

A POOR FELLOW.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"WHICH: THE RIGHT, OR THE LEFT?"

Now I am proud, and now I'm humble,
At one time weak, at another strong;
Now straight I walk, and now I stumble:
To-day, all right—to-morrow, wrong.

Now I am brave, and now I'm fearful,
At times a gentle—at times a clown;
Now bright with joy, now sad and tearful—
To-day, all up—to-morrow, down.

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TO
WHOEVER REALIZES THAT
HE IS
A POOR FELLOW,
AND

DEPENDENT UPON ANOTHER TO LEAD HIM ALONG
FROM DAY TO DAY IN SAFETY ;

AND, ALSO, TO
Whoever feels that "he has not quite come to *that*," but considers
himself "abundantly competent" to sustain his
steps "with 'dignity' " and
"without help,"

ALL THE WAY, 

This Volume,

Written in the hope that it may be instrumental in leading some
to a road which, though occasionally a little dark,
is yet the only one for 'poor fellows,'

IS
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

P R E F A C E .

MAN, who is not often guilty of placing *too low* an estimate upon his own powers, value or importance, is, in his own opinion, made up as follows :

	PARTS.
Of perfection in all commendable propensities, - - -	99
“ “ propensities not <i>very</i> commendable, - - -	1

In his candor, he is generally willing to admit that he is nearly perfect, but—not quite. And this he innately believes.

His acquaintance, who are equally candid when estimating *themselves*, do not, however, view the component parts of his moral organization so highly. In *their* mind, he is thus made up :

	PARTS.
Of perfection in propensities not <i>very</i> commendable, - - -	99
“ “ commendable propensities, - - -	1

In their frankness they are generously willing to admit that while he is a compound of fool, hypocrite and rascal, there yet possibly may lurk, in some one corner of his heart, a small grain of genuine goodness. And all this they seriously believe.

His personal enemies, who virtuously ignore all possibility of being biased, by prejudice or passion, in their views, believe him to be made up thus :

	PARTS.
Of perfection in dishonorable propensities, - - -	100
“ “ honorable qualities, - - -	0

According to them, as they will confidentially inform you, with a mingled air of profound sincerity and sorrowful conviction, “ he may possibly possess some quality that partially redeems his general depravity ; but (significantly shrugging their shoulders, and calling up an expression of horror) *they* do not know where or what it is, and *do* not, CAN not believe it. They would ‘be glad’ to be persuaded of its existence ; they would ‘rejoice’ to hear that he had *ever* said or done any one good thing, with a worthy or a disinterested motive.

PREFACE.

To be 'satisfied of this,' would 'do them good.' But (with a grave shake of the head) they 'don't think it likely'; no—they have 'seen too much of him for that.' They *once* considered him a 'fair man' and 'put every confidence in him; but (with a sorrowful sigh) *that time is over.*' They 'never believed it possible' that he could 'turn out as he has'; but (with a glance of conscious sagacity) 'time and experience' develope 'strange things,' and we learn 'some thing new and surprising' every day."

His friends, who modestly claim to have an intimate knowledge of him, estimate him in the manner following:

	PARTS.
Of moderate perfection in commendable propensities,	90
" perfection in intentionally dishonorable	0
" perfection in the weaknesses of poor human nature,	10

When questioned concerning the remarks of his maligners, they will privately tell you that 'you must not believe all you hear; that 'there are two sides to every story; that in reference to the reports against him, 'something should be allowed for feeling,' 'something for self-interest,' and something for the recklessness with which men make extravagant assertions, when influenced by 'passion,' 'prejudice,' or 'pecuniary loss; that they know the man himself to be 'as good a fellow as ever breathed,' but that, like every body else, 'he has his faults,' and now and then 'makes mistakes,' which, however, are, after all, 'few and far between,' and should be 'attributed to his head rather than his heart; that 'he is weak, of course,' as 'who is not: but that he is 'by no means' the 'kind of man' his enemies so unscrupulously represent. All of which they fervently believe.

But to some there comes a season when each is led to reconsider his original opinion. Then his estimate of himself is not so flattering. After careful self-examination, he arrives at the conclusion that he is thus made up:

	PARTS.
Of commendable propensities,	0
Of propensities <i>not</i> commendable,	100
And this he religiously believes.	

A POOR FELLOW.

CHAPTER I.

MR. BIGNELL was a matter-of-fact man, who had started in life without a shilling, and had made himself what he was, sir. He, at first, found it pretty tight scratching, but he pushed himself along—one way and another, he pushed himself along, sir; and by and bye he pushed himself up to a thirty thousand dollar house—to say nothing of the furniture, the library, or the pictures; to any number of farms in the upper counties; to sundry shares in certain paying coal mine, bank, railroad, and insurance companies; and to more scattered real estate in the city than he knew what to do with, and which he would thank any person to take off his hands—at a fair price; all of which he had accumulated himself, and no thanks to any body, sir; and now he was living on his income, and enjoying the fruits of his industry, and he didn't care that (snapping his fingers) for any man's opinion, sir.

He was a hale, hearty personage of fifty-seven; proud of his money—which he accumulated by knavery; of the system of his household—which permitted no one, not even his wife, to have a say, or an opinion, but himself; of his blunt, overbearing manner—which he innocently mistook for dignity; of his healthy, vigorous and supple frame—which

promised to carry him on to a round hundred; of his business genius—which was of a high order: and of his knowledge of the world—which was very extensive.

He always liked to be found in his library; it did him good, and gave him a literary air, which, he thought, his visitors would be sure to notice and to speak of when they took their departure. It was a nice quiet place to make his calculations in—with a large volume of Philosophical Mathematics open before him, to beguile those who called on him into the belief that he was playfully testing the accuracy of the problems that were worked-out in its pages; and in which to acquire a reputation for extensive reading, too—for the shelves of the rose-wood cases were well supplied with the standard and popular works of the day in elegant, tasteful, and substantial bindings, each of which had a leaf turned down to show that its owner had recently been perusing that very volume; and all of which had been selected by an invisible gentleman of more taste than means, who earned a precarious livelihood by keeping a quiet lookout for, and rendering himself useful to emigrants, with solid pockets, from vulgar obscurity to the brilliant circles of Fifth Avenuedom.

The millionaire was sitting, one bright morning in September, in the library, and doing his best to 'enjoy' Byron's 'Sardanapalus,' which somebody had represented to him to be a 'beautiful thing,' and 'one of the finest dramatic poems in the English language.' But, from some cause or other, he did not find so much 'enjoyment' in its scenes as he had anticipated; and he was yawning his way through the third act, and half resolving to give it up and vote it a bore, when an attendant announced the presence of a gentleman, a Mr White, in the drawing-room.

"Ask him to step into the library, Betsy," he said, gra-

ciously. "White—White!" he repeated to himself, as the girl retired, "who is Mr. White? I know no one of that name—some tenant perhaps come to complain of one of my rascally agents."

"Mr. White!" said the attendant, introducing the visitor.

The latter was a pale, slender personage, of the average height, and with small Roman features, of a mild, thoughtful cast, but very winning in their expression; thick, dark hair, which was brushed up in the centre and down at the sides; a gentle, yet dignified deportment, and was, apparently, in the neighborhood twenty-eight or thirty years. He was dressed in a suit of plain black, and wore his carefully-brushed frock coat (which the sharp-eyed millionaire discovered to be visibly thread-bare here and there) buttoned nearly up to his throat; his collar was turned down over his black silk neck-cloth, which terminated in a careless knot that would have shocked a Grace Church *habitué* and caused him to shrink back in elegant horror.

The matter-of-fact millionaire motioned his visitor to a seat; and, laying the volume he had been reading on the writing table, and surveying the stranger with a business eye, asked, in his cool, blunt way, what he wanted.

The latter, who did not appear surprised at the rude manner of the man of money, responded with an inquiry, which was accompanied by a pleasant smile: "You have a son, I believe?"

The interrogatory grated harshly on the other's ear, if one might judge from the severe frown that darkened his features, as he replied:

"That is a theme which no one in my family presumes to touch upon in my hearing!"

"I regret to hear it," said the visitor, in a tone at once so tender and respectful, that the millionaire found it im-

possible to retain his indignation, and therefore dismissed it; "for you are connected by a holy tie—that of father and son!"

A something in the speaker's voice and manner—what it was, it would perhaps be impossible to say—knocked at the door of the rich man's heart, and influenced him to submit to this reproof without a particle of resentment.

"Tom is an ungrateful fellow," he said, after a few moments, "and not a bit like me. I started in life without a shilling; had no one to give me counsel or assistance, and have made myself what I am. But I pushed myself along—one way and another, I pushed myself along: and now I am at the top of the heap, and don't care that for any man's opinion."

And he snapped his fingers defiantly, and looked around at the book cases with an air of honest pride: but more, we fancy, to obtain a temporary respite from the steady, thoughtful and somewhat mournfully rebuking glance of his visitor, than from any other cause.

"Tom is an ungrateful fellow!" he repeated, gradually bringing his eyes round again to those of the latter. "All my kindness to him has been thrown away. He has derided my advice, and treated me with insolence. He is a reckless, unprincipled spendthrift, and has cost me more money, by his wild, stupid pranks, than he ever shall again. I set him up in business twice, and in each instance, he meanly, miserably, humiliatingly failed; and because I did not sympathize with him in his last abortive effort, he abused me, turned his back upon me, and left my house. That was three years ago; and I have not seen him since, nor do I wish to. Let him stay away—starve—rot; I care not—he has brought it upon himself. If he should cross my threshold now, or at any time, he —, but, no matter—my servants have their orders!"

The tone in which these words were uttered, caused a shudder to dart through the frame of the visitor.

"But he is your son, Mr. Bignell," he said; "reflect upon that; and if harm should come to him, your parental heart would relent. Nay, do not shake your head—it *would*; for your heart, like every man's, is from God—bears His impress and His signet—and is therefore warm, loving, and rich in human sweetness at the bottom, however hard or bitter circumstances may have rendered it at the top. Come, dear friend—confess: you have still a kindly feeling for poor Tom!"

"Who *are* you, sir," demanded the millionaire, in mingled agitation and amazement—"your name?"

"Reuben White," answered the visitor.

"Are you sure?"

"Of what?"

"That your name is Reuben White?"

The visitor was silent, he was evidently meditating in what form to couch his reply; at length he said:

"I have been called so from childhood."

The millionaire shook his head impatiently, as if still in doubt.

"Your father's name?" he then inquired.

"Richard White."

Mr. Bignell colored to his temples, his eyes flashed, and a brown shade darkened their whites with that peculiar tint which announces the presence of malignant blood. The name of Richard White had doubtless called up unpleasant memories.

The visitor narrowly observed him, but without appearing to do so.

"He was a liquor dealer?" said the millionaire, sharply.

"Who?" asked the visitor.

"Your father—Richard White?"

The young man shook his head.

"No," he said, with a smile; "a gardener."

"A gardener?"

"One who raised fruits and vegetables—a sort of small farmer," said the visitor, explanatively.

"Where?"

"A short distance from Hudson, up the river."

The millionaire eyed the speaker as if to read his heart, and then looked down, perplexed.

"A gardener, you say, near Hudson?" he said, at length.

"Yes, sir."

"Umph!" and the man of money dropped his eyes again, with an air of disappointment.

The visitor observed him thoughtfully, then mournfully, then affectionately, and then again thoughtfully, like one whose mind was alternating with varied feelings and reflections.

"Your business?" asked the millionaire, looking up with an uneasy brow.

"I am an humble workman in the vineyard of our Most Holy Lord."

"A clergyman?"

"A clergyman."

"There is a knot in this!" said the man of fifty-seven, impatiently.

"In what?" asked the other, with a pleasant smile.

The millionaire half-raised himself, like one on tenter hooks, from his chair, and gazed, with a fresh air of mingled interest and surprise, at his visitor—but answered not.

It was as if a something in the young man's face, brought out perhaps into bolder saliency by the smile that illumed it, had re-arrested and given direction to his mind—perhaps

added confirmation to some indwelling thought or suspicion, and called, anew, into action, recollections that had been slumbering for years.

While he gazed, his eyes gradually lost their steadiness and strength, and turned slowly, with a dreamy absent seeming, from the countenance of the young clergyman to the floor, and there remained fixed.

And now back through a lapse of years—back to when that forehead was smooth—back to his young manhood's halcyon spring—to when his heart was careless and his words were light—and to when his impatient spirit cared neither for tie nor restraint, but did as it willed to do, and was indifferent as to the way. And what doth memory's eye call up? A something to all but make his autumnal hairs blanch with stinging remorse and shame: For a womanly form with a woman's confiding heart, and a babe reclining on her arm, lies stretched in slumber on a pallet in an humble garret room; dreaming, perhaps, of brighter days than were around her then—and but little suspecting that she and her little one should wake up to tears: her babe, for it knew not what, and herself for her desertion by him who had crept away from her side during the night, and gone, she knew not where—who at the altar had sworn to love and protect her so long as both should live, but who had used and abused her more like a slave than a wife almost from that day—who had wooed her in poverty, and kept her in poverty, at which she would not have murmured if he had only been kind—and who had wound up his inglorious course by meanly stealing away, like a thief in the dark, and leaving her and her babe to the mercy of strangers, and to make shift with want as best they could when they should awake on the morrow.

What became of either wife or child, thenceforth, the runaway never knew.

Forward, now, three years; and of all the liquor houses in Broad street, Richard White's has the largest wholesale custom. The proprietor's father, recently deceased, had built it up to what it is, and left it with sundry thousands in cash, and thousands' more in houses and lands, to his only son, its present owner, who is not so hard of heart nor shrewd in head as was his progenitor, and hence at times makes bad bargains. He gives credit to many whom sound business heads would not trust a sixpence, and therefore, meets now and then with losses—not of any material moment when viewed singly, but of considerable importance when looked at in the mass. He has a too generous nature that can never say 'No' to a friend who wants an endorsement or a loan, and consequently is, at times, hard-pressed himself; one day, very hard indeed, owing to having too freely endorsed for an old college-mate and neighbor, in the sugar way, who suddenly failed and as suddenly disappeared, leaving his notes to be settled by his easy, good-natured classmate, Richard White, who, poor fellow! is in consternation, and who, to gain time to meet his unexpected liabilities and thus preserve himself from utter ruin, rashly makes over his business and property to James Bignell, his confidential clerk, in whom he has all confidence, and who privately agrees (for such things will not do on paper) to honorably return them when once the house shall have safely weathered the storm. At length the storm is weathered, every dollar of the credulous good-natured man's endorsements for the absconding sugar dealer is honorably paid, and Richard White is a happy man once more. In the height of his joy, as he lies on his pillow at night and meditates upon the skilfulness with which his confidential clerk has carried the house through its perilous course, he resolves to present him, next day, with a third-interest in its business and

profits. Big with this generous thought, he, the following morning, proceeds to the store, and taking Bignell aside, asks him for a "return of the papers." Confidential clerk immediately desires to know what he means? Richard White explains: "The deeds of my property, and the bill of sale of my business which I entrusted you, when, three years ago, I got into difficulty by endorsing so heavily for my old friend, Tom Price. Don't you remember?" 'Confidential' coolly declares that he "really does *not*; thinks that Mr. White must be crazy—has been of that opinion for some time; hopes that if Mr. W. believes he has any claim on the business or property alluded to, he had better prove it in a court of law; in the meantime, he—'confidential'—would be very much obliged to him if he would go out of his—'confidential's'—store, and—*stay out!*" Richard White can scarcely believe his eyes or his ears; is dumbfounded, bewildered; but after awhile laughs immoderately, pokes confidential in the ribs, and tells him that it is "A tip top joke—almost as good 'a thing as he ever heard,"—that he really was "somewhat frightened at first." Confidential appears more and more surprised; don't understand him at all; wants him to distinctly remember that he don't allow familiarities of that sort on the part of any person in the presence of his—confidential's—clerks, and finishes by ordering the 'familiar fellow' out of his—confidential's—store. Richard White begins to see that he is the victim of a smooth-faced, double-tongued villain, and, being naturally slow to anger, gradually turns pale. At length, the treachery of the confidential suddenly bursts upon him in all its enormity; in an instant his cheeks are a-crimson with indignation; his blue eyes flash with a sense of terrible wrong; a spring, a quick, crushing, well-directed blow—and the 'confidential' lies, like a lump of senseless but quivering clay, upon

the office floor; while the betrayed Richard White, defiant yet unobstructed, calmly marches out—a ruined, broken man.

Of his fate, from that hour, none in Broad street, not even the 'confidential,' knew; but it was rumored that two of the absconding sugar dealer's heaviest creditors were so well pleased with the honorable conduct of the endorser, that, on hearing of his misfortune through the cold-blooded treachery of his clerk, they had each generously sent him a check for a thousand dollars—on receiving which he had turned his footsteps from the city, and disappeared.

These two pictures were what the mental eye of the millionaire beheld in its brief journey along the highway of the Past; these the memories that had been called up by the tones of the voice, the featural contour, the peculiarly sweet smile, and the name of the father of the young clergyman; these the coincidences which, united, formed the 'knot' which disturbed the heart and mind of the owner of the library, who, as he was wont to say, had begun the world without a shilling, but had pushed himself along—one way and another, had pushed himself along.

"Oblige me," he said, to his visitor, "with the name of the place in which you were brought up?"

"Claverack," said the latter.

The owner of the library repeated it to himself, and then stored it away in his memory.

"How long is it since you left there?" he asked.

"Some years," was the reply.

"Umph!" muttered the millionaire, looking down, as if pursuing an idea.

"But how about Tom?" inquired the visitor.

"What of him?" demanded Mr. Bignell, quickly.

"You will be reconciled to him?"

The countenance of the rich man darkened.

"No," he replied, proudly, angrily, defiantly, "I want nothing to do with him—will *have* nothing to do with him. I will not even hear his name. Should he have the presumption to show himself in my presence, I — but," checking his passion with an effort, "enough of him. Let us talk of some one else—of yourself, for instance. Come, tell me of your life?"

"He is out in the world," gently persisted the clergyman, perceiving his advantage; "with no one to warn him of its pit falls; evil counsellors—"

"Your name again?" interrupted the millionaire.

"White," answered the visitor, understanding his artifice. "Evil counsellors suggesting evil thoughts in his credulous ear."

"Your given name?"

"Reuben —", and beguiling his generous, impulsive nature—

"Reuben!" repeated the other, thoughtfully. "It has a pleasant ring. Come," extending his hand, "we must be friends—intimate friends; and you must let me call you Reuben."

"Why?"

"A whim, perhaps; but then, that of a man who can be of service to you, if he has the will. I commenced life without a shilling, but I had in me what the world calls *metal*, and I pushed myself along—one way and another I pushed myself along, to what I am. I can afford to have my likes and dislikes, and to humor them, too. Those who please me, sometimes find their advantage in it; while those who run counter to my wishes, frequently find a troublesome enemy. Come—be my friend!"

"Willingly, if —"

"If what? Why do you pause?"

"If you will let me talk to you of Tom?"

"Any other condition than that! The topic is distasteful to me. Why urge it?"

"For your sake and his. You are father and son—"

"His conduct has sundered that tie. No more of him. My nature bristles at the mention of his name. I—I do not wish to be rude; but when you speak of that heartless reprobate—"

"Not heartless—O, no; not heartless. Rash, perhaps, because impulsive; but noble and generous at heart."

"No more, sir. You are going too far! You —"

"Look back, with memory's eye, to when he was an artless child, sitting on your knee; when his little feet were the first to fly, his smile the first to greet, and his little voice the first to welcome you, at the door; and when his innocent prattle, exuberant with joy, fell on your ear more gratefully than the sweetest music."

"Well?" said the millionaire.

"Say, in your heart, if you did not love him then?"

"Granting that?" demanded the other in an unsteady tone.

"Look, when next you sup or dine, at that part of the table at which that little one used to sit, when he older grew, and say, in your heart's better corner, if you would not like to see him there again, as of yore—his pleasant eye meeting yours, at some casual remark, during the meal, and the happy feeling in your breast that dwelt within it then?"

"What are you doing, sir? What know you of these things? Who has been unfolding to you the incidents in my household?"

"Miss you not a dear, familiar form that you now and then encountered in the hall, on the stairs, at the door, long ago; a dear familiar face, that when you looked upon it re-

minded you of your own in your youth; a dear familiar voice whose ripe, mellow, manly tones, had still the silver ring of the artless child's that cried for sorrow when you left home for business in the morning, and shouted for gladness when you returned at night?"

"Look you, sir!" cried the millionaire, springing to his feet with a furious gesture. "You have taken an unwarrantable liberty with my affairs. Do you see that door?"

"I do," returned the young man calmly.

"Pass through it, then, to the street, as quickly as you know how!"

"What if I refuse?" demanded Reuben, without stirring.

"Then I will help you!" retorted the other, seizing him by the collar. "Come, sir—rise and leave this house!"

Reuben rose; but on reaching his feet, he looked the millionaire steadily in the eye and tranquilly observed:

"My coat will not bear rough usage. Pray, withdraw your hand!"

"I will not! come, go out!"

"O, yes, you will," returned the young man calmly yet forcibly removing it—"to oblige me!" he added, as if unconscious of his triumph. "Ah! thank you! One must be careful of one's coat, you know!"

And he smilingly resumed his seat.

The millionaire surveyed him in blank astonishment.

"I had hoped," observed Reuben, as if nothing had occurred to interrupt their harmony, "that an interview with you would have been promotive, in some degree, of a reconciliation between you and poor Tom. I had reasons for supposing that neither of you could be so happy in your estrangement as you would if your differences were adjusted. This, I thought, might be accomplished by the intervention of a disinterested third party. I am still of that belief. For

what kind of peace can be in a father's breast when estranged from his child; what in the child's that is estranged from its parent? In all ranks nature's bonds are sacred, and may not be broken without anguish, because their links are in the heart."

The millionaire was silent.

"We all have our better moments," pursued Reuben; "moments when the voice of nature pleads, and is *heard*. Why may it not be so with you and Tom? True, he has sorely wounded your parental feelings; but then you *are* his parent, and therefore can forget and forgive?"

His auditor shook his head, with an air that said 'he didn't know about that.

"Let us look at the facts generously," said Reuben. "Tom is young, inexperienced, and possessed of a bold, high-mettled spirit, that oftener leads him wrong than right. Now, how much wisdom can reasonably be expected of one who is so likely to have but little?"

His auditor preserved a dogged, resolute silence. It was plainly to be perceived that he was determined not to yield, and that it was useless to further appeal to him. Nevertheless, Reuben concluded to make another effort.

"But if Tom is rash and high tempered," he said, "he is just and forgiving, too. He is not more ready to resent an injury than to pardon it; to commit a fault than to make atonement for it. Surely, in the scale of your parental judgment, these, his good traits, will more than balance the errors arising from his youth?"

Not a sign, not a word from the proud, unrelenting man.

A mournful shade flitted across the forehead of the clergyman, who, however, determined to make yet another effort.

"If," he said, gently, "he has deeply angered, he has dearly paid the penalty. For to a warm-hearted, high-

tempered son, what punishment can equal that of banishment from the presence and affections of his father? And yet," he added, with a feeling smile, "who shall say *the father has not suffered too*; more, perhaps, than the son, around whom, since their parting, his heart-strings in secret have doubtless been twined with a tenderness and yearning he was not conscious of before?"

A slight moisture on the eyelashes of his auditor told him that he at length had touched the right chord, and his heart bounded.

"You have still a kindly feeling for poor Tom?" he continued. "If he should come to you and say, 'Father forgive me—let by-gones *be* by-gones, and I will be dutiful and loving from this day!' you would receive him, fall upon his neck, and thank God for his return?"

"Go and bring him," said the millionaire, in a voice husky with emotion. "Go and bring him. God bless you—God bless you!"

He wrung the clergyman's hand, and, stifling a sob, reeled, as if under the influence of wine, from the library.

CHAPTER II.

ONE man, with friends to watch over his interest, is trained for a business; another, without friends, but, in their stead, a fair degree of ingenuity, originates one; a third, having neither friends nor ingenuity, but possessing moderate observation and tact, picks one up; while a fourth, with or without friends, ingenuity, observation or tact, as the case may be, falls into one.

Tom Bignell, previous to entering college, was trained two years for a liquor dealer; but on completing his education, and returning to the city, he brought with him many ideas not recognised in trade as sound; one of which was that a man ought always to be honest; another, that he ought always to tell the truth: a third, that he ought to consider his word as good as his bond; a fourth, that he ought never to desert a friend in distress; and, fifthly and lastly, that he ought not to follow any business that a gentleman would be ashamed of.

Tom had imbibed these old-fashioned notions from a college chum, who was spoken of by his classmates by the expressive appellation of the "soul of honor," and, who, without being what is often sneeringly called *pious*, had, from instinct, a chivalrous regard for whatever is good and noble. Without being intimate with the teachings of the Bible, whose leading doctrine he had little or no faith in, he believed, firmly, in human progression, in man's ability to attain to perfection, and in the eventual salvation of all men.

He denied the existence of an Evil Spirit, and, ignoring the word 'sin,' accounted for *vice* philosophically.

"Immortality, Tom," he would remark to his friend, "which includes every species of vice, is simply a disease, which, like consumption, most persons inherit from their parents. Others, of a purer lineage, are free from it, but often catch it, as they do any other complaint; and in proportion as the seeds take root in or become incorporated with their blood, to that degree they transmit it to their children, who in turn bequeath it to theirs, and thus it passes from generation to generation."

"But is there no remedy for this disease?" Tom would ask.

"O yes, by vigorously disciplining the intellect to look down with contempt upon every form of vice, and sternly determine to resist it. If we persevere in proudly rejecting temptation, we, in time, shall rise above it. It is in the power of every man to do this; and they only are great, who have heroically made the effort and succeeded."

On another occasion, while conversing with his chum on the same topic, he observed:

"Heaven is a place which none may enter, save the pure. Those whose latter days in life were free from vice, pass into it the instant they have parted from their bodies. Others, according to the respective depths of their corruption, are hundreds, thousands, or millions of years in reaching it."

"What becomes of them in the meantime?" asked Tom.

"That is one of the Mysteries which are not unfolded. But it is in your power, in mine, and all men's, to avoid the passage of that Dark Unknown. To this end we are endowed with faculties to enable us to distinguish between Right and Wrong, and to successfully pursue the Right. If it were

otherwise, God would be *unjust*, which our hearts spontaneously tell us He is *not*. God is a Being of *Love*; too GREAT to trifle with men, and too good to hold in sight to them a heaven to which they never can attain. It is therefore the privilege of every man to cultivate himself up to that state of perfection which insures him at death an immediate entrance into the society of The Blessed."

At a later period, when Tom, who, having become a disciple of this fascinating doctrine, had made some progress in what his mentor termed Intellectual Moralism, the latter observed:

"Vice is a disease which allies all who are steeped in it to brutes. I know of no beast so sickeningly disgusting as a man without morality. From this vice, Tom, you are now comparatively free. Yet a little while, and a few more struggles, and you will be exempt from it altogether. Then, beware how you venture, even in thought, within the circle of its influence—how you inhale the odor of its attainting atmosphere. Shun it, as you would an artful woman; for it is an insidious Circe, and smiles only to betray. Be firm, and it will eventually cease to tempt you. *Then* you will have reached a stage of human dignity which will enable you to look down upon common men with pity."

An incident, slight in itself, but of some moment in drawing out the views of the young moralist, occurred while the two friends were on a temporary visit to the metropolis. A favorite general was receiving an ovation and enjoying the intoxication of popularity.

"Come to the window," said Tom, to his companion, who, a rare physiognomist, was attentively examining some heads in a daguerrian's gallery. "The general is approaching, guarded by his staff!"

"The little glories of little minds!" returned the moralist,

contemptuously. "Excuse me! The exhibition of human nature's small shams, before me, is sufficient!"

"Well," said Tom, laughing, "on the opposite side of the street, walks one which the crowd that admires the professional man-slayer regards with mingled pity and contempt—Mr. * * * * *, the returned missionary."

"The clergyman we heard last evening?"

"The same."

"Let me look at *him*!" cried the moralist, drawing towards the window. "Such men," he added, after a few moments, "are our only *real* heroes. They go not out, in purple and gold, with serried tramp and ringing music, to slaughter their fellow men in bloody heaps, to desolate happy hearths, and to wring tears from widows whom *they* have widowed, and from orphans whom *they* have orphaned—but, humane husbandmen! to plough up the human heart, and to sow seed for that great harvest time when wars shall be no more, and when 'the lion and the lamb shall lie down together and a little child shall lead them.'"

"I thought," said Tom, turning to him in surprise, "that you did not credit the Calvinistic doctrine of these gospel preachers?"

"Nor do I. But they are engaged in a noble work, and I honor them for that. They have their opinion, and I mine, as to the best means of forwarding the interests of our kind; and as, while they can do no harm, they may accomplish much good, I take a pride in bidding them God speed. Whoever is on Humanity's side is on mine, however greatly we may differ in doctrine. If I am wrong in *head*, it matters but little if I am only right at *heart*. If they alone are right, let them be thankful for it in that day when they shall be certain of it for the first time. In the meanwhile I am content to govern my conduct by such light as I have; to do

unto others as I would have them do to me, and to neither say nor do aught of which, as a man and a gentleman, I should be ashamed; firmly believing that each good word and deed brings with it its own reward—if not in all cases here, then hereafter.”

These sentiments had weight with his classmate; for he knew that the moralist lived up to them to the letter.

On subsequently recalling the subject, Tom inquired:

“Do you not think that a man may reach a stage of mind when he can perform a generous action without being governed by a selfish hope of reward?”

“Certainly. But *that* is an elevation of soul attained to only by few. The tendencies of society are to oppress men with ever-multiplying responsibilities, and thus to intensify their selfishness. But there are those who, in addition to great magnanimity possess the happy talent of carrying their responsibilities without feeling their weight. Individuals of this stamp are not long in learning how to do good for its *own sake*.”

Four years of familiar intercourse with this student whose name was Joseph Sprague, did much towards moulding the sentiments of young Bignell, who, without resembling him in character, loved him as a brother, appreciated him as a man, and was proud of him as a friend.

The chums quitted college together, and on their way to New York, where the friends of both resided, they, in the cars, entered into a romantic agreement to keep up their friendship, to watch over one another's interests in Intellectual Moralism, and to stand by each other through good and evil report, or, as Tom, exuberantly expressed it, “through thick and thin.”

The parting remarks of the moralist, as the friends warmly shook hands on leaving the cars, were characteristic:

“Tom, we are now about to enter practically into that great world of which we have so often spoke, and thought, and dreamed. All the pleasant and the bitter experiences of a commercial career are before *you*—those of a literary life before me. Let us each remember that every man, whatever be his position, is a Moving Influence for Good or Evil, in advancing or retarding the interests of poor but hopeful Human Nature. All men are better at heart than the world gives them credit for, all have feelings, all are liable to err, all are *their own* worst enemies, and—*the same God made us all*. Therefore, Tom, when in trade you see a brother falling, stretch out your arm and save him, if you can; when you find him struggling, remember that he *is* a brother, and that a helping hand may do *him* good, and will be of no injury to *you*; when he is down tread not on him, nor, if you can help it, let others trample on him either. Respect everybody's feelings; forget not that while all are daily subject to temptation, few only are possessed of sufficient manly dignity to resist it, and therefore, in dealing with weak, struggling, or broken customers, temper justice with mercy. Do nothing unworthy of the noble instincts of a gentleman. Remember that your Maker has done you the high honor to mould you in His Own image, and to endow you with attributes, by the proper exercise of which you may ascend to an intellectual elevation which will enable you to obtain a dim insight into that Eden in which you are to eternize with the Pure. Be at all times and in all places a Moving Influence for Good; and ever bear in mind that he who stands up for the dignity of poor human nature, thereby stands up for *his own*. May success attend you. Good bye!”

Tom, who was naturally of a proud yet generous spirit, subscribed heartily to these sentiments, and, a few days later, astonished his paternal parent, by firmly refusing, as we have

already hinted, to engage in the business for which he had been trained; alleging as the ground of his refusal that he wished to preserve his self-respect, which he could not do if, for private gain, he embarked in a traffic which was opposed to the best interests of humanity. Mr. Bignell, senior, looked at him with blushing indignation, asked him whether men went into business to serve humanity or to make money; wanted to know if that was a sample of the nonsense he had learned at college; sarcastically desired him to recollect that he himself was the son of a man who had pursued and accumulated a fortune in that very business; and triumphantly demanded whether he considered himself a more respectable man than his father? Tom replied to these interrogatories, by calmly but firmly reiterating his determination not to become a wholesale dealer in human ruin. Mr. Bignell stormed, reasoned, dwelt at length on the 'stupendous profits,' represented that society thought no worse of rum sellers than of any other class, and affirmed that the wisest men and the purest patriots of ancient and modern times, had dealt in that commodity without seeing anything disgraceful in it. But all to no purpose. Tom was firm, and Mr. Bignell was reluctantly compelled to give up the point. The young man was then requested to suit himself with a business, which he did, after a time, by purchasing a half-interest in an old established coffee and spice establishment. But when, after a few weeks he discovered that this old house which had for years done a tremendous trade in 'Mocha' without ever having had a solitary pound of it in its possession; that it was then daily selling thousands of pounds of pure 'Java,' when the books showed that it didn't receive a thousand pounds of that article in a year; that in fact, 'Maracaibo,' was 'Mocha' to buyers who wanted Mocha, and 'Java' to those desiring Java; and that the 'spices

were in genuineness and purity almost on a par with the coffee, he became indignant and disgusted; pronounced the whole business a shameful swindle, and declaring that if he could not sell goods that were in every particular what they purported to be, he would sell none at all, he, with characteristic impetuosity, and greatly to the delight of the senior partner, a portly, venerable gentleman who was troubled with no such conscientious qualms, disposed of his interest to that worthy for one-half what it had cost him, and, hurrying home, startled his father with an account of what he had done. The latter could scarcely credit his ears; and after a violent outburst of invective, every sentence of which was intended to impress the scrupulous young man with the conviction that he was a simpleton, he rushed from the apartment, slamming the door to after him with a suddenness and force that sent a shock throughout the building, and caused the servants to look at one another with mute significance.

Tom, on his way home, had looked for this, and was therefore somewhat prepared for it. Still, some of the insulting expletives of his parent touched and deeply stung him; and neither spoke to the other for many days; but at the end of a fortnight all was well again, and Tom, at the suggestion of his father, inserted the following advertisement in the morning newspapers:

"Wanted, a half interest in an established mercantile house where the business is conducted with strict truth and honesty. Houses whose profits arise, in whole or in part, from adulteration, false brands, counterfeit labeling, or misrepresentations of any description, need not reply. Address, with real name, X. Y. Z., lower Post office."

"You may look for a great many responses!" observed Mr. Bignell, smiling

"In that case, sir, I shall be able to make a selection without difficulty," said Tom, innocently.

"A *great* many," repeated his father. "There are so *many* houses of the kind you speak of, in New York—so *very* many!"

Tom began to suspect that the old gentleman was playing with him.

"When I was in trade," continued Mr. Bignell, tendering his son a cigar and lighting one for himself, "*all* business was conducted upon that principle. I don't know that I ever knew an establishment that did not open its doors in the morning with prayer and close them with a psalm."

"You are making game of me, sir!" said Tom, coloring.

"Not at all," rejoined Mr. Bignell, gravely taking his cigar from his mouth and blowing up the volume of smoke which followed, till it formed a vapory circle and extended to the ceiling. "I am only telling you how it was in my time; and, as commercial houses are continually progressing in the sublime practice of doing as they would (*not—aside*) be done by, my impression is that, by this time, our city firms must be *very* moral, indeed!"

"Surely, sir," said Tom, "this badinage is ungenerous! May not a man entertain a proper regard for truth and honesty, and whatever else is accordant with human dignity, without rendering himself liable to the charge of squeamishness?"

"There are several kinds of 'proper regards'," replied the man of the world, laughingly. "The 'proper regard' of a strict religionist is a very superior and therefore a very costly one, and every man cannot afford to practically subscribe to it. I never knew but few that could. It demands more than men generally are willing to concede. When a merchant has an expensive family to provide for, his own position in society to support, an army of clerks and book-

keepers to protect, a steady pressure of notes and drafts and bills to meet, the severity of a heavy and treacherous competition to contend with, and every other mail bringing him intelligence of the bankruptcy of some one or more customers who are heavily on his books, he soon learns to make up his mind that he cannot afford to indulge *very* extravagantly in moral Don Quixotism. His 'proper regard' is of not quite so elevated a nature as the religionist's, but yet, considering all things, it is a very noble one. It is this: "Depart *no further* from the line of truth and honesty *than is necessary* to MAKE MONEY."

"Very 'noble' indeed!" observed Tom, smiling derisively.

"Yes, noble," repeated the old gentleman. "For unless he makes money he cannot support his family, cannot meet his liabilities, cannot maintain his position in society nor his standing in business, cannot—"

An accidental gulp of cigar smoke interrupted the man of the world, and threw him into a coughing fit.

"Cannot support his family in princely extravagance," said Tom, finishing the sentence for him; "cannot give large parties which make him the talk for a few hours of his neighbors, and an object of suspicion to his creditors till their bills are paid; cannot give large sums for religious and philanthropic purposes; cannot grow more and more dignified and refined in all the subtleties of social and commercial knavery, nor wax hoary in the love of accumulation!"

"True," laughingly returned the old gentleman, who had now recovered himself; "such is the humbug of the world! But, Tom, you shouldn't have taken advantage of me! To do so under such circumstances, is like hitting a man when he is down."

"There are *some* men, sir," said Tom, "who, if not hit in *that* position, cannot be hit *at all*!"

"You are very polite," said the old gentleman with a grateful bow. "The young dog has wit," he muttered to himself, chuckling with pride. "But," he added, bitterly, "if he would only show it in his *business* affairs!"

The night wore away, and Tom waited for the results of his advertisement with impatience. Notwithstanding the satirical remarks of his father, he felt satisfied that the answers would be very numerous, and that his only difficulty would be in making a selection. At noon, he proceeded to the post office, but found only one letter, which read as follows:

"X. Y. Z—

'Most Verdant of Innocents—

"I have read and laughed over your advertisement in to-day's Herald till my sides ached; and I am anxious to know what section of this great and glorious country had the honor of giving you birth. You are certainly a 'live specimen,' and Barnum would make a small fortune in taking you round to the merchants and merchants' clerks that have roared over your tender 'effusion' this morning. I, myself, would willingly give a quarter for a two minutes' glance at your phiz; and in case you should not be caught up by Barnum, I would like to turn showman and exhibit you, myself. How would it suit you to enter into such an engagement? If you are willing, and are too modest to come to the large dry goods store, of which I have the honor to be the proprietor, I will meet you at any hour you may appoint, in the Park. I will station myself on the City Hall steps, and as you approach or pass by, you can carry in your hand a small slender cane, or any other article you may designate, as a sign by which I shall recognise you. This, however, may not be necessary, as I think I should know the author of the afore-said remarkable advertisement without such aid, as nature invariably records upon the *face*, the character of the *head*

How do you suppose a 'strictly honest, truth-telling house' could live in the face of *extensive* and UNSCRUPULOUS competition? Human nature is so corrupt, that, of fifty competitors, if one will *not* lie and cheat, forty-nine WILL; and would you expect him to resist the forty-nine *successfully*?

"You want to *buy* an interest in an established house, and I have one to sell; but—*not to you*. I would not have one of your mould with me, for five times what I ask for the interest. Such a clod would be a dead weight upon the best business man that ever threw out straws in the market to catch the direction of the wind. I want a partner who, when I have planned an operation, upon seeing its profitableness and feasibility, would immediately aid me in carrying it out. A fellow of your stripe would want to pause and consider whether it could be performed without treading upon anybody's toes, emptying any body's pocket, or pulling a green shade over any body's eyes. Faugh! if I had you within reach of my foot, I'd kick you into common sense. I had your romantic views myself once; but I fortunately got rid of them just in-time to save myself from the alms house.

"In case you should meet with a strictly honest, truth-telling mercantile house, let me know, will you? and I will sell out and go and act as your porter.

Yours,

PETER BOUNCE."

On finishing the perusal of this precious epistle, Tom indignantly crushed it in his hand, and coloring with mortification, proceeded home.

"Well, sir," said his father, meeting him in the hall, "where is your great armful of letters? Have you given them in charge of an expressman?" But perceiving that the young man's features wore a look that was far from pacific, he paused a few moments, and then added: "You appear to be disappointed. Not a single answer?"

Tom threw him the crumpled letter, and passing into the drawing room, seated himself on a lounge, covered his face with his hands, and breathed hard.

His father read the letter, and then sympathisingly observed him.

"Poor fellow!" he muttered in an under tone. "His feelings are hurt, and so are mine. But no matter. Why should I fly into a rage at the beck of so vile a reptile as an anonymous scribbler? Tom, my son?"

"Sir?" said Tom, looking up.

"The scamp who penned this, has no mean knowledge of business and of human nature, but he himself is too contemptible to merit your notice or mine. No man can write such language to another in a letter without a name, without forfeiting his own self-respect. Think no more of it."

Tom brushed away an indignant tear, and with an effort mastered his emotion.

"How would you like," inquired his father, taking a seat near him, "to commence and build up a house?"

"Very much indeed, sir," answered Tom. "That is the very thing, of all others, I should most wish to do."

"Have you a preference for any particular business?"

Tom shook his head and said that he had not.

"Look round a few days, and see what strikes your fancy," said his father, rising, "and then we will talk the matter over again."

Tom did so, and at the end of a fortnight stated that he would like to become a weekly newspaper publisher.

Mr. Bignell smiled.

"An honorable occupation," he observed; "but not very profitable, I fear!"

But Tom had had a long conversation with an ambitious litterateur, who had persuaded him that the profits were in-

credible, and the facts received from that sanguine personage concerning a proposed literary journal, he now hastened to lay before his father. The latter heard him quietly to the end, and, not wishing to dampen his ardor or to throw any doubts upon his intelligence, then gravely inquired how large a sum would be sufficient to establish the paper on a paying basis?

"Two thousand dollars," answered Tom.

"When do you wish to commence it?" asked Mr. Bignell.

"As soon as possible," was the reply.

The millionaire leaned back in his chair, and reflected. He had no confidence in the enterprise, for his good sense taught him that newspaper publishing was a business which, like every other, to pursue successfully, required a special training, which, of course Tom had not had.

"Unless he shall have the rarest of good fortune," muttered Mr. Bignell to himself, "his paper will stop when the two thousand dollars are gone. But he will have gained wisdom from the lesson; and knowledge gleaned in the bitter field of a pride-crushing experience, is more permanent and valuable than that taught in all the colleges in the world. A good round mortifying failure does a man good. It gives an edge to his wits; stirs up his pride; rouses his energies; makes him cautious in his second essay; and leaves room for hope that his *third* effort may possibly be successful. I will, therefore throw away a couple of thousands in this literary enterprise, which, let us hope, will serve as an augur to tap the maple head of my enthusiastic boy, and let out some of the sap to which the author of the anonymous letter, whose remarks were nearer right than wrong, so imprudently alluded. It will make him wiser the next time." Then turning to the young man, he observed: "Set about your preparations, as soon as you please, my son."

I need not counsel you to commence them prudently, thoughtfully, calculatingly. Give to your paper a bold, decided, distinctive character, and admit into its columns only such articles as are in keeping with that character. Employ none but able writers; and, in order to encourage them to bring you *their best* thoughts, pay them liberally. It is impolitic to publish *inferior* contributions, even if you should get them for nothing. You gain neither money nor reputation by the publication of such articles; on the contrary, as they only serve to bring down your journal to a level with the common, you sink both. There are two kinds of newspaper failures, the *noble*—those of which, when one dies, intelligent minds say, '*It deserved to live*;' and, the *ignominious*—of which when one has ceased to appear, appreciating judges observe, '*It was unworthy of patronage*.' If yours must be a failure, let it be of the former kind. There is no shame in the non-success of an *honorable* enterprise: the disgrace lies with the public in not supporting it. But, above all things, let it not be said of your paper, when it reposes in the tomb of Abortive Efforts, that *it did not deserve to succeed*. Such a remark would be a reflection upon your personal intelligence, energy, and talent, and would be very galling to your friends. Remember that you have a proud name, whose dignity would suffer by your defeat; that you are the son of a man who commenced life without a shilling, who recognized no such word as fail, and who, calmly trusting in the stern force of his own conscious energies, boldly, fiercely, *stubbornly* pushed himself along up to what he is—one of the foremost of the merchant princes of his time; one," added the complacent egotist, "of that small but honored body of opulent titans, who count their money by the million, and every dollar of whose several fortunes was earned by the unaided force of their own gigantic genius.

Remember, I say, that the blood of a Bignell flows in your veins, and put forth all your powers."

"I shall do my best, sir," said Tom, accustomed to his father's egotism.

"I expect no less. Here is a check for five hundred to enable you to take your initial steps."

"Thank you, sir."

"The remainder shall be forthcoming when you need it. One word more, and an important one. You may have the best editor, the best contributors, and the best paper ever issued; but these are nothing, without a competent publisher, who understands and has the ability to bring such facts in an impressive manner before the public. Whatever may be the fate of your journal, Tom, let me not be pained by the tidings that all concerned in its production performed their parts with skill except the publisher!"

"You shall never hear *that*, sir!" said Tom, coloring.

"I hope not, my son. I thought that would put him on his mettle!" he added to himself, with a quiet chuckle.

Four weeks thereafter, Tom laid on his father's writing table a copy of the first number of *The New York Critic*. Mr. Bignell, took it up with the easy, smiling, patronising air of a man who considers himself a capital judge, and outting the leaves with a folder, proceeded to carefully examine its merits.

"Fine white paper," he mumbled as he glanced through its pages, "legible type, clear printing, and a chaste typographical style—why, Tom, my son, you have crowned yourself with honor!"

"Read the articles—the matter!" said Tom, with mingled pride and nervousness.

"Take a 'Trabuco,'" said Mr. Bignell, observing his excitement. "It will tranquilise you."

Tom did so, and then drew from his pocket another copy of the *Critic*, which he sat down to peruse for the fourth time.

The first page had a brilliant essay on 'Literary Criticism'; the second a vigorous paper on 'Modern Music'; the third, a graphic description and critical examination of a new play; the fourth, a searching review of a new work, from the pen of a dazzling but erratic historian; the fifth, a scathing critique upon a new and popular novel; the sixth, a number of brief but able 'notices' of recent works; the seventh, an elaborate and careful criticism of a 'Washington,' from the pencil of an eminent painter; the eighth and ninth, a bold, dashing and effective 'leader' and several smaller 'editorials,' from the pen of F. Heathcote Jones, the editor; the tenth, a summary of intelligence relative to literature, art and science, at home and abroad; the eleventh and twelfth to letters from abroad, choice extracts from new publications, and brief dramatic, musical and other notices; the last four pages to advertisements of new books, pictures, paintings, music, etc.

Mr. Bignell read the 'leader' and the 'essay on literary criticism' carefully, and after glancing through the remaining articles, looked up at his son and inquired:

"Your editor is a man of talent and good judgment, and has made up an excellent and a readable paper. But who is the author of the essay on the first page? *That* is the star article of the number."

"You know him!" answered Tom, with a smile of deep gratification.

"Not one Thomas, son of James Bignell?" cried the old gentleman, starting.

"O, no!" answered Tom, laughing. "But a very dear friend of Thomas son of James."

"F. Heathcote Jones, editor?" said the old gentleman, in a tone of disappointment.

"Wrong again," observed Tom.

"Then I give it up," said Mr. Bignell; "although I might have known, from the difference in the style, that it was not the latter gentleman's."

"Who was it," asked Tom, "that you saw me with at the lecture on Syria, in Hope Chapel, on Monday evening?"

"Your old college chum and classmate, Joseph Sprague. What! is *Joe* the author of that article? I never supposed him capable of such writing; and yet, now that I think of it, he has a fine intellectual-looking head, too."

"He excelled us all in composition," said Tom, referring to his college days. "His smooth, polished, epigrammatic periods, never containing a word too much, rarely one too little, and yet always retaining a fulness that rounded without lessening their force, were the pride of the professors, and the envy of the students, most of whom were unwilling to submit to the severe study that enabled him to attain to such excellence. He was a great favorite with the professors, many of whom, appreciating his superior powers and the noble heart that beats in his manly breast, accompanied him to the depot, and as they tearfully shook him by the hand at parting, told him that they should look to frequently hear from him in the columns of the leading newspapers and reviews. He has a fine analytical mind, a rare command of language, and a style that cannot fail to win for him a proud position in the world of letters."

"Indeed? I must cultivate his acquaintance. I like to occasionally come in contact with a bright intellect. It bur-nishes and invigorates my own. Sprague is poor, I suppose?"

"If you were to offer him a bargain in a house and lot, he would have to *decline* it," answered Tom, laughing.

"What do you pay him for writing?"

"Three dollars a column."

"Make it *ten*, and charge the difference to *me*," said Mr. Bignell.

Tom was touched at this kindness to his friend.

"You have a generous heart, sir!" he exclaimed, in an uneven voice.

"We *all* have, NOW and THEN," was the truthful but unaffected reply.

'The Critic' was an admirable paper. Its columns bore witness to a high order of intelligence and culture. The articles were in all cases able, and in most instances brilliant. They were warmly praised by the press throughout the country, and extensively copied. From time to time, complimentary letters were voluntarily sent in by eminent clergymen, authors, artists, collegiate professors, statesmen, and others, testifying to the marked ability of the paper in every department, and promising their influence in its favor. The editor and the contributors were in raptures; for the former received his salary punctually, and, although an honest, industrious and talented writer, was, for the first time, enabled to dress and live respectably; while the latter, in addition to being munificently paid for their articles, felt it both an honor and a gratification to appear in a journal that admitted no second or third rate productions, that was universally considered to be the standard of literary excellence, and that had a scholar and a gentleman for its editor, and an individual with the urbanity of a courtier, the promptitude of a merchant, and the liberality of a prince, for its publisher. Every thing was apparently moving with dignity and prosperity, when Tom, one day, in the ninth month of the Critic's existence, suddenly startled the editor by the announcement in confidence that "some how or other the paper

did not pay; that there was no indication that the receipts would ever equal the expenses; that he had striven hard to reach a contrary conclusion; that it was humiliating to his pride to make such a confession, but that there was no disguising the fact that the journal, however triumphant as a *literary* enterprise, as a *commercial* speculation was a melancholy failure; that his capital was entirely exhausted, and that he should have to depend for further supplies upon his father, who, with himself, appreciated the importance of finishing the volume; that, notwithstanding this unhappy state of affairs, he desired the paper to be conducted with the same dignity, liberality and spirit to the end, so that when, at the close of the year, he suspended its publication and had withdrawn from the business, as he designed to do, he should have nothing with which to reproach himself; that his relations with the editor and the able corps of contributors the latter had drawn around him, had been pleasant and satisfactory, and that, in his retirement the memory of the agreeableness of these relations would neutralise the pain that each recollection of his failure could not fail to bring up, and more than compensate him for the time, labor and capital he had unsuccessfully invested in the effort to establish an honest, impartial, and high-toned literary paper."

Poor Tom, poor editor, poor contributors! what sad hearts were yours when you tearfully cut the leaves and sighingly sat down to read the last number of your pet journal, knowing, ere your eyes had perused a line, that it *was* the last! If your manhood had never been disturbed before, it was shaken *then*; and when at night you lay down to rest, was it not with you as if the sun of one of the brightest seasons in life's journey had been eclipsed and was never more to shine?

If the millionaire was mortified at his son's failure as a business man, the young man himself, though veiling it

under an air of jesting indifference, was no less so. "I am," he would laughingly say, whenever the subject was alluded to by his friends, "I am the most successful fellow in bursting up, that ever hung out a shingle!"

But of all his futile efforts, that of the Critic was the only one that seriously disturbed him. He could not think upon it without dejection. "It was," he would say to his old chum Sprague, whose feeling heart sympathized with him, "so *excellent* a paper; the very journal, of all others, for refined and intelligent minds. The first writers of the Union were its contributors, and the leading intellects of the nation pronounced it worthy of all praise. Why, then, did it not go?"

Sprague, who was familiar with but little else than literature, could not answer this question; but Mr. Bignell, senior, who knew very little of literature but, as he thought, a great deal of the world, one day, when in one of those ill humors in which so called *self-made* men consider themselves privileged to indulge, replied to it in this wise:

"The secret of your mortifying failure lies in the fact that you were ignorant of the newspaper business, and that you made no effort to learn it. [Tom winced.] If you had been a man of any bottom, you would have cut off your right hand sooner than submitted to the humiliation of defeat. You had the best literary editor, the most brilliant staff of contributors that were ever got together in a single journal, men of genius, all of them—and yet you meanly, tamely, miserably FAILED. [The lips of his auditor quivered with suppressed rage]. Napoleon and his marshals were not greater in their way than you might have been if, with your editor as your right arm, and your great contributors as your marshals, you had only been even the skeleton of a Napoleon. The press, supposing

from your prospectus and the superior talent of your writers, that you designed to make a manly effort for the establishment of a noble journal, gave your paper a broad and generous welcome; and men of eminence in every department of letters and of public life came chivalrously to your aid, and favored you with the influence of their commendations and their names. And yet, though thus welcomed and thus encouraged, you timorously permitted a great enterprise to fall to the ground, and now go round sniveling like a sick school boy. [Tom started as if he had been stung.] I am both astonished at and ashamed of you, sir! With a sixteenth of your advantages a man of any gumption would, to-day, have had the Critic on a foundation that nothing could shake. But *you*—you get out your paper, and then—calmly sit down and fold your arms and, tranquilly smoking your cigar, wait for the great public of the United States to find out its existence and come and buy it! Did *I* make my money in that way, sir? Did I, who commenced life without a shilling, and without a friend in the world to counsel or assist me, when I had an operation on hand, lazily sit down and fold my arms and wait for success? No, sir. I took off my coat, and rolled up my sleeves, and *got up steam*, and FORCED it. Where there's a will, there's a way; and if one plan would not bring it, I tried others till I found one that would. There was no idling, no doubting, no faltering. I had begun the enterprise to *make money*, and the money HAD to COME! That is the spirit with which to go into business; that the spirit with which you should have commenced *The Critic*: and the spirit with which you must take hold of every thing in which you look for reputation or money!"

The old lion had roared, and it was now the young one's turn.

"I have heard you, sir," he began, in a voice quivering with a sense of outrage, "and I need not say with what feelings. But if a stranger had dared to use such language to me, I would have felled him to the ground as a brute whom it were a service to humanity to deprive of the power of speech."

"What do you mean, puppy?" demanded the millionaire, crimsoning with indignation. "This, to me—your father!"

"To you, sir—to you!" thundered the young man, defiantly. "By what authority do you assume so dictatorial an air over me? Because I am your son, do you forget that I am a man; that I have a man's feelings, a man's intelligence, a man's reason?"

"A man's 'intelligence'—a man's 'reason'!" said the millionaire, mockingly.

"Not an *experienced* man's, I grant; but still a MAN's, sir! A man, too, sir, who would not reason, nor 'get up steam,' nor 'force' success, nor do anything else as *you* would; an honorable man, with an honorable man's pride, sir; and a man with the instincts of a gentleman who would rather fail in every enterprise he undertook, and live and die a beggar, than be guilty of a single action that he would fear to have known to all the world. I am rash, and hot-headed; you have often told me so, and I am willing to grant it; but if I am, you are rash and hot-headed also, and with less excuse: for on your brow time has written age, on mine the inexperience of youth."

"Silence, puppy!" exclaimed the millionaire, boiling with rage.

"Not at a command like that!" returned the young man. "I neither recognise your right to address me in such a manner, nor will I permit it. I am of age, sir; of

age, both in years and intelligence, and I insist upon your regarding and treating me so."

"Insist, puppy!"

"INSIST, sir! Do you expect me, when arrived at manhood's estate to still consider myself in leading strings? What would you make of me, sir!"

"A man of *common sense*, sirrah?"

"And is *this* the way to make me such? I am willing to receive such counsel as you may be pleased to give me—for I am conscious of my business ignorance—but I am *not* willing to act upon it, unless it meet with the approbation of my own judgment; and still less am I willing to receive or to act upon it, if, as in the present instance, it be given in a tone incompatible with the dignity of a gentleman."

"Your *own* 'judgment'!"

"Yes, sir, my own judgment? It may not, in the estimation of the school in which you have been trained, be considered of much importance; for it may want the shrewdness and deep knowledge of human nature, which govern the views of men of business. But, whether weak or strong, sound or superficial, I claim for it the respect which is due to every opinion that falls from the lips of an honest man."

"Enough, sir!" said the millionaire, impatiently.

"No, sir, *not* enough! You have provoked me to this, and you must hear me to the end!"

"*Must*, sirrah!"

"*Must*! Every word, every sentence!"

"Hark you, puppy—"

"Take back that word, or I'll knock you down, were you twenty fathers!" cried the young man, trembling with rage. "I am on the verge of madness," he added, wildly, but still with an evident effort to control himself. "Take it back—take it back, in mercy to yourself and me!"

Mr. Bignell fell back a single step, and surveyed the young lion with steady but flashing eyes. For a few moments there was every prospect of a physical collision. But a happy thought occurred to the millionaire, who, muttering, "I will humor him, for once!" seated himself, and said, sternly:

"More to gratify myself than you, I withdraw the offensive word. And now, sir, what is it that you have to say?"

"Something for your memory to carry," returned Tom. "You have always, but especially of late, assumed a tone towards me that you would not dare to attempt upon a stranger. Why is this? Am I less entitled to civility from you than the visitor who crosses your threshold, or the first acquaintance you may chance to meet in the street? Or is it because I am your son, and, according to your thought, in some measure dependent upon you, that you ungenerously take advantage of my position?"

He paused for a reply; but receiving none, went on:

"Why do you use me thus? Is it that, at your own suggestion, I have spent a little of your great wealth? Then charge the amount against me, and, out of my first self-earned means, I will repay you. Is it because you are rich? I care not for your money."

"Have you done?"

"Not yet. This arrogance must have an end. I am a man, and I demand the consideration of a man; a gentleman, and I insist upon the courtesy that is due to one."

"Yet finished?"

"Nearly. You have been pleased to comment severely upon my failure in *The Critic*, and, like other wiseacres, to give me some advice, which would have been good, if it had been given *in season*. You, who know so much concerning newspaper publishing *now*, knew so little *then*, that,

when I, from week to week applied to you for suggestions, you shook your head, indicating that you could give me none that you yourself had confidence in, and counselled me to act in accordance with my own judgment. I did so; and when, after so acting, the circulation of the paper failed to advance, who was it that advised me to bring the undertaking to an end, with dignity, at the close of the volume? Was it *you*, or shall I name the party? You did not *then* talk or act like a man learned in the business mystery of 'getting up steam,' and 'forcing' an enterprize forward to profit. On the contrary, though daily in the office, almost as constantly as myself, and for the sake of the undertaking, which your pride did not wish to see fail, studying the business as attentively as myself, yet, with all your previous knowledge and experience to assist you, you, at the close of the first six months, voluntarily confessed that it was beyond your depth? How, then, could you expect *me*, who had had no such aid, to succeed, where one of your known talent had failed? Where is your sense of justice, decency magnanimity? Does age bring exemption from petulance and generous consideration for the inexperience of youth, to all but *you*? Who and what are you, sir, that you dare to consider yourself thus privileged to tread upon the feelings of others? Shame upon you, that, upon emerging from your original obscurity into a higher and purer atmosphere, you neglected to brush off the rubbish of your native vulgarity, and allowed the bullying spirit that low minds mistake for superiority, to cling, like a draggling unclean garment, to your character!"

This was the dying curl to the roar of the young lion; but it was sufficiently sharp to cause the millionaire to spring to his feet with vigorous fury.

"Do you see that door?" he demanded, hoarsely,

every muscle of his countenance quivering with passion.

"I do!" answered Tom, the blood receding from his face, and his brows darkening.

"Go out of it, then! Out—out of my house, and never set foot in it again. Out, I say!"

Tom answered not a word. But sternly folding his arms, he, still pale, strode proudly, defiantly, up to his parent and looked him for a time haughtily and steadily in the eye. Suddenly, a gush of hot blood shot up to his temples; at the same instant, a heavy flash darted with the rapidity of lightning from under his knitted brows. Then calmly turning on his heel, he, with a steady step, passed from the apartment—leaving his father, who was livid and motionless as marble, still pointing, with a cold, rigid and imperious finger, to the door.

The sound of a calm, firm, steady tread echoed along the hall—the click of a latch resounded on the still air, and a faintly audible creak as of a door turning widely on its hinges—a half-muffled mumble as of a door drawn to by a nerve-strung but self-possessed hand, a sound without of slowly retreating footsteps—a sound within, low and gurgling, of "Tom, come back; I didn't mean it!"—and father and son were as strangers; and a female of a modest, matronly air, who while reading in an adjoining room, had accidentally overheard all, was, unseen, stealing quietly, and with streaming eyes, up the stair case, to her chamber.

From this interview, Tom went out into the world a changed man. Burning with resentment from a supposed sense of undeserved outrage, his high spirit, restive and impatient as a young colt's, impetuously shook off all restraint, and one by one his previous good qualities under-

went a rapid and mournful change. He became wild, reckless, dissolute. He was no longer the same man. From a thinking, dignified gentleman, he degenerated into a laughing roysterer. He frequented gambling hells, brothels, billiard rooms, bowling saloons, drinking dens, horse races, and prize fights; drove a 'fast horse'; sought the acquaintance of gamblers, bar keepers, courtesans, and of 'professors' of the manly art of self-defiance; and appeared to be wilfully bent upon the road to ruin. As the only son of a well known millionaire, he, for a time, experienced but little difficulty in borrowing money. When his notes fell due, he laughingly referred them to "the old man;" who, actuated by what he termed a 'proper spirit,' promptly and indignantly refused to pay them. When the note holders became incensed, and threatened to call in the aid of the law for the recovery of their claims, the spendthrift would respond, "Sue away, old boy; but if you get the money before I do, be kind enough to let me know, and for a moderate commission, I'll help you to count it." If one of them pleaded poverty, he would reply: "Ah! old fellow, you did very wrong; a poor man should never lend money, no matter how great the temptation; for the greater the shave, the greater the probability that the note will not be paid, in which event, as in the present instance, he will be distressed. Go, sir; and may this unfortunate case be a lesson to you. I feel for your situation; but as the old man has shut down the gates, I cannot help you!" If a creditor became importunate, the roysterer would coolly exclaim: "Ah! old fellow, here again to-day? Really this is an honor! The majority of my friends instead of keeping up my acquaintance, make it a point to cut me dead. But you, old fellow, *you*, are one of those rare trumps who stick to their friends in all weathers! Give me your hand,

and also your promise to call again to-morrow. In case I should not be at home, favor me by leaving your card!" Judgment after judgment was filed in the courts against the prodigal; but it had no other effect than to cause him to laughingly remark that the lawyers, judges and clerks "ought to pay him a premium for giving them so much business." But this could not always last. Money lenders, at length, declined to discount his notes, and he was reduced to the necessity of borrowing from his friends.

Sprague observed the great change which had come over his old class mate with pain. It had been the hope and the pride of the litterateur to imbue his friend with the same lofty sentiments that reigned in his own heart; and while fancying that he had at length succeeded he was rudely startled by the discovery that the bright edifice which he had taken such pains to erect, had, as it were, fallen, spire, foundation and all, in a single night. For a brief season, his heart sunk within him: but it rebounded again, and with the calm courage of a great mind, he determined to patiently set about rebuilding the structure without delay.

"Poor Tom," he exclaimed, mentally. "I did not look for this. He has fallen indeed. But," he added, after further reflection, "it is not surprising. He comes of a corrupt stock. His father, it is rumored, accumulated his great fortune by sacrificing without scruple—perhaps what he never had!—all the principles of honor. Impurity in its rankest form, is, therefore, in the poor youth's blood, and, when left alone, he is too weak to control it. While under ennobling influences, at college, he behaved fair; but on returning to the putrescent atmosphere of his vulgar father's society, what could be expected but that the vicious humor in the veins of the sire, should, as like attracts like, draw

out and set running that which courses in the arteries of the son? It is now time for me to remember our mutual promise in the cars."

Tom's downward course was rapid. His friends, learning from report that he had been cast off by his father, that he had no serious intention of ever returning what he borrowed, that he was no longer a person of any influence or importance, and that he was, in fact, a mere sponge, turned from him as from some hardened wretch dead alike to principle and to shame. Even bar keepers, gamblers, prize fighters, and creatures of their stamp, upon whom he had preyed as they preyed upon others, set him down as beneath them, and, with virtuous indignation, cut him.

"Do you see that fellow?" one would say to his companion, as Tom, tipsy, seedy, and with a collar that looked as if its owner had lost all credit with his laundress, passed by. "Ah! he is a lesson! Only a year or two ago, he was as respectable a young man as New York could boast of; and now look at him!"

"What has brought him to this?"

"Rum."

"Who is he?"

"The only son of James Bignell, the great millionaire."

"You amaze me!—How happens it that the son of so rich a man goes about in this manner?"

"They had a rupture—so the story goes, and the old gentleman cleared him out."

"How does he live?"

"Partly by sponging on his friends and partly by hanging round bar-rooms, where, when asked to drink he helps himself freely to crackers and cheese."

"Where does he sleep?"

"Any where, every where, no where."

"But has the fellow no pride?"

"It would be difficult to say. It is however the opinion of many that he has purposely taken to this course to mortify his father."

"And he doubtless considers *that* SPIRIT! Wantonly destroying himself to vent his spleen against another!"

"It is thought by others, who have observed him closely, that, like most rich men's only sons, he has a small room to let in his upper story."

"Perhaps, as is most likely, the truth lies between the two. But—now I think of it, you did not return his nod?"

"No. The fact is, his acquaintance is too expensive. I had the honor of knowing him for three months, at the end of which time I discovered that seven familiar conversations with him had averaged five dollars each, in the form of loans, whose return is about as probable as that of Sir John Franklin. Shall I call him back and give you an introduction?"

"Ahem! Excuse me!"

One day, while Reuben was proceeding to the house of a dying parishoner, he observed a young man, whom he recognised, with a knowing white hat, a flashy vest, a green dress-coat with sporting buttons and sky-blue pantaloons, all in a faded, seedy state, toddling towards him in a state of intoxication. The clergyman's gentle heart sickened at the sight; and as the drunkard approached, he involuntarily shrunk from a too near contact with him. The victim of evil influences, noticing the movement, smiled, and snapping his fingers in the pastor's face, half jocularly and half defiantly, cried out, as he reeled past him, "*Fun*, old boy!"

FUN!

Was it?

"Poor Tom!" murmured Reuben, looking after him with a deep sigh; and he moved on.

The prodigal had, in wasting riot and dissipation, reached the lowest deep. His name had become an unsavory odor in the nostrils of his friends, and all shunned, all abandoned him to the drunkard's grave to which, in their view, he was rapidly hastening. Sprague, alone countenanced him; alone treated him with the same consideration as ever; alone remembered that in the breast of this Human Ruin throbbed a heart which, like a feeble fluttering flower thickly surrounded by rank, impudent weeds, that batten on its substance and its food, only needed a friendly hand to enable its owner to hold up his head once more as bravely as the proudest and noblest of his peers. The litterateur, with his customary magnanimity, resolved to be that friend. It was a painful and a trying task, and one that stretched the elastic cord of his patience to its utmost tension; but the strength of the cord was equal to its elasticity, and when outdrawn to its extremest point, it neither snapped nor lost its tensile power. Sprague's was one of those rare natures that calmly and thoughtfully set about whatever they have concluded to do, and, never thinking of defeat, proceed steadily, and undismayed by the most frowning discouragement, until the work is accomplished.

His plan was, in brief, to appear to take no notice of the change in his friend; to make no reproaches or comments on his course; and to accompany him to his haunts and be with him as often as his private and business affairs would permit, that his presence might restrain him from indulging to excess, while his conversation led his thoughts in higher and nobler directions, till the self-destroyer should lose all taste for dissipation, and return, of his own impulse, to the sober, intellectual morality from which he had wandered.

The plan was excellent; but it did not succeed. Tom early perceived the benevolent design, and with the mingled cunning and obstinacy of a determined mind that has once drunk at the corrupt fount of brutish dissipation, he quietly resolved to thwart it; not out of any ill will to the litterateur, whom he sincerely liked and respected, but, as he *spiritedly* expressed it to himself, "to teach him, and *through* him, OTHERS—meaning his father in particular (whom the prodigal, with the sensitiveness of organizations of his type, imagined had, directly or indirectly, led him to undertake his old classmate's reformation)—that when he, Tom, had once decided upon pursuing a certain course, no human power should influence him from it."

And while continuing to associate with his friend, and to apparently admit him to his confidence, he persevered in his purpose, and appeared to be deliberately rushing headlong to destruction.

Two years went by, and Tom had reached the lowest stage of degradation. His coat was seedy, torn at the elbows, and greasy and worn at the edges. His other garments were equally unsightly, and their wearer rarely or never free from inebriety. He had long since ceased to call upon the litterateur, who, however, familiar with his haunts, persisted in seeking him out, in keeping up their acquaintance, and endeavoring to lead his thoughts to worthier scenes.

One afternoon, while taking the air, on the Battery, he perceived the object of his commiseration and anxiety leaning, with folded arms, against a sycamore, and looking thoughtfully out upon the sea.

"For a wonder," muttered the young writer, "he is sober."

As he approached, their eyes met, and, in an instant, over the features of the prodigal, stole the half blank, half cunning smile of the inebriate.

"This is assumed," observed the litterateur, mentally. "But what can he mean by it?"

"How are you, Joe?" hiccupped the other. "Glad to see you, ol-old boy! When did you see the old man?"

"To whom do you allude?" asked Sprague, in surprise.

"To ol-old dad!" said the prodigal, with a roguish leer. "Ah, ha! You (hie) thought I—I wasn't (hie) posted up? But I'm not so stupid as I look; hey (hie) old fellow! Ah, Joe, you are a high old boy!"

Sprague crimsoned to his temples. He saw in an instant, as he thought, the ungenerous suspicion, which, for two years, had stood between him and success. He felt hurt, humiliated, shocked. It was the first time since childhood, that he had been thus wounded, and the sting penetrated to his heart's centre. But his character was of too great depth to allow even so burning an insult to more than temporarily ruffle him.

"I hope, Tom," he said, with stirred feeling, "that you do not think so meanly of me as to suppose me capable of acting in concert with another concerning you without your knowledge!"

His look and voice were sufficient. The suspicion vanished like an ill omened and unwelcomed spectre, never to return again. Tom stretched out his hand, and said, frankly—

"Forgive me, Joe! But, you know how I am persecuted—with the old man, and all the world against me!"

The noble-hearted litterateur could not help thinking how much of this 'persecution' was the result of his friend's own folly; but, unlike many sage moralists who appear to have boundless confidence in reproaches, he did not deem it wise to clothe the thought in words.

"Say no more, Tom—say no more!" he exclaimed, warmly returning the prodigal's pressure, and perceiving with

joy that all symptoms of drunkenness had disappeared from his eye. "It is with me, henceforth, only a sad memory, which, let us hope, successive pleasanter ones will drown."

"I shall never forgive myself for entertaining so unworthy an idea," said Tom, coloring. "But I know your magnanimous nature so well that I am confident you will think nothing of it?"

"Nothing at all, Tom."

The prodigal wrung his hand, and turned aside his head to conceal a hot moisture that had started to his lids.

The litterateur, understanding and appreciating his feelings, was sympathisingly silent.

"Let us sit down," said Tom, after a few moments. "I want to ask you a few questions."

He led the way to an adjoining bench, and taking a small coin from his vest pocket, said, as he held it face upward, between his forefinger and thumb,

"Five pence is not much—is it?"

"Not very!" smiled the litterateur, comprehending from experience where the observation would end.

"But," insinuated Tom, "if it were your *last* five pence, your coat seedy, and your shirt peeping out at the world from its little window in the elbow; your collar not *quite* so fresh and bright as it might be; your washwoman anxious for the payment of her little account; your boots ventilated in the wrong place; no credit at your *late* boarding house, and the clock spitefully pointing to a figure which is just two hours beyond your *usual* dining time,—that little piece of silver is *something* THEN. Eh?"

"Something, indeed!" returned the litterateur, laughing.

"I believe, Joe," said Tom, hesitatingly, as he turned the coin round slowly between his fingers, "that, during the last

two years, I have borrowed pretty nearly all the money you have been able to earn?"

"You were welcome to it, were it ten times as much."

"I know that, Joe," said Tom. "But," looking at him with swimming eyes, "to accommodate me, you have often distressed yourself?"

"Should we not, when called upon, be willing to make a few sacrifices for friendship?"

"True," said the prodigal, "that is friendship! And your persevering efforts to reclaim me—for I am not blind!—all arose from the same sublime sentiment?"

The litterateur blushed, and shifted restlessly in his seat. He did not relish praise, even from a friend.

"Well," continued Tom, "now that I have got rid of an unwelcome thought, I appreciate your kindness; and, to prove it, I shall break the camel's back: Lend me fifty dollars!"

Sprague colored.

"It is a large sum for you," said Tom, observing him closely, "and you haven't it by you?"

"It is a large sum for *me*, Tom," said the litterateur, "but still I have it," and, he added, with a playful yet painful smile, "a dollar more, too. There it is."

As he spoke, he took from his pocket, a small roll of carefully folded bills, and withdrawing one of the smallest, handed the remainder to his companion.

It was the young man's *all*; the savings of many weeks, and designed as the foundation of a small capital with which to purchase an offered interest in an established newspaper, of which he was the literary editor. It had been with him a darling wish to obtain this interest, and if he blushed and hesitated an instant before parting with the substantial beginning of his hope, it was perhaps owing to

the fact that he was not yet quite satisfied that what was a sacrifice to him, would be of any positive service to the borrower

"Thank you!" said Tom, taking the money. "I'll make it up to you, some day. And now, another question?"

"Say on, Tom?"

"I wish to know if you have any wealthy friend who, at your solicitation, would lend me a few thousands with which to go into business?"

The litterateur smiled, and answered that he had not.

"The money would be perfectly safe," added Tom, "and you would run no risk in recommending me?"

The litterateur smiled again. He could not help it.

"You think," said Tom, his eye kindling, "the word of a reprobate, like me, so amusing—"

"No, no," interrupted Sprague. "Do not misjudge me. It is true I smiled at the oddity of your request; and if you will place yourself in my position, you will see that I could not well resist it. Add to this," he continued with characteristic frankness, "that while I am willing to do aught for you that lies within my own compass, as I think I have given you proof, I yet should not like, while you follow the course of the past two years, to introduce you to any friend, supposing that I had one, whose purse might suffer through such introduction. I say this plainly, but in all kindness; and believe me, when I state that it pains me to utter a single word that can trespass upon your feelings."

"Had any other man addressed me in language like this," said Tom, his lips trembling with suppressed passion, "he would have measured his length ere he had half finished. But," he added, in a more subdued voice, "I would take a good deal from *you*, Joe, since, as you say, and as *I* know, you speak to me thus only for my good."

"You are right, Tom. Far be from my lips the ungentleness of reproach, save in the spirit of generous love. But since your interrogatory, two thoughts have come to me. One I will reserve, for the present. The second is this: What prospect have you of success, supposing that you could find means to enter into business?"

"A good one."

"One that your judgment, after careful examination from every reasonable point of view, pronounces favorably upon?"

"Yes. But look at it yourself. A man a short distance out of town, has invented a machine for extracting stumps of trees from farm lands. I have seen it work, and it operates perfectly; taking out a large stump, roots and all, with the help of a pair of oxen, in less than five minutes. The principal power is a short, thick screw, which is turned by a crank, and literally drags up the stump and roots with a sharp, crackling noise, and tears up the quivering earth like a small whirlwind. The machine can be manufactured in numbers, at about four dollars, and will readily wholesale at fifteen, thus leaving a clear profit of eleven dollars. Every farmer in the South and West will want one, and as it is simply constructed, easily managed, and not liable to get out of order, it will sell rapidly. The inventor has received a patent for it, and all that is now necessary is to bring it out, which he, being only a small farmer, and with little or no money, is himself unable to do. Hence he wants a partner with three or four thousand dollars, with whom he is willing to divide the profits. It is one of those golden opportunities that come to a man only once in a life-time, and I should like to avail myself of it."

They conversed an hour or more upon the subject; Tom explaining the details of the invention, and telling also how, while in a fourth-rate drinking den and running over a file

of morning papers, his eye chanced to fall upon a modest advertisement for a partner in a new enterprise, which, for all he could do to resist it, continued to haunt him for four or five days, when, shaking off his sluggishness, he borrowed a couple of dollars and rode out to the address of the advertiser, whom he saw and was so pleased with, that he subsequently called on him four or five times; that on each occasion he beheld the machine perform a practical operation; and that now, if ever, it was in the litterateur's power to do him—Tom—a service which would at the same time enable him to give up his evil courses, to make an honest living, and to “snap his fingers at that proud, heartless, and egotistical old hunk in Twelfth street.”

Sprague heard him calmly to the end; then, promising to see him again in a few days, and meditating upon his reserved thought, took his leave.

“If,” muttered Tom, whose intellectual moralism had sadly fallen away, “I could only afford the luxury of going some night, with a party of dare devils, to the old man's house, and pelting it and him with rotten eggs, I should be satisfied. The skin flint! he would see me starve, shrivel, and rot, ere he would help me. But he must have heard of my degradation; for I have thrown myself in the way of certain of his envious neighbors, who would like no better fun than to say to him, ‘Mr. Bignell, we saw your son, to-day, so drunk and loaferish that we hardly recognised him. He will get into the alms house or the state's prison, next!’ And his pride must be lowered a peg. There's some comfort in *that*! If, now, through this invention or any other business, I could show the conceited old brute that I am independent of him, in the matter of dollars and cents, I honestly believe his mortification would choke him; a consummation, as Hamlet says, ‘most devoutly to be wished!’ Therefore,

Joe,” he added, looking after the retreating form of the litterateur, “if you love me, try what your influence with your friends is worth in my favor!”

