoop in a very dissatisfied state of mind at the thought of being cheated out of the pickings of a long and profitable law-suit; and he determined to endeavor yet to induce Mr. Van Broek to alter his course, and to persuade him, if possible, to contest his cousin's claims, and to assure him that, if he did so, there was yet a great probability that he would come out of the contest a victor.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHICH TELLS HOW MATTERS WERE FINALLY SETTLED,
AND WHAT BECAME OF CERTAIN PARTIES WHO HAVE
FIGURED IN THIS HISTORY.

MR. SWOOP was satisfied that the simple-minded Captain could be easily disposed of; and, as he knew that the Captain's more astute, though indolent brother-in-law could do little, even if he were disposed to give trouble, against the obstacles that he (Mr. Swoop) could place in his way, the wily lawyer used his utmost endeavors to induce Mr. Van Broek to reconsider his determination to give up the property without a struggle. He urged upon him the certainty that in case of a law-suit the courts must decide in his favor.

"Possession," said he, "is nine points of the law.

Miles Slowbury is dead, Charles Van Broek is in an enfeebled, if not a dying condition, and, besides, he is completely in my power. I retain possession of the veritable original documents, which I will place in your hands, and use for your benefit. Without any tangible proof, the evidence is wholly insufficient to satisfy the courts that Captain John Jack was really and truly the great-grandson of the patroon Cornelius Van Broek. Supposing, however, that you object to the publicity of a law-suit, my belief is—nay, more, I am satisfied that the Captain, if informed that you intend to contest his title to the estates, will quietly retire to his cottage on Cape Cod, and decline to take any further steps in the matter. He has discovered his child, and the semi-amphibious animal is content with that discovery. It would be folly—madness on your part, voluntarily, on a mere silly question of conscience, to reduce yourself and family from wealth and position to comparative poverty and obscurity!”

Mr. Swoop was cautious enough to say nothing about the recompense he expected for his disinterested advice, and his complicity in a scheme to defraud the Captain and his child; but he knew full well that, if he could persuade Mr. Van Broek to fall in with his views, the patroon would be thenceforward in his power, and would be compelled to make such terms with him as he might choose to dictate. His eloquence and his powers of persuasion were, however, entirely wasted. Mr. Van Broek had gone too far to recede, even though he himself had been tempted by the wily lawyer's plausible representations to retain, if possible, his false position.

Induced by his young wife's persuasions, he had unbosomed himself to his father-in-law, and, though he might have, to some extent, glossed over his guilty complicity with his cousin Charles, he had confessed with shame and regret that, believing the great-grandson of

Cornelius Van Broek to be dead, and believing himself to be the legal heir to the property, he *had* (fearful of being unable to obtain satisfactory proof of his cousin's death, and knowing that without such proof there would probably be years of delay before he, as the reversionary heir, could obtain possession) personated his cousin by means of documents and certificates, which had strangely, but through no overt act on his part against his cousin, come into his hands. The minister had applauded his resolve, and urged him to make restitution at once, without regard to consequences, now that he was convinced of the existence of the lawful heir. Thus fortified in his determination, Mr. Van Broek indignantly rejected Mr. Swoop's propositions, and threatened, in case of their renewal, or if he heard anything further of any underhanded proceedings on the part of the lawyer, to publish his knavery to the world.

Thus disconcerted, disappointed in his hopes of influencing Mr. Van Broek to retain possession of the property, and cheated out of the pickings of the originally-anticipated law-suit, Mr. Swoop's sole resource was to make the best terms he could with the Captain. He and his partner were—as *does* sometimes happen—trapped by their own cunning; for, conscious that the simple-minded Captain would be guided by the cousin to whom they had disclosed their fraudulent purposes, and conscious also of their former peculations—which they dreaded might be brought to light—they were debarred from making such demands upon the property as they would otherwise have made, as a reward for their services, and were glad to return to their original petty practice before the New York criminal courts, in which tolerably lucrative, though not very reputable branch of professional business they are probably still engaged.

