

THE DANGERS OF THE TOWN.

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ROAD TO RUIN

THE DANGERS OF THE TOWN

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BY EDWIN F. BOWEN

AUTHOR OF "THE TOWN OF THE FUTURE," "THE TOWN OF THE PAST," ETC., ETC.

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101 WALL STREET

THE ROAD TO RUIN IN SIX STEPS

BOOK I.

STEP I.

THE YOUNG GAMESTERS.

THERE scarcely exists one human being who may not be said to have been liable in his youth to the first step, or the initiative, in crime; but to whatever it may be owing, whether to the watchful guardianship of friends and parents, tenderness of conscience, dread of punishment, or the guiding hand of a beneficent Providence, true it is also in a vast proportion of the human race the *second* step is *not* taken—there is a certain spot where we halt, a certain length to the "tether" given beyond which we are not permitted to go, and thus hundreds wander no more in that promising but treacherous road.

But while crime cannot be annihilated, nor its consequences shunned, it may be lamented that the seductions and allurements of sin are only paraded with the more shameless effrontery in our towns and cities. Gradually it insinuates itself with venom breath and hideous face (muffled as it is, 'till ready to spring at the victim's throat), even to the very hearth, sacred as that should be to the domestic virtues.—By idleness, by drunkenness, by cruelty, and by all the fearful auxiliaries that belong to such names as penury, disease, famine,

and wretchedness of every sort,—by these former and through these latter progressive steps is a man unconsciously led, till the end of his journey stares him in the face; and even while he shudders in horror at the fate he has wooed, his important repentance comes at last, if tardily, but with a terrible dread and fear. Every good resolution is then unavailing; every prayer is addressed to the deaf winds, that scatter his words, and bear him back no answer: he is lost!

To trace a human being from his boyhood to his manhood, through these six different but significant phases, becomes now our province; and by laying down before the reader the varied scenes of vice through which he passes, in such a manner that instead of inviting him it shall the rather revolt him in its sure consequences, is our purpose.

It may be boldly stated that no one in London is ignorant of such a place as Kensington Common, who is old enough, or sane enough to know anything. The resort of laborers and mechanics who play at cricket, quoits, or trap-ball on a summer's evening; or on dissipated Mondays—the rightful heritage of all the juvenile population from the Elephant and Castle to

Poplar, and from Camberwell Green to Westminster Bridge,—the finest place near or in the metropolis for kites, cricket, prison-bara, and all games where physical exercise is the thing sought for.

But it is also here that the idle and the vicious congregate—here errand boys loiter on their journey, and acquaintance are formed broken only by imprisonment or the hulks; here also one fine summer afternoon was assembled a crowd of boys, all from about ten or twelve, or thirteen years of age, busily employed in the noble and innocent game of "pitch-and-toss," and at the moment we introduce these "fine young English gentlemen" to the reader, they were loudly squabbling.

"Ah! ah! Tommy Slammers," cried one, very irate, and very red in the face, while jerking his pointed finger at him,—*"ah! ah! ah! what did you go to cheat for?"*

"Wot did I go to cheat for, Shiny Cuff?" demanded Tommy, scornfully, addressing a young gentleman with a very short nose. "Why, 'cause you tries on too many dodges. Wot did you—?"

"Wot's that you say?" cried Shiny Cuff, advancing towards Tommy: "you say that again, that's all."

"Then why don't you go to pitch fair?" said Tommy Slammers, avoiding very skillfully the other's invitation.

"So I do pitch fair,—don't I now, Mike Mudge?"

Mike Mudge, a heavy-headed youth, thus appealed to, gave it as his opinion that "he didn't know anything about the matter, and that they'd better pitch again."

"I'm blest if I do," cried Shiny Cuff, very indignantly. "Look heret here's the browns, all of a row, and mine's fast."

"Blow'd if I don't though," exclaimed Tommy Slammers. "'Cause why—you've been and intimated them into the nick with your toe."

A direct and very decided onslaught on the speaker's nose from the knuckles of Shiny Cuff was the energetic reply, and Tommy, whose feelings were both enraged and hurt, turned too, and with much dance-

ing about and sparring upon the empty air, and amidst cries of "go it!" "hit 'im!" "cut away, Tommy!" "pitch into him, Shiny!" and various other encouraging cries, aided and patronised by two or three cabmen whose desultory moments were thus agreeably relieved—the combatants, panting and tugging, embraced each other, and with a good deal of shaking twisting, and terrific endeavor to squeeze each other to death, at last went down and rolled over one another on the ground.

"Hi at him!" shouted one. "Chivy, Shiny Cuff—chivy!" cried another, and "Walk into him, Tommy!" by a third, when a light boyish form came bounding into the midst of them, with a laugh and a shout, crying out, "Hullo! what's the row! Why, Tommy! what, Shiny Cuff! pitching into one another like two coves welding a horse-shoe?"

The speaker was a bold-looking, well-built lad, of about twelve years of age, though his features were blackened with the smoke and dust of a forge. He wore a kind of leathern apron over his clothes, and a small bag was slung by a hammer (behind his shoulder) containing the implement of his trade, which he threw on the grass, together with a large door-lock, that he was either taking home, or to the smithy for repairs.

He appeared to be well known to the others, who saluted him with great cordiality, and evinced much feeling by asking, "how his mother was?" and "whether she knew he was out," and finally concluded by requesting him to "sky a copper," or "make one in a game."

"No, no," he replied, "I must be off, or old hammer and tongs will be giving me a swinging, if I stop. What's this about?"

"With a nice piece of band leather, eh?" exclaimed Sammy Wilkins, a shoeless juvenile, not noticing his query. "Blest if I'd stand it, for to go for to work such a blessed fine day as this—catch me, that's all!" there was a general laugh of ridicule and approbation at this rally.

"Come, I say, Wildeye," said Mike Mudge, very pressingly, "take a hand with us—there's only three on us have any browns, and we want four. Blow the old smithy, and let the bellows alone a bit, can't ye?"

Frank Wildeye turned his laughing face from the one to the other of the speakers, and then after cogitating with himself a few moments, had apparently made up his mind; for he said at last, "Well, I don't mind if I do; but it will only be one game."

To this proposition they readily agreed; and as the cabmen found that the interest of the fray had passed over, they retired, leaving the young lads to begin.

The match was soon made. Frank Wildeye chose Tommy Slammers, who seemed very little the worse for the fight; while Shiny Cuff, his old opponent, very cordially agreed, and chose for his partner one Bill Blowzer, who had for the day at least eschewed the coal-yard where he sometimes did odd jobs, but who exhibited more alacrity and zeal in seeing that the new nick was properly placed, than in his avocation. Preliminaries being adjusted, one after the other the pence were skilfully thrown.

The play in itself may abstractly be harmless enough; but the consequences leading from it, are the dangers to be encountered. Whoever has watched a number of boys at this game, will be surprised perhaps to notice the stupidity that is aroused, the intense desire displayed, the greediness with which they all set themselves to win and add to this, the insatiable passions so frightful—so deadly and destructive to honesty, honor, and the frank nature which is so noble and fine in youth, betray in all their heinousness the germ of a passion which, if fostered, leads the youth to the card-table, or the bagatelle-board, till it find the man a confirmed gambler; a shameless cheat; a despised and abhorred object.

The first game was over, the odds were tossed up, and the squabble, the "improva-

tion, and the oath, were heard raising in noisy discordancy among them. The second game began, and Frank Wildeye had almost forgotten his errand. By some sleight of hand, or greater skill, he and his partner had both been worsted by their opponents; and as the money was not his own, but his stern master's, it became a passion to him now, and hard work to win back what he had lost—he was therefore compelled to lend his companion some, and the third game was over and lost ere he had well-calculated the results.

The heart of the boy grew cold with fear. He was not utterly bad; but his morals had been laxly taught him by his mother, who during her husband's life had thought of little more than of "gadding abroad," going to the galleries of the theatre, taking her Sunday trip up or down the river, without much demand to domestic comforts or preparation for the future. She was therefore now in poverty, and compelled to work her fingers to the bone in order to make out a living. Weak-headed and somewhat vain, for she had been a beauty in her day, though not yet thirty, she had spoilt her child by indulgence and flattery, his vanity, supplying him with pence, permitting him unrestrained to have his own way in all things. She was yet compelled, though against her will, to allow him to be bound to John Hammer, a smith and farrier, in the neighborhood, foolishly brought up as a gentleman, or at least as her ambition led, wear a clean shirt and good coat, and go to his office (as clerk) into the city every morning.

The smith, an old friend of the father, had taken the boy as much from motives of charity, and to relieve the widow, as to make, in his own phrase, a "man of him." Idle, insolent, and fond of gaiety, the boy, even so soon, had become vitiated by his father's drunkenness, which had carried him off quite a young man, while the mother still clung to her "drop of gin," neither showing him a proper example, nor teaching him any better lesson.

surprise could there be if, thus tolerated, his conduct could lead to anything but good?

They were, in the very midst of their game, when, as the boy was stooping down, and Mike Mudge was just preparing to "pitch," a strong hand was laid upon Frank's shoulder, and a vigorous heavy thwack, nearly brought his heart into his mouth, as lifting up his terrified eyes he beheld the grim and frowning face of his hard-featured master above him.

"You young rascal," cried the smith, "is this the way you go about your work? and I've been waiting this hour for the change you should have brought me. Where is it?"

Wildeye made no answer, but he was stung to the quick, for his pride was hurt by perceiving that his comrades were whispering together, and laughing over the scrape he was evidently in. Without a word he stood sullenly beside John Hammer, who again gave him a shake, and said once more, "Where is the money?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Master Tommy Slammers, "ain't old Tonga a workin' himself up to give Frank such a twistin'?"

"That comes o' workin' at a black-smithin'," observed Mudge, very gravely thrusting his hands into his pockets.

Meantime Shiny Cuff, while the sturdy smith was shaking an answer out of Wildeye, was behind the man almost convulsing the boys with laughter, by grimacing, and putting his thumb to his nose, and playfully extending his fingers, desiring him to "take a sight," and so on; but this, in itself was of little avail, to Frank, who still sulkily stood, his bag of tools at his feet, and the grim hammerer frowning upon him.

"I say, Frank," cried Ben Blower, "fore I'd stand such a lickin' as you're afe to have, hang me if I wouldn't cut and run for it."

"Do you mean to speak, or do you not, sirrah?" exclaimed Hammer; "but I'll have it out of you,—this is all your mother's doing,—take up the bag, and come with me. What! you won't?" and giving him a smart

cuff on the dexter ear, he repeated, sternly "Take up the bag."