“So,” mused the litterateur, as he turned from the Battery; “what long homilies, carefully disguised under the various forms of example, gentle attentions, and persevering efforts to lead him from the slough into which he had plunged, failed to perform, is at length accomplished by—a piece of machinery! Who, after this, shall say, in his vanity, that he knows the springs which lead the human heart! But, stay! is his reform accomplished? Supposing that, through his own aroused energy or my influence, he should procure sufficient means to obtain an interest in the invention, and prosper—what then? He would naturally give up idleness and day dissipation, and perhaps, too, the night carousing from which his want of money has only of late debarred him; but will he be man enough to abandon vice altogether, and place himself in intellectual moralism where he stood previous to the rupture with his father? I fear not. But I have so often been disappointed in my misgivings, that, in this instance, I will not doubt, but *hope*!”

In the evening, the litterateur laid the case in confidence before his uncle, who, after some inquiry and deliberation, promised to “see what could be done.” Sprague was grateful, and, sensible that his relative was one of those who mean what they say, calmly awaited the result.

In a few days, the merchant informed him that he had brought the subject to the attention of a friend, who had it under advisement; but that till the latter should confer with him again he could not say what would be the character of his decision. In conclusion, he suggested to his nephew that the case had taken an unexpected form, which he was not at liberty to mention; but that so far

as he—the merchant—could see, his friend meant to act for the profligate's good.

Two evenings later, the litterateur had an interview with the merchant and his friend, and on the following day he called on Tom, whom he found in a state of feverish anxiety.

"Well, Joe, what news? But I read it in your face—*success?*"

"Even so, Tom," answered the moralist. "You can have the money; but not, I think, owing to any influence of mine."

"Not yours? *Whose*, then? Have I another true friend in the world? If so, I was not aware of it."

"I cannot say whose," returned the litterateur. "But certainly some one's other than mine. Not having the confidence of the parties, however, I do not understand it. But one thing is certain: you can have the money."

"I hope," said Tom, drawing himself up, "you have not been to see my *father*! I would sooner starve than accept a sixpence of his wealth."

Sprague felt hurt at the question; but knowing the sensitive spirit of the prodigal, he mastered his indignation, and answered gently:

"Of course not. Nor am I aware that he has any knowledge of the party who has consented to make the loan."

Tom's ill feeling vanished in an instant.

"All right, old fellow!" he exclaimed, taking and wringing the litterateur's hand. "I was too fast; forgive me! But who is this great unknown?"

"Come to my uncle's at eight to-night, and I will introduce you to him."

"That is talking right up. I will be there."

"Would any believe, on hearing his slang," muttered

the litterateur, as he parted from the prodigal, "that my poor friend had ever mingled in respectable society! O, dissipation—dissipation! how brutalising are *all* thy influences!"

Tom was punctual, to the moment. He was so changed for the better, in appearance, that Sprague hardly recognised him.

"Your last fifty dollars!" cried the profligate, laughing, "Haven't I spent them with *taste*? But come, show me into the presence of this man of four thousand!"

The litterateur did so. The interview was brief, but to the point. That is to say, the prodigal, who promised amendment, received some wholesome advice and a check for the money. Ere long the 'patent stump extractor' was announced by advertisement in the newspapers, and the head of the firm of "Thos. Bignell & Co." was soon noticeable for his energy and tact, in pushing the stump extractor into publicity, for his application to business, and also for a gay, laughing manner, half dashing and half defiant, as though he imagined himself to be one of the cleverest, pleasantest, and most successful fellows in the world and didn't care who knew it.

"If," he mentally exclaimed, "I can only show the old fellow that I can get along without his aid, and that I am happy as a lark in spite of his displeasure, *who* will triumph *THEN*?"

The 'extractor,' proved a 'hit'; but the expense attendant upon its introduction was greater than was looked for at the outset, and Tom was frequently under the necessity of calling upon the gentleman who had so generously supplied him with means for temporary accommodations, which, however, he generally paid when due; we say *generally*, for a few were not only not promptly honored, but not met at all—being, by the consent of the lender, who was satisfied with

the promising aspect of the business, added to the original loan.

Tom attended carefully to the interests of the 'extractor,' though but little to his own; that is to say his business struggle was a success, but his moral effort a failure. For the first few months his attention was given exclusively to the former, which he pursued early and late with feverish excitement; but when by the steady increase of orders for machines, it had become evident that the concern was on a safe foundation, he did not proceed to the office quite so early, nor remain quite so late. His mornings were given to slumber, and his evenings to the various 'innocent recreations' which are so liberally provided by enterprising and respectable citizens for amusing young men, while breaking their constitutions, deadening their moral preceptions, emptying their pockets, and variously preparing them for the hospital, the alms house, the state prison, the scaffold, and the grave.

Sprague, though not discouraged, was deeply pained at the prodigal's course. He kept with him as much as possible, and ventured now and then to gently remonstrate; but finding that neither example nor admonition had any effect, he endeavored to turn his thoughts in nobler directions by inviting him to lectures, art galleries, and such other places as in his judgment would naturally appeal to his nobler instincts and arouse them into action. But all was fruitless. Tom, after listening to a lecture on dissipation, observed that every word of it was true, but plunged into cards and champagne the next evening; upon a minute examination of a masterpiece of art, he pronounced it worthy of the painter's fame, but insisted on a game of billiards and a mint julep on his way home; heard, to the end, at an intellectual association, an elaborate treatise on the marvels of science, which

he stated to be very entertaining, but felt no disposition, on Wednesday evening of the following week, to go and witness some interesting experiments in philosophy at the same institution, preferring, he said, "a night at the club" to all the philosophy in the world.

The reform effected by the machine, was, in the litterateur's opinion, of a very questionable character.

One day, while writing, the thoughts connected with his theme flowing mechanically and forming, as it were, only the public foreground of his reflection, while a private rivulet of musing, was running in the inner garden of his mind, the idea occurred to him that the refined society of virtuous and cultivated women might have a beneficent effect upon his erratic friend. The more he meditated upon this thought, the more he became convinced that it was a good one, and he mentioned it to his uncle. The latter, whose views were all drawn from one source—The Bible, smilingly shook his head and remarked that one influence alone could change the conduct of the prodigal—The Holy Spirit's.

"But," added the merchant, who understood that this remark would have no weight with his nephew, who, as the reader is already aware, was a firm believer in man's ability to change himself: "I see no harm in your making the experiment. That it will fail, I feel assured, for this is not the way in which The Lord works. His appeals are not made to the *head*, but to the *HEART*. Still I think it were well to try it; not so much on Mr. Bignell's account, as to satisfy yourself that there is but *one* Power that reforms nations or individuals. I believe that our young friend will yet be brought out from the slough in which he is wallowing; but his rescue will be attributable to no *human* arm. Prayer is ascending for him, daily, morning and evening, from hearts that are bowed in sorrow at his course; and He to

whom these petitions are offered, will answer them in His own way and in his own good time."

A slight smile, so faint indeed as to be almost imperceptible, rose to the features of the litterateur, who considered such language as the natural consequence of the "blue-fire-and-brimstone preaching of canting parsons who make religion a trade." He had, he honestly thought and hoped, a more elevated view of the Great Maker of All Things than was embodied in such doctrines.

His uncle perceived the thought imaged in the smile-light of his eye, and added, pleasantly:

"You have no faith in my religious belief, Joe; but you will, one of these days."

"Why do you think so, uncle?" asked the young man with a broad smile, which he made no effort to resist.

"For the same reason that I look forward hopefully for our friend Bignell: because our Redeemer has said, '*Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you'."

The smile departed from the litterateur's eye, and his features became clothed with an air of profound respect.

"You have prayed for me, then?"

"Not I, alone," was the reply. "Mine is not the only heart that loves you, and that seeks to do you good."

Sprague was touched, but incredulous as to the anticipated response.

"You mean well, uncle," he cried, extending his hand. "But on this point we never shall agree."

"O yes, we shall!" returned the merchant, kindly. "The Lord's Promise is good, and we are willing to wait for its fulfilment in answer to our petitions for you."

"Your faith is very strong," laughed the young man. "But your prediction will never be verified."

"Yes, it will," said the merchant, good humoredly.

"You don't know me, if you think so, uncle!"

"Yes, I do, Joe—yes, I do. You are one of the noblest fellows that an old codger like me ever delighted in owning for his nephew; but—now don't get angry, for I don't mean any harm—you are imposed upon by Satan in supposing that you can ever get to heaven by good works, or by any merit of your own. In fact I often wonder how one of *your* intelligence can be misled on a point so plain and so important. But," he added, smiling at himself, "that is one of my stupid fancies; for you never *will* see this, till the Lord opens your eyes."

The litterateur smiled.

"I hope, uncle" he said, "that you do not seriously believe in the existence of that great bugbear with which priests and parsons bewilder and intimidate weak minds—Satan?"

"Most certainly I do," returned the other. "But"—he paused, looked at the young man a few moments with an air of mingled horror and speechlessness, and then tremblingly pointing with his finger, cried or rather shrieked: "*There he is now—at your elbow!*"

The litterateur turned pale, and springing to his feet, looked terrified around.

The merchant shook with quiet laughter.

"*And so do you!*" he exclaimed, as the young man, blushing with mortification, slowly resumed his seat; "and so do all men, *in their hearts*. But, as the world goes, it is pleasant to believe otherwise. To quote from one of your own essays, 'we are so constituted that what we *desire* to believe we can tutor our minds *to* believe; but the faith of the HEART may not be shaken, and *it* ever gives the lie to the false beliefs of the mind, however firmly they may be

sustained by sophistry or buoyed up by what is flattering to our pride, or most accordant with our wishes. We are, however, so opposed by nature to our own best interests, and so infatuated with whatever is false, meretricious and unreal, that we recklessly, deliberately and with a conscious sense of whither it will lead us, go on persuading ourselves of the truthfulness of beliefs which are most pleasing to us, and which the heart—vigilant sentinel and faithful monitor! warns us to unhesitatingly reject. Ever still we hear its stirring cry of—'Wolf—wolf!' and ever in our minds respond 'It is no wolf!' And ever still it cries, 'Believe not, and we ever still believe.' Your argument was not designed for my side, Joe; but on reading the article, this passage struck me with so much force, as a picture of man in a state of spiritual unrenownedness, that I could not resist committing it to memory. But I must apologize, my dear boy, for my clap-trap outrage on your understanding. I should prefer to have employed the simple evidence of the Bible; but as you would not receive that, and as you have a habit of philosophising all human evidence aside, I thought that an appeal to your heart's faith might in some way, do you good."

The litterateur had too much good sense to take offence at what was not meant for such, and good humoredly responded:

"If your doctrine is true, uncle, then Satan was at my elbow, after all."

"True, my boy. He is your *constant* companion, and mine, and every man's. To the influence of his invisible presence acting upon *another* enemy WITHIN, is to be attributed our readiness to fall in with evil, and to walk hand in hand with whatever will minister to our propensities."

"An enemy *without* and an enemy *within*!" exclaimed the litterateur, smiling. "Why, uncle, what a poor helpless creature you would make of man!"

"And so he *is*, my dear boy, only it takes him a great while to find it out! In fact, he *never* realises it till the Lord reveals it to him; and even then, with his two enemies continually operating in concert against him, and playing, as occasion requires, upon each of his faculties, he is perpetually forgetting it."

"I apprehend that the poor fellow is not so badly off as *that*!" observed the litterateur, smiling.

"That is what our pastor aptly calls him," said the merchant.

"What?"

"A Poor Fellow! and so he is. Look at him in infancy, and what can he do for himself? In childhood,—and what would he be without parents and friends to provide for him? In youth—and what is he but a mere dreamer and a thing of hopes? In manhood—a thinker perhaps, but after all, only a mere leaner on society, which furnishes him with suggestions, with knowledge, with work, with clothing, with shelter, with bread. In old age—still a dreamer; still a dependent leaner on society; only partially conversant with the past and present affairs of the world in which he lives, and knowing nothing, of *his own* knowledge, of any other; sensible only that he was born without his own cognizance or consent; that he has been jostled along by varied incidents and with conflicting feelings, from the first consciousness of his being to his present gray hairs and infirmities; that, while a few of his desires have been gratified, the majority have been thwarted; that the friends of his affections have fallen, and that, although in the midst of men, he is like one alone; that he has, as it were, in his

journey so far, been every thing but his own master; that whether willing or not, or ready or not, he must, ere long, fall as his friends have fallen, and that his departure will make no difference in the great march of Events and of Time; and that, notwithstanding all that society may have told him, he is, so to speak, a mere plaything in the hand of some great Invisible Superior, whose mighty power he can neither measure nor resist."

The merchant, smiling, paused; but as his companion, who was meditating, offered no remark, he continued:

"Look at the poor fellow when he has not the adjuncts of civilization to lean upon, and what is he! In some parts of the world, a poor, witless cannibal; in others, a poor, ignorant Indian, tomahawking all not of his own tribe; in others, a poor unintellectual African savage, carrying havoc and slaughter into his neighbors' districts, and selling his prisoners into bondage; in others, a poor benighted Hindoo, maiming himself under the car of Juggernaut; in all, conscious, like his civilized brother, that he is the subject of some Infinite Superior, in whose hands he is as a child, and at whose order, whether willing or unwilling, ready or not ready, he must resign life. Look at him," added the merchant, "as a subject—the prey of monarchs and their nobles, who batten on his industry and sufferings; as the dupe of crafty priests, popish, mahometan or fetisch—who cozen him out of his earnings and his freedom, and lead him along the dark lane of superstition; as a struggler in the battle of life—and mark his hopes and fears, his trials and afflictions, his numerous efforts and defeats, his hopeful plans and sad disappointments; his thoughts—now generous and then unforgiving; his conceptions—by him thought glorious, by others, tame, commonplace or ridiculous; making enemies where he only looked for friends;

meeting disaster where he anticipated success; his reputation maligned by green-eyed envy; his motives misconstrued, his very feelings made sport of—himself, in weak, impulsive moments, envying, wounding, and making light of the motives and struggles of others; prostrated by unexpected accident or sickness, in the midst of important trials and responsibilities; the dupe of his intellect, which to-day leads him aright, to-morrow astray; the victim now of his own sanguine heart, and then of another's; the gull of Fraud or Error in business, politics, medicine, society, or religion, to the end of his days; and as ignorant of how, when or where he shall close his account with life as he is of what shall become of the dear ones he may leave behind. And yet," continued the merchant, "in the face of trial, defeat and bewilderment, he, with boundless confidence in his own capacity, bravely and manfully presses on to—he knows not what, but calls it *Progress*. By-and-bye, however, his eyes are opened, and he then learns to place less dependence upon himself, and more upon Another. Then he, for the first time, discovers that, artfully led on by two insidious spirits in whose real existence he had had no faith, he had been pursuing a phantom. Now, perceiving the astounding power of the Two Enemies, and his inability to control even his own thoughts, he realises that, for some undivulged reason, the Tempters are suffered to have power upon him down to his latest breath—that earnest faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone can save him—that the influence over him of the Two Enemies is so tremendous, he can scarcely ever attain to solemn earnestness—that even when he would commune in prayer with his Maker, his thoughts, under the dominion of the Subtle Ones, are wandering upon things unholy—that his chances of salvation are dim—that for all he himself can do, the Sub-

the Ones are daily bearing him down—that he is miserably helpless—that if the Blood shed on the Cross don't preserve him, he is lost—and that, temporally and spiritually, he is simply a—poor fellow?"

"All this is new to me," said the litterateur, slowly. "It may be, uncle, as you say; but I shall neither receive nor reject it without due thought and examination."

The merchant smiled.

"I see," he observed, "that you have *already* forgotten that you can do *nothing*—OF YOURSELF."

"Nothing?" inquired his nephew, incredulously.

"Nothing," repeated the merchant.

The young man bit his lips to restrain a smile, which, after all, gleamed plainly in his eye.

"The Tempters," added his uncle, "are stronger than you. If permitted they will so impose upon your faculties as to make you believe that you see clearly that this is wholly and utterly untrue."

"I will *not* permit them," said the litterateur. "I will review the case calmly and thoroughly."

The merchant smiled again.

"*You* cannot prevent them," he remarked. "You are silently their victim, and have within yourself no power of assistance. You are their bondman. They tell you to do this, and you do it; to come here, and you come; to go there, and you go. Only, instead of commanding you audibly, they play upon such of your faculties as will make you do their bidding *spontaneously*—you, meanwhile, innocently hugging the thought that you are performing it at *your own suggestion*!"

"This is not a very *flattering* doctrine, uncle! I judge, that if you were to proclaim it abroad, you would find but few disciples."

"I should find just so many to follow me, my dear boy, as were appointed from before the foundation of the world, and no more."

The litterateur looked at him in surprise.

"You do not mean to say, uncle, that my belief or unbelief in the orthodox form of Christianity was determined upon before the Creation?"

"We have the Lord's word for it!" answered the old gentleman, smiling.

"How then," demanded the litterateur, "do you reconcile that doctrine with the fact that man is a free agent?"

"Very simply," returned the merchant. "While I am a free agent, and as such privileged to choose which I will serve—God or Satan,—I *never* will choose to serve *God*, unless it was so ordained in the Beginning."

"Suppose, for the sake of argument," said the young man, "that I to-night should earnestly pray for forgiveness; don't you believe that the Lord would grant it?"

"Certainly."

"How then," continued the litterateur, who now fancied that he had his uncle in a corner, "can you class that free will act of mine with predestination?"

"Thus: You will never, of your own impulse, seek the favor of your Maker. *When* you do so, it will be because the Lord has drawn you to Him."

"How, then, uncle, is a man to know whether he is to be of the redeemed or of the destroyed?"

"He never will know it till the Lord is ready to tell him."

"A hateful doctrine!" exclaimed the litterateur. "I never will—I never shall believe it!"

"Yes you will, Joe!" observed his uncle, smiling.

"Never, uncle! It places this noble creature, Man, of

whose progressive spirit poets have sung, and to whose gigantic strides in knowledge and all that typifies a glorious Future, historians have borne testimony, in the degrading position of a spiritless dependent! If such a doctrine obtained, the world would know no more heroes; Progress would halt, Mind cease, and Labor walk the streets, moaning, 'No man will hire us!'"

"So far from this being true," said the old gentleman, "it places man in the position in which his Creator has been pleased to put him, and—no higher. Man is a dependent; all he has, is from, belongs to, and, with man himself, must return to, his Maker. True, this 'noble creature' likes to talk of 'the fruits of his own exertions,' of being 'the architect of his own fortunes,' of having 'hewn his way from obscurity to fame,' and a great deal more of like rubbish, which only serves to show that he knows no god so great as himself; but, after a while—that is to say, in the Lord's good time—he *learns better*, and don't use such childish language any more. If he is a preacher, he thenceforth preaches for his Master's glory—not his own; if a writer, his pen is from that hour devoted, not to his own fame, but his Redeemer's; if a gatherer of riches, he thereafter employs his gains like a steward who has to render a strict account. Does he in any position relax his energies? On the contrary, he pursues his calling with more ardor than ever—out of mingled gratitude and duty to Him who taught him that he is, after all, only a poor fellow; but who, notwithstanding, realizes that he is an heir of a Kingdom compared with which, fame, wealth, and all the little things of earth sink into insignificance."

"Ah, well, uncle," said the litterateur, "we never shall agree. I have a more *exalted* idea of the magnanimity of

God, and also of the capacities of man, of whom I am ready to exclaim with Shakspeare—

'What a piece of work is Man!
How noble in reason! how infinite
In faculties! in form and moving, how
Express and admirable! in action,
How like an angel! in apprehension,
How like a god!"

"So he is," added the merchant, laughing, "until *you know him*, when your admiration at once—diminishes. Our friend Bignell, for instance!"

"Tom—poor Tom is weak!" said the litterateur, with a sigh. "A 'poor fellow' at the best, but one whose heart is in the right place, after all!"

"We are *all* weak, all poor fellows!" said his uncle.—"And therefore let us compassionate one another. I feel for our young friend. If we are any better than he, the credit is due alone to Him who has graciously preserved us from wandering in the same unhappy path."

"Is your mind as before concerning the idea I spoke of?"

"Yes," returned the merchant. "But I see no harm in your giving it a trial. There are Miss Russell and Margaret—suppose you introduce him to them? They are both virtuous and intelligent, and their society may have an influence upon him for good. If," added the old gentleman, thoughtfully, "he should take a liking to Miss Russell,—who, between ourselves, would make an excellent wife for any man—I have no doubt that, for her sake, he would soon be glad to give up both drinking and the club. But as to changing his *heart*, Joe, that is a matter not in his own hands. If—but you are pale, my boy!"

"The air is very hot!" returned the young man, coloring. "But I must thank you for this privilege. I do not

know two young ladies whose society I would sooner prefer for my friend."

"In that case, my boy, bring him at once. Miss Russell has all those graces of mind and person which are the finish of beauty. She possesses wit, intelligence, a bold warm heart, a proud yet magnanimous spirit, and just such attraction and womanly power as would be likely to captivate and curb the wildness of our erratic friend. Margaret," added the merchant, smiling, "is younger, not so talented, and lacks that mild dignity which is the key to female influence; still she has a keen appreciation of propriety, and in case Bignell should ever exhibit his weakness in her presence, she would be apt to utter a few words that he would remember. She will do, as it were, to fill up the background, and to set off the more striking talent and beauty of her governess."

"I fear uncle that you are underrating my clever little cousin! If she should overhear that remark, she would not speak to you again for —."

"Ten minutes!" interrupted the merchant, laughing. "The little elf is quick tempered, but her indignation don't last long."

The introduction, which was carefully managed by the litterateur, took place; but, alas for that gentleman's hopes! though the prodigal, after a few weeks, became a constant visitor, the society of the two young ladies had no visible effect upon his habits. He always left early, and invariably spent the remainder of the evening, or rather of the night, as usual.

In fact, the scheme was, from first to last, a failure. Tom not only did not reform, but—much to the astonishment of the merchant—he was insensible to the wit, the beauty, and the graceful accomplishments of the governess, and

inclined to the elf, who had but little wit, less beauty and few accomplishments, as naturally as water flows into an inlet. The elf, on her part, invariably blushed whenever his name was mentioned, while the sound of his footsteps caused her eyes to sparkle, and her features to kindle with an air of delighted wonder.

"Poor Tom," mused the disappointed litterateur. "He turns, as if from instinct, from all ennobling influences!"

The merchant was chagrined.

"I looked for but little from this experiment," he observed to himself, "but that little was not *this*! Of all men, young Bignell is the last I should desire for a son-in-law; and yet appearances point in that direction. If, as I had hoped, the fellow had been smitten by Miss Russell who, if poor, would make him an excellent wife, I should have been better pleased; for with such a partner to study and watch over him, there would be hope of his improvement. But his fancy for *Margaret*, I—I do not like!"

This was his first view of the case. Further thought brought him another.

"Margaret, who is all impulse and feeling, and with but little mind—Margaret, who is a bundle of faults herself—Margaret, little elf! who is so ill adapted for the various concerns of life, and who, if she marries at all should ally herself to a man who is able to lead her, instead of one who needs leading himself—is not a fit companion for this young hair-brain, and I ought at once to put a stop to their intercourse. But," he added, uneasily, "to do this, would be to bring pain to my little mad-cap, whose heart is set upon him, and perhaps plunge the roysterer himself into greater excesses. What *shall* I do!"

Whenever in a dilemma, the merchant was accustomed

to pray for guidance. He did so in this instance, and his thoughts subsequently took a different turn.

"The *Lord* is sovereign. He rules all things, even to the incidents in my family. His ways are not as man's. In employing human instrumentalities for regenerating hearts, He makes *His own* choice of agents. If he does not always select such as *human* wisdom would pronounce the best, He is always right. We have prayed to Him for Bignell, and how know I but that this, which has given me so much anxiety, is the beginning of The Answer? If it be, the Lord ere long, perhaps, will by some sign, graciously let me know it."

In a few days the merchant's uneasiness passed away, and all was calm.

"Peace of mind!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "*It is THE SIGN!*"

From that hour, the merchant was tranquil; and he waited patiently for the termination of The Answer.

This was the apparent state of affairs in the prodigal's history, when—but we must close this long desultory chapter and commence a new one.

CHAPTER III.

BEFORE we proceed further, let us glance at the society which the prodigal preferred to "all the philosophy in the world."

The front apartment on the second floor of a three-story brick building in Broome street, a short distance east of Broadway, was, on a certain Sabbath afternoon, the scene of an incident which it is our purpose to describe. The room was large and sumptuously furnished with whatever could minister to the comforts of the body or to the gratification of the senses. The walls were hung with rich paintings, selected more with an eye to the pruriency of their subjects than to their merits as works of art. Card tables in the centre, lounging chairs and sofas along the sides, a statuette of a nude slave on a small pedestal in each corner, statuettes of a similar character without number on the mantel, and gorgeous curtains which completely veiled the windows, made up the *ensemble* of the apartment. It was one of a suite of rooms belonging to the Good Fellows—a private club of young gentlemen, who considered it a spirited thing to pay a weekly fee of two dollars each, for the privilege of learning the fastes trod to ruin. On either side of the folding-doors of the inner apartment, was a spacious rose-wood buffet, the one on the right containing ample supplies of wines, liquors and cigars, that on the left being well stored with choice materials for a lunch. Here, as in the adjoining room,

card tables and lounging chairs were prominent features. The walls were thickly covered with well executed portraits of celebrated actresses, opera dancers, prize fighters, and race horses, with here and there a richly colored humorous picture of sundry dashing young men on a lark. But our business, for the present, is with the front apartment, to which let us now return.

Standing in a studied attitude of mingled gracefulness and ease—his left arm leaning on the mantle, his right resting akimbo on his hip, his right foot crossed and pointing to the carpet, was a pale young gentleman, whose small, delicately chiselled features, if seen under a bonnet, would easily have passed for a woman's. He was of medium height, and dressed with an elegance that could only have come from a naturally refined and carefully cultivated taste.

Beside the window furthest from the mantel, his legs thrown carelessly over the elbow of his chair, and his hands clasped around his right knee, sat, or rather lounged, an individual of about five and thirty. He had a dark complexion, large black eyes which told of a proud, daring spirit, and straight well cut features that would have been handsome but for a cynical air in the haughty upper lip. He had the graceful bearing of one who both understood himself and was familiar with the world.

Near him, leisurely smoking a cigar, sat one whom we have met before—Tom Bignell, whose fine princely appearance rendered him, in point of manly beauty, the star of the company.

Carelessly reclining on a sofa, and attentively observing one after another of his companions, was a fourth, with a flat receding forehead, gray catlike eyes, a straight nose, small thin crafty lips, and a moderately full chin.

In a lounging chair, and smoking his cigar with the air of

a man whose mind was elsewhere, sat, at a short distance from the sofa, and with his face towards the window, a young, slender personage in the neighborhood of thirty. His forehead was pale, high, and full without being massive; his eyes, were of a mild, thoughtful blue; his lips small, distinctly defined, and expressive of gentleness and frankness. He wore a flat collar and was plainly but neatly attired. He was the only one present who was not a member of the club; but he occasionally visited it, as on the present occasion, with his friend Tom Bignell, who took a special pride in introducing him to his club-mates with—"Joe Sprague, sir. You have seen his name in the papers and magazines, perhaps?" The members generally extended him a warm welcome, and regarded him as a clever, amiable fellow, whose heart was nobler than his fortunes.

The club was, on Sundays, a general lounging place for the members, who then and there discussed whatever came uppermost in their heads, with the lively freedom of minds that imagine themselves to be running over with wit and spirit.

"You 'suffered' some last night—hey, Shipley?" asked the personage with his legs over the chair of the young gentleman by the mantle.

"Not a vewy gweat deal!" returned the latter with a well pleased smile. "I sat down with ten, and wose up with fifty. That wasn't suffering *vewy* bad—was it?"

"How was that, Buckley?" asked the other, addressing, with an air of surprise, the worthy on the sofa.

"My luck!" answered Buckley, with a shrug. "But Ned, to-morrow night, is going to give me my revenge."

"No—not *to-morrow* night," said the young gentleman by the mantle.

"Why not?" asked the individual on the sofa.

"Because I have pwomised to go with the old man to Poughkeepsie to see gwandmother, who is vewy sick."

"What is the matter with her?" asked the first speaker.

"Woomatism in the head. You needn't laugh, Gwessinger! Woomatism in the head is fwightful; in fact, perfectly horwid."

"The old lady has money, I presume?" said Gressinger, shifting his legs off the side of his chair.

"Some," replied the exquisite.

"Thirty or forty thousand perhaps?"

"Perhaps!" answered the young man. "But what has her money to do with her woomatism?"

"I knew one old lady," answered Gressinger, with a smile, "who had the rheumatism very badly, but—no money, and, *her* children and grand-children gave themselves no anxiety about her. I knew another, that also had the rheumatism very badly, *and* money; and it was marvellous what concern *her* children and grand-children manifested at her slightest aches!"

"Perhaps," quietly retorted the exquisite, "*you* were one of them!"

"Ha! ha!" cried Tom, clapping his hands. "Very good! The boys ought to be here! Ah! Gressinger, old fellow—Ned, had, you there!"

"Come, Gressenger—own up," said the worthy on the sofa. "Ned rather took you down that time!"

"But not so severely as he last night laid *you* out!" returned Gressinger, dryly.

The sofa gentleman colored, looked for a moment or two as if half inclined to retort, but thought better of it, and turned his eyes with a thoughtful air, to the floor.

"Talking of 'laying out,'" observed Tom, "puts me in

mind of the way we 'punished' a hackman a little before daylight this morning."

"Don't tell tales out of school!" said Gressinger.

"School's *in*, Tom!" cried the exquisite. "If the joke's good, let's have it. I haven't heard a good joke in a vewy long time!"

"Stay!" said Gressinger. "I'll stand drinks all round, if you will not let it out."

"Drinks and cigars if you *do*!" exclaimed Shipley.

"Go a-head!" observed Gressinger, to Tom. "Ned is determined to triumph over me to-day."

"Then why don't you dwop firing spitballs?" inquired the exquisite. "If you keep hitting people in the face, you shouldn't be suwprised if they now and then send one back."

"But you hit back so *hard*!" said Gressinger, with a mocking smile. "Drinks and cigars! Four-and-two-pence! It will kill me!"

The company roared; the worthy on the sofa even forgot his late rub, and glad to see a fellow victim, joined, with a right good will, in the general laugh.

But the exquisite was not disposed to yield the floor to his opponent. He quietly waited till the merriment had subsided, and then remarked—

"If I had been born with such an extra quantity of bile in my composition as you, Gwessinger, do you know what I'd do?"

"I have not the *wemotest* idea!" returned Gressinger, dryly.

"I'd take pills!"

A shout followed that shook the window curtains, in the midst of which the door opened and three or four new comers entered, one of whom—a young gentleman with a knowing white hat, a killing moustache, a green

Quaker-cut coat with dashing bright buttons, a heavy watch chain terminating in a large ring, to which was attached a variety of other rings, the trophies, as their wearer confidentially affirmed, of his conquests of an equal number of female hearts that were dyingly in love with him, bright blue pantaloons and patent leather boots—throwing himself into a lounging chair, asked,

"What's up?"

"Fun!" cried Tom. "But how did you get home?"

"Like a bird. Found the old 'oman waitin' for me. Gave me an awful lecture. Went to bed and slept till one. Woke up with a swingin' headache and a cold. Got another lecture from the old 'oman, who had a headache too. Said it was all my fault, and commenced cryin'. Couldn't stand that, and cleared out. But I'm thirsty. There's plenty of 'red eye' in the buffet. Let's 'wet'!"

"Can't," returned Tom; "it won't do. I've promised to go to church to-night with a young lady, and she would smell it on my breath."

"Let her smell it! Come!"

Tom shook his head.

"It won't do, Bill—it w-o-n't do!" he said, firmly. "A fellow must hold off once in a while, you know."

"Gas!" exclaimed the other, contemptuously. "Come. Let's all go!"

"A small 'nip' won't hurt us," said Gressinger, rising. "Come, Tom!"

Sprague watched his friend's countenance with an air of concern, and on catching his eye imploringly shook his head.

But Tom was not proof against the influence of example; for, led by the young gentleman with the knowing white hat, the major part of the company were moving into the

back room, and, laughingly observing—"Well, when we are in Rome, I suppose we must do as the Romans do!" he rose to follow them.—"Are *you* not going, Ned?" he asked, as he passed the exquisite.

"I never refuse a good invitation, Tom. But the fact is, the old folks fancy that I am at church; and you know how easily liquor shows itself on me!"

"All right, old feller, don't let red eye betray you!" Then turning to Sprague, he added, "Come along, Joe!"

"I never drink," said the latter, mildly.

"All right. Stick to that. I wish I could say the same!"

And putting his arm through Gressinger's, he passed into the adjoining room.

When, at the end of a quarter of an hour, he returned, he looked around for Sprague; but the young writer had disappeared.

"Well, he is right in going," muttered Tom, to himself. "This is not the place for a man who wishes to preserve his self-respect. What did I ever bring him here for? Why did I ever come here myself! What has it not cost me? Great heavens! *what!*"

"Tom," said Buckley, as he resumed his indolent posture on the sofa, "how about that joke?"

"Joke!" repeated Tom, his brain kindling with the mingled fumes of French brandy and remorse. "Yes, hurrah for a joke! What should we, the chief business of whose lives is to do what we are ashamed of, what we have not the courage to confess to those whose good opinion we value, and what in our sober moments gives us the horrors to think of, do *but* joke? Joke! we who are in business are joking ourselves into bankruptcy, and all of us joking each other down to the gates of everlasting hell! We

are having a *glorious* time, old boy—aint we?" he added, approaching Buckley, seizing him by the collar, lifting him up as if he were a child, and shaking him till his teeth chattered. "A glorious time, old parasite. Why don't you laugh—laugh, old feller; laugh your villain heart out of your body!"

"Take off your hand! let me go!" shrieked the other, vainly struggling to release himself from the young man's iron grasp.

"Let you go!" cried Tom, with smiling scorn. "I thought you wanted a joke? You, the Satan of this pandemonium—the serpent of this nursery of devils! Who is't here that cheats at play—who drugged that liquor which on Wednesday night cost me a thousand dollars? Hey—old parasite?"

Loud murmurs of surprise and discontent followed this speech.

"Come, Tom," cried the young gent. with the knowing white hat and the killing moustache, "let him go and stop this nonsense. He didn't mean anything! Besides you musn't talk about cheatin' or drugged liquor here, or you'll get a 'benefit'! We don't stand that kind of gas!"

"You were his partner in the fraud!" retorted Tom. "I know it, though I cannot prove it. But," he added, violently throwing the sofa gentleman from him, and hastily rolling up his sleeves, "there is one thing I *can* prove: I can whip you and every man present who is mean enough to side with you!"

"At him, boys!" cried the knowing white hat. "A free fight. Pitch in!"

Three or four of the members, including the sofa gentleman, rushed forward; but if they had counted on having the matter all their own way, they were sadly mistaken:

for Tom knocked them down as fast as they came up. As they advanced a second time, instead of one antagonist they found two—Tom and Grössinger, who, though feeling hurt at the stigma which the charge of drugging and cheating against one or two members threw upon the general club, was yet, with all his faults, naturally too chivalrous to stand idly by and see a single man contending against such odds.

As the knowing white hat was about to lead on the attack, a small but sinewy hand grasped him from behind by the collar, and he the next instant received a sharp, powerful kick from the same direction. Stung with shame and rage, he, with a quick powerful movement, wrenched himself from the unknown's grasp, and turning, beheld the exquisite standing before him in the most approved attitude of fistical self-defence.

"Come on, Woberts, and don't make too much noise," said the latter. "If you do, we'll have the police upon us presently. We ought to settle this business quietly."

"I'll quiet you!" cried the other, fiercely. "Take that!"

But the intended blow did not reach home. The exquisite, with one hand, skillfully turned it aside, and with the other smote the ruffian between the eyes, with a hammer-like force that instantly deprived him of consciousness and gave a severe shock to his nerves, and he fell, pale and quivering, to the floor.

"You will twy it again—won't you, Woberts?" inquired the exquisite in a tone which implied that he himself didn't think he would. "So much for wum!" he added, mentally. "When Tom is sober, there isn't a pleasanter fellow in the world; but when he dwinks, then look out! Say, fellows!" he cried aloud to the four who were gradually pushing Tom and his ally towards the door, "your best man is down, and you had better dwaw off."

"But *I* am not!" shouted one of the four, springing towards him.

The speaker regarded himself, and was generally looked upon by his fellow members, as the second 'smartest'—that is, the most scientific—fighter in the club; it being conceded on all hands that the knowing white hat was the first. Without stopping to inquire into the correctness of his claims to this, in his view, proud distinction, we will do him the justice to state that, in the hurry and confusion of the *melee*, the brief but sharp contest between the exquisite and the knowing white hat had escaped him; and on hearing of that fact, he innocently supposed it to be due to a chance blow from the knuckles of either Tom or Gressinger—he was not certain which: but he had not the remotest suspicion that it was owing, wholly or in part, to the exquisite, for whose feminine face, figure, passion for dress and affectation, he had ever entertained sentiments of the most profound contempt. In the remark of the latter, he beheld, as he thought, a better opportunity for distinguishing himself, and with less risk than he incurred with those with whom he was engaged, and with the quick-wittedness for which organizations like his in such situations are noted, he hastened to improve it.

The exquisite calmly waited till he had nearly approached; then hastily stepping aside, he suddenly stretched out his right foot, and in another instant the second smartest man of the club lay sprawling on the floor. He rose again, however, in a moment, to his feet, but it was to find his apparently effeminate antagonist ready to meet him.

Across the mind of the fighter flashed, as it were, a line of astonishment. He could scarcely credit his senses. He was as one in a dream.

The courageous dexterity with which he had been tripped—the exquisite's self-possession—the faultlessness of

his attitude, and the bold nerve, that shone like the spirit of an eagle in his blue eye, which appeared to momentarily deepen in molten intensity and clearness, and to expand with an innate consciousness of superiority—confused the 'second best man,' and impressed him with the conviction that in throwing himself into his present position, he, somehow, had made a—mistake. With this conviction came another, viz.: that he was on the point of losing all his prestige in the club as "a scienced man;" in other words, that he at length had met his superior, and was about to be whipped.

He did not stop to invite these reflections. They entered his mind unbidden, and in less than five seconds after he had risen to his feet.

Still, whether defeated, or a conqueror, it was necessary for him to show fight. It would not do for one who had always made so much pretension to fistical 'science' to finch. There was no help for him. He must show fight.

And he *did*. But it was *only* a show. It was the effort of one who does not look to win. His heart was cowed ere he aimed a blow. His confidence vanished, and was succeeded by confusion. The whites of his eyes became yellow. His face was suffused with a red, mortifying, tell-tale blush. He struck out in random at his antagonist, who smote him in return with startling rapidity and precision; knocking him now to the right, then to the left, and then back again; parrying his every ill-directed aim, and sending home two effective blows in its stead; forcing him to yield his ground, not inch by inch, but foot by foot; and frustrating each successive attempt to close, and sternly punishing him for the attempt.

At length the fighter grew desperate. One eye was closed, and he could see with the other only with difficulty.

His lips were swollen and bleeding, and he was mortifyingly conscious that his effeminate-looking opponent scarcely exhibited a scratch. Boiling with shame and rage, he resolved upon the baffled pugilist's last expedient—butting. He drew back three or four paces, and measuring with the little vision he had left, the position of his adversary, he bent his head on a line with the latter's stomach, and hurriedly rushed forward. But the exquisite apprehended his design, and was prepared to defeat it. As the fighter approached, he hastily stepped aside, and, adroitly throwing out his foot, tripped him as before. The ruffian fell headlong on his forehead, and lay like a stricken ox gasping in the shambles.

"There, fellers!" cried the victor, "I've licked your two best men; and now I'm ready for the third. Who is he?"

"There he is!" shouted Tom, as with a well directed blow, he sent the stoutest of his assailants reeling towards the windows. "Take care of him!"

But there was no need. The staggering man was already provided for. Stumbling, in his passage, against the prostrate body of the fighter, he lost his balance and sunk down bereft of both nerve and sense. He had scarcely fallen when Buckley, the gentleman of the sofa, whose eyes Gressinger, who had him in 'chancery,' was industriously shading with a pair of curtains, cried "Enough!" and wriggling his head from the grasp of the satirist, ingloriously fled into the back room, whither he was followed by his companion, and Tom, Gressinger, and the exquisite, remained masters of the field.

"A clean lick!" cried the latter. "Hooway!—hooway! They'll twy it again—won't they?"

"Give us your hand, Ned," said Tom, whom the excitement of the fray had sobered. "You are a trump! As for

you, Gressinger, your timely assistance has laid me under obligations."

"Don't mention it," returned the latter, laughingly. "If you only knew the satisfaction with which I pummelled those fellows—Buckley, especially!"

"Come," said Tom, "let's wash, fix up, and go and take some oysters. This brush has given me an appetite."

"I suspect," said Gressinger, as they turned from the club, "that you won't keep your engagement with a certain young lady to-night?"

"A small strip of plaster will make my black eye all right," returned Tom, gaily. "Mag won't observe it. But it is well," he added, "that Joe left before the fight came on."

"Joe is no twaitor," said the exquisite. "He wouldn't blab!"

"No. But he might have got hurt—or his clothes torn; and you know there are sharp eyes at Peter Brown's!"

As the trio turned into Broadway, a tall, slender, mild-featured gentleman, in the neighborhood of fifty, carrying a light cane and accompanied by a lady of about his own age, stepped out from the passing throng and touched the exquisite on the shoulder.

Gressinger and Tom colored, touched their hats, and moved on. The old gentleman returned their salute with a distant nod.

"Ned's parents," said Tom to his companion. "I wonder if they noticed the condition of my right optic!"

"I presume so, by their glance of surprise," returned Gressinger, in a tone of mortification. "Let us get out of Broadway!"

Tom blushed, but replied not.

"I didn't see you at church, Edward?" observed Mr Shipley to his son, as they walked home.

"No, sir," returned the exquisite, hesitatingly. "I—I went to hear Dr. Bailey, in Vawick street. You ought to have been there. Gweat pweacher. Such a sermon—so bwimful of weason and eloquence. I never heard anything that could appwoach it!"

Mr. Shipley glanced at his wife, whose fair, gentle face wore an expression of pain. The young man observed both, and his conscience smote him.

"What was the text?" asked Mr. Shipley, gravely.

"On the pwodigal son, sir," answered the young man in a disturbed voice. "I will wise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight am *no more* worthy to be called thy son!"

His parents understood him. His father pressed his hand. The air of pain on his mother's face was succeeded by a joyous smile; and the heart of the young man himself felt relieved.

Not another word was said on the subject. But ere he laid down to sleep that night, the exquisite had quietly determined to "withdwaw from the club"

CHAPTER IV.

Tom had just finished dinner, at his boarding house, and was in the act of putting on a fresh collar when a servant tapped at his room door, and, handing him a card, informed him that the owner desired the favor of a private interview.

"Show him up," said Tom. "I can't conceive," he muttered to himself as the attendant disappeared, "what a gentleman of the Rev. Reuben White's cloth can want with me. I believe I am not an 'anxious inquirer.'"

"Mr. White," said the servant.

And the clergyman entered the room.

Tom offered him a chair, and taking another himself, inquired, with the staring air of a business-man, the purport of his visit.

"I have called," said Reuben, surveying him attentively, "partly at my own instance and in part at the suggestion of others—who take a deep interest in your welfare, to endeavor to make peace between you and your father."

"You are very kind, sir!" said Tom, sarcastically. "But as I have no disposition to converse upon that subject, you will oblige me and yourself by taking your departure!"

Reuben colored.

"Is that all your reply, sir?" he said, without moving.

"All, sir!" returned Tom, haughtily.

"I think," smilingly observed Reuben, comprehending

his man, "that you have *forgotten* something—the courtesy that is due from one gentleman to another!"

The eyes of the prodigal flashed, and his features crimsoned with a hot blush.

"Nay, reverend sir," he exclaimed, springing to his feet, with a threatening movement, "if you came here to insult me—"

"I have already explained the object of my visit," calmly interrupted the clergyman, without stirring, "and you cannot so distort it without forfeiting your own self-respect. This, I trust, sir, you do not wish to do."

The firmness and dignity of his manner overawed the prodigal, who, after a vain effort to stare him down, resumed his seat, and taking out his watch, observed as he glanced at the dial.

"Since you insist upon it, I will give you five minutes. Now, sir, fire away!"

Reuben reflected a moment, and then said, in a kindly tone,

"There are some organizations that are willing to endure much for those they wish to serve. Mine is one of them. If you are disposed to receive and treat me as I should you if you were my visitor, and also to regard me as one who is sincerely desirous of your confidence and affection, here is my hand?"

"You have but three minutes left!" said the prodigal, still looking at his watch.

But there was a waveringness in his voice and a flush in his countenance which showed he was ashamed of himself, and that if he had manliness enough he would confess it, but that not possessing that quality, he was determined to be obstinate.

"Poor fellow!" mused the clergyman. "How deeply,

without being aware of it, he is in the toils of Satan! One alone can rescue him." Then rising, he said aloud—"Dear friend—I *must* call you so!—I do not wish to trespass upon your patience, nor would I have you suppose that I would for a moment think, say or do aught to wound your feelings. The object of my call was two-fold—partly to see and converse with one in whom I have long felt an interest; but mainly to say that if you are willing to forget and forgive, the arms of your father are open to receive and bid you welcome."

"Doubtless!" returned the prodigal. "Now that he sees I can get along without his help, he is very eager to assist me! 'Forget and forgive?' Never! not though the hoary-headed skinflint should crawl from Twelfth street down here on his knees, and beseech it with his expiring breath! Tell him this, and also, that, for all his wealth, I spit upon and despise him!"

"You would not send such a message to your father, surely? You cannot mean it, Mr. Bignell; you—"

"*Time's up!*" cried the prodigal, suddenly. "There is the door. Go, sir!"

The two young men eyed each other; the face of the one pale with vulgar passion, that of the other with manly indignation.

At length the clergyman, with a violent effort, mastered his resentment, and said, as he moved towards the door:

"It would give me great pleasure to be the bearer of better tidings; for your father is advanced in years, and age feels ungentle words with a keenness unknown to youth. Perhaps," he added with a forced smile, as he paused upon the threshold, "perhaps you would be generous enough to send a kinder word? Think—it is to your father, who is sad and lonely at your absence, who often mentions your

name endearingly in his dreams, who at every meal looks at your old place at the family table and then falls with an air of sadness into thought, and who would know no joy so great as that of taking you to his breast and sobbing, 'Forget and forgive, my boy—forget and forgive!' Were it not better to send a kinder word?"

Tom was pale as a winding sheet. A dew appeared upon his eyelashes, which quivered a moment or two, as if their lower fountain was struggling for an outlet.

"Hope!" murmured Reuben. "The angel will triumph over the demon, yet. Hope!"

But he had scarcely entertained the flattering guest when the eyes of the prodigal became dry, stony, and flashing.

"Go!" he exclaimed, huskily. "YOU HAVE HAD YOUR ANSWER!"

Reuben made a slight bow, and, with a mournful step, took his departure.

CHAPTER V.

"I SEE, by the Commercial," observed Mr. Peter Brown, a small dry goods jobber, looking up from his evening paper, and dividing his remark equally between his mother, who was reading a chapter in Job,—his daughter Margaret, who was reading a novel,—Alice Russell, the governess, who was meditating,—and Mr. Asbury, a heavy dealer in metals, and a widower and a boarder in the family, who was looking over the *Missionary Record*, "that Joseph's article in the November number of 'Godey,' has been copied into 'The Dublin University Magazine,' and commented upon as a brilliant American specimen of epigrammatic writing, creditable alike to its author and to the country "in which it first appeared."

"Good for cousin Joe!" cried Margaret, a short elfin-featured thing of eighteen, dropping her book and clapping her hands in delight. "But, O!" she added, looking round with a mischievous smile, "won't he carry his head high, now? 'Did you see what the *Dublin University* said of my article, sir—spoke of it very highly—very highly, sir!'"

"Do you believe Joseph to be weak enough for that?" asked Mr. Asbury, pleasantly.

"The poor child's head is always running on nonsense," said grandmother. "If any body else should talk so of cousin Joe, she would scratch their eyes out."

"Was my head running on nonsense this morning, grandma," quickly returned Margaret, bursting into tears, "when I read to you that great long chapter in the History of Missions?"

"I hope it did you good," said her father.

"Ah!" said grandmother, carressing her, "you are a good child—a good child. Don't cry lovee. Grandma wouldn't say any thing to hurt her little heart for the world. Hark! wasn't that Tom's ring?"

The elf's eyes were dried in an instant.

The governess smiled. She understood the magic power of that name upon her charge's ear.

"Mr. Bignell," said a servant; and a proud dashing young fellow of twenty-five, with handsome manly features, a small moustache, and the bearing of a prince, entered the parlor, with the familiar air of one who knew he was among friends.

"What news?" asked Mr. Asbury.

"Joe's claims to literary fame have been recognised in Europe," answered Tom; "but, I see by your faces, that that news is about equal to the intelligence that the steamer has arrived. Where is Joe? I want to congratulate him."

"Hard at work on an article, and ignorant of the honor the 'Dublin University' has conferred upon him," said Mr. Brown. "When he hears of it, it will do him good—at least, I hope so."

"Joe has but little vanity," said Tom. "But why not send the paper up to him?"

"He has been in his room since two o'clock, and it is understood that when he is writing, no one shall disturb him."

"Writing," said grandmother, "is unlike most busi-

nesses; it can only be done, Joe says, when one is in the humor."

"How is your business progressing?" asked Mr. Asbury.

"Bravely," returned Tom, "thanks to your kindly—"

"I am happy to hear it," interrupted Mr. Asbury. "Have you no other news?"

"None to tell of," replied the young man, smiling.

Mr. Asbury was silent. His was one of those calm, impassive faces, which show but a single expression, viz.: thought, but which never image the *character* of their thought, and on which Time's pencil rarely succeeds in tracing more than the shadow of a wrinkle. Put a brown wig on the head of one of these, and its owner at fifty will pass for five and thirty—if sixty, as in Mr. Asbury's case, for a good looking gentleman of forty. Individuals with such faces, possess, in the main, clear comprehensive minds; are always self-possessed, strong-willed, free from visible passion, and never given to boasting. In business, in the church, and in society, they are oftener felt than heard. In appearance, Mr. Asbury would have been taken for a clerk, whose limited income compelled him to be economical; and yet his note for fifty thousand would sell in Wall street as readily as United States' bonds.

Peter Brown, whose countenance was of the more common order, was evidently both pained and disappointed at young Bignell's reply. This expression, however, lingered only a moment or two in his benevolent face; and he glanced at Mr. Asbury with an air that said, plainly as any words:

"Don't decide against or give him up, yet."

You appear to be meditative, Miss Gressinger?" said Tom.

The elf looked down as if something had suddenly bitten her foot.

"I am not particularly so," returned the governess—a young lady of about twenty-two, with fine Grecian features, out with unusual distinctness, a pearly complexion, smooth ebony hair, and large clear dark eyes. She was dressed in a neat blue frock, which admirably became her, and had withal an air of mingled modesty and dignity, that preposessed a beholder in her favor, and impressed him with a desire to obtain an insight into her character. "What effect do you imagine, will the high compliment of the 'Dublin University' have upon Mr. Sprague's future productions?"

"An excellent one," answered Tom. "It will call special attention to them, cause them to be read with more than ordinary interest, give a prestige to his name that only years of effort could otherwise have won for it, make publishers anxious to secure the services of his pen, and thus help at once his pocket and his fame."

"If such are the results of a single recognition, by a respectable authority, of the merits of a struggler, why are so many slighted?"

"Few have *cause* to complain of neglect, from the press," answered Tom. "Journalists and magazinists err, if they err at all, on the side of generosity. They are ever ready with an encouraging word for whoever comes to them. Observe, when next you run your eye through the review department of your magazine or newspaper, how numerous are the friendly notices, how few the unflattering. If, after having been favorably introduced to the public, writers do not sustain themselves, the fault is their own, and not the critics'. True, now and then, some snarling journalist takes a savage delight in ridiculing the efforts of most literary climbers, but his carping spirit soon disappears with his sheet; for human nature, ever genial and generous at heart, revolts at what is not in unison with itself, and turns from the malig-

nant fault-finder as from a thing whose spirit and utterances are offensive. But instances of this kind are rare; and writers who complain of want of encouragement by the press, are mainly those to whom encouragement is of no avail."

"You speak like one who has had experience in these matters," observed Mr. Brown, smiling, "and it appears to have done you good."

"I wrote a book once," said Tom, laughingly, "and even the kindest disposed critics recommended its anonymous writer to betake himself to some more lucrative calling, as not a single page in his work gave evidence that he ever would be able to earn an honest living with his pen. Had this suggestion come from a single editor, or from a solitary snarler, I should have smiled at it; but, no; it was the spontaneous outburst of the general press; the most courageous had not the nerve to utter a syllable in favor of the book or its author; and, being unable to find a publisher bold enough to risk the publication of my second manuscript, I consigned it to the stove, accepted the advice of the editors, and blushing retired—a sadder and a wiser man!"

"You do not speak of critics' good nature from experience, then?" said the governess, when the laugh produced by this frank confession had subsided.

"Not altogether," replied Tom. "The same sheets that so unanimously urged me to relinquish all pretensions to authorship, and turn my attention to sawing wood, or driving horses on the canal—for some of them even went as far as that!—contained very kind notices of very ordinary books, which plainly showed that if mine had only come up to mediocrity, they would have given it a good word, too: but as it did *not*, they, individually and collectively, recommended its author as aforesaid!"

"What was the name of your book?" asked grandmother.

"Spare my blushes!" answered Tom.

"I insist," said grandmother, as she wiped the glasses of her spectacles.

"The Sorrowful Heart," replied Tom.

"Why," cried grandmother, glancing at Margaret, "we have that. Don't you remember, dear? It's among my books, on the little shelf in the corner, in my room?"

The elf nodded.

"Yes, I recollect," said Tom. "My publisher spoke of having actually sold one copy to an old lady, who doubtless labored under the impression that it was a religious work of some kind; but he could not imagine who she was. Were *you* the mysterious unknown? Ah! you do me proud; But—touching question!—did you *read* it?"

"Well, no," said grandmother, thoughtfully looking over her spectacles. "On examining a few pages I found it was not what I had supposed, and I put it away. Margaret, I think—"

"No, grandma! I never did!" laughingly interrupted the elf. "I took it up, one rainy day, but broke down in despair, in the middle of the first chapter!"

"You see, then," said Tom, gravely, "that the critics could not say even the shadow of a good word for my poor work—O, *how* 'poor'!—if they had tried ever so hard! And their gentle recommendation to its author to take to sawing wood, horse driving on the canal, or polishing gentlemen's boots—generously leaving it optional with him which to choose!—was no doubt scrupulously conscientious and delivered after a patient and careful examination of his work!"

"From all of which," said the governess, "you argue—"

"That the critics are as generous to literary climbers as

they dare be," said Tom. "But I see that grandmother is yawning—an infallible sign that she considers somebody's society about as interesting as his book."

"Why, Tom—" began the old lady in a tone of mild reproach.

"Not a word, grandmother. You know as well as I do that it is your retiring hour. But ere you go, allow me to deliver a small essay on the luxury of independence."

"Now you are going to tell us one of your funny jokes," observed grandmother, pleasantly. "As if we did not know you!"

"As if the illustrious author of 'The Sorrowful Heart' or The Great Unread, could descend to so pitiful a thing as fun!" returned Tom. "But to my essay. A soldier who had been compulsorily accustomed for twenty years to rise every morning at the sound of the dressing bugle, and to hurriedly make ready to answer the roll call, had but one ambition,—namely, to see the day when he could treat the summons of the detested dressing bugle with defiance. But year after year flew by, and he was still the victim of the object of his dislike. At length, he, one day, received two letters—one from the government, informing him of his discharge, the other from an attorney telling of a legacy. In less than two hours he had left the army, taken lodgings at a hotel and hired a servant, to whom he gave strict orders to enter his room and wake him up with certain words at five o'clock the next morning—that being the hour at which he had been in the habit of springing into his regimentals at the call of the bugle. Having instructed and reinstructed his man in this important matter, he lit a cigar, went out, and lying down under a tree near the barracks which he had so recently quitted, amused himself by making faces at the sentry on guard. At the appointed hour of the following

morning, his man entered his room, and shaking him roughly by the shoulder, earnestly cried out: 'Get up sir—get up. The dressing bugle is sounding, and you have only two minutes for the roll!' 'Eh?' said his master, slowly opening his eyes. 'The dressing bugle is sounding, sir.' 'Oh, it is—is it, rascal? Well, all I have got to say is, *Let it sound!*' And with an air of rebellious indifference, which he had mentally rehearsed for twenty years, he calmly turned over and went to sleep. The servant," added Tom, rising and moving towards the door, "on receiving this reply, bowed himself out, and—with a fair good night to this 'goodlie pompanie'—so will I."

"My poor sides ache with laughing," cried grandmother as he retired. "He is as full of liveliness as ever. But it is getting late. Margaret, dear, will you be kind enough to ring the bell for Susan?"

"Never mind Susan for to-night, grandma." Let *me* see you to your room."

"As you will, dear," returned the unsuspecting old lady, rising and taking her arm.

An arch smile played around the ruby lips of the governess, who rose also at this juncture.

With an affectionate good night, the ladies retired, and the two gentlemen were left alone.

An hour later, Miss Gressinger tapped gently at the door and entered the chamber of her pupil, whom she found bending over an open volume which lay before her on a small round table.

"I am looking for the 'Home Journal.' Have you seen it, my dear?"

"It is on my bureau," answered the elf, as, with a tell-tale blush, she *inadvertently* placed her arm over the book

"Thank you," said the governess, perceiving and taking

the paper. "You must not read too long. It will hurt your eyes. Good night."

"Good night! I hope she don't suspect," added the elf, in an under tone. "Grandma' promised that *she* wouldn't tell!"

"I thought so!" muttered the governess, with a smile, as she left the room. "'The Sorrowful Heart' at length has found its first delighted reader!"

CHAPTER VI.

"Mr. Bignell made no mention of Reuben's call upon him to-day!" observed Mr. Asbury, when the ladies had retired.

Peter Brown shook his head with an air that said: "No. I'm sorry for him. I thought we had his confidence—we who have been friends to him; but it appears we haven't."

"We may therefore infer," continued Mr. Asbury, "that he declines Mr. White's mediation and refuses to be reconciled to his father?"

"I don't know," said Peter Brown; "but I fear so."

"If it be true," said Mr. Asbury, "I shall not like it."

There was a calm, inflexible decision in the tone and manner of this observation that spoke volumes for the speaker's character.

"We must not be too hard upon him," said Peter Brown, compassionately. "He is young, and full of pride; but he will be wiser in time. We must not be too hard upon him."

"I have no sympathy for *unreasonable* pride," said Mr. Asbury. "If his father, who is the aggrieved party, is willing to forgive and forget, as our pastor has assured him, he ought to meet him in the same spirit."

"And so he will," said Peter Brown; "so he will—only give him time. Young blood is proud, but not always bad. Tom's isn't, I *know*! A little time, and he will come round all right."

"He has not yet given up his evil companions," said Mr. Asbury, "notwithstanding his solemn promise to me that he would do so."

"He is young—"

"Must that *always* be his excuse?" asked Mr. Asbury.

"No," said Peter Brown, with a rosy smile on his rough but kindly face, "for he will not be always young!"

"We must not ignore facts," said Mr. Asbury. "He has left this house for his club; and he will spend to-night as he spends every night—in carousing: this hour, in drinking—the next at cards, billiards, or roulette—the hour succeeding that, in some den of infamy!"

The dry goods dealer shifted in his chair and looked down uneasily.

"With the same arm that to-night will encircle the waist of a harlot, he, to-morrow evening, will clasp that of a virtuous girl—your Margaret!"

"Don't say so;" said the dry goods dealer, mournfully. "He is young, and rash, and worldly, but not so bad as that O, no: not so bad as *that*!"

Mr. Asbury observed him a few moments in silence, and then said, mildly:

"I do not wish to pain you, brother. Therefore, let us say no more about him for the present."

The dry goods dealer uttered a sigh of relief.

"Mr. Tapley is past his time," said Mr. Asbury, looking at his watch: a small one, guarded by a plain black ribbon.

"Let us give him a little grace," observed the dry goods dealer. "We cannot always be as punctual as we could wish, you know."

"You have a good word for everybody," remarked Mr. Asbury, smiling.

"It does me good," returned the dry goods dealer, with a rosy blush.

"Mr. Tapley," said a servant; and Mr. Tapley entered the parlor. He was a rugged, square built man, without any taste in dress. He had a hard, positive manner, straight features with a positive expression, and a harsh decided voice. He wore a flat-brimmed hat which nearly covered his forehead and added much to his rough, uncongenial aspect.

The gentlemen rose to receive him.

"Keep your seats," he cried. "I am ten minutes behind time. A Mr. Bradley—a persistent fellow, stopped me on the way, and wanted me to consent to receive his brother, a miserable worldling—as a clerk, in my establishment."

"And you refused him, on that ground?" asked Mr. Asbury.

"Certainly. I will have no one in my employ who is not a Christian. Don't you say so?"

"No," replied Mr. Asbury.

"Why not?" demanded Mr. Tapley.

"Because I do not wish to encourage hypocrisy," answered Mr. Asbury. "If I conduct my business in a strictly honest manner, and my deportment is what it should be, my clerks will be more likely to become sincere Christians than they would if I should make religiousness a condition. If an applicant is capable, truthful and honest, I ask no more."

"A flimsy, miserable plan!" exclaimed Mr. Tapley, contemptuously.

"And yet it *works* well," said Mr. Asbury. "Every clerk in my house has, sooner or later, and of his own free will, become a professor of religion."

"And all but two, in mine," said Peter Brown.

"I haven't time to argue the matter," said Mr. Tapley.

impatiently, on finding himself cornered "Discussions are unprofitable! To business!"

His companions understood him too well to be surprised at his summary method of extricating himself from a dilemma, and the trio seated themselves round the centre table.

"Have you Kimball's diary?" asked Mr. Tapley.

"He left it at my office this afternoon," said Mr. Asbury. "It is here," and he drew from an inner pocket in the breast of his coat, a thinly folded book, made up of a few sheets of letter-sized paper stitched in a flexible cover of morocco leather, and opening it, read as follows:

"*Wednesday, 3d.*—Mrs. Mitchell, seamstress and widow, with two children, in rear of Alley, 65 — street. Prostrated by over-working, and will not be able to do anything for a month. Neighbors speak well of her for sobriety, industry and virtue. Attends no church, but sends her children to a Methodist Sabbath School. Gave her a Bible, which she promised to read, together with five dollars, and promised to call again. *Mem:* What shall I do in her case?"

The reader paused, and looked inquiringly at his companions.

"Attends no church!" said Mr. Tapley. "Umph! I don't like that! She has had enough, then. Let her go."

"Give the poor thing time," said Peter Brown. "Consider, she now has a Bible, and time to read it, too. The Lord has thrown her into our hands and we must not let her want."

"I agree with brother Brown," said Mr. Asbury, in reply to an interrogating glance from Mr. Tapley. "The Lord has placed her in our hands, just as she is; and we have no right to say we shall not receive her. Had I not better instruct Mr. Kimball to allow her four dollars a week until she shall be able to do for herself again?"

"Two dollars is enough," said Mr. Tapley. "What does a sick woman in *her* sphere, want with four dollars a week, I'd like to know? She can't eat—sick women don't eat; or if they do, they don't eat much. Consequently, two is enough."

"But children do," said Peter Brown, eagerly. "Consider the two children, Tapley; and only a dollar a week for each of 'em!"

"Well, well," said Mr. Tapley, "put down four—if she will promise to go to church when she gets well."

"I would rather leave out that condition," said Mr. Asbury.

"Well—perhaps it is best," said Mr. Tapley, slowly.

"We mustn't be too hard upon sick people," said Peter Brown. "We must give 'em time. It does 'em good."

"Next case," inquired Mr. Tapley.

"*Thursday, 4th.*—John Ferris, printer, No 76, second floor, same street. Was formerly editor and publisher of a weekly paper in * * * *, Connecticut. Failed, through the delinquency of his subscribers, losing three years of time and fifteen hundred dollars in money. Then came to New York, where he has since been making a precarious living as a "sub"—that is, working in the place of some one of the regular hands—on the morning newspapers. Has been sorely tried within the past fortnight. Suffering with a severe cold, he has been unable to work. Of his three children, one died on the 28th ult., of scarlet fever; a second of the same disease on the 3d—yesterday—and he is without means to inter it; the third is ill, and is scarcely expected to live till to-morrow. As if to crush the poor fellow to the earth, his wife, who will soon become a mother, is also down with the fever, and may or may not recover. Ferris has well nigh lost his reason. His watch, his own and his wife's best clothes, and the better part of their furniture.

are in the hands of a pawnbroker. But for the money received on these, they would have perished from literal want. Ferris had been down to the Times, Herald, and Tribune offices, and placed his case before the compositors, who came up liberally to his help. But this money was principally consumed in the burial of the child that died on the 28th. His wife must have a nurse, or she will die; the sick child can hardly live another day; while Ferris, himself, if uncared for, will assuredly sink. I gave him ten dollars, and told him to keep up his spirits. He pointed to the corse of his little one, to the bed in a corner of his only living child, and to his suffering wife, and then burst into tears. The scene unmanned me, and hastily telling him that I would attend to the burial of the dead, I left him. I then called on an undertaker, and gave him the necessary instructions. The funeral took place this afternoon, the father and myself being the only attendants. I shall never forget his look of unutterable woe as the body of his child was lowered into the grave. On our return from Greenwood, I pointed him to Him who said: 'Call upon me in thy day of trouble and I will deliver thee,'—but with what effect time alone will reveal. The poor fellow's heart was too deeply torn with grief to listen to consolation. At his door I bade him trust in God, and be of good cheer; and telling him that I should call again, I left another ten dollars in his hand and hurried away. Both his wife and himself require the immediate attendance of an experienced nurse. I would also suggest that about twelve dollars per week for this unhappy family, until its head shall be able to return in health to work, would be only a reasonable allowance. But this is for you to decide."

"Twelve dollars a week!" exclaimed Mr. Tapley. "Does Kimball suppose we are made of money?"

"Mr. Kimball's judgment is good," said Mr. Asbury; "and when he says twelve dollars, we may take it for granted that a less sum would be insufficient."

"I don't see how the poor things can get along with so little," remarked Peter Brown. "The husband in a bad state, the wife down and in a condition that loudly calls for sympathy, and their only child not expected to live—the picture is enough to make one's heart bleed. I move that fifteen—"

"Put down the twelve," hurriedly cried Mr. Tapley, fearful lest Mr. Asbury should side with the dry goods dealer, "and tell Kimball to provide them a nurse without delay. The next case?"

Friday, 5th.—Called at the City Hospital, and saw in Ward 16, Harvey Birdsall, mason, who was in great distress of body and mind. He fell on the 1st instant, from the fourth story of a new building in Spruce street, on which he was at work, and was severely injured in the head, right arm, and leg. Will not, according to the surgeon in attendance, be able to resume labor for six months. Is in great distress for his family, consisting of an aged and pious mother, his wife, a worthy woman, but without hope in Christ, and an interesting little daughter, of eight years and a regular attendant of Sabbath School, who are now without means of support. Told him to be of good cheer, that the Lord would provide for them. He is, himself, a pious man, and has an unshrinking faith in the goodness of God. Still, he says he would feel easier, and that he could bear the burning torture of his wounds with more courage, if he could only be persuaded that his family should not suffer. It would be a source of great joy to me to be able to ease his anguish. I have seen his pastor and neighbors, who speak of him in terms that warrant me in recommending his dear ones to

your sympathy. The church can help them a little, but, being itself poor, not enough. With four dollars a week from you, with what the church can do, and Mrs. Birdsall's own labors as a seamstress, they would be screened from want."

Mr. Asbury paused and glanced alternately at his companions.

"I don't know," said Peter Brown, with mingled hesitation and deference, "but I think we ought not trust too much to the earnings of the poor man's wife. For *my* part, I don't see how she can find time to earn anything at all. She must attend to her poor old mother-in-law, to the baby, and to the house, and that is as much as can reasonably be expected of her. And then she will want an hour or two, now and then, for a crying spell. Women in trouble like to cry—it does 'em good; and we ought to make provision for every thing. I think six dollars a week wouldn't be too much."

"If she were a pious woman," observed Mr. Tapley, "I wouldn't object. But I don't see why we should put ourselves out of the way for one of the world."

"But her husband is, and so is her mother-in-law," urged the dry goods dealer, earnestly. "Two out of three, without counting the baby, which goes regularly to Sabbath school!"

"Well," said Mr. Tapley, after a few moments, thought, "tell Kimball to allow her six dollars a week, if she will agree to read a chapter in the Bible every day."

"The six dollars without the 'if,' I think would be better!" said Mr. Asbury, smiling. "'Reading the Bible for six dollars a week' does not sound near so well as reading it for light."

"Well, well—as you please. Next case?"

Saturday, 6th.—Mrs. Mary Knowles, widow; occupation, laundress; rear of No. 116 ——— street. Burnt her left

hand, arm and shoulder, by the explosion of a camphene lamp, on the 28th ult., and is in great suffering. Is unable to do any thing for the support of herself or her little boy and girl, both of whom are Sabbath School scholars. Has no money saved, and since her misfortune has depended for help on her neighbors, who, though poor themselves, have been liberal in their donations. Thinks if she could get into the Hospital, she would soon get well, but cannot afford to go there. I beg your consideration in her favor. Her lot through life has been hard. From early childhood she has known naught but trial. Her parents, who at one time moved in respectable society, were very poor, and mainly depended on the begging of their child for support. They had been stripped of their means through the treachery of a pretended friend, and they rapidly descended, step by step, to the lowest grade in indigence. They were finally carried off by the cholera. Shortly after their death, the daughter married; but her new position made no alteration in her lot. Her husband, a journeyman shoemaker, was a tippler, and soon became an inebriate, brutally wringing from his wife, whose toil alone provided for the household, the means of gratifying his unnatural thirst. He died as he had lived—a miserable drunkard. His widow has since dug and delved, content if, on Saturday night, she could lie down, owing no one. She is neat, frugal and industrious. She is spoken of by her neighbors as a woman of naturally good principles, and as strictly temperate, virtuous and honest. She attends no church, however; does not even read the Bible. In a conversation with me she made use of this remarkable expression: 'My life has been that of a drudge. I have never known a single joy. What have I to thank God for!' And yet I believe her to be a worthy person. She has been severely tried, and we ought to have charity.

Her face is cold, hard, severe, as if it had never known the sweet sunshine of a smile. I feel for and pity her. May I not hope that you will?"

"No," said Mr. Tapley, energetically. "Feel for a woman who entertains a sentiment like *that*! Never! 'What has she to thank God for'! Rank blasphemy! Not a cent for her—not one cent!"

"Don't say that, Tapley—don't say that!" cried Peter Brown, pityingly. "The poor thing has had a life of trials which have hardened and embittered her spirit. We ought to think of that!"

"Let us give her *something to thank God for*," said Mr. Asbury.

"Not one cent—not one cent!" repeated Mr. Tapley.

"O, Tapley—*dear* brother Tapley!" remonstrated the dry goods dealer. "The poor thing is in suffering, a widow, too—and without a friend. Think of that!"

"Not one cent!" cried Mr. Tapley, fiercely buttoning up his pockets. "It would be holding out an encouragement to sin. Not one cent!"

"I think we have no right to make such a decision," said Mr. Asbury. "We are simply the stewards of the Lord. He has entrusted us with riches, that we might be His almoners. Whoever is in want, has a claim upon His treasury. It is not for us to turn one such away. God has brought the case of this poor woman before us, and it is at once our duty and our privilege to receive and help her. She is in need; and God has kindly honored us by making us the instruments of imparting to her of his bounty. She is in suffering; and He has kindly put upon us the honor of placing her where her anguish may be mitigated, her wounds be healed. How know we what His purpose is in this, or what influence He designs it shall have in breaking up the ice of

bitterness in her heart and causing it to melt, perhaps to the salvation of her soul? Shall we, His stewards only, attempt to thwart His august purposes? Shall we take upon ourselves to say to any who come to His door in hunger, 'There is no bread for you here!'—to any who come in suffering, 'There is no healing balm for you!' Let the self-righteous speak thus, act thus. But *we may not!*"

"I was wrong," said Mr. Tapley, frankly. "Satan had possession of me for a moment. How much ought the woman to have?"

"Whatever will meet her needs."

"Of course. But how much? Figure up."

"A dollar and a half per week for boarding and clothing each of her children; four dollars a week for her own expenses while in the Hospital; and half a dollar a week for the storage of her furniture during that time."

"Three dollars is the usual hospital charge," said Mr. Tapley. "What is the other dollar for?"

"For extras. Invalids require, now and then, delicacies not included in the regular fare."

"And the delicacies do 'em good too," observed the dry goods dealer. "They make 'em get well quicker."

"She ought to be satisfied with the common fare, and be glad to get that!" said Mr. Tapley. "Whoever heard of giving delicacies to common people?"

"She is what God has been pleased to make her," observed Mr. Asbury. "We have no right to disregard her feelings because *her* purse is *EMPTY*, and *ours* *FULL!*"

"Well, well, put her down, delicacies and all!" exclaimed Mr. Tapley, impatiently. "What next?"

"*Monday, 8th.*—Mrs. Elizabeth Halsey, widow, aged sixty, No. 81 — street. Her husband took his departure six weeks ago, leaving her in indigence. They had formerly

been in affluence, but Mr. Halsey met with reverses which reduced them, step by step, to poverty. Their last little all was swept away, about a year since, by the destruction at sea of a bark, in which Mr. H. had a small interest, since when they, up to the date of the old man's death, had been sustained by the kindness of an old friend in Hudson street, who is now no more. Mrs. Halsey receives a little aid from her church, but not enough for her subsistence. The church is overburdened with poor, and cannot do all it would. The poor old creature is living at her daughter's, or rather with her son-in-law, who, though doing well in a pecuniary sense, refuses to support her, and says he will not have her in his house unless she pays her board, which he fixes at two dollars and a half per week. He is a hard, stern man, a petty domestic tyrant, and with a heart for nothing but money. He has notified his mother-in-law that if she does not cancel the six weeks' bill he has against her, within ten days, and give security for her future board, he will send her to the poor house. If it should not be thought too great presumption in me, as your private missionary, I would earnestly entreat your favorable consideration of this poor lady's case. She desires that the few days remaining to her on earth may be spent in the society of her daughter, between whom and herself, there is a bond of cordial tenderness and affection. They are both, I have reason to believe, of the Lord's people; and if you should be instrumental in preserving them from separation, you will save two loving hearts from pain."

"We must do something for the old woman, of course," observed Mr. Tapley, in answer to Mr. Asbury's inquiring look. "She is a Christian, and we must look to her. But I don't know about saddling ourselves with her perpetual support. She may live for twenty years to come, for all we know; and fancy what a tax *that* would be upon us.

These old things hold on to life with amazing tenacity. Some of them never go off at all. I know two who have been a tax upon their friends for these thirty years; and they are as tough to-day as in their prime. I don't like tough old women. They cost too much. We have got sixteen old drainers on our list now, and I don't want any more. If they would die, now and then, like other people, there would be some encouragement. But, no; they hang on, and hang on, pertinaciously, as though they paid for their own living. I sometimes think they do it just to spite us. If we should give them up, it's my firm conviction they would all go off to-morrow. But so long as they know that they have three responsible men to provide for them, they will see us further, first. If Mrs. Halsey had the consumption, or anything of that sort, I shouldn't object; for then we should probably have her on our hands only a few months: or a year or two, at furthest. But as Kimball has made no mention of her having any disease, we are bound to suppose that she is as tough and hardy as those already on our list. Still, as she is a Christian, I am not unwilling to do something for her. Suppose we pay up what she owes her precious son-in-law, and put her in the asylum for Indigent Respectable Elderly Females? The entrance fee is only forty dollars, and she will be well cared for. That would be cheaper than running the risk of taking her on our hands."

"Suppose you were in her place, and she in yours," said Mr. Asbury; "what would you wish her to do? To let you remain with your daughter, or to remove you from her?"

"We ought not to presume upon our position," observed Peter Brown, gravely. "If we prove ourselves unworthy distributors of the Lord's bounty, it will not be well for us. Besides, we ought to have consideration for the feelings of the Lord's people. Mrs. Halsey desires to remain with her

daughter. Why should we, for the sake of two dollars and a half a week, be so cruel as to separate them? No—let 'em be together; it will do 'em good."

"Your head and not your heart whispered that suggestion, brother Tapley," urged Mr. Asbury. "Reflect a moment: the poor lady, having lost her companion, finds still some happiness in the society of her daughter, who loves her. Remove her to the Asylum, and though she will be well cared for, she will be sad and lonely, and pine away in mournfulness. Shall we, to whom God has graciously entrusted the means of lightening the loads of many, permit this?"

"Well—well," returned Mr. Tapley, yielding. "I don't want to be hard upon her. Tell Kimball to settle her bill and allow her two-and-a-half per week. I suppose her church will find her in clothes?"

"If the church should not, we will," observed Mr. Asbury.

"Any more cases?" asked Mr. Tapley.