Mr. Van Broek appointed a day for an interview with his cousin and Mr. Martin, in the presence of Mr. Brad-

ford, his (Mr. Van Broek's) own lawyer. In the course of this interview, Mr. Van Broek declared his intention to give up the property without delay, and expressed his regret that his cousin should have remained so long in ignorance of his birthright, and deprived of his rightful property and position in society. He expressed his own contrition for the part he had himself acted, in the belief that he was, in reality, the lawful heir to the estates. He warned the Captain against the machinations of Messrs. Nettletop and Swoop, and recommended him to place his affairs in the hands of Mr. Bradford, who was a man of honorable repute.

The Captain, however, was as intractable, and as difficult to deal with as ever. It was only with the utmost difficulty that he could be induced to resume his real Christian and sur-names, and even when he was persuaded to this, he declared that he should only sign those names to documents that might hereafter affect the interests of his child.

"John Jack, master mariner," said he, "is the name I've stood by these fifteen year, and Jack be the name as I stood to for fifteen year afore that, and John Jack I'll stand by still. Cause why? It soots me better than t'other crooked name."

He declared at first that he would have nothing to do with the estates. Anybody might have them who liked.

"I've got enow to live on," he said, "and enow for the child arter me. Thar ain't no salt water nigh on to the property, and I'm not goin' to live thar. I'm goin' back to Cape Cod right away, and I don't want to hear no more o' the matter."

Mr. Martin and Mr. Van Broek, however, at length persuaded him to accept his change of fortune, for his child's sake, if not for his own; and finally he consented, only on the condition that his cousin should continue to manage the property, and to reside at the Manor as his

agent, with liberty to act in all matters according to his own judgment. But the cousins had many interviews together, and a variety of persuasions were necessarily employed, before the simple-minded yet obstinate sailor would consent to alter his mode of life. In fact, his consent was only partially won at last; for he insisted that he should still be Captain Jack, at Singapore Villa, Cape Cod, and should only openly resume his real names when it was absolutely necessary for him to do so. Captain Jack,* or Captain Van Broek, as I should now write (though to the present day he is probably better known by the former title), continued, however, to reside at his snug homestead on Cape Cod, only occasionally visiting the Manor, and on those occasions making his visits as brief as possible, in his eagerness to return home to breathe the salt sea air. Miss Slowbury continued to occupy the position of housekeeper at Singapore Villa until four or five years after the change in the Captain's fortunes, when, having made the acquaintance of the son of Deacon Willis, while on a visit to Acton Parsonage, the young man and she were soon afterwards married. The Captain, though vexed at the idea of losing his housekeeper, behaved generously on the occasion. He provided Nancy with an ample dowry; and this, together with the portion the wealthy deacon was able to bestow upon his son, enabled the young couple to purchase and stock a considerably large farm in the vicinity of Acton.

* The character of Captain Jack—as are all the more prominent characters in this story—is drawn from life, though, of course, each and all are so disguised as to render recognition impossible to those unacquainted with the facts upon which the story is founded, as well as with each individual character. The writer has spent many pleasant days at Acton Parsonage; he was, for some years, himself a boarder at Stuyvesant House, and, moreover, he was connected with the "Herald of Freedom." Only about six years ago he met Captain Jack at Newport, Rhode Island; and, although the Captain was then the owner of vast estates, and a patroon in his own right, he appeared in dress and manner like a coasting skipper, and preserved all the eccentric peculiarities and all the apparently simple characteristics that are accredited to him in this narrative.

Bill Brail died of sheer old age about a year after Miss Slowbury's marriage; and, thus deprived of his housekeeper and his faithful old follower, it was thought that the Captain would remove to the Manor. Such, however, was not the case. He provided himself with another and more elderly housekeeper, and hired a farm servant, and continued to live at Singapore Villa.

Mr. Martin, after a brief sojourn in the United States, found the climate too cold for him, and the manners and habits of the people so different from those to which he had been accustomed, that he was glad to return to the East Indies; and he declared, when he bade farewell to his friends, that he should never leave the shores of India again.

Charles Van Broek was removed to more respectable and more comfortable lodgings, and for some time he seemed in a fair way to recover his health. But his constitution was broken with a long course of misery and destitution, after a life of dissipation; and, though he struggled with disease for a while, alternately flushed with hope and sunk in despair, flashing and sinking like the flame of a candle flickering in its sockets, he fell at length into a rapid consumption, and died, thus evading to the last the grasp of earthly justice, and passing from the world with the decree of outlawry still upon him, into the presence of the great Judge, before whom let us hope that his repentance may have been found to be genuine. His unfortunate wife remained with him to the last. There was still much that was gentle and womanly in the unhappy creature; and, through the influence of some friends who had seen her attentive care of her husband, and pitied her desolate condition, she obtained a situation as a nurse in the New York Hospital, where she conducted herself well, and bade fair to become a respectable member of society.