Frank, trembling with rage and fear, stooped down and obeyed amidst the jeers of his associates; and shouldering the bag, he went doggedly forward, the smith following him, occasionally hastening his steps with an admonitory tap, till at last they arrived at the workshop.

"Now, young fellow, put that bag down and come along with me, will you?" said the smith, quietly. Frank threw the bag instantly on one side, but Hammer did not appear to pay any attention to it; for he led the way into a little "office" at the end of the shop, where he drew the boy in after him and shut the door.

The quiet preparation of a man who generally vented his ire more wrathfully, sifted the heart of the boy with dismay. His imagination heightened all that was in itself really bad; and seeing that the old man took hold of a kind of day-book, and began to turn the pages, Wildeye became pale as death, and trembled in every limb, while he fancied he beheld the policeman in the distance.

Having looked over several pages, and dotted down some figures on a bit of paper, he turned his keen eye on him, and said, "How much money have you?"

The lad put his hand into his pocket and drew forth a few shillings, which he placed on the desk.

"Is that all?" demanded his master.

"Yes," replied the boy, in a whisper full of fear.

"Well, now listen to me, will you?" and he turned full upon him. "I know your father, my lad, and I know your mother, too. It is not my way to speak ill of the dead, and I could only wish that your father had been a better man; and I do not wish to speak ill of your mother, only that if she had stayed more at home, and kept the bottle out of the cupboard, and attended more to you than to the ribaude in her cap, it might have been better for you. You have been receiving several sums of money for me lately, that I know

nothing of, and I dare say you have spent them. I am too poor a man to be robbed, and if I were not, this should be stopped. Where do you think this will end?" There was a pause after this last abrupt question, and the boy was now weeping bitterly.

"You may as well save your tears," said old Hammer, scornfully; "for there's no sincerity in them. You begin rather early at the trick to gamble first—it's always the fruit of idleness—and then rob me after. I could give you to the police for it, but I will not, though I don't think I am doing right by letting you go. I took you out of compassion, thinking it was for your good, and a bad day's work it was for me. You are going to the dogs fast, my lad, and I'm sorry for it; but if you continue and can't keep your hands quiet, you'll certainly finish with the hulks or the gallows. You've been a lazy, saucy boy; and although I've paid you well, and would have helped you on if you'd been worth a spark, yet as you prefer the company of such vagabonds as I saw you with to-day, you may go and join them, if you like, but don't come near my shop any more. Go! mend if you can, or you'll break your mother's heart; there's plenty of time, but I can't spare any of mine for you."

The sense of shame and of degradation was not quite blunted; but the fear of immediate punishment, being thus taken away, relieved him; and though he stole off like a beaten hound from the old man's presence, his freedom, love of indolence, and narrow escape consoled him.

And yet he had not lost all feeling. The shame burnt in his blood and rankled in his heart. He loved his mother too, after a fashion; and he dreaded her displeasure and grief. What should he do? A plausible story would make it up; the first step was already taken, and out of it sprang abuse of confidence, dishonesty, and a systematic lie. Wildeye slowly bent his way homeward, and soon arrived at the place where his mother lived, in a little narrow street, leading from the numerous ramifications of

Lambeth,—where all that is polluted by the dregs of poverty might be discovered. Mounting up the staircase of the large house (let in chambers to about a dozen families, thus forming a regular colony), he came to the apartment and entered.

His mother, still a very pretty-looking woman and fond of tawdry finery, was busily at work when he entered; but he could perceive by the twinkle of her eye that she had been having her morning's cordial.

"Good gracious me, Frank," she exclaimed, "what brings you home now?"

"Why, that old Hammer has been beating me again," was the answer, "and I won't go to him any more."

"Beating you, my darling boy?" she cried, jumping up and embracing him; for her heart was still the heart of a mother—a sacred fountain of affection, in spite of every folly or fallacy that might possess her. "Oh! the nasty ugly wretch," she cried; "but I'll let him see. Where's my bonnet?" and she began to bustle about the room. "I'll let him know that my child is not to be treated in this manner. My mother was of good family, and had blood in her veins, and you, Frank, ought to be a young gentleman, with a pony to ride upon, for you're handsome enough, bless you;" and while this maternal rhodomontade was ringing, the widow had snatched her bonnet and shawl, and was preparing to depart.

"Don't go, mother—dear mother, don't go," for the lad already knew the power of wheedling,—besides it was no part of his plan to let her speak to the old man. "Eh?" she hesitated; "a low black-smith—to think that I should send you there! Oh—a—o—it's too much," and then she began to sob, "to be so—beaten and abused—used."

"Never mind him, mother: something better will turn out, I hope, than this," said the boy, having gained his point; he's not worth your notice. You know he'll only swear and curse, and use such language that will frighten you. Don't go there, now?" and he took the bonnet and shawl

away. "I'll soon get another place, and a better one than this smoky old blacksmith's forge."

And so the mother lost her best friend in old John Hammer for the man would have melted at the widow's tears and entreaties for her son, had she gone; for she would have learned the truth, and believed the hard but honest man; but she never saw him again, and therefore Frank's lie, as he detailed to her a new version of his own concoction, carried him through, and so worked upon her tenderness and feelings that it was necessary to apply for relief to the bottle.

Days passed on, months followed, and the boy's time was spent in the society of the law and the vicious; but more particularly, he was always in the company of his adopted friend Bill Blower, who made a living, however known, but he had money in his pocket, and could treat Frank to the best of the low dancing rooms, when the lost boy had not money to buy bread. Frank was a smart boy, too, of lively powers, and much intuitive talent, and had received a tolerable education at a neighboring charity school, where the master had ventured to infuse a little more knowledge into his pupils than had hitherto been done.

Some years passed in struggling against poverty, while the vicious courses of Wildeye were restrained, not stayed, only by the want of means; but the death of a rich relation, who had remembered his poorer kinsfolk at last, brought the widow a small annuity, and two or three hundred pounds in addition. This change of fortune produced its results, and the widow became young again. She explained this circumstance by significant and expressive hints to her gossip and female neighbors, on the occasion of a grand tea-drinking party, (though she was prudent enough not to say so much of her son's prospects—Frank being now sixteen years of age)—and she parted from them and her old neighborhood with regret, and went to live in a genteel house in the neighborhood of Highbury, where a new and enlarged sphere of life

roused up the emulation and gave play to the ambition of Frank Wildeye, and the widow, introduced to newer friends who flattered her fortune, shone again in the splendor of her otherwise harmless vanity.

Men of Frank Wildeye's class are ungrateful, and Bill Blower was the first that he cut dead; for lest he should be on the watch, he took care to keep out of his old friend's way till they had arrived at their new home; and as they quitted their old lodgings, taking nothing with them, they were enabled to elude observation, and were in a manner lost to all the past.

Frank entered life upon a magnificent scale. He knew the cost of luxuries, and was an adept in sensual enjoyments. The extravagances of champagne and the opera, he commuted by billiards, races, the Adelpi, and the cider cellar. There is a middle-class extravagance in dissipation, and he adopted that upon its broadest scale; and, as he was a master, or supposed himself to be so, at cards, dice, and billiards, at first he found that he lost comparatively little; nay, that gaming to some extent met his own expenditure; and this gave him courage to venture further into the mire.

Business or profession of any kind was a thing that never entered into his head. Idleness had been so thoroughly inoculated into him, that it had become part of his existence. His mother, thoughtless as she was now, added the unlimited passion for drinking to her former neglect, and the boy was thus induced to proceed, and in a manner encouraged in his ruinous career.

STEP II.
The different position in life which Mrs. Wildeye, by her marriage, had chosen, compared, together with her husband's different character, totally to exchange him for many years from her relations and friends; but the legacy bequeathed to her not only tallied her future prospects, but had

brought her in nearer contact with some few she had known long ago, among whom was a family intimately related to her of the name of Carpenter—an intimacy which she assiduously cultivated. They had an only child—a daughter of about the same age as Frank himself; and as the young people were occasionally thrown into one another's society, Frank, who was really a handsome fellow, had made such rapid advances in the young girl's graces, that she was deeply in love with him before she was aware of the fact. This was noticed by the prudent parents on both sides; and as the Carpenters were in a manner wealthy—the old man being a retired trader—Frank, who at first had looked upon the matter in the light of a flirtation, now did not object to look upon it as a right serious affair, particularly as the money was an incentive; he therefore made his declaration of love, and it was accordingly accepted.

Frances Carpenter was a very pretty, charming, fond-hearted girl, and loved the reckless young scamp with a heart so trusting and guileless that ought to have inspired a like affection in return; but Frank, whose passions had now become prematurely exhausted, whose heart had been blunted by his pursuits after pleasure, and whose sensibilities were deadened by gaming, debauchery, and excess of every kind, could not appreciate the worth of such an affection—nay, he had even so far plunged into the horrible slough of his new career, as to hold forth the hideous belief that there is no such thing as pure, disinterested love on the part of a woman. This contemptible slave to his passions believed that his handsome form, striking features, and captivating exterior, had completely conquered Frances; and it was only on the impulse of his insane conceit that he took advantage of the girl's fondness in a trusting moment, and sought to undermine her virtue; but the young man was made to know what a noble thing the virtue of a true woman is, he felt the brand of her scorn and contempt lying upon his audacious brow, as if it

had been seared with a hot iron; and he crawled away—battered, beaten, and ill. This, however, did not break the intimacy which existed between Mrs. Wildeye and Mrs. Carpenter. As for the good man himself, so satisfied was he with the proposed arrangement, being ignorant of the quarrel that had taken place between his daughter and Frank,—that he made a serious overture, that the young man should enter into a business which had every appearance of turning out well; for Mr. Carpenter was cautious, and not likely to speculate largely or wildly, and offered to back him with money and security, provided he would accept it.

The offer the delighted mother repeated to Frank, who rejected it with indignant scorn. "No," said he, "it will be time enough for me to enter into business when I am forced from the pressure of circumstances, and I am not disposed to give up my liberty to the whims of an old fellow, nor even for the sake of the pretty face of Frances." Besides, it was necessary that she, too, should be humbled. A revengeful and dark spirit worked within, and he was determined "to be even with her."

The mother received his decision with grief, but she could not press the question: she had, alas! lost her power over him, she had herself encouraged him; and was it likely he would alter? True in return she communicated to Mr. Carpenter, who coolly observed, "That if he would have his own way it was useless to say anything more about it;" and quietly smoked his pipe.

One morning between ten and eleven o'clock, the breakfast was laid for the mother and the son in the little back-parlor, and Mrs. Wildeye, somewhat pale and melancholy, was waiting for Frank's coming. The poor mother appeared much altered from what she was when we saw her last; for a nature not powerful or strong at any time, had been much shaken by the use of spirits, which she imbecile woman had allowed to over-master her, and to which she resorted whenever she was in any trouble; while the child of her affection

ceased her now much bitter pain of heart. All this had greatly and sadly changed her; she was a poor, trembling creature, with neither energy nor power; and she was now weeping about her at last rose and went to the decanter on the side-board, poured out a small cordial glass, her only comfort, as she really believed, and then sat down to weep anew.