"One," answered Mr. Asbury. And he read:

"*Tuesday, 9th.*—Margaret Wiley, for two years your pensioner, finished her career on earth to-day. She departed at 11 A. M., in full assurance of acceptance in The Beloved. I was never at a happier closing scene. She was fully prepared for The Great Meeting. She had no fears. All was peace—peace and joy. She sent her blessing to you for your kindness in screening her latter days from want. But for you she would have suffered. She recognised in you the ministrants of Him whom she was, at length, about to see face to face. Oh! how proud I felt of my three employers, then! Me, too, she thanked and blessed—poor unworthy me. I could have sung for joy in that moment; for the blessing came from one who, I had reason to believe, is very dear to Christ. She was, if you remember, when first

The Lord threw her into your hands, a poor human waif, whom nobody owned and whom nobody cared for, save Him who cares for all. Old, her husband and children dead, friendless, penniless, a prey to rheumatism, in arrears for the rent of her wretched garret, dependent for food on an occasional day's work, and a stranger to the Friend of the friendless, what was her prospect in The Present or The Future? One morning she was without bread. She had often been so before; but on *that* morning, her hope and courage fled, and a sense of desolation came upon her in all its overpowering fulness. Poor soul! she was hungry, weak, alone—with no one to look to for help, no one to cheer her with a single kind word—utterly friendless, utterly helpless—her poor old heart utterly barren of hope. She threw herself upon her knees, and cried "God! do not *Thou* desert me! Send me *some* help, in mercy, *for the love of Christ!*" It was her first cry to her Maker since her childhood. (You know how easily poor human nature goes astray.) The excitement of her mind was too much for her famished body, and she fell prostrate. The noise of her fall was heard by the occupant of the room below, who hurried up to learn the cause, and found the poor creature senseless. Help was called, and she was restored to consciousness and to a renewed sense of the horrors of her position. The morning wore away, and she concluded to put a period to her misery by suicide. In that, her critical hour, Providence directed the footsteps of your humble missionary to her door. When I told her my errand, she turned pale, and murmuring—"God has heard me, in my despair, after all!" fainted. I did not understand her then, but I did when she came to. From that day, I want pursued her no more; I furnished her with a copy of the Scriptures, and spent an hour with her, now and then, in conversation and prayer. Ere many weeks had flown, our

heavenly Father was graciously pleased to send comfort to her mourning spirit—to forgive the wanderer that had gone out in the morning and come back late at night. She was happy from that moment; perhaps blest would be a better word: for if I have ever known one around whom appeared to be visible the heavenly light that is said by good men to enframe, as with the rays of a glory, the forms of those who, in pure artlessness of heart, lean with trusting confidence on God, I think it was the sister who took her farewell look of earth to-day. The Bible was her constant companion; and she had such clear views of its meanings that it was a joy to listen to her. The mild, loving spirit of her Redeemer shone in her air and words. She was no idler—no ingrate. The glad tidings that had come to her, she gratefully bore to others. She went out among her neighbors and explained to them the gospel. Her genial way of bringing out its truths rendered her always welcome. When, by reason of her infirmities, she could no longer go to them, they called on her; and her humble room was the spiritual birth-place of seven dear ones who give daily evidence that they are of His who was crucified on Calvary. But our sister's work is done. She is gone; but there are many who will cherish her memory—none, however, with more affection than your missionary, who esteems it a privilege to bear even his poor testimony to her worth!"

"That woman ought to have lived!" exclaimed Mr. Tapley. "She *earned* her three dollars a week. Tell Kimball to give her a *good* funeral. Really, I—"

He paused, gulped, looked confused, and finally covered his face with his hands. In a few moments tears were seen trickling through his hard, bony fingers.

His companions understood what was passing in his rough, but after all well-meaning heart.

"Let us thank God for graciously permitting us to see that His cause is still advancing," said Mr. Asbury.

"For allowing us to take a part in His good work," cried the dry goods dealer.

"For not turning his back upon our offerings," observed Mr. Tapley.

And they knelt in prayer.

CHAPTER VII.

REUBEN called, the following morning, on Mr. Bignell, and related the substance of his interview with Tom.

"And so the young puppy declines to have any thing further to do with me—eh?" said the millionaire, his brow contracting as he spoke. "Very well—very well! This is a free country, and every man is at liberty to do as he pleases."

And he smiled like one meditating vengeance.

"We must not think too harshly of him," observed Reuben. "He is young, inexperienced, and high spirited. It was his pride that prompted the utterance of that reply, not his heart."

"Then his pride must be brought down, sir," replied the millionaire, sharply. "If he forgets what is due to me as a father, I do not, as he shall learn to his cost. I have tamed bolder spirits than his, in my time, and made them feel what it is to rouse a man who knows the measure of his own strength, and has both the will and the power to use it!"

Reuben made no reply for a few moments. He was pondering how to beguile the wealthy egotist from his stormy indignation, into a nobler mood. At length he thought he saw his way.

"Think you," he at length gently inquired, "that 'taming' is the best method of proceeding with those who have injured or displeased you? Such a course leads

only to resistance, and most generally to a wilful repetition of the offence."

"That depends upon the *promptitude* with which you act," returned the man of the world. "When I take an enemy in hand, I make it a point to give him neither time nor opportunity for resistance. I move with energy; but I do not *visibly* raise my hand till I am ready: and," he added, with the egotistical smile of a rich man proud in the consciousness of power, "when I *strike*, I CRUSH!"

Reuben, whose delicate mind had been trained in a school where a contrary sentiment is taught, could not help viewing the coarse-witted speaker with mingled pity and contempt. He had, however, the tact to conceal his real feelings; and, full of his idea, observed:

"Man, poor fellow! when left to the suggestions of his own nature, degenerates into barbarism. His highest ambition is to gratify his own selfishness. From Cain—his truest type!—down to the present generation, this has been his leading characteristic. Let him for a moment fancy himself the victim of an injury, and his first impulse is to take counsel from his pride, which prompts him to resent it; and the deeper his pride, the keener is his sense of wrong and the speedier his vengeance. With rich and poor, young and old, this propensity of returning blow for blow and injury for injury, is ever existent and in force. The gospel denounces it, but the world sustains it: as though it were of *higher* importance, than the gospel. It was this characteristic in Tom that led him to rebel at your authority; this characteristic in you, that inspired you to view his rebellion with indignation; this characteristic that influenced him to treat my well-meant overture for a reconciliation with lofty disdain: and this characteristic that prompts you to regard his refusal as an insult that calls for imme-

diately punishment. And yet, in the face of this characteristic, both in his breast and yours, dwells a secret yearning for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. In his heart, far down below his pride, he weeps at the obstinacy which it evokes, since that obstinacy keeps him away from a father's love and favor. And in *your* heart, far down below your pride, are tears for the ungenerous passion that separates you from the confidence, the affection, the companionship of your boy. So long as this barrier exists, so long will be the duration of your estrangement."

He paused for a reply; but his auditor was looking down thoughtfully at the floor.

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Bignelli, at length, as he drew a long breath. "But whose fault is it? Not mine, surely. I made the first advances, and was repelled. You would not expect me to sacrifice my dignity by making the offer a second time, I hope?"

"What if I should say—if I were in your place I would make it a thousand times, if the nine hundred and ninety-nine should fail?" asked Reuben.

"Then, sir," returned the man of the world, "I should reply that you were a person of a mean spirit—and unworthy the notice of a respectable man!"

"Do you think I would hazard the peace and happiness of my child and the satisfaction of my own heart for so small a matter as that?" said Reuben mildly. "Your calling me unworthy, would not make me so; and I should still be as respectable, in my own eyes, as before."

"In *your own* eyes, I have no doubt!" said the man of the world, sarcastically. "But not in those of your son, over whom you would have lost all authority."

"If he were of the age of Tom, who is arrived at man's estate, I should expect to exert none," said Reuben. "It

would be compromising *his* dignity and my own to attempt it."

This was a new idea to the millionaire, who bent his eyes in thought upon the floor.

"I don't know," he observed, after a few moments, "but that there is some sense in your remark. It is possible that I may have presumed too much upon my position, and perhaps forgotten Tom's. At all events, I will think upon it."

Reuben's heart bounded.

"Do," he said, warmly. "To whom should we look for candid thought and generous admission, but to the older and wiser?"

The millionaire looked at him a few moments. Then rising and warmly pressing his hand, he exclaimed:

"You are a *gentleman*! Stay and dine with me."

This was a compliment, and Reuben so understood it. To request an individual to dine with him, was, in the millionaire's estimation, the highest honor he could confer upon such person. "I am particular," he would egotistically say, "whom I invite to my table. I do not ask *every body*, I assure you!" And he told the truth.

"It would give me great pleasure to do so," returned Reuben, "but I have so many calls to make to-day, that I shall be unable to. I, however, have a few minutes at my disposal," he added, referring to his watch; "and if you have no objection, I should like to spend them with you, in the discussion of an important subject?"

The millionaire understood him, and laughingly exclaimed:

"If it will be any gratification to you, proceed; but religion is a topic in which I take but very little interest. The fact is," he added, with an arch leer, "I am a hardened old sinner. Mrs. Bignell does about all in the religious line that is done at my house. My days have been consumed in

making money. I commenced life without a shilling; but I pushed myself along—one way and another, I pushed myself along. Business is no joke, you know; and the man that goes into it as I did, with the idea of *coming out* right, will find but little time for outside matters. To take a pew and, when called upon, to give liberally, are as much as can reasonably be expected of him. Still, in the face of all my pressing labors, I have contrived to post myself up on the principal points, which, I think, is doing pretty well. The details, we heavy business men have to leave to those who are less engrossed. Do you smoke?"

Reuben shook his head.

"I have some capital 'Trabucos' here," continued the millionaire, taking a handful out of a box. "Cost me forty-five dollars a thousand. Try one while we talk this matter over."

"Excuse me," returned Reuben, "I do not smoke."

"Pity. You don't know what you lose. Smoking is a luxury to those who understand it; many don't: but I flatter myself that I long since became a proficient in the art. You smile; but it is an art, and one that all-cultivated lovers of the weed appreciate. Any loafer can draw smoke from a cigar; but to smoke one well, it is necessary to have the susceptible nerves, the educated eye, and the superior instincts of a gentleman. A vulgar fellow, for instance, with the best Trabuco that ever was manufactured, would, in three minutes, fill a room with a stench strong enough to sicken a horse; while a practised smoker, with refined nostrils, will smoke one of the same brand, in a parlor filled with ladies, without giving offence to the most delicate. On the contrary his light clear whiffs of pearly smoke will impart to the atmosphere a soft, delicious aroma, beneath whose magic influence each occupant will experience a dreamy, houri-like

languor, reminding her of that which is said by poets, romancists and travellers to be native to her fair sisters of the harem. The difference between the two smokers lies in the fact that the refined instincts of the one, lead him, on taking the first whiff from a cigar, to intuitively comprehend just how hard or how softly to draw so as to extract only the fragrance, and to avoid the bitter juice that lurks in the body of the tobacco. Observe," he added, with a mild puff, "what a pure clear smoke comes out from this, and how gently it intermixes with the atmosphere and disappears. I'll warrant now, my dear sir, that you can detect nothing offensive in the odor it gives to the room."

His auditor, with a slight motion of the head, indicated that he did not.

"I thought so. That comes from the fact that it is in the mouth of an artist. Talking of art," he added, pointing to a fruit piece over the library door, "do you see that picture?" Reuben bowed. "A perfect gem. One of Inman's. Cost me a cool eight hundred. It is said, by excellent judges, to be unapproachable. Observe the shading of that peach!"

Reuben rose, and, coloring, said:

"I see that you do not design to give me an opportunity to say a word on the subject to which I referred; and, as my time is not my own, I will take my leave."

The millionaire smiled with the blushing air of one who perceives that he is understood.

"Don't get angry," he said. "The fact is, I feel no interest in religious matters. Even if I wished to, I have no time. My mind is occupied with other things. My property takes up all my attention. One of these days, when I have less care, I may give religion an examination. Till then," he added with a gay laugh, "you really must excuse me!"

"One of these days!" repeated Reuben, looking at him a few moments. "How old are you, Mr. Bignell?"

"Rather free, that!" returned the millionaire, laughing. "But I took a small liberty with you just now, and I suppose it is but fair, to allow you to return it. Slightly over fifty-seven."

Reuben observed him gravely for a few moments, and then said.

"May I ask you another question?"

"Certainly."

"As it is meant in a kindly spirit, will you promise to so receive it?"

"Of course. But if it is likely to tax one's patience too much, oblige me by cutting it short. I cannot bear any thing prosy!"

"I will make it as brief as possible," returned Reuben, restraining himself.

"If you please!" laughed the man of money, satirically.

"If," said Reuben, "you beheld a friend walking over a bridge sixty, or at most, sixty-five, miles long, what would you think if, when he had passed the fifty-seventh mile, he should deliberately confess that he knew neither *the length of the bridge*, nor *where he was going*?"

The laugh disappeared from the lips of the mocker, and a sharp gleam of resentment glittered in his eye; but ere he could bethink himself of a reply, Reuben had politely wished him 'Good day,' and taken his departure.

Mr. Bignell had half a mind to follow and insult him; but he, with an effort, checked the impulse, and threw himself back in his chair, muttering indignantly:

"The impudent puppy! I should have kicked him! If ever he shows his face in my house again—I—I'll pull his nose! But its always the way with these pious fools. Once

let one of them inside your doors, and he without delay impertinently desires to know whether you are prepared for the day of judgment! The insolent meddlers! What is it *their* business whether their neighbours are ready to render their accounts, or not? Let every man look only to his own affairs, and we shall all get along pleasantly enough!"

He rose, paced the library, and at length paused in front of a small mirror that hung between the windows.

"I don't know," he mentally observed as he surveyed himself in the glass, "but that the young preacher is right, after all. The wrinkles of that age when a man can no longer be considered as in his prime are rather *plainly* visible in my poor old face. The color of my hair, too, is that of a gent. advanced in years, especially round the temples, where it is like silken silver. My teeth, however," he added, smiling, "thanks to my dentist, who charged me two hundred and fifty dollars for the set, are sound as ivory, and as pure. But then," walking away from the glass and resuming his seat with a sigh, "every body knows that they are not natural. If we could only make the world believe that things *are* what we *represent* them to be!"

He lit a fresh cigar, and, leaning back thoughtfully in his chair, recalled the interrogatory of his late visitor.

"Yes," he muttered, looking absently at the key in the door, "the young preacher is right. When a man has once passed his fifty-seventh milestone, *he ought to know WHERE HE IS GOING*. Then, IF EVER, he ought to know whether he is walking on the high road to heaven or—the other place. Then, if ever, he ought to feel that he has had a stomachful of the world and all its humbug, and be able, for once, to be in *earnest*. But," drawing vigorously on his cigar, and contracting his brows, "what if I should do this—I, whose career has not been in *exact*

accordance with the Ten Commandments?" After pondering awhile. "No. It would be of no use. It is too late. I have made *too much*. I have accumulated four millions; and when a man, in this age of severe competition, plunges empty handed into the battle of business, and comes out with that sum, it is reasonable to conclude that HIS CONSCIENCE *did not go far into the battle with him!* And yet," after a pause and a long thoughtful gaze at the door key, "the young preacher spoke as if he took it for granted that any rascal, no matter how great, could repent and find pardon. I wonder if that is TRUE! If it *be*—" starting up and for a few moments striding up and down the library in great excitement; "but, psha! it can *not* be. Sin, like every thing else, must have a limit, which, once passed, the transgressor is doomed; in which event, *my* case is settled, for I must have over-stepped that limit twenty years ago. Therefore, where is the use of my giving the matter any further thought? No, I'll let it drop, at once and forever, and enjoy myself while I may. The young preacher meant well; but he didn't know what a *precious* rascal he was addressing!"

Having finished his thought concerning himself, the millionaire's mind returned to his son.

"I wonder," he mentally exclaimed, "how much longer Tom intends to keep up his animosity against me? If he were only less proud, and would come and acknowledge himself in the wrong, and ask my forgiveness, and promise in future to be guided by me, I'd pay his debts and give him five thousand a-year for pocket money." A deep sigh, a dreamy stare at the door key, and utter forgetfulness that the half-smoked cigar between his lips is going out for want of drawing. "The old house is lonely—lonely, without him. I don't meet his handsome, manly

figure in the passage ways any more. He has left me; when he must have known very well when I ordered him out, that I didn't—*couldn't* mean it!" A long, feeling pause. "If he would but come back, I think I should not insist upon his confessing himself in the wrong; yes," tears gliding down his cheeks, "I think I should *not* insist upon *that*!" Unconsciously chewing the end of his cigar—"If he but knew how sacredly I, every morning, privately look in upon the things in his room which remain, even to the open novel on the table, just as he left it, he would feel for me; yes, feel for me, and come back, and make up, and let times go on again as they used to before he went away!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Miss RUSSELL, the governess, was sitting by the window of Peter Brown's drawing-room, and looking through the Paris panes at the passers-by, when she heard an advancing footstep on the carpet. On turning round, she beheld the litterateur. He was pale and toil-worn.

He bowed, but, from diffidence, perhaps, did not extend his hand, nor seem so self-possessed as usual.

The governess blushed, as if her woman's instinct had whispered the meaning of his manner.

"You seem, Miss Russell," he began with a smile, "to enjoy the human panorama. Are you skilled in Lavater's art, or, like the sybils of the old romantic days, do you read character by intuition?"

"Neither," answered the governess. "I long ago found both so faulty, that I concluded to place no reliance upon either."

"And yet," said the litterateur, "to those who give them patient study, they bring golden returns in trusty knowledge. His face is a faithful mirror of the inner being of every man. He may, if so disposed, temporarily change its expression; but, unless he be an adept in the art, such change will only deepen the original, and, in case he be a scoundrel, make him appear a greater one than he is. But he is so constituted, one thought chasing another with the rapidity of the gallop of his blood, that he cannot be always

upon his guard, and, in a moment that he knows not, the assumed falls back into the natural aspect, and then he stands—revealed. Few, however, understand physiognomy so well as this; and hence, nine out of ten may be read by the careful observer as plainly as a newspaper paragraph."

"Are you a proficient in this study?" asked the governess, her every nerve thrilling at the ripe, rich sound of the litterateur's finely modulated voice.

"I should be glad to answer in the affirmative," he answered; "but truth forbids it. Physiognomy is one of the many studies from which we rise up with fresh points for reflection from every lesson."

"Still you have made *some* progress?"

"True; but it is like that of one who has undertaken to go through a whole library, and has read only a few volumes."

"You are too modest!" laughed the governess. "I have read your sketches, and know better!"

"As you will!" said the litterateur, with a shrug.

"Do me the favor," continued the governess, with well assumed playfulness, which, however, did not deceive the man before her, "to give me the characteristics of — let me see. I must have those of more than one, to fairly test the practical value of the art. Let me see. Mr. Asbury? No; his features are set, and so plain that a child may peruse them. Mr. Brown's? No; his kind, honest nature is limned in his frank, benignant smile. Mr. Tapley? No; his rugged, pretentious, but at heart generous spirit, is imprinted in his very manner. Whom *shall* it be? O, I have it—Mr. Bignell, and some of his club friends, whom he brings here so frequently; but which of them—that's the question? Mr. Shipley? No; his 'very particular-ity' forbids it. Mr. Gressinger (with a slight rosy glow and in a hesitating tone that did not escape the litterateur)?—Yes. He will do. But,"

she added, with smiling vivacity, "now I think of it, you have known Mr. Bignell so long and intimately, that a description of his character would hardly be satisfactory; and so, let us leave him out. But, O dear! his omission reduces me to a single test. No matter. An intelligent mind ought to be satisfied with that. Therefore let us have Mr. Gressinger's traits."

"I fear," remarked the litterateur, "that this is a liberty to which, if he were present, that gentleman would not consent."

"Consent, indeed. What! when a *lady* wished it? He is too gallant for that! Besides, what should he have to fear?"

"Nothing, I am aware. But if he were here, and should himself make the request, I could not well decline to accede to it."

"I shall have to put you down among the 'very particulars,'" said the governess, archly.

"For what you will," laughed the litterateur. "But," he added, taking her hand, "may I not take courage and address you upon a theme in which I feel a *deeper* interest?"

The sprightliness of his fair auditor disappeared, and was succeeded by an air of embarrassment.

"Have you never," asked the young man, misinterpreting her blushes, "seen one on whom your eye could fondlier fall than on any other; whose form, enshrined in love's most tender temple, became a cherished image; and hand in hand with whom you would gladly walk along life's winding lane down to its closing twilight?"

"Have *you*?" asked the governess, her bosom heaving with contending emotions.

"Have *I*? O, she divides with Honor, the empire of my spirit; is entwined with my being; is my first memory in

the morning, my main thought all the day, my last on lying down; accompanies me in my walks; floats between me and my paper as I write; gives tone, energy, and essence to my pen; is beside me and leaning on my arm in my rambles, the silver melody of her whispers attuning my heart to hope, and confidence and conscious strength; is the bright vision of my dreams, inviting me to put on all my armour, and to thoroughly equip me for that conflict in which indolent Genius struggles with resolute Tact for the laurel and the wealth that follow fame? 'Have I?' Could you but unlock my breast and look in upon her statue, pedestaled in that inner fane, where we hide from the world's rude gaze our heart's dearest object!"

The features of the governess, gradually paling to the hue of a vestal flower, became sharpened with an air of pain.

"Have you seen one such?" asked the litterateur.

"I *have*!" was the trembling response; and the fair speaker crimsoned to her temples with the words, and the lashes of her eyes, which sparkled with an unbidden tear, were lowered to the floor. "But ——"

"You pause?" observed the young man, a mournful foreboding gathering upon his brow.

"But," resumed the governess with a staggering effort, "perceiving that I was not fitted to share life's trials with him, and finding that my affection for him grew stronger day by day, I, at length, for his sake more than my own, wrested with and at length, though not without many pangs, overcame it."

"Overcame it!" faltered the litterateur. "Overcame it!" he repeated in a voice so unlike his own, that it for an instant startled the governess into the belief that it proceeded from the lips of an intruder, and caused her to look up in surprise. "You found him unworthy, then? Pardon

—pardon!" he added, dropping her hand, and moving back. "I did not mean to trespass upon your feelings. I thought—I had a hope but, no matter. I would not further wound you!"

And, with a low respectful bow, he was about to retire, when a word from the governess arrested him.

"Stay, Mr. Sprague!" she exclaimed, in a tone of deep anguish. "It is due to you and myself that we should not part in misapprehension. It was not his unworthiness—no, not *that*!—which prompted me to this step!"

The litterateur acknowledged the compliment by a grateful bow.

"Not his unworthiness," repeated the lady, struggling in the midst of a blush, which was deep as scarlet, to preserve her dignity; "but, his—*poverty*!"

And, to the young man's amazement, she looked him calmly and majestically in the eye, without quailing for an instant before the stern glance of proud scorn with which he surveyed her, and apparently without abating one jot of her sense of principle.

"I know your thought," she said, hoarsely; "but it is wrong—I might say unworthy of one of your magnanimity."

"I may have done you injustice," observed the litterateur. "If so, I entreat your forgiveness. But I will take your word for it, and my leave also; for it is not becoming to your position as a lady, nor to mine as a gentleman, to humiliate yourself thus to satisfy any fancied curiosity of mine."

"Nay, stay and hear me, I command——"

The young man paused and observed her in surprise.

"I—I entreat!"

The litterateur bowed.

"I crushed the feeling," said the governess, explanative-

ly, "because he was poor, and I unwilling, by wedding him, to make his noble spirit *feel* his poverty!"

Sprague started, colored, turned pale, and with a tear of remorse flashing in his eye, exclaimed—

"O, pardon—pardon! I was too hasty—cruel—"

"You have committed no offence that *I* regard as such," replied the governess, with a sad smile, "and therefore I have naught to forgive. But let me finish. I inherit all the pride of a proud family, and am unfit, both by nature and education, to be a poor man's wife. I had a father whose overconfidence in a villain led to his ruin, and his proud heart was reduced to the necessity of going forth to daily toil. He submitted to it, but with an unwilling spirit: and then, if never before, he experienced the bitterness of that mocking drudgery which realises that it must grind its life away for the *burdens* which call for constant support, *at home*. We had been educated for luxury—not indigence, and could do naught to help him. He sunk at last, in suicide—his proud spirit crushed, his heart corroded by unpleasant business memories, his brow darkened with uneasiness, and his temples silvered before their time, with care. At his death we were wretchedly poor, and I was driven to earn my mother's bread, or see her starve. She had no resource but me; and could I—a proud and feeling woman—consent to cumber the man I love with *two* such burdens?—Sooner than that—sooner than see his manly head bowed as my father's was, I'd drag out every root of love, though it left me bankrupt of his esteem, yea of life itself, and cast it to the first tempest that would bear it, with other wrecks, to the gulf of Ruined Hopes!"

"Never till now," muttered the litterateur, "have I experienced the inconvenience of poverty—never till now! But are my earnings, present or prospective, sufficient to

enable me to say to this high-hearted woman, 'Be mine, and want shall never haunt nor stare thee or thine in the face'? No; let me not deceive her or myself. Dull, driveling drone! what have *you*—a pensioner on the grudging bounty of the pen!—to do with the delights of love! Leave *them* to thy BETTERS—to that rabble horde who know no higher ambition than, in the accumulation of dollars, to tread down all the finer feelings of humanity, to cultivate knavery up to a science, and minister to their own loathsome egotism! But," he added, checking himself, "what is this—*envy*? O, man—man! what *art* thou when the desires of thy heart move not as *thou* would'st have them! But I must make atonement to this poor, suffering lady."

Then turning to the governess, he said, aloud—

"Miss Russell, in encouraging a passion like this without your knowledge and consent, (and yet who, knowing you, could know and love *not*?)—and in treating you so cruelly, I have doubly sinned, and fervently beseech your forgiveness. Nay, weep not," he continued, faltering, "or there are hot burning courses beneath these lids which will leap out, too, and shame the manhood of their owner. I at once regret and thank you for your heart's confidence; for while it tells me what my earth's future will be, it yet somewhat mitigates the blow to know that my affection was set upon a spirit worthy of its brightest and proudest dreams."

He paused a few moments, to recover himself, and then added, in a tone that vainly struggled to appear smiling, confident and firm:

"Let what has been said pass into oblivion—as if it never had been spoken; as if we had always looked to be only good friends—good friends," he repeated, with a desperate calmness, "and—and—nothing more. Your hand, Miss Russell—as a lady may give it to a gentleman!"

It was warmly tendered, and gently pressed; and with a bow, as rich in dignity as grace, and a step whose scarcely perceptible unsteadiness only the keen eye of a quick-witted and sympathising woman could detect, the litterateur passed from the apartment.

CHAPTER IX.

No ONE would have supposed at breakfast, on the following morning, that there were two parties at the table who, on the preceding day, had each undergone all the agonies of Love's martyrdom.

The features of the litterateur were somewhat sharper and his eyes more sunken than usual; but all, with the exception of the governess, who observed his attenuated appearance, attributed it to his having been up late at writing, and made no comment upon it.

The governess, who was more experienced in suffering, exhibited few or no signs of the severity of yesterday's trial. She was a little pale perhaps; but then *that* was no new thing for her: and, much to her relief, the meal passed off without anything in her manner or appearance having attracted attention.

Thereafter, when they met, they were, as before, genially courteous, and we might add, at the risk of being thought guilty of a contradiction, distantly polite. The litterateur never alluded in any manner to the past; but, after a few weeks, the governess perceived, with pain, that he was less energetic than formerly; that he stayed in his own room more, and appeared in the drawing-room less; that he seemed to shun observation and society; and that he was falling into a habit of thoughtful listlessness, and becoming prone to dreamy mental absences. Her heart told her the cause; but though

it bled for him, she deemed it indelicate to refer to the subject; and fearful lest in pity she should some time be tempted to do so, and thereby imperil her womanly dignity, she carefully avoided being alone with him, either in the drawing-room or elsewhere.

The young man noticed this; and though there were occasions when it stung him to the quick, he yet could not help admitting to himself, in calmer moments, that, considering her position, it was her only proper course.

One evening, about a month after the scene described in the preceding chapter, Tom, Gressinger and young Shipley called in together, and after a half hour of the tattle which young minds discuss so gravely, Margaret, at Tom's request, favored the company with 'Love Not,' at the piano, on which she performed with indifferent skill. Her auditors, however—her lover particularly—complimented her highly: Tom, the arch rogue! declaring that "he had never heard any thing like it, in his life!"

After a few minutes of additional chitchat, Mr. Gressinger laughingly asked the governess to dismiss them with a few words of melody. The latter consented, and seating herself at the instrument, sang with a meaning emphasis, which reversed the sentiment of the poem, "Tis said that *absence* conquers love!"

Mr. Gressinger, who had a fine ear for music, was in raptures, though he only quietly applauded the performer.

The litterateur alone understood the gentle and ingenious hint of the governess, and was touched by it.

"You do not applaud, Sprague!" observed Gressinger. "Have you no soul?"

"Et tu brute!" returned the litterateur, with an assumed smile. "You have dissolved the spell, and brought me to earth again! I must think, now, what to do!"

As he spoke, he glanced furtively at the governess and perceived, by the expression of her countenance, that she comprehended that the latter part of his reply was meant for her.

At a later hour, while alone in his room, and vainly endeavoring to elaborate an article, he, leaning his head on his left hand, shifting the pen from the paper, and looking absently down at his watch which lay before him on his desk, mentally exclaimed:

"She is right. It would be more in accordance with delicacy for me to remove. But should I do so, my kind-hearted uncle would naturally desire an explanation, which I could not give. To leave *without* an explanation, would wound the feelings of my relative, who regards me as one of the family, and to whom I am indebted for a thousand generous attentions; whilst to remain is, perhaps, to offend with my presence one to whose feelings I should pay scrupulous deference. Perhaps!" he added, bitterly. "How know I that she cares either for my absence or my presence? Am I not as a withered leaf that is trodden under foot, and that no longer flutters a glad welcome alike to the benevolent sunshine, the reviving air, and the thrift-giving rain? Has not my pen lost its power, my working hand its nerve, my heart its ambition? And is not all this *her* work—HERS? Yet," he added, checking himself, as his revolving mind brought round a better thought, "let me not be illiberal—UNJUST. Was it not in *mercy* that she refused me? What should I, whose earnings scarcely equal the perquisites of a waiter, do with a wife whose education and instincts unfit her for the poor home that I could offer her! She desires to move in the elevated sphere to which her culture entitles her—a laudable ambition, which it were selfish and unworthy in me to attempt to thwart. Why should I do so? Let me not

be so unmanly. Rather, let me emulate the chivalric spirit of those knightly gentlemen of old, who inscribed upon their banners, 'Let justice triumph, though it send us to the headsman!' And was it not in pity to me that she suggested absence as a remedy for my hopeless passion! For herself she feels not, but only for me! Noble spirit! She is worthy to be loved; yea, deserving of the richest treasury of affection that man ever poured into the lap of woman!" Another turn of the mental wheel, and sarcasm gushes out like a rill. "But in this age of religion, enlightenment and culture, we cannot love, without—*Money*. Honor is nothing—Learning, nothing—Purity of Purpose, and an Irreproachable Life, nothing; Money, the *one* merit, the concentration of ALL virtues! A man may have a *heart* opulent in goodness; but if he have not an opulent *purse* as well, he, for all his goodness, is a Pariah, and must be content with a Pariah's privileges: to dwell on the *outskirts* of society! He may look on Beauty, and, if he please, love her, with all the strength of his great manly nature, but—at a *distance*! Her soft cheek, her ruby lip, the glorious fire of her eyes, the music of her voice, the sparkling thoughts of her cultivated mind, the ripe affections of her heart, her sweet counsel in trial, her angel consolation in affliction, her soft hand to fan off sickness' fever, to smooth its pillow, and to gently point it to The Great Physician, are not for HIM; but for some coarse successful son of Trade, ingrained in the subtleties and duplicities of Business, whose noisome carcass is rank with the effluvia of men who make bargains, whose coffers are plethoric with the fruits of moral knavery—and whose gross nature is incapable of appreciating the refined tenderness of her superior spirit!" Another turn of the wheel, and a gush of mingled scorn and envy bursts forth. "And yet this refined, *superior* spirit deliberately reserves herself

for one of these, as a merchant reserves his best goods for a higher market! Had I money, she would accept me; *not* having it, she calmly nips her liking in the bud, and, tranquilly folding her arms, awaits a like offer from the first he whose purse has a golden lining, that may chance along! And on such a creature I have built the structure of my love; on such a thing have wasted the highest and holiest treasure of my being! Why, had she been a WOMAN, she would have followed me to a cabin, and preferred its humble chattels to the garniture of a palace, and our only crust to the most sumptuous feast ever set before a queen. But, no; she is *refined*, and cannot *afford* to love a poor man! Fool—idiot—driveller! (smiting his forehead) why, in thy vanity, soughtest thou to make one of that small but imperial army of self-sacrificing intelligences who, with the Pen, are pioneering the way into the great wildernesses of Thought and Action, and throwing open all their treasures to the human race, when, by taking an obscure place under the inglorious banner of Traffic, thou might'st now have dollars in thy purse—dollars, which would make thee worthy in the eyes of beauty, and render thee *most* lovable and acceptable!" A pause, and then turning with softened eyes, to the leading implement of his profession, which he held up fondly. "Old friend! dear to me as the pulses of my heart—who hast been the silent partner of my labors in the long still hours, when Thought's sparkling stream flows freshest and purest—in whose fascinating companionship toil has lapsed into a pleasure, and time glided by unnoticed and unfelt—could I bid thee farewell for *money*? Could I forsake thee even for her, to whom my heart went out in joy and came back in sadness? No; for *thou* wast my FIRST love. Ere I knew *her*, I was wedded inseparably to thee. Thou hast been with me in all my mental journeyings; hast

shared my griefs and gladness, my despondencies and enthusiasms; hast given form to my imaginings, brought me bread and raiment, explored the dark caverns of error, unriddled the sphinxes of sophistry, lashed vice till it shrieked and quivered, whipped off charlatans in art, science and literature, given a helping hand to modest merit, and contributed in some degree towards pushing on the car of Human Progress. Abandon thee? Not for money, not for woman, not for all the shams that ever shook the manhood of ingenuous minds! While I look on thee—humble representative of the mightiest power beneath the stars!—methinks I behold the titan that has rent the veil of superstition, stormed the citadels of cruelty, stayed the march of ignorance, emancipated man from the moral chains of false rulers and false priests, dictated conditions to despots and to meaner villains, made the husbandman the peer of kings, borne glad tidings to all nations, rescued History from interested and unscrupulous dynasties, freed Knowledge from its ancient fetters, and which even now is battering at the fortresses of tyranny and throwing up Freedom's bulwarks all around the earth. Power of powers—Titan of titans! may thy glorious work go on till all the nations yield to thy beneficent sway, and every bondsman of whatever despotism shall be elevated to his birthright of *Man in the image of his God!* Abandon thee—exchange thee for the vile knavery and the gains of Traffic! Not while reason holds her empire, and this hand the nerve to wield thee in the Common Cause! So, old friend! come pain or pleasure, wealth or poverty, we'll still go on together—yea, till the shadows of The Long Even gather over us, and we bid to earth our last Good Night!"

One evening, Tom observed to the litterateur,

"Do you know, Joe, that Gressinger is paying his *distresses* to Miss Russell?"

"What did you say about Miss Russell?" inquired the litterateur, looking up from a revery.

"How absent you have become! You remind me of old Professor Minturn, who was so faulty in this respect, that when a quizzing friend called on him one day and gravely inquired, 'Is the Professor in?' he innocently answered, with a dreamy stare, 'I don't know; be kind enough to walk in, and I will see.' I was simply asking whether you had observed how thick Gressinger is with Mag's governess?"

Sprague shook his head, musingly.

"Tis true, however. I saw them, last night, at the opera, for the third time; and Mag tells me that he is very attentive to her."

"Possibly," said the writer, with assumed indifference. "Is Mr. Gressinger a gentleman of any means?" he asked, after a few moments. "Though familiar with his person and disposition, I have no knowledge of his resources."

"His old man is largely in the tobacco line," answered Tom; "and Arthur is likely soon to be a partner, and also the only heir; for Bill, his brother, is at St. Augustine, Florida, trying to hold out against the consumption, which, however, according to a recent letter from his attendant, threatens to carry him off in the fall. But, talking of consumption—do you know, Joe, that it is thought you are yourself gliding into a decline?"

The litterateur smiled, bitterly.

"You must take care of yourself, old fellow. You are working yourself to death. You sit here scratching away with that pen till your last energy is used up, and then go to bed. You take no air, no exercise; but meditate, write and sleep; and sleep, meditate and write. Such a life is unnatural, and enervating enough to pull down a giant. Joe, old fellow," added the young man, in a tone of deep feeling,

"if you have no consideration for yourself, have some for your friends. If you don't want your old college chum to go in mourning for the noblest and truest friend he ever had on earth, shake off this melancholy and this morbid attachment for your pen; rouse yourself, walk your stagnant blood into circulation, let your manuscript wait till you are re-invigorated, and then return to it with fresh zest. Come, take off that dressing gown, and put on your coat, and go to the club, and have some fun. It will put new life into you."

The litterateur shook his head, and, with a sad smile, replied:

"Not to-night, Tom. Excuse me!"

"Nonsense, old fellow—come along. There will be sport around there. The boys are all flush, and, as all are not good players, and many full of fight, there will be some good shoulder-hitting by twelve o'clock. Come."

"Pardon me, Tom; I cannot. I take no interest in such scenes."

"Well, then; let us run down to 'Burton's.' The 'Road to Ruin' is up, and though I have never seen it, I understand that it is full of roaring incidents, and keeps the audience in convulsions. Come—any thing, any where, to free you from the dismals!"

"You are very kind, Tom; but, in truth, I am in no humor to-night, to appreciate any thing but my own thoughts."

"A gentle hint for me to retire!" cried Tom, laughing. "I see there is no use in playing the doctor; for you have no confidence in my prescriptions. But," he added, in a disturbed voice, "though I see you wish to be alone, I shall not budge a foot till you promise to relax your labors and take some exercise!"

Sprague was touched; and a mist gathered in his eyes.

"I promise!" he said, taking and pressing his friend's proffered hand.

"All right, old fellow!" cried Tom, brushing the spray from his lids. "Good night!"

As the prodigal disappeared, the smile passed away from the face of the litterateur, who fell back in his chair and uttered a deep sigh.

"So," he exclaimed, bitterly; "she has found a lover to her mind: at his proposal, she will sink gracefully into his arms, overcome by love for—*his money*. (His brows darkening as a new thought occurs to him.) This thing, it seems, is not new. It has been silently going on, for some time; else why her artfully-framed desire, on the morning of my rejection, to have me read for her the characteristics of this same Gressinger? I begin to understand the duplicity and selfishness of her nature. 'Tis well she refused me—yes, *very* well; for had she not, I had been cursed indeed!"

But a quiet monitor in his heart told him that he was doing the fair lady a great wrong; that, he had neither asked her confidence on this subject, nor received it; that, as she had dealt fairly and frankly with him, so far as his own passion was concerned, he ought not to complain; that, being free, she had a right to accept the addresses of whomsoever she pleased; that poor and with a mother to care for, she was far from being in a position in which she could follow her own inclinations, and when considering an offer of marriage, was, in a measure, compelled to view it more as a matter of business than of love. True, this destroyed the romance, and struck a rude blow at the general opinion, of woman's shrinking delicacy; but then when, as in the present case, she is not wholly her own mistress; when poverty, like an ill cur, is barking at her heels; when, for these reasons, she feels that she cannot afford to marry the man she loves; and

when, in view of the utter friendlessness of her position, she finds it compulsory to either marry a man who can support her, or not marry at all, is she not more entitled to sympathy than to reprehension?

Thus spoke conscience to the heart of the poor litterateur. The response of the heart was prompt and generous:

"True. I was too hasty. We cannot always do as we would. It is more for her mother's sake than her own that she takes this course, which, to one of her proud, sensitive mould, must be a sacrifice. Her lot is hard, her position trying. I feel for her. May she find in Gressinger a man she can warmly love; may the study of *his* life be how to make her happy, and may their union be as a lengthened holiday!"

Poor fellow! while his great, manly spirit uttered this wish, tears were gliding down the pale, attenuated hands that covered his wan face.

CHAPTER X.

"WHERE, now?" asked the millionaire, of his wife, as the latter was drawing on her gloves, on the following Friday evening.

"To covenant meeting," answered Mrs. Bignell.

"Covenant meeting! What is that?"

"Come and see," said the lady, with a hopeful smile.

Her husband reflected a moment, and then observed:

"It may amuse me more than lounging at home. I will."

And he put on his hat.

A few minutes brought them to the lecture room, which, although it wanted a quarter of an hour to the appointed time, already presented quite a respectable auditory.

The millionaire selected the second slip, in the centre, from the door.

"I can see best here," he whispered, with a knowing air, to his wife.

The latter bowed. Her own hearing and eyesight were good, and where she sat was a matter of indifference.

The man of money noticed that as the new arrivals met at the entrance, they greeted one another with genial interest and affection, and appeared to be on the kindest of terms.

"Somewhat different from those we meet with in the world," muttered the millionaire to himself, "who shake hands with you as if they are not quite certain whether

you will let them cut your throat, or whether you have any serious design of cutting theirs."

At half-past seven, by which time the room was tolerably well filled, the exercises were opened with a hymn, in which the assemblage joined with a spirit and feeling that satisfied the millionaire: their hearts were in it; and he could not help mentally contrasting it with the dead, monotonous singing at the 'prayer meetings' of his own church, where it was considered vulgar to exhibit the slightest approach to feeling—they being regarded as approaching nearest to perfection who were most practised in icy stateliness and formal politeness, and whose deportment gave evidence that they were acquainted with the terms 'heart' and 'feeling' only by hearsay.

The hymn was followed by a prayer from an humble member, whose half stifled voice, trembling with mingled reverence and awe, attested that he felt in WHOSE presence he stood, and to WHOM he was addressing his petition. There was an artless simplicity, too, in his manner, and a naturalness in his words, to which the millionaire, familiar only with the courtly bombast of fashionable churchism, was unaccustomed; and, as a consequence, he insensibly relinquished his critical observations, and bowing his head, mentally followed the speaker in his petition to the Throne of Grace.

At the conclusion of the prayer, in which the assembly appeared, in the eyes of the millionaire, to join with artless humility, Reuben rose in the desk. A glad smile was visible on every face as he stood up, as if the very appearance of their pastor was in itself a touch-spring that opened the hearts of these people, and allowed their joy to bubble up till it filled them.

"Here is love—here affection for one another!" mur-

mured the millionaire. "Pastor and people as one, and joined together in a common bond of cordial confidence! A pleasant sight!"

And he began to think there were some good spirits in the world, after all.

"I like this place," he added, to himself. "It does me good—makes me feel better towards my kind!"

"Dear friends," began the pastor, greeting the assembly with a smile in which it would have been difficult to say which predominated—confidence or affection, so happily were they blended, "befor throwing the meeting into your hands, I wish to call your attention to a few cases that may perhaps be found worthy of your consideration and your prayers. Since our last meeting, The Father has been pleased, for purposes of His own, to visit some of our number with affliction.

"Brother Kellso, our Sabbath-school superintendent, who was with us last Lord's day in his usual health and strength, was suddenly stricken down on Tuesday. I called on him this afternoon, and found him in great suffering. He was pale, wasted, and able to speak only with difficulty. Perceiving his anguish and feebleness, I was about to withdraw, but he gently insisted on my remaining. It cheered him, he said, to converse upon the goodness of God, and upon the the interests of The Kingdom. His faith, I rejoice to state, is founded upon a rock. He feels, however, that he has no ground for hope—that he has nothing with which to plead for mercy, save that precious blood which was shed on Calvary. The recollection of his own remissness, of his neglected opportunities to forward the enterprises of Our Most Blessed Lord, and of his many yieldings to the whispers of his own heart, fill him with unspeakable distress, and he fervently asks an interest to-night in your prayers.

I know not if he yet be living—for he was very low when I left him; but if, in your petitions, both here and at your family altars, you will kindly bear his case to The Throne, his family, who are bowed down in sorrow, will bless you."

The auditors were saddened at this intelligence; for the superintendent was familiarly known and loved.

"Some of you," continued the pastor, "may remember our dear brother Sterling's little daughter, Susan? She was noticeable, in our Sabbath-school, for the artless simplicity of her nature, her steady attendance, her attentiveness to her lessons, and the sweetness of her voice in singing. She was in her class four Sabbaths ago, happy and amiable as usual, and but little dreaming that it was the last time she should ever mingle with her little friends in hymning praises to The Redeemer. She was taken ill on the evening of that day, and lingered until midnight of yesterday, when her released spirit took wing for the arms of Him who said: 'Suffer little children to come unto Me.' Ere she took her departure, she desired her teacher, who was present, to bear her love to her classmates, and to tell them that she would pray for them and ask her Saviour to make intercession with The Father for them, too, that they might find favor always in His sight; she bade her teacher good bye, and told her parents to be of good cheer—for that she saw an angel at the bedside waiting to bear her to Christ. As noon drew nigh, her voice grew weak and tremulous; but a hymn was upon her lips, a smile upon her face. 'Let me feel your hand, dear father—dear mother,' she said, faintly; 'it is getting dark.' 'But the angel,' said the teacher; 'do you see him yet?' 'No—it is getting dark. Kiss me. Ah! the light is returning—I see him again.' 'Who?' 'The angel.' She

was silent for a minute or two, when her voice softly murmured—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O, Lamb of God, I come!"

The last line was breathed out like a vocal sigh. Her parents and teacher listened to catch the opening of the next stanza. But it came not. She was gone."

A deep sigh from the auditors broke the brief silence that followed the description of the little pilgrim's last moments.

The millionaire felt something hot upon his cheek; and on withdrawing his finger from the spot, he observed that it was wet.

"Our sister Robins," said the pastor, "is in distress. Her husband, a pilot, while cruising in his yacht near Sandy Hook, on the eighth of the present month, beheld outside a disabled brig, struggling, with the friendly aid of a temporary mast, to make her way into port. Those who had charge of her were apparently ignorant of the character of the coast, for her bow was heading for the rocks. Perhaps, having recently emerged from a destructive tempest, they were worn out or bewildered. The sea was rolling heavily, huge masses of ice were tossing on the surface of the furiously pitching waves, and the vessel was rapidly approaching a spot which would probably wrench her in every seam and scatter her in pieces. Mr. Robins saw that without the aid of an experienced pilot, all on board would soon be lost, and bravely determined to fly to their rescue. His men endeavored to dissuade him from the effort, stating that no person on earth could save the vessel, that her fate was sealed, that she could never reach port, and that to attempt to save her would be to court the destruction that

shortly awaited both vessel and crew. Mr. Robins' only reply was to take the helm of the yacht, and deliberately bear down towards the brig. This was not an easy matter, for the sea was running high, and rendered doubly dangerous by the floating ice. At length he reached and sprang aboard the distressed vessel, when his companions instantly put about and made for the lee of the nearest headland to escape the storm which had been gathering for the last half hour, and which was then beginning to breathe forth its fury. The yacht eventually reached port in safety, but the fate of the pilot, as well as that of the brig, is unknown. Whether the vessel went down in the gale, or whether she was carried out to sea, none can tell. Twenty-one days and nights of anguish and uncertainty have passed away, in the household of sister Robins, since then. She herself is worn to haggardness by anxiety and watching; each successive day brings her nearer to bankruptcy in hope. The first cry of her little ones at dawn is—'Is father come?' Their first word on returning from school—'Is father come?' They frequently start up during the night with the same tender inquiry. 'Should he come before morning,' they say to her, when going up to bed, 'wake us!' And every morning brings to their little ears the same sad, tearful 'No!' Our sister is resigned to the Lord's will; but still in her breast dwells a heart that will not be comforted while the fate of her beloved is unknown. If you, who know how to feel for a fellow creature in this sad strait, will kindly remember her and her husband in your prayers, both here and in your closets, who knows what influence it may have in bringing joy back to this poor, afflicted family?"

"If this were a case in which *money* could be of service!" muttered the millionaire, to himself, with a sigh.

"Our venerable brother Russell," resumed the pastor, "at length has reached the end of his pilgrimage. He has fallen in the fulness of his days. His manhood lived out to its ultimate. His body yielded slowly to death. For four years it resisted the insidious attacks of the Destroyer, giving away only inch by inch. For four years, he kept his chamber, and meditated and prayed, conversing with joy, with all who would spend an hour with him, on the goodness of his Blessed Lord and King. He, as many of you well know, was one of the original founders and supporters of this church. In its struggles for being and permanence, it ever found his hand open as the day. For forty years he felt a stirring interest in all the enterprises of our Lord. Possessed of abundant means, he esteemed it a privilege to be one of the almoners of his Master. The church, the poor, never appealed to him in vain. He gave as they give who understand that they must render an account of their stewardship. Old age sat gracefully upon him, crowning his fourscore years with mingled gentleness and dignity. He lived as they live who know that they must die. His house was in order—his faith unwavering. When his work was finished, his Master called him home. Last evening, while sitting in his chair, and observing the going down of the sun, he calmly fell asleep—his grand-daughter at his feet, his grand-son at his side, his son and daughter leaning affectionately over his chair. The partner of his youth and christian manhood had long preceded him to the house appointed for all the living. His ashes will rest beside hers to-morrow. His fall is as that of a pillar in Israel. But God is good. Let us pray that He will raise up another to fill his place."

"Who, when I die, will deliver such a eulogy upon *me*?" asked the millionaire of himself. "This is a pleasant place.

I must take a pew here. What will Sarah think when I propose to accompany her here next Sunday? She will smile, perhaps. But, no matter; she is a good creature: if I were only *half* as good!"

"I, since yesterday," pursued the pastor, "have looked forward to this meeting with yearning, that I might lay before you a case which calls for instant sympathy and prayer. The husband of our sister Goodrich lies on a couch from which the hand of God alone can raise him. His physician has advised him to finish what he may have left undone. His will is made, and his temporal affairs in order; but for a meeting with his Maker he is mournfully unprepared. He is, as many of the brethren are aware, without hope in Christ. His mind is at sea, and he knows not whither to turn, nor what to believe. He is one of the dupes of those who deem it an evidence of intellectual greatness and moral courage to sneer at God's Holy Word. In this, apparently his dying hour, he is as a shipwrecked struggler in the waves. Doubt, fear, horror, by turns beset him. His anguish is indescribable. In this terrible state he is hastening to his account. His wife is in agony at his strait. So far as human calculation may discern, ere a week shall have passed away his name will be blotted out from the list of the living. But He who holds the thread of human destinies in His hands is able to shield him from the grasp of death, to raise him up, and endue him with an abiding faith. Shall we not implore Him to do so? Is it not our privilege? Can we look upon a fellow being in such extremity, and be mute? God has often kindly heard and as kindly answered our petitions. That He will hear us to-night, in behalf of this poor soul, I trust and believe. 'Whatsoever ye shall ask The Father in My name, He will give it you.'"

A short slender man, with silver hairs, and with a countenance of classic contour, on which the experiences of seventy winters had scarcely traced a furrow, now rose and led the hearts of the assembly to The Throne. His voice, manner and language reminded the millionaire of the artless simplicity of a child coming up in confidence to a parent whom he revered and loved.

We shall not attempt to describe his prayer, nor those of the three or four that, one after another, followed; nor tell in detail, with what moving earnestness and humility they asked Him who in goodness never wearies, should it be consistent with His will, to have compassion upon the stricken superintendent, and to raise him up, in the fulness of health and strength, to usefulness again; to preserve from all harm, if yet living, their missing brother on the sea, and speedily restore him to his pining ones at home; to appoint another to the place made vacant by the removal of the aged servant whom He had taken to Himself; to comfort the bereaved hearts whom He had called upon to resign the little one He had entrusted to them only for a time; and to spare to repentance and to that Better Knowledge which is at once joy, understanding and safety, the victim of those whose mission is to lead credulous minds astray, and who deem it great and witty and wise, with what they call *reason* to impeach the veracity and deny the existence and the power of Him who said, "LET THERE BE LIGHT!"—and light *was*.

"A pleasant place!" remarked the millionaire to his wife, as they walked home. "The members appear to take a deep interest in one another. A stranger would suppose them to be all of one family."

"They regard themselves so," said Mrs. Bignell.

"Seriously?"

"Seriously—of the Family of Christ."

"Humph—perhaps so. They are nice people, at all events. I haven't spent such a happy evening in I don't know when. Have you any idea that they would make room for an old sinner like me?" he added, laughingly.

"Try them, and see!" was the smiling reply.

"Humph! I don't know but I may," said her husband, with the air of one who supposed that the inclination for such a step depended upon himself. "The fact is, it is almost time for me to look into this matter."

"What matter?"

"Religion. I presume, it would be necessary to post myself up on the principal points, before they would consent to receive me?"

"I doubt if the church would be satisfied with that!" replied Mrs. Bignell, who could not help smiling at the ludicrous interrogatory.

"Why not?" inquired her husband, innocently. "They ought to be glad to get hold of any body—especially of a fellow with money? They are at *our* church."

"Our people are peculiar," returned Mrs. Bignell, not designing to be satirical. "They do not want to know so much of an applicant's money as of his piety. How else could we have so much confidence in one another?"

"They are too particular—by half!" said the millionaire, cynically. "What has a small, insignificant church like theirs to do with so much nicety? If they were a strong, established society like ours, and made up of men of substance, there would be some excuse for their squeamishness. The fact is," he added pompously, "there is nothing like charity in these matters—charity and liberality. When self-styled Christians exhibit too much fastidiousness and too little charity, you may safely set them down as ignorant of the

first principles of true Christianity. Our minister made a very excellent discourse on that very subject, last Sunday. 'Charity,' said he, 'charity'—he may have stolen the sentiment from some book for all I know, for I have often heard him make use of language that don't belong to him, and that I remember to have heard or read somewhere else—'charity,' said he, 'is not puffed up with its own righteousness, thinks well of all men, and hopes all things of every body,' or something to that effect. Now," he continued, "if I should make up my mind to offer myself for membership to your church, where would be the liberality or charity of its members, if they should doubt my competency for admission? Answer me that—will you? I had her there, I think!" he added to himself.

"The quotation to which you refer," said Mrs. Bignell, who could scarcely preserve her gravity, "is not new to me."

"I presume not," said the knowing millionaire. "In fact, I was quite confident I had heard or read it before."

"It is a familiar one," continued his wife; "and it may be found, though not exactly in your words, in Corinthians."

"Ah!" remarked the man of money, coloring. "In the Bible, is it? Humph! The fact is," he muttered mentally, "I have been making a ninny of myself!"

Mrs. Bignell smiled; and the conversation dropped: for they were now within a few paces of home.

CHAPTER XI.

It was Saturday evening, and Alice, drawing on her things, went to pay her customary weekly visit to her mother, who resided with a widowed friend of limited means, in an obscure street running parallel with, and only a few hundred yards from, Broadway.

Mrs. Russell was of that uncertain age which, thanks to Yankee improvements on French inventions in head-dressing, makes a woman look old in the presence of youth, and young in the presence of the aged. Though nearer to fifty than forty, she still insisted upon not being over thirty-three, in wearing her hair in ringlets, which she tossed with a coquetish air, and in affecting all the ardor and genial spirit of a girl. She was always making conquests and suggesting the most impossible schemes, and ever making sacrifices. With all this, she had a heart as soft and gentle as a child's, and could never go out without giving away all her loose change to the first object of real or apparent pity that came in her path. At first, Alice, out of her earnings, supplied her mother with means to pay her current expenses; but finding that she expended the money in the purchase of toys for ragged little children, whom she met in the streets, or upon small bare-footed newsboys, or professional beggars, and neglected her board, washing, and dressmakers' bills—for the poor thing had never been taught to do anything for herself—Alice was driven to the necessity of paying all

such accounts in person, and to supplying her girlish parent with pocket money for what she could not but help regarding as weaknesses.

On the evening in question, Alice, much to her surprise, found her mother pale and ill. The latter, however, thought nothing of it; declaring that she should be well in a few days, and that if she were not, she should take a dose of something or other, which would put her on her feet again stronger than ever.

But Alice was not content with this; and on learning that her parent had been confined to her bed two days without a physician, she instantly sent for one, who, on his arrival, and after looking at his patient's tongue, feeling her pulse, and conversing with her a few moments, prescribed a sedative, and, promising to see her again in a day or two, took his departure.

Alice watched his countenance narrowly, but could glean nothing therefrom on which to form an opinion. Her mother's features, however, were more readable; and she saw in them enough to fill her with apprehension.

"How did this come, mother?" she asked.

"I am sure I don't know, my dear," was the evasive reply. "Sickness, you know, will come upon the youngest of us, now and then. When you were a child, you were almost always troubled with something or other."

"But you are not a child, mother!" said Alice, smiling.

"Very true, child; but I was once: and this is only one of the old turns. But it don't matter. I shall soon be as well as usual in a few days. If the doctor's stuff shouldn't do me any good, I shall take a dose of Brandreth's or some body else's pills, and cure myself. There's an Indian doctor in East Broadway, who, for sixpence, will give you herbs and barks enough to last you a life time."

"Perhaps so," said Alice, who understood her mother. "But if you take them without the direction of a physician, your lifetime may be only for a few days!"

"What is that, child?" inquired the old lady, starting.

Alice repeated the remark.

"In that case," said the mother, "I shall have nothing to do with them."

"Nor with the pills, either, I hope, mamma?" smiled Alice.

"Not unless the doctor orders them, my dear—certainly."

"That's my dear mamma!" said Alice, caressing her. "Now tell your Alice how this came about?"

"I got my feet wet," said the girlish mother, falling into the trap.

"How, mamma?"

"By walking home in the rain, on Thursday afternoon."

"But why did you not ride home?"

"I had no money. I saw a poor little newsboy in Canal street, hallooing himself hoarse to get rid of thirty or forty newspapers which he had been unable to sell, and, as his great red feet were without shoes and his papers half spoiled, and his appearance very disconsolate, I thought I'd make him happy; and so I took him to a store and bought him a pair of shoes, and then purchased his papers, and he proudly ran off, shouting as if he would burst with joy."

"And what did you do with the papers, mamma?"

"I gave them to another little boy, without cap, jacket or shoes, who, with his hands in his pockets, was looking hungrily at some cakes in a baker's window. Just then it commenced raining, and not having sixpence with which to ride up, I stepped into a store to wait till the shower was over; but on going home the crossings were bad, and the water got in over my shoes, and the next morning I was

feverish, and felt in my side a slight pain which has not yet left me. But now that the doctor has taken me in hand, I shall be well in a few days, and then all will be right again."

"Dear mamma!" exclaimed Alice, her eyes glistening with tears, "I wish you wouldn't do these things!"

"What things, child?"

"Throw away your money in this sad manner!"

"I am sure you wouldn't say it was sad, my dear, if you could have seen the little fellow's face as he proudly took his first step in his new shoes; or the other little boy when, looking up with mingled incredulousness and delight into my eyes, he said, 'Do you give 'em *all* to me, ma'am'?"

"Perhaps so, mamma. But charity is a luxury that persons in our condition cannot afford. Please don't do so any more, mamma. It makes your Alice very unhappy!"

The heart of the girlish mother melted.

"Well, child, don't cry, and I won't. It is only one of my few enjoyments; but for your sake, I will make the sacrifice."

"For how long, mamma?" asked Alice, smiling through her tears.

The old lady looked at her with an expression which said, 'You are driving me into a corner!' And presently her soft mild eyes began to swim reproachfully.

But Alice understood with whom she was dealing, and repeated the question:

"For how long, mamma?"

"A whole month!" reluctantly said the mother, at length.

"Say three, mamma—say three, and, when you are well, I will give you a new hat."

"A new hat?" said the girlish mother, her eyes brightening.

"A new hat, mamma."

"With a bird-of-Paradise feather?"

Alice hesitated—for the hat alone would try her purse; but it was only for an instant.

"Yes, mamma; if"—and she smiled winningly—"if you will make the three months *six*?"

The child-mother drew back, shaking her head. But it was to drive a better bargain.

"If you will add a box of gloves?" she said, suggestively.

"Make it a year, mamma," said Alice, "and I will!"

The mild blue eyes of the child-mother swam reproachfully again, and her small handsomely-cut lips drew up into a pout.

Alice, knowing that she would eventually yield, silently observed her.

Presently the pouting lips fell back into their natural form, and remarked:

"A year is a long time!"

"But it soon passes away!" said Alice, encouragingly. "It was but yesterday that you were a child, and yet many years have passed away since then!"

"Not a *great* many!" said her mother, glancing in the glass, which was conveniently hung opposite the foot of the bed so that she could see herself in it from the pillow.

"Still it was as yesterday, mamma?"

"True, my dear!" admitted the child-mother. "I recollect reading 'Sinbad the Sailor' and turning down the leaf; but somebody took the book away, and I never finished it. I left off where he went down the rocks to pick up diamonds. Have you the work?"

"No, but I will add it to the hat and gloves, if you will but agree to the year."

"And the bird-of-Paradise feather?"

"And the bird-of-Paradise feather," said Alice.

"I'll do it! Yes, child, for your sake, I will make the sacrifice!"

"That's my own mamma!" cried Alice, embracing her.

"But I have something to tell you, my dear," said the girlish-mother, smiling, as she shook her ringlets in the glass. "I have made a fresh conquest!"

"Yes?" said Alice, inquiringly.

"What do you think of a bookseller for a step-father?"

"Who is he, mamma?" asked Alice, who was accustomed to the old lady's conquests.

"The gentleman who keeps the store where I stayed during the rain. He must have been struck by something in my manner or appearance, for he kindly offered me a chair, and said many obliging things, and tried to make himself very agreeable, and when I rose to go, asked me if he shouldn't stop an omnibus, and pressing invited me to call again."

"Mere politeness, mamma!" suggested Alice, smiling. "Besides, how do you know that he is not a married man and the father of half a dozen children, already! My dear mamma—you must not let gentlemen trifle with you so. When you find one over-polite, you should distrust him. What is the bookseller's name?"

"Brigham—C. Brigham. That was the name on the sign. But what the C. stands for, I don't know, unless it is Charles, which is a very pretty name, I am sure."

Alice smiled, and shook her head.

"No, it is for Christopher. I know the man by reputation very well. He is married and has four children, the eldest quite a young lady. They all attend Mr. White's Sabbath-school, in whose church Mr. Brigham has a pew."

The child-mother blushed, and looked indignant.

"Well!" she exclaimed, "if I didn't think so all the time!"

"That he had a pew in Mr. White's church?"

"No; that he was a married man! His beard was of a second day's growth, and single gentlemen shave every day! But," she continued, anxious to change the subject, "what news have *you*, child?"

"None," answered Alice. But she blushed as she spoke; for her interview with the litterateur uprose before her.

"What! no beaux—no offers? I never saw such a world! It was not so when I was your age, child. I had more beaux and proposals than I knew what to do with. But this is an ever-changing world! Why don't you set your cap for Mr. Brown? Widowers are as susceptible as young men."

Alice smiled.

"Why need I be in haste to marry, mamma?" she asked. "Surely *I* can support you; and you know that you shall never want while I have health and strength?"

"I am aware of that, my dear," answered the child-mother, with swimming orbs. "But I should like it better if you had not to work so hard."

"I don't work *very* hard, mamma!"

"I know better, my love. You cannot deceive *me*! A mother is not so easily misled. It is work—work—work, with you, all the time. And all for *me*, too! What do you do it for?"

"Do it for, mamma?" repeated Alice, her eyes filling.

"Yes, pet," said the simple creature sobbing; "what do you do it for? Who and what am I, that you should drag your dear young precious life out, for me? Why don't you pack me up and send me off to the poor house, at once; and then you would not have to work so hard!"

"Don't talk so, dear mamma—don't!" said Alice, convulsively pressing her to her breast.

"Well, child, don't cry, and I won't. I didn't mean any thing. I wouldn't hurt your feelings, you know, for the world. But it pains me to see you work so."

"It is a pleasure to toil for *you*, mamma!"

"I know *that*. But it isn't pleasant to feel that I am a burden to you."

"Not a burden, dear—dear mamma. No—*not* a burden!" cried Alice.

"If I were but of some use, and could do any thing for myself," said the child-mother, "it would be another thing. But," she added, with a hesitating and half humiliating air, "I am, as Mrs. Wilson (her landlady) often tells me, so queerly put together, and—and—so helpless, and useless, that I often wonder what I was ever made for."

"Don't think so—don't say so, mamma!"

"I can't help it, Alice. These thoughts will come, sometimes."

"Mrs. Wilson ought to have more sense than to make such impertinent remarks!" said Alice, her eyes kindling with resentment.

"She don't mean any thing," cried the mother, deprecatingly. "She only says it in jest!"

"I don't like such jests upon you, mamma! You and I and all upon earth are just what God has been pleased to make us; and if Mrs. Wilson has any fault to find with your putting together, let her make her criticisms to *Him*!"

"Don't be offended, my dear. She don't mean any harm. She says it in a laughing way, like a friend when joking you on some peculiarity."

"I don't like such freedoms, or such friends," returned Alice. "If Mrs. Wilson takes such a liberty with you again,

I shall remove you to some place where you will be free from such vulgar impertinence."

"If we only had a house of our own!" suggested the child-mother, for the purpose of turning her thoughts.

Alice, struggling with the ill-feeling that had been roused by the slight upon her parent, bowed her head upon the coverlet and breathed hard.

Her mother repeated her observation, and added:

"Why wouldn't it be a good idea, child, to bring Mr. Brown with you, when you come to see me? Who knows how soon we might have a home, *then*!"

"Dear mamma," returned Alice, looking up, her face pale from a subdued internal conflict, and her voice hoarse from the same cause, "let us not be the victims of our own fantasies. (This world is not a romantic play ground—I, at least, have not found it so! in which we can *dream* to pass the things that we would have, but a world of **HARD FACTS**. Let us therefore make the best of it, and wait patiently till our turn comes for a portion of its sweets.)"

"Perhaps you are right, my dear. But, in the meantime, we might do some thing ourselves to *help the sweets along*!"

"That is understood!" said Alice, smiling in spite of herself.

"To help them to *make haste*!" added the child-mother, quite proud and taking courage. "Now," she continued insinuatingly, "if you were to set to work seriously to find a rich husband—"

She paused, glanced suggestively at her daughter, and then, thinking she had said quite enough, *ahem'd* as a sign that she had done.

"I have thought of this," said Alice, slowly.

"Yes—well?" said the child-mother, with smiling anxiety.

"For *your* sake, mamma," continued Alice. "For I knew that you would be happier in opulence, than in such a home as my poor efforts could give you."

"O, much—*much* happier!" exclaimed her mother.—

"And I am *very* grateful to you for the thought."

"But," pursued Alice, in a hard, dry voice, "I—"

"Eh?" cried her parent, in alarm. "I hope you haven't abandoned the idea?"

"I have concluded to take another course."

"To marry a *poor* man?" demanded her mother, with an air of childish terror.

"No, mamma—not to marry *at all*; at least, for the present. I will work harder. I perhaps can get writing, copying or sewing to do, at which I can labor evenings, without neglecting my present duties; and I shall thus be able to secure you more of the little comforts and luxuries that you need, and also to preserve my own self-respect."

Her parent's blue eyes stared at her in surprise.

"There are *reasons*," continued Alice, "which I may not name, for this decision—at all events, not *now*. Therefore, mamma, no more of rich husbands!"

Her mother, lost in amazement, had evidently not heard the latter remarks, for she repeated:

"Your own self-respect!"

"My own self-respect!" reiterated Alice, with slightly dilating eyes. "What kind of woman is she^o who, for money, deliberately professes love for one whom she does not love; and who, with self-scorn in her heart and a lie on her lips, marches with the man she has imposed upon, to the altar, and there, with a vow which she neither hopes nor intends to fulfil, puts the *setting-seal* to her baseness?"

Mother—I AM NOT THIS THING!"

"Why, child—what a fuss you make about nothing! If

you are so particular, you never will get a husband—that is, I mean, one worth having. I see I must look out for a supporter for us, myself; and (glancing in the mirror and proudly tossing her ringlets) it is well that my attractions—

“Mamma! have I not said that you shall have your little comforts and luxuries? Don’t press me further down; my heart is already bowed: don’t!”

Her voice, more than her words, touched the child-mother, who, with a woman’s intuition, comprehended, in an instant, that there was something behind all this which her daughter, for some cause, had not seen fit to reveal.

“Don’t look so sad, pet!” she cried, throwing her arms around her and drawing her to her breast. “I didn’t mean any thing. I wouldn’t hurt your feelings for the world. But we are so poor, and I am at times so sorrowful, and such a poor creature, that I often think and say things of which I afterwards am ashamed. Forgive me, Alice dear!”

She was answered by a convulsive pressure.

“You have had some great heart-trouble, pet,” continued the child-mother, in tones of mingled sympathy and distress. “I know you have. But,” as Alice blushing looked up, “don’t tell me any thing about it; though it is something very great—I know that. But not a word, now. I don’t want to hear it, and I won’t. There are some griefs that cut deeply—all the way through, and silence does them good. One of these days you may tell me; but not now.”

A neighboring bell struck nine. And Alice, agitated and confused, rose to go.

“You musn’t mind any thing I’ve said, Alice dear!” cried her mother. “I wouldn’t hurt your feelings for the world!”

“I know that, mamma!” said Alice in a choked voice. “Good bye!”

“Kiss me again. Good bye, pet! Dear—dear!” added the poor soul, wringing her hands as her daughter disappeared, “I am always sending her away unhappy!”

“It is the privilege of some,” murmured Alice, at a later hour, as she reclined upon her pillow, “on falling into life, to drop into a train of circumstances, which makes their lot careless and happy; *mine*, is to think and—suffer!”

On Wednesday evening of the following week, Gressinger, fresh from an interview with the governess, returned home, gnawing the unlighted end of his cigar, in savage silence and abstraction. He was pale, furious and humiliated. His love for Alice, which he had half considered a condescension, had not been treated with the consideration he had looked for. In a moment of maudlin passion, he had proposed, and—been rejected.

CHAPTER XII.

'MR. WHITE'S' was a small, modest, unpretending church which gentry with Fifth Avenue notions would not enter for the world. And the attendants were, in the main, so much like the church, that it is said of a young exquisite, who carelessly dropped in there one Sabbath morning by mistake, that he at first stared around him in surprise, innocently fancying, from the absence of the brilliant dry goods, waving feathers and glittering jewelry, to which he was accustomed, that he had stumbled upon a new race of churchgoers, whose discovery would immortalise him; and he for a time, sat twitching his moustache in thoughtful anticipation of the sensation which the announcement would make in his set: when suddenly a something in the pastor's simple, earnest manner arrested and retained his attention, and with such effect that when he came again, in the afternoon, his killing cravat was shortened by at least a quarter of a yard, and his killing moustache shaved off, and himself scarcely distinguishable, for anything in his dress, from the other plain people there. How true this anecdote may be, we do not take upon ourselves to affirm; but *this* we will say—stranger incidents and greater revolutions in the minds of auditors have taken place in that little, unpretending church. As was frequently observed, "the Lord so loved the place, that He delighted in pouring out His Spirit upon those who sat within its walls."

There were seasons when it was dangerous for men and women whose hearts were set upon the world, to attend Mr. White's; for the chances were ten to one that they would leave it with a very small opinion both of themselves and of the things of this world, too. They occasionally passed from its doors proud and indignant; for the gospel preached there was far from palatable, and often made strangers furious; but they, in many cases, subsequently called again and again, and afterwards stated that they considered it a privilege to associate with the mild-mannered but earnest-minded people that worshipped there. There were, of course, among these, some who never repeated their visit, and who would as soon thought of disturbing a hornet's nest as of going there again; for Mr. White, in the pulpit, had a way of shaking up a stranger's brains, if he had any, and of sending him home with his whole being in an agitating, bewildering whirl, that every body couldn't stand. How much of this effect upon his auditors was owing to Mr. White himself, we are not able to say; but it was the opinion of his people that the credit of his apparent power was due to One *higher*.

Mr. Bignell woke up on Sunday morning in an agreeable humor, and with a sort of condescending pleasantness informed his lady that he should do himself the honor to accompany her to church.

Mrs. Bignell smilingly thanked him, and at the appointed time—for the millionaire was very tenacious of his dignity, and liked to do everything in style—they set off in their carriage.

"I presume," said the man of wealth, patronisingly, as they rode along, "that you have not many 'men of substance' among you?"

"Not *very* many," answered Mrs. Bignell, smiling.

The millionaire was pleased with the answer. He thought

it would be a gratifying thing to be looked up to as the richest man of the congregation. In his own church—or rather the one in which he had a pew and in which he was *sometimes* seen, he felt that his importance in this respect was altogether lost sight of in the fact that there were several equally as opulent and a few even wealthier, than himself.

As service commenced, however, all such thoughts passed gradually from his mind. The happy air of mingled plainness and good taste of the church, the simple earnestness of the attendants, the humility with which all bent in prayer, their apparently conscious dependence upon their Maker, as evinced in the feeling and the cordial spontaneity with which they joined in the opening hymns, all impressed the millionaire with the idea that he had fallen in with a small body of *real* people—such people as he used to think the world was made up of, when, a little artless child upon his loved mother's knee, he murmured the Lord's prayer.

The sermon struck him with great force. It was founded upon the passage, 'No man will come unto Me, except The Father draw him,' and was delivered in Reuben's happiest vein. We shall not attempt to describe it, as we suppose the reader to be sufficiently intelligent to comprehend the depth of its meaning; if so, he will come to the conclusion, as Mr. Bignell did, that men have but little to be proud of, and perhaps retire, like that gentleman, with a stirring sense of personal feebleness and insecurity.

"A very powerful discourse!" observed Mr. Tapley to Peter Brown, as they met in the crowded aisle, while passing from the church. "Mr. White, this morning, has certainly surprised me!"

"No wonder," returned the latter, smilingly. "He had plenty of help!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Tapley, with a look of confidential mystery. "You don't mean," he continued, whispering in the merchant's ear, and then putting his own under the lips of the latter, "you don't mean that he didn't write it himself?"

"O, no!" replied Peter Brown, laughing at the thought. "Nothing of that kind."

"Who, then, assisted him?" asked Mr. Tapley, puzzled.

"The Lord!" answered the merchant.

"Yes, brother," said Mr. Asbury, who, being near, had overheard the brief colloquy, "the Lord was surely in that sermon!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE millionaire wore an uneasy look at breakfast, on the following morning. He was pale, nervous, and uncommunicative. The servants glanced at one another with a meaning air. They understood that he had passed a sleepless night.

Mrs. Bignell perceived his shattered appearance with an anxious eye; but his reserved manner, and the system of the household, which she had always scrupulously observed, precluded her from inquiring its cause. She hoped she understood it; but the thought, without something to support it, was too electrifying to entertain, and she dismissed it—mentally praying, however, that what she hoped might have a reasonable foundation.

On rising from the table, the millionaire proceeded to the library, which he paced for a time with a disturbed step. His brain was in a state of exciting activity. The usually imperceptible veins in his cheeks and forehead assumed a painful distinctness—swelling and standing out from their walls of flesh like blue cords; now flattening and comparatively disappearing, then filling and protruding with vigorous energy, and threatening, every few moments, to burst their quivering films. His eyes became bloodshot, his hair moist with perspiration, and his whole being thoroughly aroused. And yet there was no sign of fierceness in his aspect; no indication of vanity, haughtiness or pride. But, in their

stead, the wild, haggard lineaments of one whose breast is filled with remorse and terror; whose last spark of courage has fled; whose last hope is gone; who finds himself sliding down a precipice, but can perceive neither twig nor creeping vine at which to clutch to save himself: a broken, abject, despairing man.

Could his worst enemy have looked in upon him then, he would have pitied and forgiven him; could the poorest beggar that ever craved an alms have seen him in that hour, he would not have envied him his wealth: for there was a mingled horror, helplessness and agony in his features that would have shaken their inmost hearts and filled them with compassion.

At length, he sank into his easy chair, and covered his face with his hands. Tears would have relieved him; but they would not come. His whole being was burning with a dry, hot, affrighting, bewildering remorse.

What to him in that hour was the vast accumulation which made men say, "James Bignell—millionaire, sir!" What to him his successful part in the great brutal drama in which he had felled so many other strugglers to the ground? What to him the tinsel, frippery and hollowness—the refined littleness and sickening pretension of the male and female shams in the circles up to which he had fought his way, and from which he had turned in disappointment and disgust?

No thought, then, of his thirty-thousand-dollar house, of his scattered city properties, of his bank, coal mine, railroad or insurance stocks, his farms in the upper counties, or of his rents; but much, *very* much of the ways by which he had pushed himself along to what he was—he who had plunged into the trying conflict for the Almighty Dollar, without a shilling, and come out with a victor's ringing shout, and with a victor's dripping hands.

Injuries he had done to less able, less unscrupulous and less artful strugglers in the battle; confidences he had ruthlessly betrayed; sly, malignant stabs at rivals whom he had openly treated with respect, but whose reputations he hesitated not to blacken in the dark; helpless men and women whom he had trodden down, regardless of their agonies, their moanings or their shrieks; snares that he had set, duplicities he had practised, falsehoods he had uttered, frauds he had planned and carried out—and all with an adroitness that screened him from the chastisement of the law—uprose within him now, in his brain, in his heart; each memory a spectre, and a fury, and a whip, lashing his startled spirit into terror, into tremblings, into shrieks, and into mournfully appalling cries of Guilty—guilty—guilty.

Pale and with eyes cast down—her hand upon the knob, as if desirous yet fearful of entering—her breast swelling and receding, as it has not for many a day, with mingled hope and dread—stands a small, slender, dark-dressed woman, nearer forty than thirty, listening, at the door; her small attent ear catching naught but half-stifled sighs, and dry, half-smothered sobs.

And well she knows, or hopes she knows, their cause; and much, *very* much, would like to enter and whisper comfort to the sufferer in the chair; but fears to follow her wish, lest she should be mistaken, and lest he should deem her a spy, perhaps an officious intruder, and order her from the room.

At length the sighs and the sobs ceased, and she heard the footsteps of the object of her hopes and fears approaching the door.

With a light, quick movement, the woman darted into the drawing room, and drew toward the window, at which she had scarcely taken her stand, when the hall door opened and closed, and her husband passed down the street.

Mrs. Bignell turned from the window and, with her usual quiet tread, went up to her room; where, dropping on her knees beside the bed, she offered up a silent prayer: for him in whose breast raged a tempest to which only One could say—'Peace; be still!'

CHAPTER XIV.

It was eleven o'clock; and Reuben, who had just returned from the chamber of a dying parishioner, entered his study to finish a sermon which had been begun for the morning of the following Sabbath. While taking off his surtout, his eye fell upon a note lying upon the half-written page of his manuscript. He drew on his coat again, for he well understood the meaning of that sign, and, taking up the note, read as follows:

"*My dear Friend*:—I am in suffering. If you can favor me with an interview this morning, I will be grateful.

JAMES BIGNELL."

Reuben meditated a moment.