Amos Jepson and Dame Copley both died within two

years of the discovery of the legal heir to the Van Broek property. The old seaman never got over his astonishment at the possibility that any one could equal his skill in the noble art of tattooing; and the dame, to the last moments of her life, continued to associate the Captain with the infant who was "allers a-dabblin' his head in the gutter afore the door, and muckin' his har a-purtendin' he were a-washin' hisself."

So secretly and quietly had the investigations respecting the validity of the title of Captain Julius Van Broek to the inheritance of the Van Broek property been carried out, that few, excepting those persons immediately interested in the matter, were aware of the change that had taken place in the ownership of the estates. People living in the immediate neighborhood of the property fancied that something mysterious was going forward, but they were ignorant of its nature; and, although there appeared at the time a few vague paragraphs in the newspaper relative to the property and its ownership, the meaning of which the writers themselves did not appear to understand, which temporarily attracted the attention of the public, they were soon forgotten.

Mr. and Mrs. Van Broek continued to reside at the Manor House in summer, and at their town house, in the Fifth Avenue, New York, in the winter; and the Captain, on the occasions of his rare visits to the Manor, was regarded rather as the guest of his cousin than as the legitimate owner of the property by the neighboring villagers. Mr. Van Broek exerted himself to improve the estates (which the Captain would have suffered to go to ruin) to the utmost; and, under his management, little Alice became one of the richest heiresses in New York State. Miss Malcolm and Miss Dunlop, with whom Mrs. Van Broek formed an intimate friendship during her residence at Stuyvesant House, frequently visited the Manor; the former as Mrs. Captain Whittaker, and the latter

as Mrs. Marshall. Miss Dunlop married the young Southerner briefly alluded to in the fifth chapter of this narrative. But I am doubtful whether these ladies are acquainted with the fact that their hostess on these occasions is not the actual lady of the Manor.

They no longer live at Stuyvesant House; but, to the best of my belief, Stuyvesant House, and its landlady, Mrs. Lyman, are both still in existence, and still prosperous; and I know that not longer than six years ago Mrs. Doctor Benson and Mrs. Latham were still inmates of the boarding-house; Mrs. Doctor Benson being still as deeply steeped in the "isms" and "ologies" as ever; still more imbued with "strong-mindedness," and still—as the poor Doctor, her husband, can tell to his cost—as firm as ever in her belief in the superiority of the feminine over the masculine intellect; while Mrs. Latham and the worthy ex-consul her husband are still as fond as ever of boasting of their intimacy with foreign magnates at the time when Mr. Latham was a United States Consul in Italy.

CHAPTER XL.

CONCLUSION, IN WHICH COLONEL WILTON SPEAKS PROPHETICALLY.

I DRAW to the conclusion of my story. The great moralist Dr. Johnson headed the last chapter of "Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia," "The Conclusion, in which Nothing is Concluded." It was a good idea. Nothing ever is concluded in this world. No man ever lived who, upon his death-bed, could truly say that all objects of his life had been attained. The end of everything undertaken by mankind is, as is life itself, a conclusion in which

nothing is concluded; and, if a writer were to write on for ever, he would still find some last words to say—still find that he had left something unsaid.

I have cautiously abstained from any mawkish descriptions of love-making in this narrative, though I have spoken of more than one marriage. People will marry and be given in marriage as long as this world shall last and I have yet another marriage to record before I close. Perhaps the reader may have anticipated it?

It was the marriage of George Neville with his cousin Mary, which took place at Acton Church, on the same day on which Nancy Slowbury was married to Henry Willis.