Not long after Frank entered the room, wrapped in a dressing-gown of a bright glowing pattern. He was not even then sobered, for he came home the previous night—or rather morning—very much intoxicated, a common practice with him; and the fumes of drunkenness still blating around the boy, the poor mother so greatly loved.

"Good morning, mother, good morning," said he, saluting her with an air of gloomy indifference; and drawing a chair to the table, he leaned his head on his hand.

"Good morning, Frank," she replied. "O, gracious me!" she added, gazing upon the inflamed though still handsome face,—"why, my dear Frank, oh! why do you go on thus drinking and destroying your constitution, and—"

"I say, mother," said Frank, with a kind of chuckle, while pointing to the decanter, "how can you be such an unreasonable old lady? Do I ever make a remark about you? Come, now, don't begin to preach to me; this morning, there's a good soul, but let's have some breakfast for I'm going out to spend the day."

"Again?" she cried; but seeing the changed expression with which he looked upon her, she said, "Nay, Frank, I was not going to reproach you—you know I never do that; but I was going to express a hope that you would spend this day with me—indeed, I want to speak with you very much."

"Why, what do you want to say, mother?" and he drew his chair nearer as he spoke, and poured out some coffee. He had spent yesterday at Mrs. Carpenter's, and began Mrs. Wildeye's thus, paving the way

for heavier and more important communications.

"Well!" muttered Frank, sullenly, "what of that?"

"And we were remarking, both Mrs. Carpenter and myself," continued the mother, "that the poor girl Frances is looking so sad and melancholy, and—"

"Well, and what of that, too?" once more demanded Frank, in a tone of indifference, though he certainly started, and a pang of remorse or something else crossed him.

"What of that?" echoed Mrs. Wildeye: "why, you must be insensible as a stone. Do you not love her?"

"I did," replied Frank, a shade of melancholy crossing his face,—"I did, but—"

"But what? I tell you, Frank, that these courses in which you are engaged will not only lose you a handsome fortune and a good wife, but will break my heart!"—here she began to weep—"and destroy you."

"Come—come, mother," said Frank, "let's have no more of this crying—it's all nonsense. As for Frances, do you see, I don't think she cares a button for me—I don't for her." This was a deliberate lie.

"But she does, I tell you," insisted Mrs. Wildeye, "and she has told her mother as much."

"Well, then by Jove!" exclaimed Frank, rising up suddenly and slapping his thigh, "I'll go and see her again; though we quarrelled lately, and she told me never to see her more, and—"

"Nonsense!" cried his mother: "some lover's quarrel; I suppose it's always the way with young folks. If you go to her, she'll forgive you, and make it up before you ask her; and let me tell you," added Mrs. Wildeye, dropping her voice, and speaking across the table in a confidential whisper, "she's a good match. The old man, though he was angry with you, loved her too well to oppose her."

"Just the thing," cried Frank, "for I'm

desperately pinched now, and I'll do just as you tell me."

"Will you?" exclaimed his mother: "then you will not go out to-day?"

"Why—a—why, you see, mother," hesitated Frank, "I have absolutely promised, in fact, I have a pigeon match at Battersea, and there are some heavy bets which I am sure to win—sure to win."

His mother shook her head sadly;—nay, with an air of misery so helpless and complete that his heart was really touched by it. "Frank," said she, "I received yesterday morning two letters, one is from a man named Levi threatening to arrest you if I do not pay thirty pounds for money borrowed, and another is from some one insisting on fifty pounds."

"Give them to me!" shouted Frank, rising from his chair.

"Nay—but Frank, dear Frank," said she, in return, and endeavoring to soothe him, "be calm, I implore you."

"The scoundrels!" cried the young man,—"the villains! to rob me in the way they did;—but give me the letters; and, hark you mother," he added in a decisive tone, "the next you receive do this to them;—"

and as he handed him the two missives, the young man thrust them "into the fire. There, that's the place for those; and now let us cut this matter short—I'll make it up with Frances,—but I must go out to-day, and—I—a—deuce take it!" he muttered, self-hesitating, "I must out with it;—"

then added, thrusting his hands into the depths of his trouser's pocket, "I've no money, mother, and I want some, and it's of no use your beginning to scold me."

"Good heavens, Frank!" she cried, "no money? Why, I gave fifty pounds two days ago."

"Well, that's true," he replied; "but how can I keep up my character as a gentleman—"

"Gentleman!" exclaimed the mother. "I'm afraid I've done you a deal of harm, Frank; and make a sad fool of myself and you."

"Why, what do you mean now, mother?"

demanded Frank. "Speak for yourself, and leave me out, if you please."

"When you have spent the little money we have, what do you suppose is to become of us? I could hardly work to keep us both when we lived at Lambeth, and now"—she clasped her hands in despair, and wept afresh, "you cannot work. I almost wish you had not left the old blacksmith's or that I had gone to see him."

"You are mistaken, my dear mother," replied Frank, soothingly. "For my part I am very glad that I left old Hammer's; for I have moved in the station I am most fitted for; and as for want, why I shall win my bets and gain a hundred pounds by them."

"And spend two hundred," said his mother, dejectedly. "No—no, don't trust to that."

"Now, that's always the way you go on; I tell you I'll lose no time in making it up with Frances and the old people; so, like a dear old soul, let me have twenty pounds."

"Twenty pounds!" ejaculated the mother, in utter astonishment. "I have not got twenty shillings."

"Well, then, you must draw a little more, that's all," returned Frank, stretching his legs complacently.

"Draw a little more! Why, do you know that we have long ago spent the three hundred pounds we had left us?"

Frank started, he did not know it, but he feared it; but as he was from time to time supplied, he was careful not to ask from what quarter it came,—nor indeed did he heed much provided that he had it.

"Well," said he, at last, "you have some little plate,—pawn it," and he assumed a hardened air.

"Frank—Frank!" cried the widow, in affright, "it's pawned already, and I've overdrawn my annuity; besides, I have borrowed money to such an extent that I am refused any more."

The young man bit his lip. "Can't you go to Mr. Carpenter?" said he, at last.

"I am afraid that—"

"Try it," said Frank, interrupting her somewhat sternly, "and go at once. If I have not twenty pounds this morning, I shall be utterly disgraced,—aye, disgraced so that I dare not meet any one, and must leave the country." This, as he expected, harped rightly on the fears of the fond mother.

"Leave the country!" she cried, turning pale. "Oh! Frank, do not speak like that.—it would be too cruel—it would kill me. Stay, and I'll go there: comfort yourself, I will go at once, though I fear it will be fruitless," and leaving him to his moody thoughts, the widow soon dressed herself and departed.

In an hour she returned, pale and trembling. She had seen old Mr. Carpenter, so she told her son, and had stated to him her want of twenty pounds, which he had not only refused her, but with a few very significant words intimating his dislike to lending more, having done so before without having been repaid. He also added that he rather doubted the propriety of her giving her son so much to indulge himself farther with; for that his courses and vicious propensities were a matter of talk,—drily concluding by congratulating Frances on her narrow escape from a spendthrift,—that he was always glad to see Mrs. Wildey as a relative at his house, but that he must bid her good morning.

When this news was told Frank, his rage was boundless. He swore a terrible oath that he should be revenged,—that for this insult the old man should weep tears of bitterness and anguish; and seizing his hat he rushed forth, in spite of the widow's entreaties, leaving her overwhelmed with terror and despair. Alas! he did not know to what further misery he had left her!

He went forth with a fierce hatred in his heart, and a black design working in his brain, and was crossing a neighboring street, when he was met by two or three young "gentlemen," like himself, about town, who in a sniggering, half "half-fellow" manner, asked him where he was going to, or whether he

had forgotten the match that was to be shot at Battersea?

"No—no, my boys," replied Frank, in a bold, jovial, dissipated tone; but assuming a gay and independent air—for he had become perfect in simulation, and could wear a gaiety upon his face even when disappointment was rankling most within—he added "I've not forgotten it; but I was just going to a friend of mine for a little money, you see. Ha! ha! ha! I have for the first time overshot my allowance with my sternly exact mamma, and she refused to lend me twenty pounds this morning, which is the slightest possible inconvenience in the world, and—"

"Come—come!" exclaimed a young fellow, somewhat short in stature, and very ambitious of imitating Frank in address and style—he was the hopeful scion of a rich soap-boiler, and answered to the name of Timmins—"come, what a row about a twenty pound note. Here's one—here's two—here's three, ha! ha! now choose: which shall I lend you?" and he parolled the tempting papers, which with that execrable bad taste that always accompanies plenty ill-bestowed, he kept ostentatiously in his waistcoat pocket.

"Why, you are—a—very kind," said Frank, with an attempt at hauteur, a sort of courtly frigidité, though his fingers longed to clutch them—"but I am not so absolutely pushed—in fact, if I went to the City to my mother's banker—"

"Oh! bother," cried the other, shaking the notes with impatience—"what need of that? We can't spare the time. I'm only just one of you, you know, and we're all going to spend the day together—so, to save time and trouble, you may as well borrow a couple of these."

Frank thought so also, and at last with great cordiality he took two of the notes, saying, "Well I am greatly obliged to you. It's only till to-morrow—"

"On the middle of next Christmas," observed Timmins, playfully. "Do not speak another word, I beg. Now, gents," he added, in an important tone, "that our worthy

friend to accommodate, what's the next thing to be done?"

"I'll tell you," cried Frank, quite himself again,—"as we are to make a day of it, we'll just begin upon a bottle of wine, I'll stand it,—nay, half-a-dozen, and then we'll go through our shooting match, and wind up with a first-rate dinner and a game of billiards or cards. What do you say?"

"Agreed!" cried they all, while the small gentleman exhibited a frantic sort of delight, and they adjourned with Frank to a tavern of rather flash pretension, as to billiards, skittles, bowls, and harmonic meetings,—the landlord of which received Frank with great delight.

Here, in the recklessness of youth, secure of the present hour and heedless of the future, prodigal of excess; for as yet youth and health were not undermined, though the seeds of premature decay were already sown, they drank two or three bottles of wine, for which Frank paid, and now idle, thoughtless, dissipated, they were primed for any mischief.

The party, after this early debauch, with lighted cigars polluting the sweet fresh air of the morning, stalked on arm-in-arm (Frank being prominent in speech and act, feeling himself now that his pocket was supplied, once more a man,) till they came at last to a cab-stand, where, with much wrangling and abuse, which ended in treating those around them, they at last got to the boat, and were finally landed at the Red House, Battersea.