"Can it be," he murmured hopefully, "that this poor soul is at length in travail? And yet, why not? Has not prayer been offered up in faith that he might be saved? And," he added, reverently looking upward, "art not Thou a *prayer-answering* God?"

He knelt awhile, and asked for strength and guidance. He rose refreshed; and then, with a clear mind and a stout heart, set out for the millionaire's.

He found Mr. Bignell pacing the library with disturbed steps.

"You wish to see me?" said Reuben, with his usual pleasant smile.

"Tell me," returned the millionaire, sinking into his easy chair, "tell me what I must do to be saved?"

His voice was hoarse, his face livid, his hair disordered, and his whole mien that of one in agony.

Reuben's heart bounded. For how long had he yearned to hear this inquiry from the man before him? For how long? and it had come at last! His joy was unspeakable.

He surveyed the questioner for a few moments in silence. His agitation was great, but not visible. He wished to speak, but did not dare till he could do so with calmness. Though by virtue of his calling as a Bearer of Glad Tidings and of his sympathy as a Christian, he was stirringly solicitous for the redemption of *all* men, he yet, from some unexplained cause, felt a *special* interest in the salvation of the millionaire.

"One word before we proceed," he said, at length. "Do you wish this interview to be conducted with the plain earnestness of *one* MAN conversing with *another* MAN; or, with the studied politeness of two gentlemen—one of whom, more exacting than his competitor, expects that his wealth, his sensitiveness and position in society will be carefully considered and respected?"

"Be plain as you will," replied the other. "This is not with me a moment for folly."

Reuben thanked him.

"I am in torture," continued Mr. Bignell. "Tell me, what I must do to be saved?"

"Do you ask," said Reuben, mentally bracing himself for a conflict with the millionaire's pride, "as one who would simply know the truth; or, as one who desires both to know and to be *governed* by it?"

"The latter," said Mr. Bignell.

"Are you sure—*very* sure?" inquired Reuben. "If you only knew—if you could even faintly imagine, how many are deluded in this matter! On this, as on all points, men are

daily deceiving, daily *being* deceived; and, worse than all, daily deceiving *themselves*. They approach it with eyes half fixed upon it, with hearts scarcely half set upon it; with feelings more affected than real, and still flattering themselves *to* themselves that they are sincere, and yet knowing that they *are* not. Therefore I ask; are you SURE? Reflect—be not too hasty; examine yourself; take time, *but*—REFLECT. It is not *me* you are to satisfy, but God; and it is fitting, proper, *all*-important, that you look, calmly, yet scrutinisingly, in upon your hidden nature—in that chamber where, as in the private drawer of a safe, you ever keep fast locked all the secret papers of your most interior being—and *then* say, *are you SURE!*”

The eyes of the millionaire wandered uneasily to the floor.

“I would have you face this question *manfully*,” continued Reuben; “for I warn you that it is no trifling thing to walk day after day and year after year in conscious hypocrisy; and still less so to attempt, even in thought, to palm off that conscious hypocrisy upon God!”

The millionaire shifted uneasily in his chair.

“In reference to every thing that pertains to the interest of his soul,” pursued Reuben, “man is a poor fellow. *How* poor, *how* helpless, and how self-deluding, none may know or even remotely imagine save those who desire, and *endeavor*, in VERY EARNEST, to walk in The Narrow Path. For in *that* path *all* MUST walk, who would reach The Kingdom, or they will reach it never!”

“Is it then so difficult—the path; to walk in it, I mean?” inquired Mr. Bignell, whose mind was in a whirl.

“If I could tell you—if I could explain to you the multiplied machinery, visible and invisible, devised and kept in ceaseless motion by The Relentless Enemy to ensnare,

bewilder and securely keep him in *the other*! From the cradle to the grave the poor fellow is on all sides beset by influences of every kind, form, color and degree, to hinder him from giving a single honest thought to what concerns him most—his Future. Let him go into society, and they surround him there: into business, and they begirt him there. He enters a railcar, but is scarcely seated, when a vender puts into his hand the last new book; he opens it, and virtually reads, ‘Be merry—take no thought.’ He picks up a newspaper, and reads in effect, ‘Be merry—life is a jest—take no thought—the world don’t.’ He retires into his library, opens a volume—of poetry, perhaps, and reads in substance, ‘This whirling world in which we live and eat and drink and toy life away in gilt and feathers, is all.’ He stops a business man, who tells him that the great end and aim of man is and should be to accumulate property and money; that to be an Astor, a Jacob Little, a Stephen Girard, or a Rothschilds, is to be all. He looks in at a wayside window, and his grosser senses are appealed to and excited. Beauty flaunts by in satin and rouge, and his thoughts are colored with lust. A croesus rolls by in a carriage, and his mind is warped by avarice. Pomp stares at him from the high places, and his breast is fired with ambition. Turn where he will, ‘This world is every thing,’ greets him like letters on a wall. Should he break through all this, and resolutely determine to make an effort to gratify the yearning of his soul, which, conscious of its peril, is ever crying to him, ‘Save me—save me!’ he is met on the threshold of his purpose by unconscious puppets of the Subtle One who gravely assure him that Satan exists not; that he is simply an imaginary phantom with which certain orthodox religionists, more fanatical than sensible, impose upon weak minds. Should this not tranquilize him, other

puppets are pushed forward, who—themselves the victims of an ever-present dread of the To Come—seriously tell him there *is* no To Come; that it is an invention of cunning priests and statesmen, and that simpletons alone are its dupes. Should he not be content with this, others, learned in all the subtilties of pious infidelity, are led up to smilingly persuade him that he is giving himself useless anxiety; that the Soul's To-morrow will *surely* dawn in brightness; that virtue is its own reward, and that God is too good to *keep* His own word. Should this not lull him into a fancied sense of security, others are introduced, who seriously assert that there *is* another world, but that it is very different from what is generally supposed; that, if he so desires, he can satisfy himself of its character by interrogating some of its inhabitants—his departed friends, for instance, who ready are both and willing to communicate with him. Should all this fail, should he still persist, should he throw himself, like a little child, at the foot of the cross, all the artillery of The Tempter is opened upon him. The world's laugh, the world's sneer, and the world's jibe pursue him. Temptation, in a thousand forms, relentlessly besets him. Doubts and fears—long periods of darkness and of gloom—harrassments within and harrassments without, assail him. In the closet, at prayer meeting, in the sanctuary, evil thoughts insidiously steal in upon him and blend with those that he sends up in lowly reverence to God. Nay, his own heart sides with The Subtle One, and urges him to throw down his faith, to turn his face from Christ, and go back—laughing, sceptical, and defiant—to the world. With Satan and his own heart incessantly contending against him; buffeted within and without; himself weak; and his trembling soul ever crying out 'Save me, save me!' is he *not* a POOR FELLOW?"

"His own heart!" said the millionaire, gloomily.

"His own heart," repeated Reuben; "next to Satan, his artfullest foe. No living thing will compare with it in treachery or cunning. Trust it, and it will lure you to destruction. Therefore, I repeat my question: Are you *sure*?"

"I think—yes, I think I am," said Mr. Bignell, after a short silence. "I know that I am a poor, miserable fellow; very unworthy in God's eyes, and very pitiful in my own; but I think I can say that if I knew what is right, I would try to do it." He paused awhile, breathing hard, and then added, heavily: "I have had a hard night; indeed, many hard ones of late: but none so terrible as that of last night. Another like it would kill me." He paused again, and again resumed, in a hoarse, broken voice, and with his eyes wandering uneasily around the carpet, "I have been a bad man. I commenced life without a shilling; but I pushed myself along—one way and another, I pushed myself along, to what I am. And that is what frightens me."

"What?" asked Reuben.

"What I *am*!" replied the millionaire, shrinking from himself. "If," he added, smiting his forehead, "if you could but look through this wall and read the blistering memories behind it, you would pity and despise me!"

Reuben was touched to the heart by the agony in the speaker's air.

"Tell me what to do!" said the old man.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," answered Reuben.

"I do not understand—" stammered the other with a deep blush. "I—I am indeed a poor fellow!" he added, with a mournful smile. "Tell me what it is to believe in Christ. What am I to understand by it?"

"That Christ is the only begotten Son of God; that He

came into the world to atone, by the voluntary sacrifice of his own blood, for the sins, however great or many, of all who would ask forgiveness of The Father in His name; that He *did* suffer and die for them; that His blood, shed on the Cross, was, in the eye of Divine Justice, a full and sufficient atonement for the transgressions of all who should repent with their whole heart; and that whosoever, from that hour, should ask pardon of God in Christ's name—(remember this—in CHRIST's name!)—should, though his offences were red as scarlet, and numberless as the sands of the sea, rise wholly and freely forgiven."

The poor fellow bowed his head in his hands, and breathed hard.

"What now?" asked Reuben, pityingly.

"Tell me what to do!" said the other, hoarsely.

"Have I not?"

"Not? No!" Reuben looked at him mournfully.

"What you have said applies only to ordinary men."

Reuben shook his head.

"Nay—to every living being."

"Aye—in Christ's own time!"

"No," said Reuben, "from the hour when with His dying breath He exclaimed, 'It is finished!' to the end of the world. See you not encouragement in this?"

The poor fellow appeared to be everything else but encouraged.

"For *common* sinners—yes; but for a wretch like me—no!"

In what a tone of mingled self-horror and despair was *this* uttered!

Reuben's heart bled for him.

"Take courage," he said. "The blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin him who believes. Why *will* you raise obstacles

in your own way where God himself places none? Or, as I *should* have said: Why do you *wilfully* REPLACE the obstacles to your peace that The Redeemer came on earth to forever put away?"

The poor fellow breathed hard, like one in extremity.

"Have you prayed?" asked Reuben.

"Prayed!" repeated the millionaire. "To whom *should* I pray?"

"To Him who alone can help you."

"I have not dared. It would only be adding to the already long, dark catalogue of my enormities. Prayed—prayed! Ha! ha! ha!"

Reuben shuddered. Never before had he heard a laugh so full of conscious ruin and despair.

"You mistake," he said, gently. "It is the privilege of every man—mark: *every* man!—to approach the mercy seat *in hope*. Our Redeemer, by His voluntary sacrifice of His own life, secured that privilege to the end of time, to *all who BELIEVE*. Are you not one of these?"

"I—I know not!" answered the millionaire, uneasily. "My brain is in a whirl. I know not what I believe. I cannot fix my thoughts. Whenever I attempt to concentrate them, they elude me. I am a poor, miserable, pitiful fellow; I feel it. But what can I do? Pray? Prayer is not for one like me. *That* calls for a devout and an honest heart, which mine is *not*. For one so steeped in all that is offensive, to enter the presence of God—"

"You *are* in His presence—it is The Holy One who is working upon you now," interrupted Reuben. "But for Him you would not have these feelings. Men, however much unconverted minds may deride the idea, do not awake to a stirring sense of their *REAL POSITION of themselves*! Nay," he added, smiling, "do not shake your head; it is

as I have said; you may not understand it *at present*, but you *will*. How *soon*, however, is known only to Him who has commenced this work. But be not cast down; He will *finish* it. For never yet began He in *any* heart a work that He did not complete. What—still in doubt?"

The millionaire started up, and impatiently paced the library.

Reuben surveyed him in mournful surprise.

"What you have said," exclaimed the agitated man, pausing at length, "is all very good, and doubtless very true. I neither believe, nor disbelieve it. It is well enough for those to whom it applies; but it does not touch *my* case. I am not a *sinner*, but a *DEVIL*. My life has been a tissue of lies, tyrannies, and frauds. I cannot point to a solitary thought that was not wholly selfish; to a single act, that did not spring from an unworthy motive; nor to an individual thing in my career that would not make all in heaven and on earth cry "Shame—shame!" and turn from me in loathing!"

Then in a rapid energetic manner, that reminded his auditor of a hurried discharge of musketry, he proceeded:

"I commenced the conflict of life at eighteen. I was an orphan, without friends and without money. I had nothing but high hopes and a warm heart; but ere I was five years older, the first were crushed, and the second embittered. My earliest friendships were ruthlessly broken; my confidences betrayed; my kindnesses repaid with injuries. I loved, and was jilted.

"At twenty-five I was heartless, and began to wound others as I myself had been wounded. But, notwithstanding my willingness to be a villain, I still remained poor. At length I thought I saw what adventurers call an opening.

"A widow, who lived parsimoniously, was yet reputed to be rich. I sought and obtained an introduction to her only daughter, an innocent, confiding girl, whose affections I shortly won, and we married—for love on her part, with expectancy of gain on mine. Two years thereafter, her mother died, when it was discovered that she had only been existing on the remnant of a small fortune, of which scarcely enough remained to decently entomb her. Disappointed in my anticipations, I turned like a fury upon my wife, and for six months led her a life of misery. I then affected reform, and, under pretence of bettering my fortune, took her to Philadelphia. We were poor, but not so straitened as I represented. Marriage was burdensome, and I resolved to be free. One night, having previously made preparations for flight, I rose from the side of my sleeping wife and child—the latter a fair-faced boy, and the image of his mother—and crept, like a thief, from the house. At dawn, I was exulting over the success of my cowardly effort for freedom, and on my way to New York. But you are pale, sir!"

"I—I was thinking of that poor woman's anguish on the morrow!" said Reuben, whose eyes were humid. "But," he added, in a slightly tremulous voice, "you partially palliated your wrong by subsequently endeavoring to trace them out—I mean the woman and her child?"

"How do you know that?" demanded the millionaire, staring at him.

"I asked the question for the sake of the dignity of poor human nature!" returned Reuben.

"I had talent," said the millionaire, evasively, "and became in two years the confidential clerk of a young liquor dealer, who had what men call a great heart. He endorsed heavily for a neighbor—a former college chum—who played

the knave, and left his notes to be taken up by their endorser, my employer, whose name was Richard White. The latter, in the excitement of the moment, and to gain time on the notes, which he honorably designed to pay, made over his business and property to me, with the understanding that I should return them so soon as the notes were all met. By this ill-judged movement, he had placed his all in my power;—had risked his all upon my supposed honor. Innocent, confiding man! When the notes were paid, he desired me to restore his business and property. I affected surprise at the request, and ordered him to leave the store. He could scarcely believe his eyes or ears. He repeated his request, and I my order. Perceiving at length the mingled treachery and duplicity of which he was the victim, he indignantly knocked me down, and walked out. I never saw him from that hour."

"Poor Richard White!" exclaimed his auditor.

"Ha! you knew him?" cried the millionaire.

"I simply said 'Poor Richard White!'" returned Reuben.

"That stroke of villainy," said the other, "placed me in possession of forty thousand dollars—the foundation of my fortune. It was, like that of the first case, the act of a miscreant. What say *you*, sir?"

"I am not your judge," replied Reuben, hoarsely. "Permit me to add that it were more appropriate for you to unburthen the secrets of your life to God, than to me."

"I *wish* you to hear them," said the millionaire. "I desire you to know the man whom you class among those to whom pardon is offered, and to *then* say whether you think there is a shadow of hope for him!"

"If you insist upon it—"

"I am in judgment before God and my conscience, and in despair!" interrupted the other. "If you feel any interest in a reeling soul, hear and counsel me!"

"Proceed," said Reuben.

"One of my customers was in a strait, and, to secure the payment of certain extended notes, gave me a mortgage on his property. Ere the notes fell due, he died! His wife and children were in distress, but I exacted payment of my claims! The property became mine at a fourth of its value; and, although the widow had my promise that she should occupy the house rent free for three years, and also have the privilege of redeeming the estate within that term I yet threw her and her little ones into the street in less than four months, placed every obstacle in her way to hinder her from reclaiming the property, and drove her into beggary, in which state she died. Her three children, having no one to guide or care for them, became scattered; one became a gambler, and was slain with a knife over a card table; another went to sea, and was lost in a gale; the third is now in the Penitentiary, for house-breaking.

"John Russell, a druggist, was embarrassed. It was known that in addition to my regular business I discounted notes and loaned money. He wanted ten thousand dollars for a few months, and gave me a mortgage on three houses and lots and twelve shares in a coal mine for security. He was an active, honest, but not over-prudent man. He drove his business fast, but carelessly. When his obligations fell due, he could not meet them. I rejoiced at this; for his property was richly worth double the amount of the mortgage, and I resolved, if possible, to grasp it. He asked for an extension, which I refused. The next day it was known to all down town that he was a bankrupt. He made herculean efforts to save himself; but I had emissaries at work,

and it is not easy for a broken man to borrow money. I foreclosed the mortgage, and so dexterously managed the sale, that the property sold for less than my claim, and still left the druggist twelve hundred dollars in my debt. He was amazed, frightened, stupified. Like a sailor wrecked at sea, he, on finding himself in the waves of ruin, instinctively threw out his arms. But a few wild, uncertain strokes convinced him of the futility of the struggle: and, losing his courage, he resigned himself to his fate, and sunk into a clerk. He might, in a few years, have recovered himself; but his nerve and energy were gone. He allowed the memory of his misfortune to prey upon him. His eye became absent, his brow uneasy, his step timid, his coat seedy. One evening, he sat up late meditating. On rising the following morning, his wife noticed that he looked pale. She laid her hand upon his forehead—its marble coldness told her that she was a widow! At the coroner's inquest it was discovered that during the night he had taken prussic acid."

Reuben started as if he had suddenly been stung; but he recovered himself, and, as before, looked the miserable, self-denouncing narrator calmly yet sorrowfully in the eye.

—"I boarded with Edgar Rix, a fur dealer, who had twenty thousand dollars in property, a handsome wife, and a sickly child. He was fond of gunning and boating, in which I sometimes accompanied him. His lady had a high and generous spirit, and was not insensible to the attentions of the boarder, who was still young, handsome, and a master of the art of pleasing. One day, the fur dealer, an easy credulous man, who regarded me more as a brother than a friend, invited me to go sailing with him down the bay. I agreed. We had been out four hours, and at length set

about to return. We were then far below the Narrows, and out of sight of witnesses—"

"Stay," interrupted Reuben, rising. "I cannot listen to this!"

"Keep your seat," cried the millionaire, "and I will skip the particulars. The next day, the papers announced that while Mr. Rix was sitting on the side of the boat, he was knocked overboard by the sudden shifting of the boom, and that all the efforts of his companion to catch him ere he sunk or to recover his body were fruitless. Six months afterwards, I married his widow, whose child lingered only a year or two and then died. My son Tom was the issue of that union. Had I no remorse? Perhaps—at times! But it found only little room in my breast. *My eye was fixed upon a million*, of which I had as yet but little over a third. To acquire that million was the topmost point of my ambition. My wife soon learned to understand the man she had mated, and to wonder how she ever could have consented to jeopard her peace and name for him. Money was my idol, not woman. The partner of my guilt dwelt with me twelve years, and then took her leave of me and of earth. At her death, I was turning the corner of my first six hundred thousand.

—"Robert Halsey was a neighbor, and occasionally spent an evening at my house. He was a man of leisure and of means. Descended from an old Knickerbocker family, he inherited a fortune, and knew but little of business. I regarded him as fair game. He had forty thousand dollars, which he desired safely to invest. I had twenty thousand dollars worth, of a certain stock, which was selling at only sixteen dollars per share. By a little adroitness, I, in a few weeks, caused it to run up to thirty-two. Then turning mine over to a confederate, who put it up for sale, I advised

Halsey, who had confidence in my judgment, to purchase it. He did so. A few days later, the stock, no longer bolstered up by the false reports which had served the purpose of their originator, rapidly declined to their original figure, and my victim wept over the loss of twenty thousand dollars, never dreaming that the money was in the pocket of his friend, to whom, with an air of deep sorrow, he related the result of the unfortunate investment. I, of course sympathised with him, and wondered how I could have been so deceived in a stock in which I had had so much confidence!

—"Gideon Wiley was a builder. He commenced life by buying a lot and mortgaging it for the means to put up a house, which, when finished, he sold; and with the profit and the return of his original capital, he adventured upon the construction of two. Thus he went on, making steady progress every year, and hoping in time to boast of a fortune. He was honest from instinct, and it was safe to trust him. He was a shrewd man in his own business; that is, he knew how to buy materials advantageously, and had a keen eye for rising property; but in the study of man he was a mere child. I loaned him money—at times on security, but oftener without, for the purpose of leading him on; now and then, in an assumed fit of petulance, exacting a bill of sale or a mortgage on all he had, and returning it to him a day or two afterwards, when my sullenness had apparently worn off, with my compliments and also with a half indignant request to know what he meant by such an insult to a friend. He grew in time accustomed to my 'whims,' and humored them, however unreasonable, without surprise. All was moving smoothly, when a deep gloom settled over the trade and the finances of the country; business became paralyzed; bankrupts were announced every day; the banks, not knowing whom to trust,

stopped their discounts; money grew scarce; all classes were forced to bend beneath the pressure; contractors suspended their operations; workmen walked the streets in idleness; property of all kinds rapidly diminished in value; and thousands who only a short time before had lived in affluence, were hurled down to beggary: the whole Union was in affright. Seasons like this are the golden days of capitalists. Having early perceived the crest of the rising cloud, I had quietly called in my resources, and when the storm came, I was prepared to take advantage of the ruin it brought to others. With two hundred thousand in cash, I that year bought real estate that, when the panic was over and confidence had again returned, was richly worth a million. Among those whom the pressure had forced to their knees, was my friend the builder. The storm found him with ten buildings in various stages of construction—six of them his own, the others on contract. Notes he had received and paid away were dishonored, and others he had given were rapidly falling due. Had the former been met by the givers, his own would have been taken up. To add to the criticalness of his position, the holders of the notes he had taken and made use of, finding their givers bankrupt, furiously pressed him, their endorser, for payment. He was like a hunted stag; turn which way he would, he was beset. Money could scarcely be had at any price. He had notes, but who would take them: mortgages, but who would loan on them, when cash was bringing four and five per cent. a month? In his strait he came to me. 'There is no use,' he said, 'in my attempting to breast this storm unless you will help me.' I told him I could not. He reflected a moment and then continued: 'Loan me enough to finish my contracts, and I will give you the profits of them.' I shook my head. 'As-

sign the contracts to me, make over your bonds and mortgages to me, and also the new buildings you now have under way,' said I, 'and I will let you finish them all for me.' This proposition was so preposterous that he smiled. 'Reflect?' said I, with my accustomed gravity. He did reflect, and then looking up, said, 'I see your aim. You wish to cut off my creditors from the ability to harass me or to touch my property, to secure me time in which to recover myself, and also to furnish me with means to finish my buildings?' I smiled, but did not contradict him. 'Tut, tut, Gideon,' said I, with playful petulance, 'you must not speak of things that should not be spoken.' He jumped up, and seizing my hand, cried, while tears started from his eyes, 'I thought so—I knew so. You would not take the profits of my contracts when I offered them, but generously step forward to save me from ruin, and lend me money at common interest, in times like *these*! You *are* a friend. God bless you!' 'Make haste with the assignments, Gideon,' said I, 'before your creditors, by obtaining judgment, shall render it impossible.' He gratefully squeezed my hand, and, trembling with emotion, retired. In a few days, the mortgages and contracts, duly assigned, were in my iron safe, and I gave him a check for what he wanted. The buildings were shortly completed, *but in my name*, and Wiley's creditors then pressed him for payment. He represented that he no longer owned anything, that he had sold all to me, and that he was simply in my employ. This was one of the many white lies that are admitted by all, *save their victims*, to be perfectly excusable and legitimate in trade. The creditors, furious and incredulous, dragged him into court and dared him to make oath to the statement. He had gone too far to recede, without being suspected of

fraud. I had foreseen this, and was among the spectators, carefully observing him. He meditated a moment, and then boldly called for the book. It was placed in his hand, and, crimsoning to his temples, he took the oath. As he descended from the stand, every lip was curled with scorn; for his blush satisfied all present that he had sworn falsely. As for me, *I felt a hundred thousand dollars richer!* I returned to my store, lit a cigar, and quietly exulted over the success of my 'whims.' A few weeks, and the builder came to me, a changed man. He was pale and haggard. His eyes were sunken and glistening with that peculiar light which results from long-continued thought upon a single theme. I received him coldly. 'Let me have a thousand dollars,' said he. I stared at him, and desired to know what for? He looked surprised, blushed, and stammeringly repeated his request. I answered that I loaned money only on security, and asked what he had to offer in that way? 'I hope,' he said, with a quivering lip, while his eyes began to gleam with indignant malice as the suspicion of my treachery crept through his brain, 'because I have rashly placed myself in your power, that you do not design to take advantage of me.' 'What do you mean, rascal!' cried I, springing with feigned fury from my chair. 'Do you come here to insult me? Get out of my store! Here, John—Thomas—William, put this ruffian in the street!' The builder started. He could scarcely realize such villainy. He staggered a few steps, like one reeling under a terrible blow from above; and then muttering, as if to himself, 'It is just!' he walked or rather tottered out, with the air of a man utterly crushed. What became of him I cannot state with certainty; but there was a rumor that he was good for nothing afterwards, that he rapidly went down to utter poverty, and that he and his

wife subsisted, in their latter days, on the earnings of their daughter.

"Add to all this," continued the millionaire, hastily drawing forward his easy chair, seating himself, and looking his auditor steadfastly in the eyes, "a long black list made up of numberless lies, of every shade and depth; of bland deceptions to make the most in bargains with credulous or less cunning-minded men; of reputations that I have covertly blackened, to serve my interest or to gratify my hate; and of meannesses and brutalities, great and small, business and domestic, either of which should have made my back familiar with the whip, and then tell me what you think of me."

"A word can do that," replied Reuben, shuddering in spite of himself. "You are a very great sinner."

"Say a *miscreant*—a double-dyed *miscreant*, too base to live and too unfit to die!"

"*Very* unfit to die, with all this load upon your soul," said Reuben.

"It makes you creep to barely think of it?"

"Frankly—it does!"

"What, then, must it be to me, who have to carry it?" cried the millionaire. "I told you," he added, with a wan smile, "that I was no common sinner, and that what you said did not apply to *me*! Go further back—dive deeper into The Promises, and tell me if there is any hope for villains. Do! I implore you. I am a sinking man!"

"My dear friend," said Reuben, pitying his distress, "if the blood of The Redeemer does not save you, nothing will; if His sacrifice is not sufficient to atone for your great guilt, nothing is: if you find not pardon through Him you are lost."

The millionaire turned livid.

"Is there no other way?" he asked, in a hoarse whisper. "Is there nothing behind that plan, in all the Scriptures? Remember, you are talking to a despairing man!"

"There is no going behind Christ," returned Reuben. "His sacrifice is the only hope of sinners."

"But," suggested Mr. Bignell, "if I should go, on my knees, to God himself—"

"If with any plea but Christ's dear blood, or in any name but that of his dear Son, He *would not hear you*."

"What? *If I were penitent*?"

"Not if you had done penance for a million centuries; not if you had made the amplest restitution to all whom you have defrauded; not if you had given away all that is rightfully yours to the church and the poor!"

The millionaire looked bewildered.

"Listen," said Reuben, "to the Redeemer himself: 'No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him.' Do you still doubt? Then again: 'There is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' What—yet incredulous? Then what think you of this: 'I am the way the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by *Me*'?"

The millionaire could no longer doubt. Still he was uneasy.

"Do not be thus cast down," said Reuben, whose experienced eye read what was passing in his mind. "As there never yet was a man so free from sin that he had not need of Christ, so there never yet was one so deeply steeped in sin that Christ's blood was not sufficient to cleanse him. Do you believe this?"

"Yes—but——"

"But what?" asked Reuben, smiling.

"I am so *very* guilty!"

"Christ is the Good Physician. He came not to minister to the whole, but to the *sick* and the *wounded*. And *you* are one of these?"

"Yes," said the millionaire, in anguish, "one of the *very* sick. O, could I but think that there is even a shadow of hope for one like me!"

"The promise is to *all* who BELIEVE," said Reuben. "Believe, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy. Believe, and ere you seek your couch to-night, you will be happy. Only believe."

"In what?"

"The Lord Jesus Christ—who is making intercession for you now, with The Father!"

Mr. Bignell looked at him in mingled earnestness and surprise.

"O!" cried Reuben, "you know not the constancy of the Redeemer's goodness. The instant a sinner shows signs in his heart of repentance, The Son is pleading for him with The Father! and can you have any fears of the result of your approach, when you have so *all-powerful* an advocate? Come, dear friend, let me lead you to Him?"

Mr. Bignell shook his head.

Reuben surveyed him for a few moments in mournful silence.

"He has shown you your *need* of a Saviour, by showing you *yourself*!" he observed, at length.

"My *need* of a Saviour? Oh yes!" returned the old man. "Very great NEED!"

"He has said for your encouragement, 'Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.'"

"Yes," sighed the millionaire.

"The Father Himself has said, 'In the day that you seek me with a whole heart, I will be found of you.'"

"True—"

"The Father's ear is ever open—the Holy Spirit ever willing."

"I doubt it not! But—"

"Who *would* come, *may* come. He joys for all who *do* come. Will you?"

The millionaire reflected.

Reuben's countenance darkened with mournfulness at his hesitancy.

"Dear friend!" he said, in an agitated voice, "do not trifle with yourself in a moment like *this*!—Oh, in all that respects his eternal interest, how poor a fellow is man!"

"I have faith," said Mr. Bignell, coloring, "but—"

He broke off and turned his eyes, in confusion, to the floor.

Reuben's experience intuitively enabled him to comprehend his difficulty.

"But you feel restrained by some invisible power from taking the step that your judgment prescribes?" he said, finishing the sentence from him.

Mr. Bignell bowed.

"Shall I tell you what that invisible power *is*?" continued Reuben. "You would shudder, perhaps?"

"No," said the millionaire.

"It is the same evil spirit that tempted the first pair in Eden; that beguiled Judas into the betrayal of his Master; that prompted you in the dawn of your manhood, to strike boldly for a million; that spares no human being while his heart still beats, or while he yet has left a single sense that may be played upon to his undoing; who when he discovers a soul, that he had thought securely his, struggling to fight its way to God, employs every device, visible and

invisible, to bewilder and unnerve, and thereby prevent it from succeeding; who pursues man, like a relentless enemy, in the counting room, in the field, in the workshop, in the domestic circle, in the street, in the closet, the prayer meeting—yea in the very sanctuary——SATAN!"

Mr. Bignell started.

"Yield to him *now* and you will find the next effort to shake him off still more difficult."

"What shall I do?" demanded the millionaire, springing to his feet.

"Call aloud for help on him who alone can give you the will and the power to relieve yourself from the grasp of your enemy."

"Help, Lord!" cried the other, faintly, "help or I perish!"

"Was that with your *whole heart*?" asked Reuben.

The old man blushing but frankly answered that it was not.

Reuben sighed.

"See you not," he said with a sad but friendly smile, "how deep a hold The Enemy has on you?"

The millionaire hung down his head in mingled shame and alarm. He now, for the first time, began to experience and to mentally acknowledge the presence of the Subtle One, whose existence as a real being he, all his life, had been inclined to doubt—quietly setting it down, like many others, for one of the many superstitions that crafty priests, pagan and christian, had succeeded in imposing upon the world. Now, however, he began to clearly perceive the, to him, startling fact that Satan was *not* a phantom of the imagination, but a stern reality; a living, breathing, terrible Spirit, full of guile and rapacity; a Being of might and knowledge and malignity—hunting man down with a relentlessness that slumbers not, worrying him at home and abroad, in his

thoughts and dreams, and infusing into each of his faculties a virus that fills it with corruption and converts its owner into a willing conspirator against himself.

A sense of mingled helplessness and horror crept over the millionaire. He clasped his hands over his head and, looking down, stood like one paralysed.

"Lift up your heart to God!" suggested Reuben, who comprehended the character of his thoughts. "Although He knows it already, yet tell Him how fearfully you are beset. Call on Him with your whole heart, and He will come to your help."

"I am so unworthy—so full of guilt!" sobbed the millionaire. "Ask Him for me; won't you? Do. My heart is breaking."

"Be not afraid," said Reuben. "God is stern only to the obdurate; to the penitent, He is more loving and benignant than any father. Approach Him, therefore, with confidence. He is kind and merciful, and will tenderly hear you. Let no thought of your past hold you back."

The poor fellow moved not. Every muscle of his body and every fibre of his inner being appeared to him to be spell-bound and beyond the influence of his own will.

"Let no fear of your sins restrain you," continued Reuben. "Be not duped by the artful whispers of The Tempter, who, if you resist him not, will forever retain his hold upon you. Be assured of this: *From the moment you believed and repented, your sins were forgiven.* Would you have THE ASSURANCE of it? Kneel, then, to your Maker; tell Him freely all that weighs down your heart; omit nothing—not even the fraction of a thought: and He will not let you rise till He has blessed you with that assurance. Come—one effort; one brave effort!"

No motion in that poor mind or body, yet.

But Reuben did not falter nor despair. He was too conscious of his real position, as well as of his companion's, to be in any wise dismayed; for he fully understood that it was not simply his own mind in conflict with another mind, but The Spirit of Truth struggling to wrest a trembling soul from the grasp of The Arch One.

"One spring," he cried, "and you will be across the gulf that yawns between you and safety; one effort with all your heart, and you will be free from doubt, and fear, and gloom. This to inspire you: The sins of all who *have* believed, who *do* believe, and who may *yet* believe, were nailed, with our dear Redeemer, to the tree on Calvary. Take courage, then, dear friend—take courage!"

"I have nothing to offer," cried the old man, weeping; "not so much as one good thing—not one!"

"Salvation cannot be *bought*—it is FREE!" cried Reuben. "But," he added, wishing for some private reason to better understand the heart of the man before him, "can you not call to mind a single disinterested kind word or helping-hand to some poor stricken one in sorrow or in need?"

"Not one."

"Out of A WHOLE MANHOOD?"

"Not one!" was the despairing reply.

How completely had Satan exhausted whatever sweetness had originally existed in the breast of this poor fellow!

A shade of mournfulness swept over the brow of the young clergyman. But it lingered only for a moment.

"Cheer up!" he exclaimed. "Hope is not yet gone. The darkest hour in the soul's night is that which precedes its dawn. Cheer up. There is light ahead."

"Light? And for me?"

"Great light! From the sinner God asks nothing, expects nothing; for *possessing* nothing, he can *give* nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing. For *every* thing is God's—all in heaven and on earth, man himself, his powers, conceptions, utterances—every thing. We are simply dependents on The Father's bounty. Had you had a kind thought or word for a fellow being in distress, it would have been from heaven and not yourself, and therefore you could not bring it up as your own. It was the Lord's ere it came to you, His *when* it came, and hence not yours to offer. You surely would not tender to Him, what is His already!"

The millionaire's face blanched; and his features became fixed with horror.

"God help me—God help me!" he cried, reeling to his chair. "I never was bankrupt in hope till now!"

"Still, be not cast down," said Reuben, gently. "For all this, you may yet hope."

"I—hope!" exclaimed the millionaire, bewildered. "Hope—for me?"

"For you. Said I not there was light ahead?"

The millionaire stared at him with eyes molten with consciousness, agony and doubt.

"What if I should tell you, dear friend, that the price of your pardon has been paid, and that, too, by The Only One from whom The Father has ever accepted aught?"

The doubt disappeared from the staring eyes, but the helplessness and the agony remained.

"CHRIST is your offering!" said Reuben.

"Christ?"

"Our REDEEMER! who offered himself for you, and for me, and all who believe, and whose offering was *accepted*!"

"All?" repeated the millionaire, with a faint smile. "Precious thought!"

"Is it not?"

The old man started up, and in a voice quivering with emotion, cried, as he extended his hand to his companion.

"Great light, indeed—dear light—sweet light! Come—let us to The Throne. My heart is bursting. Come!"

Reuben could scarcely contain his joy.

"One word," he said, tremulously. "There are occasions when it is fitting to searchingly interrogate our most interior being, and to be satisfied only with answers that will stand us at The Judgment. This is one of them. In your history it is an hour scarcely less solemn than that to which you will awake in The Resurrection."

The poor fellow bowed.

"You are now about to enter, for the first time, the presence of that Holy One whose august name thrills every meditating heart with awe, and stirs it with swelling reverence. Look in upon yourself. Have you a becoming sense of the solemnity due to such an audience, to such an hour, to such a PRESENCE?"

The millionaire turned aside his head, and uttered a deep sigh.

"Do you realize that for whatever you may pass among men, in the eye of The Eternal you are but a beggar, and unworthy, from any merit of your own, to be permitted to approach or to look upon Him, even in faith? Is there any private thing that it is your secret purpose to keep from Him? Come you up to Him, with the humility and trusting confidence of a little child? Are you willing to trust yourself *entirely* in His hands? Come you to Him with a faith that does not falter? Repose you *all* your hopes for mercy on the merits of His dear Son ALONE? Dear friend what says your inmost being to all this?"

"Christ is my offering!" sobbed the poor fellow, in a trembling voice.

Reuben was half bewildered with joy.

"Come," he said, kneeling; "come—to God!"

CHAPTER XV.

FREE!

In the fields of a haughty Roman toiled a manly Greek in the garb of a conquered bondman. For twenty years he had been the drudge of an unfeeling master; for twenty years he, in silence and in sternness, had kept himself aloof from his fellow slaves and nursed the hope of freedom. He was a stranger in a far country, and separated by great seas, and wastes, and mountains, from his wife and little ones, from parents kindred and—*Greece!* at whose dear name his heart leaped, his cheek blushed and his eye kindled as in the noon-tide of his youth. His fellows feared him, and, in secret, his haughty master also; for the Athenian, at times, was influenced by his indignant spirit, to forget that he was a slave, and to remember only that he was a man. When aroused, he was fearful; sweeping all before him, like some furious spirit; breathing slaughter and spreading it: and all fled from him in terror. After one of these outbursts, he would wander off to the woods and hills, and be gone many days, none daring to follow him. When so pleased, he returned, and resumed his work, no one presuming to question or call him to account for his absence. One morning, the master, pointing to the Greek, said, to some visitors from the city, "Yonder slave hath been upon my estate for twenty years, and in that time no man hath seen him smile." The guests looked at the bondman, and marvelled. Then

said the master's only daughter, who was standing by, and who had often felt for the Athenian, "Father, if thou wilt ratify my words, I will engage, ere five minutes shall pass, to call up both smiles and tears to the face of Arcas." The master, suspecting nothing, smilingly agreed, and the party approached the Greek, who, silent and stern as usual, was ploughing in the field. "Arcas," said the master's daughter, "I would speak to thee." The Greek surveyed his visitors with knitted brows, and then turning to his young mistress, calmly awaited her remark. "Arcas," said the maiden, "my father hath ready for thee a hundred pieces of silver, to take thee back to Greece. *Thou art FREE!*" The Athenian staggered, and turning pale, raised his hand to his brow as though he had received a sudden blow. The master colored, but felt that he had given his word, from which he could not recede. "Free!" cried the Greek, gasping. "Free Arcas," repeated the maiden; "free as any here or in the world; free to return to thy native land, and with ample means to help thee on the way." All looked to observe the effect of these words upon the Greek. He was like one transfixed; every limb and feature was set: and he appeared to have been transformed into marble. In a few moments, however, his limbs became unlocked; his cheeks and forehead were suffused with a scarlet glow; his legs gave way beneath him, and he sunk, with a faint laugh, to the earth. Free! wife, children, kindred, friends, home, Greece! were all comprised in that little word. "Free, at last—free!" he gurgled, sitting on the ground. "Let the sun shine out in all his splendor; let the birds sing, the woods deepen the brightness of their green, the streams murmur, the flowers unfold their glories, and the earth bring forth a thousand-fold, now; for my heart is drunk with joy, my soul wild with gladness: I am *free*—FREE!"

A printer wore a pleasant face before men, but a gloomy one at home. When his friends asked him how he was getting along, he always answered 'Bravely'; but when his wife made the same inquiry, he shook his head and responded, 'Poorly.' The latter answer was the true one; but the printer feared to make it to the world lest he should lose caste in society and trade. The poor fellow had a conscience, which always smote him when he told a falsehood; but he sighingly replied to that gentle but ever-watchful monitor, "A man must keep up appearances; if he don't, he'll sink into a nobody. I, however, will be more careful in future." But with all his vigilance, his conscience had substantial reasons for calling him to account at least a dozen times a day. Sometimes he would vary his reply to—"I can't afford to tell the truth; I am poor, and in debt." This was his plea whenever, in answer to a query to that effect, he told a stranger, or a customer, that he would have a circular, a lot of cards, or a book finished at a certain time, well knowing at the moment that he could not. "A man who is up to his ears in debt, and with notes and bills continually falling due," he would say to himself, "cannot afford to let proffered work go away. If he should try it, he would *soon* see the end of his rope." Thus it had been with him for seventeen years, during the last fifteen of which ruin had daily been in sight; but he had fought it off, from week to week, month to month, and year to year, with short notes, 'call to-morrow,' or, 'part down and the balance next week,' till he could fight it off no longer, whereupon he relinquished the contest, and retired a whipped, defeated man. He drew a long breath, and walked out of his late office whistling; but it was observed by one of his old hands that the tune which commenced so cheerily at the top of the stairs glided off into a melancholy refrain as

the whistler reached the bottom. Poor fellow! though indifference was in his face, his heart was very sad just then. He felt that fortune had not used him kindly; that she had led him along with a perpetual promise of a good time coming, which never came; that she allowed creditors to worry, hamper and oppress him; and that she had wound up her deceitful conduct by jilting him at last. "Ah! well," he muttered with a sigh, "if I were but free from debt, I should feel easy!" If! But where there is a will, there is a way, and the bankrupt had the will. He returned to journeywork, and, taking off his coat, earned, in two years, enough to open a small office; many of his old customers returned, and new ones were with but little difficulty found; his creditors had agreed to give him time, and, with his eyes fixed upon a single point—the payment of his debts, the printer energetically moved forward. But it was no easy road; for with economy bordering upon parsimony, and unremitting labor from early dawn till late at night, he found himself, at the end of three years, only half way up the hill. At this stage, exhausted nature, which he had taxed to its utmost, exacted a respite, and he lay upon his bed for months; during which time his business, with no interested party to watch over it, declined until the profits scarcely equaled the expenses. But notwithstanding this blow, the printer's resolution to free himself from debt remained unshaken. He was no sooner able to go about than he commenced looking up his old as well as fresh customers. In a few weeks his types and presses were kept steadily and rapidly employed. Months flew by; a bad debt now and then disturbed the harmony of his calculations, but he still pressed forward: and the months glided into years—the printer, drawing nearer and nearer to the top of the hill. Meanwhile, his industry, promptitude

and carefulness were slowly but surely attaining their natural result. His customers increased in numbers, and his facilities for meeting their wants were gradually accumulating. As the second third year approached its close, he found himself within a few steps, or rather dollars, of deliverance. How his heart throbbed and his veins swelled! At length the last day of December arrived. He owed only a small balance of eighty dollars, and he had due to himself in small sums by patrons twelve times that amount. It was Friday—a poor day for collecting, but making out his bills, he hurried forth to glean at least enough to enable him to taste what he had not for three and twenty years—the thrilling nectar of freedom. His first call was on a hatter, who was so busy with customers that he had no time to attend to him; the second on a tailor, who desired him to 'come in some other time,' as he was making out his accounts and had not a moment to spare to anything else; the third, fourth, fifth and sixth were equally fruitless, but the printer had learned not to be discouraged, and he pushed on to the seventh and eighth, both of whom paid him. He was now within six dollars of what he wanted; but neither the ninth, tenth nor eleventh could let him have it, and as the clock struck four, his prospect of eating the supper of a man free from debt began to look dark. But he pushed on to the twelfth with a bill of a hundred and sixteen dollars, and the twelfth paid him. The poor fellow could scarcely see! He took the money without counting it, and with his receipt book in his pocket, hurried to his last remaining creditor. He walked or rather ran like one to whom every moment was precious. On reaching the creditor's, he found that the latter had gone home for the day. He could have paid the balance to the book keeper, but his joy would have been incomplete without the receipt of the

creditor himself. He took down the merchant's address, and calling a cab rode to his house, which he reached just as that individual was in the act of sitting down to dine. Having obtained his quittance, he drew a long breath, paid and dismissed the cabman, and with a breastful of ineffable satisfaction, set out to return to his office. He had reached the top of the hill; he did not owe a dollar in the world! He was *free*—FREE! He appeared, as he proceeded, to be treading on air. Snow was falling; but, to him, never before looked falling snow so beautiful. The streets were lighted—for dusk had deepened into night; but never before seemed they to him so brilliant. The walks were thronged with male and female passers-by; but never before, to him, looked passers-by so much like brothers and sisters. He could have stopped and embraced them all, and enquired into their affairs. On reaching his office he found it closed, and the key in its usual place, over the top of the door. It was half past six. The men had finished their work for the day, and gone home. With light feet and a lighter heart, he followed their example. He startled his family by entering the house whistling a comic medley. A man of fifty whistling! The eyes of his wife and children enlarged with mingled uneasiness and surprise. They stared at him and at one another with an expression that plainly said, 'What can be the matter with father!' The careworn air that had darkened his face for the past six years, the sober bearing, and the soft anxious step, had disappeared; and but for his thin half silvered hairs, he might have passed, at a cursory glance, for a man in the neighborhood of thirty-five. He had scarcely entered, when tossing the remainder of his money to his wife, he plunged his hands into his pockets and, doubtless, under the impression that he was doing something very funny, walked, three

times, with long hasty strides, around the room; then suddenly stopping, he, the next instant, commenced dancing a minuet, and breaking short off in the middle, performed a pirouette, at the conclusion of which he balanced to an imaginary partner whom he gallantly led to a seat; then bowing himself back to the centre of the apartment, he threw up his foot to a level with the mantle, applauded himself, and tripped to a chair like an opera dancer retiring from the stage: when, perceiving the smiling solicitude with which his family surveyed him, and comprehending in an instant the ludicrousness of his extravagance, he covered his face with his hands, and exclaiming, "I know I am very foolish, but don't laugh at me!" burst into tears.

There was joy, *great* joy, in the breast of the freed bondman. But was it without alloy? The journey to Greece was yet before him; and — he had been absent *twenty years*! What should he find on his return? His wife's grave, perchance, instead of herself; his parents dead, his children scattered, and—strangers occupying the old house in which he was born!

There was joy, great joy, in the heart of the freed printer. But was it complete? True, he owed no man; but the cares and worriments of three and twenty business years had not left that poor old body sound. He was still poor; ambitious, too; and—*fifty*.

But there is a joy *without* alloy; a joy that *is* complete!

Free! A man of fifty-five was pacing a library; now clasping his hands; then smiling; anon bursting into tears; by and bye relieving his swelling heart with a heavy sigh; ere long, falling on his knees and crying with gasping joy, "I would thank Thee, Lord God! if words could express my gratitude; I would thank Thee, O my Redeemer, could my enraptured soul but speak her feelings!" and again

springing to his feet and traversing the library with trembling steps, and murmuring, "Free—free—free!"

Yea, free of every sin from his birth to this great hour; from every falsehood, wrong, and evil thought; from every fraud, trespass, and deceit; from every sin of omission and commission; from all that had tormented him with uneasiness and fear; from all that should stand between him and heaven at the judgment; from all that could render him offensive in the sight of angels and of God:—all blotted out as though they never had been; not the shadow of a vestige of aught remaining against him; the tender babe reposing in slumber on its mother's breast not more sinless; clear, released, pardoned of all—*all*—ALL, from that moment; born again, renewed, regenerated; THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS written in the new heart now throbbing with such stirring rapture in his breast; a new account opened with him from this hour: and all in answer to one pure, honest prayer, IN FAITH, for mercy in the name of Him who bled for believing men on Calvary.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was church-meeting night at Mr. White's, and, as business of unusual importance was to be transacted, the lecture-room was filled at an early hour. Reuben, ever prompt as time itself, rose as the clock pointed to half-past seven, and gave out a hymn, appropriate to the occasion. This sung, he called on a venerable brother—one of the deacons—to ask for wisdom from on High to guide the deliberations that were to follow.

The prayer was a stirring one, and few hearts in the assembly but felt their own impotence, and the pressing need of constant watchfulness and prayer that The Father's hand from them might never be withdrawn.

It was evident, both from the hymn, the prayer, and the mingled sorrow and anxiety that pervaded the countenances of the assembly, that some serious event, in which all felt a tender interest, was about to transpire.

"Before we proceed with the business of the evening," said Reuben, rising in the desk, "I wish, brethren, to communicate to you tidings that, I feel assured, you will receive with joy."

There was a rustling of bonnets and shawls and coats, as the auditors bent forward in their seats to catch every word of the intelligence thus heralded, and the pastor went on:

"The Lord has been graciously pleased to hear our peti-

tions for the husband of sister Goodrich, and, for the present to turn aside the dart of the Destroyer. On Monday afternoon, the poor gentleman's disease, greatly to the surprise of his physician, took a favorable turn, and the latter now pronounces him out of danger."

A murmur of delighted satisfaction went up from the hearts of the assembly.

"I should be glad," continued the pastor, "to have the privilege of adding that Mr. Goodrich, having been so near to The Great Meeting, had seen the need of conforming to the Redeemer's injunction, 'Repent, and believe the gospel.' But, I grieve to say, this part of our prayer has not yet been answered. Mr. Goodrich still denies the truth of Our Lord's most holy Word, is still the dupe of infidelity. But, courage, dear sister—for I see her among us; courage, dear brethren, for prayer has ascended in FAITH for this poor benighted man, and he will yet be brought in."

A sigh of mingled hope and relief broke from many and floated through the lecture-room.

"To *strengthen* our faith," pursued the pastor, "in that The Father is as true to His pledged word to-day as ever, He has kindly sent us a living witness in the person of brother Kelso, our Sabbath-school superintendent, whom, in answer to our prayers, He has kindly raised up, and who, though still feeble, *is now among us*."

This happy news electrified all present with gratitude and joy.

"We still have to acknowledge the kindness and mercy of Our Father, to another of our number," added the pastor. "A telegraphic despatch was to-day received from our dear brother Robins, the pilot, who is safe at Halifax."

Nothing but the sacredness of the place prevented the overjoyed assembly from breaking out into an enthusiastic

shout at this enrapturing announcement. As it was, tears of unspeakable happiness leaped up to many an eyelid.

"You all remember," said the pastor, himself moved by the glad tidings, "that the last that was seen or known of him was his heroically boarding a dismasted vessel which, in the great storm of the eighth of last month, was vainly struggling to work its way through the ice and gale, outside of Sandy Hook, into port. From his despatch, we learn that the vessel—a Portuguese merchantman, whose officers were ignorant of our coast—having ceased to obey the helm, was driven by the tempest down to the Mexican Gulf, whence it drifted to the Bermudas, where those on board were picked up by a passing British steamer and conveyed to Halifax. The despatch also states that the brother knew he was upheld by prayer; for that many times the frail vessel, while being pushed along by the wind and tide, was within an ace of destruction, but that an Invisible Hand steered her safely from rocks and shoals, and brought her harmless from out the furious surges that threatened to send her bow-foremost to the bottom. Let us," said the pastor, in conclusion, "let us gratefully return thanks to The Father for His watchful care of our brother, and also for the preservation of those who shared with him the terrors of this perilous adventure."

After prayer and a hymn of thanksgiving, in which all joined with spontaneous acclaim, the pastor rose and said in a troubled voice:

"In the church as in every day life, we pass from joy to mourning. One of our number, who till recently had enjoyed our confidence, has fallen. It is not my wish to advance aught that may bias your judgments; but as the disposition of his case is the main business of the evening, I cannot avoid stating that, to me, he is an impressive illus-

tration of what I so often have tried to impress upon you—that, from the cradle to the grave, in all the relations of life, Man is simply a Poor Fellow, and always—O, *always!* an object of sympathy, and ever calling for our prayers. For from his earliest years to his latest hour, whether in prosperity or adversity, in sickness or health, in the world or in the church, he is constantly beset by the artful minions of the cunning tempter *Within*, and by those of the arch tempter *Without*. Therefore, dear brethren, while listening to and weighing the facts in our fallen brother's instance, I would humbly suggest the propriety of remembering that we are all human, all more or less weak—all Poor Fellows!"

The assembly drew a long and painful breath; for all, or nearly all, knew the truth of this, from experience.

"The church clerk," pursued the pastor, turning to that functionary, who sat near him, in the desk, "will now please to read the report of the committee."

The clerk rose, and, unfolding a paper, read as follows:

"The undersigned, appointed to inquire into the character of certain charges against brothers Henry Nelson and Thomas Ward, as the result of their examination respectfully represent—

1st.—That brother Nelson, who is a poor man, having attempted business three times, but on every occasion with ill success, while walking home from church, after the morning service, on the first Sabbath in June of last year, was followed by brother Ward, who, on coming up with him, and after a few irrelevant observations, inquired—'Brother Nelson, how are you getting on?' 'Poorly,' was the reply; 'I find it difficult, even with the assistance of my wife, who teaches music, to lie down on Saturday night free from debt.' 'But,' said Mr. Ward, who is a lawyer

and a person of considerable means, 'why do you not throw out your energies, and make money? Have you, (alluding to his previous failures) lost your courage?' 'No; but my energies are of no avail, since I have neither credit nor capital with which to turn them to account.' 'Don't be too sure of that, brother,' said Mr. Ward, smiling. 'If I should lend you a couple of thousand, you would not then be without capital—eh? But, come and see me, at my office, to-morrow, and we'll soon determine whether you are so poorly off as you fancy.' Brother Nelson, as he states to the committee, was so excited by this apparent generosity on the part of one upon whom he had no claims, and also by the prospect which it opened before him of being able to better provide for his wife and child, that, when night came, he could scarcely think of anything else. He called, early the following day, upon Mr. Ward, who, after some conversation, took from his pocket-book a certificate of stock, to the amount of two thousand dollars, in an incorporated coal-mine company, and handing it to him, said, 'I cannot lend you cash, brother Nelson, but I can its equivalent. With that in your possession, you can obtain credit without difficulty. You can conscientiously represent yourself to be worth the face of that certificate—which is perfectly good, as the stock is at par—and if you find it necessary, you can refer those whom you propose to buy of, to me, and I will assert the same thing. In this way you will get your goods on six and nine months, like other merchants; and if you stir yourself, a year or two will place you on your legs. You, however, will want a few hundreds in ready money to fit up with and other matters, which here is a check for. No thanks. We are all brothers, and should help one another along. But, as business is business, you can give me your notes for the

face of the certificate and this check and secure them by a mortgage on your stock (referring to his goods), on which pay me a little every week or month, as may be most convenient.' This appeared so kind and liberal, that brother Nelson wept for gratitude. He gave his notes, as suggested, and, with characteristic energy, at once set about opening a dry goods store—his former business, referring the merchants of whom he obtained his stock to Mr. Ward, who represented that Nelson was honest, prudent, industrious and energetic, and to his personal knowledge in possession of over two thousand dollars. This was satisfactory to the merchants, who credited him, in the aggregate with merchandise to the amount of five thousand. He opened with fair prospects and did moderately well; on perceiving which, Mr. Ward, who watched his progress narrowly, suddenly pretended to be in great pecuniary distress, and made incessant calls upon him for money, in many instances as often as once a day. This was annoying, but gratitude for his friend's kindness, and faith in his reasons for pressing him—which were subsequently found to be false—induced brother Nelson to submit to it unmurmuringly. But this constant drain upon his receipts acted as a serious check upon his courage, frequently driving him to hopelessness; and also upon his ability to keep up his stock of such articles as he had to pay cash for, often compelling him to go without them, and thereby losing the profit on their ready sale. It evidently was Mr. Ward's original design to obtain from his victim, before the notes of the latter fell due, money enough to cover his loan as well as that of the face of the stock certificate, which Nelson at his betrayer's suggestion, had quietly kept in reserve till the last moment. At length his first note fell due, and Nelson, having no other resource, went to a Wall street broker for

the purpose of selling the certificate, which to his consternation and amazement, he learned was barely worth twenty cents on the dollar—and had not been at any time in two years! He called on Ward for an explanation, to whom he had already paid nearly two thousand dollars; but the latter insisted that he had received the certificate for its purported value, that he was innocent of any intentional deception, and wound up with the impudent declaration that Nelson should have learned its worth before taking it! The latter was terrified—bewildered, and knew not how to act. Unable to obtain means from any source, his note was protested and himself immediately sued. Pending the action, two other notes fell due, and met with a similar fate. Upon obtaining judgment, the first creditor, on attempting to levy upon the delinquent's stock, was met by Ward's original mortgage. The other creditors were defeated in a similar manner, and Nelson was pronounced a scoundrel. As the result of his first nine months' effort, during which time, his wife, by her own untiring industry as a music teacher, had nearly if not quite, paid all the expenses of the household, the poor fellow found himself covered with debt, his credit destroyed, his reputation impugned, and his business, which had seriously suffered during the lawsuits, reduced to a mere nothing. At the termination of the tenth month, he could go no further, and by the advice of Ward, whose speciousness exerted a sort of fascination upon him, and who still promised to befriend him, his remaining stock was sold at public auction, the proceeds being taken by Ward to satisfy his mortgage, who thereby realised the nominal value of the stock certificate, together with the interest—the few hundred dollars he had also advanced having been paid long before; but Nelson was a ruined man. Worse—his betrayer, at the outset of his difficulties, had invited him to

his house and persuaded him into trying a glass of wine, which, acting upon an old thirst—for Nelson, some few years previously had drunk to excess but had reformed—beguiled him back into his old habit, and deprived him of the permanent use of his judgment. But Ward had not yet done with his dupe, who, for many days after the sale of his goods, was in a state of mind bordering upon frenzy. Still promising to “see him upon his feet again,” he, one morning called his attention to an advertisement in a morning paper, headed, ‘Wanted a Partner,’ and advised him to reply to it. He did so, and shortly had an interview with the advertiser, a provision dealer, apparently in a thriving business, who represented that he desired to establish a branch house up town, to conduct which would call for the necessity of a partner of sound business abilities; that if he could meet with such a person he would receive him into the concern for—say two thousand dollars. Nelson laid the case before Ward, who after a private interview with the provision dealer, agreed to advance the money, providing he could draw every week upon Nelson’s share of the profits till the loan, with two per cent. a month interest, should all be paid. To this arrangement, the credulous Nelson, after a consultation with his wife, who agreed to sustain the household in the meanwhile, assented, and the proper papers were made out. Before opening the branch store, the provision dealer suggested that, to avoid the jealousy and gossip of rivals, it would be an excellent plan to conduct it in the name of the new partner alone. “In this way,” urged the provision dealer, “we can play into each other’s hands and accumulate a large business without any body being the wiser, and thus steal a march upon our rivals.” Nelson thought favorably of the plan, and fell in with it. It was also agreed that the new partner should be the principal buyer, that

the branch should supply the down town store with stock, and that the finances should be managed by the provision dealer himself, from whom Nelson should receive instructions every morning relative to the operations of the day. The latter was not quite satisfied with all this; but reflecting upon his pecuniary position, a sort of desperation induced him to accede to it, in the hope that he should soon be able, in case his fears proved true, to withdraw, and with sufficient means honorably and alone to set up anew. But the further he advanced in the business, the more he became convinced that he was associated with a nest of invisible scoundrels. Ere long, Ward, from being a mere weekly receiver of Nelson’s share, appeared, in the down store, to have a controlling influence. Nelson shortly after perceived that he himself had no voice in the management of affairs, and that, if not a simple tool, he was but little more than a cipher. He however still continued to be the buyer—purchasing, when possible, on time, and when not, for cash. As the first year drew towards a close, he, on summing up, discovered that Ward had over-received the sum he had advanced, and feeling that now, if ever, was the time for him to take a manly stand, he forbade his partner to pay any further monies to Ward on his account, and, requesting an intelligent understanding of the business, demanded at the same time an inspection of the books. He was the more strenuous upon the two latter points, inasmuch as he had notes rapidly maturing, and was indebted in his own name to various creditors in the round sum of seven thousand dollars, for goods, of which, by far the largest proportion had been furnished to the down town house. But Ward, who had now done with him, made a sign, not however unperceived by his victim, to the ostensible partner, who refused either to give a statement

of the business or to allow an examination of the books. Nelson, though nearly all along suspecting that all was not right, could scarcely credit his senses. 'Am I to understand,' he exclaimed, 'that you refuse me this reasonable request?' 'Just that,' replied the ostensible partner; 'and what are you going to do about it?' Nelson thought of his year's incessant labor—of his poor wife's herculean struggle—of their mutual hopes and stern self-denial—and of his own liabilities, and—staggered. 'Who is to pay my notes?' he demanded. 'You don't expect *us* to pay them—do you?' said the ostensible partner, with a sneer. 'Come, sir,' he added, 'we've had enough of your heroics—now walk out of here!'. Nelson's heart swelled with a sense of outrage, and suddenly starting back, he as rapidly dashed forward, and knocking both of the individuals down, darted, pale with terror at his position, from the store. But where to go—what to do, he knew not. He was confused, unnerved, delirious. He walked down to the river; but the recollection of his poor wife and child came to him, and he abandoned the meditated act. He turned, sick at heart, and, reeling like a drunken man, proceeded to the branch. The strangeness of his appearance arrested the attention of his two clerks, who, looking at one another significantly, mutually concluded to watch him. As he passed on towards his desk, his eyes fell upon a meat-knife on the counter. He took it up and on reaching his seat, sat down and mechanically ran his fingers along the edge of the blade. The clerks exchanged glances, and gradually approached him. But, wrapt in a staring study, he did not appear to be conscious of their presence. They paused to observe him. At length, laying down the knife, he clasped his hands and bowed his head upon them in agonising thought. As he did so, the head clerk carefully removed

the knife, and then both stepped back to their original positions. On raising his head, their employer looked confusedly around, as though he missed something. The clerks comprehended that he was looking for the knife. Not finding the article of which he was in search, he got up, and, without noticing the clerks, walked out, followed however by one of the latter, who feared what he durst hardly express. Nelson went home, and suddenly appearing before his wife, who was copying some music for a pupil, said, with a strange laugh, 'No more work, Susan—no more efforts—no more confidence in God or man. We are *rich*, my girl—rich in *treachery* and *ruin*! Come—put on your things, and let's go dwell where there is nothing *human*! Come!' And he attempted to walk from the room; but fell, pale, unconscious and unstrung to the floor. His mind remained frenzied for nine days, during which time two of his notes matured and were protested. His general creditors learned the fact, and his place of business was besieged. The clerks represented his condition, but his derangement was laughed at as a mere trick. One of them—a Jew—of whom Nelson had bought his lease of the store and given notes for payment which were then overdue, was furious, and, on the morning of the tenth day, pushed himself into the house of the unhappy man, whose mind, though sane, was still in a state of excitement, and pronounced him a rogue, a swindler, and all the vile epithets he could remember or invent. Nelson endeavored to explain the facts; but the Jew was incredulous, vehement and abusive: and he at length was compelled to violently eject him. The Jew, pale with rage, and noisy with fierce threats, that attracted the attention of the neighborhood, departed; and Nelson, humiliated and weak from illness, was again upon the verge of insanity. The Jew, with the craftiness of his race, before making his

complaint, determined to ferret out all the facts in the matter. He did so, and made some startling discoveries, viz: that the proprietors of the down town house had another establishment in a leading town in Connecticut, which, during the past year, had been mainly supplied with the stock received from this branch; that Ward was the principal owner of both it and the New York down town house; and that he was too rich and too keen for a common man to go to law with. Your committee also have made some discoveries—First, That for five years the stock of the Connecticut concern has principally been furnished by some branch of the down town store; Secondly, that poor Nelson is only one of Mr. Ward's many victims; Thirdly, that that bad man recruits for dupes in the church; and lastly, that ours is the fifth church of as many different denominations, of which he has been a member."

Then followed the names of the committee.

The reading of the report was followed by a general sigh, and that by a dead silence. Never before had the lecture room echoed to a statement of such depravity.

After a few moments, Reuben, his countenance shaded with melancholy, rose and said:

"The report, dear friends, as you have noticed, was dated yesterday, the ninth. The committee were not then aware of the mournful termination of brother Nelson's sad history. I learned it last evening, from his wife, who, poor creature! is in a condition that calls loudly for our sympathy and prayers. Nelson, hearing yesterday afternoon that the Jew had obtained a warrant for his arrest, on a charge of intentional fraud, and aware of his inability to maintain his innocence by proving the knavery of Ward and his confederates, and conscious also that his old creditors—I allude to those who suffered by our poor brother's essay in the

dry goods business—some of whom the Jew, in searching for evidence, had hunted up, would darken his case and make him appear a deliberate criminal, and thus blast his reputation and chances in life forever, fled, at four o'clock, and is now, with scarcely means enough to take him to his destination, on his journey westward. His wife, poor lady!—you can fancy her feelings—would have accompanied him, but was restrained by want of money. I take the liberty of mentioning this fact, without her knowledge or consent, knowing, dear friends, that you will not let her suffer." He paused awhile, and then added: "You have heard the points in the report. What is your decision in regard to Mr. Ward?"

"I move," said Mr. Asbury, "that he be instantly expelled."

This was seconded by voices from all parts of the lecture room; and upon the putting of the motion, there was a spontaneous show of hands, both from males and females, that testified to the heartiness of the vote.

"In reference to brother Nelson?" inquired Reuben.

There was a dead, uneasy pause, which was at length broken by the rising of the chairman of the committee. He was a tall, spare man, with a majestic yet calmly severe countenance; the brow lofty and swelling with thought; the eyes large, gray, and meditative; the nostrils of his Grecian nose deeply curved and set with a stern, resolute air; the lips small, and cut like a straight line. A glance was sufficient to inform the most inexperienced physiognomist that, if need be, he would march with an unfaltering step up to the stake, for conscience.

"I move," he said, in a cold, metallic voice, "that, like the man Ward, he be expelled."

A mournful shade passed across Reuben's forehead.

There was a short pause, and then

"I second it!" came up, feebly, from a distant part of the lecture room, as if the speaker grieved to utter the words and would have been silent but from a sense of duty.

"You have heard the motion, brethren," said Reuben, with a sad, faint smile. "Any remarks?"

Mr. Asbury rose.

"I wish," he said, his usually placid features slightly aglow with feeling, "to offer a few words."

The dropping of a pin might have been heard, so profound was the silence at this moment; for the clearness of this gentleman's views, the exalted purity of his Christian character among those who were most competent to judge, his great magnanimity, his comparative freedom from the littlenesses so common to most men, and above all, the unwavering constancy of his FAITH, were well known, and impressed the assembly in advance with a high respect for whatever he might say.

"It has graciously pleased God," he observed, "to let the Tempters have power for a time upon our brother. That he has fallen, I do not marvel; for the Tempters are *strong*, and human nature, when left to itself, *weak*. If similarly circumstanced and similarly tried, which of us can say, '*I would have passed through the ordeal unbruised!*' For who is not daily tempted, and who, of all on earth, *daily* falls not? As for me, I am conscious of causing pain every hour to the loving breast of my Redeemer; and had I not *His* righteousness to plead, in the place of my own, my life would be one of misery; for I know the power of Satan to constantly beguile me into sin, and the wickedness of my own heart. Therefore I would plead for compassion for my poor brother. That he has erred—greivously, sadly—we all know; but if The Beloved were on earth, and standing

in this room, and were again to utter the solemn warning, 'Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone,' which of us would not shrink away, abashed? A sinner, I plead to you, brethren, for a fellow sinner who has been sorely tried and found wanting, because in the hour of temptation he failed to avail himself of his privilege as one of the Sons of God to call upon The Father for grace—grace to resist, to help, to save. Mercy!"

"I hope brother Asbury does not impute my motion to an unworthy motive?" said the chairman.

"I do not, brother," replied Mr. Asbury. "I believe you speak your convictions. But I submit to the church that we should pause, and think, and pray, ere we proceed to cast a brother out, broken in courage and in name, again upon the world. I ask your tender consideration for our poor friend, in the name of Him who, in His loving kindness, has, as we hope, had compassion upon *us*."

"I feel," said Mr. Tapley, rising, "that I must vote for Mr. Nelson's expulsion. His conduct, from first to last, according to the report, has been the reverse of a Christian's. In the first place, when originally approached by Ward, he should not have spoken of secular matters at all on the Sabbath. Secondly, on discovering the comparative worthlessness of the certificate of stock, it was his duty, as an honest man, to call his creditors together and lay all the facts in the case before them. Thirdly, having once signed the pledge, he should not again, on any account or at any one's instigation, have taken to drink. Fourthly, on failing in the dry goods effort, he owed it to his creditors to give them an explanation of the whole affair, which he did not; not so much as going near them: on the contrary, when meeting one or more of them in the street, dodging round a corner as if ashamed of himself.

Fifthly, on discovering the suspicious character of the provision concern he should have drawn back at once, at any and every hazard. Sixthly and lastly, every step taken by him through that business was unwise and disgraceful to a professor of religion. For these reasons," added Mr. Tapley, "I shall vote for his ejection."

"I have no doubt," said Mr. Asbury, in reply, "that brother Tapley feels as he has spoken; and I believe that if he had been in my poor brother's place he would himself have acted as he has suggested. But it has pleased The Father to constitute men with various degrees of sagacity and moral firmness, and when we are called to sit in judgment upon a brother we ought, I think, to weigh his error according to the standard of persons of *his* organization, rather than by the cold, exacting SINGLE RULE by which the world judges. What I could not easily forgive in a strong mind like brother Tapley's, I, while grieving for the sin, can readily forgive in a weak one, like that of my poor brother. It is true that, for the sake of the church as well as society's, there should be a *limit* to this standard; but that limit, I apprehend, can only be determined by our good sense in each individual case. In the instance before us, the picture before *me* is that of a weak and credulous but hopeful and well-meaning spirit, in the snare of a bold and crafty one, who has led him, step by step, from comparative innocence and happiness into almost inextricable guilt and misery. Is it then for me, seeing my poor brother's plight, to *turn* from him? I have not the heart! I rather would emulate the spirit of Him who, when I was in the toils of the Tempters, turned not from *me*—of Him who kindly has compassion upon all who come to Him, and who suffered for my poor brother as for me!"

"I feel for brother Nelson," said the chairman of the

committee, again rising. "I feel for him, both as a Christian and as a man. But if the rules of the Church are to be regarded, I see not how we can avoid the painful duty of withdrawing the hand of fellowship from him. To countenance his course, is to bring shame and reproach upon the church. I have conferred with many of his creditors, one of whom, an infidel, stated that if professors of religion tolerated such things, he thanked his stars that he was not of their number; while another, who is very indignant at his loss, represented that on learning from Nelson's references that he was a member of this church, where, to use his own language, he had always understood they were very particular whom they admitted, he had no hesitation in trusting him, but that henceforth such a fact, if coupled with an application for credit, would, with him, be every thing other than commendatory. Our own feelings are perhaps of but little account; but not so with the reputation of the church, which should be as dear to us as life."

"The reputation of the Church is dear to us," said a short, slender gentleman, with thin silver hairs, and with a countenance whose classic contour would have been harsh but for a winning sweetness round the mouth and in the expression of the eyes, "but its preservation is in the hands of a Higher power than man's. We are commanded, both by the letter and the spirit of the Word, to love one another. If we are in The Beloved, we *will* do so; *that*, more than any other, is, to me, the most reliable evidence of our acceptance. But can we be said to comply with this requisition, if we refuse fellowship with a brother, because he has *sinned*? If *that* were an inexorable rule, which of us would be left? Brother Nelson is young, and has been called to pass through a dangerous road. Had his

faith been strong, he would have gone through unharmed; but, unhappily, it was weak, and he stumbled many times and was severely hurt. He lies there now, bleeding and sad and faint; and shall we *leave* him thus? Shall we, as the Levite, seeing him down, pass by on the other side? Or, shall we, like loving disciples, raise him up, whisper encouragement, and nurse him till he is able to stand and walk alone as before? Now that he is down—now that he is broken in heart and despairing in spirit—now that the world has no pity for him—now, when he most needs the helping hand of God and of his kind—*now* is the time to *prove* our love—*now*!”

“I, for one,” said Mr. Tapley, “do not and can not recognise Nelson as a brother. He has exhibited no evidence that he ever was a Christian. If he has, I have not seen it. For the two years that he was struggling in business, we cannot perceive, by the report of the committee, nor is it reasonable to infer, that he was at any one time in a religious frame of mind. If this be so, why should we hesitate to cut him off from privileges in which he feels no interest, and to which he attaches no value?”

“True!” remarked a voice. It was that of the individual who seconded the motion.

“I, therefore,” added Mr. Tapley, “call for the question.”

“One moment, brethren,” said Peter Brown, rising and looking timidly around.

His eyes were red and his cheeks crimsoned with weeping. The assembly listened to him with affection and respect; for all knew the warm, sympathising heart that throbbed in his kind, fatherly breast.

“I want,” he began, in a broken voice, “to say a few words for my poor brother. I do not know that they will do any good, but I feel that I ought to speak them. If

any have concluded to enforce the stern rule of our discipline in his case, I—I do not deny your right, but I beseech you to first pause and weigh the consequences of such an act. To say of a man, ‘He was expelled from the Church,’ as will be said by many if you act upon your present thought, is to sink him in every channel into which such a report may find its way; to cast a doubt upon his integrity—which may be genuine *then*; to cause friends, whose good feeling and influence may be important, to turn from him; to throw countless obstacles in his way, and thus drive him, if his faith be weak, back again to despair—perhaps into serious culpability. Pause and think, dear brethren—O! as you love Him who had compassion upon *you*, pause and think, and pray for guidance, ere you take this step! Do not, I implore you, tread upon my poor wounded brother! True, he has fallen—sadly, fearfully; but reflect upon his youth—his poverty at the outset—his bitter and trying experiences during his double struggle—the power of the Two Tempters—our natural proneness to wander into forbidden paths—our weakness when not under the sanctifying influence of divine grace, and then say, each in your heart’s best corner, ‘How would it have been with *me*, had I been in his place?’ and then act towards him, as you, if in his position, would have him do to you. He has not done right, I grant; but Satan and the evil whispers of his own heart were suffered to have power upon him. But he will return to The Father from whom he has strayed; I know it, *feel* it, and then all will be right again, and then you will rejoice that you had done nothing, when he was in trouble—for he is in *great* anguish—to add to his affliction. Pardon me, dear brethren, if I have said aught amiss; I did not mean to do so. I know that whichever way you vote, you will be guided by con-

science; but I feel that if my poor brother should hear that the church, in hope of his early repentance, had kindly concluded to take a mild view of his case, it would, some how, do him good, and perhaps lead him to ask The Father in mercy to pardon his great sin; I—I," he added, trembling with emotion, "would like to say more, but—but ——"

He broke off, sobbing, and sunk upon his seat overpowered. Nor were his eyes the only ones in the assembly that were weeping then.

"If," said Mr. Tapley, "we were satisfied that Nelson was ever a child of grace, we might be inclined to deal leniently with him. But there is no evidence to warrant such an opinion."

"Do not say *that*, dear brother—don't!" cried Peter Brown, springing, deeply agitated, to his feet. "Ere his temptation, I often heard him pray; and I am quite sure the words came from his heart, and that he was a Christian *then*. I still remember the deep feeling in his tones, and I am confident it was sincere. I would not doubt it for the world. O, brother—if the poor fellow has of late fallen into evil, let us not do him the injustice to forget or deny that he *once* was good!"

"It might perhaps," said the chairman of the committee, in an uneven voice, "be best to modify the motion."

A ray of gratification appeared in the features of the pastor.

"I therefore," continued the chairman, "move that brother Nelson be suspended from the privileges of membership till he shall give evidence of his worthiness to be reinstated to good standing, by repentance."

A universal sigh of relief resounded through the lecture room, and the motion, on being put by the pastor, was carried unanimously—Mr. Tapley, whose heart was always

warmer than his head, being almost the first to rise in its favor.

On reaching home, Reuben, at the whispered suggestion of the philanthropic Mr. Asbury, went to his study, and referring to a volume containing the addresses of the clergymen of his denomination, for the name of the minister of his persuasion in the western town to which Nelson was on his way, he sat down and wrote him a letter, of which the following is an extract:

"I need not tell you, dear brother, to seek out, if possible, and watch over this poor soul. Comfort him by the assurance that we still think kindly of him, and that nothing will give us more joy than to hear of his return to The Father from whom he has wandered. Tell him that we feel for and shall pray for him; and if it be not too much to ask, I would humbly request the prayers of yourself and the little flock of which you are the temporal shepherd, in his favor too. Console him also with the fact that his dear wife and little one shall not suffer in his absence; and do you, dear brother, see that the poor fellow himself wants for nothing; whatever expense you may incur for such purpose draw for upon me, and it shall be promptly paid. Your brother in the Great Work of our Redeemer, REUBEN WHITE."

"You look sad?" observed the millionaire to his wife, as the latter returned home.

"We have had a trying time at meeting," said the lady, smiling. And, after recovering her composure, she related the particulars.

Her husband heard her with deep interest to the end; and then filling up a check for a hundred dollars, said, as he handed it to her, "We must not let the poor fellow's family suffer. Ask Mr. White to give them this, and get me, at the same time, Mr. Nelson's address."

On obtaining it, he forwarded the unhappy man a like sum, "from a sympathising friend."

"We are all poor fellows," he murmured, as he sealed the letter, "and should hold each other up!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE millionaire, walking in the shade of his grape arbor, in the garden, was meditating upon a remark that had fallen from the young clergyman's lips on the preceding Sabbath evening: "The Lord gives answer, in *His Word*, to all who come to Him in sincerity of heart for guidance; and it is the exalted privilege of all the Sons of God to find there The Reply to what they pray in faith for, and in language that they alone shall understand."

After a half hour of thought, under the arbor, the millionaire passed slowly from the garden to the house, and entering the library, took from a shelf a copy of the Bible, and murmuring: "I will be governed by the first verse on which my eye may fall," opened it, and read as follows:

'Then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered to him to keep, or the lost thing which he found.'

The millionaire turned pale, breathed hard, and putting down the book, seated himself in his easy chair, and fell into a reverie.

What a flood of thought came pouring in upon him; and what ransacking of old memories and scouring of lanes which interest had long since taught him, for peace' sake, not to disturb or enter!