George and Mary had been engaged for more than a year before their marriage, which would have taken place at an earlier period, but that Mr. and Mrs. Upton could not reconcile themselves to the idea of separating themselves from both their children: and Mary, with all her willfulness, was too fond and obedient a daughter to leave her parents to the desolation which she knew they would experience were she to quit the old Parsonage in which she had been born and had grown to womanhood. Now there was no reason that the parents and the child should separate, although the daughter became a wife; for Mr. Upton had at length accepted an invitation offered to him to become the pastor of a church at Harlem, near the city of New York. The invitation, or the "call," as our American friends say, had been offered long before; but, though the emoluments were far superior to those of the church at Acton, Mr. Upton had been unable to make up his mind to leave the congregation over which he had presided, alike loved and respected, for a quarter of a century; and the probability is that he would have remained at Acton to the end, but that he felt that he could not ask, that it would be selfish and wrong on his part to desire, his younger daughter to sacrifice the

hopes and happiness of her future days to her sense of filial duty.

So at length it was decided that the minister was to leave Acton, and the double marriage was, therefore, a solemn occasion to the minister's congregation, as well as to those whom it most nearly concerned; for it was, in all human probability, the last time that the aged and faithful pastor would officiate at that solemnity in their presence and in the old village church; and on the following Sabbath he was to preach his farewell sermon. The church was crowded as if it had been a Sabbath day, and on the following Sabbath day there was not room within the church for half the congregation that assembled, not only from the parish, but from the neighboring towns and villages, to gaze, perhaps for the last time, upon the benevolent features and venerable form of him who had been for so many years their spiritual guide; and to hear, perhaps for the last time, those words of warning, and pleading, and hope, and trust, and promise they had so often heard from their aged minister's lips. And then the day of his departure came, and most of the minister's congregation assembled to wish him and his wife God-speed on their journey, and to wish happiness to the bride and bridegroom. And thus, loaded with memorials of their friends' love and esteem, Mr. and Mrs. Upton removed to Harlem, and George Neville and his young wife took up their abode with the aged couple in the ample Harlem Parsonage-house.

The "Herald of Freedom" had long ago ceased to exist, and Mr. Puffington, the ex-editor, had since its demise occupied his talents in various ways. He had been alternately an anti-slavery lecturer, a biologist, an advertising agent, a commercial traveller, a manufacturer of patent blacking, and a hotel-keeper; but, failing in all these vocations, he had suddenly departed for Utah

Territory, and, if report spoke truly, was at this present time an influential Mormon elder!

Colonel Wilton, however, had not forgotten his promise; and George Neville, who had become an adopted American citizen, had been offered and had accepted a permanent and profitable appointment on the staff of the "Broadway Gazette."

"I put the question to you once before," said the Colonel, one day shortly after George's marriage, "when you were a stranger, fresh from the Old World, and you answered it modestly and wisely: I now put the question to you again, and ask you to answer me honestly and truly, to the best of your ability. What now do you think of our country? I wish you to give me your real opinion of us much-bepraised and equally as much vilified and bespattered Yankees." And George told the Colonel his real opinion of the people, and of the country in which he had made his home.

"You are right, I believe, in many—perhaps in most respects," answered the Colonel. "All nations, all people, have their own peculiar virtues and vices. I—deeply as I love my country, proud as I am of its marvellous progress, its rapidly-developing power and greatness—am not blind to its faults. I am not one to uphold it in all things, right or wrong—in which determination many of our people seem to conceive exists the acme of patriotism. *Patria cara, carior veritas*; and he is the best lover of his country who acknowledges the faults which it must possess in common with all things earthly, and who acknowledging these faults, can use his own poor efforts to work out their amendment. I do not insist that we are *as yet* the greatest of all nations, nor that our system of government is *as yet* the most perfect that the world has ever seen. Our country may be compared to a vast garden laid out from a virgin soil, in which the fairest flowers, and the finest fruits, and the

rankest and vilest weeds will alike grow apace; and it does and will require the utmost vigilance, and the most constant care, to prevent the weeds from crowding out and poisoning the fruits and flowers. As a young people, we have much to be thankful for, and much to be justly proud of. Still I am free to acknowledge many of our noblest institutions, and much of that liberty which is our proudest boast, we owe to old England, and to that Anglo-Saxon energy and love of freedom which we inherit from our British ancestors.