This house has become a favorite resort of a portion of the "shooting gents," who have dogs, guns, pigeons, and boats; and as many of the frequenters of this establishment, were wealthy commoners, and actions of the aristocracy, there followed in their train, as a matter of course, a host of dog and pigeon-fanciers, blacklegs, panders, pick-pockets, watermen, scuffers, and a rabble of others infinitely lower, who lived upon the extravagance and vice of their patrons. To many of these our hero was well known; and he was not a little flattered by their notice, which as it extended also to his companions,

not the least important or pleased was the little Timmins.

But Frank's shooting match was one part of the attraction, and having drunk some champagne,—for he was getting desperate and losing his coolness and caution,—in order to steady his nerves and sober him, they all adjourned to the shooting ground, an extensive square of waste meadowland boarded in, where their intended prey were kept in small boxes.

Fortune at first favored; and then ran counter to Wildey; and at last left him loser of the match, though he had very skilfully laid bets in the meantime, which left him in about the same position as he was at first. At its conclusion he had his twenty pounds untouched; but annoyed at the disgrace accruing to him for his lack of skill, though ordinarily no mean shot,—he once more led his companions to the tavern, where they drank copiously of wine.

"Werry sorry, sir, to hear, sir, as you've had such a run of hill luck!" exclaimed a burly-looking young fellow, with an unprepossessing face, drab breeches, laced boots, and a white hat,—"Werry sorry, indeed, Mister Frank;" and he touched his hat with proper respect.

Frank gazed upon him for an instant, and as a dim recollection crossed his mind he remembered the features of Mike Mudge, now a dog-fancier, or a fancier of anything that might come in his way; and he almost cursed his fortune that brought him once more in contact with this vulgar ruffian. The reader may be tempted to ask here where lay the difference between the ruffianism of the one and the colder villainy of the other. We answer that we do not know if there existed any.

Fearful that Mike would speak of his origin, and thus expose him to the insulting jests of his companions, he beckoned the fellow within; and asking for a private room, he bribed Mudge to silence regarding the past with a couple of guineas, which he greedily accepted and readily swore to hold his tongue, though with a silent reservation to himself.

Frank then rejoined his companions, taking Mudge back with him in order to "treat" him, where they remained some time longer, till our hero, tired of this, cried out, "Who's for finishing the day with a revel and a dance, or a game of billiards at Greenglade Gardens; there we shall find music and pretty girls, and fun in plenty—who'll go?"

"All of us!" was the response, and forth with ordering a large wherry, they were rowed across the river to the imminent danger of drowning, and in about two hours afterwards they were idly sauntering about the gardens. The place was crowded by well-dressed people of both sexes, young and old, and there were amusements of all kinds going on,—rational to those who go in a rational manner to enjoy themselves,—vicious to those who seek for vice; and such were the three led by Frank Wildeye.

"I'll tell you what," said Timmins, after a walk and a pause, during which they had grouped together, "this is very slow—too slow by half for us fast fellows. Have you nothing else to propose, Frank?" For Frank had been very gracious to the ambitious youth, and Timmins therefore looked up to him accordingly.

"To be sure," replied Frank. "More wine will soon sharpen our inventive faculties, and I propose that we go within the billiard-room, for when it's dark it will be time enough to come out as strong as you please. What say you?"

"Why, that we are agreed to do anything you propose," replied another; and passing from the garden through an immense dancing-hall, with vast chandeliers of colored glass-lamps, ready to be lighted up at night, they arrived at the billiard-room. Then more wine was called for, and play began.

Frank played with great skill, coolness, and dexterity; and he had already cleared his debt with Timmins, when a tall and rather white-faced youth (one of his companions) who occasionally figured as a medical student in sundry police reports, challenged him to a game; and here he found his match, for the thin gentleman was also as cool as

his opponent and infinitely cleverer; so that at last Frank gave it up, having lost a considerable sum.

By this time it was necessary to light the lamps over the billiard-table; and after a series of practical jokes, carried on with the waiter and the marker, this procedure was carried. It was then agreed, *nem. con.*, that more wine was absolutely necessary, in order to prevent them from becoming weary of their location.

Having been joined by some of those poor, unhappy girls, who frequent these places of amusement in order to allure and dazzle the young by their bright smiles and fair faces—whose laugh is so glad and joyous, and whose hearts are like ashes, bare and desolate,—containing a gigantic and unspoken misery beyond the power of words to express, which at last, from long endurance, becomes so black with turpitude and blasphemous wickedness, that a fiend himself might wear it,—having, we say, been joined in the billiard-room by these, an additional supply of wine was called for, and the orgia commenced in real earnest.

It was not yet very late in the evening. The sunlight was dancing upon the waters of the Thames, and the golden distance lay in a soft and slumbrous haze,—while the sweet summer air was soft, gentle, and musical; but within, the hot vapor of wine rose from among the young drunkards, and the uproarious song, the yill jest, and the frantic laugh, pealed forth, as the bacchanals pledged one another in bubbling cups, till they could scarcely stand.

From the room the eye could see through another chamber, now brilliantly lighted up, into the distant garden; whence the pulsing echoes of the music came floating by, and where numerous happy and innocent hearts were harmlessly enjoying themselves; for, as we have stated, the vicious and the virtuous alike might find diversion there. "To the pure all things are pure." The place in itself was not evil; but there were those who made it so.

All of a sudden there began a wrangling between Frank and one of his friends, whose

heated passion must needs find vent in fierce and noisy wrath. The altercation grew so violent that epithets, as insulting as true perhaps, were interchanged between them; and finally, in spite of the entreaties of the young women, the two had begun to scuffle together, till at last Frank, carried beyond all bounds, threw off his coat and challenged his opponent to fight.

Then burst forth, in all its hideous discordance, the infuriated rage of both. Oaths and blasphemies, too shocking for the ear, were interchanged, and the dull sound of blows, and a trampling of their unsteady feet, were mingled with the screams of the women.

Frank, grasping a billiard cue, was only prevented from dashing the heavy end on the forehead of his foe, by a female clasping him tightly round the waist, with an entreaty to be quiet,—while with a black and bitter scowl, the other was clutching a bottle prepared to dash it in his face. The foam stood on the impotent young man's lips; he ground his teeth with rage;—when at the instant a body of police, called in by the waiter, entered, and settled the fray by taking the belligerents into custody, and carrying them to the station-house,—where Frank, the next morning awoke with blood-shot eyes, racking headache, shaking limbs, and a pocket miserably shrunken, to be taken before the magistrate, fined for his misconduct, and severely admonished.

STEP III.

THE PAWNBROKER'S.

ALL that had passed taught Frank no lesson. With an almost headlong pace he was going on to destruction, and his poor mother did not even lift up her voice in remonstrance. All seemed ineffectual, and in the apathy of despair she folded her trembling hands together as if to pray and die!

For some time past she had been estranged from the Carpenters; and during this,

as we have said, the unhappy boy, drenched in sensuality and drunkenness, comprehended not the misery his mother was doomed to undergo.

The poor widow, whose means were literally drained by Frank's extravagance, knew not what to do. It was not inconceivable for want of money—it was absolutely want of almost all things. She had exhausted the patience of those from whom she had borrowed, leaving them without even a hope of repayment. She had borrowed money upon her small annuity to an extent that left it utterly useless to her. Without a friend, without any resource, she was in her loneliness thus, night by night, compelled to await the return of the still beloved, but depraved boy from his orgies.

He had in the meantime, ere this, seen (by stolen interviews) Frances Carpenter, and the breach between them was soon healed; for her gentle heart yearned towards him. She was ignorant of his reckless career; and his protestation of love soon overpowered her anger. She loved him as before; but she did not behold him often; and they were at last secretly married, though she was compelled to go with her parents for a month or two into the country, and neither he nor she dared to divulge the secret, so that for the present it was known to none. Frank did not even think it worth while to inform his mother.

A month, two, three, passed away, and Frank night by night was at the billiard-room, the card-table, or the low orgie, in which he played a prominent part. He was become so utterly shameless and abandoned, that even Timmins cut him, and all his old associates quitted him. His luck, at play deserted him, so that he was obliged to eke it out by less scrupulous means. His features grew disfigured with continual intoxication, and his aspect was that of perfect licentiousness. Still retaining his jaunty air of ease and breeding, so false and hollow, it was woefully belied by the "squalor" of his clothing, whose hue, lustre, and sleek nap were becoming worn out. His hat was shabby, and his boots leaky. The

language of the sake of good means gave place to the impudent leer of the sharper, or to an audacious modesty. Mike Mudge, who appeared to improve in proportion to the decreasing glory of Frank, once more met him, and dragged him still lower to these infamous dens he was now becoming habituated to.

Still he contrived to get money; but not from his wife: he could not, and as yet did not press her for any. He had sworn to be revenged—and would he not wait—wait, and endure a little longer! It was his poor beggared mother that he still wrung the last farthing from, till she was left foodless at home. He thought not of it—dreamed not of it, and, as shouting out some jovial song about wine and women, cared not for it. She had been obliged to let the upper part of her house, and only retained the kitchen and two attics as bed-rooms for herself and for Frank; but even this little pittance did he with an almost merciless ferocity insist upon having. She loved a boy who thus withered her, till it became an atteration; no remonstrance, no resistance, no complaint met his ear; but passive, hopeless, and despairing, she gave him all, and only put her thin hands over her throbbing eyes when he told her, that he might not see the tears of agony spring to them—lest he might curse her whining, and rush forth to the streets, and silence to the tavern.

We take the reader with us to a small kitchen paved with flag-stones, though the stones are as white and clean as the table of a rich man. Cleanliness is the only ornament of that chilled place. The fire is dead, and has been so for many hours; but a crested candle flings its yellow and sticky light on the little dresser and the walls, where a melancholy strife of misery had been essayed, by putting a few polished tin utensils on them: the very whiteness of the place, in all the penury it displayed, was bitter to look upon.

It was two o'clock in the morning, and very cold—bitter and biting cold. Winter generally so, and winter, in all its white, icy atterment, was dominant within and with-

out; and the Boreal blast, whistling in the long streets, was not colder than the heart of that poor woman pacing that stone floor. It was the poor widow—thinly clad—and oh! so end-looking—pale as a sheeted corpse!—thin, and wrinkled, and old, and hungered to the very heart!

To and fro—to and fro she walked, and had been thus walking for hours. She always sat up for Frank—she had not even the oblivious relief of the bottle to fly to, nor had not for many a day; it was impossible they both could. Her features were pinched with pain; and she stopped a moment in her walk to listen to the savage whistling of the wind as it flung the keen sleet against the windows—and then shivering and moaning as a gust of cold air crept round and through her; even to the marrow—she resumed her walk.