To say that this man did not love money, either for its own sake, or some other, would be to give the lie to the

tenor of his whole life. From his earliest manhood, it had been his One Yearning. As with most men, it was a great substantial Something, to possess which was to possess every thing; and, like most men again, he did not stop to consider its price. But even if any had said to him, 'Stay, friend—you are giving too much for this!' and he had paused to enquire 'What *am* I giving?' it is fair to presume that he would have responded to the answer '*Yourself!*' with a light laugh, and gone on his way heedless; for man gives audience to great truths only when they are uttered in his ear by the sharp, grating voice of EXPERIENCE: and *then* he remembers.

The millionaire understood and appreciated the full meaning of this truth, now; and, poor fellow! he realised to his heart's deepest centre, the humiliation which ensues upon looking back at the slimy, serpentine path through which The Two Enemies lead their victims.

He rose from his reverie with a trembling frame, but with a deep sense of thankfulness for having been led to see his real position, and also for not having been permitted to go on in folly's wisdom down to his grave.

He paced the library awhile, to walk down his excitement, and then resumed his seat. Then taking a small memorandum book, in dark morocco binding, from the desk, he opened and laid it before him, and drawing up his chair and taking up a pen, wrote, with a nervous hand, the following:

MY DAY OF JUDGMENT.

1—CATHERINE BIGNELL—my first wife, whom, twenty-six years ago, I deserted and left to shift as best she could with want. Have heard nothing of her since. If she be living, I and my present wife are living in adultery.

- 2—EDGAR, my son, whom I abandoned with his mother. Must now be grown to manhood; and, if any thing like his unworthy father, is probably a bad man, and daily adding his contributions to the treasury of villainy in commerce and also to that of vice in society. Residence, unknown.
- 3—RICHARD WHITE, my too confiding employer. I betrayed the trust he reposed in me, and thereby reduced him to a beggar. He was of too honest and generous a temperament to ever become rich; and if now living, must be somewhat advanced in years and poor. Residence, unknown. Owe him, irrespective of interest, \$40,000.
- 4—JOHN GRIGGS. His father was one of my customers, and, to secure the payment of extended notes, gave me a mortgage on two small houses and lots. His death occurring as the notes fell due, and his widow being unable to meet them at their maturity, I meanly took advantage of her ignorance of business and of my own power, and stripped her of every thing. The poor woman took her loss to heart, and died. Her children, with no one to care for them became separated, and grew up under evil influences; the eldest finished a brief vicious career in a gambling hell; the second was lost at sea; John, the third, a burglar, is now in the Penitentiary at Sing Sing. Owe him, as the only remaining heir of his father, about \$15,000.
- 5—THE HEIRS OF JOHN RUSSELL, *Druggist*. I loaned this man \$10,000 on bond and mortgage, which he could not pay when due. He asked for an extension, which I refused. He failed, and I foreclosed, sold, and bought in the property, giving out, through my emissaries, who were scattered among the attendants

- at the sale, that it would be unfair to bid against me, as it was my private intention to stand between the poor bankrupt and the loss of his property, which was worth double the amount of my claim. The property became mine at less than the face of the mortgage, still leaving Russell twelve hundred dollars in my debt. After the sale, he asked me if the report current among the bidders, that I designed to protect him from ruin, was true. I told him I knew nothing of it, and demanded security for the remaining twelve hundred. He left me, pale, indignant, and speechless. He subsequently sunk into a clerk, and finally committed suicide. His widow and daughter are, I believe, still living; if so, having none to provide for them but themselves, they must be poor. But whether poor or rich, I owe them, aside from interest, at least, \$22,000.
- 6—EDGAR RIX. Dead. No heir.
- 7—SUSAN RIX—his widow, and my second wife. Dead.
- 8—ROBERT HALSEY, *Gentleman*. A neighbor, whose ignorance of business and of men induced him to consult me, in whom he had confidence, as to the most judicious mode of investing \$40,000. I told him I would look round, and let him know. The next day I put into the hands of a confederate \$20,000 worth of a fancy stock, and started a report which gave it an upward impetus. In a few weeks, it was, apparently, the most rising stock in the market. I called Halsey's attention to this seeming fact, and advised him to buy while it was still ascending. It was then at 30. He hesitated a few days: but observing on the fifth, that the stock still continued to rise, and that it was then at 34, he authorised me to purchase to the amount of forty thousand.

I gave the word to my confederate, whose apparent lot was put up, and knocked down to my friend, who, receiving the stock from another, never suspected my interest in the transaction. The stock, ere long, rapidly descended to its original value, and poor Halsey was a loser in the sum of twenty thousand dollars. This was the first of many bad investments which eventually reduced him to poverty. Residence, unknown. I owe him, independent of interest, \$20,000.

- 9—WILLIAM HIBBARD bought of me, for \$1,000, the fixtures, stock and business of a small retail grocery store that had fallen into my hands through the inability of its original owner to meet his notes for liquors he had had of me. Hibbard, young, credulous and inexperienced, credited my false representations that the stand was a good one, that it had always afforded an excellent living to its former proprietor, and that a careful man could, from the profits, easily lay by from two to three thousand per year. A few weeks satisfied him that he had been duped, and he commenced a suit against me. His want of means, however, compelled him to relinquish it, and he subsequently became, in his turn, a sharper; disposing of his business in a similar way to another, who shortly went to ruin, and disappeared. Hibbard, shaken, by his transaction with me, in his confidence in the honesty of men, and encouraged by his own success, in his bargain with his successor, resolutely determined to thenceforth play the scoundrel and get rich. He bought a half interest in a retail jewelry store, in the Bowery; but had not been long in the firm, when his partner died of consumption, whereupon he conducted the business in connection with the widow, whom he afterwards married. He

managed his affairs carefully, paid his notes and bills promptly, and after five years his credit was both sound and extensive. At the end of that period he purchased goods to the amount of ten thousand dollars, upon which he adroitly contrived to effect an insurance of eighteen thousand. Ninety days thereafter, he burned himself out, clearing eight thousand by the operation. The company suspected his instrumentality in the fire, but Hibbard had been five years building up a good character whose strength could not be shaken, and he claimed and obtained his policy. Emboldened by the success of his audacity, he three years afterwards repeated the crime, but was betrayed by his wife, who was of an irritable disposition, and to whom he had given cause for jealousy, and he was sent to the Penitentiary, where he died. Having been in some measure, the cause of his deliberate entrance into evil, it is but just in me to restore to his widow and children the sum, with interest, that I obtained from him by false representations. Residence, unknown. \$1,800.

- 10—GIDEON WILEY, *Builder*. Of all my villainies, none gives me so much remorse as this. His appearance the last time I saw him, haunts me like a spectre. It was that of a man reeling under a blow from heaven. It was produced by his discovery of my cold-blooded treachery. I cannot write the particulars—they are too painful. If he still lives, I owe him a larger sum than to any other human being. Residence, unknown. Without counting the interest, which is considerable, there is rightfully due to him \$100,000.

- 11—ROBERT CLASSON, *Hotel Keeper*. I sold this man, for \$1,600, a lot of home manufactured liquors for imported. He retailed them to his customers for what he bought

them for, and thereby became an innocent party to the fraud. This case gives me the more uneasiness, inasmuch as Classon was an honest, highminded publican, and the only one I have ever known of his calling who would on no account descend to an imposition of any description upon a fellow being. Residence, unknown. In addition to interest, I owe him \$1,600.

- 12—WILLIAM WESTERVELT. A young wine importer and jobber, who, in 18—, irritated me by taking away one of my heaviest Southern customers, for which I resolved to break him. He was an active, energetic man, ambitious, and full of talent; too much so indeed to allow me an opportunity to gratify my resentment: and I was unwillingly compelled to bide my time. It came round, at length. The pressure of 18— was one of those business seasons through which only solid houses can pass without staggering. Westervelt kept his account at the — Bank, of which I was a leading director. The Bank had been accustomed to accommodate him freely with discounts; and, at a meeting of the directors, in the early part of the season, he was one of the few customers to whom it was thought safe to continue this favor. Here was my opportunity. I rose, and, with a mysterious shake of the head, stated that I was of a different opinion; that I within a few days had been put in confidential possession of certain facts which I was not at liberty to mention, but which satisfied me that in future there would be danger, *great danger*, in touching his paper. My business sagacity, and my cautiousness in remarking upon the means of men, were so well known to the bank, that my suggestion was acted upon, and Westervelt's name was omitted from the list of the favored few. I had foreseen that

the pressure and the want of discounts would seriously embarrass, if not wholly ruin, him. I was not disappointed. As I subsequently learned, he could have successfully borne up under the pressure; but the Bank's unexpected refusal to accommodate him with further discounts—which, through an instrument, I was careful to make public—and his inability to obtain them elsewhere, swept him, within two months, into bankruptcy. His creditors, on winding up his affairs, received only thirty cents on the dollar, and he himself retired from the field covered with debt, and with scarcely sufficient in his pocket to pay his fare to his native place in Vermont. He subsequently persuaded his father, a well-to-do farmer, to mortgage his property and furnish him with means for a second effort, in which he failed, and the whole family were reduced to poverty. But for my malignity, they would now be in affluence. I owe Westervelt, or his heirs, at least twenty thousand dollars, and his parents or their heirs, who but for the mortgage on their old homestead would never have come to want, at least ten thousand more. In all, I am conscientiously indebted to the Westervelt family, \$30,000.

- 13—JOHN BRODIE—A man in my employ, while adulterating a pipe of common brandy to give it a French flavor, near the fall, under my personal directions, fell from the short step-ladder, on which he was standing, down the unguarded hatchway, and was killed, leaving a wife and three children to struggle unaided through the world. There are two reasons why I am morally responsible for this man's death and for the misery which it brought upon his family; viz: the dishonesty of the action in which I was engaged at the time, and

my pecuniary meanness in not having previously guarded against such accident by railing up the sides of the hatchway. I know not what has become of this family; but if its members are living and can be found, I am conscientiously indebted to them for the ten years' earnings which but for me would probably have been brought home to them by their head. His salary was twelve dollars per week, which for ten years would be about \$6,000; add another thousand for interest and for their misery, and I morally owe this family at least \$7,240.

I can think of no other glaring wickedness. But weighing accusingly upon my conscience are a great host of petty frauds upon customers—a vast train of private and business misrepresentations—a long list of clerks whom I taught to lie to dealers for the sake of effecting sales—and, more terrible than all, the inconceivable injury I did to my countrymen and humanity at large during the twenty-five years I was engaged in selling rum. For all this, not knowing how or where to begin, I can make no reparation. I must await the issue till the Resurrection.

In most of the preceding cases, however, there is perhaps still time to make restitution. Let me about it instantly.

RECAPITULATION.

1—Catherine Bignell—to seek out and provide for.	
2—Edgar Bignell	“
3—Richard White	“ “ and pay \$ 40,000
4—John Griggs	15,000
5—Heirs of John Russell, principal and interest....	22,000
6—Robert Halsey, say	25,000
7—William Hibbard	1,800
8—Gideon Wiley, say	125,000
9—Robert Classon	1,600
10—William Westervelt's family	30,000
11—Heirs of John Brodie	7,240

In all

\$267,640

THOU! to whose judgment seat I am daily drawing nearer—who didst behold me in the gulf and in pity didst stretch out Thy hand and bring me dripping, yet safe, to shore—who, ere the world began, didst foresee the evil I should heap upon myself *against* That Day, and yet, in Thy loving kindness, didst mercifully give Thine Only Begotten to take my sins upon Him and to make restitution for them in Thy sight, that I might not be lost *in* That Day—whose mercy I have in part experienced, and by whose Holy Spirit my soul hath been made glad—grant, if it be Thy will, that I may find these, that I may restore to them what is justly theirs, and that I may receive their forgiveness. Grant this, I beseech Thee—not because of my weakness, or my repentance, but for the sake of Him whose Blood was shed for me on Calvary!

CHAPTER XVIII.

REUBEN was meditating in his study, when Mercy, his wife, entered with her customary quiet tread.

"Busy?" she asked, smilingly.

"I am weighing the case of Mr. Ward," returned Reuben, pleasantly. "Be so kind as to take a seat a few moments till I finish my thought." He looked down awhile, and then turning to his wife, observed: "How completely The Subtle One has subjected that man!"

"Whom—Nelson?"

"No—Ward. Poor Nelson is only *temporarily* fallen. The work of grace has been *begun* in his heart, and it will be completed. He is a *believer*—ONE OF THOSE FOR WHOM OUR REDEEMER DIED, and God, who does nothing half way, nor leaves unfinished any thing He has commenced, will not permit him to be lost. Though, like Peter, he, in a moment of weakness, has, by yielding to temptation, denied his Master; he, like Peter, will yet be led to see and mourn over his error, and to acknowledge Him again. *He* was careless—*Satan*, vigilant; and God has allowed this thing to come upon him to teach him the necessity of *watchfulness*."

"Still, his case is hard!" observed Mercy.

"*Very* hard, love; for the lesson, though a wholesome, is yet a bitter, one: and poor human nature is weak—*very* weak, and disposed *while under* the rod, to question the

kindness of The Chastener. But Nelson will yet be led to see that it was for his good, and to appreciate, in all its fullness, the gentle admonition, '*Take heed* that ye fall not into temptation.' His position, however, is enviable compared to Ward's, whom the Arch One has been ingraining in evil for upwards of fifty years, and whom, dead to all sense of danger, and reeking with accumulated guilt, he is now rapidly pushing down in triumph to his grave. Say," pursued Reuben, "God should not in mercy stretch out His hand to *rescue* the poor fellow—WHAT THEN?"

Mercy shuddered.

"Let us hope that He will," she said, with a sigh.

"Let us *pray* that he may, and then we may indulge the hope," said Reuben. "But," he added, smilingly, "I am detaining you. You have come to tell me something?"

"On my way from Miss Brown's, this morning, I met Mrs. Bignell, who desired me to inform you that her husband is laboring under some mental disquietude, and to ask if you would not kindly call and see him."

"By all means, and at once," returned Reuben, springing to his feet. "But one word: did Miss Brown state how Tom is getting along?"

"Yes; as usual."

"Poor Tom!" exclaimed Reuben, with a sigh.

"Does his father yet know who —"

"No," interrupted her husband, hastily. "Why should I acquaint him with it? What good would come of it? Whom would it benefit? Not himself; not his reputation among his friends, who doubtless would make sport of it and him; not his wife, whose confidence in him might be shaken by it; not Tom, whom, for many reasons, it would be likely to make jealous and unhappy; nor me, whose motives in making it known would in all probability be mis-

construed. No; let it rest where it is—in our own breasts, till time, place and fitting circumstances shall justify its revelation."

Mercy looked him steadily but smilingly in the eye, for a few moments, and then observed, archly:

"I see a *fraternal* yearning struggling in your pupils!"

"But poor Tom is proud and sensitive, and would feel himself injured by such a proceeding," said Reuben, blushing; "and I—I should respect his feelings."

"But *your own*?" said Mercy.

"MINE!" When did he ever think of *them*!

And tears sprang to his eyes like a sudden gush of hot spray.

Mercy took him by the hand, and whispering "Don't cry!" bowed her head upon his shoulder.

"This is selfishness!" exclaimed Reuben, smiling. "Mr. Bignell is in anguish—over some doubt, perhaps, which a word may remove. I must away!"

And they passed from the study.

"Do not tarry long," whispered Mercy. "Your lecture for to-morrow evening is yet to be prepared."

"I shall remember."

Reuben found the millionaire sitting moodily in his library.

"What, now?" he asked pleasantly.

"Sit down," said Mr. Bignell, "and counsel me. I am glad you are come. I had thought of calling on you. Advise me. My heart is heavy."

"With what?"

"I have been a bad man," began the millionaire, "and I have many things to clear up; but *one* thing, first of all."

"Name it?" said Reuben, who had a suspicion of what troubled him.

"In my young manhood, I, for an unworthy motive, wooed and won a woman whose only fault was that she loved the wretch whom she wedded. She was of a mild, quiet, trusting spirit; one of those pure artless natures that appear to have fallen, in some strange way, from some superior sphere, into the midst of the human wolves that make earth stormy with the din of sin. Her plaintive voice reminded those who knew her of lulling music in the still calm of eventide. Her mien and step were soft and graceful, blending the mild dignity of conscious virtue with the unassuming diffidence of inborn modesty. You rarely saw her at work, and yet her work was always done; her careful hand being visible in the sweet, smiling air of neatness that ever reigned in our humble home."

He broke off, apparently without being conscious of it, and bowing his chin upon his right hand, gazed awhile vacantly at the knob of a book case against the wall. At length, without looking around at his companion, he inquired in a subdued voice,

"Can you, who have some knowledge of the ways of God, tell me why such pure natures are allowed to become the prey of human brutes?"

"Why is the wolf permitted to tear the innocent lamb?" returned Reuben, who was very pale. "He whose purposes may not be penetrated by man, SUFFERS it!"

The millionaire thrummed his chin with his fingers, and continued to gaze dreamily at the knob.

"Poor girl!" he observed, after a time. "She was worthy of a nobler mate—of one who could appreciate her worth, and return her gentleness *with* gentleness. But it was not to be. She was married to a scoundrel, and received the treatment of a scoundrel's wife. It would make your heart bleed—it does MINE, *now*!—could I but tell you

how uncomplainingly she submitted to his late hours, his long neglects, his villainous outbursts of passion, his infidelities, and his drunken asperities; and it would rouse you to mingled pity and indignation could I depict his inhuman delight as he beheld her form wasting, and the rose fading and the lily setting in upon her wan cheek, day by day."

He broke off again, his eye still resting with an air of gloomy abstraction, upon the knob.

Reuben's features, in spite of his efforts to subdue the feeling, were gloomy with resentment. A mental prayer, however, soon tranquilised him, and he looked pityingly as before upon the poor fellow before him.

"I had hoped," resumed the millionaire, "to worry her into her grave; but I was disappointed. She wasted, under my brutal treatment, to a certain degree, and there remained fixed, without wasting more. Month after month rolled away, but she was still the same, and promising from appearances, to continue so. I grew indignant. She was an incumbrance, and I determined to get rid of her. The brutal instinct of a depraved mind ere long suggested the way. I made a pretence of reform, and her unsuspecting heart leaped with joy. I affected poverty, but she cared not for that; she, too, would work, she said, if it were necessary—all she desired was kindness and love. I saw that my scheme worked, and, after a time, proposed to try if fortune would not smile upon us kinder in Philadelphia than in New York. She assented, and, selling what we had, we removed to the Quaker city, and took lodgings, apparently for the time being, in an humble boarding house in an obscure part of the town. But I played my cards consistently. 'Business was scarce, and work dull.' Our prospects grew gloomier every day.

A month of this kind of acting rendered my victim sad enough in my absence, but on my return she was ever smiling, loving and encouraging. There were times when my better nature pleaded for her, but its voice was shortly smothered by the grosser, and my purpose became fixed as before. One night I returned home unusually weary and disheartened. Catherine endeavored to inspire me with hope; whispered confidence in God; sang, caressed me, and invited me to notice the smiling face of our little one, of whom I had affected to be fond; but all in vain: my moodiness continued, and in due time we retired. Catherine, however, at first could not sleep. Her mind was wrought up with her husband's gloom. At length, exhausted nature asserted its subduing power, and her eyes closed in slumber. At midnight, all was still, and, congratulating myself upon the success of my duplicity, I rose, lit a lamp, and hastily dressed myself, and stepping lightly to the door, turned to take a last look at those I was about to desert. The child was lying upon its mother's arm, its little face lit up with a dreamer's smile; Catherine herself was also dreaming, and just giving vent to a low sigh. My resolution wavered, but only for an instant. The next, found me groping my way along the passage to the stairs. I retreated from the house undiscovered, and hastened to a distant inn, which I left at day break, for the steamer. I have seen neither wife nor child since then. Subsequently, when other villainies had rendered me strong in worldly substance, I made some efforts to discover their address, for the purpose of settling an annuity upon them, but without success, and I dismissed them from my thoughts. If they still live—"

He broke off, once more, this time with sudden abruptness, and turned his eyes, which were full of anguish, upon his auditor.

The latter was livid; his features were filled with resentment, as before, and his hands doubled into fists.

Human nature was struggling with the Christian.

"What then?" he asked, after a moment's conflict with his blood.

"Then," hoarsely answered the millionaire, somewhat surprised at his manner, "my present wife and I are *living in adultery*!"

Reuben looked down a moment in thought, and then raising his head, observed, in a voice by no means free from agitation:

"This is a serious matter, if it be so; but I think—nay I am confident, you are giving yourself useless anxiety. The affair you speak of happened so long ago, that ——"

He paused, colored, sprang to his feet, and, much to his companion's astonishment, paced the library in great excitement. At length, he resumed his seat, and continued:

"I am familiar with Catherine Bignell's history—with part of it, at least, and can tell you what befell her after her desertion."

The millionaire started back, in speechless surprise.

"Do you wish to hear it?" asked Reuben.

"You know her, then?" gasped the millionaire.

"I am acquainted with a portion of her history," said Reuben, blushing in spite of himself.

Mr. Bignell surveyed him for a few moments in silence, and then turned his eyes uneasily to the floor.

"I will commence," said Reuben, solemnly, who was evidently struggling between feeling and duty, "by stating that you were seen leaving the house by a fellow boarder, returning from the theatre, who, deeming your conduct strange, followed you to the inn, and mentioned the incident at breakfast, the following morning, when the facts of your

desertion, flight, and departure were canvassed, traced and established. I shall not attempt to describe the mingled horror and despair of Mrs. Bignell on learning the truth, language cannot express it: enough that it overwhelmed and threw her into a hospital, where she remained four months, at the expense of a benevolent maiden lady, who had heard her story from the boarding house keeper, and who, on Mrs. Bignell's recovery, received her into her own house, nominally as a servant, but in reality as a friend. The deserted woman and her boy remained with their protectress four years, when the latter was suddenly removed by apoplexy, and the heirs coming in, they were once more upon the world."

"And then?" said the millionaire, eagerly, but without lifting his eyes.

"Mrs. Bignell, finding her prospects dim, and herself but little fitted to fight the passage of life, removed, in a few weeks, to New York, where, it being her native city, she hoped, with a timid woman's reasoning, to feel more confidence, and to find friends who would counsel, protect, and, in case of need, assist her. She was one of those poor diffident souls who, knowing their own weakness, go through the world leaning on the advice and courage of others. She arrived in the great metropolis in safety, and took lodgings at a poor widow's in Varick street. While walking out, the next day, in search of employment, she beheld you, her husband, riding by in a carriage. (The millionaire started as if he had suddenly been shot.) She was so startled by the incident that she had to enter a store and solicit the privilege of sitting awhile to recover herself. She was by nature of a refined mind, dressed with good taste, and had the air and manner of a lady. These qualities served her well on the present occasion. The shopkeeper, mistaking

her for a person of affluence who might be converted into a customer, was exceedingly courteous and attentive, invited her into his carpeted back office, offering her his own softly cushioned chair, furnishing her with iced water, and, when she was partially restored, with the morning paper. While carelessly glancing through its columns, her eye was arrested by an advertisement headed, 'Wanted, a companion, for the wife of a gentleman who is about to remove to the country,' which she modestly desired the privilege of cutting out. The shop keeper smilingly assented, and politely volunteered to extract it for her; but on perceiving the *character* of the advertisement his manner underwent a rapid and marked change, and petulantly exclaiming, 'Have I been throwing away my time upon a *servant*?' he indignantly left her, taking the paper with him. (The millionaire shifted resentfully in his seat.) The poor lady rose, and blushing at the man's brutal rudeness, timidly hurried from the store, followed by a loud guffaw from the clerks, who were not above flattering the servile spirit of their employer. (The millionaire, with his clenched fist, smote the elbow of his chair, as if he fancied it the shop keeper's head.) Mrs. Bignell returned home, and retiring to her room, tearfully related her troubles to her Maker, and humbly asked Him to counsel and assist her. She rose from her knees comforted and encouraged. The following morning the address in the advertisement, providentially, recurred to her, and she wrote a note, couched in the modest language of her own modest nature, applying for the situation. Towards the close of the succeeding day, she received a reply, requesting her to call on the parties at their house in Franklin street. She put on her things, and hastening thither, found in the gentleman a young man of about twenty-seven, and with a frank, open, generous countenance,

which yet was darkened with a mingled air of recent suffering and melancholy; in the lady, a young woman of twenty-two, with placid features, a graceful deportment and a gentle manner. They received the applicant with a genial urbanity which caused her to feel that she was among kindred spirits. Notwithstanding this, the heart of the poor creature throbbed with painful violence. The idea that it was possible for her to obtain a situation with so kind a pair seemed to her diffident mind too great a happiness to entertain. Still, she hoped. The gentleman inquired who and what she was, and she artlessly related the story of her life up to that moment. Her voice, air and manner were so simple and natural that her auditors felt that she was not drawing from any well but truth's. During her narrative, however, they occasionally colored and exchanged meaning glances. When she had concluded, the pair retired to an adjoining room. They returned in a few minutes, and informed her that they would send her word of their decision. She took her leave fearing that this was only a quiet way on their part of declining to take her. But her misgiving was removed ere noon of the following day by the receipt of a note that read, somewhat, as follows:

"*Dear Madam*—Your trials have been severe, and we sympathise with you. But you are not the only victim of the man James Bignell. We too have suffered at his hands—how you will know hereafter. But, like you, we are helpless to right ourselves, and have no course left but to silently submit. The time perhaps may come, when he will discover that they who deliberately injure others, injure themselves most. We hope and pray that that time will come. Meanwhile, we have concluded upon taking a glorious revenge—on that the world perhaps

might not approve, but which satisfies our own hearts. By giving the wife and child of our enemy a home, we shall render a service to them and ourselves, and cause him to one day regret that he ever injured us. Come, then, dear madam, and make one of us; be to us at once a sister and a friend. Bring your—*his*—little one, and, the Lord guiding us, we will teach him to walk in a different path from that pursued by his father. Come.

Yours cordially, RICHARD WHITE."

At this name, the millionaire sprang from his seat, and reeled, like a drunkard, towards the window.

"Richard White!" he cried, arresting himself.

"Richard White," repeated Reuben, with forced calmness.

"My betrayed employer?" gasped the millionaire.

"The same. But why this agitation? I am speaking of events of more than a fourth of a century ago. Be tranquil. You have naught to fear. Resume your seat."

The millionaire did so, trembling in every limb.

"Shall I go on?" asked Reuben. "I have but little more to tell."

The millionaire bowed.

"The poor woman gratefully accepted the offer of her friends, and they repaired, with but little delay, to the country, where they were thenceforth as one family. The Whites having no children of their own, adopted the little son of their companion, with whom they vied in lavishing on him the most tender caresses. Under their united tutelage and instruction, he grew in years and knowledge and happiness. At length he was sent to college, from which he was one day called to shed his heart's first scalding tears: it was at the bedside of his second mother, who, sad only at leaving those she loved and smilingly crying 'Good cheer!' to invisible visitants, at midnight breathed her last. There was

gloom in the household for a time; but religion has a soothing influence on believing hearts, and sunshine came again. I must break off here," added Reuben. "I have said enough to give you a clue to the subsequent history of your wife and betrayed employer. More I need not say at present. But I will add that you need give yourself no fears concerning your marriage with your present wife. The first will never trouble you."

The millionaire, who was not yet satisfied, moodily shook his head. At length he started up, and, in a determined tone, exclaimed:

"I must see her!"

Reuben observed him for a few moments in silence.

"Whom?" he then inquired.

"My first wife!"

"Impossible!"

"*That* is not a word for MEN."

Reuben turned pale.

"More," added the millionaire: "I must see Richard White!"

Reuben, disturbed, turned his eyes to the floor. Human nature was still contending with the Christian; and the Christian had not yet triumphed.

"Pride—pride!" he murmured, "what a faithful ally of The Tempter art thou!"

"Where are they?" demanded the millionaire. "Give me their address."

"With two words I could relieve this poor man," muttered the young clergyman to himself: "with two little words. And yet I do not say them!"

"Their address?" repeated Mr. Bignell.

"If I tell him *that*, I must tell him *ALL*!" muttered Reuben.

"Why do you hesitate?" asked the millionaire, in surprise.

"What if I should say they are *dead*?" returned the young clergyman, with an effort.

"You would not say so, because it is not *true*!" cried Mr. Bignell, incredulously. "Dead! I am not a child!—Their address?"

Reuben, coloring to his temples, sprang to his feet.

"One word!" he exclaimed, trembling with agitation. "I have striven to spare you, myself, and others from unnecessary pain. In this struggle—let me confess it—pride and policy have each had a part; pride, perhaps, the *greater*. I am accustomed to wrestling with my being, but, till of late, not in the form in which it has defied me during this interview."

He paused, nervously paced the room awhile, and then, still trembling, and in a voice vibrating with disquietude, continued:

"I had erroneously begun to think that I had nursed my will well up to that point which holds the body tame. This was a step towards self-righteousness that required correction, and He who watches over his stumbling children has been pleased to bring about this scene to open my eyes to my folly. The lesson is a bitter, and therefore a wholesome, one; for it has taught me to realize, in all its humiliating fullness, that he who fancies he is even partially free from the power of THE OLD MAN, flatters himself. I am under its baneful influence *now*, and my will is as a straw before it. Philosophy enables me to see this, but philosophy can do nothing for it. Secret prayer will chain it, but even it *only for a time*. In the next unwatched moment, it snaps its fetters, and, wild with satanic delight, riots turbulently again. GRACE alone can effectually crush it; but what human being *ever had that grace* LIFE-LONG? And yet it is well-ordered, too! Like the Israelites in the

wilderness, who each morning, could gather only so much manna as would serve them till night, our proud hearts need to be taught our utter dependence upon God, *DAILY*! O, the pregnant wisdom of that little line 'Give us *this day* our daily bread!' And yet I, in my sickening conceit, had the folly to imagine that I, by the mere force of my own weak will, could hold in check that old man whose power and cunning can be held down only by God Himself! Fool—dolt—idiot! when *wilt* thou learn wisdom?"

The millionaire, whose spiritual experiences savored too much of the neophyte's to catch more than a glimpse of the meaning of this half soliloquy, stared at the speaker in mingled doubt and astonishment.

"Is your resolution still fixed?" asked the young clergyman, catching his eye. "I warn you that it will try your manhood to its centre! You see," he added, with a mournful smile, "how triumphantly the old man has me in his toils, since he will not even permit me to *speak* kindly!"

"Fixed," replied the millionaire, not heeding his observation.

"As you will," said Reuben after a few moments of thought. "Be in readiness to take the six o'clock train of the Hudson River road, to-morrow morning. I will meet you at the depot."

And he moved towards the door.

"But—"

"I cannot tell you more to-day," interrupted Reuben. "You have demanded this thing, not I. But," he added, pausing, and observing his companion with a faint yet beseeching smile, "it is not yet too late. This resolution will lead to pain. *Retract it!*"

"No," said Mr. Bignell, firmly.

"Enough. I will meet you at the depot."

He said, and was gone.

CHAPTER XIX.

"A HARD day will be his, to-morrow—a hard day!" muttered Reuben, as he hastened homeward from the millionaire's. "He will, however, sleep the sounder for it at night—there's comfort in that. But," he added, as another thought flitted before him, "how will it be with *me*? Shall I, with pride, policy, and the voice of nature crying bewilderingly aloud, be able to retain my secret? *Shall I*?"

And his brow darkened mournfully with doubt. Was *that* the answer?

"Pride!" he murmured, uneasily, a few moments later; "what have I, a professing minister of God, to do with pride? Blind leader of the blind! is this the spirit that becomes one of The High Commission? 'Becomes!' O, we are all human, the leading and the led, and alike subject to human infirmities! But could I listen to his detailed sketch of his cold-blooded treatment to *her* UNMOVED? Is it in man's pulses not to beat with resentment when—— but this is worse than childish," he added, checking his feeling with a powerful effort. "Was it not from the lips of a penitent, who has already received pardon from God? And shall I, then, refuse to forgive him—I, whose pretensions to implicit obedience to duty are presupposed by my calling as a Bearer of Glad Tidings, and who preach, in public and in private,

the ennobling grandeur of forgiveness! Dolt—idiot—vain prater! *in what* art thou better than thy kind!"

He walked on, clouded, oppressed and sad at heart—hearing nothing, observing nothing, and moving mechanically, as if in a dream.

"But was his account of his injuries to that poor, helpless sufferer, the only provocative?" he demanded of himself, as his thoughts cleared up. "Had not his apparent indifference to the fate of his son *a little* to do with your wounded pride? Come, conceited moralist! who, full of failings thyself, art yet so ready to sit in judgment upon others—CONFESS!"

A scarlet blush, of mingled humiliation and uneasiness, followed this searching interrogatory. His mind became confused, also, and his eyes temporarily dim. But his self-possession ere long returned, unaccompanied, however, by the calm serenity of spirit that usually attended it.

"Whence comes all this?" he cried, mentally. "Why am I thus disturbed? I'll no more of it; I'll crush it!"

He made an effort; but failed: forgetting that the ability did not lie in himself.

He walked on confused, humiliated, indignant, and at length reached home.

Mercy, whose watchful eye was sensitively observant to the slightest change in the features of him she loved, met him at the door.

"You have been in conflict!" she exclaimed, in a tone of solicitude, as, taking him by the hand, she led him to a sofa in the parlor, and seating herself beside him, looked him tenderly in the eye.

"A fierce one!" returned Reuben, mournfully. "And, as if the trial itself were not enough, it terminated in my defeat!"

"That is obvious from your manner!" said Mercy, smi-

ling. "But, courage; tell me all. Perhaps you may yet recover from your error. Who shall say you shall not? Come," she added, with a playfulness she did not feel, "make a clean breast!"

Reuben related the main facts of his interview with the millionaire and the particulars of his own thoughts and sensations, concluding with a minute description of his fruitless exertion to subdue the feelings that the interview had engendered.

Mercy followed him from the beginning to the close with her calm, clear mind.

"My poor Rube!" she sympathisingly exclaimed, when he had finished. "As you say, man is at the best, a poor fellow. Conscious, on reflection, of his impotence, he is yet perpetually trusting in himself; sensible that faith to the end alone will save him, his faith is ever faltering, and a mere thing of spasms; and knowing that, in the face of all his delinquencies, he has yet in God a kind, firm friend who is ever ready and willing to come to his aid in time of need, he yet, when in difficulty, is constantly *forgetting* that Friend! How good in Him, and how fortunate for us, that we have an Intercessor to plead for our lagging memories and short comings!"

Poor Reuben, uttering a deep sigh, covered his face with his hands.

Mercy was pained at his distress, but did not let it appear; and foreseeing, from a thought in her mind, that he soon would be himself again, she smilingly observed:

"But The Lord knows the weaknesses and failings of His people, and asks them to do only so much as they are able, with His help, to perform—their *best*! And surely *that* is not hard! And when they have no 'best'—as indeed, *who* HAS?—to offer, He has lovingly made provision for them in

His Son, whose blood they can *always* plead, and always with acceptance. So, then, *who* has cause for SADNESS, and *who* NOT for JOY?"

Another sigh, longer-drawn than its predecessor, was the only response.

Poor Reuben! He knew all this, in his mind; but his faith having glided imperceptibly away before the approach of pride, at the millionaire's, he could not realize its warm, stirring truth in his *heart*.

Mercy's clear mind perceived the difficulty in the way, and, still confident that his depression would soon disappear, said in a tone of assumed cheerfulness:

"Our reasoning faculties are for use, not idleness; so, let us employ them school fashion, and see what will come of it. Why are men unhappy? From general sin. Why are individuals unhappy? From the consciousness of sin. Ought they to remain unhappy? No. Does God ask or expect them to be unhappy? No. Is there any need of their being unhappy? No. Will giving way to disquietude help them? No. Will sitting down and crying, help them? No. Will peace come to them of its own accord, or must they seek for it? The latter; 'seek and ye shall find.' Is there any good reason for their continuing unhappy? No. Why? Because they can cast their sorrow off. Where? At the foot of the cross. When? At any moment; 'behold, *now* is the accepted time.' What assurance have they that they are at liberty to do this? From the Highest: 'Call upon Me in thy day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.' That is from The Father; is there any evidence from the Son? The amplest: 'Whatsoever you ask The Father, in My name, he will give it to you.' What does it require to do this? Faith, and an effort. But what if they have no faith? The effort itself is one of the

properties of faith, and is always blessed; when blessed, it attracts all the other properties, and the petitioners are pardoned, and thereby at once made happy. There," added Mercy, with forced pleasantry, "so much for exercising one's reasoning powers. Now, what have you to say!"

Not one word; only a dry, miserable, fixed gaze down at a round blue figure in the carpet!

Mercy felt like sighing, but she checked it; and knowing from her own experience the feelings of a Christian whose faith is under a cloud, she resolved to leave nothing undone to rescue the man she loved from his despondency. Therefore, committing the result to Him who employs human instrumentalities to execute His designs, she altered her method, and continued:

"When we are thus beset, with whom have we to contend? The Arch One *without*, and The Old Man *within*—two cunning and valiant enemies, *either* of whom is able to crush us, without half trying; aye, and to so impose upon our senses as to cause us to employ in our own defence such weapons as will be of service only to *their* side! What then shall we do against BOTH?"

Poor Reuben sighed, and stared at the round blue figure more gloomily than before.

"And yet we *can* do something," said Mercy, encouragingly. "We can call on One who is *stronger yet* than they, and He will *fight them for us!* But in all that you have said, I do not discover that in your conflict you depended for a moment on any strength or wisdom but—*your own!*"

Her husband started,—and looked at her thankfully. These few words were to him like the sudden lifting of a curtain. He saw his error in an instant. All was plain. His doubt and gloom vanished, and Faith, smiling and inspiring as the bright star of morning, reappeared in his

heart, and electrified him with her presence. Tears, bright as crystals flashing in the sun, leaped from his eyes, and his countenance lit up with mingled gratitude and joy.

"Thank God, O my soul!" he exclaimed, falling on his knees. "*Thank God for LIGHT!*"

CHAPTER XX.

MR. BIGNELL rose at daybreak, and hurriedly commenced making his toilet. He was pale and agitated, and his eyes swollen and dewy.

Mrs. Bignell, who had lain awake nearly all the night, listening with pain to the sighs and sobs that escaped him in his sleep, silently observed him. The poor soul knew that something heavy lay upon his heart; but what it was she could not guess. She had been too long accustomed to passively submit to his reserve, to break through it now; but she had hoped that his conversion would have influenced him to give her a little of his confidence. She would have been satisfied with ever so small a particle, and been happy with it; for it would have been an evidence that, with all his uncommunicativeness on his private affairs, he still had a corner in his heart in which her image was warmly treasured. But in this respect she thus far had been disappointed. Since his change, he had been a little more urbane than before, but nothing more. There was no sign or exhibition of *feeling* in his deportment; nothing to indicate that he loved her: and the poor thing *wanted* to be loved. She had endured his cold indifference for ten years; not un murmuringly, perhaps, in her private moments, for she was a woman, and had a woman's warm heart; but uncomplainingly, and looking forward hopefully to bet-

ter times. A kind look, a gentle word, a breath of confidence—a single step down from his dais of proud haughtiness and supercilious coldness would have cost him nothing, but would have been *very much* to her.

When about to retire, he had told her that he should rise early as he had business a few hours' ride from town, but had said nothing to give her a clue as to what that business was; and this was all she had on which to found a thought. She felt that whatever the business was, it was of more than ordinary importance; else why the uneasiness and gloom that had sat upon him for a week past; why his sobs, and sighs, and broken rest during the live-long night: and why his downcast air and seeming sense of helplessness this morning?

How the poor soul wished to know the character of his burden, to share it with him, and, if possible, to whisper comfort!

It had been arranged that Mr. Bignell should not wait for breakfast; and now having finished dressing, he looked down for a moment in thought. Then dropping on his knees, he besought guidance and strength for the day, in a brief and silent prayer.

He rose calmer, but was still pale, still agitated. He approached his wife, whose heart bled at his distress, and kissing her, slipped a small note into her hand.

"Pray for me!" he said, convulsively; and was retreating from the room, when Mrs. Bignell called him back.

He turned, and surveyed her with mingled confusion and surprise.

"I know not what is before you to-day," said Mrs. Bignell, with a loving but tearful smile, "nor what is on your mind. But—"

She broke off, blushing and amazed at her own boldness.

"But?" said Mr. Bignell, encouragingly.

"I was about to add," said the lady, her eyes cast down with mingled timidity and modesty, "that whatever be the cause of your suffering and despondency, it is your privilege as one of the adopted Sons of God to call on Him for help, with the confident expectation that He will both hear and answer you."

Mr. Bignell bent over her and tenderly pressed his lips to hers.

"Pray for me!" he whispered.

His wife answered him with a sob; and, drawing her to his breast, he hurried with reeling steps from the room.

Feeling, at last! affection, and kindness, too—warm, deep, and, generous! What a flood of sunshine the discovery let in upon that lonely and long-neglected heart! Trembling with joy, she opened the note and read:

"*My dear Martha.*—Shame alone, perhaps not unmingled with a lingering spark of false pride, has kept me from asking your forgiveness for my unmanly treatment since you have been my wife. But I ask it now. Forgive and forget it, and let us henceforth be friends. I am a poor fellow; but, with God's help, I shall mend. I have been a bad man; you cannot conceive *how* bad. The Lord is merciful, and has pardoned me; but I hope to see the day when I can pardon, or at least look with less horror upon myself. A fear is now upon me; a fear I cannot describe. But be assured of this: let happen what may, I love you, and only you. You shall know all on my return.
Yours affectionately,

JAMES BIGNELL."

Poor lady! with what mingled emotions she wept and smiled over these few welcome lines, which she read again and again.

"O!" she murmured reverently, "If it be Thy will, let not this day, which has opened so brightly for *me*, close darkly upon HIM!"

The millionaire met Reuben at the Hudson River depôt. The latter was pale, but firm. But few words passed between the pair; the younger comprehending the feelings of the elder, and respecting them. Reuben provided himself and his companion with the morning journals to wile away the tedium of the journey. After running his eye through a few lines of the leader, the millionaire laid the paper on his knees, where it remained during the remainder of the ride. His thoughts were elsewhere, and upon other things. He was interrupted in his reflections by the stopping of the train.

"We are at Hudson," said Reuben, rising.

"Hudson?" said the millionaire, with an inquiring glance.

"We are to get out here," returned Reuben, gravely.

The old gentleman colored, and, leaving his seat, followed the young clergyman with a tremulous step, out of the car.

Reuben, perceiving by his companion's manner, that he had neglected to strengthen himself for the journey, led the way up the main street to a hotel, and called for a substantial lunch, which was soon forthcoming and despatched without a word. The meal over, the pair proceeded to a stable, and taking a horse and wagon, rode slowly out of the city.

It was a bright sunny day in that season when spring, having unfolded all her budding glories to the sun, is about to yield them to the care of summer. The atmosphere was pure and exhilarating; the yellow, winding road comparatively free from dust; and the verdure on the road's sides, and the fields in their first dress of green, refreshing to the eye.

"A pleasant morning!" observed Mr. Bignell, with a deep sigh, when they had ridden a short distance.

"Very pleasant!" returned Reuben.

But the mind of neither was upon the morning.

The birds, perched on the road-side trees, piped their glad songs without finding appreciating listeners in the occupants of the wagon, whose sense of hearing was absorbed by the overflowing fulness of varied feelings that agitated their breasts.

"Have we far to go?" asked the millionaire, after a pause.

"Only to Claverack—the next village. See—it is already in sight!"

"Claverack!" repeated the old gentleman to himself, as he riveted the name in his memory.

And they relapsed into silence.

At length they approached a small, neat, but somewhat scattered village, in the centre of which stood a plain, stout, old-fashioned brown-stone church, its tall spire pointing, with silent eloquence, to heaven.

Reuben, whose features, during the journey, indicated an oppressed mind, on nearing the village, suddenly drew up, and turning to his companion, observed, in a quivering voice—

"One word, Mr. Bignell, before we proceed!"

The millionaire, half suspecting what was on his mind, surveyed him in silence.

"If we pursue this matter to the end, it will lead to pain for us both. This will do good neither to you nor me. Had we not better turn back?"

Mr. Bignell moved not, spoke not; but there was an answer in his *eye*, and that answer was—*No*.

"I am restrained by various causes," said Reuben, coloring, "from speaking freely on this topic, but I am at lib-

erty to say this: You are not living in adultery with the present Mrs. Bignell, nor will your first wife ever trouble you." He paused, looking the while at his companion, and then continued, inquiringly: "We have not yet gone so far, but that we may retrace our steps. Were not that the wiser course?"

His auditor, slowly, but with an air of calm decision, shook his head.

Reuben colored, and appeared grieved.

"There are reasons," he said, "why my tongue should remain tied, for the present at least, on this matter. These reasons affect another much, you but little. Have pity on that person, and bid me turn the horse's head?"

The millionaire's brow contracted sternly, and his lips drew closer together than before.

"I could say one word," continued Reuben, a mournful shade tinging his brow, "that perhaps might influence you to retire with an easy heart; but if I speak that word, I shall most likely be forced to say what the individual to whom I have referred, would rather have remain unsaid; whereas, if I go on without mentioning it, the termination of our journey will, in your eyes, make me appear brutal. Have pity, therefore, on the delicacy of my position, and allow me to turn back!"

The millionaire was silent.

"A sign—the motion of a finger?"

The sign was not given.

Reuben sighed, and seating himself at ease, as before, drove on.

"Prepare yourself," he said, gently, as they turned into the main road of the village.

Mr. Bignell bowed. His breast was swelling with emotion. As they rode on, he glanced at the numerous seat-

tered dwellings, and wondered in which of them his long-deserted and long-forgotten wife lay pining.

"She must be old, now!" he muttered, musingly. "Fifty at least in years, and seventy perhaps in aspect; for thought, and pain, and care—the only things I left her!—silver the hair, furrow the face, and bend the body, deeper than age. Yes, she must be old; and thin, too: for she was by nature of a slender make. Gray-haired, thin, bent, and wrinkled with care and sorrow—four marks by which to distinguish her. Neat, too—I must not forget *that*; very neat, from instinct and from habit; for in our darkest days, her tidy hand made even poverty look respectable. Neatness in woman is a gift which never departs from her. Gray-haired, thin, bent, wrinkled and neat—I cannot mistake her. But how shall I endure her mild, reproachful glance? Perhaps she is married to another—perchance to Richard White! Who knows? Divorces are easily obtained in some states, when women are the applicants and abandonment is proven. Can it be as I suspect? And yet why not? There was a congeniality in their dispositions that, all bars removed, would draw them to each other. It is, it must be so; and hence my friend's anxiety to have me turn back, that I might not discover nor disturb the timid pair. O, the power of logic! I feel bolder, braver, and can face them now without trembling!"

His courage was soon to be put to the test; for, walking slowly down the road, in the direction of the advancing wagon, was a couple whose slow careful steps, and general air announced them far gone in the silver winter of human life.

As Mr. Bignell's eye fell on them his breath became suspended, and his cheek turned pale; while his heart received a shock resembling that of a sudden blow.

The aged pair drew near; but as they passed by, the millionaire's self-possession returned, and he breathed freely; his instinct telling him that he never before had looked upon their faces.

"What miserable dupes we are of our imaginations!" he muttered, with a humiliating blush. "I shall be more careful the next time."

A little way further on, a young farmer, with the easy, independent bearing of one who feared and owed nobody, was leaning carelessly over an orchard fence, and quietly observing the parties in the wagon. As he caught Reuben's eye, his handsome, manly face, ruddy with health and self-reliance, softened into a winning, recognising smile that caused the attentive millionaire to start.

"It is he—my boy," he cried, mentally. "That smile—it is his mother's; I'd know it in a thousand!"

He every moment expected Reuben to draw up; but no—the wagon passed on.

"You are pale?" observed the latter, comprehending the cause of his agitation.

"I thought I recognised that face," stammered the millionaire, in confusion.

"It is not that of your first born," said Reuben. "He no longer resides here."

Imagination again!

"Simpleton!" muttered Mr. Bignell, moodily, to himself. "What is man but the dupe of his faculties, that trifle with him as if he were only their play thing!"

A few yards further on, and they drew near to a farm house in the last stages of neglect and decay. A shutter was hanging awry by a single fastening. A bundle of rags occupied the place of a shattered pane. The roof, with here and there a vacant spot, was covered with moss.

The backs of the side seats by the door were broken, one of them momentarily threatening to fall to the ground for good. The garden space between the house and the broken fence looked darker and more forlorn than the building itself, and both testified that here was the home of a sloven. Behind the house, in the act of drawing water from a well, whose ruined frame was in keeping with the wretched condition of the general scene, was the mistress of the homestead, her short, thin, shapeless body, half bent with age, enveloped in tatters and rags.

Mr. Bignell shuddered. Could this poor old creature, whose last lingering sparks of pride, confidence and hope, appeared to have long been crushed out, be the remains of the once beautiful and lady-like woman whose industrious hand made meagerness look plenteous and gave an air of thrift and neatness to every thing she touched? Had desertion, neglect and poverty revolutionized her nature and brought her, in the gray winter of her days, to *this*? Yes; it must be so: it was she, indeed. Now, now, the millionaire fancied that he understood the full meaning of his companion's anxiety to have him turn back. Yes, it was to spare him the humiliating sight of that sad solemn wreck of a once happy, confiding and hopeful heart, now, alas! bankrupt of every tie that affiliated her to her kind, and for no wrong, fault or error of her own!

Tears, of mingled sympathy and shame, glided down the cheeks of the rich man, who could not withdraw his eyes from the forlorn object of his thoughts, who having now filled her pail, paused to observe the occupants of the slowly approaching wagon.

Mr. Bignell turned livid as his orbs encountered hers, which, to his startled fancy, seemed to flash with mingled recognition and surprise. He uttered a deep sigh, and

ashamed to look her in the face, made a slight, confused bow and hastily averted his head.

A few paces more, and the wagon faced the gate; but, instead of halting, it *continued to move on*.

The millionaire glanced in surprise at his companion, who was bowed in thought, and then touched him on the knee.

"Well?" inquired Reuben.

"Is not this the house?"

Reuben shook his head.

"But she is here," cried the millionaire, pale and agitated. "I have seen her. She is standing by the well!"

"She!" said the young man in dreamy astonishment. "Who?"

"My wife!"

"You mistake," returned Reuben, mournfully. "Patience yet a little while!"

And he was again in his revery.

Imagination once more!

The millionaire was bewildered. A sensation of lightness darted through him. He felt as if a mountain had been removed from his breast.

They were now fairly in the village, and gradually approaching its centre. Scarcely a hundred yards intervened between them and the time-honored church, to which the honest inhabitants were accustomed to proceed from Sabbath to Sabbath to listen with reverential attention to the faithful messenger who, in the name of The Prince of Israel, there proclaimed glad tidings to wounded hearts.

The millionaire surveyed it a few moments, and then glanced successively at the scattered cottages on either side of the road, silently wondering which of them contained the wife whom he had deserted, and the employer he had be-

trayed. As he had erred so egregiously in reference to the sloven, he now resolved to be more upon his guard, and not permit his artful fancy to impose upon him for the fourth time. He turned to his companion to see if he could judge from his look or manner at which house he designed to stop, but the latter, though evidently conscious of whither he was going, was still in a revery, and Mr. Bignell perceived that he had no help for it but to rely upon his own intuition.

His eye fell at length upon a modest cottage, situated in the centre of a small garden whose tastefully planned walks and air of unusual neatness singled it out from its more pretending neighbors and extorted the admiration of the spectator.

As the millionaire looked upon it, he felt that he was at length approaching the abode of the two whom, of all persons in the world, he had wronged the most. His features crimsoned with blushes, his frame trembled, and his heart knocked violently against his breast. As he drew near to the cottage, his agitation changed and increased with startling vigor. His blushes disappeared and were succeeded by a fearful paleness; his breathings became hard and spasmodic, and his palate dry and painful.

"Stay!" he cried, hoarsely, touching his companion on the arm. "I cannot endure this meeting, at present. I must postpone it. I am not so strong as I thought!"

"What meeting?" asked Reuben, in thoughtful surprise.

"With *them*! That is their house, is it not?"

"No," returned the young clergyman, gravely.

The millionaire looked at him a few moments as if doubting his own senses; then observing that the wagon continued to move on, he bowed his head, in conscious helplessness, upon his knees.

A short distance further, and the vehicle drew up at a horse-post in front of the church. The neat pathway to its entrance was through a graveyard, whose green hillocks and plain marble memorials, distinctly visible from the road, told the passing wayfarer, in simple but stirring language, whither he was bound.

"Let us get out here," said Reuben, in an agitated voice.

He alighted, and gave his hand to the millionaire. As their palms met, he noticed that his companion's trembled.

"Prepare yourself; call up your courage: be firm," he whispered.

"Where is their house?" asked Mr. Bignell. "My eyes are getting dim."

"This way," said Reuben, gravely. "Take my arm."

The millionaire shook as if laboring with a chill.

"Courage!" whispered Reuben.

"But where are we going?"

"Look!"

The sun was shining upon them; and the millionaire, shading his eyes, the lashes of which were wet and quivering, glanced around.

They were in the graveyard!

"What is this?" demanded Mr. Bignell, with a slight start. "I thought we were going to their house?"

"We are approaching it now," returned Reuben, tremulously.

"That is it, then?" said Mr. Bignell, pointing to a cottage on the left of the cemetery, and a few yards back from the road. "But I see no gate or other opening. To reach it, we must scale the fence, and I am but a sorry climber. It would be better to walk round the church."

"Prepare yourself; call up all your courage," said Reuben,

not heeding his remark, and leading the way towards the left hand corner.

The millionaire followed him with trembling steps.

The young clergyman suddenly stopped, and turning to him, said, in a hoarse, dry voice,

"There is yet time to avoid the painful surprise that awaits you, if you pursue this matter to the end. I repeat it, you are not living in adultery with the present Mrs. Bignell, and you may dismiss all fears that your first wife will ever appear against you for your great wrong to her. Were it not better to turn back?"

The millionaire looked a cold, hard, obstinate 'No.'

"I am restrained," said Reuben, coloring, "by a promise to the friend and protector of the first Mrs. Bignell, from informing you of their whereabouts, unless circumstances should render it compulsory. It is true that when he exacted and I acceded to that promise, neither had any thought that you would desire to learn their hiding place, save with a malevolent object, and he did not wish the story of Mrs. Bignell's wrongs or that of his own to be gossiped in the little world to which he had retreated for retirement, and in which he and his were living happy and respected. But a promise given, is a promise binding. Have pity on me!"

The millionaire was silent, immovable.

"I yesterday," continued Reuben, "in an unguarded moment, and touched by your distress, spoke of them when I should have held my peace. Have pity on me?"

"You have said too much or too little?" said Mr. Bignell, after a few moments of reflection.

"I have stated all that I am at liberty to," returned Reuben. "To have spoken more yesterday, would have been a wrong to myself; to have said less, would have been ungenerous to you. I found you in doubt and gloom, and I

gave you what light I could consistently, to restore you to tranquility. I assured you that in the matter which gave you so much uneasiness, you had naught to fear; but I had not your confidence, and my word went for nothing. Having learned so much, however, you insisted on knowing more. You had perhaps a right to make this demand; but if so, I, as the confidant of one who feels keenly the wrong that was done to the first Mrs. Bignell, had an equal right to decline giving you further particulars. But perceiving by your manner that you would never again be at peace till you were satisfied by credible testimony that your fears were groundless, I partially waived my right, in hope that ere we should come to our journey's end, something would transpire to induce you to forego your resolution; but, in case of disappointment in this, still willing to lead you to where you could obtain the information you desired."

The millionaire heard him, but somewhat impatiently, to the end; and then, with characteristic energy, demanded:

"Show me their house, or lead me to it!"

"Enough, Mr. Bignell,—you force me to it," said Reuben, mournfully. "Prepare yourself for a painful surprise.—Their house is that appointed for all the living!"

The millionaire started, and became livid

"Look behind you," continued Reuben, "and say if the names on those headstones are familiar to your mind?"

Mr. Bignell turned and glanced hastily at the lettering on the memorials designated. Then throwing a reproachful look at his companion and uttering a low cry, he sunk down, in a sitting posture, on an adjoining grave, and covered his face with his hands.

The headstones, which were uniform in size and style, bore the following inscriptions:

SARAH WHITE,
Died April 10, 1838,
AGED 39.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth."

RICHARD WHITE,
Died January 3, 1843,
AGED 43.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

CATHERINE BIGNELL,
Died September 5, 1845,
AGED 41.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Reuben observed his companion for a time as if he would read his inmost nature, and then murmured:

"Yes, his tears are from the heart. I pity and forgive him!"

He plucked a four-leaved clover from each of the three graves, and uniting the stems, placed them in the upper button-hole of his vest, where they remained till he reached home, when they were carefully transferred to a small vase on the desk in his study.

"Ah!" he mentally exclaimed, "could the poor sufferer but have known that her wronger would one day shed tears of honest penitence over her grave, how the thought would have cheered her departing hours! But if the spirits of the just are permitted to look down upon those in whom they in life felt a tender interest, her gentle eye is smiling on him now!"

When his agitation had partially subsided, the millionaire, looking at his companion, inquired—

"How did she die?"

"Calmly."

"Of what?"

"Consumption."

"Did she linger long?"

"Four months."

"Who was with her in her closing moments—you?"

Reuben bowed.

"Her son—where was he?"

"At her bedside."

"And now?"

"I must decline to answer that, Mr. Bignell!" was the reply. "For reasons that I may not name, but which are weighty with me, your son does not wish to acknowledge the relationship at present. Nay, do not blush—he means it not unkindly, nor out of any disrespect to you. More than this I am not free to say. And now, sir, if you are ready, we will return to town."

The millionaire looked at him with eyes that after a few moments flashed with an understanding thought, and then lapsed into deep dejection.

"Have you no consideration for the feelings of a father?" he asked, in a tone that touched his auditor.

"Hear me, Mr. Bignell!" exclaimed Reuben, in an agitated voice. "I—but," recovering himself, and bursting into tears, "you are treating me ungenerously, sir, in thus attempting to worm a secret from me by appealing to my feelings!"

"I, too, have feelings—I," cried the other. "But no matter," he added, in a voice hollow with emotion. "Pardon me. I will not offend again. Your hand!"

He pressed Reuben's with great warmth, and at the same time looked him in the eye with a beseeching affectionateness that caused the young man to color and avert his head.

As he did so, a sad smile, mingled with not a little grief and bitterness, shaded the countenance of the millionaire.

"Are you ready, Mr. Bignell?" asked Reuben, hoarsely.

"Quite ready, sir!" replied the millionaire, in tones of suppressed despair. "It is but to quit this cemetery for another!"

Reuben, his frame shaken, turned to him with inquiring eyes that seemed as if about to burst with restrained tears.

"I am sore oppressed," cried the millionaire, "and no one

has pity on me! I have two sons, but not one child; for children are tender of their fathers and regardful of their wishes and their feelings, which *mine* are not. My house is open to them, but they will not enter; my arms are yearning to embrace them, but they stand aloof. True, I have not always acted towards them as a father should; but that was in my days of pride and worldliness. But I am another man now, and look back upon my past with horror. I desire my sons to forgive and forget, and to give me a trial under the light of that Lamp which God has given me to illumine my evening's pathway. But they will not—they will not! I have repented,—but they care not; I am in anguish, but they feel not for me! I call to them, but they will not come!”

Reuben was spell-stricken at his misery. He tried to speak, but the words hung unuttered upon his lips.

“From both perhaps,” continued the other, “I should not look for sympathy. But one—O, one has been trained from infancy to walk in wisdom's ways, and been led to understand and feel for the weaknesses of his kind. Should not *he* show some touch of pity? Perhaps—for he is of a stock that remembers injuries!—the memory of my cruel wrong to his mother is ever present with him; and, though willing to take me by the hand as a ‘brother,’ he yet refuses to recognise as a father! [His auditor, blushing deeply to his temples, started.] O, have I not repented of that great wrong in tears and suffering, and will he not forgive? Here, beside *her* grave whose memory is like a hallowing presence, I call on him again, by that name by which he first was called and which his protector taught him to forget—EDGAR, and also by that by which he *now* is known—REUBEN!—my boy—my first born, come to your father's arms!”

The young man, whatever his cause for silence, could

restrain himself no longer. Staggering forward, he fell upon the millionaire's breast, sobbing, in spasmodic tones—

“Father—father—father!”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE millionaire returned home at once joyous and miserable—happy in that the journey had removed some doubts and fears, and restored to him a son; unhappy that, for his wrong to his betrayed employer, he could make no amends.

Mrs. Bignell met him, with a timid yet hopeful smile, at the door, and affectionately tendered him her hand and lip. He hurriedly pressed both, and, confusedly whispering that he would see her by and bye, retired, for rest and reflection, to the library.

The poor lady followed him with her eyes till he disappeared, and then turned with moistened lids into the drawing room.

The millionaire was anxious and uneasy. He felt that his position was a trying and delicate one. He was sensitively conscious that he owed her an explanation. But should he tell her *all*, as he had promised? To inform her that he was a sinner—a *great* one, for that matter, was not difficult; but to let her know that he had been a SCOUNDREL—O, *that* called for a kind of courage to which he feared he was a stranger. If he should keep his word, as he was sensible he was morally bound to do, what would she think of him? Could he ever after look her in the face without humiliation and without blushing? Would not the knowledge of his villainy cause her unlooked-for

and unnecessary pain; and could she thenceforth view him otherwise than with horror—aversion—contempt?

These interrogatories, which he put to himself again and again, confused, terrified and bewildered him. He knew not what to think, to say, or do.

O! if he had only pursued an honest life! *If!*

And while he thought and feared, and rose up and sat down, and glared morbidly at vacancy, and bowed his reddened face in doubt and hope upon his hands, the hours glided on.

He knew intuitively that it was late; that his wife was sitting up and waiting patiently for the redemption of his promise, or at least for a few words of comfort, but he did not, could not stir. Shame fastened him to his chair like a rivet.

At length a familiar passage came to him: 'Call upon Me in thy day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.' It was like a star suddenly shining through a dark sky, and he knelt and prayed for light and courage.

He rose calmer, clearer, firmer. All sense of doubt and fear had imperceptibly passed away; and, quitting the library, he walked instinctively into the drawing room. Mrs. Bignell was sitting in a rocker, near a small table, apparently asleep. But the quiet and ready manner in which she looked up as her husband entered, told the latter that she had been in thought, not slumber. He colored, as their eyes met, and a momentary fear came over him; but he shook it off; and taking her by the hand and seating himself beside her, he, though not without emotion, told her the story of his first wife and child, and also that of her friend and protector, Richard White.

The poor lady was deeply affected; but when she remembered that it was the *penitent* who spoke, and not the crimi-

nal—when she called to mind the astounding power of the Two Tempters in beguiling men astray—when she reflected that they had successfully duped him for seven and fifty years, and that he had barely escaped from their artifices through the special interposition of Divine Mercy—when she bethought her what a long train of errors they had led him into the commission of, and the mingled pertinacity and cunning with which they still would follow him in every thought and at every step so long as he had life—when she considered his sufferings throughout the trying journey to and from Claverack—when she recalled his kindness to her in the morning—when she remembered that He who does all things well had selected her to accompany him (perhaps as a staff, or as a gentle monitor, to counsel, encourage, and uphold him in his new faith, and in her experience to explain to him the doubts, and point out the snares that The Tempters should throw up before him) on the road to The Silent Valley, she could not do otherwise than feel for and sympathise with him; and her warm, gentle heart went out to him, as she extended her hand at the close of his recital, and said:

“My poor James! Satan and his great ally—your own heart, have led you a sorry dance! Your errors have been grievous and many; but you have a Redeemer whose blood is *more* than equal to them, and a Father whose love and mercy will never weary.”

“You do not despise me, then, Martha?” asked her husband.

Mrs. Bignell looked at him a few moments, and her eyes began to fill.

“You could not think *that*!” she said, in a broken voice. A mist gathered on the lids of the millionaire.

“I have never treated you with confidence and kind-

ness,” he said, tremulously. “But if you will pardon and trust me for the future—”

He broke off, partly because his emotion would permit him to say no more, and in part for the reason that a pair of loving arms were thrown fondly around him, and a softer heart than his was throbbing rapidly against his breast, and a voice was crying in affectionate distress:

“Not another word, James—not another word!”

CHAPTER XXII.

THE spring trade of 18—, was over. To city wholesalers generally, it had been like a great harvest. 'T. Bignell & Co.' was one of the many firms that had reaped largely. They had been so fortunate as to sell nearly four thousand 'extractors.' The country merchants had had so many calls for them from the farmers in their respective regions that they had found it judicious to buy liberally, and the stock on hand soon disappeared, and orders for others followed each other so rapidly that the energies of the firm were taxed to their utmost to supply them. As Tom smilingly informed an applicant for a dozen, "The factory is under full steam night and day, and still we cannot keep up with the demand"—as if there were but one factory in the world.

The firm was in raptures. "The dealers," jokingly remarked Tom to his partner, "are taking to the 'stump' like patriotic politicians, who feel a deep interest in the concerns of the country!"

As spring glided into summer, the firm was in a position to pay up all its debts, to increase its manufacturing facilities, and, for the first time, to 'feel the ground' beneath it.

Success, with most men, has a refining influence. Now that his business was no longer a torturing experiment; now that he was free from pecuniary dependence upon friends; now that his 'house' had a healthy 'bank account,' and its notes passed current in trade and were pronoun-

ced 'good;' now that his business name was regarded as 'respectable' by 'respectable business men;' now that he owed nobody and could look every body in the face like a free and independent man—Tom began, by degrees, to think less and less of clubs, cards, champagne, larks and exceptionable company, and more and more of his business, which he attended to with constantly increasing sedulousness. He also began to grow choice of his acquaintance; 'cracked' fewer and fewer low jokes; indulged less and less in vulgar slang; became more regular in good habits, and more and more respectable generally.

But his improvement was, after all, only a surface improvement. His heart was no purer, nor his private thoughts any more elevated than before. He was simply more respectable—that was all.

In this state of his respectability, he, one evening, while walking home with the elf from a lecture, asked that young lady a question which caused her to blushing hang her head.

"You might as well say 'Yes' at once," added Tom, caressing his moustache, which really became his handsome face; "for this is just the season to take a trip to Washington: and I think we had better take advantage of it. Don't you?"

The elf said she would like to go to Washington very much.

"Then," said Tom, who had acquired a business habit of despatching matters, "how would you like to start Thursday morning of next week. That would allow us a day in the Monumental City, and we could reach the Capitol in season to go to church on Sunday morning?"

The laughing elf shook her ringlets. She had never heard of such haste.

"Pooh!" cried Tom. "There's George Bliss, of the firm of Bliss & Thompson, boot and shoe jobbers, next door to me in Courtlandt street, who tells me that he and the present Mrs. Bliss—they boarded, you know in the same house, at Mrs. Bell's, in Bleecker street."

The elf intimated that she didn't know any thing about them.

"Well, you will, one of these days," said Tom, "for I'll introduce you. You'll like them. They are the most affectionate couple I ever was acquainted with. But to my story. They went out, one evening, on a walk, understood each other, went right off to a clergyman, who tied the knot in five minutes, left him looking with an eye of admiration at a twenty dollar gold piece, and returned home in less than an hour, man and wife. They mentioned the matter to no one but the landlady, and started bright and early next morning, before the other boarders were up, on their wedding tour."

"Where did they go?" asked the elf.

"To Washington," answered Tom. "And they had a royal time. They arrived there," he added confidentially, "just as the great blow was coming on."

"What blow?" asked the elf.

"That of the opening of Congress!" said Tom. But the joke was lost upon the elf. "So, you see," added the young gentleman, naively, "there is no good reason why some honest clergyman should not make a fifty dollar bill next Wednesday evening."

The ringlets shook again, and the elf really couldn't think of such a thing. Besides, what would father say—and grandmother, and Mr. Asbury, and governess?"

"Father will hope it will do us good," said Tom; "grandmother will cry, 'ah! well she's a good child!' Mr. As-

bury will wish us all manner of happiness; and Miss Russell will look languishingly at Mr. Gressinger and wonder when he designs to ask her to step up with him and be chained in the noose hymenial."

"So much you know about governess!" laughed the elf. "She could have been Mrs. Gressinger long ago, if she had wished."

"Then," said Tom, "why is Miss Russell yet a maid, Gressinger still a bachelor?"

"Governess don't choose to be too precipitate!" returned the elf.

"Why not? Gressinger is worth having. He likes her, and is rich. She never will get a better offer."

"That is *her* business, Mr. Impudence!"

"I am sure it isn't mine," said Tom. "But I had always supposed their delay in bringing their love-matters to the usual conclusion was owing solely to Gressinger's neglect in putting the interesting question."

"Does *he* say so?" asked the elf, quickly.

"No. But such is the general impression."

"He has importuned her to appoint the day at least twenty times!" said the elf, speaking up for her friend.

"Then why don't she act like a true lady fair, and oblige him?" demanded Tom.

"That is *her* business!" replied the elf.

"For such uncalled for language, Miss, you deserve to be very coldly treated; and if it were not so late, I would take you to Thompson's and give you an iced jelly. But perhaps you don't mind the hour, or—it being only nine o'clock—the crowd?"

"An old pun!" exclaimed the laughing elf.

"I can't help its age," said Tom. "If it had depended upon me, the poor thing should not have been born till now."

But how about spending the second next Sabbath in Wash-ton? We shall never have a better season for travelling?"

"I'll think of it," said the elf.

"No—don't!" cried Tom, in affected alarm. "I'm afraid it will be like Aunt Hannah's deliberation."

"Who is Aunt Hannah?"

"A lady whom a gent. of my acquaintance once invited to share his loneliness. She told him she would think of it. At the end of a week he desired to know what conclusion she had come to; but the lady stated that she had not yet made up her mind. He repeated the question a month later, and received a like answer. He waited another month, and was favored with the same reply and in precisely the same words. Another month, and another, and yet another, and still the lady had not made up her mind, and still the gentleman hoped, and still the lady was undecided. The proposal was made seven years ago," added Tom, "and Aunt Hannah is weighing it over in her mind yet."

"Where would you have her weigh it?" asked the elf. "In her *shoes*?"

"No," answered Tom, "in her admirer's ear! But, if Wednesday evening don't suit you, I am willing to be reasonable. What say you to following the admirable example of the Blisses, and dropping in on some good-natured clergyman, on our way home?"

"We have no landlady to reveal the matter in confidence to!" laughed the elf.

"But we have a stout, good-hearted landlord in a certain Peter Brown?"

"Whom I would not pain for the world by so unlooked-for a surprise!"

"Good natured people *like* surprises!" suggested Tom.

"Suppose we try the experiment?"

"Not to-night, Mr. Impudence!"

"To-morrow night, then? You see I am disposed to be accommodating."

"Nor to-morrow night, either."

"To-morrow *morning*, then! I can call on you at ten, and we can go out as if for a walk?"

"No!" And the ringlets tossed like a naiad's when stirred by a sudden breeze, and the little lips, sweetened with a rosy smile, puckered up as if they had just been regaling on a ripe orange.

"It would be so easy to say 'Yes!'" insinuated Tom. "Besides, it is cruel to keep the poor clergyman who is to unite us, out of his money. He may be in pressing need of it. But here we are at the door. Shall it be next Wednesday night?"

"You are a great tease! Ask 'pa!'"

They started on Thursday morning for Washington!

"I believe," said Tom, while the happy pair were dashing along in the cars, "that Mr. White recognised me last night. He blushed as he approached to perform the ceremony."

"I should think he would!" cried the elf.

"What?"

"Recognise you. He has known you a long time. Are you not acquainted?"

"Umph—we have had one interview—I believe!"

"Indeed!" And the elf looked puzzled.

"Any thing surprising in that?" asked her husband.

"I cannot understand it," she replied. "It was principally at Mr. White's solicitation that Mr. Asbury agreed to let you have the money with which you entered into business."

"Mr. White's? Impossible! I understood from Joe, that it was at your father's! Mr. White can have no interest in *me*! You have been dreaming, Mag!"

"Perhaps cousin didn't understand it, himself. But it was at Mr. White's, I *know*!"

"You *know* it, Mag?" asked Tom, in astonishment.

"I know it. But don't say any thing. I got it in confidence from governess, who received it from grandmother, who was very much shocked at your treatment of Mr. W., the day he called on you at your boarding house to reconcile you to your father. But don't say any thing. Mr. White, Mr. Asbury and 'pa, are all desirous that it should not get to your ears."

"Why?" inquired Tom, thoughtfully.

"I don't know. But that is what grandmother says."

"I must talk with grandmother when we get back," said Tom, presently.

"No, don't!" cried the elf. "That would betray governess, and *that*, ME!"

Tom looked down, musingly. But the more he reflected, the more he was mystified.

"I give it up!" he exclaimed, at length. "But still I think there must be some mistake."

"You wouldn't, if you knew all, perhaps. Grandma' is usually very careful. Governess says pastor is the best friend you have in the world!"

"How does *she* know?" inquired Tom.

"Grandma' told her."

"Did grandma' tell her why?"

"No. But she said you would learn it one of these days, and that you would then cry over your treatment of him."

Tom looked down again.

"How did Mr. White come to call upon me?" he asked, presently.

"He had previously been to see your father, and after

patiently enduring insult and violence, at length succeeded in obtaining his consent to a reconciliation."

"Umph! But what induced him to call with such a motive on my father?"

"Dear me! didn't you know *that*!"

Tom shook his head.

"It was at the request of your step-mother, who is very unhappy at your estrangement."

Tom stroked his moustache, musingly.

"She is, you know, a member of Mr. White's church," added the elf, by way of suggestion.

"Could mother have been the *real* advancer of the money, after all;" muttered Tom to himself. "It would be easy for her, through the agency of her pastor, to make Mr. Asbury her almoner. She is a modest, delicate soul, doing good by stealth, and when performing a kindness, always retiring behind some screen, like Mr. Asbury, who receives the credit of *her* charity. But, no; it cannot be; the stingy old hunk, her husband, holds his purse strings too tight for her to have so much money. Besides, Mr. Asbury is of too sincere a nature to lend himself even to so pious a fraud. 'No,' he would have said right out, 'a friend, who desires to remain unknown, is lending you this—reserve your thanks for her;' whereas his manner, throughout the whole transaction, left no room to doubt that he was himself the lender; and his manner is as honest as his word. No; my mother did not advance the money! But, granting that this is the fact, how would the simple agency of her pastor in the affair, make him the 'best friend I have in the world'? No. I am not yet on the track!" He looked awhile at the point of his boot, and then continued. "Could he have been the lender himself? Impossible. What interest could he have in me more than in any other sinner? Besides, where could

he get the money? Ministers are proverbially poor: and grandmother states also that it was at his 'solicitation' Mr. Asbury consented to supply me with means. No; it was not Mr. White. I am far from the track yet! And yet grandmother says he is the 'best friend I have in the world.' Umph! I don't understand it. It may be that without knowing it, I somehow am entangled in the skein of his destiny. If so, by keeping a sharp eye upon him, I may, ere long, get a glimpse at one of the threads."

CHAPTER XXIII.

To PAY away money!

It was midnight, and a man with white hairs was struggling; not with another man, for life or death; not in the water, and convulsively splashing, and gurglingly screaming, and looking wildly through the darkness for help; but, in a library, all alone, and with an invisible enemy that had taught him how to crawl through the foul slippery ways in trade where dollars are gathered, and had schooled him how to set great store upon them when once he had them in his hand.

To pay away money! Not for a something in exchange, to satisfy him that he was receiving its value in a tangible substance, which, if he wished, he could turn into money again, and with a profit that would remunerate him for parting with its possession for a time. No; nothing of that kind. For to do this, requires a struggle only on the part of a weak, inexperienced mind, rendered timid by non-contact with the daring titans of Business, whose thoughts, like their operations, are colossal, and this man's was a bold one.

But

To pay away money for—CONSCIENCE!

Not forty or fifty dollars—not a few hundreds, that he would never miss, but—*hundreds* of THOUSANDS!

What does *that* require?

From one who is scrupulously honest from instinct—and there are such men—but little perhaps; but from one who has fought his way, step by step, from poverty to opulence in the sharp conflict of New York trade, where the contestants, gradually hardened by the crushing pressure of competition, are not over-particular as to how, so long as they do, succeed—what *then*?

It *tries* a man, perhaps? No; it don't try *him*—only a *part* of him; a part that has influence upon him—*great* influence—influence that he dreams not of till he attempts to run counter to its dicta, when it suddenly rises with the indignant air of an insulted bully, and teaches him that in *it* he has—A MASTER. Then he awakes from the old, fond, close-hugged thought that he can do what he pleases; then he feels, with a humiliating blush, that he is no longer the ruler of his own thoughts, the prompter of his own actions—that indeed he never was. Then, in his most interior being, he realizes, EXPERIENCES, in mingled amazement and alarm, that there is incorporated with his being an *Intelligence* of whose existence as a LIVING VERITY he previously was ignorant. True, he had frequently heard it spoken of by preachers, but he did not believe it; had seen allusions to it in his reading, but these had not shaken his incredulousness; had now and then heard or read passages concerning it in the Bible, but they had failed to impress him as sober truths. He had heard experienced professors of religion speak of it as the seat and suggester of all manner of wickedness; but he, with many others, had put such individuals down in his thought as simply echoes of a class of persons who have a habit of *talking that way*. He had also heard men of great intelligence—authors, editors, and clergymen of certain denominations—speak of it with an incredulous smile, and knowingly pronounce it an invention

of the early and ignorant ages; and his own judgment, for all he could do to resist it, it must be confessed, sided with theirs; and thereafter, whenever allusion was made to it in his hearing or reading, he smiled, also. But, now, he begins to understand that the experienced professors were *not* simply mere echoes; that the subject was a *real* one; and that the thing itself is a LIVE TRUTH—a strong, sinewy, full-blooded Intelligence, cunninger than any fox or serpent, and more spiteful and malignant than a low-browed woman; a thing of amazing power, and before whose tremendous energies *his* will is as a mere child's; a thing that leads, and plays, and mocks, and trifles with him as it pleases—but careful always to so beguile him that when he *would* do right, he, of his own strength, CAN NOT.

For this crafty Intelligence, all unknown to and unsuspected by its dupe, has grown old and strong—O, *how* strong!—in the art of governing, and also in its likes and dislikes, and will brook no change or interference in them—from *him*.