"I do not know whether you have observed it, but it is a remarkable fact that, notwithstanding the immense influx of foreigners from all parts of Europe during the past fifty years, the names in our American directories, and over our shops and stores, are nearly all purely British; and this fact is, I take it, a complete refutation of the assertions of certain envious carpers, that we have become a mongrel race, and can no longer claim Anglo Saxon parentage. I can only account for this—in the face of our vast Teutonic, and Slavonic, and Celtic, and Gallic immigration—from the fact which I think is now fairly established, that, given fair Anglo-Saxon stamina in any newly-settled country, and however numerous the immigrants of alien blood, they will gradually but surely be absorbed by that, the dominant race; and the Anglo-Saxon language, and laws, and religion, and even the Anglo-Saxon features, so far as change of climate will allow, will be preserved. This I believe to be an irresistible law of nature; and we Yankees are as purely Anglo-Saxon as our British forefathers. In this country—with its vast area of surface, its fertile soil, its inexhaustible mineral and other resources, its great variety of climate, and its sparsely-populated territory—man has a wider scope for his energies than in the cramped space and amidst the over-crowded populations of Europe. But for that very reason his energies are too apt to run riot.

There is, perhaps, among us as yet too little respect for superior ability, because of the wide field that is open to respectable mediocrity. That mediocrity, which in the Old World will never raise a man above the common herd, is here, if accompanied with usual energy, all-sufficient, and is often more valued or more respected than great ability, because it is less fastidious and more easily recognized. In a word, here, *as yet*, as in all new countries, energy is the most valued and valuable quality, and, if accompanied with tact and moderate ability, is sure to meet with success.*

It is essential that such should be the case in a new country; and yet it is productive of many evils, since, in too many instances—of which I could produce an abundance of examples—our ablest, and wisest, and best men are crushed down or jostled out of the race for distinction by pretentious mediocrities, whose superficial knowledge—which in older communities would be speedily seen through—is regarded as superior wisdom by the multitude, and whose extravagant energy, expressed oratorically, or in any other form, captivates the rude, uncultivated minds, and charms the restless spirits of the listeners or observers. The time may—*will* come, when all this will be changed; but that change will bring with it other and perhaps greater evils, from which we are at present exempt; though the great evil entailed upon us by our forefathers—the evil of universal suffrage—must necessarily make all political changes slow, and dependent, not on the intelligence of the educated minds among us, but on the gradual and necessarily slow progress of education and refinement of thought and feeling amongst the masses of the people. And, though our system of popular education is one that we may justly boast of, and one that

* The sentiments here placed in the mouth of Colonel Wilton were expressed to the author by an American gentleman in Boston very shortly after his first visit to the United States. He merely reports them, without expressing his own opinions.

most other nations might in its general plan wisely follow, *it* has its faults, and just such faults as are calculated to retard rather than to accelerate the changes to which I refer."

"Universal suffrage!" exclaimed George, interrupting the Colonel. "I thought that universal suffrage was regarded as the palladium of American freedom, and as one of those especial advantages which the American citizen possesses over the subjects or citizens of less favored communities?"

"Many—most Americans will tell you that universal suffrage is the American citizen's proudest heritage," replied the Colonel; "but there are others, and they are numerous among the educated and thinking men of the country—who perceive the evils to which it conduces, and who would, if they dared, raise their voices against it—who, had they the power, would abolish the system. When it was established by the founders of the Constitution there was reason in its favor. There was comparatively little social inequality in the condition of the people; and those who had spent their substance, and risked their lives, and shed their blood in the cause of independence, had a right to a voice in the government of the infant republic. There were few at that period who had not a material interest in the well-being of the country. But the founders of the Constitution did not look into the future, or rather they had no conception that such as it has been would be the rapid growth of the new-born nation. They did not foresee the day when our population annually recruited from the lower classes of the nations of Europe, there must arise a majority of the ignorant and comparatively uneducated classes of our own countrymen—to say nothing of adopted citizens—who would outvote the more intelligent portion of the working classes, and who, becoming the ready tools of political charlatans, would hoist into place and power

men whose sole object in life is their own selfish aggrandizement. I would place the electoral privilege very low; I would render it attainable by every honest and industrious man; but I would have no man possess the privilege who had not proved himself worthy of it, or who had not some stake, however small, in the well-being of his country. However, the arguments that might be adduced, *pro* and *con*, respecting this question would occupy hours of debate, and the debate would come to nought, since the privilege being in the possession of the people, nothing less than a complete revolution could effect any change in our electoral system. Nevertheless, chiefly to this error, and to another mistake—the non-abolition of slavery at the outset of our career, when it might have been comparatively easily effected—do I charge most, if not all the evils that, amidst our general and wonderful prosperity, have afflicted our country.