She was hungry; that poor old woman, and she had eaten no supper,—but there was a supper on the table for Frank. She looked wistfully upon it—lengthened her gaze; but while tears stole down her furrowed cheeks, she only shook her head, and recommenced her walk across the kitchen.

"Ah! he comes," she cried, at last; and it was astonishing to see what a joy he up those worn features; but the heavy footfalls went staggering by,—and another and another succeeded—and still she kept her watch.

Terrible moments those to the poor widow, whose vanity of heart and weakness of head had long passed away. The grim world became to her all too rough and ruffian-earnest; and long—long ago had her flightiness given place to a solidity and weight; but it was a ponderosity derived from suffering. Think of this, Oh young reader; that aged head which ought to have been pillowed with respect, and love, and filial obedience, thus rudely dishonored—no sleep, no rest closing the heavy lids; the very voice that should have been to her gentle and affectionate, was then shouting out some vile song, fitted for an infamous saturnalia.

"Oh! will he not come?" she moaned.

"Frank; Frank; this is killing me. Night after night—morning after morning; peniless—foodless!" The poor widow shuddered, and walked about more hastily, as if to shut out a horrid image; while broken prayers stole over her lips.

At last she listened with intense eagerness to one step she was certain she knew. It had the cadence, although an uncertain one, of Frank's foot. It stumbled up to the door; the knock was heard, and she crept softly up-stairs to light him in and to assist him down stairs.

He reeled into the kitchen, and flung himself, with sullen visage, into a chair; his dress was disordered, and his features were heavy and inflamed, while the eyes were full of blood; and as the mother gazed in silence upon him, she wrung her hands with an anguish so poignant, that it appeared as if she would have knelt at his feet and there, with a heart all splitting, have died!

That same night Frank had been the life and the soul of a boon party, and his voice and laugh were loudest of all,—every faculty had been excited—every idea had been bared; he had amused his companions with flashes of merriment, and mad, equivocal mirth; and now—now he was like an exploded shell; nothing! he was, as it were, dead; his whole electric fire had gone out; he was utterly collapsed; with neither soul nor thought, and his brain had no further coining. No word was spoken, but his mother gazed furtively upon him as she pressed the little supper close to him, and looked in blank silence upon the fearful wreck of her only child.

While he was eating it, and by turns falling into a moody reverie, without one single thought for her, the mother's imagination seized one idea, fed upon it, drained it, drank and exhausted it, till her very soul was re clothed with the morning dews of her younger days; she was happy, then, for the time.

For she remembered herself of that drunken young man a child at the breast, a little creature, with curly golden locks, as beautiful as light, and full of health, crowing

and laughing in her arms, so lovely to the proud mother's thought, that she almost devoured it with kisses. She would not, in her poverty and privation, have taken the whole world, with its principalities and powers, its stars and garters, or even its Russian diamond snuff-boxes, in exchange for that living treasure—not she! She remembered how fast he grew, how very soon he began to prattle and talk, and how amazingly he got on with his reading when but a very child; it was so wonderful.

Great heaven! why do the white ashes look dark when compared with the whiteness of her blanched cheeks as she awakens to the present?—why?

Because the child is lost in the man, and the man is lost in the oblivion of drunkenness. Because the flush of health has given place to the blush of intoxication. The fires of his fine eyes are quenched, and the seal is there—on his cheeks.

Alas! yes—on his cheeks, the bottle hath sapped the flowers of promise: so young, so beautiful a boy! Now his cheeks are bloated, and white, and red, and ghastly, like a dead man with his face painted. Good, foolish, fond old mother—die! Thou hast "loved not wisely, but too well."

That night, when they slept, his mother had a terrible dream; and in the morning, ere Frank went forth, she knelt down before him, and prayed him, for God's dear sake, to stay with her—to pity her; to love her! Was this much for a mother to ask? She, the mother, prayed for her son to love her, as if it were only to love her a little; but with a coarse laugh and a wicked jest, he took all the money she had, and went forth.

He returned as usual, hours past midnight, after his debauch, reeling and half frantic. The air was cold and bitter, and the freezing wind shrieked and moaned over the hard ground, and beneath the black sky, seeming like the wail of some dire, so sad and solemn, that the peculiar cry struck him. On the crystal, hardened air, it rose like the dismal shape of the Threnos.

—a lament of the mourning women for the dead.

"Dence take it," he muttered, "how that breeze hables. Ugh! ugh! it's cold—very cold. What a pity one must leave such a pleasant nook. Curses on them," he continued, "they are ashamed of me—me! but I'll let 'em see, I—I will. What's that shape flitting and dancing before me?" he muttered, as he attempted to gaze straight before him. "Very! strange very strange!" and so, with such disjointed fragments, he reached his mother's door.

He knocked softly—there was a light flickering through the kitchen shutters—he knocked again: the cold was dreadful, and he was impatient to get in, but no one came. "It was singular," he thought. "She must have fallen asleep:" and there pealed "three" in the morning from the gray steeple.

He stooped down, and touched the window-shutter without—it was unfastened—he drew it back, and opening the window, got in and reclosed it, and then with a thrill of fear he began to look around him.

The light was on the table, and the supper was laid as usual, but the fire was out and his mother sat in an old chair. She slept very soundly, for she moved not—stirred not.

He did not go near her, but stood gazing upon her. He was almost sobered by an indefinable awe—a cold fear that crept over him: she looked so venerable as she sat—for the wrinkled features were smoothed into a solemn calm. The eyes were closed and the head slightly bent. A straggling lock or two of grey hair had escaped from beneath her cap, and the wind blew it about her cheek. The thin hands, where every vein and muscle were prominent, were clasped one in the other. A smile was on her lips. How very calm must her slumber have been!

Like the memory of an old household ballad; like a soft stealing of music, came over the hardened boy's thought of the past. How happy he might have been,—and what

was he now? His heart throbbed and swelled, and tears stole into his eyes.

He took the light and looked into the cupboard; every dish was empty, every plate cleared. There was no bread—no food of any kind but his supper on the table. No bread! How then had his mother lived? For the first time he gave it a thought, and his heart seemed crushed with a weight he could not endure: he gasped for breath; he panted—phantoms passed before his eyes; first all smiling; at last, all grinning hideously!

Her head, as we have said, was bent; but in her hands he detected an object that had missed his gaze. He approached, in order to look upon it nearer,—it was a little lock of golden hair; his own! A tear had frozen on her cheeks; she was cold—for he touched her hand; she was calm; very calm—she was dead! Cold, and hunger, and weariness of life, together with abandonment of all hope, had done their work!

He may cry if he will, unavailingly, out of his great anguish as the poet did:—

"Oh! that those lips had language."

But they were closed for ever, never more to speak to him with endearing words—never to pray and to beseech him to beware of the witcheries of drunkenness; never to kiss his own white lips and ashy cheeks; never to move more.

Two or three years went by. and Frank Wildeye, who now lived with his wife in a wretched room, had only sunk lower and lower in the scale of society. For a long time the father of his wife had refused to take heed of either of them. The wrathful man had driven poor Frances forth, and cursed her for her clandestine marriage; but softened by her sorrow and distress, he had at last relented so far as to give her a trifle of money now and then, which, with the needlework she had obtained, helped to buy their bread, though the greater part still found its way into the tavern. But it was a part of Frank's plan, even when intoxicated, to wreak his vengeance upon the father by his atrocious abuse of his wife;

and this detestable intent and purpose he made no secret of from her or her parents. It destroyed her love and made her life a terror to her; and the wife that would have died for the lover was forced to look upon her husband with detestation and abhorrence.

With cool, systematic, and diabolical cruelty, he forced the poor woman, by the labor of her hands, to feed him and the child, and yet before the very eyes of her stern father he was killing her daily. This conduct he swore to persist in till the old man settled a sum of money on her as her dower. This Frank felt sure of having; but to his astonishment and dismay the old man suddenly died, having left his widow a small annuity, a large part of his money to various hospitals, and the remainder (a considerable amount) to Frank's children when of age. To poor Frances he left his forgiveness and his blessing only, stating that he saw even less hope for her had he left her money, as it would only have been the means of fostering her husband's extravagance, without in any way benefitting herself; but he was determined that her children should not suffer for the faults of either.

Frank had defeated himself, and his rage knew no bounds. He redoubled his ill-usage, and seemed to have imbibed the most inveterate hatred against his own children, who had robbed him of an inheritance he had calculated upon as his own.

Time went on, and Frank was now twenty-five years of age. How he had managed to live of late was a mystery which he himself could not unfold. It is true that he had undergone much wretchedness and privation, and had endured the pity, and contempt, and finally, the scorn and indignation of his old companions. He had been hunted from among them with jeers and laughter, as a sneaking fellow, as a counterfeiter, as a sham personage—nay, as a cheat and a swindler.

He had made his wife work for him as his old mother had done; and he bore so much with a kind of heroism unscrupulous

and unshrinking, because it arose from the cherished thought of wreaking his vengeance against old Carpenter upon his daughter. And this course he followed by such a systematic manner, that neither she nor any other could legally prevent him from doing. He did not beat her, nor turn her out of the house; but there are other and more refined modes of torture, and these he became an adept in.

Having removed from his late haunts, the only companion who still remained fatally true to him, was Mike Mudge, whose pursuits even up to this time were a mystery to Frank. He sold dogs and pigeons, and probably stole them again; but still this was insufficient to account for the money he at times had in his possession, and which he shared with the utmost liberality and frankness with his companion. Mike was a clever rascal, and had a thought or two in reserve: he was patient also, and would wait any length of time.

And yet there were periods of time when Mudge was not to be met with for many days; and it was then that, being penniless, and almost foodless, Frank would return to his miserable home, and demand money from his wife. But this resource now failed by the death of both her parents,—for the mother died within a short time after her husband.

It was on one occasion that Mudge having been cut off the way for a week or ten days, Frank went homeward one afternoon, determined to obtain money in some way or other, and a thought as cruel as it was infamous struck him. Entering his room with a scowling brow, and a bitter look upon the young child who met him at the door, he flung himself into a chair, and said, "I want some money."

"I have none," replied the trembling wife.

"Stuff! always the cry," said he; "there was that obstinate old lady—my mother—she used to say so at times; but for all that—"

Frank interrupted his wife, somewhat impetuously, "It'll be true that per-

ple whisper and say, the less you talk about the matter the better.

"What do you mean?" demanded he, in a fierce tone; "and what do they say?"

"They say, Frank," replied the wife in a tone of mournful sadness, "that by your conduct you reduced your mother to beggary, and that she perished of hunger. I did not know it then."