And if, as in the case of the poor struggler in the library, it be incorporated with the being of one who, under its tuition, has made the gathering of dollars the great aim of his life's best years, this strong, subtle Intelligence has taught him how to *love* them, too, as much for their own sake as for the consciousness of the power that they bring.

It is easy, in view of past delinquencies in honesty, to say, with an effort of the mind, 'Pay up all thou owest, and be at peace.' But an effort of the *mind* is one thing, and an effort of the HEART *another*.

This man had found it so. In a solemn moment, his mind had bade him 'pay,' and he mentally consented, and appointed the time when he would seriously set about it. But now—to-night, the Subtle Intelligence that had be-

fooled him throughout a long business manhood, was having a say, and *its* word was—'No.'

And it was a strong word, too; stronger than the Mind's, which quailed before it into a corner, where it debated whether it had not been too fast in its suggestion, and whether it had not better propose to the man to follow the counsel or rather the *order*, of—The Bully.

A strong word; that shook the poor old brain beneath those white hairs as it never had been shaken before; that strained the sweat, with a more than hydraulic pressure, from the lowest depths of his being up to his forehead in great dancing globules; and that caused that poor old struggler on his way to The Kingdom to pause, and waver, and consider whether he was not paying too much for the quieting of the Little Monitor within—whether indeed he had not better—*turn back*.

Yes; for it resolved itself into this—whether it were not wiser to give up his FAITH, to cast it away as an expensive and an uncertain thing, and to hold on to that which he knew to be both substantial and sure—his MONEY!

It was a trying question; for he knew, now, that to relinquish his Faith, was to throw up his only chance of salvation. There was no guess work about it; no dim uncertainty: for he had been permitted to grasp just so much of the plan of Redemption as to *know* that it was a solemn fact, and not a mere human invention. If he could have thought otherwise, he would have been easy—happy. But, no; he was too conscious of its truth; examination and experience had confirmed it: and he could not believe it a fiction, if he would. He had repented and been forgiven, and had a new account opened with him, and all that was asked at his hands was that he should keep alive his faith—nothing more; and this—his only hope, his ALL—he fan-

cied he could not afford to keep, since it suggested the propriety of—FOLLOWING THE DICTATES OF HIS OWN CONSCIENCE!

If he did not owe so much, he thought he could pay it without a murmur; but Two hundred and twenty-eight thousand was—a great deal of money to pay away on—old scores! True, he fairly owed it, and it was wrong to retain what did not belong to him; but then, Two hundred and twenty-eight thousand was—money! He was a long time in first getting that amount together. Many men spend a whole life without accumulating a fourth of that sum; and others without gathering an eighth of it; yes it was—a great deal of money. And then he was not quite certain, even if he parted with this large sum, that he should retain his faith to the end. Men lose their faith for other causes besides not paying their debts!

And he had worked so hard for his money too; had sacrificed so much, endured so much, gone through so much.

And, now, to *give* it away——!

If those whom he owed would compromise—if they would agree to take, say ten, or even twenty-five cents on the dollar, *then* perhaps he might be willing!

But to give away the *whole* amount——no, he didn't think he could, quite do THAT. It was, in his view, *asking altogether TOO MUCH*!

Having thus brought his hope of salvation down to a dollar-and-cent view, he mechanically lit a cigar and breathed easier. A weight appeared to have been removed from his breast; and for the first time since his religious awakening, he experienced a freedom from all sense of moral accountability. A still calm, a dead indifference to conscience, pervaded his whole being. He thought of his Maker—of the soul's immortal Future—of the Judgment—of the bright reward of those who hold out in faith to the last; but without any

consciousness of hope, of confidence, or dread. It was, on the contrary, with the same stagnancy of mind, the same absence of feeling, on this subject, that used to be his ere his conversion.

He could not account for this great and sudden change; and if he felt easy, his inability to comprehend the cause, rendered him, in what Reuben would call his most interior nature, uneasy at his easiness. Something was wrong within; but what, he could not fathom.

After finishing his cigar, he ascended to his room, and went to bed—omitting, with a mingled carelessness and indifference at which he was himself surprised, his usual evening prayer.

He lay down—but not to sleep. The revolution in his mind—the departure of his interest in the affairs of The Kingdom—and the ease with which he refrained from communing with his Maker, puzzled him till a late hour, when the cause unexpectedly darted across his mind, and benumbed him like a sudden stroke of paralysis.

HE HAD LOST HIS FAITH!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE millionaire rose late, and uneasy.

He reviewed the struggle of the past night, for the purpose of discovering, if possible, wherein he had so grievously erred, as to warrant the disastrous sequence mentioned in the last line of the preceding chapter. But the effort proved abortive, and he gave it up, though not without a cloudy brow. He saw, indeed, that the gross direction in which his thoughts had wandered, had had not a little to do with the flight of his Faith. But, though sensible of the tremendous power and subtlety of The Inner Tempter, he was far from suspecting that he would not have had those thoughts but for *its* insidious whispers.

Days and weeks passed on; but he continued in the same stagnant state. He tried to shake it off in intellectual dissipation—by seeking to amuse himself, as of yore, with the miscellaneous literary nothings which are daily falling from the press, and which occupy so much space in most public and private libraries; in sly visits to the theatre and the opera; and in assisting at early soirees and converzationes. But his efforts terminated in disappointment. He had lost all relish for such things. His inner being yearned for something more substantial. He felt that, in his conversion, he had been elevated to something higher; and to turn to these, was like descending. They seemed insignificant, fictitious—*beneath* him. He could no longer appreciate nor

enjoy them. He felt that he wanted something more worthy the grasp of a mind that had risen above puerilities—something *earnest*, something *REAL*. He turned to the stronger poets, novelists, biographers,—to the chaster records of incident and travel—to the higher-toned reviews, periodicals and newspapers, but without satisfying his longing: all seemed alike empty, weak, and *unearnest*. Meanwhile, behind his unappeased craving, lingered, like a gentle reproach, the memory of the sweet Faith which he had lost, and which smilingly invited him to look Up for it again. This, an inward monitor told him, was his wisest course; but he had no inclination to follow it. He thought he would do so, at some future time, but not just then. Yes—at some future time.

But the hankering within still continued. It was not satisfied with 'some other time,' and *would* not be. 'Now, would be better,' it whispered; but while he mentally admitted the appropriateness of the suggestion, he had no disposition to *act* upon it. With the departure of Faith, went out, as it seemed to him, Energy also.

And thus it was with him from day to day.

He read, as before; but he could no longer feel the words, nor grasp the points in the topics presented. What, in other days, would have stirred, electrified, and set every wheel in the machinery of his being in exciting activity, could not touch him now, nor stir up an emotion. True, he had both thoughts and feelings, but they appeared to him like those that skim over the surface of our interior nature when the system is in a state of comparative torpor. Books, magazines and newspapers that rank high in public estimation, and that he formerly perused with interest, seemed to him now like so many inanities. He read them, but his lip involuntarily curled over them with contempt. He remem-

bered reading when a child, 'The Wonderful History of Jack the Giant Killer,' and these appeared to him only Jack the Giant Killers on a larger scale. He felt that he had risen above them; but how, or in what way, he could not satisfactorily define. All he knew was that they did not, could not satisfy him. His spirit clamored for more nutritious food.

Family worship, which since his awakening, he had introduced into his household, he still formally observed; but his interest in it had ceased. When reading a chapter in the Bible, it was to him like going through a species of moral drudgery. In prayer, his lips spoke, but not his heart. But for fear of the remarks of his wife, (who, poor soul! was not so blind as he supposed) and the servants, he would have given them up altogether. He attended church and prayer meeting, as usual; but the preaching palled upon his ear, and the prayer-meetings had no attraction for him: he simply accompanied his wife—that was all.

Day after day and week after week passed by, but without vitalising his energies, or carrying off the moral nightmare that held down his being. He was like one who is equally shut out from heaven and from hell. He could find no interest in the things of the world, and was indifferent to those of religion.

Mrs. Bigne'l, though privately distressed at the great change which had come upon him, carefully refrained from making any allusion to it. As he did not make her his confidant, and as he always adroitly introduced another topic or rose to retire whenever he suspected that she was about to inquire the cause of his inquietude, she of course had no clue to form an intelligent opinion concerning it. But she knew, from her own christian experience, that he, in a weak moment, must have failed to comply with some decree of

conscience, and that the Tempters were now being suffered to lead him through dark waters, for a brief season, as a wholesome lesson for the future.

She, at length, sought an interview with Reuben, and laid the case before him. The latter heard the intelligence with surprise and grief; and, though severely pressed by his pastoral duties, he yet found time to make an early call upon his father, who received him with a show of heartiness, but privately was neither sorry nor grateful for the visit. He was glad to see the son, but was indifferent as to the clergyman.

Reuben, however, knew his man, and broke the ice at once.

"You are unhappy?" he observed, with his usual winning smile.

"How do you know?" asked the millionaire, staring at him.

"It is visible in your face. Come, father—confess it!"

His affectionate tone and manner were not to be resisted, and his parent sighed.

Reuben observed him steadily a few minutes, and then said:

"Have confidence in me, father; do, for my sake and your own. I cannot be at ease, and you in suffering. Have confidence in me. It may be that I can brush away this cobweb which wraps you in gloom, and let in light. Have confidence in me!"

A tear trickled slowly down the old gentleman's cheek. The ice was beginning to melt.

"I have lost my faith!" he said, with difficulty restraining a sob.

"Not lost it," returned Reuben; "no, not lost it. Sunken, thrust down and covered over, by the pressure of an evil

heart, it may indeed be—but *not* lost! The sweet angel that at God's bidding takes up her home in the breast of The Forgiven, is not so easily driven from her post. Courage, therefore; though prostrate and perhaps wounded—for the Inner Tempter knows no mercy!—she will rise again and re-fill you with bright joy. But," looking at him a few moments, "The Tempter is not permitted to do this without a *cause*. You, in a weak moment, had relaxed your vigilance; had forgotten the admonition to 'watch and pray;' had neglected some important duty; had inadvertently omitted to trust in The Only One for strength, and insensibly relied upon your own; or been unwilling—for human nature is weak!—to follow some suggestion of conscience?"

"The latter!" sobbed the millionaire, covering his face with his hands.

Reuben's brow became mournful. If he pitied the man and the father, he felt for the christian, more.

"Have you forgotten," he said gently, "that, in His love and mercy, it was God who first sought *you*; that it was He who, from pure compassion, planned the great scheme of Redemption, that you might not be lost through your own natural proclivity to evil; that when he speaks to you through the voice of The Inner Monitor, it is for your dearest good? He would have you happy, even here on earth, as it is the privilege of *all* His people to be; and therefore He has asked you to remove some bar to your tranquility—some weight that sits heavily upon your heart, that it may no more trouble you, and that you *may* be happy! *Why not remove it, then?* Think—it is God who requests it—God, *the Merciful*—who would rescue you, not only from Satan, but—YOURSELF!"

The millionaire breathed hard.

"Why not remove the bar?" said Reuben, gently. "It may *try* you—severely, perhaps; for there are things that have great hold upon the heart, and to part with them seems like separating from a cherished portion of our very nature. But the sterner the trial, the greater the triumph. Besides, The Father is kind, considerate, just: whatever He calls upon His children to do, He gives them the *strength* to perform. Why not remove the bar?"

The millionaire shook his head despondingly.

"I know it is my duty," he said, coloring with humiliation; "but I cannot raise the courage!"

And he glanced at the clergyman with an air that said, "There—now, it is all out; and despise me if you like!"

"Of course not," said Reuben, smiling. "No man has courage *in himself* to respond with cheerfulness to a command from God; for the Inner Tempter gives him confidence only for evil. But he has a Father on whom he can call in every emergency; a Father, who *is* a Father. Did *you*—"

"What?"

"Ask The Father to *give* you courage?"

The millionaire hung down his head in silence.

Reuben understood him, and was pained.

"It is so difficult for us to appreciate the subtlety and power of The Heart!" he observed, with a sympathising smile. "So hard to realize that it is continually playing upon our faculties so as to make us forget what we ought to remember, and to remember what we ought to forget! Have you never noticed, while in prayer and also while endeavoring to centralize your mind upon The Message, in the sanctuary, how worldly and unworthy thoughts insidiously steal in, and artfully, yet imperceptibly to yourself, push aside the purer ones that filled you, as it were, with a spirit of sweet lowliness, before?"

The millionaire bowed assent.

"These are the wily whispers of The Heart," said Reuben; "of The Heart—the chief ally of Satan—which is constantly and maliciously aiming to beguile us away from God, from hope, from truth, from confidence, and leading us into all manner of sin and error. Hence, when, under the benign influence of the new spirit which is given to us at conversion, we say, 'we will do this' or 'that,' The Heart at once meanly sets to work to thwart us; and while the spirit is willing, the heart is not: and so great is the power of the latter upon our faculties, that, unless we ask for Help and receive it, the thing we have proposed to do, we *can not*."

The millionaire began to understand himself more distinctly than ever before.

"What poor fellows we are!" he exclaimed, with a humiliating smile.

"Very poor!" said Reuben, "and therefore when we see a brother falling or already fallen, we know how to feel for him. You perceive now, do you not, why we cannot trust ourselves?"

Mr. Bignell bowed.

"And also," continued Reuben, "why we *need* The FATHER's hand to hold us up at every step?"

"Clearly."

"But, joy!" cried Reuben; "we *have* The Father to lean on, to protect us, to hold us up! Let The Tempters play upon us ever so meanly, they cannot deprive us of *His* affection or support; for His love and mercy endure forever: and though they allure us into the darkest valley of doubt, or gloom, or error, one cry to The Father will bring Him to our side!"

"One cry?" said the millionaire, waking up, as it were, in hope.

"One cry," returned Reuben; "one cry, in faith."

"But," said Mr. Bignell, hesitatingly, "what if we *have* no faith?"

"Faith, like grace, and mercy, and all things else, is a *gift*, and is free to all who will ask for it. If you have no confidence that God will grant your petition, pray for the *faith* first, and then for the object of your desire, and He will give it you."

"Ask—ask!" repeated Mr. Bignell, with a slight tinge of bitterness. "It is *all* ask!"

"*All*!" said Reuben. "Man is a fallen creature, and if he will not remember it, He who *alone* reigns will soon find a way to make him—not through any egotistic vanity on His own part, for *that* is not an attribute of The Father! but, for the poor fellow's good. Man is proud, rebellious, and desires to have every thing his own way. He desires to reach heaven, but only in a way agreeable to himself. The Appointed Way is not satisfactory to him; he wants to get there by a course of his own. This spirit," added Reuben, gently shaking his head, "will not do with THE FATHER! It evinces ingratitude for His love, an utter want of respect for His dignity, and a disposition in man *to treat with Him as with an equal!* Prayer, which opens an inner fountain of *purser*, TRUER thoughts, alone prepares us to realize *who* and *what* we are; breaks up our pride, our rebelliousness, our sense of strength in ourselves, and teaches that is of the last importance for us to know—our *utter dependence upon* God! More—it brings us in communion with Him, and enables us to comprehend that in Him we have a Friend who is lovingly preparing us, degree by degree, for our High Inheritance. Have you never observed the still joy, the holy calm that pervades our whole being when, on bended knees, we approach The Father, in

lowly reverence?" Mr. Bignell bowed. "You see the key, then, to that still joy, which might be always ours, could we but continually bear the key in mind—lowly reverence! This brings with it all other essential thoughts, and constructs our spirit into a proper frame. Then we learn to walk like little children, and to lean with trusting confidence in The Father. Would we have faith—we ask for it; mercy, hope, favor—we pray for it. *Then* all is well with us: for we are walking in the Prescribed Way. But," checking himself, and surveying his companion a few moments with a smile of blended sympathy, mournfulness and reproach, "it was the Inner Tempter who suggested that remark—not your better angel!"

The old gentleman blushed and turned his eyes aside.

"You are right!" he exclaimed, smiting his forehead. "And I am a poor, weak, miserable old fool!"

"Not quite *that*, my father!" said Reuben, affectionately. "You are simply the dupe of your own heart, which, at the instigation of The Invisible Enemy is employing every artifice in its power to prevent you from calling on The Only One who can lead you out of this by-path-into which you have unwittingly strayed!"

The millionaire sprang to his feet and paced the apartment in deep agitation.

"Tell me what to do!" he exclaimed. "I know—I *feel* that I have done wrong, and that I am now paying the price of my error. But when I think of it, I am confused, bewildered, and know not what step to take. Tell me what to do; and though it breaks my heart-strings, I will do it!"

"My poor, *poor* father!" cried Reuben, mournfully. "How nearly to the edge of the world have The Tempters succeeded in drawing you again! Sit down, my father, till I explain this matter. In all pertaining to his salvation,

man himself does nothing, *can* do nothing. The work, from first to last, is *already* done. Christ performed it all. There is nothing *left* to do, and least of all for the SINNER, who, a *fallen* being, is by nature so full of uncleanness, that for him to even *think* upon heavenly things is profanity."

"You place the poor fellow very low!" observed Mr. Bignell, with a humiliating smile.

"No, not *I*," returned Reuben "but SIN—which taints him like a leprosy, and from which The Great Supreme shrinks in loathing, because HE is *pure*, and *it* IMPURE."

"'Shrinks!'" repeated the millionaire, in astonishment. "How then is it that some find favor in His sight? Is not the sinner forgiven?"

"The *sinner*—yes; SIN—no! The latter He *may* not, CAN not pardon. Its fate, with that of its arch fabricator, is already writ; but for its willing dupe and victim, He, in love and mercy, has made ample provision, in the sacrifice of His beloved Son, in whose all-powerful Name all who *would* MAY come, and find favor. But they must come *as THEY ARE*; they must *bring* nothing—no good deeds nor thoughts nor words of *their own*; they must not say, 'I have done this good thing,' or 'thought that' or 'said thus and' thus, Lord,' but they must approach Him as suppliants for mercy, having nothing, tendering nothing, and pleading The Blood shed on Calvary as their *only* ground of hope."

"I understand," said Mr. Bignell. "But what I referred to is this: I have committed a grievous fault—one that has deeply offended God, to whom I, of course, owe some reparation. Now what shall I do? Tell me, plainly: and though it may crush me, I will do it!"

A mournful smile rose to Reuben's face.

"The Inner Tempter is still playing upon you, my poor

father" he observed, "and will not let you see! The reparation is *already* made!"

Mr. Bignell was incredulous and bewildered.

"Already?" he repeated, coloring.

"Already," answered Reuben; "by The REDEEMER."

"What, then, am *I* to do?" asked the millionaire, dumb-founded.

"Confess the sin to God, and ask Him to forgive you."

"But it is *so grievous*! Will He?"

"Is it not *already* atoned for—by His Son?" returned Reuben, smiling. "And has He not said, 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive?'"

The millionaire shook his head. He was not yet satisfied. Reuben saw that the Inner Tempter still had power upon him; was still befooling him.

"You want to *do* something?" he said, pleasantly.

"I think I *ought* to!" was the confused reply.

"Then," observed Reuben, rising, "you had better confer with some other counsellor; for I can give you no better advice: nor am I aware that any thing *you* can do, will palliate your offence in any degree."

"Stay," said Mr. Bignell, hastily; "keep your seat." Covering his face with his hands and shaking his head. "I am very—very sad!"

Reuben was touched.

"Lay your case before The Father," he said, gently, "and be assured that all will be well."

"I will—I will!" cried the millionaire, sobbing.

"And not timidly," said Reuben, "as if you did not look for pardon; but as an erring son hoping for forgiveness for Another's sake—The Beloved's, who died that your prayer might be heard!"

"I will. But—"

But, again!

"What?" asked Reuben, gently.

"I cannot think The Lord *will* forgive me!"

"Alas! poor heart!" murmured Reuben, sighing. "You must go further back than that," he said, encouragingly. "You must pray *believingly*; but, you are so helpless, that you cannot have even belief, unless The Father gives it to you! This, however, He will grant, if you ask Him."

"You push me off further and yet further, with every word!" sobbed the millionaire, his head bowed in anguish upon his breast.

"I would simply show you your REAL POSITION!" returned Reuben. "I would not delude you with false views, nor be instrumental in your ruin, by beguiling you with delusive hopes. Above all, dear father, I would not have you approach The Searcher of Hearts without a due sense of His august greatness and your own utter unworthiness. If," he added, with solemnity, "if in your interior being, you account yourself as possessing in His eyes a single particle of merit; if you privately think of any one good thing which, in your mind, should *entitle* you to Favor; if you hold any one or any number of things whose possession is dearer to you than CHRIST; if, for His sake, you are unwilling, if needs be, to give up all you have; if in your heart, there is any hidden thing that you design to withhold; if you are indisposed to submit uncomplainingly to whatever He may impose upon you; if you believe you have the faintest vestige of a right, inherent, for any cause, in yourself, to *treat* with THE SUPREME; if you think you can in any wise BARGAIN with Him—then, my father, turn back, approach not The Throne; for salvation is through the merits of Jesus Christ alone: it is a *free gift* and therefore *is not* for you!"

The millionaire mentally recoiled from these few words as from before a descending sledge-hammer. His face, shaded by his hands, was bowed down in helpless despair upon his knees.

"But," continued Reuben, whose heart bled at his misery, "if you feel that you have *no* claim; if you realise that you are, as it were, struggling in the waves of your own sins; if, in yourself, you can see no good thing, and your only hope is in The Blood shed for fallen men; if you are willing to come as a *poor helpless sinner* who is conscious that he can do nothing for himself; if you come in the name of The Redeemer, for MERCY—then, my father, *take heart!* for God from His high throne, and the Prince at His right hand, and all the ransomed hosts of heaven, with one loud cheering and inspiring voice, cry, '*Come!*'"

The millionaire looked up, and started to his feet. Tears were streaming from his eyes; but they were not those of one in darkness, but in light. Faith, relieved from the pressure of doubt and fear, and the love of money, that had borne and held it down, uprose again and reillumed him with the brightness and the warmth and the stirring joy of her sweet unshackled presence; and the spirit of the poor fellow was buoyant with gladness, for he perceived The Hand that was leading him along, and he knew that he should now be able to walk in the line of duty—to make restitution and all—without shrinking and without trembling; he felt strong in Another's strength, not his own; and he burst out, in mingled gratitude and praise.

"Arise, my soul, my joyful powers,
And triumph in my God;
Awake, my voice, and loud proclaim
His glorious grace abroad."

"The arms of everlasting love
Beneath my soul he placed,
And on the Rock of ages set
My slippery footsteps fast.

"Arise, my soul ; awake, my voice,
And tunes of pleasure ring ;
Loud hallelujahs shall address
My Savior and my King."

What followed was not for human ears ; but the Inner
Tempter shrunk back, silenced and abashed, for a time.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE governess was perhaps the only person rendered unhappy by the marriage of the elf. She, of late had been more of a companion than a mentor to her charge, to whom she had grown tenderly attached ; and on the departure of the latter, on her wedding trip, she could not resist a feeling of sadness.

A sense of loneliness came over her, too. For the great fact stared her in the face that she must shortly seek another home ; or rather, to speak more plainly, another situation. For his daughter married, her employer would of course have no further need of her services. True, the merchant had intimated nothing of the kind ; but she nevertheless was as conscious of it as though he had uttered it to her in so many words.

The long-continued illness of her mother acting as a steady drain upon her earnings, Alice, in view of the exceeding limitedness of her means, felt the necessity of providing, without loss of time, for the change that her intuition told her was soon to take place in her position. She therefore drew up an advertisement for a situation, which she inserted in the 'Tribune' and the 'Times,' and waited hopefully for an answer.

The advertisement was observed by Mr. Brown, while running over the morning papers at the store ; and though regretting that any circumstance should separate him from one whom he so highly esteemed, yet, sensible that he should no longer be in want of her aid, the tender-hearted mer-

chant was thankful that her good sense had saved him from the embarrassment of telling her so.

Mr. Asbury also noticed the advertisement; but, with his usual reserve, made no comment upon it.

Alice, in a few days, received four or five replies, none of which however impressed her very favorably with the *heart* of their writers, and she repeated the application. To this she received but a single answer, but it was so courteously phrased, that she at once called on the party—a retired lawyer in Tenth street, with two twin daughters not yet in their teens. After a brief conversation in reference to the duties, salary, etc., Alice referred the lawyer for her character and capacity, to Mr. Brown and Mr. Asbury, and took her leave. The references were satisfactory, and she was engaged. It was agreed that she should enter upon the initial labors of her new situation as soon after the return of her late charge as possible; and Alice, with a painful foreboding of she knew not what, awaited, with a sort of desperate calmness, whatever was in store for her.

An evening or two after the completion of her engagement with the lawyer, Alice, while reading, was interrupted by the entrance of a visitor. It was the satirist—Gressinger.

Alice received him with mingled stateliness and affability.

"I am here, Miss Russell," he said, after hearing of her intended change, "to renew to you the offer of my hand and name; and to invite you to give up this kind of life, which must be painful to one of your superior mind, and enter upon a sphere worthy of you."

"I thank you, Mr. Gressinger," returned Alice with an appearance of tranquility which she did not feel; "but, as I have informed you many times, I cannot entertain such a proposal from any one, while my parent remains in her present condition."

"Why should that hinder you?" demanded Gressinger. "Your mother can reside with us, and receive from you a personal care which now you would but cannot give to her, and which she cannot obtain from strangers?"

"Your suggestion is generous, and I appreciate it. But were I ever so strongly inclined to follow it, my better judgment would prevent me. I could never consent to bring a sick mother into my husband's house. However kindly he, at first, might think of it, the gossiping world—a harsh judge!—would soon cure him of his magnanimity, and, most likely, sour him with mortification, if not embitter my parents' days and mine. For his sake, then, my mother's, and my own, it is necessary for me to be prudent."

A slight tremor in the lip and a barely perceptible kindling in the eye of her auditor informed the governess that she was in the presence of a lion who would roar, but that he believed the soft bleating of the lamb would serve his purpose better.

"I regret your determination, Miss Russell," he remarked. "I had hoped that, seeing how faithfully I for three years had waited on you, you would have been willing to reward my constancy and my love with a more agreeable return. 'Love for love,' the motto the world over, does not, it appears, pass current among *all* hearts; owing, it may be," he added, bitterly, "that some are so cold by nature that they cannot appreciate, because they are unable to experience, so warm a sentiment!"

"You forget yourself, Mr. Gressinger!" said Alice.

"That at least cannot be said of you, Miss Russell. You shelter yourself behind a rampart made up in part of 'the continued illness of your mother,' and of a cold, deliberate '*prudence*,' from which you can safely bid defiance to love's honest importunities!"

"Mr. Gressinger!"

"Why have you led me on, for three years, in this manner?" demanded the other. "Why, at the commencement of your mother's illness, did you change so suddenly from apparent affection to polite indifference; and why have you since received my visits, if they were not agreeable? I submit, Miss Russell, that three years of careful attentions rendered in mingled hope and uncertainty, entitle me to an explicit reply?"

"I admit it, sir," said Alice, pale with indescribable feelings, "and I will frankly answer, in the order of your interrogatories. I have not intentionally 'led you on'—the phrase is yours, not mine. You at first, and at a time when my mind, from a recent event, was in a state of excitement, did me the honor to favor me with such regards as young gentlemen, with no further object in view, daily tender to young ladies. As you appeared to be pleased with my society, and as my mind needed relief by diversion in another direction, I accepted with pleasure an occasional invitation to attend you to the opera and other places of amusement. In return for your politeness, I endeavored to be agreeable, as any lady in like circumstances naturally would. But I, at that time, had no thought of accepting you, nor any one else, for a suitor. My poverty, my position, my mother's dependence upon me, and other reasons, had, collectively, decided me to remain single. But your attentions increasing, I fancied I began to see in them a *deeper meaning* than I was willing to encourage, and while meditating upon the best course for me to pursue, my mother fell ill. A few days after her prostration, you honored me with a proposal of marriage, which, for the reasons I have already given, I declined. In this, I presume, sir, you will see no good ground for entertaining the thought that I had 'led you on!'"

Gressinger's nostril quivered under a deep breath, but he made no remark.

"After my refusal, you, with some emotion, desired the privilege of continuing your visits as a friend. To this, feeling for your apparent suffering, I assented. Ere long, however, you startled me with a second proposal, which I also refused. An apology for your forgetfulness of the *character* of your visits induced me to overlook your fault; but it also taught me the necessity of a moderate degree of reserve towards you for the future. In this, as you continued to call, I hoped for protection from similar offences. [Her auditor's brow darkened.] But I was destined to disappointment. From time to time you broke your promise, and seemed to think that perseverance would eventually conquer me into acquiescence. Had my mother recovered, perhaps it might; for the human heart—mine, at least—is sometimes tempted, against its better judgment, to yield to importunity: but it would have been at the price of your happiness and mine, for where woman weds without love, she weds—splendid, it may be, but yet corroding misery. In this, as in the previous case, where, sir, do you find reason for charging me with having 'led you on?'"

"Enough, Miss Russell!" exclaimed Gressinger, rising. "We understand each other. My position is not very flattering, I confess. But it serves me right. I should have given my attentions to one of my own standing in society—to a *LADY*, and not to a mere lady's *attendant*!"

A quick, hot blush, and Alice sprang to her feet, with eyes flashing lightnings.

"Go, sir!" she cried, pointing sternly to the door. "Go!"

Gressinger turned pale; his lip and nostril quivered: and his features became set into a deep frown.

"You carry it with a high hand for a *governess*!" he observed, with a malignant sneer.

"Go—COWARD!"

Gressinger became speechless—livid; and half awed by her imposing air, he, as if fascinated by the magnetic influence of her scintillating orbs, involuntarily moved slowly backward from the apartment, and disappeared—observing her steadily to the last.

As the hall door closed upon him, and the echo of his retreating steps died away, Alice tottered to the sofa, and covering her face with her handkerchief, uttered a moan-like sob, and burst into tears.

Gressinger—confused, indignant, humiliated, and his neck and countenance darkened by a deep blush, strode home and darted, like a guilty thing flying from himself, up to his room.

"All's over!" he muttered, smiting his forehead with his clenched fist, and pacing the chamber with staggering steps. "I am a fool! a silly boy, more than a grown man. What infernal spirit is it that possesses me? To undo, with a single word, the efforts of years! To spitefully wound the feelings of a defenceless woman! To sink, in an instant, without a struggle, from a gentleman into a ruffian! To yield, on every occasion, to the vulgar proclivities of a brutal temper! (Smiting his forehead, again.) Out, LOU!"

All things have an end in time—even honeymoons. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bignell returned home, at the end of a month, as Tom remarked to his father-in-law, "fagged out." The elf, having been a married woman precisely four weeks and two days, considered herself a remarkably great housekeeper, and after indulging in a few criticisms on domestic management generally, patronisingly informed her laugh-

ing father and grandmother that she should now take the burden of the household arrangements upon herself. Her father hoped it would do her good; grandmother called her a dear 'surprising child,' and Tom, with a knowing wink at the merchant, offered to set up an intelligence office to supply servants to that house alone, and thought he would make a good business of it. The elf pouted, and had some notion of going off into a crying fit, but finally concluded, now that she was the mistress of the house, to show them what real housekeeping was. She committed so many blunders, however, during the first week, that her enthusiasm went down to zero, and she informed grandmother that she was "willing to let things go on as usual." She "was not quite equal," she thought, "to so much responsibility." But she eventually improved, and became, in time, by general consent, quite a housekeeper.

Shortly after the return of the wedded pair, Alice commenced making preparations for her departure, and the whole household was instantly disturbed: for all loved her.

"O, stay another day—only another; do—won't you, govee?" cried the elf, with one arm around her waist and looking up at her with smiling eyes whose lids were glittering with tears.

"I have already exceeded my time too long!" answered Alice. "My employer is impatient!"

"Yes, I know. But one day more—only one; that's a dear good govee; only *one*—won't you? O, *do*!"

"One more, then!" said Alice, straining her to her breast.

But it was the same the next day, and the next, and the day following that; and Alice saw, that without a heroic effort, she should never get away, and, reasoning the case with the

elf, she appointed the following Saturday as the last day of grace.

It may, to some, be a little thing to turn from one to another of life's changes ; a little thing, when our work is done in one place, to pack up our things, ask for our wages, call a carriage, and remove to a second ; a little thing, to look around, for the last time, at chairs and tables and sofas and pictures to which we have been so long accustomed as to half consider them our own ; a little thing, to turn our eyes from familiar forms and faces that we, for years, have looked upon and loved, as if we had grown up with them and were all of the same flesh and blood ; a little thing, to take a parting view of the cherished objects in the little bedroom where, in night's silent hours, we have had many earnest thoughts and happy dreams ; a little thing to turn for ever from a house, in which we were so kindly treated that it seemed dearer to us than the one in which we were born : a little thing, perhaps. But, oh ! to hearts which the unpleasantnesses along life's devious lane have failed to steel to feeling, it is *not* a little, but a sad, momentous thing—prolific of stirring memories that, from the heart's deep well, draw up great swelling tears whose wholesome brine scalds away the scales covering the tubes running from the lids to the seat of life, and sets running all the accumulated recollections of repeated courtesies that drop by drop had gathered there, and that now come bubbling out in one great torrent of Conscious Gratitude, which washes them clean of all sense of pride and strength, and bows them down to the bewildering realization that they are only pilgrims passing through to The Better Home, after all : and that this house which they are leaving is one of the stopping places on the way at which they were so kindly treated that they never—no, never!—shall forget the dear house itself, nor the faces of

its pleasant family, nor the thousand obliging things that were said and done to them the while they sojourned there.

So was it, in thought and feeling, with Alice, for the last few days of her stay at the Browns'.

The last day came, at length, and she was faint at heart and sad. A presentiment of some coming great cause of sorrow weighed upon her, and added to her melancholy. She was to leave at five, and never came that hour so dilatorily and yet so soon. All the family were at home, and assembled in the parlor, and her heart seemed ascending to her throat as she rose to bid them good bye. She shook hands with all—with Sprague, whose face, as the observant Mr. Asbury quietly observed, was pale as a sheet and whose hand trembled more than her own, the last.

As she left the room, Mr. Asbury followed. On reaching the door, he slipped a note into her hand and hurriedly whispered,

"Miss Russell, read this on your way. Good speed!"

He put her into the carriage which was in waiting, wrung her hand, and left her. A moment later, Alice was whirling up to Tenth street. Confusedly tearing open the note, a bank bill glided out and fell, with its face downward, to the floor. Coloring, the agitated governess read as follows :

"MISS RUSSELL :

There are certain states of mind when a little money makes us feel braver. The long illness of your mother must have exhausted your resources. Replenish them with the enclosed, which The Friend of dutiful children is graciously pleased to send to you through me.

Your friend,

CHARLES ASBURY."

Alice tremulously picked up the fallen paper, and glancing at it, burst into tears.

It was a five hundred dollar bill.

Alice felt that of the few great clear-headed hearts that work in silence in clearing up the rubbish of this old-building world, she, only a few short moments before, had shaken hands with *one*; and that if he habitually said but little, that little was to *the purpose* and was always spoken WELL.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"To stop at Sing Sing!" was the main idea in the millionaire's mind as he dashed on in the Hudson River cars. "To stop at Sing Sing!" He could make room for no other; for every thought has its associations, and those in the train of this were as a great throng of spectres and filled up every avenue of his brain, like a dense, hideous crowd.

The Subtle Spirit that is suffered to have power upon men was unwilling to lose one on whom he had confidently counted for seven and fifty years; and now that he saw the Poor Fellow making a manly effort to follow the dictates of his conscience, he let loose a succession of bewildering images and visions to terrify him from his purpose. Faculty after faculty was played upon, image upon image and vision upon vision were brought in luminous distinctness before him to startle, unnerve and restrain him.

Memory was touched; and suddenly, as if at the bidding of an enchanter, uprose before him a fac simile of his old counting-house, himself sitting in his chair and John Grigg—a customer and the father of the man he was on his way to see—delivering him a mortgage on his only house and lot to secure the payment of certain extended notes. The scene changed, and, ere the obligations were due, the man, pressed down to death by pleurisy, was lying cold and still, for the last time, upon his bed; but his uneasy countenance

implored his creditor to the last not to take advantage of his decease to injure the unprotected family he had left behind. This vanished, and appeared before him the widow and her three sons beseeching him to remember his promise that he would not be hard upon them, and tearfully but fruitlessly invoking him to give them time. A fourth picture passed before him, and he beheld himself employing every device to prevent the widow from saving her own and children's little all. Then passed before him the foreclosure—the sale—the purchase by himself—the dead man's family cast friendless and adrift upon the world—the heart-broken widow's death—her first born struggling in the waves and finally going down in a gale at sea—her second falling from a card table, stabbed to the heart by his antagonist for cheating while at play—her third, a midnight thief, breaking into men's stores and houses and robbing them while they slept; free for a time but caught and caged at last, and working out his sentence with a blasted name, and perhaps, a heart dead to all sense of hope, of truth, of penitence, of shame.

The millionaire trembled; and what wonder? For but for him, that widow might still be living; that lost sailor now be happy himself, and the cause of happiness to others; that murdered gambler now leading a different and perhaps a meritorious life; that penitentiary felon doing good service in the cause of God and Humanity.

"You can give him money," whispered a thought; "but will that bring his mother back to life, call up his sailor brother from the sea, the gambler from his grave, and repay the convict himself for his destroyed youth and ruined manhood? Will it blot out, as though it never had been, all the dark error and bitter experience of his maturer life, and restore him back to the bright hopes, the

artless confidence and the comparative innocence of the young boy who, as his dead father lay upon the bed, said, as he drew his arm round the neck of the sobbing widow, 'Don't cry, ma—don't cry; Bill and Tom and I'll be good and work for you—don't cry, mamma: don't cry!' Will it do THIS for him?"

"What!" urged another thought, "what are you about to do? To offer this man money as the price of his destroyed family? He will kick, spit upon you! Better far to let him alone. He has probably forgotten the great wrong you did to him and his, and is doubtless so dead to all moral sensibility that he will neither appreciate your repentance nor thank you for the restitution."

"Let him pass," insinuated another. "It will be better for you both. If you give him this money, he will waste it all in riot and debauchery—perhaps get killed with it in some drunken brawl, and thus you will have done him a second wrong. It would be wiser to keep the money; or, if your conscience will not allow that, to give it to whom it will be useful—the deserving poor. Above all things, be careful not to give it to *him*—since it would be more likely to do him harm than good."

The millionaire was sorely pressed; and he probably would have yielded but for the remembrance of a warning from Reuben that "men are so closely beset, that whenever one attempts to take an important step in conscience, he unexpectedly finds his best worldly judgment in arms against it. How helpless is he, then, since he can put no confidence in the counsels even of his own being! But, let him take courage; there is One whom he *can* trust. Lean on Him, persevere in the step, and all will be well."

"I *will* trust in Him!" murmured the poor, bewildered man; "yea, though He slay me!"

His heart felt lighter, braver, after this; and when the train stopped at Sing Sing, his self-possession had returned.

On reaching the office of the superintendent, he presented a pass from the Mayor, and a few minutes later found himself in the prison parlor and face to face with—John Griggs.

The latter was a personage of about three and thirty; thin, tall, with handsome Grecian features, and a bold dark eye that told of a daring, reckless spirit. His finely moulded head shone strikingly in outline, the black glossy hair being cut close to the scalp. He was dressed in the striped woolen garb of a prisoner, and surveyed his visitor with an air of mingled curiosity and defiance.

The millionaire observed him for a moment in silence.

"But for me," he mentally exclaimed, "this mind might have ripened in honesty, its intelligence have helped in some degree to push on the car of human progress, and its energies be now engaged in a noble and ennobling direction. But for *me*! O, who can tell where a single bad act will end!"

"Do you want to see me?" asked the convict, abruptly.

"I—yes—that is—your name is John Griggs?" stammered Mr. Bignell.

"John Griggs," said the man, looking down upon him.

"What then?"

"Take a seat, sir," said the millionaire, uneasily.

The man did so, surveying his visitor with a proud, cold, suspicious eye.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

His manner was rude and quick, like that of a ruffian who expects no favors at the hands of society and asks none.

"A friend of mine—a very intimate friend," said Mr.

Bignell, coloring, "who feels an interest in your welfare, desired me to call upon you."

"What for?" asked the convict, abruptly, as at first.

"To—to—see if I could do anything for you."

The man looked at him, and observing his confusion, said, scornfully,

"You must excuse *me*, but—you *lie*!"

"Sir!" returned the millionaire, staring at him.

"You lie!" repeated the convict, deliberately. "No man sent you here on any such errand. I have no friends that care for me; or, if I have, this is the first intimation I have had of their existence during the five years I have been in Sing Sing!"

"We often have friends without knowing it," said Mr. Bignell, hoping to conciliate him.

"Friends who are ashamed to make themselves known are no friends at all," said the man. "But, to the point. You evidently have spoken falsely thus far; and if you cannot speak the truth, you had better go. I detest a liar!"

"You are not very choice in your remarks!" said the millionaire, smiling, and blushing at the same time.

"Perhaps not," returned the man; "but I am accustomed to say just what I mean, and I have no fear of being misunderstood! I do not claim to be over-and-above virtuous, but when I was at large I was known as a man who never stooped to a lie."

"We are not all equally brave," said Mr. Bignell, who was determined to keep his temper. "I am hard upon sixty; and I would give a million this instant if I could make the same boast."

"Come, that is frank," said the man, "and I like it. But I don't admire *you*!"

"Why not?" asked his visitor, coloring.

"I do not exactly know. There's a something in your face that tells me you are a scoundrel, and that you would take advantage of a man if you could. I have seen just such a face before; *where*, I cannot remember: but that it was in a situation disgraceful to the manhood of its owner, I am sure. What do you follow for a living?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Bignell, whose neck, cheeks and forehead were all aglow with humiliation.

"I used to know a great many in that business," said the convict, satirically. "But when they were found out, it was discovered in some instances that 'nothing' was only another word for gambling, picking pockets, robbing on the highway, and burglary. What does it mean in *your* case?"

"I did not come here to be insulted," answered the millionaire, rising; "and I see no need, in view of the nature of my errand, to submit to your insolence!"

A brief silence followed, during which the two men looked at each other.

"The door is open," said the convict, haughtily. "Why don't you go?"

"My errand is not performed," replied Mr. Bignell, his eye falling as he called to mind his agency in bringing the man before him into his present position.

"Do it, then, and depart," said the latter. "Your presence somehow disturbs me, and I feel an instinctive desire to knock you down!"

The millionaire resumed his seat and bowed his head on his hands.

"Who are you?" demanded the convict.

"One who has done you and yours a grievous wrong!"

The countenance of the felon flushed; his eyes flashed: his fingers knuckled up into fists, and he hastily stepped back as if to gather momentum for a spring.

"If I did not think so!" he exclaimed. "You are *he*—the man I so long have wished to once behold face to face—JAMES BIGNELL?"

"James Bignell!" said the millionaire; but in a voice so full of misery and with an air of such utter wretchedness, that the convict arrested himself in the midst of a bound and glared at him in amazement.

"What do you want?" he asked hoarsely, and with lips and cheeks of an ashen hue.

"To make restitution and ask your forgiveness!"

The convict's lips moved; but no sound followed: he was like one dumb.

"To make restitution," repeated the millionaire, his humid eyes, not daring to look up, wandering uneasily round the floor; "to do what little I can to atone for my great crime: and to entreat your pardon!"

"You—you—beggared my mother!" It was more like the shrill whistle of a steam-engine than a human voice, that spoke. "Broke us up—scattered us—threw my mother into her grave—Bill, to the bottom of the sea—Tom under an assassin's knife—me, into Sing Sing!"

"But I repent—I repent!" sobbed the visitor. "God has shown me my wickedness. I repent. Pardon—pardon!"

"*Repent*—you!" said the scream. "Will God *let* such a thing repent? Have you dared to *ask* Him—*you*?"

"I have been a bad man," cried the other. "Satan tempted me, and I was—"

"*Easily* tempted!" interrupted the convict. "Why, you yourself are Satan! I have mingled with all sorts of devils, *in* prison and *out*, but I never have seen *your* match. You are one of those oily monsters, compared with whom common murderers and thieves are pure as angels!" Falling down to his natural voice, and his bold counte-

nance lighting up with mingled scorn and fury. "Were it not for your white hairs, I'd make this floor red with the contents of your treacherous veins. You—you—go, if you love life! Passion is getting the upper hand, and I would not strike one of your years. Go!"

And he pointed, with flashing eyes, and a startling gesture, warningly, to the door.

The millionaire, trembling with agony, rose; but instead of turning from the apartment, he advanced towards the convict, and folding his arms and looking him tearfully but undauntedly in the eye, exclaimed:

"Strike! I deserve it all!"

The convict was a picture. His chest heaved; his countenance, empurpled with contending emotions, twitched, as though every muscle was convulsed by an inward fire; and his arm, raised to smite, hung quivering in the air, as if stayed in its purpose by some invisible power.

The struggle terminated in the gradual retreat of all that fierce blood, leaving the features pale as marble; in the vanishing of the indignant flash from those two bold eyes; in the relaxing of the fierce-strung nerves of that flexible, well-knit frame; in the gradual fall of the poised arm; and the sinking of the man himself into a chair.

The millionaire seated himself near him, saying: "Let us understand one another."

The convict instinctively shrunk back and looked at him with a fixed gaze of mixed interest and scorn.

An air of pain passed over the features of his visitor, whose thoughts may be more easily imagined than described.

"I have done you and yours great injury," he began, tremulously; "and my desire is to make all the reparation in my power, and beseech your forgiveness."

"Can you forgive yourself?" asked the convict, abruptly.

"I can not," was the reply. And the millionaire dropped his eyes, the lids of which were hot with internal suffering.

The convict observed him for a time in silence, and his stern heart relented.

"Go on," he then said, striving to disguise his pity for his visitor's wretchedness.

"I wish to make the fullest possible atonement for my great wrong," said Mr. Bignell, not yet daring to meet his companion's glance, "and if you would be so kind as to suggest in what way I best can do it, I will thank you."

The convict made no immediate response, but gazed steadily at the man before him as if to read his very soul.

"Why did you do this?" he inquired, at length. "You were already rich, and your victims poor."

"Satan and my own wicked heart tempted me," said Mr. Bignell, sobbing.

"You mean the devil?" said the convict.

"Yes."

"But how *could* he tempt you?" asked the convict, who evidently could not comprehend him. "You were already rich, and our little house and lot could have been of no importance to you?"

"I, without knowing it, was under the influence of The Arch One, who filled me with a desire of greed, which rendered me merciless, selfish and unscrupulous."

"Without knowing it?" asked the convict, to whom this idea was new.

"Without knowing it," repeated the millionaire. "Satan is cunning and supplies us with thoughts that we, in our conceit—another of his devices, implanted in us early, for he commences his evil work upon us in our very infancy—innocently attribute as the offspring of our own minds."

The convict reflected, stored away the idea for future

examination, and then naively observed: "But my mother was poor—a *woman*, and a *widow*!"

"Satan had power upon me, and I cared for no one's feelings but my own," was the humiliating reply.

"Well, that is frank," said the convict. "But still you should not have taken advantage of a poor widow and three fatherless boys. *That* is a thing, I—a housebreaker, and therefore not supposed to be over-virtuous—would hold both arms in a red-hot grate till they were burned up to the shoulders, ere I'd do—Satan or no Satan; and any man that is mean enough to tread upon them, ought to have his brains knocked out and then be thrown into a sink. You must excuse *me*—but I like to be understood!"

"I am ready to make every reparation in my power," said the millionaire, looking up.

"Your repentance comes too late—the widow and two of the boys are dead," said the convict, in a tone and with a threatening air which told his auditor that the storm of fury was again rising.

"But, I surely can atone in some way for my injury to the third?" said Mr. Bignell, nervously. "I am willing to do any—every thing to prove the sincerity of my regret for the evil I have done!"

There was no answer.

"To take advantage of that poor widow, as you did," at length said the convict, eyeing him sternly, "was the act of a scoundrel!"

"More," said the millionaire; "it was the work of a villain! I know it—feel it—confess it, and would give all I have, yea, life itself, could I but recall the wrong, and that poor widow and her two sons back to life."

"Nay, if you admit all *this*," said the convict, generously, "why, then, there!"

And he held out his hand. Mr. Bignell grasped and wrung it.

"Now I hope you are easy at heart?" said the convict.

The millionaire shook his head.

"I have something to do still," he said, with a tearful smile. "I must return what belongs to the poor widow's heir!"

The convict flushed, stepped back, and proudly drew himself up.

"You must excuse *me*," he exclaimed; "but I cannot stand this. It is too much like taking the price of blood! No words. You mean well, and I forgive you. But *this* thing must not be. I would sooner starve by inches in sight of meat, than touch a dollar from you for any such purpose!"

The millionaire, dumb—bewildered, sunk into a chair.

"I do not wish to be hard upon you," said the convict, observing his anguish. "It would no doubt make you feel better to do something for me; and as you are an old man, I will not be too stubborn!"

His visitor looked up, gratefully.

"There is a young woman in New York," continued the felon, in an uneven voice, "who, when I was at large, used to think a good deal of me. She did not know my real business at first, but she discovered it by the papers on the morning after my arrest. The poor thing at first was fearfully shocked; but she had a true woman's heart, and flew to my rescue. The poor girl sews for a living, and her means are limited; but all she had in the world she cheerfully gave to the lawyer who undertook my defence. She comes up from the city, now and then, to visit me; but, though she tries to hide it, I can see that the poor thing finds the struggle of life a hard one. I am afraid also that

all is not well with her within. She looks thinner every time she comes up, and the rosy color on her cheek appears to have faded forever. She became religious about the time of my arrest. If it were not for that, I fear her courage would have gone to pieces long ago." He paused, colored, and then added, in confusion, "If you feel like doing a poor fellow a good turn—that is, I mean, if, instead of caring about *me*, you would kindly see that poor Moll don't suffer, I—"

His emotion unmanned him. He broke off, tried to gulp down a rising sob—failed, and turned aside to hide the hot tears that leaped, unbidden, from his eye-lids.

"One word," said the millionaire, who was himself shaken. "If you were free to-morrow, what would you do with this young lady?"

"Make her my wife, and turn honest!"

"Enough," said Mr. Bignell, his countenance brightening with hope. "She shall neither want nor suffer, if money will avail her. Her name and address?"

"Mary Duff, 81 — street."

The millionaire entered it upon his tablets.

"What business do you propose entering, when you leave this place?" he then asked.

"I have thought of going West, and working at my trade till I could earn enough to buy a small farm," returned the convict, slowly.

"A good idea," observed Mr. Bignell, after a few moments of thought. "But I must go. I will see you again in a few days."

"You will not let poor Moll suffer?"

"As I hope for mercy—no! Will you give me your hand at parting?"

And he held out his own.

The convict drew back with an air of pain.

"*Don't ask me*," he said, in a stirred tone. "You mean well, and I have already given you my hand in forgiveness; but," touching his breast, "there is something here that tells me it would not be right to shake hands in friendship with one who was the means of sending my mother and brothers——"

"I understand you!" interrupted the millionaire. "It was perhaps wrong and unreasonable in me to expect it. However, good bye—for the present!"

The convict bowed, and Mr. Bignell moved, with a trembling step, from the room.

On returning to town, he called upon his lawyer, with whom he remained closeted for an hour. He, then, with his usual energy, hurried to the residence of the seamstress, whom he found to be both amiable and intelligent. What passed between them matters not for the present. Suffice it, when Mr. Bignell reached home, at dusk, his heart was lighter than when he had set out in the morning.

In a few days, he accompanied his lawyer to Albany, and hastened to the office of the Governor. The attorney, who stood high as a politician, had but little difficulty in accomplishing the object of his client's desire, and their ride in the cars back to the city was, to the millionaire at least, unspeakably gratifying.

In the evening, Mr. Bignell, after a private conference with Reuben, waited again upon the seamstress, to whom he communicated the result of his trip to the capital. The poor girl was much affected, but, we may confidentially add, more with joy than sorrow. Requesting her to be in readiness to proceed with him on Monday morning of the following week to Sing Sing, the millionaire took his departure, deeply grateful for the turn which events had taken.

"Griggs will give me his hand yet!" he murmured, as he rode homeward. "Yes, and his heart will be in it, too!"

On the morning of the appointed day, he, accompanied by Reuben, called in his carriage for the seamstress. A few hours later, and the trio were seated in the prison parlor, where they were shortly joined by the convict, who was attended by the warden.

As the felon perceived the seamstress, who was somewhat more elegantly dressed than he had ever seen her before, he started; but immediately recovering himself, he advanced and took her affectionately by the hand.

"You do not notice *me*!" said the millionaire, approaching him.

"An inadvertence only," returned the convict. "But I thank you for your visit, since to it I am indebted for the presence of one who is dear to me."

"If you could see the lady always," said the millionaire; "if you were at liberty to hold her hand in yours, to be ever by her side, to call her your own, and to know and feel that death alone should separate you, you would be happy?"

"O, how happy!" exclaimed the convict.

The millionaire turned to the warden, to whom he made a sign.

"Be so *now*, then," said the latter taking from his breast a paper that he had previously received from Mr. Bignell. "You are *pardoned*—FREE!"

Griggs staggered, turned pale, and would have fallen but for Reuben, who whispered:

"Courage, dear friend. Good news should not kill!"

The young man sunk into a chair, and covered his face with his hands for a few moments. All could see, by the heaving of his chest and the tears that trickled through

his fingers, that he was strongly moved. As he recovered from the shock, the warden touched him on the shoulder, and whispering in his ear, they withdrew.

"He will be back in a few minutes," said Reuben to the seamstress, in answer to her inquiring glance.

Griggs soon returned in a respectable dress, and approaching the millionaire, exclaimed:

"I learn from the warden that I owe my pardon to you. I would thank you, if I could find words; but as I cannot, I can only say that I am sincerely grateful!"

And, making a low bow, he turned to the seamstress.

"He does not offer me his hand!" murmured the millionaire to himself, with a sigh.

"Have you any friends to whom you wish to bid adieu?" asked Reuben. "If not, suppose we take our departure?"

"I have already shaken hands with the few who care for me," returned the young man.

"In that case," said Reuben, "there is no reason why we should not set out at once. We are going a little way up the river, and it would give us great pleasure to have you accompany us?"

Griggs looked at the seamstress. The latter blushed, and smilingly assented.

"I do not understand this," said the young man. "But as I believe that I am with those who would not injure me, I am willing."

"Have no fears," whispered the seamstress.

"You will think better of us by-and-bye," said Reuben, smiling.

"Come," said the millionaire, leading the way.

As they turned from the prison, Reuben observed the young man pause and look up with an air of mingled affection and regret at the cell which he had occupied so long.

Then brushing away a tear, he gave his arm to the seamstress, whose instinct told her what was passing in his heart, and moved on.

"Poor fellow!" murmured Reuben, sympathisingly.

They took the cars as far as Peekskill, and then crossed the river to Newburgh, where they entered a conveyance, and rode a few miles out of town, alighting at length at the gate of a large, substantial and elegantly built farm house.

As the vehicle drew up, a man descended from the piazza and touched his hat to the millionaire, who requested him to show them the farm.

The party passed up a pebbled walk to the rear of the house, and after observing the barns, stock, wagon house, and tool shop, all of which were amply supplied with the most recently improved implements of husbandry, they wiled away an hour in rambling through the orchards and inspecting the fields, which were waving with wheat and corn and all the usual productions of the soil. They then followed their guide to the house, which was furnished throughout with a due regard to comfort and good taste.

As they entered the parlor for the second time, the millionaire made a private sign to the guide, who withdrew, and then turning to Griggs, inquired:

"Well, my friend, does the picture of the farm in your mind's eye equal this, or exceed it?"

"I look only for a small cot and a few acres," answered the young man, coloring.

"And you, young lady, would doubtless be willing to share the patience and the toil and the years that are between Mr. Griggs and his modest hope?"

The seamstress blushed and was silent; but an affirmative response was in her eye.

"I see no good reason," continued Mr. Bignell, smiling,

"why you should not have your cot and few acres, now. But for one whom I need not name, you might, if so disposed, have had them long ago. Will you accept them from me?"

"You are kind, and mean well; but I *can not*!" was the reply.

The millionaire's eyes became dewy, and his countenance sad.

"You may be right," he observed. "I will not say you are not. It is for you alone to judge. But it would give me great joy, if you could say in your heart, 'The poor old man has deeply erred, but he desires to make restitution, and why should I not receive it and him?'"

He paused for a reply: but Griggs was silent.

"The Lord has forgiven and received him," said Reuben, gently; "and will not you?"

The young man looked down, but answered not.

"We are all sinful—all wanderers away from the True Path," continued Reuben, "and we should have consideration for one another. If we do not, how can we expect that He whom all have offended, and to whom we all owe fealty, will have compassion upon us?"

"Do, John!" whispered the seamstress.

"No, Mary—not even for *you*! I'll work these fingers to the bones, first!"

Reuben turned away in mingled grief and pity.

"Enough," said Mr. Bignell, tremulously. "I'll not urge it. Let us now pass to what to you is doubtless a pleasanter theme. I feel a deep interest in my fair friend here. She loves you—you love each other. It would, I presume, be a source of mutual satisfaction to crown this day, so eventful to you, with your union. As for me, I should esteem it a privilege to see you happy, if not in friendship

for me, at least in your love for one whom I esteem? Will you kindly grant me this favor?"

"If Mary will consent," said the young man, glancing blushing at the seamstress, "I can have no objection."

A pressure of the hand told him there was no thought of refusal in that quarter.

"Let us, then, to a clergyman's," he said, drawing her arm in his.

"We have one here," said the millionaire, smiling. "The Reverend Mr. White, my pastor!" he added, introducing him. "Shall I call in another witness?"

"If you will," returned the young man.

The millionaire rang a bell, and the individual who had acted as their guide through the fields, reappeared.

"We wish you, Mr. Robson," said the millionaire, "to witness the marriage of our friends. Robson," he continued, turning to the late convict, "has charge of this property, and is favorably known throughout the county as a respectable man and an excellent gardener."

Griggs and the gardener exchanged bows, and the ceremony was begun. While it was proceeding, the millionaire moved to a table, and drawing a written paper from a side pocket, rapidly filled up the blanks. At its conclusion, he approached the couple, and presenting the document to the bride, said:

"My dear madam, yourself and husband are now as one. I could not give this to Mr. Griggs, since he would not let me. But there is no good reason in his mind, I think, why I should not make him happy and independent through you, his wife. You are now the mistress and owner of this house and farm of one hundred and fifty acres, and also of the check which you will find in this deed. And if," he added, with a quivering lip, "you can persuade your hus-

band that he who now addresses you, sincerely mourns the great wrong he once did to him and his, and would endure much to have him forgive and forget, you would do a kindness to an old man, and enable him to walk through his few remaining years with one sad thought the less!"

A great manly sob broke from the late convict.

"Here!" he exclaimed, extending his hand. "I never expected to do this, but—you have conquered!"

The millionaire returned the pressure, but could not speak, for joy.

"Not my poor white-haired brother," answered Reuben for him; "no, not my poor old friend: but," looking upward reverently, "He whose love for erring men may not be measured—Who turns and overturns—Who from evil bringeth forth good—and Who, in mercy, by His marvelous grace, leads them to repentance!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

On Saturday evening, Alice went to pay her usual weekly visit to her mother. The latter apparently was much improved. Her breathing was easier, her eyes brighter, her general features pleasanter, and her spirits more buoyant than she had been for a long time.

Alice could scarcely control her joy.

Poor soul! she was too inexperienced in the workings of the artful malady under which her parent had so long suffered, to rightly comprehend the import of these symptoms.

The old lady herself was so exhilarated that she confidently expected to be able to visit Alice at her new place on Wednesday of the following week, or Thursday, at the latest.

Alice informed her mother of all the incidents of the past few days, except that of her quarrel with Gressenger. As she mentioned the generosity of Mr. Asbury, the old lady wondered if it did not mean more than was implied on the surface.

"I do not understand you!" said Alice, coloring.

"A proposal, my dear!" explained her mother, smiling.

"I am as sure of it as of the world. No one would give away five hundred dollars without an object; and some men woo in that way. There was Mr. Jameson, for instance, my first beau, after I became a widow, who paid his initial visit to me with a bouquet, which must have cost at least five dollars; and who never came without bringing me some thing

He seemed to think that to be the only way to a woman's affections. But he was a dear, nice man; and his heart was tender as a child's. — It pained him to see any one suffer; and it made him happy to know others so. Poor fellow! he was taken away by the cholera just one week before we were to be married. But," her thoughts reverting back to Mr. Asbury, and speaking as if half to herself, "you are too young, my love, for a gentleman of Mr. Asbury's years and character. A lady a little more advanced—of about *my* age, for instance—would be more in keeping. I declare, when I get out, I'll call on him. I can introduce myself by stating that I have come to thank him for his magnificent present to you, which I must say, is very handsome."

"Mother!" said Alice, beseechingly.

"Why, child—how strange you look! I hope you are not jealous of me. I am better suited for him than you; and certainly," added the old lady, tossing her thin ringlets with a girlish smile, "he could not help being attracted——"

"Mother—dear mother! you will drive me mad! O, don't call on Mr. Asbury—please don't!"

"Well, child," said the old lady, her heart softening in an instant, "don't cry. I don't wish to do any thing to injure your prospects; and for your sake, my love, I will make the sacrifice. But," perceiving Alice's eyes brighten, "I must say that it would be more to your happiness and mine for me to marry him, than——"

"Mother!"

"Well, I won't talk of it any more. I have said that I would make the sacrifice, and I will keep my word. There is a Mr. Fessenden," she added, dropping her eyes simperingly, "who sometimes comes here with the doctor—a student of his, I believe—and makes himself very agree-

able. He has not actually proposed; but his eyes tell me he does not regard me with indifference!"

"My poor, poor mother!" murmured Alice, mournfully.

"Besides," continued the old lady, with another toss of her ringlets, "when I once get out, I shall have the world before me; and I fancy I shall not be long a widow!"

Alice rose.

"What! you are not going, my dear?"

"I promised to be at home by nine," said Alice.

"When one is new in a place, one must be particular," said the old lady, aphoristically. "But, one word. Now that Mr. Asbury has broken the ice, you must be careful. He being a religious man, it would be a good idea, I think, for you to meet his sympathies in that respect."

"What do you mean?" asked Alice.

"To become pious, too," explained the old lady. "It might hasten his proposal. Rich men, my dear, are not to be picked up every day."

Alice blushed to her very temples.

"What do you take me for, mother?" she asked, indignantly.

"Why, child, what a fuss you make about nothing! Such things are done every day, and by persons as good as you are."

Alice dropped upon a chair and burst into tears.

"Well, my dear," said her mother, touched, "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. You know I wouldn't do so for the world. I withdraw the offensive remark. I didn't mean it. I was only in jest. Don't cry—there's a love. Dry your eyes, and kiss me. There—now we are all right again."

"Good-bye, mother," said Alice, embracing her.

"Good-night, my love. But," she added, affectionately, "you must be sure not to think unkindly of me. I didn't mean to wound you. I wouldn't do so for the world."

"I *know* it, mother," said Alice, smiling. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye, pet."

On her way home, Alice, while passing towards Broadway, was conscious of being followed, and she hastened her steps in hopes of reaching that ever-lighted thoroughfare in time to meet a passing omnibus. Her pursuer imitated her example, and soon coming up with her, rudely put his arm around her waist, and accosted her with—

"Good evening, my pretty dear. Can't I see you home?"

Alice glided from his clasp, and uttering a scream, ran forward, followed, however, by the ruffian, who, with a coarse laugh, insolently called upon her to stop.

A single street only separated the governess from Broadway, and as she was in the act of crossing it, she met an individual advancing.

"O, sir!" she hastily exclaimed, "if you are a gentleman, protect me from insult. This man who is chasing me——"

"Cross over and wait a moment, madam," interrupted the stranger. "I understand it all."

Alice, hearing the footsteps of her pursuer close upon her, retreated to the sidewalk, but had scarcely reached it, when, "Back, rascal—another step, and I'll teach you a lesson in decency!" fell upon her ears in a tone that sent a thrill through her every nerve.

"Who are you?" demanded the ruffian. "Stand aside, or I'll knock you so your mother won't know you!"

And he attempted to pass. But the stranger suddenly caught him with one hand by the neckcloth, and with the

other, struck him two blinding blows in the eyes. The rufian reeled, but recovering his balance, squared for his opponent, who sprang back a step or two, but as suddenly rushed forward and dashing aside the miscreant's guard, smote him a quick, fierce stroke under the chin. The latter staggered back a few paces, like a drunkard striving to preserve himself from falling, and then gulping out a groan of mingled astonishment and rage, measured his length upon the pavement.

"Now, madam," said the victor, approaching the trembling governess, "if you dare to trust yourself with a stranger, I will see you in safety to your home, or put you into a carriage—as you please."

"I should prefer the former, Mr. Sprague," returned Alice, "as it will give me an opportunity to thank you for your timely kindness."

The litterateur—for it was he—started.

"Miss Russell?" he exclaimed

"The same, sir. I would thank you—"

"Pardon me, Miss Russell," interrupted the young man, "you owe me no thanks. I have simply done what any gentleman owes it to his dignity to do, in like circumstances. But this is Saturday evening; and—excuse my familiarity—you have been to see your mother?"

"Yes, sir."

"May I ask after her health?"

"Freely. It is much improved."

"That is good news, indeed. How do you like your new situation?"

"Very well, so far. But it is not like the old house in Bleecker street."

"Time—time," said the litterateur, pleasantly, "and you, perhaps, will fancy it better. It is as we view those

that sit around our fireside, that home is either a purgatory, or an Eden. But your arm trembles!"

"I—I *must* thank you, Mr. Sprague," cried Alice, in a trembling voice, "for your brave kindness to me, to-night."

"It is needless," said the young man, paling before her warm-hearted glance. "I would have done the same for any lady in a similar position, without perceiving any special merit in the act, either. Besides," he added, with a forced smile, "there is a gratification in punishing a scoundrel, which amply rewards one for the trouble. I remember an anecdote of a judge, who took so great a delight in administering justice, that he, on one occasion, startled the counsel, jury, and spectators by observing to the prisoner, whom he had sentenced to five years of hard labor, 'This is the utmost that the law authorizes in a case like yours; but you are so great a rascal, that I only regret I cannot make the five years, five hundred, and also that the bench is not privileged, after passing sentence, to cowskin every convicted culprit, according to the measure, in its judgment, of his deserts. To flog *you*, knave, would be a great satisfaction to me, I assure you!'"

"Not a word—not even a hint, of the old time!" murmured Alice, with a sigh.

They soon reached the young lady's new home. As they drew towards the door, Alice invited her companion in; but, pleading a press of labor which would keep him up till a late hour, he declined.

"I should be happy," said Alice, giving him her hand, "to have you call and see me?"

"You are very kind," returned the litterateur, not daring to look her in the face. "Good-night!"

He raised his hat, and turned away; but, as his fair auditor observed, with a disturbed step.

"He loves me still!" she murmured, slowly ascending the stoop. On reaching the top, she paused a moment to see whether he would look back. But he did not.

Alice followed him with her eyes till he turned the corner; then hastily wiping away a tear, she rang the bell.

The litterateur left the city, the next day, for a business visit to the American Athens, where he remained a fortnight. On his return, and while riding in a carriage to his uncle's, he, unobserved, again beheld the governess.

She was taking the morning air with the twins, and was in mourning.

"Poor girl!" exclaimed the litterateur. "She is now alone in the world!"

In the afternoon of the succeeding day, Alice was interrupted in a music lesson with her charges, by the announcement of a visitor. Dismissing the twins, she descended to the drawing-room, and found herself in the presence of the millionaire.

As the reader has guessed the object of the gentleman's errand, we need not describe their interview.

At its close, the governess, pale and agitated, ascended to her chamber and bathed her temples, which throbbed as if they would burst. Her brain felt dry, and hot, and hard. She would have wept, but the power seemed denied to her. She sat down and tried to think, but could not. Her whole being appeared to be under the restraining influence of a spell.

By degrees, however, the usual keenness of her sensibility at length returned, and her surcharged fountains overflowed in a shower of relieving tears.

Then calmly unfolding a slip of paper which she had received from her visitor, she examined it with a thoughtful eye. As its contents became riveted in her mind, memory

called up her rejection of the litterateur, and murmuring, "If he would but ask me *now*!" she bowed her head upon her lap, and sobbed in mingled grief and joy, in blended hope and fear.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE millionaire pursued his work of restitution with unabated vigor. True, as in the case with the convict, he now and then was made to writhe under stinging sarcasm and burning humiliation; but in the main, his reception and treatment were gentler than he had any right to expect, while every debt cancelled was like a great load removed from his heart. Still, it was far from a labor of love. Fear, doubt and anxiety attended every step. In some instances, the parties themselves were dead, and their heirs, though successfully traced from place to place, at last could not be found; while all clue to one or two was lost by their removal to "the West." "They have gone West," persons would tell him; but where they could not say, as that was all they knew. "Gone West!" he would respond, in despair at the indefiniteness of the information. "Gone West!" they would repeat, and then turn away indifferently to attend to their own concerns. Handbills and advertisements in the newspapers of the leading western cities and towns, were resorted to, but without success. Still, the millionaire persevered, buoyed up by the hope that He who smiles approvingly upon the penitent would assist him in the search, and thereby enable him to throw off the corroding memories that depressed him, and allow him to lie down and rise up, and eat and drink, and ~~ming~~ mingle with his

fellow men, and approach his Maker, with a clear conscience once more.

Reuben, without having received his confidence in this matter, was yet conscious of his successive steps. He knew in part, and the rest came to him by intuition. Still, knowing his father's propensity for keeping his thoughts and feelings to himself, he with his usual delicacy, made no inquiries or remarks upon the subject, except when they were called for in reply to queries by the old gentleman himself upon certain points: all of which he was expected to respond to with the intelligence of one thoroughly familiar with all the details of the facts. To do this without appearing to know *too much*—that is, more than his father desired him to know—and thereby trenching upon his sensibility, required a tact and discretion that often tried the young pastor, but which, thanks to his experience, he most generally was equal to.

Calling one morning upon his father, he found him bending over his private memorandum book, in a state of deep depression.

"You seem sad?" observed the young man, with a sympathising smile.

"I can get no thread to the whereabouts of Gideon Wiley," answered the millionaire, with a gloomy brow. "I have spent nine weeks and over eight hundred dollars without obtaining a particle of information. I fear The Lord has deserted me!"

"You may have given Him cause?" suggested Reuben. "Think!"

The millionaire shook his head.

"If I know myself," he rejoined, "I have no other motive, in my present course, than to attain to inner peace."

A mournful smile shaded Reuben's forehead.

"It is so difficult to comprehend with *whom* we have to strive!" he observed. "Your object is a worthy one among *men*, but it will not stand you at THE THRONE."

The millionaire looked at him with surprise.

"No?" he coloringly inquired.

"No," returned Reuben. "To the grateful heart of the Pardoned, there is a higher and more inspiring aim—the *glory of The Father!*"

The millionaire saw his errors, and blushed.

"How could I have forgotten *that*?" he mortifyingly exclaimed.

"Easily," replied Reuben. "The *Inner Tempter* is cunning, and—EVER AT WORK!"

The millionaire felt himself helpless against so subtle a spirit. "I am a poor fellow!" he cried, in confusion.

"And *who* is not?" suggested the young pastor. "But, courage! the conflict is not forever. A brief season," he added, with a cheering smile, "and then—*rest!*"

The old man's heart became warm.

"Aye!" he exclaimed, "with Him who led me to see that I was a sinner!"

"And who, in His magnanimity, generously suffered in His own person, that the poor sinner might not die!" said Reuben.

"How shall I be sufficiently grateful for such amazing goodness!" cried the millionaire, tears springing from his lids.

"We may not in this world," said Reuben, with emotion. "We are, by nature, so gross in thought and feeling, and The Tempter's influence upon us is so bewildering, that we are incapable of appreciating its sublimity except in spasms, and then only faintly. But after the Great Change, in which—thanks to our Redeemer!—we shake off both the

hold of Satan, and the propensity to sin in which we are now ingrained, our sense of it will be permanent, and so inspiring that we shall regard a whole eternity of praise as too little for such marvellous love."

"O!" cried the millionaire, rapturously, "if I could but be permitted to make one of the bright host, now!"

"All in good time," observed Reuben, with a genial smile. "We each have our life's-work to finish ere we can go home. But, a thought for your consideration, my father: When on earth, The Saviour gave to his disciples three commandments, namely—to repent, believe, and be baptised. I do not wish to urge you beyond your convictions; but suppose that you should be suddenly summoned to your account, what answer could you make in reference to these?"

"I believe, and have repented," said the millionaire.

"Doubtless, my father. But the third, which is no less an injunction?"

"I have thought upon it," returned Mr. Bignell, leaning his head upon his hand and gazing abstractedly at vacancy.

"I would not have you think me unreasonably importunate," said Reuben, gently. "But when we are commanded to do The Lord's will, is it well to say, 'We will think upon it?'"

"I have so many things to clear up!" said the old gentleman, with an air of mingled uneasiness and confusion.

"That was not the answer *you* received when you applied for pardon!" suggested Reuben, in a tone of friendly reproach. "And will you make it to The Saviour?"

"I am unfit to pass through that holy ordinance," said the millionaire. "Old unsettled scores cover me like the unclean garment of a pestilence."

"If you are fit for pardon, are you not for baptism? What, if your forgiveness had been delayed till your own

righteousness had rendered you *worthy* of it! Be on your guard, my father! This is only another of the devices of the Subtle One, to restrain you, *even through* CONSCIENCE, from duty!"

"Should I not first pay what I conscientiously owe?" demanded the millionaire, looking up.

"O yes, father," returned Reuben; "you ought to pay your debts!"

"How, then," triumphantly demanded the millionaire "can you consistently urge me to take this solemn step while these remain unsettled? What would the world think of such conduct—what say? It would be bringing reproach upon the church!"

"CHRIST is the guardian of the church—not the world!" answered Reuben. "So you stand well with HIM, of what moment is the opinion of men? I ask you to do this," he added, with a beaming smile, "because, in a christian's mind, the commands of The Master take precedence of every thing. To neglect or excuse them aside till in your own judgment you are more ready to comply with them, is, in my thought, equivalent to placing *your* wisdom in comparison with God's. Is this well?"

The millionaire could not reply. Still, he hugged his own idea.

"The Master," continued Reuben, pleasantly, "in giving the order, says, in effect, that you are ready—you, that you are *not*. Which, think you, is *most* likely to know—which to soonest be believed?"

The millionaire glanced at him with the air of one pushed into a corner. Still he would not yield. His original fancy that he must *do* something to render him meritorious and acceptable, still possessed him, and would not be driven out.

"Your argument is very plausible," he remarked; "but argument may be very strong, and very subtle, and yet very fallacious. In any event, I am satisfied of the soundness of my course, and till my heart leads me to a different conclusion I shall adhere to it."

His pride—ever his chief stumbling-block—rendered him proof to all reasoning. Though this was transparent to the young clergyman, who knew his man, he yet did not deem it discreet to tell him so in plain words.

"My poor, poor father!" he exclaimed, mournfully. "If you could only see, as I do, how adroitly Satan, through his faithful ally, the Inner Tempter, after we have detected and driven him from *one* faculty, instantly hies to and plays upon ANOTHER! Your judgment convinced, what is it that influences you to still hold out?"

The millionaire's egotism rose up.

"You flatter yourself!" he returned, coldly. "I am not so easily imposed upon! If my judgment *were* convinced, I am man enough to follow it!"

"Of *your own* strength?" asked Reuben, with a gentle smile. "Pardon me; I supposed that you had been led to see that you had none."

The remark was light to the millionaire. He perceived his error in an instant. A hot blush, red as scarlet, darted up to his temples; and, covering his face with his hands, he exclaimed—

"God help me! Satan has in me as great a dupe as ever!"

"We are all his dupes—all," said Reuben; "the vigilant and the careless—pastor as well as people: all are alike played upon, all alike daily beguiled into yielding to temptation. Therefore it is that when The Father, *who knows us*, gives us a thing to do, He does not expect us

to pause and consider whether we are 'fit' or 'good' enough to perform it—He alone is the judge of *that*!—but, to obey. When we have learned to do this—”

“To obey?” asked the millionaire, fearing to misunderstand him.

“To obey,” returned Reuben, with an inclination of the head. “When we have learned to comply with the commands of The Father, the power of The Tempter immediately commences to decline; and according to the *implicitness* of our obedience is the degree of our faith, our hope, our confidence in our acceptance, and our internal calm.”

“I understand!” observed his auditor, with an intelligent nod.

“You see, then,” pursued Reuben, “that as baptism is one of the Redeemer’s three great commands, you have no more right to withhold an unhesitating compliance with it than to the other two?”

The millionaire’s countenance changed from intelligence to confusion.

“I don’t see *that* so clearly!” he obstinately exclaimed, shifting restlessly in his chair.

Reuben smiled like one who perceives that the structure of his hopes has toppled down, and that his work must all be done again. His numerous experiences, however, in similar cases, were not lost upon him, and calling up his patience he calmly set about removing the ruins.

“When on earth,” he began, pleasantly, “The Saviour said to the multitudes, ‘Believe and repent,’ and ‘repent and be baptized.’ Were these commands?”

“I regard them so,” was the reply.

“Were these commands,” continued Reuben, “given with any qualifying clauses which left it optional with the

sinner when he should believe, when repent, and when be baptized?”

“No,” returned the millionaire, confusedly, “I presume not.”

“Were these commands to be obeyed according to the humor of the sinner, or in conformity with the will of their Divine giver?”

“Yes, I know,” replied the other, evading the question with a humiliating blush; “I understand all this. But,” dropping his eyes pitifully to the floor, “I have so many things to clear up!”

The young clergyman felt ashamed of such moral poltroonery; and yet he was duly sensible that it was simply the subtle work of the poor fellow’s Inner Enemy.

“Do you believe,” he inquired slowly, after a short pause, “that a man, to suit his own convenience, can push aside a divine order that has once been fairly brought before his conscience, *with impunity*?”

“No—of course not,” stammered the millionaire. “But—” Always a ‘but’!

“But I have so many things to clear up!” he repeated, like a man not quite satisfied with himself, but still doing the best in his power.

“The time of doing them is of your own appointing.”