"And mark me, young man," (here the Colonel's voice became solemn and impressive), "I have studied the signs of the times, and, notwithstanding our apparent prosperity, I feel that a terrible struggle is impending over us. It must break forth sooner or later. Nothing that we can do or say can avert it. The 'irresistible conflict,' of which 'stump-orators' have spoken glibly, and of which newspaper-men and others, whose high position or whose sacred calling should have made them more guarded, have spoken and written carelessly and ironically, is no subject for foolish jest. The evil may be delayed for years; and the most trifling accident—anything that may irritate men's minds, and set smouldering party feeling into flame—may hurl it upon us at any moment. We live, as it were, on the verge of a volcano, and, as did the ancient inhabitants of Herculaneum and Pompeii when they sat beneath the shadow of Vesuvius, we eat, and drink, and laugh, and dance, and wake, and sleep, and make our bargains, and go through our com-

monplace routine of business or pleasure, day by day, as if no evil could approach us; ay, though, if we choose to listen, we can hear the murmurs of the smouldering volcano in the very atmosphere that we breathe. And when this conflict does break forth, it will be one of the most terrific the world has ever known. It will pit the two great sections of our country against each other. It will turn brotherly love to bitter hate. It will divide families, and change relatives and friends into foes. It will devastate our land with fire and sword, and waste our wealth and treasure, and deluge our soil with blood. It will spread mourning and desolation throughout the land from Maine to Florida, from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific. It will be a strife of years; and, whenever and whatsoever be its ending, the evils it will bring with it, and the fresh evils it will engender, will not cease with the cessation of the strife, but will be entailed upon our children, and will rankle and fester for long years yet to come. What may be its influence over the future of our country none may tell; but it will abolish or pave the way for the abolition of that slavery which has hitherto been, and which still remains, a blot upon our otherwise fair escutcheon; and I hope and trust, when time shall have softened down the bitter feelings it will create, it will tend to a closer and a happier union of our people, and cause them thenceforward to be more prone to acknowledge each other's good qualities, and less disposed to criticise each other's short-comings; that thenceforward—though a difference of opinion must always exist among men—those of one section or party, in their intercourse with those of another, will, as the poet sings—

‘Be to their faults a little blind,
Be to their virtues ever kind;’

and thus, each making allowances for the other, mutual concessions shall prevent the necessity of strife.

“It has pleased Providence,” continued the Colonel,

“that every people, in the course of a nation's progress from infancy to full maturity, shall pass through a baptism of blood and fire. It was so with the nations of antiquity; it has been so with the more modern nations of Europe. It has been so, more than once, with our own mother-land; and more than once has Great Britain come forth better and stronger, and greater than ever, from the strife, purified by the terrible ordeal through which she has passed.

“Some nations have been more favored than others. It may be that we, as we have been blessed with greater prosperity than many other people, have waxed wanton in our pride, and have abused the blessings we have enjoyed, and that the furnace of affliction through which we must pass will be more terrible in consequence thereof. Still I have a firm abiding faith in the bright and glorious future of my country. I believe that we Americans have not degenerated from the great race from which we sprang, and that, as Great Britain has come forth greater and wiser, and better from the ordeals that have sorely tested her courage and endurance, and her bright and holy faith, so shall we. The old Anglo-Saxon spirit is still strong within our bosoms. And, when the storm of blood and fire that threatens us shall have burst over us, and passed away—what though it spread terror and devastation in its course, what though it leave ruin and desolation behind—it will have purified our moral atmosphere, and our country will rise, like the fabled phoenix from its ashes, and, strengthened by the conflict, will become worthy of its greatness. And then, regardless of petty jealousies, it will recommence its duties with a heartier will and a purer aim, and with a firmer, holier trust in Providence, until it shall accomplish its destiny as the civilizer and Christianizer of the Western World.”

So spake Colonel Wilton; and George Neville, who had listened attentively to the Colonel's prophetic words, now

rose from his seat to return home to the Parsonage, where his young wife was awaiting him, to take her for a sail on the beautiful Harlem River. And, as he shook the Colonel's hand at parting, he said, earnestly and hopefully, "SO MAY IT BE!"

THE END

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