The dismayed husband put his hand to his face, and groaned aloud. That dark and dreadful night came before him with every hideous particular; and while his conscience told him that the fearful accusation was true, his blood boiled with rage, that he should be taunted with it, then starting up with flaming eyes and clenched fists, he shouted out a terrible curse against the meddling fools who presumed to stigmatise him in this matter, adding with a vindictive scowl: "And do you take heed, my wife,—let me not hear any more of this from you; they will be words which you will terribly rue if you speak them again."

She was terrified; and trembling she resumed her work as he proceeded:

"Now, understand me, Frances,—I cannot toil, and I will not; and I cannot stoop to beg, yet—there are other modes, to be tried first. When I come to ask you for money, it will be no answer to me to say that you have none."

"But, my God!" exclaimed she, "what am I to do?"

"I know not, and do not much care," he replied. "I married you in order that you should be my slave; I wedded you because I owed your father a bitter grudge."

"Oh, Frank,—Frank!" cried the heart-stricken wife, "why do you persist in speaking in that way? You told me that you loved me."

"I lied then," exclaimed he, coarsely; "but," he added in a brutal tone, "I knew what I was about even then."

"It is too true; but oh! Frank, I loved you, with all my heart and soul."

"Now, fool, you," was the husband's comment: "you ought to have known

better. Look you, I want money. Well, you must get me some."

"I cannot; and I have none. I swear to you;" and she wrung her hands in anguish.

"It strikes me," observed Frank, "that I have already told you that shall be no answer. If you have none you must get some."

"But how? and from whence?"

"Why, what do I care about either means or place, you pale fool. Do you suppose that a man like myself, who having lived as I have, can become over-scrupulous about means and ways? Do not believe it," he continued. "Do you imagine that I who have eaten of the best, and drunken of the red wine—I who have lived for the pure enjoyment of life can fall back upon bread or water, or turn an honest water-carrier, or into some other drudging fool?"

"Would to heaven that you could;—but Frank," said his horrified wife, "you do not—you cannot mean all that you say?"

"I do, by heaven!" said he, deliberately, as he rose up and walked to the small chest of drawers against the wall, and opening them, he tossed out, one by one, the sad remains of the finery, she wore in her girlish days. One after the other, till the tears scalded her, did she see flung out, the dresses, little trinkets, and other valuable articles, which she, however, valued most.

"Here," he cried, at last, taking out the wedding dress: "this is of no other use.—Pawn it."

"Pawn it! you cannot mean! Frank, do not, for heaven's sake! do not!" but she spoke to one deaf as an adder. She spoke to one whose heart was callous and hardened; she spoke to one who now found a fiendish pleasure in pursuing his point; for he saw that it was gnawing her to the very heart.

"And here's a shawl," said he, contemptuously. Ah! and a bonnet, a necklace, and a bracelet—hum! pretty toys enough; but they'll fetch in more money."

"And Frank!" cried the wife, "when this is gone, and you have had the money, and

spent it, where am I to get food for myself and child?"

He paused a moment, and then with bitter hardihood, said:

"You, my dear, can apply at the work-house; and for the child—why she will be a lady of property when she is of age, or you can send her to her guardian's, or apply to the Lord Chancellor, ha! ha! Come—hang you!" he added, with a fierce gleam in his eye; let's have no more of this—pack up the things—"

She did not wait the completion of the speech, nor the blow which threatened to descend. She spoke no word—murmured no longer—the bundle was made up.

"Now," said he, "place it under your arm, and then to the pawnbroker; I will bring the brat with me. Be quick!"

Putting on her miserable bonnet and her little scanty shawl, with a heart sick to death, and with a face all pale and ghastly, she descended the stairs, while Frank followed, dragging, rather than leading his child by the hand.

Out of one of the leading and crowded thoroughfares there stood a court, and at the corner of this court was a small door, which was so formed as to elude public observation, while at the same time it was well known that this was the entrance into the pawnbroker's shop.

Standing without—holding the child by the hand, who gazed up into his dark face with an expression of wonder and fear, while the wife went into the shop, he began to revolve many projects in his own mind: but even while a glow of satisfaction at the humiliation he was thus inflicting on his wife warmed his almost ossified heart, a presentiment of some coming evil fell upon him, a dim and vague misgiving of advancing mischief. If he by a premature cruelty maimed his right hand—that is to say, if he deprived his wife of all chance or hope—it would leave him breadless and penniless; and he somewhat relented as she came out of the shop, and with her white hand put all the money into his.

"Is this all?" asked he.

"Ah," was her cold reply.

He started; but as he got into the passage way, who should he meet, face to face, but Mike Mudge. A glance of mutual recognition ensued; but Mudge evidently did not wish to draw upon him the wife's attention.

Frank placed a few shillings into her hand, and pushing the child roughly to her, bade her to go home; and then darting round the corner was soon seated with his friend in deep and earnest conversation in the private parlor of a low tavern.

STEP IV.

CRUELTY.

SEATED in the tavern, Mudge at last lifted up his heavy brows, and cast a keen, sagacious look on the haggard face and miserable dress of his companion; then lifting up his voice he cried in a *saturney* tone. "Wot, Frank, and is this raly you?"

"What do you mean by asking that?" demanded Frank, somewhat angrily.

"Why, I was a-thinkin' to myself," replied Mudge, with an assumed air of meditation, "can this be the dashing young blood, thinks I, wot used to carry on everything before him—wot sported his boat on the river, and his dog-cart at Epsom?—Why, when I used to think of that precious old blacksmith as used to wop you, and of the old 'shop' as your mother had in Lemon Street, Lambeth,—or of your precious arms as used to walk out of the jacket or the wrister, and then," added Mike with a growling admiration, "think of the swell as you cut arter, I'm a ready to fly; and to look at you now—"

"Silence! hang you," growled Frank hoarsely; "silence! hold your tongue!—Do you know, when I think of those things they drive me mad."

"Why, looker there, now," cried Mike, "blest if I didn't think so. I say, you're a little seedy, Frank, but I suppose as your Missus's guv'ner will stump up, eh?"

"No, he won't," muttered the enraged

Frank; and he cursed the dead old man in the ground.

"Dead, is he?" echoed Mike, and bilked you, eh? What a pity. "I say," he continued, as he looked at the shabby clothes of the young rake with an eye of commiseration that made Frank's blood boil in his veins, "I say, your toggery aint werry slap up now; but I dessey as your pals don't mind that—"

"I'll tell you what," shouted Frank, with an eye that was growing ferocious and blood-shot, "if you talk any more in that manner—"

"Well, I'll be blessed," ejaculated Mike, "wot's up now?"

"Or hint to me anything about them in any way, do you hear?—or mention old names, I'll—I'll—"

"What'll you do?" demanded Mike, coolly taking a draught of the liquor before him, and then cocking his hat with a peculiar air on one side of his head, and bending upon Frank a glance so changed and so full of contempt, of insulting superiority and ruffian boldness, that the words died away on his lips. "Suppose I do?" and Mike paused for a reply. "Why, you miserable warmint, you would live by speaking day by day arter the heels by those who have shoved you one side, and after meanly receiving wot they gave you, like a hound under a table, so to some other place and spend it with a swagger and an oath, as if you had no end of money,—as if you was the Prince of Wales, and you expecting your prime minister to bring you harrow-loads of gold every day, you miserable whelp?" and the ruffian, in his utter contempt for Frank, looked a somewhat nobler being, simply because the energy of his nature gave him a power of scorning the paltry shifts of a soul so depraved as Frank's. "Now, wot ave you got to say? I've helped you to money many a time," pursued Mike, "and you took it as if you was my master, and me your servant to fetch and carry; and you thought I was doing myself a favor, my pretty lad," added Mike, tauntingly. "You wouldn't

stoop to thank me, because I've got a fustian coat on, and the others—ugh!—precious scamps, all going to the dogs,—and, s'elp me," cried the man, striking the table with his fist, "not worth the dogs' eating;" and he rose up, moving towards the door.

"Mike, don't go away—don't leave me," cried Frank, as he saw that on the conclusion of this long speech his old friend was about to depart. "Come, come—sit down, and I'll stand something more to drink;" and he at once knocked on the table, while a fresh supply of spirits was ordered, and Frank drank with a greediness that evinced a desire to drown remorse or stifle present emotions.

Mike, with an air of indifference, obeyed, and seemed to have forgotten all past anger as he asked with a cold air, "Where was you a comin' from when I met you?"

"From the pawn-shop," was Frank's dogged reply.

"The pawn-shop, eh? Umph! Didn't think you'd got quite that far yet," muttered Mike; "but," added he to himself, I dessey he's vagabond enough to do anything;" and he looked fixedly on Frank.

"Why not?" demanded Frank; "and why do you stare at me in that manner, eh, my boy? Come, you don't drink;" and the eager lips of the young man again touched his glass.

"Tell us, will you," said Mudge, "how much you raised?"

"Five-and-twenty shillings," replied Frank, with a chuckle.

"That's heavy," observed his companion: "and wot was it on?"

"My wife's wedding-dress. Hallo! what's the matter?" for Mudge had started as if he had been shot.

"O nothin'—nothin'—go on; and—and how much have you got now?" and he bent his eyes with eagerness on him.

"Now?" echoed Frank.

"Yes, I mean wot did you give your Missus?"

"Oh! a couple of shillings," said the husband. "I did her, then, eh? Capital! wasn't it?" and he laughed.

"Well," muttered Mike, half aloud, "I wouldn't be such a complete, round, up and down scoundrel as you for all the gold in the Bank of England."

"Eh! eh! what's that you say?" demanded Frank, half leering the energetic words in which the man expressed his intense detestation at Frank's abominable heartlessness; for Mudge was disgusted, robber as he was, and thought thus:—"If I was to wop the woman, and smash the young'uns twenty-four times in the blessed day, if I wouldn't give 'em half of my pocket for bread, I wish I may be scragged before six o'clock;" and pursuing his thought, he cast an eye upon the clock in the room, as if to call it in as evidence, and to request it to be particular to a minute.

"You're saying something to me, that doesn't sound very complimentary," began Frank, even now half tipsy with the spirits he had taken. "Just speak plainer will you."

"I say," replied Mudge, "that you are a clever, cool fellow, and up to a move or two."

"Aye, aye,—ha! ha! ha! I believe you, my boy," shouted Frank: "that's your sort, hey?"

"I say," began Mudge, putting on a look of intense cunning, "you don't like that father-in-law of yours, much, eh?"

"Hang him—hang him!" shouted Frank, the foam of rage and intoxication working about his lips, and his fingers quivering and clutching as if he could drag out the old man's corpse from his grave; "but, ha! ha!" he added, hysterically, "I'm even with him!—I'm even with him!—I'm revenged!"