“I admit it. But should they not be done?”

“Certainly. But is it well to say to The Lord, in effect, ‘I will attend to *your* business after I have finished *my own*?’”

The millionaire began to gnaw his nails, as though he did not like his position.

“Perhaps,” continued Reuben, “perhaps the Inner Tempter has been beguiling you into the belief that you will be more meritorious in the eyes of The Father, after

you shall have done what you propose, than *now*? As if you or I, or any man, could do *any* thing to make us worthy of His favor! We are saved—if saved at all—through the merits of The Man of Sorrows, alone. How, then, will you be more ready for baptism, after you have rolled this burden off your conscience than before! Besides, this is a stale trick of The Invisible Enemy's. You may or may not live to complete this which you have begun. In case you should not, you will have been cheated, through the agency of a false view adroitly placed in your mind, out of the willing performance of an important duty!"

The millionaire began to feel exceedingly uncomfortable.

"Be not thus imposed upon," continued Reuben. "For every obligation enjoined upon believers, 'now is the accepted time'—*now*! Come up, then, to this commandment just as you are, and you will have fulfilled it in the order in which it is laid down—otherwise, not."

"Just as I am!" said the millionaire, in the uneasy tone of one urged against his will.

"Just as you are," repeated Reuben. "The Lord don't ask you to wait till you have paid your debts. *Why* wait, then? Salvation is a free gift, and cannot be bought by anything that you can do. Then why *try* to buy it? Though you may yet be able to pay all you owe to men, can you expect ever to pay what you owe to God? Why, then, indulge the thought? If, therefore, you are to gain nothing by postponing an important duty, *why* postpone it?"

The millionaire answered not; but it was easy to see that the cloud was passing slowly from his mind.

"There is one consideration in this matter," continued Reuben, "which the Inner Tempter has adroitly withdrawn from your memory—a consideration which it is the constant aim of every experienced Christian to remember. It is

this: That to put off any known duty, till we have done something that will make us appear *better* in our own eyes, is an insult to the Redeemer: since it is only saying in other words that it is not His sacrifice, but our own good works, that makes us worthy."

Mr. Bignell, blushed.

"What children we are!" he observed, with a humiliating smile. "I had really thought that I was not good enough to be baptized. But I see my error, now. It is *Christ* who is my goodness—*His* atonement for my sins that always makes me worthy to do whatever he commands. Christ!"

"Christ!" said Reuben, with enthusiasm; "in whose dear name all may at all times approach the Father; in whose dear blood you and I and all who believe, are washed of every sin forever—do you hear? *forever*! Who, is our righteousness now and in the Last Great Day. Whose magnanimous sacrifice of Himself makes us ever fit for every duty, for life, for death, for heaven! Who is our hope, our surety—our *Redeemer*!"

"Our *Redeemer*! Blessed thought!" cried the millionaire, his eye-lids dewy with emotion. "I thank you, my son," he added, taking the young man's hand; "I thank you for this. It has removed some doubts, and fears, and delusive thoughts, and given me a plainer view of myself. I am now ready to walk in the line of duty."

Reuben's features were radiant with joy.

"O, thanks, my father—thanks!" he exclaimed, warmly returning his pressure. "These are sweet words to me. They inspire me with confidence in the hope that your Christian manhood will be worthy of your profession."

"I hope so," said the millionaire.

"It *will* be, my father, if you depend upon the Only

Strong to keep you, and not yourself. But," looking at his watch, "time presses, and I have other engagements. Yet ere I go, I would say a few words for your private thought. Conversion is only the *beginning* of the Christian's course, and faith must be TO THE END. To wrest this faith from him, to hinder him from prayer, from meditation, and active labor in The Master's service, which are its supporting pillars, is the one great aim of Satan. From the struggle with this relentless enemy, who plies his arts upon all to the last, you will not be exempt. And do not imagine for a moment that the conflict is a *light* one. One more earnest, was never fought by man. It is not a mere contest between two men of equal valor, for an ordinary prize; but of a poor weak mortal, wrestling for his soul with *the great Arch Enemy*! In a struggle like this, my father, where is your hope—your strength?"

"In the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!" answered the millionaire.

"Right, my father. *You have THE KEY!*"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THERE was a pleasant time at covenant meeting in the lecture-room of Mr. White's, on the succeeding Friday evening.

Reuben read a letter from Mrs. Goodrich, the wife of the infidel, concerning whom the members felt a deep interest, announcing the conversion of her husband.

The communication was from Cleveland, Ohio, whither the infidel, on his return to health, had proceeded in quest of business.

It appeared that shortly after his recovery, Mr. Goodrich, at the solicitation of his wife, for whom he entertained a deep affection, had promised to give the Bible a single careful reading. He kept his word, and his views underwent a change. How or why this was, he could not understand: for he took up the book in a spirit of unbelief, and with a fixed resolve to place no confidence in its contents; and yet a something—he knew not what—had influence upon him, and, as he read, he believed. A species of shame, however, prevented him from imparting this fact to his companion. He became pale and thoughtful, and, as his manner resembled that which marked the early stages of his late illness, the latter fearing that he was declining into a relapse, was alarmed. "But," as the lady naively expressed it in her letter, "it was not *that*!" He, one evening, after a long,

meditative silence, startled her by proposing family worship. The poor, fond creature, could scarcely believe her ears; but they had not deceived her. It was true—it was real! She soon further learned that he had been praying in secret for more than a fortnight, but that he as yet had received no assurance that his petitions had been heard. A few weeks later, however, the evidence came, and Cleveland knew no happier man than he, no wife more blest than his. The Sabbath preceding the date of the letter, the pardoned penitent had made a public profession of his faith—an event which Mrs. Goodrich lost no time in apprising her former pastor of.

The prayers of hearts strong in faith, had not been offered up in vain!

This intelligence, which possibly may have but little interest for the reader, had a great deal for those who heard it, whom it filled with mingled gratification and gladness.

“And this,” observed Reuben, with an enthusiasm that was shared largely by the auditors, “is the confidence that we have in Him—that if we ask anything *according to His will* He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him!”

All remembered the quotation, and thanked God and took courage.

“If we could but hear as good news of poor Nelson!” sighed Peter Brown, in a whisper, to Mr. Asbury.

“All that The Father has given to The Son, will be looked after!” returned the latter. “If our poor brother be one of these, his face will wear a smile at the Judgment.”

A hymn of thanksgiving was sung, in which all joined with spirit-stirring warmth. At its conclusion, the pastor

again rose, and said, with an emotion that was understood by at least a few of his hearers:

“We have fresh occasion for rejoicing. The great work of the Redeemer, in this branch of His Zion, continues to go on. One who is very dear to some of our number—indeed, a much loved friend, for whom prayer had for a long time ascended, has, as there is reason to hope, at length been roused to a sense of his true position, and been led to receive The Precious Gift as a little child. It pleased the Father to suffer the Tempter to have uninterrupted power upon him till he attained to an age when the brow is silvered by the attrition of multiplied cares, and the heart begins to cease to throb responsive to the lures in the false romance of the world. As his is to me a striking instance of the efficacy of the fervent prayers of long-tried faith, I will relate the particulars for our mutual encouragement. He was deluded in early manhood into the prevalent idea that the accumulation of wealth is the only sensible ambition, and he plunged into the fierce conflict of Money with a resolute ardor that ignored everything but the one great aim. He was successful; every movement contributed its quota to the object of his desire, every step paid tribute to the force of his business genius. But, as with most, the more he gained, the more he craved; and it was evident to a few who silently observed him, that he was striding forward to great riches and to ruin. These few—four in all—prayed that Satan’s blinding bandage, ‘the one sensible ambition,’ might be removed from his eyes, that he might see whither he was proceeding. But time passed on; their petition was apparently unheeded; and he for whom it had ascended, rendered vain by unusual success, was still a willing dupe of the Tempters, under whose guidance he was proudly strutting down Sin’s inclined plane. One of the four,

her work being done, lay down to die. 'Keep pleading!' she said, to her companions, and went to her reward. Yet a few years, and the second one was called home. 'Keep pleading!' he cried, to the remaining two, and departed for the Great Meeting. Yet a little while, and the work of the third was finished. 'Keep pleading; let him not be lost!' she cried to the fourth, and departed with the death angel."

The young pastor paused a few moments. His voice was broken; his eyes were struggling to restrain a coursing tear; his face was of a blueish pale, and it was visible to all that his being was stirred to its center.

The millionaire, who was sitting in his favorite slip near the door, felt a hot rill trickling, like burning lava, down his cheek. He fancied that he recognized the dupe of the "sensible ambition;" that he had looked upon the graves of the three who, though having but little cause to love him, had entreated so earnestly for his rescue: and that he could point his finger to the fourth and call him unmistakably by name.

"And this was the way his injured wife and betrayed employer had taken their revenge! This was the unsuspected beginning of the human work—the initial chapter, in the history of his conversion!"

The millionaire began to comprehend the sweetness of that faith which is content to leave vengeance to Him who is able to repay.

"The fourth," added Reuben, on recovering his composure, "continued to yearn, to hope, to pray for the struggler after riches, and also to invoke the prayers of devoted friends, in whose piety he had confidence. But more years moved unnoticed on, and the object of his and their anxiety was still absorbed in amassing, still under the dominion of

the Tempter. In the meanwhile he had passed his meridian, and was moving on to age and—the Judgment. Looking one day in the glass, and beholding his bleached hairs, he concluded that it was time to withdraw from the contest and enjoy his winnings. He had gathered enough, and he could now amuse himself by calmly looking down upon the world with an eye that saw practically from the deep, rough ploughing of Experience. But not a thought that his life's sun was going down to set in darkness; not a sign that he had yet learned to look above the Dollar. The fourth trembled for him, and, with those who had remembered him in the closet, was beginning to grow heart-sick with long-deferred hope, when lo! a voice from heaven, and the unconscious object of persevering prayer was kneeling, in sobbing penitence, at the foot of the cross!"

Tears leaped from many a lid at this announcement, and a sigh of relief came up from the great body of the auditory.

The millionaire remembered the eventful hour, and shaded his face with his hand. The mingled gratitude and gladness that were bubbling up, in great round globules, from his heart's dearest well *then!*

"I have been thus particular," continued the pastor, after a brief silence, "as this is a case that seems to me specially designed by the Father to encourage our wavering faith when we see no immediate results from our prayers. It gives me pleasure to add that the party to whom I have alluded has been in the habit of meeting with us for worship, both on Lord's day and at our social gatherings, ever since his conversion. He is the husband of our sister Bignell, whose heart, a long time heavy with tender anxiety, is now cheered by the hope, that on descending to the Dark Valley they shall not turn off in different directions, but shall pass on, hand in hand, to the same happy goal. Our new friend,

whom we may soon look to call by a more endearing name, offers himself as a candidate for baptism. Will you nominate a committee to examine his fitness for that ordinance?"

The committee was appointed, and after a hymn, Reuben observed:

"You all know, dear friends, or at least those who are accustomed to attend here, that this is our regular covenant meeting, when we assemble for the three-fold purpose of reviewing our spiritual experience during the month, of watching over one another in brotherly affection, and of renewing our vows to walk together on our journey to the Kingdom, according to the precepts laid down by our blessed Master. We to-night are nearer to the Great Meeting, by four weeks, than at our last covenant gathering; and it is profitable, while passing through, to pause at stated intervals and examine the character of our progress. I will now throw the meeting into your hands, with the suggestion, that the time is short, and the briefer brethren make their remarks, the better it will be for all."

He offered up an appropriate prayer, and then took his seat.

The millionaire anxiously awaited what followed. Though by no means a stranger to covenant meetings, he nevertheless viewed the proceedings on the present occasion with special interest. He felt that if he knew himself, he was thoroughly in earnest in trying, so far as lay in himself, to attain salvation. He felt, also, or at least believed, that of the many composing the assembly there were not a few equally as sincere, and the experiences of these he fervently desired to hear, that he might compare them with his own, which, in certain private moments, gave him not a little uneasiness.

A young man rose, in whose devotion to the cause he had

been led to espouse, there was general confidence. He was apparently in the neighborhood of thirty; had a bold, frank blue eye, light hair, a strongly-marked aquiline nose, a generous mouth, a firm yet slightly retreating chin, and a strong, rugged, medium-sized frame. He was a Bible-class teacher, and was favorably known to the members and to many of the general attendants for his untiring industry and energy in bringing children into the Sabbath-school; for his zeal in visiting from house to house, evenings, and awakening persons to a sense of their position, and for his simple, unassuming manner. With his brother, who followed him in speaking, he was understood to be almost exclusively employed, after business hours, in spreading the glad tidings which had made his own heart happy; rarely, or never "taking an evening to himself," but continually about the work of his Master. He was a clerk in an extensive fancy goods house, the proprietors of which appreciated, if they did not imitate, his sterling honesty and truth.

"I feel," he observed, "that if I am saved, it will be through no merit of my own. In looking back upon my past month, I can see nothing in which I have not come short of the glory that is due from every heart to God. I cannot point to a single thing, in thought, word or deed, to recommend me to mercy. On the contrary, daily experiencing my utter unworthiness to be in the service of so exalted a being as The Savior, I sometimes wonder that I am permitted the honor to speak of His goodness, or to breathe it to myself at all. I owe Him so much, and am unable to pay Him even ever so little, that I am at a loss to understand how He can have patience with me. And what appears to me the most surprising is, that I am occasionally allowed, through God's marvelous grace, to have happy thoughts. Whenever I reflect upon what the Redeemer has

done for me—how he took my sins upon Himself and died that I might not be lost, I am so overwhelmed with joy that I want to go out into the highway and tell it to every passer-by. And yet when I remember that I am so vile that it was necessary for Him, whose name is above every name, to descend from His high throne and suffer sorrow, hunger, humiliation, persecution and death in my behalf, to appease Divine Justice, I feel so pained and shocked and miserable that I want to fly from the face of man in shame. I should be very glad to say that I had made some progress since our last meeting, but truth will not let me. I rely upon the merits of the Savior's precious blood alone for justification. As for myself, I am convinced, from careful observation, that there is nothing good in me."

And yet this young man was known to be continually in the service of the Redeemer who had ransomed him.

He was followed by his brother, who was of a less robust build, verging in fact to slenderness, but with a fine, open, genial countenance, noticeable for its mingled expression of energy and frankness. He was one of those quiet unpretending organizations that are oftener felt in society than heard. While others talked, he worked. At a meeting once of the Sabbath School teachers, of whom he was one, the question was agitated, 'What is the best plan to fill the school with scholars?' and some very pretty theories were advanced. Our young friend and his brother alone were silent; but they spoke out effectively on the following Sabbath morning, one bringing in nine, and the other twelve new scholars—the theoretical teachers, whose chief merit lay in their perfumed linen, and fine speeches, introducing only—themselves. 'Filling up the classes,' scouring the streets and lanes and inviting the uncared-for to church, lecture, and prayer-meeting; asking the opinions of care-

less professors of religion of certain passages of Scripture, applicable to their respective cases, and thus stirring them up to self-examination; suggesting to young converts unoccupied fields of usefulness, visiting the sick, the old, and the otherwise weary laden and after leading their minds to the right point, pointing out to them how they too, by prayer for special persons, might help on The cause, even in their chambers; calling on the poor, the ignorant, and the physically blind, and after ministering to their temporal necessities, reading the Scriptures to them, and leading them to The Throne in prayer; distributing tracts, and Bibles, and taking advantage of every opportunity to drop a fitting word that might fructify in season. He was always at work, always cheerful, always happy. Although only a clerk, he was a silent, systematic and generous giver, and his Master's institutions never suffered through his remissness. In fact, he was one of that small body of working Christians who have but one ambition, viz: to emulate their Great Exemplar, and to know none other service than His.

"I am glad of this opportunity," he said, with characteristic modesty, "to testify to the great goodness of God in permitting me, at this stage of my Christian pilgrimage, to realize in Whom I believe. Indeed He has been so kind to me during the past month, has kept me from doubt and fear and gloom, and filled my mind daily with so many comforting thoughts, that if I could only find words to thank Him, I should be unspeakably happy. As it is, I have great reason to be thankful. My lot has been cast in pleasant places, and among pleasant people. While riding in the cars, a few days since a short distance from town on business, I beheld a large number of sheep in a vast enclosure, whose rich green herbage, burnished by the sun, was delightful to the nostrils and refreshing to the eyes. At some

distance, perched on an eminence, was the house of the owner, who, from the piazza, appeared to be looking down at the flock and apparently enjoying their tranquil happiness. 'O!' thought I, 'beautiful as this, fragrant as this, thrifty as this, are Thy pastures to Thy sheep, O Lord; who would not enter, and be filled; who would not lie down in safety, with *Thee* for their Shepherd!' And a feeling of joy came over me, and I could do nothing but thank God for his goodness to me both during the remainder and on returning from my journey. I have not deserved the peace which The Father has so graciously accorded to me during the month; and when I look in upon myself, and see how utterly unworthy I am even of the smallest favor, I am confounded, and can scarcely believe it to be other than a blissful dream, from which I shall soon awake. But day after day glides by, and it is still the same. I can say, from my heart, that I have found it good to serve The Lord. My daily experience is, that Wisdom's ways *are* ways of pleasantness. Though I am sometimes disturbed at the evenness of my happiness, yet when I remember that it is one of The Lord's own promises, my uneasiness vanishes, and joy returns. My dear Redeemer died that this should be so; for we have the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 'Believe, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy!' And yet I know that it is for no merit of mine that this is so. O, no; but for His, who took my sins upon Himself, and with whom they were nailed to The Tree. I do not know that I have said any thing worthy of your attention, brethren. I would not have spoken; but that I felt a yearning to tell you how good The Lord has been to me for His dear Son's sake, and how faithful I have found Him to His promise, 'Believe, and your joy shall be full!'

There was not a doubt in all the auditory that the young man spoke from conscience, or that his joy was less than he represented it; but there were many—experienced christians, too—who felt that they would give much, *very* much! if they could but say the same. But there were also many who, having doubted that solid happiness was attainable in this world, took courage from his relation and prayed for a living and reviving faith that would permit them to *take God at His word!*

A gentleman with Roman features, round, stooping shoulders, of medium height, and somewhat past his prime, now rose. He was known for the depth and constancy of his Bible reading, for the soundness of his views, his blunt and occasionally quaint manner and phraseology, and the variousness of his experience; being at times in the lowest glooms of despondency, at others far above the clouds. As a christian, he was generally viewed, both by pastor and people, as ranking higher than any other in the society; for there were seasons when he was permitted to feel the presence of Him whose image was impressed upon his heart, and when he could say from more than human knowledge that he *knew* in whom he trusted. Though this may be doubted by the reader, it was firmly believed by those in the society who had the privilege of a near acquaintance with him and understood the fervent piety that lay beneath his apparently irreverent manner, the sterling honesty in his homely speech, and the boundless faith in his simple, childlike heart. Placing a hand on the top of the slip on either side of him, and leaning against the wall and looking down at the floor, instead of at the pastor or at the assembly, he began:

"This being our covenant meeting, I suppose I ought to say something; but I haven't anything worth telling. The

Lord hasn't done much for me this month; it may be because I haven't deserved any thing; perhaps it is: but if so, I'd like to know when I ever did. Satan has had such a fast grip on me, that I stand about pretty much where I did at the last meeting. I haven't been able to shake him off, and, of my own might, don't ever expect to. I've called repeatedly upon The Lord to come to my help; but He hasn't done so, any more than if He hadn't heard me; though I know He did. Why he hasn't answered my cries, I can't say; but I suppose He could give good reasons for it. The result is that though I started for heaven before many here, some are now a good way ahead of me. But it serves me right. I've a proud, sinful heart, full of all manner of wickedness. There's nothing in it worth having; and I am surprised that The Lord should ever have asked me for it. If I didn't know Him better, I should judge from His apparent indifference that after having received it, He had made up His mind that it isn't worth having and concluded to return it. In such an event, I should agree with Him; it is *not* worth taking: for such another proud, obstinate, ungrateful heart cannot be found any where. It is continually suggesting the most depraved thoughts, and if I didn't know that Satan is mean enough to take any thing, I should be astonished at his pertinacity in clinging to it. The more I look in upon myself, the more I am convinced that if I ever get to heaven, it will only be because the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient to cover even the vilest of sinners. I haven't gratitude or sense enough to thank God even for what He does. I know that He daily blesses me; but He don't bless me as I want to be. My heart is so contrary, that it won't be satisfied with any thing. The Lord is willing to bless me in His way; but I am not content with that: I want to be blessed in my own way. I am dissatisfied with

my business; I am dissatisfied with myself: I am dissatisfied with every body and every thing. I want every thing my own way; but The Lord won't have it so. I want to get to heaven in my own way; but The Lord won't let me go there by any way except the one He has appointed: and therefore I'm dissatisfied with The Lord. If he means that I ever shall get there, He'll break me in; and consequently I must expect to take it. In fact, I'm getting it pretty hard, now. I haven't felt that The Lord has been near me, for more than a month. In all that time I've been left to battle with Satan alone, and on my side it's been a mighty poor fight. If things go on with me this way much longer, I don't know what will become of me; for I plainly see that I am nobody. If any of the brethren can feel for a poor fellow, and their faith is equal to their sympathy, I would thank them to lay my case before The Lord; tell Him that Satan has me down, and beseech Him to make him let me up. If you haven't faith enough for this, ask The Lord, and He will give you all you want."

Notwithstanding the temporary gloom that was upon him, and the low estimate which this oddity placed upon himself, there were but few present that would not have rejoiced, if such a thing were possible, to exchange their chances of heaven for his.

The millionaire, who knew him well from report, felt that he would gladly give all he was worth to feel confident that all would be as well with himself in the Last Great Day.

The chairman of the committee in the case of Ward and Nelson, followed. He was one of the deacons, and was viewed by some with affection, but by many with a species of negative disfavor. He was understood to be a man of an iron mind, and as inflexible in all matters of conscience. His countenance told of an unbending will, and a stern, pitiless

nature; his manner, of a proud, haughty, unsympathising spirit. These served as a bar to his popularity; but they did not exhibit him fairly. While they doubtless were a true index to his character previous to his conversion, yet since that event his moral being had gradually undergone a great change. But it was only in private conversation with him that the sweetness of his new disposition was observable; and then the heart went out to him in warmth, and ever after met and thought of him with satisfaction. As, however, notwithstanding the revolution within, the forbidding expression of his exterior still remained, he was continually misunderstood, and hence, though both a faithful officer and an active member, the great body of the attendants regarded him with doubt and dislike: so ready are even the moderately good to sit in judgment upon their fellows and to impute unworthy motives to those whose faces are not moulded like their own.

"In looking back upon the past month," he said, in a subdued tone, "I observe with regret numerous opportunities for furthering the great work of our dear Redeemer, which were permitted to pass unimproved. In this hour of self-examination, I can call to mind nothing said, or thought, or done worthy of the high standard which, as a professing follower of the blessed Saviour, I should have had before me. Coldness of heart on many occasions when all the sympathies of the christian were due; want of charity for poor, erring men; absence of feeling for careless sinners; lack of interest in the institutions of The Lord; deadness of ear to the preached Word; indifference in prayer; neglect of the closet, of daily personal scrutiny, of proper discipline in my religious, family and business affairs; ingratitude for constant mercies, and, more than all, for the great sacrifice made for me by my dear Redeemer—all uprise be-

fore me and fill me with mingled shame and grief. I have made but little progress in my christian journey. The temptation to sit down and rest on the wayside, has come upon me so often, and I resisted so feebly that I fear I have given Satan fresh occasion for shouting in exultant triumph over my Saviour. A careful revision of my steps has impressed me with a deeper sense than ever of man's utter inability to walk in hope without grace daily from on High. And yet, God, in mercy, has graciously allowed me a few inspiring joys. There have been moments when I felt that it is sweet to serve The Lord; moments when I knew in my heart's inner shrine that my dear Redeemer was with me, and illumining my soul with the stirring joy of His presence. Precious moments! which come back to me even now, and animate me with fresh courage to push on."

The last few words of the speaker had a cheering effect upon the auditory, and they sang with swelling fervor,

"Awake my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown.

A cloud of witnesses around
Hold thee in full survey;
Forget the steps *already* trod,
And ONWARD urge thy way."

The millionaire began, as he thought, to comprehend the true character of the Christian race. He called to mind Reuben's pertinent suggestion that 'faith must be to THE END,' and wondered if his own would. His experience, as well as that of those to whom he had been listening, satisfied him however, that the power to retain that all-important basis of the Christian's hope did not depend upon himself. But then came up the encouraging thought that if he daily

asked for grace to enable him to keep it, God assuredly would grant it, and he felt braver. Yes, the Lord keeping him in the will, he would ask for this grace *every day*; that—he saw it all, now—that was the way to hold out to the end!

A member now rose, concerning whom few, if any, entertained other than unbounded confidence. He was in the vicinity of fifty; had a fine Roman head, bald from the forehead to the occiput, a mild blue eye, a generous mouth, a winning general expression, together with a pleasant, amiable, unassuming air that won upon an observer directly. He had at one time been extensively engaged in liquor dealing, which, on his conversion, he decided to abandon, as unworthy of a conscientious man. His friends remonstrated; they “had never heard of such fanaticism,” and “would not and could not believe it of him.” Finding him resolute, however, they advised him to “sell out,” and thereby do “at least one sensible thing.” This he refused, on the ground that to convey a wicked business to another was equally as bad as to continue in it himself; and throwing it up, he went out into the world, “relying upon the Lord.” His friends and relations ‘cut’ him from that hour; and though they had previously regarded him with favor, and had always spoken of him as a good, sound-headed business-man, they now set him down for a simpleton. “Ah!” they would say in a low voice, and with a knowing shake of the head, “he is to be pitied!” [But *they* did not pity him.] You know what a keen, shrewd, energetic fellow he used to be; what a business he had; how he pulled in the money; how A No. One his note was considered; in what a princely style he lived—keeping his carriage, and all that? Ah! well—he don’t keep his carriage *any more*! He got cracked by religion, under the influence of which he broke up his busi-

ness so that no one else could get hold of it—literally refusing big offers for it—and is now eking out a living as a book-keeper in a heavy concern down town.” He was known to the more advanced members as one of that small body of professing Christians who have attained to the simplicity of earnestness. This was apparent in his manner, his conversation, his delivery, and his daily deportment. The few who were intimate with him prized the acquaintance as a precious privilege; for there was in him so much to lift one above the grossness of the world, and to awaken good thought and gentle feeling, that it was impossible for any one with an appreciating eye for modest worth to know and not love him. Reuben, Mercy, Mr. Asbury, Peter Brown, and Mrs. Bignell never thought of him but with pleasure, and looked upon him as one of those true, sincere, hopeful hearts, whom it does one good to know.

“I feel,” he observed, in a subdued voice, “that I have very much to be grateful for since our last meeting. The Father, in His loving kindness, has been graciously pleased to protect me and mine from all manner of suffering; to permit us to realise that He is our protector and provider; to preserve unbroken the harmony of our little circle; to relieve us from some tender anxieties; to bring to us good tidings of absent friends whom we love; to raise from sickness one who is dear to us; to send joy to a family in whose spiritual and temporal well-being we have long felt an interest; to permit us to see brought into the kingdom one for whom we have been privileged to pray; to prosper us in our daily undertakings; to put upon us the high honor of interesting a few who were strangers to His great name in the inspiring story of the Cross; to keep alive our attention to the course before us; to make us cheerful and happy in duty; to give us light in the perusal of His Word; to allow

us to feel an unwonted solicitude in all His enterprises; to imbue us with tranquil resignation to His will; to allow us to see the glory of His hand in every thing; to keep us sensible at once of His love and of our dependence upon him for every mercy; to enable us, as we journey on, to keep our eyes steadily upon our Redeemer: to fill us with gladness all the day long. We have not deserved these blessings—I, at least, have not; and when I look in upon myself, and see how unworthy I am—how wofully short I come, in all I think, and say, and do, of the glory of my blessed Lord, I am amazed at His continued goodness. But when I remember that He is a being of infinite love—of love so great that He gave His only begotten son to suffer the penalty of my sins, the mystery is explained, and I cease to wonder: for what may we not look for from so kind a Father? Twice during the month, the fear came upon me that my even serenity of mind might be from a false source, after all. It was an ungenerous thought in the face of so many visible mercies, and only showed the ingratitude of my heart. But when I, on each occasion remembered that peace of mind which passeth all understanding is the heritage of The Forgiven, that the Father is more willing to give than we are to receive, and that doubt is only one of the many adroit weapons of the Tempter to shake the Christian's faith, the unwelcome intruder departed, and courage and joy came back to me again. But," checking himself, "I would not trespass, brethren, upon your time. Pardon me, if I have tried your patience. I did not mean to. Ere I sit down however, sensible of my insufficiency, I would humbly ask, when you approach the Throne, to kindly pray that I may be kept."

It was something to many in the assembly to hear one who had been led step by step through the hallowing gra-

dations of faith, till it could be almost said of him that his spirit dwelt in heaven and his body on earth—one who was known to sacrifice every thing material that interfered with his progress in the immaterial—one who walked in the ordinances as few walk, and who, as a Christian pilgrim, was believed to be favored as few are,—it was something, we repeat, to many in the assembly to hear one whose spiritual experience thus far had been of a character to raise him above common men, thus confess to common men's weaknesses; to hear from his own lips that he, who, as they knew, had, in a wordly sense, sacrificed all for Christ, had no confidence in those sacrifices, to save him—that though through God's grace, he had got along thus far on the Christian road, he yet was sensible that grace alone would enable him to hold out to the end, and that, if he were not KEPT, he saw but one fate before him: *to FALL, after all*—O, it warned some, to some was light, to others encouragement, and to all like another HANDWRITING ON THE WALL. And from the great body of the auditory went up, spontaneously, and with solemn feeling, the hymn—

"When thou, my righteous judge shall come
To take thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I
Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at thy right hand?

I love to meet thy people now,
Before thy feet with them to bow,
Though vilest of them all;
But, can I bear the piercing thought?—
What if *my* name should be left out,
When Thou for them shall call?

O, Lord, prevent it by thy grace ;
 Be Thou my only hiding place,
 In this th' accepted day :
 Thy pardoning voice, O let me hear,
 To still my unbelieving fear,
 Nor let me fall, I pray."

"Hold me up, too, dear Lord!" mentally cried the millionaire. "Make me faithful—let me not fall—keep me to the end!"

Nor was his heart the only one that in its sense of personal helplessness, offered up, in the solemn earnestness of silence, this fervent prayer.

Mr. Tapley now rose. His hard, uncharitable, self-sufficient manner rendered him unpopular, and caused him to be generally regarded as one of the numerous shams that figure conspicuously in all church bodies. Because of this unsympathising manner few sought his acquaintance, and fewer still to understand him; most estimating him from his exterior, and setting him down in their private thoughts for what that pictured him. There were some in the church however who had gone behind his manner to his actuality; some who had learned that an individual's manner may be very much against him, and yet the individual himself be worthy; some whose observation had taught them that a person may speak wrong and yet think right—may, so to speak, be unable to properly represent himself—may, as it were, be literally without the ability to say what he really thinks—may never say, think or do right till *afterwards*—may always say just what he would *not* say on reflection—may say and do a great many stupid things, and subsequently be very sorry that he did not either hold his tongue or say and do the very reverse—that he may, as it were, have an outer heart which is always leading him into blunders, and

an inner one that is always regretting and rectifying them—that he may, in fine, appear a great deal worse than he is, and though barely or never showing favorably, yet be a good man and a zealous Christian notwithstanding. Among the few that understood Mr. Tapley in this light were Reuben, Peter Brown, and Mr. Asbury. The major part of the church and congregation, however, as already stated, viewed him as a hard-headed, hard-hearted hypocrite, who wanted every thing his own way, who had no sympathy for his kind, and who, if he but had his will, would tread upon every body that thought differently from himself. His experience was listened to in the main without interest, for only the few that knew the gold that lay within the rough setting of his outer nature gave him credit for sincerity.

"I have been much edified," he began, in his hard, dry voice, and in his hard, dry manner, "with the remarks of the brethren. They have, in a measure, impressed me with a plainer sense than ever of the prime importance of constantly bearing in mind the true character of the Christian race. For one, I feel that I am a sinner, and nothing but a sinner. When I look in upon my perverse heart and observe the depth and variousness of its depravity, I am at a loss to understand how I ever dared to consider myself a child of God. I have been led many times during the past month to ask myself, 'Who and what am I, that I should look forward, for one moment, in expectation of mercy?' I have done nothing to merit it; nor, with so vile a heart, do I ever expect to: for every day brings me fresh evidence that if Satan ever had a follower that seemed to do his bidding with alacrity and zeal, I am he. Sin comes to me naturally. It appears ingrained in my very instincts. I sometimes think I have an honest love for it. To do right is, with me, hard work. I have prayed and wrestled that this might not

be so, but my prayer has not been answered: evil still abides with me. Now and then a glimpse of light illumines my pathway; but just as I begin to think that all is at length right, and to grow comfortable, it suddenly disappears, and I have to grope along in the darkness as before. I don't know to-night whether I am a Christian or not. Indeed, I am not certain that I ever was. If I could see any prospect of a better state of heart, I might perhaps be able to decide. From a careful examination of my course since the last meeting, I am satisfied that if I ever get to heaven, it will not be owing to any merits of my own."

Many in the assembly wittily thought that in the last remark he had spoken the truth; but most were of the opinion, that he talked in this wise simply for effect. What he had to gain by such effect, seeing that he was already rich, and in a social point of view moved in circles, to which the great majority of the church could not reasonably expect ever to be admitted, they did not stop to consider; but that it *was* all for effect, they were "perfectly satisfied." They did not like his manner, and that was enough." There were others however—Reuben, Mr. Asbury, and Peter Brown, for instance—who believed differently. These three particularly had frequently seen and conversed with him during the month, and they were convinced that every word had come from his heart. They knew also how to sympathise with him, and with every Christian whose experience leads him to make so painful a confession. It was under the compassionate impulse generated by this conviction that Mr. Asbury suggested the singing of two verses of Wesley's well known 'Christian Refuge.' The response from the auditory was only moderately warm; some remaining silent from personal dislike to Mr. Tapley; some from want of confidence in what they were pleased to designate his "reli-

gious pretensions;" some from the notion that they could not manifest any sympathy for "so transparent a hypocrite" without forfeiting their own self-respect: and others for the purpose of showing their contempt for so uncharitable and close-fisted a person as he was reported, and as his hard, uncongenial manner denoted him, to be. "Wise judges are we of each other!" They did not know—for Mr. Tapley was not one to make a parade of such things—they did not know, as Reuben, Peter Brown, and Mr. Asbury did, that behind that hard, dry manner dwelt a heart, that, after the thin crust drawn over it by the first suggestion of the head had melted or been broken, bubbled with love and gentleness and gushing warmth for all humanity, and a hand that usually gave more for the support of the gospel, for education, and the poor, every seven days than most professing Christians do in as many years. But then, as Peter Brown would occasionally observe, "they don't know him; if they did," he would add with smiling significance, "it would do 'em good." Some of the church and congregation joined in the hymn because it was a favorite; others out of compliment to Mr. Asbury, whom they cordially esteemed: and the older and more experienced members, partly because they, like Reuben, Peter Brown, and Mr. Asbury, believed in the genuineness of Mr. Tapley's 'pretensions,' and partly because among them there was hardly one that did not feel the sentiment of the stanzas both then and every hour of their Christian lives.

"Jesus, refuge of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the raging billows roll,
While the tempest still is high:
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;

Safe into the haven guide—
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none ;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee ;
Leave, O leave me not alone ;
Still support and comfort me :
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring—
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."

Poor Tapley ! The spirit of the hymn had not knocked at the door of his inner nature in vain, as the tear that glided silently down his hard cheeks bore touching testimony.

The next speaker was an individual, in whose sincerity none had confidence—not even Peter Brown, who was wont in most such cases, to find a reason for leaning on the side of charity. But he could never look or think upon this man without a sensation of mingled uneasiness and horror. He had originally been received by letter from another society, and almost from the hour of his admission had been a reproach and a stumbling block to the church. He was a retired merchant ; lived and dressed with vulgar ostentation ; was very jealous of his wife, his money, and his dignity ; liked to say, *my* house, my pictures, my drawing room, my subscriptions, my pew, my denomination, my table, my newspaper ; was a tyrant and a bully in his family, over whom he reigned with despotic rule ; starved his household on cheap, tasteless fare, and gave splendid *moral* parties in the party season ; made long prayers at meeting, and none at all at home except when he had visitors ; was liberal in church collections, but was exceedingly careful to throw his bill upon the plate with a studied carelessness that ensured

the face upward ; was careful to make an occasion for mentioning in some way, his benefactions to religious and benevolent objects ; would turn a hungry beggar from his door with pharisaical dignity, and give a hundred dollars to any orthodox call if the names of the donors were published in the newspapers ; was understood to have hastened his ability to retire from business by grinding his clerks, journeymen and sewing girls down to the merest pittance ; by unfair and selfishly dishonorable conduct towards his business rivals, and by persevering systematic meanness generally ; regarded all Christians out of his own denomination as bound to eternal torment, without question ; was, fearful, of the spiritual destination of every man, woman, and child whom he personally disliked ; and could tell to a man who in his church would and would not be saved.

How these things leaked out and became generally understood, how a man with such an undercurrent reputation was permitted to hold a place in a society where they were particularly careful of the characters of the members, are mysteries which we do not pretend to be able to unfold. The female members were many of them of the tea party, order, and wonderful threads are unraveled and amazing things brought to light over steaming souchong, which, as every body knows, is a febrifuge to which many ladies resort when they have an itching fever to drive away, in the shape of something that they have heard, and which they yearn to tell. And certainly a souchong party is just the place to get rid of all that they may have gathered while wandering from house to house and piously drinking tea to help the poor, and to promote the spread of the gospel. This may help to account for many of the whispers which, passing in confidence from wife to husband, from old lady to old lady, from young lady to young gentleman ; and from friend to friend, served in

the course of time, to make the individual referred to pretty well understood from Dan to Beersheba in the little church known as Mr. White's. Why, with such a name, he was tolerated there, we cannot tell—that is to say with certainty; unless it was that the members thought the society of christians was the best he could possibly have under the circumstances, or that when the rumor first commenced its travels, none could be found to father it, and it went on till it had passed into an old story, when of course no one wished to rake it up on his own responsibility. But why the individual himself should be willing to stay in a church where he was received with such abhorrence, is a question we *can* answer—which we will take upon ourselves to do in the words of an old lady who often expressively declared that it used to make her 'creep' to hear him. "Bless your innocent heart! the creeter didn't know any thing about *that*! No one told him how he was thought on, and he never suspected a morsel on't himself!"

At the rising of this man, a dead indifference to what he had to say seemed to spread over the assembly. Some bowed their heads upon their hands in mental prayer to lose the sound of his voice; a few turned to their Bibles, many to their hymn books, a number to their neighbors, and others to meditation. Never did speaker address more unwilling auditors.

We need not repeat his remarks. They were of the stereotype order, and were listened to but by few. But it was painful to see him affect emotions he did not feel, and to hear him with cold-blooded deliberateness relate experiences that were never his, and freely make use of exalted Names to whose dearness he was a stranger.

He did not understand the character of the general sigh that resounded throughout the lecture-room when he sat

down—imputing it in his vanity to the overpowering effect of his speech, for it deserved no better name, and but little dreaming that it was one of gladness that he had got through.

The next speaker was a standing wonder to the zealous. He was in good circumstances, had a prosperous business, a bland, easy manner, and struck you at once as a shrewd, careful, comfortable man. He was soundly orthodox in all his sentiments and views; knew the Scriptures by heart to a letter; could quote chapter and verse and all the clauses of verses, from Genesis to Revelations, with fluent readiness; could knowingly inform you when a young convert was "right"; when the remarks of a brother were "a *lit-tle* 'wild,'" when the pastor reminded him of Mason or Whitfield, and when a minister from some other church or denomination who had 'exchanged pulpits' with Reuben, was "a *lit-tle* 'out of the way,'" would feelingly tell you how he 'loved the Saviour,' how he found religion 'a great comfort to him,' how great was his 'interest' in 'the spread of the gospel,' how it 'cheered him' to hear the good that certain brethren under God were 'accomplishing,' and how such and such an enterprise had his 'warmest sympathies' and 'prayers.' He was doubtless sincere; but, as we have said, he was a careful man, and never allowed his sincerity to descend lower than his heart. *There*, orthodoxically speaking, 'he was all right,' that is to say, as himself would smilingly observe, his 'faith was unwavering,' he was sound on all 'orthodox points, had 'no confidence in works,' 'felt deeply for sinners and for the poor,' and 'loved the brethren.' *But* ——— when an agent appeared in the pulpit to plead the claims of The Redeemer's institutions, the Bible, Tract, Missionary, Sunday School or educational societies for example, he would button up his pocket so close that nothing

larger than a half dime could possibly find its way out. When a call was made by the pastor for workmen, in any particular channel of usefulness, he was never the man to respond, though he not unfrequently rose and 'earnestly hoped that the brethren would not permit so favorable an opportunity of doing good to pass unimproved.' In the case of a church collection for the poor, he would look with a sigh at the three cent piece which, with a spasmodic effort of the hand, he dropped into the plate. And yet at church, prayer, and covenant meetings he made at times very touching speeches. And this is what astonished the actively-earnest; how one who was so right at heart, should be so wrong every where else; how one who knew so much, should be so ignorant; how one who was so great in heart, should be so pitifully small in action; how one who exhorted so meltingly, should even be found only on the *talking* side. But though few doubted his sincerity, there were many that estimated that sincerity at an unflattering value: these set him down as a sound, orthodox, warm-hearted, three-cent christian.

His observations were listened to with respect, but were too unimportant to make any impression upon minds that, while having no confidence in works, yet worked to testify their love and gratitude to Him who had redeemed them.

As the religion of the last speaker lay all in his heart, so that of the next was all in his head. No man in the church understood the Bible in its literalness better than he. He seemed to think that to 'search the Scriptures' was the one only duty of man. Call on him when you would, he was reading the Bible. Talk to him of what you would, he never failed to introduce the Bible. He would not go where there was no Bible, and was always 'trembling' for every Christian that read any thing but the Bible. He never

prayed without making the Bible the burden of his prayer; all his exhortations were to repent and read the Bible. According to him, whoever read not the Bible, and that continually, was bound to everlasting perdition. If a person in need applied to him for help, he would point him to the Bible as the only true bread. If the claims of an educational society were presented to him, he would shake his head and say, 'Teach the people to read the Bible, that's enough.' If an appeal was made to him in favor of a Bible society, he would wish it all manner of success, and, though rich in property, business and money, would liberally promise it—his prayers. He had a certain set of ideas, beyond which he never wandered, viz.—That *his* denomination was the only one founded on Scripture; that the Good Shepherd had 'other sheep,' but that they were all in his denomination; that the Saviour died only for the sinners of that denomination: and that all other denominations were 'things of darkness.' He would talk with you by the hour on any religious subject, and leave you impressed at the close with a profound regard for his Biblical and theological knowledge; while his want of charity for the weaknesses of his fellows, and for all out of his own sect, satisfied you that his piety might be as deep as he claimed, and still not be of the kind that you would look for in a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. He would make eloquent prayers and speeches, in which the most captious critic could not detect an error in grammar, nor the most hopeful christian a particle of soul. He had a sharp eye to the slightest departure from doctrine, and would give you the literal words and literal meaning with a smiling knowingness that made you blush at your ignorance. He liked to 'show up' young converts by asking them questions which could be answered only by experienced professors. When occasion offered, he would make feeling speeches for

the poor, and for sending the gospe' to the destitute, in the course of which he would dwell with rare unction on the fact that every thing belongs to the Lord: but when the contribution box passed round, he seemed to have changed his opinion, for he took good care that the Lord should not get much of *his* money. But then if he was stingy in giving, he was very liberal of suggestions, speeches and prayers. Once in a while, too, his religion went down lower than his head, and then he parted with a whole shilling; but it was like losing his heart's blood. When reproached for his meanness, as was sometimes the case, he would triumphantly respond, 'Do you, a professing Christian, and therefore supposed to have some acquaintance with the Bible, believe that the Lord stands in need of help from a worm like you or me!'

This man had his reward: few believed in him. He was as it were a stranger among men. Neither in the church nor out had he a private friend that sorrowed in his griefs, or rejoiced in his joys. As in the world his reputation for bigotry, uncharitableness, and pecuniary 'closeness' cut him off from human sympathy, so at Mr. White's, where professors of his kind were the exception and not the rule, he was generally received with that distance-keeping courtesy which shakes you by the hand with pleasant politeness, but never asks your confidence nor gives you its own. There were however in the society some who looked deeper into the heart of human nature, than this; who knew that all are not alike—that, as in all things, there are varieties in men, and degrees in Christian character—that all have their failings, and that a man may be neither a liberal nor a cheerful giver and still be a Christian, a *poor* one it may be, but still one of those for whom Christ died—and *these* received him with compassion, pitied his weaknesses, felt for him as for a bro-

ther, and mentally set him down as one unaware of the joy of responding with gushing warmth to the calls of Him who is graciously pleased to make use of the means of those He has already blessed, as a means of blessing others. And they prayed that he might be led to experience the inspiring gladness and sweet content of this joy; for they knew—these true Christian hearts—that liberality in giving, walks hand in hand with charity of thought—that every time we open the heart with a generous offering, out flies another raven—and that the larger our gifts are in proportion to our fortune, in that degree we throw open the portals of our being, and let Christ's warm, inspiring sunshine in upon the soul.

Mr. Asbury was the next speaker. As he rose, an air of satisfaction beamed upon the faces of the assemblage. He was one in whom all had confidence. Even those who had reason to doubt their own sincerity, believed implicitly in his. He was known to them as one of that few whose consistent uprightness leaves no room for suspicion. Though an active officer of the society, his activity was of that kind in which the results are visible, but not the worker. He had a habit of setting about whatever he had to do in a calm, simple, unpretending way that was in itself despatch. No one would have supposed, on looking around at the congregation, that in the plain, thoughtful, unassuming gentleman at the end of the seat in the third slip from the desk, on the left, he saw a business titan who, in the church, was among laymen what Whitefield was among preachers; and still less, that beneath that mild air throbbed one of the truest Christian hearts to be found among men. Slander's tongue, however busy with the names of others, was dumb when his was mentioned. The little that came out from time to time concerning him was of a kind to add to his established

reputation of goodness. As he was one of those that never let their left hand know what their right does, the rumors that got abroad emanated from parties whose gratitude for his generosity would not let them keep silent. The members generally knew him for a favored man, one who had made unusual progress in sanctification, whose faith never faltered, whose clear, solid views were light both to himself and to all within the radius of his circle, and who literally walked according to his convictions. It did them good to hear him speak, for they were sensible that in solemn earnestness he was one in a thousand. 'Here,' they would tell you, 'here is a man whom wealth has failed to subdue; who walks unharmed in the avenues of temptation; whose head and heart are both always right; who deceives none, not even himself, and, thanks to his sterling intelligence, is by none deceived; whose march is steadily, steadily, steadily onward.'

"It is to me," said Mr. Asbury, with calm, thoughtful emotion, "a precious privilege to get away from the world's din of the hurried tread of men in mad pursuit of money and of life's gilded deceptions, and to mingle, in a retired place, with my fellow pilgrims to The Kingdom. In such society, my soul leaps with fluttering gladness. She is conscious that then, if ever, she is in the atmosphere of His sweet breath who has promised to be wherever two or three are assembled in his name. To-night especially she would fain sing out her joy, like the birds of the morning; for she knows that The Master is here, and filling the house with the refreshing of His presence. Methinks I can hear Him say, 'Good cheer! little flock; your journey draweth to its end; yet a little while and the gates of the heavenly city shall dawn on your sight; yet a little while, and the trial of your faith shall cease, in the enlivening

smile of The Father; be firm, and fear not; for, lo! *I am with you, alway.*' To me the latter is a cherished thought—that in all our pilgrimage, whether harrassed by pain, anxiety or sorrow, whether in the shadow or the sunshine, in sickness or health, our dear Redeemer is nigh, is with us *always*, feeling as when on earth for our troubles and sufferings, and ever filling us with resignation to our lot by pointing to the hour when in eternal joy we shall lose all memory of life's sufferings and sadness. I feel to thank God for bringing me along in safety, thus far. Through His loving kindness, all has been well with me since our last meeting: My sense of my own insufficiency has become more and more manifest; my interest in the great work of our Redeemer has continued to increase; my anxiety for the salvation of sinners, to deepen; my sympathy for my kind, to enlarge; my submission to the Father's will, to grow in evenness: my faith, to keep fresh and firm. In addition to this, I have been graciously preserved from bodily suffering; my faculties have been kept unimpaired; my friendships, unbroken; my nightly rests, undisturbed; my dreams pleasant; my system, free from the infirmities of age; while good tidings have been brought to me of some that have tender claims upon my heart. In all these mercies I recognise the kind, paternal Hand that from before the foundation of the world saw the evil I would choose, and provided a Way to stand between me and the wrath I should invoke. Ah! happy for me that He does not leave me to myself, and that he has taught me to trust in His alone-wise guidance! But," added the speaker, in a tone of deep feeling, "though thus tranquil in my retrospect of the month I have left behind me, I cannot forget that the race is not yet finished; and how many have walked well *for a time!* There is a Scripture for our watchfulness: 'Let him that

thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.' I must confess that, in my case, this friendly warning is constantly needful. I daily experience that the passage of life is full of slipperiness; temptation assails us at every turn, and, "he continued with a melancholy smile, "we are but poor fellows at the best! Satan smiles at the feebleness of our resistance. But if *we* are weak, CHRIST is strong; if we are poor, Christ is rich. In Him, though impotent as a sick man on a dying bed, we are more puissant than any Sampson; in Him, though needy as a Lazarus, we are more opulent than any Dives. For these reasons, dear brethren, I would humbly solicit a remembrance in your prayers, that I may be led, from day to day during the remainder of my journey, to keep my eye steadfast on Him who is my only hope, my strength, my righteousness—my all!"

"'Keep my eye on Christ!'" murmured the millionaire, struck by the forcibleness of the expression. "O, that I, too, may be permitted to do that!"

A pin drop might have been heard when the speaker sat down, so profound was the attention to his remarks, so strong the confidence in his spiritual integrity, and so deep the respect in which the man himself was held.

An aged member, in a prayer of great feeling, now led the assembly to The Throne; after which Reuben rose in the desk. His countenance was pale, but a glance was enough to satisfy the most careless that his heart was swelling with big thoughts.

"Dear friends," he began, "our brief hour is up. It has come and gone like the month of which we have heard; like the bright summer that is followed by autumn; like the year whose requiem is sung by hearts to whom it has brought sadness; like the times of our days when we too shall be trodden down by the death angel, and the places that now

know us shall see us no more. To some, it has been a season of proudly stirring joy—for in their inner being has moved One whose name is dearer to them than freedom to the captive, help to the drowning, or bread to the hungry; to many it has been as light in a dark night on a lonely road: to others, let us hope, an occasion that will leave sweet memories which, in good time, will blossom like the rose. But, ere we separate for our homes, let me say a few parting words.

"If there are any here that have put on pilgrim garments, that have partaken of the ordinances, that have professed to experience the sweetness of The Comforter, that have publicly stood up in the temple, that have sent up prayer—if there are any who have done these from any motive of which in their hearts they are ashamed; if they have done them for any cause other than innate love to God——*turn back!* Turn back, if you would go forward. Turn back; it is not yet too late—turn back, and begin anew. The road is still open, and will wait for you; Salvation is still free, and may be had by you; God's offer is still open, and may be taken by you. Turn back—turn back!"

"If there are any who have heard the story of The Cross till it palls; till from repetition every sense is hardened to the moving power of its moral; till it has become an idle tale that wears when retold; till the ear has seemed to have grown gray under the burden of its theme; till heart and ear and mind alike are dead to the solemn cry which comes through long-forgotten centuries from the quaking hills round Calvary——*wake*, as from a long night's stupor; as at a cry of fire at midnight; as from a dream when your dwelling's falling; as from your grave when in the last day the archangel's trump shall summon you to judgment. Awake!"

"If any who have heard, but heard without believing; who down the lane to the Dark Valley have come thus far reckless of what shall greet them when they rise in The Beyond; who have been content to smiling doubt, that He who for believers died is He that stirs men's hearts to upward look, and kindly hears them when they pray; who never on bended knee, in privacy and silence, and in the accents of a soul in travail, have beseeched God to give them token if His own Word be true——pause! like one who, walking, lost in thought, over a vessel's side at sea, is stayed by a friendly hand; like one who, after journeying long, hears that, of two roads, he has taken the wrong. Pause! Light is free—Time is moving—Decay is breathing, and men are falling one by one. Pause!

"If any who, pushed hard by the fierce strife for daily bread, have secretly withdrawn wholly or in part, from the race, as calling for too much from them; but sincerely hoping and designing to resume it, after a time——take courage, O poor, fainting souls! and calling on God for an unerring faith, let *that* time be now! Your Redeemer will restore you to the favor of the Father; the angels now weeping over your faltering, will sing again in joy; and the mansion set apart for you will reopen for your coming. Take heart, poor souls! take heart; the prize is not yet withdrawn. The Sun that illumed the course before, still sheds its cheering light. The bracing airs that ere while lent you vigor, still sweep along the path and will give you strength again. Up, then, in Christ's dear name, and summoning every nerve to action, aim for the crown once more.

"And you, dear friends, to whom salvation is not a formal word; to whom the Dark Valley between you and the prize has no palsying fears; whose faith is a living, energising thing that increases in stature day by day; who have

stripped to the race, and know in Whom is your strength and from Whom your courage——BEAR ME WITNESS.

"That the measure of our endurance is as that of our faith;

"That the degree of our faith is as the depth of our love to Him who first loved us;

"That whoever shall ask for a sufficient faith, shall not ask in vain;

"That to whoever has the true faith, the race is easy and the way clear;

"Since it is Christ who is our strength, Christ who is The Way.

"And now to all to whom this is no cunning fable; to all who to the judgment seat are daily drawing nearer; to all to whom That name is dear which sweetens sorrow's cup, takes the sting from suffering, and at the martyr's stake makes the timid brave—forward! In that name, and in no other, strive for the crown eternal. Faint not, falter not, turn not. The heavenly gates are open, and all the true may enter in. 'Good cheer!' from Him who ransomed us, and His help upon the way. Forward—forward!"

CHAPTER XXX.

"WELL, my dear boy," said Peter Brown to his son-in-law, as they walked down town to business, "your father is to be baptised, at our next communion Sabbath."

"Indeed?" returned Tom. "I always thought the old scamp would sooner or later put the finishing touch to his hypocrisy in *that* way!"

"You will think better of him, by and bye!" said the merchant, smiling. "It is one of our weaknesses to suspect the motives of those we do not like."

"Perhaps so," said Tom, somewhat nettled. "But I have *some knowledge* of Mr. James Bignell!"

"We don't know *every* thing, Tom," said the jobber, with his usual kindness of spirit.

"I know that the old man has been a rascal all his life!" returned Tom, quickly.

"The Lord can turn and *overturn*," suggested Peter Brown, with a quiet smile. "You have been from home for years, my boy, and of course cannot tell what changes may have taken place in your father's heart in that time."

"His *heart*!" said Tom, with derisive impatience. "As though he had such a thing! He showed a good deal of it when he turned me out upon the world! 'Heart,' indeed!"

A million such could hold a mass-meeting on the point of a cambric needle, without making any more impression upon its surface than a log cabin on a western prairie!"

"You are too severe, Tom!"

"Perhaps I am!" said Tom. But I happen to know the individual!"

"And you may not, for all that!" remarked the jobber, good naturedly. "Hearts are difficult to read."

"I know nothing about *that*!" said Tom, impatiently. "But if the old man is taking to religion, he is *up to something*!"

"Of course he is—of course!" said the merchant, with a dry smile. "Something that will do him good, too. Something that we all ought to be up to—preparing for the last great day."

"Well, well!" cried Tom, with an air that said he could tell some strange things, if he liked, "you will find the old sinner out, one of these days!"

"We think we have already, my dear boy!" observed the jobber, with a sly twinkle in his eye. "And more than that—we are satisfied that he at length has found himself out! Ah! Tom, the great question with each of us, should be—not whether such or such a one is walking by conscience, but, *are we*?"

"Perhaps so," said Tom. "But—"

"Holloa! ole feller," interrupted a human ruin, stepping up before him and familiarly extending his hand. "How are yer? Don't see yer round any more!"

The speaker was apparently in his twenty-eighth or thirtieth year. He was seedy, bloated, and had the unmistakable look of one who had been destroyed by dissipation and bad company. The flesh under his left eye had that purplish-yellow hue which tells of recent quarreling. His breath

was offensive from bad liquor and cigar stench, and his general appearance at once mournful and sickening.

Tom recognised him as the individual who had the cold on the occasion of his fight—at the club.

"Excuse me. I am in a hurry!" he exclaimed, attempting to pass on.

"Not so fast, ole feller," said the ruin, laughingly catching him by the arm, "I want a word with you, first. Yer know yer used ter win a good deal of money of me at the club?"

"Well, sir?" demanded Tom, haughtily.

"O, come," laughed the ruin, unabashed, "don't put on any airs; they aint pooty. We've spread it together too often, yer know!"

"What do you want?" said Tom, coloring.

"Ah! now yer talk!" said the ruin. "The fact is," he added, with an air of familiar confidence, "things with me aint as they used to be. The old 'ooman has 'stepped out' without leaving me a 'red,' and I'm 'broke.' Lend a feller a V, for old times!"

Tom, was half disposed to refuse. But the recollection of his own prodigal days, when he presented as much of the appearance of a castaway as the miserable ruin before him, together with the memory of the scene on the Battery when the litterateur came so opportunely to his rescue and altered the current of his life, led him to change his mind and to take out his pocket book.

"Here," he said, with a generous impulse, "here are fifty dollars. I ask no promises, exact no pledges; but you are a man, and owe something to the dignity of human nature! If you reform and stand in need of further help, you will find my address in the directory. Good day!"

And muttering, "If high-hearted Joe could see this, he would think himself repaid for all his kindness to me!" he

took the arm of his father-in-law and hastily passed on, leaving the ruin rooted to the spot and staring after him in amazement.

"I presume," said Tom, "you think I have acted very silly, and that I will never get rich in this way?"

"No," said the jobber, smilingly shaking his head, "I don't think any thing of the kind. I, as a business man, imagine that you are doing well enough to afford an occasional luxury of this description. But, as a Christian, I believe that The Lord had an excellent reason for suggesting the idea to your mind."

"The Lord," said Tom, with a gay laugh. "What had He to do with it?"

"A good deal more than you suspect," answered the merchant, pleasantly.

"Yes, but what?" persisted Tom.

"How can I tell," replied the jobber. "It may be for your benefit, the young man's himself, or that of some one with whom he is connected, or with whom he may spend the money. How can I say? Who can fathom the designs of the great Disposer? But that He had a motive in it, and a good one, too, I know. Satan never gives men good thoughts."

"You don't mean to state that our thoughts are suggested by either God or the devil?" said Tom, with an incredulous grin.

"I mean to say just that!" returned the jobber.

"Fudge!" said Tom. "According to that hypothesis, you would make out man to be a nobody!"

"So he is," said Peter Brown; "and he is frequently made to realize it, too. Satan to further his own purposes, very frequently tickles the poor creature with some high notions of himself, but he isn't any body for all that!"

"Nonsense!" cried Tom. "To show you the absurdity of such a doctrine, I will suppose that, instead of giving that money from a generous whim, I did it from a mercenary motive. Who, in that case, would have suggested the thought?"

"Satan," said Peter Brown, turning to look at the ruin. The latter was in the act of drawing his hand across his eyes and moving on. "It will do him good!" muttered the jobber to himself.

"Ah!" laughed Tom, "I knew I'd catch you. You have changed your ground already. As they say out West, you are 'treed!'"

"Ah! indeed! Pray let me hear?"

"If you don't understand it now, you will directly," said Tom. "If Satan suggested the selfish thought, it stands to reason that the Lord could have nothing to do with it. I have you now, I think!"

"The Lord has to do with every thing, my boy," said his father-in-law.

"Come, come," said Tom, "that is overshooting the mark. When you religionists get an idea, you always carry it to extremes!"

"With *every thing*," repeated Peter Brown, quietly, like one who knows what he is saying, and can afford to be laughed at. "Whatever thought, invention, or discovery is for the benefit and happiness of man, is from God, because He is the source of all good. On the same principle, whatever is for man's injury, is from Satan, because he is the source of all evil."

"That is very plausible, but not very sensible," observed Tom.

"Why not?"

"Because it will not bear application to every-day mat-

ters," said Tom. "For instance, suppose a man desired to go into business, do you mean seriously to state that the Lord sent him the idea?"

"Certainly," said Peter Brown; "for the purpose of making him useful. The Lord will allow none to eat the bread of idleness: and if they won't work in one way, He will make them in another."

"Fudge!" said Tom. "How many *do* eat bread they never earned?"

"Not one!" said Peter Brown. "Every body works in some form; if not in the Lord's way, in Satan's. The curse has gone out; and he *has* to!"

"And I suppose the Lord even descends to such petty details as buying and selling?" said Tom, sneeringly.

"Certainly," said the jobber. "So long as you and I have an eye to honesty, truth, and conscience, in our transactions, we are under Divine influence; when we forget these, Satan has us by the heart, and, if he can help it, does not mean to let us go."

"But, suppose," said Tom, "as is frequently the case, a man is truthful and honest in his dealings only from policy, under whose influence is *he*?"

"He *knows himself*!" said the jobber, with a quiet smile.

"I have no doubt," said Tom. "But how am *I* to know the principle that governs him?"

"Why do you wish to? It is none of your business, so long as he tells the truth, and *is* honest. You have to answer for no one's motives but your own."

"That may be," said Tom. "But when I discuss a theory, I like to sound it to the bottom. There is that old club-mate of mine, for example. Apply your idea to his case, and see how completely you are at sea. *He* eats the bread of idleness."

"No, he don't!" said the jobber, smilingly shaking his head. "He works hard for Satan. Didn't you notice his black eye and greasy sleeve? He gambles, drinks, fights, swears, lies, hangs around bar-rooms, sponges, cheats—"

"How do you know?" interrupted Tom.

"He shows it in his face, manner, and dress. You can be in no doubt as to the influence that governs *him*."

"Of course not," said Tom, smiling. "But he defeats your whole theory."

The jobber looked at him with an inquiring eye.

"In the first place," said Tom, "according to your own showing, he is good for nothing."

"Yes, he is."

"Eh?"

"Christ thought him of so much consequence that he died for him."

"How do you know?"

"Because he died for sinners, and if your friend is not one, I don't know who is!"

"But I thought Christ died only for *believing* sinners?"

"True, my dear boy! and of these your friend will yet be one."

"How do you know *that*?"

"I have been praying for him the last five minutes."

"You have been praying for *me* the last *five years*, and I am as 'far from the Lord,' as you call it, as when you first commenced."

"No, you are not, Tom!" said the jobber.

"I think I ought to know."

"And I, that the Lord ought to know *better*!" said the merchant, with his usual good nature. "You will yet be brought in, Tom," he added, feelingly. "I have the Father's word for it: 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask

in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' You are therefore three—not five—years nearer to conversion than when the prayer of faith first ascended in your favor."

"We will not argue *that* point!" said Tom, pleasantly.

"To my old club-mate. If any reliance may be placed in human judgment—"

"Not *much*, Tom!"

"If *any*, he is as thorough a scamp as ever escaped the penitentiary; steeped to the head in scoundrelism, he is riding a fast horse to eternal night."

"Such men are sometimes stopped on the way!" observed the merchant.

"Perhaps so," said Tom. "But *his* chances of interruption look to me rather slim."

"The dying thief's upon the cross!" suggested the jobber.

"Were slimmer yet, I presume you think. But this man was always a rascal. At the club he was regarded as but one degree above the brute. He never showed any heart, and seemed to glory in whatever was ruffianlike. It was reported that he had even been known to hit little children at play, while passing them in the street."

"Satan is able to lead men to do any thing, Tom. And yet it is possible that the Lord now means to withdraw him from the tempter's grasp, and has employed you as one of his instruments in that purpose. If not him, then some one else. At all events, good is to be done to some body, or that fifty dollars would not have passed from your hands to his in the way it did. There is no chance-work, no spontaneous generosity as such, in the world."

"Fudge!" said Tom. "I, at the instigation of Satan, as you would call it, might have given the money from a purely selfish consideration, for all you know: in which case, your

theory of an over-ruling Providence in *all* things, falls to the ground."

"Not at all," said the jobber, quietly. "The Lord reigns in *every* thing. He follows every artifice of Satan, and silently orders its termination to his own glory. Though your action might have been performed with an unworthy motive, which I do not suppose, the manner of its performance may yet have touched the man's heart, and started a flow of emotions, that may result in his conversion. The money, too, may be used in laying the foundation of an honest business, that shall have a beneficent effect upon himself, or on some other that shall be connected with him; or, it may pass from his hands, in whole or in part, in a direction where it is needed—perhaps to save from suffering some poor soul that is very dear to Christ. Who can tell the Lord's purpose concerning it, any more than it could have been guessed that the Spanish dollar which Mr. Asbury's father, in a fit of drunken passion, threw at his head, telling him to 'take that and clear out!' should be the means of leading the boy on foot to the city—of placing him in the counting-house of an unscrupulous merchant, who, through the partial instrumentality of the youth, subsequently became a devoted Christian—of introducing him into a circle where he found a pious wife—and of founding an immense business, whose profits enable him to be of service in various ways to hundreds every year. In this, as in every case, the Lord turned and overturned, till He triumphed over Satan; and the suggestion that first led the miserable father to drink, and then to play the brute, instead of working evil, and only evil, as the tempter intended, was simply the beginning of a great chain of good, whose length and breadth no human mind can grasp. You see, therefore, Tom, that though your generosity to the man may have been

only a pretence, the Lord can yet rule it to His own honor."

"It appears so," said Tom. "But does not your theory of man's nobody-ness strike at the root of his free agency? I always had an idea that I could do as I pleased."

"You are a free agent, of course," said the jobber. "You could have given that money, or withheld it—as you pleased; but you chose to give it. Now, my dear boy, who prompted you to that course, *who* gave you the impulse?"

"My own heart!" said Tom, standing up for the 'dignity of human nature.'

Peter Brown smiled.

"The heart, of itself," he said, "never suggested a kind word or a generous action. If there is a particle of good in it, it was put there by the Lord, for some purpose working in, to, and with, one or many of His great plans."

"I don't believe a word of any such nonsense!" said Tom, with the air of a man who feels that an insult has been offered to his intelligence, and that his dignity demands that he should resent it with a proper spirit.

"You will, one of these days!" said the merchant, with a smile of tranquil confidence.

"Never!" said Tom, indignantly.

"The Lord rules, not men," said the merchant, "and He will yet lead you to see the clearness of His truth."

"Not *that* kind of truth!" said Tom, stoutly.

"Time—time!" suggested the jobber.

"We never shall agree in these matters," said Tom, "and we had better drop them. The old man is to be baptized next Sunday week, you say? Umph! I don't know but that I may attend."

"Do!" cried the merchant, grasping his hand. "It may do you good!"

"We'll see!" said Tom, smiling at his earnestness. "Who preaches—Mr. White?" And, as his father-in-law answered in the affirmative, he laughingly added: "A dry customer, and not at all like our minister! But I suppose I can bear the infliction of a single sermon!"

"Mr. White," returned the jobber, with an equanimity which even this sneer at his pastor could not ruffle, "don't pretend to preach any thing but—*the Gospel*!"

"Umph? Perhaps not. But who wants to hear *that* all the time?"

"Very few, indeed, Tom! It is too much for them. They cannot stand it!"

"Well, well," said Tom, laughingly, "I will give in for to-day."

"You will come, then?"

"Ye-s—I suppose so. Mag, perhaps, will like it. She has been desirous for some weeks past to have me accompany her there, and this will be an excellent opportunity to humor her. But here we are at Courtlandt street. I have a number of extractors to get off to-day, and must hurry."

"It is not in nature for a son to look upon the baptism of his father unmoved," muttered the jobber, as he turned into Maiden lane. "If the ordinance is blessed to their reconciliation, who shall say that it may not to a still greater good!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

The litterateur was penning a review for a leading "daily," of which he was the literary editor, when the flow of his mind was interrupted by a private thought; and laying down his pen, and leaning back in his chair, he began to meditate on the subject which it had called up.

"Position," he mentally murmured, with his hands meeting together under his lips, "is everything. Three years ago I was a poor struggler in the field of letters—without a name, without influence, almost without friends. Now, thanks to my talents and to a few fortunate hits in books and articles, I have a moderate degree of fame, am quoted as authority in literary matters, have an abundance of friends and, though not rich, am in the receipt of a comfortable income. My character is spoken of by the press, and by all who know me, with respect; invitations to dinner in what small minds call high places, flow in upon me in a steady stream; my society is courted by the intelligent and the refined; I am said to excel as a conversationalist; my opinion of a book, a picture, and of a musical or other composition, is treated with consideration. This is position. The toil of a lifetime could add nothing to it; and were I now to die, my name would live for a brief season in fair remembrance. But am I any happier for all this, than three years ago? Let me see, let me think? (Rises and

approaches his mirror, into which for a while he steadily gazes.) The same slender form; the same mild eyes, but deeper sunken; the same wan features, a shade or two paler than before; the nose and chin sharper; the cheek-bones, which were hardly visible *then*, very prominent *now*. (Looking at the back of his hands.) My muscles softer, and the joints plainer. (Resuming his seat.) My breathing not so full or manly; my chest weaker; and (covering his eyes with his hands) *within*, a WITHERED HEART! If (in his sadness) when our cup is full, we could only lie down in the silence of the Long Night, and be at rest!"

(Rising, after a time, and approaching the window to direct the current of his thoughts, perceives below, in the street, three small boys shooting marbles. A smile rises to his eye.)

"Play on little ones; make the most of childhood; for life's solemn drama is yet before you, and who can tell what crushing sorrows it may bring. Go on in your innocent joys; be happy while you may!"

[A hasty tapping at the door. He opens it, and Tom enters.]

"Ah! Joe, meditating? But (looking at him) what is the matter? You have been crying! What could make *your* great heart give way? You distress me!"

"Look down there!" (Pointing to the players.)

"O, I see. You have been wishing yourself a boy again! Ah! well, it is natural! But have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"Old skinflint is about to join the church."

"Your father?"

"Yes. He is to be baptized next Sunday."

"Indeed? He might do worse!"

"I don't know about that!" said Tom, who, as the litterateur perceived, was glowing with an undercurrent excitement. "The old fellow is acting like an idiot. I fear I shall have to introduce him to a straight-jacket."

"You alarm me, Tom! I hope Mr. Bignell's mind is not affected?"

"It is by *some* thing—by spite, if nothing else. The old twaddler is either the dupe of religious fanatics, who have succeeded in frightening him in his old age into piety, and are taking advantage of his terror to bleed him of his money, or else the old hypocrite has some deep scheme afoot to do me out of my inheritance!"

"'Old hypocrite'—'skinflint'—'twaddler' " mentally exclaimed the litterateur, sorrowfully. "Moral Intellectualism is at a discount, to-day!" Then clearing his throat with an "ahem!" he observed: "Tom, my friend, it is easy to see that something has disturbed you; but what it is you are yourself unable to determine. In the meantime, you are cherishing and giving utterance to ungenerous thoughts which, it is evident, are so many baseless fabrics, but which, nevertheless, are injurious to the reputation of innocent and honorable persons. Don't blush with indignation. You know I am as tender of your feelings and moral interest as of my own. Therefore shake hands, Tom, and tell me what has startled you. Perhaps, on hearing the cause, I may be able to assist you to a true, or, at least, to a reasonable view."

"Under the pretence that his squeamish conscience will not let him sleep, the old reprobate—"

"One word, dear Tom. You know how painful it is to me to hear such ill considered expletives. Pray avoid them, to oblige an old friend, and simply say 'your father,' which is worthier of your dignity and mine, and does no wrong to

the party himself. Pardon me for this liberty; but you know how sensitive I am to whatever affects the high and commanding faith which is so dear to us both! Your father, you say, with the plea that his aroused conscience prompts him to the act, is—

"Giving away all his money!" said Tom, coloring.

"To what end—to whom?" asked the litterateur, pained at the extravagance of the answer.

"To make 'restitution,' as he terms it, to those whom, in his long business career, he has defrauded."

"All honor to him, then!" cried Sprague, with enthusiasm.

"But," said Tom, "if he continues as he has begun, he will soon be on his way to the alms-house."

"In that event, the greater honor to him!" exclaimed the litterateur. "He is a star among men."

"Yes—but—(breaking out)—the old villain is throwing away his—my—I mean, the—money, in incredible sums!" stammered Tom, uneasily.

"All honor to him—all honor!" cried the litterateur, springing excitedly to his feet. "One such ennoble a thousand of his kind. All honor to him—all honor!"

"That is all very well," said Tom, in a whine that is half ashamed of itself. "But what right has the old sinner to turn religious at *my* expense! It is rank robbery. I will not stand it. No sensible man would act so. He must be crazy—in his dotage, and it is my duty to look to him. I—I—I'll have him taken care of! You may smile; but I tell you it is no joke! Why, not long since he paid to Miss Russell—Mag's old governess—the enormous sum of twenty-two thousand dollars. You may well start and turn pale. I did, too, last night, when Mag told me of it. But this is only a single case. He is throwing out the money, in large sums, in all directions!"

"Why to Miss Russell?" inquired the litterateur, in an unsteady voice.

"She is, it appears, the only heir of a druggist whom, some years ago, the old rascal's knavery drove to suicide. But, seriously, don't you think it is outrageous?"

"What? That Miss Russell should receive her own?"

"No," blushing replied the other, in the same uneasy whine. "I didn't mean that—of course. No man, with the feelings of a man, *would*. But that the old sly fox should vent his spite against me in this manner?"

"I must say, Tom," answered the litterateur, "that I do not believe Mr. Bignell's course to be prompted by any such motive."

"You do not?" he said, with a spasmodic trembling in his lip.

"I do *not*, Tom. Money has a powerful grasp upon the heart, and as we advance in years its hold deepens. When therefore an old man, whose life has been devoted to accumulation, resolutely shakes off its clutch, and going to A, B, and C, or their heirs, says, 'Here are so many hundreds, or thousands, which of right belong to you,' it must be from a higher and holier incentive than that which you allege. The instance you have mentioned looks to me so much like what I should judge to be the fruit of a genuine repentance, that it gives me a new and pleasing view of Mr. Bignell."

"Pleasing!" said Tom, with a derisive air.

"Yes, Tom: the picture of a money-gatherer crowning his white hairs with glory, by nobly atoning for the wrongs of his business manhood."

"Nonsense!" said Tom, impatiently. "He should have made his money honestly, and then there would have been no wrongs to redress! But I will not be ruined by his folly. I—I—O you may smile, Joe; but if you were in my place, how would *you* like it?"

"Poor human nature!" murmured the litterateur. "I cannot tell, Tom. Men are weak. But if I know myself, I think I should say, 'Go on, my brave father—go on: pay up all you owe, to the uttermost farthing, and die *like an honest man*'"

Tom looked at him thoughtfully—blushed—and then stretching out his hand, exclaimed:

"'Pon honor, Joe, I verily believe you would say just *that*, even if you knew it would render you a beggar! And [warming up] may my star—if I have any—wax dim, and pale out, if I don't wish the same glorious words to *my* father!"

A thought flashed, quick as lightning, through the brain of the litterateur.

"Now, while this magnanimous fire is burning, let me be the happy medium of reuniting the sundered pair—now, ere the fire goes out!" he murmured.

"Say them to him, Tom!" he exclaimed with an inspiring pressure.

Tom colored, and drew back.

"I would, if we were friends," he answered with averted eyes; "but you know we do not speak."

"But it is easy to."

Tom smiled incredulously.

"It only needs a manly effort of the will," said the litterateur. "Let us put on our hats and ride up to Twelfth street and test it. Besides" he added, observing symptoms of mingled desire and irresolution in his companion, "it is so noble to courageously follow the generous promptings of our hearts. Come!"

"*I will!*" cried Tom, his eyes lighting up with enthusiasm.

The breast of the litterateur bounded with joy.

"Moral Intellectualism triumphs at last!" he murmured as they descended to the street. "Man is rising to his *true* dignity. His impulses are good, and his great nature shines out in them, dwarfing his imperfections, as the great bright moon dwarfs the stars. With now and then a mis-step, his march is steadily onward and upward; and with 'Excelsior!' inscribed in imperishable letters upon his banner, he is pushing forward to that magnificent era when, morally and intellectually, he shall be *indeed* an image of his God!"

The pair passed on to Broadway, where they entered a stage. Ten minutes brought them to Twelfth street, and three more to within a few paces of the door of the millionaire, when the litterateur noticed that his companion's courage began to falter.

"Courage!" he said in a low voice. "Be a man—a hero. Great resolves are worthy of great efforts, and yours is a noble one. Come!"

He took the young man's arm in his, and leading him half resistingly up the steps, hastily rang the bell. It was answered by a female servant whose face was unknown to Tom.

"Is Mr. Bignell at home?" asked the litterateur, with assumed tranquility.

"Yes, sir. Walk in!"

The moralist handed her his card, and followed by Tom, whose legs trembled, passed into the drawing-room.

Tom was pale. As he seated himself and glanced around, his nostrils quivered, and his eyes kindled. There was the same vast mirror that had witnessed his expulsion from the house three years before; the same family portraits that had looked down upon him on that, to him, memorable scene; the same chair—he recognized it by a black streak in the centre-piece of the back—from which his rude, vul-

gar father had sprung to order him out of doors ; and he himself was sitting now upon the very lounge on which he had been sitting then.

Sprague, without appearing to do so, observed him closely, and noticed that a cold sweat rose to his forehead and covered it in beads. His brows, without knitting, expressed a severe frown ; his eyes gleamed with a proud and vindictive light ; his breathings were audible and indignant ; his knees shook, his gloved hands looked stained with moisture, and—it might have been fancy, but the litterateur fancied he heard a harsh, dissonant sound, resembling a subdued gritting of teeth. He judged it best, however, to make no comments, trusting that the sight of his father would banish from the young man's breast whatever ill-feeling had been engendered by the memory of a pride-wounding incident recalled by the scene where it had occurred.