"You are?" Mike looked up into his face eagerly.

"Aye, I robbed him of his daughter, and he—he well knew that I would be revenged on her—on her—there! What do you think of that?" and he drew back with a fiendish exultation.

"Capital! werry good," replied Mike, with a singular working about his mouth. "Now I've just got a few words to say,"

pursued he, somewhat eagerly; "and as I don't often preach long, I'll begin. You know, when I was a dirty, bare-footed lad some years ago—before you came to your fortin"—Frank writhed at this reminiscence—"well, I wasn't over and above good or honest then; but it was because I hadn't a chance left me of being otherwise. My father sent me out of a morning and told me I was to bring home some money at night, and if I axed him how? or where? why, I got a crack of the jaw, that once broke it: and if I came at night with out any, I was kicked out into the cold streets without a bit of bread. I ran away—I tried to get work—I wished to be honest; nobody would give me an opportunity; and so I was obliged to break the eighth commandment. Well, I grew up, and I hadn't then done as much harm as one of your young fellows, who about eighteen, come out about town, with money in their pockets, with every scoundrelism matured and full-grown in their hearts—drunkards—seducers—liars!" and the man grew terrible as he summed up the catalogue. "While I, without chance, hope, or friend, could not be good, honest, or happy, if I would—if I tried ever so much; and God knows," added the man, with much emotion "I did try."

"Well," said Frank, flippantly, "go on, old fellow, you've got a pretty litany of names at your tongue's end; but let me have the whole, my would-be virtuous young man. Pray proceed;" and Frank threw himself back in his seat. "I think you said you 'tried to be good;' and what prevented this fine moral force of yours from acting?"

"Hunger, cold and rags," was the reply, "all, prevented me. I have seen half-a-dozen young bloods, walk the streets of an evening with cigars in their cheeks, with impudence that staggered me, and language as impure as their own prurient imagination could utter, pass by me with no want or care, while I—worth them all, by heaven!" added the man, striking the table; "as clever, for he who lives by his

wits is not to be laughed at—as talented,—say, better, and I say it, an honest man than any of them; and yet out of their superfluity they could not spare me a half-penny to keep the sickness of hunger from my heart. Nobody would give me work: they thought I would rob them five minutes after they engaged me; and those other fellows, you and your companions,—robbed those same good people with a fashionable air, while they had their eyes open and admired you much,—oh! very much.”

“Oh, you mean the tailors,” cried Frank. “Ah! ah! we used to stick it into them.”

“I mean any who were fools enough to trust you. Well, I gave it up—I could not be honest,—I don’t think,” pursued Mudge, as if profoundly meditating, “that I was meant to be honest—only it was a mistake that I should have the wish put into me. It’s hard, and I always thought so,” added Mudge remonstratingly, “that a fellow should be hungry all day, and sleep under the arches of the Adelphi all night—go past a shop without priggings, because you’d rather not. I never could understand that.”

“Eh!” and Frank, as he spoke, tapped his nose, with great significance.

Mudge only smiled, and leaning his elbows on the table, gazed steadily upon Frank. “Now, you were just the same as myself, only you had the luck to get a place, and a trade if you’d liked to keep it—or, if your mother hadn’t been such a fool—poor soul, poor soul!”

“I was a gentleman, and I’ve lived as such,” replied Frank indignantly, his callous heart only remembering this part of his life.

“Was you?” returned Mudge, with overwhelming contempt. “Then I s’pose you’re dead now; for a shabbier vagabond I have not seen for many a day.”

“What do you mean, you impertinent fool?” began Frank.

“Come, hold your tongue,—listen to me, and don’t talk in a high tone, or threaten me, or else I’ll give your neck such a twisting as may put you in mind of the gallows;”

and the cool voice of the burly Mike had an instant effect upon the feverish Frank. “You had money left you,” continued Mike,—“you were placed in good society, among decent people who would have done you good—but the feeling was not in you. You did not work then, more fool you,—you have not since. You are about one of the most worthless, useless beings that curse the world with their presence.”

Frank started. “Hallo,” cried he, “what do you mean by all this?”

“Nothing, now,” was Mudge’s gloomy answer. “I’ve said my say,—leastways, I’ve said as I can; and he fell into a reverie, while Frank again applied himself to the glass.

Suddenly Mudge lifted up his eyes, and said to Frank, “When the money is gone, what do you intend to do for a living? for I suppose your wife has not another wedding dress to pawn.”

“Do!” exclaimed the hardened man.—“What can I do? Trust in Providence, I suppose,” was the reply.

“Or make your wife work the harder, eh?” added Mudge.

“Just so,” answered Frank, indifferently, “that is if she can; for between you and I she only earned three shillings all last weeks.”

Mudge leaped up and uttered a frightful oath, while he glanced upon Frank with the ferocity of a tiger. Wildeye was not only astonished, he was appalled almost at the frightful distortion of Mike’s countenance, and half alarmed, he said:

“What’s the matter with you? Are you mad?”

“Yes—yes I think so,” was the reply, “I must be mad. You—do you see—you astonish me: you beat me out and out. Oh!” he cried, with an uncontrollable bitterness, “if God had but pleased to have given me the chance you have cast away—and clapping his hands over his face, the powerful man; the outcast—the ruffian—the robber; let fall some burning tears on the table.

Frank’s astonishment was at its height;

and when he saw that Mudge suddenly seized the vessel holding nearly a pint of undiluted spirits, which had once again been put before them,—drink almost the whole at a draught, and place it down again with fixed and stony eyes,—he was prepared to rush from the room.

“Ha! ha! ha!” all right! my boy; never say die! It’s a little foolish fancy of mine, that’s all,—a bit of nonsense; but, lord, what’s the use of my thinking of such things?”

It was remarkable that as his emotions increased, the vulgarity of his language disappeared,—nay, that it became powerful, forcible, refined as it were into a sort of rugged grandeur, which strangely contrasted with his villanous appearance and sordid dress. The man rose in intelligence in proportion to the impetuosity with which he poured out his singular and unaccountable emotions.

Did that man, then, with his debased life and low habits, by casting back his eyes into the past, that was *not* golden or pleasant to him, but a past of poverty and wretchedness,—a past spent in dirty streets and filthy alleys, foodless, and half clothed,—did he regret that there had been no chance offered to him, no straw to clutch at, while sinking deeper and deeper into the polluted sea that surrounded him?—Alas! yes—yes, a thousand times yes, with all the energies of his heart and soul; and he looked upon Frank with a loathing, a shuddering that filled him with disgust and contempt. How utterly low, then, must Wildeye have descended!

But his subsequent jollity was a desperate one. What use to whine and moan over what he could not help? What benefit to regret what had ever been out of his reach? None: and he cast the thought to the winds.

“I’ll tell you a dodge,” said he to Frank, assuming all his old mannerism, “and maybe it’ll put some money in your pocket. I don’t live a very exact life, and the police now and then are asking arter me with great kindness. Have you a mind to do a

little bit of work in my way, such as cracking ribs or—”

Frank turned pale—he feared the consequence, not because his honesty was insulted, but because his criminal intent was menaced. Mudge saw that his proposal was ineffectual; but he had a design in his brain, and busily was that subtle brain at work. He wanted such an abandoned man as Frank as a partner; and, strange to say, he despised him even while seeking to make a tool of him. But he was too clever a rogue himself to frighten Frank away; by little and little he concluded on having his co-operation. If he could implicate him in a few minor things, gradually he would complete his work. The fear of justice would then give place to the fear of his associate; and Mudge concluded by turning the conversation into another channel; and finally he took him to a tavern, where a number of men were drinking, gambling, and nurturing every vicious propensity. Introducing Frank among them, he so managed the pliant drunkard that he became in a manner one of the initiated.

It was thus that by slow gradations, as insensible as they were fatal, he plunged Frank into crimes which, because they were cognizable by law, also made him partaker of their dangers and of their profits. The law, while it permitted him to *kill* his wife and his children daily, and commit every hideous atrocity that his brutality could elaborate, on the contrary, held him culpable when he became a cheat, a sharper, a petty larceny thief; and though the bolder and more sagacious mind of Mudge sheltered him, it also served the purpose of the man to steep him in crimes of deeper dye; for it is not the less strange than true, that Mudge, while he protected him, had conceived an inveterate hatred and dislike to Frank from the very wantonness of cruelty he had displayed to his wife and children. It is a paradox, certainly, but not an inapplicable one. Mudge never forgave him for having had the opportunity which the wretched Frank had so wantonly cast away; and thus between misery and crime, between

debauchery and danger, still the years rolled away.

It was afternoon, and the poor wife, in a wretched and miserable garret, with the younger child in her arms, was endeavoring with her thin and trembling hands to do a little work. There was no bread in the place; and this work, which would take her some hours longer, would buy some for the poor hungry ones. One little girl about eight years of age, was seated beside the window, and with her small hands was endeavoring to assist the heart-crushed parent; but those same hands were feeble, and the wearied child was weary and hungry. For hours, without a word scarcely, had they sat thus, breaking the monotony of labor by looking out from the broken attic-window on the black, dirty, dreary walls of the opposite houses.

The room was a small and miserable garret next the roof,—icy cold in the grim winter, and like the leads of Venice in the hot, stifling summer; while every breeze, on the one hand, wrapped them up as with a torpor of death, or bore them the noxious and disgusting effluvia of the filthy courts below. On a line stretched across, hung a few rags to dry, the very aspect of which was expressive of abject penury. An old and half-rotten bedstead supported the worn mattress; while the dilapidated chairs, the crippled table, the few broken dishes, the jugs without handles, the window stuffed with rags, or covered with paper, the ruinous fire-place, the filthy and broken door, the dingy walls, all—all, with tongues never silent, proclaimed the dreadful destitution that reigned around.

Poverty is a thing of degree; but it is utterly impossible to describe the extreme degree to which it can attain. The poverty of beggary offers even a kind of fluctuating income, so to speak, because at that ultimatum there goes the burning sentiment of shame. The little respectability that has been cherished, and supported, and clung to, even till the last hour, is swept away,—that barrier being broken down, the sympathy of the public is a source whence food,

and lodging, and money may be obtained. Charity, then, becomes a kind of bank, or rather a tontine, where the survivors succeed to the advantages their predecessors have created for them. But that poverty which is still in a room, with bed and board; that poverty which struggles to pay rent, and to be decent, and strives to have the right to be considered virtuous and good, and which has not quite withered the fountain of the human affections; which clothes and feeds children,—it is that poverty which cannot be told in words; and of such nature was the destitution of poor Frances Wildeye and her offspring.

But for her husband! What beads the vice-hardened man if any were to speak to him this?