The noise of the opening and closing of a door, was followed by that of approaching footsteps, and Tom's heart swelled with excitement, and his paleness disappeared before a hot flush.

"Courage, for five minutes!" whispered the litterateur, "and all will be well!"

In another instant, the millionaire—his hair thinner and silkier than when Tom had seen it last, and his features sharper and paler than before—entered the drawing room and glanced rapidly from one to the other of his visitors. As his eye fell upon his son, he drew back a single step in grave surprise. But it was only for a moment. Quickly recovering himself, he hastily approached him with radiant features and extending his hand, exclaimed :

"Welcome, my son—most welcome!"

"Excuse me, sir!" said the young man, rising and

haughtily averting his eyes. "Come, Sprague!" And, to his companion's dismay, he retired, with a proud, rapid step, from the apartment, and a moment or two later was heard stiffly descending the steps leading to the sidewalk.

The millionaire, half in anguish, half in amazement, turned with an inquiring glance to the litterateur.

The latter explained ; and expressing his regret at the result of his well-meant but abortive effort, respectfully took his leave. On reaching the street he looked around for his late companion ; but that worthy, fearing the reproaches of his friend, had disappeared.

Moral Intellectualism was a failure !

The litterateur was grieved, shocked—humiliated.

"My uncle is right!" he murmured, throwing himself back in his chair, on his return home. "Reform is not reform, unless it be rooted in the heart ; and that, *One* alone can effect. Tom is hopeless. I give him up !"

CHAPTER XXXII.

Tom attended "the dear old church," as the elf, exuberant with joy, affectionately called it, on the morning of his father's baptism, partly in a patronising spirit, and partly from a feeling of curiosity.

"I presume," he insinuated to his wife, as they walked thither, "the old hypocrite knows what he is about in taking this step; but if the members are wise, they will be careful how they elect him treasurer!"

"Don't, Tom!" said the elf, playfully jerking his arm. "Father says he is a good man."

"Yes, I know!" returned Tom, laughingly. "But he says that of every body; even of *me*!"

"Well, you *are* pretty good," smiled the elf, naively; "but—"

"Go on, turtle; we'll hear the truth directly."

"*You might be better!*"

"Fudge!" cried her husband. "I am not perfect, I admit; who is? But *you*, madam—do you know what you are?"

"What, Mr. Impudence?" demanded the elf.

And her eyes, looking up into his, appeared as though they the next moment might sparkle with delight, or throw out a shower of tears, it was not certain which.

"A sugar plum!" answered Tom, affectionately.

The elf pressed his arm convulsively, and they shortly reached the church, and, at Tom's request, entered a rear slip.

"On this occasion," he whispered, "I like to see without being seen!"

Glancing around, he at length beheld, in Mr. Asbury's pew, in the middle aisle, near the pulpit, the well-known form of his father, whose head was bowed upon his left hand in prayer, and who looked like everything but a hypocrite.

The young man was touched. In spite of himself, he could not resist a generous feeling at sight of that old paternal face; and while he gazed upon it, memories of other days came up to him, and—

The elf was disturbed by a sigh.

Turning her eyes up at her husband, she beheld him looking absently in the direction of the pulpit, and unconsciously wiping away a tear.

The elf's intuition told her the meaning of the sigh, and she hoped that her only cause of sorrow might soon disappear forever in the reconciliation of the pair.

In the midst of her thoughts, Reuben appeared in the desk, and startled the congregation by his paleness. His bosom friends alone understood the cause—that is to say, the few that knew the relationship existing between him and the white-haired convert who was to be baptized; but to the rest of the auditory it was a mystery, and one that caused them not a little solicitude: for the young pastor was loved by his people with a paternal tenderness, that only the consciousness of such impiety prevented from bordering upon reverence.

"So!" mused Tom, carefully observing him. "That is the 'best friend I have in the world!' Why, I wonder?"

He insensibly forgot this thought and all that followed in its train, when Reuben, his fine countenance animated by the stirring grandeur of his theme, had once fairly entered upon his sermon, which was suggested by the passage, "Ye are not under the *law*, but under *GRACE*." Its effect upon such of the congregation as had risen, or were laboring with an undue estimate of their individual importance, was to repress their pride, and to turn their minds upon One higher than themselves.

Tom did not this time consider the young minister dry, nor interesting, nor yet eloquent, nor indeed anything else. In fact, he became so absorbed in the great point of the discourse, that he lost sight of the preacher altogether; and as the sermon drew towards the close, this fact was nailed to the front wall of his mind's reception-chamber in large, staring capitals, namely: that

A man may spend a lifetime in relieving the poor, healing the sick, encouraging the timid, raising the fallen, helping the helpless, defending the weak; may be scrupulously honest, and, if he have defrauded any, make restitution four-fold; may carefully abstain from all manner of falsehood and deception; may be generous in thought to the last degree, and of his means to the last fraction, and yet—*BE LOST!*

Tom was shocked, indignant, furious. A blow could not have more enraged him.

"He never," as he observed to his wife on their way home, "had heard anything so monstrous, unnatural, or absurd. It was positively frightful; and how an intelligent audience could patiently sit still, and gravely listen to so gross an outrage upon common sense, was more than he could comprehend. That as for him, he never again would patronize a church where such puritanical, starched-collar, sleek-faced fanaticism was tolerated—no, *never!*"

The elf attempted to explain; but he would not hear her.

"Let such a doctrine once obtain," he added, indignantly, "and good by to all truth, honor and benevolence. Ugh! I could kick any man, with a right good will, that advances such blue-fire-and-brimstone Calvinism. And this fellow is my 'best friend,' too. I *want* no such friends!"

Upon repeating these sentiments to his father-in-law, the latter smiled and observed:

"My dear boy! you will think differently upon these points, by-and-bye!"

"Never!" cried Tom, in a fume.

"Time, time," said the old gentleman, pleasantly. "It is not as *we* say in this matter. Time, Tom; it does us all good!"

Time witnesses wonders, if it does not work them. Tom, after a few weeks, began, as his friends termed it, to "grow serious;" that is, to earnestly meditate, for the first time, upon the great truths that had been brought before him by the jobber in their morning walks down town, and by Reuben in the sermon that had shaken him up to fury. He also, very much to the delight of his father-in-law, took to reading the Bible, "to see," as he smilingly excused the act to the elf, "if there was any truth in the astounding doctrine preached by 'that' Mr. White. He didn't believe there was; but he intended to judge for himself."

There is hope for whoever will investigate. Tom read the Old Testament through, but without arriving at any opinion. He was sagely inclined, however, as he observed to his father-in-law, "to consider Mr. White's doctrine *rather* wild."

"Read the 'New!'" suggested the merchant, with a friendly smile.

Tom replied that he "didn't think it was worth while."

"Try it, and see!" observed the merchant.

Tom shook his head.

"I have already read enough to satisfy me that Mr White has no scriptural authority for such remarks," he returned, "and I don't see the need of going further."

"Try it, and see!" repeated the old gentleman.

Tom stated that he "would not promise." Notwithstanding this, he commenced and finished 'Matthew' ere he went to bed. In a week he had got to the last of 'John'; in a fortnight to the end of 'Jude'; and two evenings later, to the close of 'Revelations.'

"What do you say, now?" asked his father-in-law.

"I really don't know," answered Tom, gravely. "My impression is that there is some truth in what Mr. White preaches; but how much I will not take upon me to say, till I have gone through the New Testament again."

"His tone is altering," said the dry-goods merchant to himself. "The Lord is bringing him round."

Tom's second reading was more careful, and consequently more thoughtful, than the first. It took him longer, also—much longer. There was an irresistible fascination in the four Gospels which enchained him as in a spell, and from which he could not easily tear himself away; for they were the touching history of man's Only Friend. He loved to linger, as it were, in the atmosphere of that Pure Presence; to hang upon His words, that fell upon the ears of many like inspiring strains from heaven; to follow Him in His wanderings; to observe His calm constancy to His great mission, in the face of want, friendlessness, persecution, treachery and suffering; to hearken to the pearly wisdom that fell from His lips on the mount, by the sea-side, on the highway, wherever he went; to notice the mild benignity which

blended with His earnest air of conscious authority; to dwell upon the mercy-spirit that reigned throughout His teachings, His patience with the cold, the cynical, and the supercilious—His consideration for the ignorant, the friendless, and the mistakenly zealous—His restless labors to lighten the hearts of the afflicted, to set aright minds that false guides had led astray—His gentleness to the erring, His tenderness to the sorrowing, His forgiveness of his persecutors and revilers, His yearning for the pardon and preservation of those who had turned from him, His anxiety for the salvation of humanity in his own day and through all the centuries to the end of time—and the steady calmness with which He pursued his way to complete with crushing personal suffering the Mighty Sacrifice—all this had the charm of a wondrous story for the young merchant, and held him captive till he not only knew almost every word by heart, but till every recorded incident in that Holy Life, and every sentence by Him uttered, were stamped ineffacably upon his mind. He next took up the Epistles, which called for equally as much thought, and then Revelations, which exercised him not a little, when he put down the book, with the remark to the elf, "Who says the Bible is dry?" and then went off into a reverie. But all this consumed time—time, however, of which he was unconscious; for, imperceptibly to himself, a great change had come upon him, and in taste, sentiment and feeling, he was altogether another person.

But he was as far from a Christian as ever. He had simply reached a stage of mind that may fitly be termed Intellectual Christianity. That is, he believed; but though believing, he had not repented, nor had he any disposition to. He simply believed.

Meanwhile, he attended Mr. White's, without once thinking of calling in question the great truths which had once

made him so indignant, and which the young pastor was careful to bring out in language that could not be misunderstood. Occasionally, the application of a passage still caused the reformed profligate to wince; but in the main he was pleased with the preacher's remarks, whose "Bible soundness" he would often flatteringly commend, while for the young minister himself he entertained the kindest feelings.

"You ought to hear my pastor," he would say to friends. "You may find here and there one more graceful in his periods; but for fervency of heart, earnestness in delivery, and sterling Bible soundness, Mr. White is the man of men."

"But," as the clear-headed Mr. Asbury observed to the dry-goods merchant, in a conversation upon the subject, "liking a minister is not conversion; nor mere belief in the Gospel salvation. 'The devils also believe, and tremble.' Till a sinner has been led to *pray*, he can know nothing of Christ except the theory."

"True," said Peter Brown. "But Tom is in the right way to learn these things. The Bible!"

"He is, if his present interest in the sacred volume is the work of the Lord," said Mr. Asbury, pleasantly. "If not, then he will not be permitted to comprehend them."

The dry-goods merchant looked down like one who sees but indistinctly.

"The privilege of understanding The Father," continued Mr. Asbury, with his usual mildness, "is granted only to praying hearts—that is, His own children. To all others, the inner meanings of His Word are sealed. The power to grasp their import, is, like everything else, a *gift*; but a gift so inestimable that it can be obtained only in answer to prayer. Conceive, for an instant, the preciousness of the privilege of understanding THE FATHER! Mere education

in the schools will not enable us to do this. Count, if you can, brother; the number of bright intellects in the pulpit and out of it, whose preaching and conversation bear evidence that they have not prayed for a removal of the seal! In expatiating upon any given passage, which may be plain and simple to the most unlettered praying layman, they wander, in wordy circumlocution, above, beneath, around it, but are never permitted to penetrate to the hidden gold within. Satan is aware of this, and therefore spares no efforts to prevent the poor fellows from perceiving their blindness, and the only way by which it can be removed. Human nature is so weak, men's vacity so easily imposed upon, and the Tempter so profound a master of how, when, and to what degree to play upon us, that even the wisest and most experienced are constantly befooled, belittled and humiliated. How then must it be with those who are, as it were, *willing* dupes; who are eager players upon their own vanity; who make no effort in God's name, or their own, to break through the sham which permeates their entire being, and which they have assisted the Subtle One to ingrain them into their own innate scorn; who are content with a dim twilight, when they might enjoy the rich noontide of the Ever Glorious! Yes, brother, to understand The Father's Word is a gift, which all must ask for, which will be granted to *all* who ask, but only to those who ask it daily: and even to these only as they need it. What is well for them to know to-day, they are permitted to learn to-day. What, in furtherance of his own august plans, The Father designs them to understand to-morrow, He imparts to them when to-morrow comes: He alone being the judge and the regulator of the occasion that leads the favored few to 'ask' for light when they would 'receive' it."

"I see," said the jobber, his countenance brightening.

"This is why so many read the Bible without its doing them good?"

Mr. Asbury bowed.

"But the prayer of faith has ascended for Tom?" said the dry-goods merchant anxiously, after a short pause.

"And it will be answered," returned Mr. Asbury, tranquilly. "Fear not. The Lord is faithful to His promise."

The simple-hearted jobber, who walked more by faith than knowledge, was aware of this; but—alas! for the weakness of poor human nature—it encouraged him to be confirmed in the conviction by another.

"Our young friend," continued Mr. Asbury, who understood his companion, "will yet be led to pray in person for pardon and for light."

"And that," cried the jobber, eagerly, "will be the answer to our prayers?"

"A *part* of it," returned Mr. Asbury, with his calm, intelligent smile. "When we see him walking like those who know Whose they are, and whither they are going, then—"

"Then we may know that we have been heard?"

"Then," said Mr. Asbury, "we have ground for a reasonable hope! On this point, my brother, men are often imposed upon by the Tempter, who frequently beguiles them into mistaking hope for conviction, feeling for conversion, tranquility of mind for evidence of acceptance, and into willing self and outward deception. Hence, we cannot well say more than that *it seems*, and on this we hope. Still, we have THE PROMISE, and on that we may confidently rely—not that we shall be permitted to discover *how* or *when* The Father shall answer the prayers of His people, but that He *will*."

"But shall we never know?"

"In this world, it may be yes, it may be no. It is as The Lord wills, with whose plans it may or may not accord. But a time is coming when we *shall* know—in that day when He whose name is dear to us shall say to all the ransomed, 'Enter, ye blessed of My Father!'"

"And Tom—poor Tom, will be amongst them?" cried the jobber, hopefully.

"We have THE PROMISE!" said Mr. Asbury.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SPRAGUE was also among the auditors on the morning of the day when Reuben's great sermon roused Tom into such a fury.

The litterateur was of a family that had been remarkable for the unaffected gentleness, the modesty, the integrity, and the unobtrusive benevolence of its members, and also for their unwavering confidence in the efficacy of good works. They were an intelligent, open-hearted, strong-minded race, too; and when once intellectually convinced of a great fact, they clung to it with a tenacity which nothing human could shake. Thus, the passage in the Declaration of Independence, 'We hold this truth to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,' fell with such force upon the mind of the young man's great grand-father, that, though previously a well-to-do royalist, he buckled on his sword, and, though satisfied that the step would result in his pecuniary ruin, enrolled himself among the small army that was struggling for the great principle of human liberty. He knew but little of the Scriptures; but he had a species of intellectual religion which appeared to him as in perfect accordance with the true spirit of Christianity. If it was not to be found in the Bible, he was satisfied that it *ought* to be; and without referring to the sacred volume itself, he grew in time into the belief that it *was* there, because he


fancied it *must* be. While sitting one night with some comrades round a camp-fire, he observed: "I will tell you what, friends; any man who lives up to the golden rule of doing as he would be done by, need have no fears; that is the sum of the Gospel, after all; and he who follows it as well as he is able, cannot go very far astray." This was his religion; and as he was noted among his companions-in-arms for sterling uprightness of conduct, a chivalrous regard for truth, and great nobleness of heart, his sentiment was received with deep respect, and applauded as a self-evident truth. He lived and died in this faith; carefully impressing it upon his children, whose tender regard for their mild, affectionate parent, influenced them to place implicit reliance upon whatever fell from his lips—lips that ever breathed peace and good-will, and had never been charged with descending to the unworthiness of a lie. His children were like him in faith and character, and transmitted their gentle virtues to *their* children, one of whom [the father of the litterateur] was a clergyman, who, dying, left behind him a name for manly rectitude, nobleness of purpose, and broad, generous sympathy for his kind, which even low-browed calumny never dared to assail. He fell like a good Samaritan, from a fever caught at the bedside of a poor cast-away whom contagion had stricken down, and to whom he had flown with the hope of rendering her closing hour one of peace and hope. He breathed his last in the arms of his only son, between whom and himself existed an attachment which, while preserving all the affection of father and son, combined also that of two loving friends who appreciated each other's superior intelligence, magnanimity and gentleness. To the faith of his father the litterateur clung with the calm tenacity of a mind that feels its own strength, and is firmly confident in the liberality, the justness, and the correctness of its views.

He usually attended a religious society in Broadway, which favored his own faith, and where assembled every Sabbath a small but select congregation, which was mainly composed of the leading intellects of the metropolis in art, literature and science. But he was led to Mr. White's on the occasion in question, by what he supposed to be a feeling of curiosity to witness the baptism of the millionaire, in whom, for various causes, he felt a friendly interest. The burden of the opening hymn, of the pastor's prayer, and of the chapter selected for the occasion, though by no means new to him, was yet sufficiently fresh to chain his attention and lead him to look forward with a certain degree of anxiety to the sermon, which, from the prayer, which had mind in it as well as religion, he felt assured would be an able one.

How Reuben came to choose the text we have mentioned for that Sabbath morning, some of our readers, doubtless can readily tell, for there is no chance-work in this world; but to the litterateur it was a gratifying surprise, since it was on the very subject on which his own pastor had commented on the preceding Sabbath; and he had then thought that he would like to hear some clergyman of what he termed the 'Calvinistic School,' reply to, or give *his* version of it. He felt quite certain, however, that, in the opinion of any un-biased mind, such 'Calvinistic' preacher would signally fail to advance argument and adduce testimony that would rebut those of his minister.

But, as the discourse proceeded, he was shaken in this impression; while at its conclusion he was constrained to admit to himself, that there was but *one* argument for that text, that the evidence was all on one side, and that that side was *not his*.

It was to the litterateur a solemn hour, for it was one in

which he was led, thought by thought, to see and feel, with all the strength and clearness of conviction, that the cherished belief of his whole life was, from beginning to end, a humiliating mistake; that it was simply one of the many artful devices of The Subtle One to turn man's very earnestness against himself: that, like a well executed counterfeit which often deceives good judges as well as the incautious, it was a tremendous deception whose very audacity blinded men to its real character, and imposed alike upon the credulous and the unwary; that it was, in fine, one of those false roads whose sign boards say,  "To Heaven!" but which lead all who traverse them to Ruin.

The poor litterateur was sad at heart. For indeed it is no light thing to realize that we have been played upon; to feel that we have given our purest and noblest thoughts to an impudent swindle—that we have been the unconscious dupe of a malicious spirit that trifles with our highest destinies; and, worse than all, to be sensible that that spirit will continue to mock, to tempt, to deceive, to trifle with us to the end of our days, notwithstanding all our vigilance, and all our efforts to prevent it!

"Is it any wonder," muttered the unhappy man, "that on waking from the trance into which they were beguiled, little by little, by the Tempter, the poor bewildered victims fly with a scream of mingled fear and joy to the Only Refuge!"

The idea did not occur to him that he, too, could turn to the Refuge. Poor Fellow! he little suspected that that thought was withheld from him by the Inner Tempter who, fearful that it might lose its hold upon its old familiar dupe, was now marshaling all its forces, all its cunning, to head him off from Light.

He was interrupted in his reflections by the scene at the

altar. The millionaire was passing through the ordinance of baptism.

The litterateur was touched at the sight of those white hairs coming up in life's late autumn, as a public witness of Divine mercy; and his lively fancy imaged the incident into that of a pilgrim who had been wandering nearly all his life on the wrong road, but had been put on the right at last.

The scene was viewed by the general congregation with emotion; but it was unusually stirring to the few who were aware of the tie that existed between the pastor and the convert. These sympathised with the pair. They understood why both were so pale and tearful, and why Reuben's voice trembled with proud joy as he pronounced the baptismal formula upon his father.

The litterateur retired with a grave brow, and walked home and up to his room in a state of mind to which he was a stranger.

He felt like one *who has lost something*.

His thoughts whirled through his brain with bewildering rapidity, and appeared as though they had escaped from his grasp forever. He tried to catch and reduce them to order; but they flew on swiftly and confusedly as before. Conscious that his blood was in a mad gallop, he threw himself back in his chair, and shading his eyes, which were both hot and dry, patiently awaited its return to tranquillity, that he might think clearly once more.

He had indeed lost something. It was the view that had been his from childhood; the mainspring, as it were, of his life; the pivot on which the fancies begotten of that view revolved; which governed his impulses, colored his conceptions, regulated his actions, aroused his enthusiasms, awakened his whole being, and inspired him as he thought, to be

an example of the high nobility of soul to which brave minds are capable of attaining. And now to be told—nay, to be made to *feel* to his inmost centre—that that view which had ever commanded so much of his respect, was, after all, nothing but an audacious fraud upon human understanding; an artful, impudent religious counterfeit, to cozen the careless, the credulous, the generous, the enthusiastic; a great sham, which by appealing to the finer feelings, the hopes, and the romantic aspirations of ingenuous minds, beguiles them into a sort of religious outer court, where they are carefully ingrained into the belief that they are all right, and that there is no need of going further—O, what a blow is this! To be made to experience that what we have mistaken for the instinctive faith of an honest heart is simply one of the phantasms with which The Prince of Evil hoodwinks men down to ruin; to feel that the fervently cherished conviction of a whole life is a solemn imposition; that the high intellectual faculties on which we have trusted for honest thought and guidance, have, under the direction of an Invisible Demon, betrayed us, and can no longer be trusted—what crushing light is THIS!

He had gone to church in the morning in a firm disbelief in all such doctrines, and now he believed! Whence was this?

He had yielded without a struggle—the bright romantic faith that had been part and parcel of his being from childhood. It had glided away unobserved, while he listened, and when the discourse was over, he was no longer a Moral-Intellectualist!

His old views were to him now like the fleecy, unreal things seen in dreams, and like them had disappeared!

The sweet belief of a whole life was no more!

Is it any wonder the young man was disturbed?

He tried now to trace the Influence that had wrought this tremendous change. But he was too much of a neophyte in the mysteries of religion to comprehend The Hand that was leading him.

Failing in this, he turned to The Error, and asked himself how it was that he had been led into its ranks? The reply was soon forthcoming. His father! But his father was a good man—kind, gentle, amiable, honest, truthful, noble, good, and above intentionally leading a fellow being astray? Doubtless. But he, too, received The Error from *his* father, who also believed in it, and was also noble. What then? Among the followers of Mohammed, Brahma, Confucius—nay, of Jove, Pluto and all the gods whom the ancients worshipped, generous hearts and true have not unfrequently been found. Deists, infidels and pagans are honest, generous, and amiable, now and then. But what part hath CHRIST with these? Should we believe the teachings of a father because the father himself is amiable? How many a blind, benighted papist, with a mild and tender heart, leads his son in pious reverence to the feet of Mary, Patrick or Ignatius, and instructs him how to bend to images and how to count his beads? A father may be ever so kind and amiable, and yet be far from Truth. His father taught him? What then? How if the father himself was wrong? Had not the son better first learn *that*? Pitiful is the journey of that soul that knows not of her own knowledge whither she is walking. The Book is open, and may be freely read.

The litterateur's first reception of and continuance in Moral Intellectualism was now before him in a nut-shell: His father the instructor of the doctrine; religious intercourse on his own part only with like errorists; unwillingness to give the Bible, the only source of light, as much at-

tention as he would the last new book: and, behind all this; The Tempter's energy in keeping up in a thousand ways the interest in this pet scheme for leading generous minds into error, and inducing them to take it for truth.

And yet it is an enlivening, if an erratic faith. It is so flattering to our pride to believe in—ourselves. We are so strong, so pure, so unwavering in our goodness, and so independent of all help! It is so comforting, too, to feel, as we go on, that we have *deserved well of God*; that our salvation is simply a brave effort of our will; that, unlike the poor, the helpless, and the weak minded, *we have no need of a Redeemer*, since, by following the golden rule, we can be our own Saviour!

Yes, it is a pleasing, a flattering and a bright romantic faith. It is so cheering to know when we lie down at night that all is well with us; that there is nothing in the form of omission or commission left unbalanced; that every impure thought, unworthy word, and unrighteous act during the day is washed out by the cleansing waters of some good deed; that there is nothing with which we can be reproached, for which we require a justifier; and that with our numerous acts of goodness, of sacrifice, and atonement, we can face the Majesty of Heaven without a tremor at the last day.

How weak and puling and insensate all this appeared to the litterateur, now; how like the impracticable schemes of visionary minds! It was however a pleasant illusion while it lasted, and was the source of many a hopeful thought. But, like the dreamy idler who realises at length that to obtain competence he must at once grapple with the realities around him, he felt he could no longer afford to indulge in chimeras. His soul was too important to be trifled with. Hard stubborn Truth had knocked at the door of his heart,

and told him that no merits could be presented at the Great High Court but Christ's; that no man cometh unto God except through Christ; that no one cometh unto Christ except The Father draw him; that no one can know The Father save he to whom The Son shall reveal Him: and he saw the necessity of being up and doing with all the energies of his being.

"Now," he murmured, as these thoughts passed through his excited brain, "say The Son should not reveal The Father to me; say *The Father* should not draw me to THE SON!"

He turned pale at the question.

He was one of the few that treat the vital concerns of life with earnestness, and this interrogatory had for him a solemn interest.

What claim—he asked himself in bitter sadness—what claim had *he* to God's mercy:—what had he done to merit it? Merit it! he repeated with a hollow laugh. Was he not full of high sounding pretensions? Had he not undertaken to *teach* men—he who knew so much himself, and was therefore so well *qualified* to teach! Had he not been a great exponent of—Moral Intellectualism! Had he not talked and written romantically of 'Excelsior! upon his banner'—discussed learnedly the distinction between 'vice' and 'sin,' and expatiated with marvelous fluency upon 'leading humanity forward' to—*what?* To be THEIR OWN SAVIOURS!

What claims!

Poor fellow! he was very sad. He did not know—or if he did, it had escaped him—that he could find mercy *without* claims. He did not seem to understand that if a penitent pleaded any worthiness other than that of The Blood shed on the Cross, he would be rejected; but that THAT was all-

sufficient. Like most persons, he had a dreamy idea that he must first be meritorious in some way. This fancy had possession of him the remainder of the day, and filled him with vague apprehensions.

At dinner and tea his pale thoughtfulness attracted some attention; but as it was no unusual thing with him, it elicited no remark. In the evening, he quietly concluded to go again to Mr. White's. On reaching the church, however, he found it closed. He was about to turn away in disappointment, when he observed a gentleman standing at the entrance of an adjoining alley. From him he learned that there was no preaching in the evening; but that the monthly concert of prayer for missions would shortly commence, in the lecture room, and he was invited to enter.

Prayer! The word fell with a welcome sound upon the young man's heart, which throbbed with a strange yearning.

He thanked the gentleman for his politeness, and turning into the alley, passed on to the lecture room and seated himself in a modest slip in a side corner.

The scene was new to him. Though living in a christian city, he was a stranger to prayer-meetings, and knew but little of their character. The exercises therefore had for him all the charm of novelty. Apart from the feeling with which we was laboring, he was stirringly impressed at the picture before him of a band of disciples that had come up to hear the report of the laborers in the vineyard, to rejoice in their success, to pray that they might be still further encouraged, and to contribute for their support.

The evening was not in vain to the litterateur. Light came to him as he sat and listened—light that removed his uneasiness. He retired at the close, with a profound sense of gratitude. On returning home, he, on ascending to

his chamber, threw himself upon his knees, and prayed, in tearful silence, for forgiveness. He presented no 'claims,' nor thought of any 'worthiness'; for he knew now in Whose name to approach, in Whose name to plead, and for Whose sake to hope.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Tom!" said the elf, from her rocker, near the register.

"Eh?" said her husband, looking up from his book.

"Govee is ill."

"As I am not a doctor—" began Tom, mischievously.

"Don't tease, Tom. You don't know how sadly poor govee looks!"

"I thought my father had given her a check for a small fortune."

"Money is not everything," said the elf.

"True," observed Tom, perceiving that she had something on her mind, and laying his book aside. "What is the matter with Miss Russell?"

The elf blushed, hesitated, and appeared to half regret that she had spoken at all.

"Shall I resume my book?" asked Tom, half in pique.

"Did cousin," began the elf, slowly, as though she had not heard him, "ever tell you of his rejection?"

"Who, Joe?"

His wife nodded.

"No," returned Tom, dropping his voice in thoughtful astonishment. "But," he added immediately afterwards,

"You don't mean to say that Miss Russel refused *him*!"

"I do."

"What—*Joe*?"

"*Joe*."

"I can't believe it!" exclaimed Tom, reddening, as if at an affront to himself. "There is not a nobler fellow in the world. No one could know him without loving him."

"He *was* loved!" said the elf.

"And yet rejected?"

"Rejected."

Tom was smilingly incredulous.

"He was poor, and govee also," explained the elf.

"But that was no excuse for wounding the great heart of a man like *Joe*!"

"She had a helpless mother to think of," said the elf, to interrupt his indignation.

"What then?" demanded Tom.

"Govee was her mother's only support. If she married—"

"The old lady could have resided with them," said Tom, snappishly.

"It takes money to provide for three, and cousin had none."

"Admitted. But he could have weathered the storm, some how!"

"Some how' often breaks the back, Tom," suggested the elf.

"I don't know but you are right, Mag!" remarked her husband thoughtfully, after a pause.

"And no woman," continued the elf, "would like to see the man she loves ground to the earth by unrelenting labor, and the harassing uneasiness of uncertain means."

"Did Miss Russell explain to *Joe* the cause of her refusal?"

"She did."

"What did he say?"

"That she was right."

"And so she *was*!" said Tom, frankly. "But the rejection must have touched the poor fellow. His is a gentle, sensitive heart!"

"It did," said the elf. "Have you never noticed his sad, pining air?"

It burst upon her husband like a flash.

"Was *this* the cause?" he demanded.

The elf bowed.

"Has he never alluded to it?" she asked.

"Never," responded Tom. "*Joe* is one of those that bury their griefs in their own breasts, and—wither under them!"

"Govee would have him *now*!" suggested the elf.

"Now—in her wealth?"

His wife nodded.

Tom looked as if his heart was softening.

"She has money enough for both," continued the elf, with the hopeful smile of a diplomat who sees the way gradually opening before her to success.

"*Joe* himself is not so poor now, as then!" said Tom, speaking up for his friend. "His income is moderately respectable."

"Could we not manage to bring them together?" asked the elf, seeing that her little scheme was understood.

"*We*!" said Tom, with playful affectation. "What do you mean, madam! Do you presume to imagine for one instant, that you have the power to beguile me into a conspiracy against the peace and comfort of an innocent man!"

"You, for *Joe*'s sake, Tom—I, for govee's!" said the elf, with feeling.

"I am ready to do anything, Mag!"

"I knew you would, Tom!" said the elf, a joy-tear gathering in her eye. "Can not your practical mind devise some way?"

This was hitting the nail on the head with a skilful hand. All men like to be thought practical. It gives them a good opinion of themselves, and the elf—sly puss!—understood Tom's weakness in this respect in common with all of his sex.

"I guess it can be done!" returned the managing partner of the great firm of T. Bignell & Co., with the bland, patronising air of a man who is accustomed to grapple with impossibilities and to overcome them.

It is true he did not see his way, as he said this; but then he looked down very intelligently at the carpet, and perhaps that answered as well.

The elf observed him with an anxious eye.

"Did Miss Russell herself suggest this?" asked Tom, presently, as though the question had a bearing upon some tremendous scheme then under consideration.

"O, no!" cried the elf quickly. "But knowing her sentiments for cousin, and seeing to-day the lowness of her spirits, I thought that if I laid the case before *you*, everything would soon be made right!" This was delicate flattery for a young woman of twenty.

"I see!" said Tom, clearing his throat with an 'a-hem!' and looking down shrewdly as before, like a great business man revolving a gigantic operation.

"It would be doing such a service to them both!" suggested the elf.

"True!" said Tom, unable for the life of him to get hold of an idea.

"Cousin's melancholy would so rapidly disappear!" continued the elf, hoping to inspire him.

"There's something in *that*!" said Tom, slowly, as though he believed there was.

"And then," added the elf, "it would be so satisfactory to see him happy with the woman he loves!"

Tom still finding that his drafts upon his invention were successively dishonored, grew desperate, and lifting his eyes to his wife, said, with a mingled air of practical wisdom and high, manly candor:

"I will tell you what it is, Mag!"

"Yes, Tom?" said the elf, bending forward hopefully, to catch every word.

"There is nothing like taking a bull by the horns," said Tom, with the knowingness of experience; "nothing like doing things squarely and above-board."

"True," said the elf, in as calm a voice as she could command, to veil her disappointment.

"The simplest ways are always the best," pursued Tom, innocently fancying that he was making a great impression. "I will go to Joe in a plain, straightforward manner, frankly acquaint him with the facts in the case, and then leave the result to him. If he be the man of sense I take him, things will soon come right; if not, not; and there is no harm done!"

The elf shook her head with a sad smile—she couldn't help it, and drew back, sorry that she had said a word to him about it.

The practical man saw that he had not made so immense a hit as he expected.

"You business men," said the elf, shaking her finger at him with forced playfulness, "will never do in affairs of the heart!"

"I don't know about that!" laughed Tom, to cover his confusion. "They are no more difficult than other matters

that we daily carry through successfully. But you women seem to imagine that nothing can be done right, unless through the intricate web of an intrigue!"

The elf did not reply. Leaning back in the rocker, she was soon lost in meditation. As for Tom, he was satisfied that the plan he proposed was the best that could be advanced, and he quietly resolved to put it into execution, which he did the next day—with what result will be understood when we state that a few days after it was observed that the litterateur wore a more cheerful look than usual, and seemed to be less indifferent to his appearance. In a few weeks his eye began to grow brighter, his smile more cheerful, his cheek to fill up, and his general air more like that of other days.

One evening, Tom, while dressing for tea, was interrupted by the elf, who came bounding in from a walk, and throwing her arms around his neck, exclaimed in transport, as she kissed him:

"You naughty fellow! How could you!"

"What's that for, madam?" demanded her husband with playful indignation. "I'd have you to know that I am a married man, and have a wife that will resent such liberties!"

"How could you do this, and not let me know it!"

"Do what?" said Tom, carefully drawing on his neckerchief before the mirror.

"Tell cousin about what we had been discussing?"

"Did I?" asked Tom, innocently, as he pulled up the left corner of his collar to a level with that on the right.

"You *know* you did, you naughty fellow! I have just come from govee's, and have heard all about it!"

"You don't tell me that!" said Tom. "The young lady is better, I hope?"

"Don't tease, Tom! They are engaged!"

"Ah, ha!" cried the great head of the great house of T. Bignell & Co., manufacturers and patentees of the great patent stump extractor, "we practical business men don't understand managing affairs of the heart. Ha! ha! ha!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

REUBEN, leaning back in his arm-chair, in his study, was immersed in thought.

It was one of his yearnings to gain from the pressure of professional duty an hour for private thought. This hour was generally devoted to self-examination, and to running over a mental list of his immediate friends and estimating their advance upon the Road. The present was one of these.

Looking out therefore upon the scattered pilgrims moving along The Way, he endeavored, with the eye of fair judgment, charity, and intuition, to see if those who were near and dear to him were among them.

For his wife, he had no fears. (He saw her daily, and believed that he knew every nook and corner of her heart. That she was possessed of the true faith, he felt stirringly assured. While having no confidence in works, her faith was yet reflected in hers. Call when he would, the death-angel would find her ready

His step-mother? Her quiet, simple, unobtrusive manner remained unchanged. Doing good in secret; modest in her deportment; silent but steady in her offerings; her smile ever gentle; her interest in the enterprises of her Redeemer ever fresh; her faith exemplified in her works—these proclaimed her.

His brother? Improving. Near to the road, but not yet on it. Light coming to him by degrees, and his sky bright with promise.

His bosom-friend in times of trial and difficulty—Mr. Asbury? A calm, stately, Christian light, whose walk along The Pathway was that of one who knew in Whom he believed. No sham in thought, or word, or deed. Who depended for guidance from day to day not upon himself, but on One *able* to lead and sustain him, and therefore never fell, nor wandered, nor stumbled. Keeping his eye ever upon his Redeemer, he could see nothing but the brightness of *His* glory, the sufficiency of *His* merits, the greatness of *His* strength, and therefore was ever tranquil. Praying daily for light, light was ever his. Walking daily in conscience and omitting no duty, his conscience never reproached him. Having no confidence in works, he yet worked, believing that if a man have the true faith it will shew itself in his daily life. Receiving no authority but God's Word, fanciful theories and false doctrines, however plausible, tempted him in vain. His faith was a rock, which all the winds and waves of error could not shake or disturb. Trusting with calm confidence in One able to keep him, he walked on fearless of foes without and of foes within; conscious, however, that grace alone sustained and could bear him on in safety to the end.

Peter Brown? One whose heart was simple as a child's; who walked more by faith than knowledge; who daily felt his own weakness, and recognized in his friend Mr. Asbury a friendly guide sent by The Lord to prevent him from falling into any of the thousand snares set by the Tempter to catch the ignorant and the unwary; who had no confidence in works, but yet worked, believing that true faith is a living, energizing thing, and is not content to sit down in

idleness, while a whole world calls for all true men in Christ to be up and doing.

His father, the millionaire? The young man paused, and over his forehead gathered a melancholy cloud. He knew not what to think, nor what to hope. His father had certainly changed, had certainly repented, had certainly been pardoned. Conscience, that slept, had been aroused; the proud, self-sufficient boaster had become more like one conscious that he is marching forward to his account, but—Reuben was uneasy, unsatisfied.

Since his baptism, the millionaire had settled down, little by little, into a species of religious self-complacency of which the young clergyman had seen too much not to be alarmed at it in his father. After that important event, Reuben had looked for much that had not come to pass. Some things, too, had reached his ears in odd, round-a-bout ways that disturbed him. He had hoped to see his father enter with spirit and energy into the enterprises of his Redeemer; in this he had been disappointed. Three or four opportunities of forwarding the cause he professed to love had been permitted to pass unimproved. A struggling mission had appealed for aid; a severe winter had reduced thousands of the poor of the metropolis to distress, and a committee had asked for help; an embarrassed church had solicited assistance; a poor negro woman had implored a helping-hand to redeem an only son from slavery: but each and all without extracting more than a few shillings from the man of wealth. *This* was a kind of faith in which Reuben had no confidence and with which he had no sympathy.

"If faith be not a *living, moving* thing," he murmured; "if it stir not the pocket as well as the heart; if it prefer its money to Christ; if it have for God's glory only a few grudgingly given pence and its good wishes,—then it is not

of God; for His spirit is broad, generous, and large as that amazing magnanimity and love which led him to give his Only Son to die for sinners; and the faith that partakes not of this spirit is simply a fraud—one of the many religious counterfeits with which the Tempter cheats men, through their own agency, out of salvation. I must see to this. My father must not be duped by so transparent a forgery!"

"A letter," said Mercy, entering.

Reuben opened it and, hastily glancing over its contents, a smile of glad joy illumed his countenance.

"Pleasant news from the West, of poor brother Nelson!" he exclaimed, handing it to his wife. "Read!"

Mercy did so, aloud. The missive ran as follows—

"Dear Brother—I am at length permitted to send you good tidings. The Lord has been graciously pleased to bring back poor brother Nelson, and to reveal Himself to him again. I would have written you of the happy event sooner, but preferred to wait till it should be established beyond a doubt, which, I am delighted beyond measure to say, is now the case. At your request I sought his acquaintance and obtained his confidence. He was very sad, as indeed he had reason to be; but now, thanks to the Author of all goodness, he is once more in The Way. He realises that his late bitter lesson was for his good, and that it was administered to teach him the exceeding need of watchfulness and to let him see that men cannot walk safely when they go in their own wisdom. Since his return to duty, his deportment has been irreproachable. His repentance is evidently sincere, and his anxiety that he may be preserved from again being led captive into evil, intense. The Lord, through the instrumentality of some kind unknown eastern friends, having, shortly after his arrival, furnished him with a timely supply of means, he has since, in a temporal sense,

been doing well, and of late has testified to the honesty of his new vows by making monthly remittances to his New York creditors. His industry and energy are tireless, and, the Lord helping him, he will yet be able to pay up to the uttermost farthing. His dear wife and child are with him, enervating him by their presence and encouraging his noble struggle. Mrs. N. is much esteemed for her amiable demeanor and the christian excellence of her character. The whole family are members of my Sabbath school, brother N. having charge of a Bible, and his lady of an infant, class. They are an affectionate and worthy couple, and are much beloved. Mrs. N's joy and gratitude at her husband's restoration are inexpressible. To many this may be but a trifle—a merry jest; but to you and me, my brother, and to all who know the preciousness of a single ransomed soul, the preservation of this wanderer will bring great gladness both now and in that day when The Lord shall make up His jewels."

"How many will rejoice at this!" said Mercy, with swimming eyes.

"On earth and in heaven!" added Reuben, with feeling.

"But I must away. I will be back at dusk."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AN interview with conscience.

While Reuben was on his way to his father's, the latter was feasting; not upon the viands of the table, but the savory-meats and delicious drinks in the entries of his dark morocco memorandum book.

They were as follows:

SUMMARY OF MY REPROACHES.

1—CATHARINE BIGNELL—my first wife. I could make no restitution to this poor soul, whom I deserted and left to want. The Lord had removed her to where she could look down in pity upon the poor penitent whose sorrow for his cruelty availed not. It is however an indescribable consolation to know that her last days were free from the miseries of poverty, and that she died praying for him who had so harshly wronged her.

2—EDGAR, my first-born. Who is he that will presume to predict the course of the man from the circumstances of the child! This son whom I deserted in his infancy, and whose unhappy path worldly wisdom would confidently take upon itself to trace, was led, by Him who from evil bringeth forth good, to become, in after years, a prominent instrument in the conversion of the father who abandoned him. In this I see the working of That hand who turns and overturns and maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him.

3—RICHARD WHITE. As in the case of my deserted wife, I could make no amends to this too-confiding victim of my treachery. He was led to become the protector and patron of my wife and child. He heaped coals of fire upon the head of his betrayer by forgiving him, and praying that he might not perish in his sins. He had passed to his reward ere I had learned to walk in wisdom's narrow way; but I take comfort in the thought that in spite of all my villainy he was preserved all his subsequent days from poverty and suffering.

4—JOHN GRIGGS. I thank God for permitting me to make some atonement to the memory of this man, through his only heir, whom I found in the State Prison at Sing Sing. I obtained his pardon from the Governor, established him upon one of my farm properties, and was instrumental in

making him happy in some degree in the arms of a loving and virtuous wife. After some difficulty, I received his forgiveness, and take some consolation in believing that if his father and mother were now living they would grant me theirs also.

5—JOHN RUSSELL. My repentance was too late to be of any service to the widow of this man whom my rascality drove to suicide. But I have been permitted to light the pathway of his daughter, a very deserving person, whom I found struggling in the capacity of a governess. On perceiving the sincerity of my repentance, she magnanimously accorded to me her sympathy and forgiveness. She is, I learn, on the eve of marriage with a young litterateur, to whom I am under an obligation for a well-meant but futile effort to effect a reconciliation between my erratic son Thomas and myself. I therefore feel a friendly interest in this couple, and if opportunity offer, will gladly avail myself of it to serve them.

6—EDGAR RIX. The memory of this man is as a spectre at my elbow. I can make no restitution of the life that I took. If, as I hope, God has pardoned me, I shall lose the presence of this memory when I come to lay me down for the last time.

7—SUSAN RIX—his widow and my second wife. My treatment of this woman is a remorse from which I cannot escape. If I had my life to live over again—but this is childish. Vain are regrets for the past. Let me improve the present.

8—ROBERT HALSEY. The grass was green upon this poor gentleman's grave in the hour of my repentance. I have succeeded in finding his widow, however, who, poor soul, had experienced all the biting humiliations that worry indigence. She is a worthy, honest, simple-minded lady, and

readily forgave the depravity that had reduced her from affluence to poverty. I thank God for permitting me to restore her to independence.

9—WILLIAM HIBBARD. I found, after some difficulty, the widow and children of this man in a western village, where they are carrying on a small grocery. The widow received the restitution money, politely thanked me, showed me the door, and pointed me out to her eldest son as a dangerous character whom it would be proper to horsewhip. The son, however, did not undertake to act upon the suggestion.

10—GIDEON WILEY. Poor Gideon! My treachery unnerved him. He never was the same man afterwards. After a few feeble efforts to recover himself, he removed with his family to the wilds of Iowa, where he worked a few years as a farm laborer, when with his small savings he bought and cleared a few acres of land, from which he managed to eke out a limited living. He could have done better, for labor was well paid and lands cheap, but his energy was gone. He died after a time, and was shortly followed by his wife, who had previously been ailing. His daughter and two sons then separated; the former going to Muscatine, where she supported herself by her needle, the latter to Davenport, where they engaged as clerks, and where I found them. On sending for them to my hotel, and announcing myself and the object of my visit, they were strongly disposed to both refuse the money and to take summary satisfaction from my person. But the friendly counsel of one of their employers, whom I had called in, prevailed, and they consented to receive what was justly theirs and to forgive if they could not forget. I have since had reason to believe that the money led to no injury to them. Their sister's proportion was invested in productive real estate; their own partly in rising real estate, partly in good rail-road shares, and the

remainder in buying out the business of their employers.

11—ROBERT CLASSON. This honest old man, at whose hotel in Rochester I put up, received me with great heartiness as an old acquaintance, but was gravely surprised when I stated the object of my call, which an uneasy fear prevented me from doing till the second day of my arrival. His eye gradually kindled as he heard me; and when I had finished, he sternly bade me pack up and leave his house. No entreaty, no excuse, no explanation availed. He indignantly refused both the money and my apology, and sternly insisted on my instant departure. Nothing could appease him, or induce him to recall his order; nor would he take one cent for the twenty-four hours I had been his guest. He was enraged, without being furious, and I had no help for it but to take up my quarters elsewhere. I wrote him a note the next morning, and enclosing a draft for the sum due him, despatched it by a messenger; but both note and draft were returned in ten minutes without comment or reply. Through the intercession of his pastor, I at length succeeded in persuading him to receive the restitution money, but he resolutely refused to grant me his forgiveness. I have the satisfaction however of feeling that I am no longer in his debt.

12—WILLIAM WESTERVELT. This man, I found, after a long search and extensive advertising, keeping a small store in an obscure village in western Illinois. His parents were dead, and a younger brother and himself are all that remain of a once happy family of nine. He received me surlily, heard my story with impatience, gruffly took the money, and then shaking his fist in my face gave me fifteen minutes to get out of town. I judged it prudent to act upon the suggestion, and did not breathe freely till I had left the boundaries of the state.

13—WIDOW AND CHILDREN OF JOHN BRODIE.—The widow, together with two of her children, died, some years since, of cholera. The only remaining heir, a daughter, when discovered by my agent, was serving as a domestic in a small modest family in Hudson street. The restitution money was to one in her sphere so large a fortune that it overcame her. She was giddy a few weeks, and would scarcely recognise her old master and mistress, with whom she still continued to live, or rather to reside, as her equals. They magnanimously bore with her, however, for the sake of poor human nature, consoling themselves with the thought that her flightiness would soon disappear. She had previously been engaged to a young journeyman carpenter, whom she now contemptuously dismissed. But with the return of reason, these follies took wing, and all was well again. She recalled the carpenter, who, she found, had a deeper hold than she suspected upon her heart, and gave him her hand; but before taking this step, she, at the suggestion of her friendly master and mistress, prudently placed herself beyond the possibility of want by purchasing a house and lot and settling it upon herself. This was not very romantic, but it was sensible; for young men are sometimes unduly adventurous with the money of their wives.

And now let me, with a proud hand, check the record of my business knaveries:

RECAPITULATION.

1—Heir of John Griggs,.....	\$15,000—paid.
2—Daughter of John Russell,.....	22,000—paid.
3—Widow of Robert Halsey,.....	25,000—paid.
4—Widow of William Hibbard,.....	1,800—paid.
5—Children of Gideon Wiley,.....	125,000—paid.
6—Robert Classon,.....	1,600—paid.
7—William Westervelt,.....	30,000—paid.
8—Daughter of John Brodie,.....	7,240—paid.

\$227,640—PAID.

This is a gratifying moment! I feel my heart swelling with a stirring sense of freedom from a galling bondage. I—"

He was interrupted by the announcement of a visitor. Looking up, he beheld Reuben.

"Give me joy, my son!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet. "I at length have paid up the last of my old scores. I now don't owe a dollar in the world, and can sleep in peace!"

"I congratulate you, sir," said Reuben, warmly pressing his hand. "You have done well."

"I know it—feel it!" cried the millionaire, tears trickling down his cheeks. "I have experienced no such innate satisfaction in twenty-five years. Thank God—thank God!"

"Poor human nature!" murmured Reuben. "How it forgets! It was but a short time since that this man received pardon from heaven, and his whole being shook with rapture. And now this joy drives away the memory of that! You have much to be thankful, sir," he said, aloud.

"Very much!" exclaimed the millionaire, with feeling. "I never can be sufficiently grateful. But for the Father's loving kindness, I should be still in debt, still uneasy. O, I could sing for joy!"

"True," said Reuben, "but for His loving kindness—all is embodied in *that*!"

And he looked down, marvelling at the strangeness of the human heart. The millionaire, from his observations, seemed, in paying his debts, to have had in view no higher object than the attainment of peace of mind. To get on good terms with himself was apparently his only aim. There was no broad, upward mental grasp—no conception of the high spiritual advancement within the christian's compass—no visible appreciation of the Mighty Work that had roused

him from his dream of willing sin, and in his hour of penitential agony electrified him with a sense of pardon—no generous upheaving of the soul for His glory who had ransomed and set him free. Nothing, it would appear, but the selfishness that cries 'The Lord has been good to me!' and is content to settle down with that, with no yearning of high and *active* gratitude, no desire to go out into the highways and byways of the wide world and invite others to come and get good, too. What did this prove? That the man himself had never been regenerated, that it was all a delusion or—a pretence?

"Neither," said Reuben to himself; "but that he still has in him that old human heart, out of which no good thing did ever come, and which will contest his salvation with him down to his grave!"

"You are thoughtful?" said his father.

"I must put him on his guard!" murmured the young man. "I have an idea that I should like to bring before you," he said with his usual winning smile. "Now that you are no longer restrained by your debts, what aim have you in view?"

"What aim?" said the millionaire.

"What aim?" repeated Reuben. "The christian race is one of ever-stirring action; and, unlike any other, fresh strength is gathered by pushing on, not resting. Once in The Way, we are no longer our own; for, lo! our kind are perishing!"

An uneasy gleam, like that which overspreads the cheek when an unwelcome truth cuts a reproachful conscience, suffused the features of the millionaire.

Reuben observed it with a silent sigh. He understood its tell-tale meaning. He knew the proneness of human nature to shrink from duty. But he felt too great an interest

in his father's salvation, to let him follow, the promptings of the Tempter without opening his eyes to the consequences. To do this, however, he was sensible, required delicacy; for the uneasy glow revealed a touchiness of spirit that a single wrong word might startle into a flame.

"The ransomed soul," he observed, gently, "owns to a loyalty to God that inspires her to study her best course for His high glory!"

The millionaire saw that it was necessary to defend himself; and this he did with the stale excuse of those who are glad of a plausible pretext for buttoning up their pockets and basking in idleness.

"I had thought of this," he said. "But I have no confidence in what puny men can do. We are saved by faith—not works!"

"True," said Reuben. "But did you pursue the thought to the end, or carefully consult The Word? Faith, in itself, is nothing; works, in themselves, nothing; but when they walk hand in hand, faith becomes a living, moving, and inspiring, because a *perfect* thing. If we have *this* faith," he continued, looking at his father with an affectionate yet warning air, "it imbues us with the spirit of Him who went about doing good; and if we have His spirit, then we may *know* that we are His, and that our salvation is *SURE*!" He paused again, and then added, with a sad, mournful smile, "If we have *not* *THIS* faith, then the poorest heathen in the wilds of Afric, that never heard of Christ and bends to idols of wood and stone, is more likely to enter the Pearly Gates than we!"

The millionaire surveyed him a moment or two, in surprise; made a motion of his lips as if about to answer, but checked himself: then bowing his head between his hands, stared musingly at the floor.

These few simple words had penetrated his inmost being. He was roused. The passive christian—if christian he was—had become at least a thinking christian. If he was sailing in an unknown sea, he could now be satisfied. The lead was in his hands, and he could sound for himself.

Reuben anxiously awaited his reply. If the true faith had a lodging in his heart, it would, he thought, ingenuously respond; but if, on the contrary, it was the counterfeit the young man feared, its reply would be an indignant outburst.

"You are right, my son," said his father, raising his head, at length, with a humiliating flush. "But, the Lord help me! I have a deep grief: the old love of money! I have paid paid away so much of late, on matters of conscience, that I feel poor."

"You, father—with your millions!"

"Ah! my son, you do not know the hold of money on the heart! A needy man, pale and thin and weak, stopped me in the street, to-day. Six months in the hospital, which he had just quitted, had left him without means and almost without hope. I felt for him; felt that it was my duty, as a man and a brother, to give him a helping hand that would send him with a lighter step on his way. And yet a mean stinginess restrained me, on putting my hand in my pocket, from drawing out more than—a shilling! If I believed his story, that paltry sum was not enough; if I did not believe it, it was too much."

"I should say so," said Reuben. "But such was not the spirit of Him who laid down His life for you!"

"I know it!" said the millionaire, reddening with shame. "God help my poor, pitiful, insignificant soul! she more deserves the whip than mercy!"

Reuben saw, as he thought, a timely opportunity for a few plain truths.

"Why do you yield to this propensity?" he asked, earnestly. "Why not use the will the Lord has given you, and overcome it?"

"You consider it an easy triumph?" said his father with a pitying smile for the young man's inexperience. "A mere matter of the will?"

"That is all," answered Reuben, with an understanding air that caused the other to reconsider his smile. "Why has the Lord given us eyes, but to see; ears, but to hear; reasoning faculties, but to reason—a will, but to determine! Shall we insult our own judgment by saying that we can not do a thing, till we have tried? We are forbidden to go on in sin, and shall we sit mopingly down and say we cannot help it; or shall we exercise the resisting powers with which we are endowed, and *try* whether we can or no? What God commands us to do, He gives us the ability to. In the matter of this money, it is simply a question whether it shall rule you, or *you* it!"

"Eh?" cried the millionaire, with a start.

"If," continued Reuben, perceiving that he had made an impression, "on trial you find that your will is too feeble for the conflict, ask the Lord to make it equal to victory, and He will."

The millionaire felt his energy warming up.

"I will try it," he exclaimed. "I can but fail."

"There is no such word as *that*, my father, to those who trust in God. Besides," he added with mild earnestness, "you have all the advantage of a disinterested party in this case. The money don't belong to you!"

The millionaire looked at him in surprise.

"You are simply an agent," said Reuben, "and will have to account for every dollar."

"To whom?" demanded the millionaire

"Its high Owner, my father. Hence, the sooner you get it out at interest in safe quarters, the sooner your mind will be at ease, and the better it will be for you, and many others let us hope, in the great reckoning day."

The millionaire rose excitedly from his chair, and paced the library awhile, in deep feeling.

"You are right, my son," he at length said, pausing and taking the young man's hand. "I know it, feel it, and with God's blessing, I will act upon the conviction."

"Be sure the blessing will follow, my father!" cried Reuben, tears of joy leaping from his eyes.

"See brothers Asbury, Brown and Tapley," continued Mr. Bignell, with a quiet, convulsive pressure, "and ask them if they will let me make one of their private society. Tell them, I, too, want to put some money out at interest. You understand me?"

"Yes, sir!"

His father pressed his hand again, and then, with a heart too full to speak, turned away.

Reuben, comprehending that he wished to be alone, took his leave. He felt, on emerging into the street, as if a mountain had been removed from his breast, and breathed freer. He saw that grace was moving in his father's soul, and inspiring him with sterling views and proper energy.

"It is the true faith!" he murmured, trembling with mingled gratitude and joy. "All will be well!"

The millionaire, sunk upon his easy chair and covered his face with his hands. Thought was coursing hotly through his brain, which throbbed as if it would burst. Falling at length upon his knees, he offered up a brief prayer, of which this was the burden:

"Thou, who knowest the power of the Tempter upon men; how, in all that concerns their highest destiny, he deludes them with all manner of beliefs which are alike spurious and untrue: give me to know, if it be Thy will, whether the doctrine that I now have heard and credit, as I afore time have many another that was apparently sound but in reality false, be indeed that which ensures life eternal?"

He rose and turned to the Bible, believing that if it was

there, he should be able to find and to understand it. As he opened the book, his eye fell upon this passage :

"For as the body without the spirit is dead ; so faith without works, is dead also !"

He was not superstitious ; but he had ceased to believe in chance.

He was stunned. A sense of awe pervaded him. His knees smote each other. For a few moments, he did not dare to look up. But this feeling presently passed away. A melting consciousness that he was being led IN SAFETY filled him. He felt the ground of The Path he was treading, as he never had felt it before. Tears sprang from his lids, a bursting sob escaped him, and his breast swelled with stirring gladness ; for he fancied that he could now hear, in his soul,

"BE OF GOOD CHEER. IT IS I. BE NOT AFRAID !"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"I see, by the morning papers," said the dry goods jobber to Mr Asbury, as they sat in the back parlor, waiting the arrival of Mr. Tapley and Mr. Bignell, it being meeting-night with their society, "that, owing to unfortunate investments in bad stocks and other causes, the tobacco house of our friends, Gressinger & Son, has failed."

"I have been aware of it for some days," said Mr. Asbury.

"I was informed by one of the creditors, this morning," continued Peter Brown, "that prominent among the other causes, was the young man's excesses at the card table. Clubs have been his ruin.

"These are probably but the external, though the instrumental agencies," observed Mr. Asbury, with his calm, intelligent air. "The Lord has many ways of reminding us whither we are traveling. Though a professing christian, the elder Mr. Gressinger's intense devotion to business en-

dangered his future, and the Father has thought proper to administer a corrective. The gentleman is well on his way, and, as his friends have long thought, has indistinct views of duty which this lesson may help to make clear. We live, my brother, for a higher object than accumulation."

"True," said the jobber. And he fell into a reverie.

"I received, this afternoon, from Mr. Kimball," said Mr. Asbury, after a mutually meditative pause, "a note concerning Mrs. Halsey, who, you may remember, was formerly on our list of poor."

"The lady whom brother Bignell's repentance—"

"The same," said Mr. Asbury, nodding. "The note was intended by Kimball to be read at our meeting ; but as he is doubtless unaware that our brother Bignell and the 'Mr. Bignell' alluded to in his note are the same person, I have doubts of the propriety of reading it in that gentleman's hearing, whose feelings it might possibly wound ; not that it contains anything disrespectful, but that it might call up unpleasant memories whose chief points it would humiliate him to have known to his friends. There is the note ; and as its contents are of no importance to brother Tapley, throw it, after you have finished, in the fire."

The jobber read as follows :

"Permit your missionary to make an addition to his report. You may call to mind the Mrs. Halsey whom I mentioned a few weeks since as having ceased to be in need. You may recollect, also, from a former report, that she was brutally imposed upon by her son-in-law, who, though pecuniarily prosperous, at one time made frequent threats, in case the poor lady did not pay her board, of sending her to the poor house. Their relative positions are now materially changed. The receipt by Mrs. H. of \$25,000 from a Mr. Bignell, whose conscience impelled him to make restitution for a fraud upon her late husband, has released her from her son-in-law's petty tyrannies. With part of this money Mrs. Halsey quietly purchased the house in which they reside, and informing him that he could thenceforth occupy his portion of it at a nominal rent, at once put him on his good behavior. The transformation in the son-in-law was instantaneous and astonishing ; from an imperious bully, he became

a sycophant. Looking to inherit her property, and possibly to wheedle it from her while she yet lives, he is the ar-rantest toady that ever disgraced manhood. Whereas before, he could not do too much to trample upon her feelings, he now can not sufficiently respect them. He defers to her wishes in every thing with a servility that makes one blush for his kind. But the old lady duly appreciates his politeness and his officious attentions. Knowing his aim, she has taken measures to insure its defeat. She has secretly made a will, giving to her daughter the sole use of her money and property while she lives, at whose death they are to descend to her grand-children, the surrogate of the city at that time to have the appointing of the administrator who, in the words of the will itself, "shall *not* be the father of said children." In case, the grand-children should die before their mother, the property is to go to certain public charities."

"The son-in-law would have lost nothing by a little humanity," observed the jobber, as he burned the paper. "But don't you think Kimball writes as though he felt a secret satisfaction in Mrs. Halsey's revenge?"

"Human nature," returned Mr. Asbury, with a quiet smile, "will peep out, now and then, in the best of men!"

"Umph! And it does them good, too!" laughed the honest jobber.

Mr. Tapley now entered, and was shortly followed by the millionaire. The meeting then opened; but as the proceedings had no bearing upon our narrative, we need not report them.

"Your father is down stairs, Tom," observed the elf to her husband. "Would it not be well to go to him and make up!"

"Not to-night," said Tom, hesitatingly raising his eyes from his book. "I have not the courage. I may, perhaps, when he comes again."

"You have said that—"

"For many weeks—I know," interrupted Tom. "But the nerve has not come to me yet."

And he resumed his book. But it was evident that his mind was not on his reading.

The elf did not press the matter. A something told her that all things were working right, and she was willing to trust to time. Nor was her hope founded on an illusion.

It was plain, ere long, to all the household, that the Leading Event in man's life was not far off in the history of their young friend. A spirit of quiet but solemn feeling pervaded him, which deepened day by day. The prayer of faith, that for years had been ascending in his behalf from hearts that loved him, was at length soon to be answered. They saw it—felt it; and, knowing the Influence at work, awaited, with tranquil confidence, the hour when Divine Light should burst, in all its bright effulgence, upon his soul, and he should find peace in believing.

This intelligence brought joy to the millionaire, who foresaw in it a double happiness.

Mrs. Bignell wept at the tidings; but her tears were those that gush from the heart when a long-settled sorrow is being driven out to make room for a pleasanter visitant.

One afternoon, the elf went to spend an hour with her old friend the governess. Instead of returning in time for dinner, as she had expected, she did not get home till after tea. On going up to her room, she was arrested at the door by the sound of her cousin's voice in prayer. It was accompanied by her husband's sobs, which seemed to come from a heart bowed down with a sense of guilt.

The elf, pale with emotion, drew back, and tremblingly descending to the parlor, told her father and Mr. Asbury the glad news. The former thanked her, and looked at his friend with quivering lids. The latter pressed his hand, but was too full to speak.

Finding his wife out, Tom had called the litterateur down to spend the evening. They soon learned the new view which in each other had taken the place of the old; and Sprague, who had already sought and obtained forgiveness, had but little difficulty in leading his friend to kneel with him and supplicate for his also.

On reproceeding up stairs, the elf listened a moment; but all was still. The litterateur had retired, and she passed in. Tom was reading as usual. He raised his head as she entered, and revealed a countenance pale from recent agitation.

"You are late, my dear?" he observed with a smile.

"Govee had so much to tell, that it was night ere I thought it sunset."

Tom looked as if he had on his mind something that *he* wished to tell; but his courage gave out: and though he laid aside his book and conversed cheerfully an hour or two, his secret remained untold at the close.

The elf made no allusion to what she had heard. When they retired, it was, for the first time, on both sides, with a thought concealed. In the morning they felt braver.

"You had company last evening?" said the elf, with an air that informed her husband that she knew all about it.

"Yes," returned Tom, "and pleasant company, too—cousin Joe's. Did you hear us?"

The elf nodded with mingled sympathy and archness, and at the same time held out her hand.

Her husband took it, and drew her to his breast.

"God has been pleased to be merciful to me!" he whispered.

The elf returned his convulsive pressure, and they descended with swelling hearts to family prayer.

Before going to business, Mr. Asbury called on Reuben, and Peter Brown on the millionaire. In the evening, both met in the drawing room of the dry goods jobber.

All had judged, and rightly, that if true religion had entered Tom's heart, the long-sighed-for hour for his reconciliation to his father had at length arrived.

The elf, while hemming a collar, kept looking up every few minutes, at a little white porphyry clock, on the mantel, till it announced the hour of eight, when she laid aside her sewing, and asking Tom to excuse her a short time, left the room, as she said, for a private conversation with grandmother about something very particular.

Tom smiled. He anticipated a surprise of some kind; but of what nature he had not the most distant idea. The elf who had been in high spirits all the evening, wore an air of wonderful mystery, and was dressed with unusual elegance and care. Tom felt quite certain that these had a meaning; but what it was, he did not attempt to fathom.

The elf had been absent but a few minutes, when a gentle

tapping at the door announced a visitor. The noise was soft and low and timid, but the knuckles were too hard and firm for a woman's.

"Joe, perhaps?" muttered Tom, laying down his book. "Come in!" he said, aloud.

The door opened, and he beheld his father standing on the threshold! His hand was held out in amity, and his venerable features clothed with a yearning smile.

Tom frowned, turned pale, and sprang to his feet as if to eject the intruder. But the next instant a better thought came to him, and the frown disappeared, and the paleness also, and his countenance lighted up with a generous but irresolute flush.

"Tom, my son—my boy!" said the millionaire, timidly, yet hopefully advancing. "Is all forgotten, all forgiven? I want to embrace my boy!"

The dear old voice, the dear old face again! Out, pride! out, folly. Let kindly nature and the dear old times once more have sway!

A spasmodic struggle, and joy, penitence, pardon, affection—all in one—flashed in the young man's eye. He started—a moaning sob broke from him—"Father! dear father!" he exclaimed—and they were locked in each other's arms.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Now that he had sincerely repented, now that he had made restitution to those he had defrauded, now that his faith and works walked hand in hand, the millionaire was tranquil, happy. He knew whither he was going, and had no uneasiness, no fears. Conscious that each successive night brought him one day nearer to the Great Meeting, he aimed so to improve the passing time, that, in the words of Reuben, "call when he might, the death-angel would find him ready." He identified himself with all the enterprises of his Master, and gave them a warm support. He "put money out at interest" in every direction where His Lord's glory could be served, and deemed it a privilege to rally to

the aid of every institution that had for its object the advancement of humanity.

He became a sturdy friend of the poor, by liberally helping them in their necessities; of the ignorant, by contributing generously to the cause of education; of the superstitious, by liberal gifts for the promotion of literature and of science; of sinners every where, by munificent and systematic donations for the extension of the gospel. "Man is a poor fellow," he would say, "and needs all the help he can get."

There was no sectarian narrowness or bigotry in his views. He remembered the Saviour's saying, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd," and was liberal to the institutions of all denominations that own Christ for their shepherd and rest their only hopes upon His merits. "Men are poor fellows," he would say, "and on certain points all cannot see alike." If uncertain of the propriety of helping a cause outside of his own sect, he would settle it by a generous donation, and thus remove the bigotry which was the father of the doubt. He worked for the glory of his Lord, and not for that of his denomination.

He felt for the poor and the struggling. "The conflict for daily bread for the dear ones at home," he would say, "is often a fierce one. The heart is tried, and its tenderest feelings wounded at every step. How often is the struggler knocked down, how often hurt; and how often does he weep in secret over his agonising bruises and at the cruelty of his kind. He is a poor fellow; and a few words of cheer and a little timely help, send him braver and hopefuller on his way."

He grew in grace day by day, and consequently more and more in the spirit of his Redeemer. Neglecting no duties, he had no glooms, no fears. Knowing on Whose righteousness he depended, he looked forward with a reasonable hope. His faith was a living, breathing, perfect thing, and showed itself a substance, not a shadow.

Tom united with the church with his eyes open; that is to say, he had an intelligent understanding of the Bible.

After his baptism, he entered upon The Work of the Redeemer with the ardor of a true disciple. He said to himself, "There are two broad classes of workmen—those who preach The Word, and those who support the preachers. As I am a business man, I will be one of the supporters." He never forgot his duty in this respect, or neglected it.

We should have mentioned in the preceding chapter, that on the evening of his reconciliation to his father, Tom learned for the first time that he had in Reuben a kind and loving brother; and that it was to his influence with Mr. Asbury, that he was indebted for the timely loan that had enabled him to go into business. He then understood why Reuben was 'the best friend he had in the world.'

The litterateur was baptised on the same Sabbath with his old classmate. Like him, he, too, took upon him the vows of a christian, understandingly. He fully comprehended that faith in Christ, to be of any avail, must be a living thing. He studied the Scriptures carefully, and acted according to his convictions, one of which was that he had *his* share to do in the great work of his Redeemer. He could not preach in the pulpit, for that was not his gift, but he could do good in various ways with his pen, and he improved his talent. He could not carry The Message to the heathen at home and abroad, in person, but he could help to sustain those who did; and he scrupulously set apart a liberal proportion of his earnings for that object. After his marriage with the governess, he spent two evenings a week in deeds of mercy among the sick and poor; dropping a good word now and then, as well as a good dollar, and thanking God in his inmost heart for having kindly shown him the difference between the religion of Romance and the religion of the crucified Redeemer.

On a pleasant autumn evening, a few select friends, consisting principally of persons already known to the reader, were assembled in the drawing-room of the millionaire. The object of the party was the public recognition, by Mr. Big-nell, of his eldest son.

After an hour of social interchange of thought, the millionaire rose, and drawing a sealed packet from his breast, approached Reuben, and placing it in his hand, observed,

"My boy, my Reuben, take this. It should have been yours before, and would, had I but known you earlier, and been equally as familiar with your worth. Accept it as a willing, if a tardy, offering from an old man's heart that knows no human joy so great as that of proudly calling you his son!"

He wrung the young clergyman's hand, and passing with unsteady steps to a lounge, seated himself beside his wife, and asked her with a glance, "Have I done well?"

Mrs. Bignell smiled upon him, and he felt glad.

Tom rejoiced, and whispered to the elf, "This makes me feel good. Rube *ought* to be rich!" The elf pressed his hand.

Mercy, from a seat on an ottoman, observed her beloved with a solicitude so intense that it disturbed her smooth brow from its native serenity. Her confidence in him was boundless; but she knew that he never before had been under the influence of so great a temptation. And from every chamber of her trembling heart a beseeching cry ascended to the Throne that he might not waver but stand firm.

Peter Brown was uneasy, but without exactly knowing why. He was glad to see his favorite receive the packet, and, suspecting the character of its contents, hoped it would do him good. And yet he didn't know. He was not satisfied that Reuben would be so well off with money as without it. The good that he was doing was mainly owing to the fact that he had in his mind but a single thought, in his breast but a single aim—devotion to the interests of his Master. How would money, the visible source of so much evil, affect this singleness of purpose? It had made shipwreck of the faith of thousands, and why might it not jeopard his? And yet the jobber did not know. The Lord is abundantly able and ready to provide for those who put their trust in Him; and he hoped *He* would take the matter in His hands and decide it in His own way, which would be sure to be the *right* one—the jobber knew *that*.

Mr. Asbury observed Reuben with an untroubled eye. He knew the young man's principles, and felt tranquil.

The young clergyman broke the seal of the packet and drew out three papers, which he examined one by one—not following their contents in detail, but sufficiently to comprehend their nature.

The first was a deed of certain houses and lots in the aristocratic quarter of the city; the second, of a large farm a few miles from the metropolis: the third, the most bewildering of all, a check for a hundred thousand dollars.

For a minute or two, Reuben was pale, speechless, motionless. Had his life hung upon a single word, he would have lost it, for he could not utter that word. His lips were as if glued together, and as if they never would separate more. It seemed to him, also, as though his will had lost all control forever of the forces in his body. A cold, damp sweat burst from the joints of his knees. An icy thrill darted through his frame and held it as in a spell. The portals of his heart were suddenly thrown open, and a tumultuous host of evil thoughts came rudely, riotously and triumphantly pouring in. Desires, good and bad, that had been long chained to the wall in far back dungeons, broke through their shackles and cells, and joining the uproarious throng, yelled frantically aloud—'Gratify, gratify!' Insults, long forgotten, started up from their slumbers and clamored noisily for vengeance. Wrongs, long forgiven, sprang vigorously to their feet, and shouted for retribution. Pride, vanity, avarice—lust for power, opulence, fame—all the evil demons of the human heart, seemed suddenly to be let loose, to tempt, bewilder, terrify and drag him back to the world from which he had escaped; to force him to forget God, Christ, heaven, his own soul; to inspire him to ride, rampant with egotism, over all who would not flatter or do him homage; to indulge, to satiety, every whim; to run a dashing career of elegant vice; and to flaunt down the broad avenue of life with gilded splendor, dazzling envious eyes, and followed by swarms of parasites whose flatteries and applauses should lead him to forget—the dark, fathomless gulf at the end.

But out from her chapel niche came, at this juncture, the angel Faith that had been sent from on High to keep watch and ward over that poor soul that she might go no more astray, and that had successively caged and chained the evil spirits that abode in and originally had dominion over that helpless human heart; whipped the turbulent intruders off, the escaped demons back to their chains and cells, the evil memories to their old repose; re-set up the Redeemer's im-

age, which the rioters had thrown down; swept out the attainted air and let purer in; and all again was peace and joy, and sunshine in that lately troubled breast.

All eyes were upon him; some to observe the effect of the sudden receipt of fortune upon one who from childhood had been familiar only with short commons: others to notice how he, who had ever spoken of wealth as a means and not as an end, would comport himself now that he had it in his power to do as he willed.

But the young clergyman was true to the self-sacrificing order of which he was a member.

"What am I to do with this, sir?" he asked, calmly replacing the papers in the envelope, and turning to his father.

"Do with it?" said the latter, in surprise.

"Do with it?" repeated Reuben, gently. "I am in the employ of a Master, who amply provides for all in His high service, and who will not let me want. My life's yesterday was safe in His hands, and why should I fear to trust Him with its to-morrow? What need, then, having so sure a Helper, have I of property or money?"

Some of the company looked at him in surprise. Mr. Asbury, Peter Brown, and Mercy, alone seemed to think that the young clergyman had taken a wise step.

"Have I a faith like that?" murmured the litterateur.

The millionaire's countenance showed that he was grieved and disappointed. Reuben was pained.

"I know, sir," he said with mingled gratitude and affection, "that you mean well and kindly by this too generous gift; but I may not take it. It would not do. I am unaccustomed to the use of wealth, and I should fear its influence upon my mind. It has led millions into danger, and why not me?"

"There is reason in that!" observed Mr. Asbury, coming up to his help.

The millionaire looked less grieved, and admitted that perhaps there was.

Reuben said he knew it, and added:

"There are men who are fitted to handle riches without ruin to themselves or to others; to such, and those within their influence, it is a blessing; and to them I cheerfully

leave it. You, sir, are one of these, and therefore I return it to you again, with thanks as warm as ever bubbled from an overflowing heart, and with an abiding confidence that you will so employ it that it shall redound to its high Owner's glory and your credit in the last great day."

"This is faith!" muttered the litterateur, in amazement.

An air of joy shone on Mercy's features at this moment. She felt proud of her husband. Peter Brown was delighted. Tom envied his brother. Mr. Asbury was pleased.

Nevertheless, there were some who fancied that the young clergyman had not shown his usual good sense.

The millionaire, though convinced of the far-reaching soundness of the young pastor's reasoning, was yet ill at ease. He would rather that he had taken the money.

"Man is weak," suggested Mr. Asbury, perceiving the state of his mind.

Reuben smiled his thanks for the generous aid.

"But while he clings to his faith, he is strong?" suggested Mr. Bignell, still hoping to prevail upon him.

"Strong?" repeated Reuben, with a winning smile. "He—the man? Never! For while this side of heaven, the old man of the human heart is still in him, and incessantly playing up to the Tempter to beguile the poor fellow away from faith; now luring him imperceptibly into self-righteousness; then stirring up his pride to egotism and stubbornness; anon, making him the creature of his own little vanity; then exciting his avarice; ere long calling into play his selfishness and making him its dupe; by-and-bye throwing him into doubt, coldness, gloom; and meanly taking advantage of his very earnestness, yea, of his generous instincts, to betray him. Strong? O, no. Every thing but strong! Weak, rather—yea, helpless. Ever deeming himself wise, and yet the shallow gull of every circumstance; considering himself able to walk straight and to maintain his dignity, and yet stumbling at every step; competent, in his own conceit, to conceive and execute the most bewildering enterprises, and yet perpetually committing blunder on blunder in the simplest—to map plans for years to come, and yet a victim of the first incident in the next hour—ever ready to sit in judgment on his fellows, and yet running

over with culpability himself. Not strong; and never so weak as when he hugs the jilting thought that he is strong; no, never so weak as THEN! *None* strong; not one on all the earth who in his breast carries that wily, treacherous thing, a human heart. *ONE alone* strong: He who, in spite of the Tempter and his arch ally, by the all-conquering force of His loving grace *in safety* LEADS THE MAN. *He ALONE* strong; man—impotent victim, all his days, of his own imbecile conceits, conscious of his utter dependence on God for wisdom to walk from hour to hour, and yet scarcely willing to trust Him—only A POOR FELLOW!"

The millionaire was silent.

"With these views," added Reuben, affectionately, "what want I, sir, with money? You mean well, but I cannot, dare not, accept it. My high calling is best pursued by leaning from hour to hour on Him who will surely hold me up. I would steer clear of temptation, not court it."

His father turned away, sobbing.

"So walk I now," continued Reuben, pale with stirring enthusiasm, "so may I walk unto my journey's end along life's solemn pathway; thankful alway for the privilege of putting aside even a few stones from the way of a single pilgrim; of warning one traveler of false, fair-seeming spots that only cover pitfalls; of pointing weary wanderers to shady resting-places on the wayside; of whispering courage to the faint and disheartened; of leading the heavy-laden to Him who alone can give them rest; of doing ever so little for One who has done so very much for me; and for the privilege of now being able to lay my hand upon my heart and say, '*Whether Thou sendest me poverty or riches, happiness or affliction, LORD! LET THY MOST HOLY WILL BE DONE!*'"

THE END.