"The morning smiles, and the breeze is healthful, and the trees are whispering to one another in the green arches of the woods, and the earth laughs beneath the flowers and the fat pastures,—therefore, brother, if thou hast this day no work—bread-winning, honorable, heroic work to do, come forth with us, with thy smiling children, and thy happy wife,—come and worship nature, and love man." He will answer thus:—

"Go hence!—trouble me not,—or let us hasten to the wine." Such words as these are exponents of his actions. "What talk they of? the beauties of nature, and the glories of life? Is not wine rather the best boon of nature? and is not life in all its perfection to be found in the bowl? To the wine, then, hasten amain. Lo! it bubble—it dances! and what are the smiles of children to smiles like these? What is the music of trees, the fond love of the wife, the prattle of the little ones, to the chiming clang—to the joyful sounds of the revel? The welcome of the wine-seller, then, is warmer than the greetings of the wife; the tavern is more jovial than the household hearth; and the noisy brawl over the bowl far better than voices 'tender and low,' sounding in your ears. Better drink wine than the morning breeze; better drink wine than the dews of Nature's Paradise;

better drink wine than the wine of life; which is love, and peace, and holiness; better laugh with the bacchanals than give the children food! If they cry for bread, wine will drown the cry; if in their rags they cry because the cold goes even to the marrow, do thou warm thy heart with wine; and if they cry, lamenting thy love because it is lost, fling thyself into the incestuous arms of the wine-cup!"

Oh! rash young leveller,—hold—hold! While thy heart is not dead, and thy soul palsied, beware! for it will turn upon thee, even as did the sirens of old; for when men were clasped to their bosoms, they changed into the hideous—the horrible fiends they were!

Such had been, such still was the career of Frank Wildeye. Woe be to the man that says he never had the opportunity! It is false! God hath given it to all, and each alike. Idle, depraved, and cruel, this young man, only thirty years of age, was the type of the utter sensualist. If he were—oh! if he were but a solitary exception, these chapters might have been spared; out, alas! who does not know of some one or other to whom this description will apply!

It was not yet late in the afternoon, and the heavy footsteps of her husband on the stairs warned the unhappy wife that Frank was coming. She trembled: the children shrunk at the sound—they feared. They had—shocking truth—learned to hate their father; for an unnatural dread kills the fresh trust of innocent hearts, and makes them black with misery.

The man, with his haggard face, wild eyes, unshaven beard, and soiled hands, had an absolute air of blackguardism in his manner. All trace of original refinement, however real or factitious, was gone. His coarse jacket, ragged trousers, and tattered hat, completed the hideous picture. Dashing the latter article on the ground as he staggered in,—for he was then in that stupor produced by continual drinking,—a number of playing cards fell out of it, and

plainly evinced the occupation which he had been assiduously following.

He sat sullenly on a chair without uttering a word—without moving hand or foot: only now and then his furtive glance stole across to his wife and children, and he cast them down again, till at last the courage he appeared to have lost, or the embarrassment which he felt, gave way to a new mood of sternness; and at last he spoke.

"Frances!"

The wife shook from head to foot, but she did not speak to him; nay, she took not the slightest notice of him; and the elder girl, whose eyelids were trembling and dewy, only stole an affrighted glance at him, and then quickly averted them in terror.

The father, the husband, rose from his seat and stood behind his wife. "Did you hear me speak?" said he.

She turned her face to his, and though shrinking and cowering, she looked fixedly into his own. "Yes," she replied, in words that were like ice, "I heard you; and oh! my God! my God! I have felt your hand, too;" and as if carried away beyond her self-impossibility, she wept bitterly—agonizingly!

"Hang your whimpering!" shouted he, rudely, shaking her by the shoulder. "Get up and give me something to eat, or I'll give you some cause for tears."

"You do—you have," replied the poor woman, though almost frightened at her own desperate temerity. "Day after day I have experience of what causes for weeping you give me; and last night, oh, brute!—oh, wretch!—oh, pitiless man! you struck me, who have been your slave—your wife! Would I had died ere I knew you!"

"Get up and give me some food; and once for all, hear me, be silent!" His voice had a cool, vindictive expression in it, which shook her as if she had the ague.

"I have no food," was her answer.

"You lie!" cried the infuriated man.

"As God is in heaven!" adjured the wife, "I have not. Neither I nor the chil-

dren have had any to-day; and I have no money!"

"Well, then," said he doggedly, sitting down, "get on with your work. Come, hurry! I want some food, and some more money."

"I will not work any more," replied the wife, casting it down to her feet. "I will not waste my heart and wear out my fingers to feed you—to supply you with money to go eternally to the tavern—"

May the hand of such a wretch be withered! The words were stopped by a blow on the mouth that struck her senseless and bleeding under the table; and with a severe kick on the body, the man cursing them all, left the room.

STEP V. CRIME.

NEVER to such an abhorrent and brutal extremity had Frank Wildeye proceeded before; and even now, for all the exceeding cruelty he had been guilty of, he felt that he had overstepped the bounds of safety—he had gone beyond the limit of abuse and ill-treatment his wife for so long was accustomed to endure patiently; he even dreaded that he had killed her.

That new idea having seized him, he was tormented by the most terrible images of fear. Judicial punishment came before him in all its grim array. The sentence due to blood-guiltiness rang in the air, and the affrighted man wandered about the neighborhood of his wretched lodgings dreading to know the results.

He strayed farther, with the haggard, hang-dog, downcast look peculiar to men whose coats are seedy, and whose ideas of respectability and position are bound to a faultless coat and a smooth nap,—that is to say, there are some men, who, with a good coat on, can confidently look any man in the face, and who, in proportion to the wear and tear of such garments, sink in their own estimation, and are apt to suppose that, in diplomatic phrase, the "eyes of the whole world are upon them," watching every retrograde step they take, moral

worth never being considered by them as deserving a single moment's consideration: and this was the true reason why Frank Wildeye stole on with a dull and louring face, as if there was nothing in the world, that could, by possibility, bring his lost self-estimation once more to a premium.

On he went, hungry, and ferocious, and the blood blushed scarlet to his face, when, all at once he came right opposite to the Timmins of an older day, and another well known associate of his. When he beheld the expression of pity, contempt, and indignation, which crossed the features of the once submissive, but now respectable and altered Timmins, and saw him turn his head to his companion, and whisper something which brought a smile upon his lips, the crimson fire of shame and degradation scalded the man's heart, while it throbbed at his temples, nigh to bursting.

But the climax of his abasement was to follow. Timmins who had treated Frank not only liberally but kindly, had in return received a very contemptuous return, not to mention one return never made,—namely, that of sundry monies lent at various times. Timmins, we say, who turned to his friend and caused him to smile upon Frank, then put his finger and thumb into his pocket, and drawing them forth with half-a-crown between, flung it at Frank's feet, and passed on.

The wretched man, in that horrible state produced by rage, humiliation, and literal starvation, at first would have spurned the money with his foot; but the instant that Timmins turned his back to him, Frank, with a mean and ignoble smile on his unhealthy looking lips, stooped down, picked up the piece of money and hastened on.

"Surely," thinks the reader, "the man now having means to purchase food for the weeping ones at home, will go there, taking with him bread for their eating."

No; he will not do anything of the kind; for, behold! there is the door of the gin-shop standing invitingly open, and the man enters it!

Truly, so it was. At the counter, and

with the spirits in his hand, Frank began to recover his hardihood—his indifference.—Once more he mailed himself in a callous scoundrelism, hardened the more by the gin he was drinking. He cursed in his soul the man who had given him the means of present gratification. Why should Timmins be prosperous, happy, and rich, while he, Frank, was an almost shoeless vagrant traversing the streets, and stifling his hunger?—while in addition he stole away from the remorse of his own conscience which accused him of killing his wife.

The reader must not imagine literally that Frank did no work all these years: there were time when he had employment,—such as copying papers, writing out bills for shopkeepers, bearing messages, or playing a sort of light porter; for he had a good address and an insinuating manner, though drunkenness by this time had destroyed both his employment and his graces. This money however, went the same reckless road. If the man had sworn a great oath that he would kill his wife and children by starving them to death, he could not go about to do it in a more direct and straight forward manner. He never brought home either food or money; but he expected both to be there for him, or woe to her.

The half-a-crown thus gave him an absolute day's festival and revelry; but there was the same proportion of solids to fluids as in Falstaff's tavern-bill, one item of which goes to show a half-penny-worth of bread to a "monstrous quantity of sack." The selfish man would not go near his old haunts lest the principle of "equality" so much in vogue among the frequenters of the tap or the parlor, should lead them to demand a share of his money,—in a word, he was determined to spend it all himself.

Not much to do, and not difficult to be done; it was a practical arithmetic he was well versed in, and as it was also all subtraction and no addition, the money was fast diminishing; though he still had the means to keep up the delirious intoxication that made his heart throb, and his dull eye brighter, and his heavy cheek more inflamed;

and half-staggering he went on, babbling some disjointed and unmeaning words to himself, such as we sometimes notice drunken men do in going through the streets.

He had forgotten the blow and the kick; he had forgotten the dull moan of the fainting mother on the ground; he had forgotten all—"Hurrah!" What cares he for anything? Hurrah! "One glass more;" and so he had it.

Behold, by contrast, once more, how stands Frank Wildeye, a human, living man, with a human soul working within his oscillating and enervated body, when he is placed in opposition with another man, but one who simply doth not drown his senses with gin.

Look, for instance, upon that fellow, broad-shouldered and large of limb, while his ruddy face is all grimed by the dust of his labor; and he boasts that he drinks no "wine," no "gin," no "spirits," even of any kind; in fact, he is a teetotaler.

"More fool he," Frank would have said, with a reel and a tipsy wink.

Perhaps so; but for all that he is a foot of a right noble sort, and it would be well if there were many more of his kind. He has thrown down the great forge-hammer which he has been wielding skilfully all day; and he is now washing himself preparatory to going home; and he will swear to you, by the bright smiles of his wife, and the happy laughter of his children, that there is not in all London, or the world, any place like "home."

Frank would have said in his atrocious slang, if spoken to about it, "Gantmon; no place like the bar of a gin-shop. Hurrah!" and the white fire goes once more down his throat.

But this swart artizan will have none of your strong drink, and his face pales, absolutely whitens, as you ask him; for he mutters something of the drunkard's death, and tells you of an unhappy father who lived drinking, and who died howling in torture; and he asks in addition, "what (if he did so) would become of his wife, his

children, whom, with his country, he loves next to God?" and so on. He knows well that he too must die some day, and does not feel any fear as he speaks of it; but it is because he trusts that he shall die smiling, with prayers on his lips, and his children on his bosom, that he is thus secure. He does not even feel any dismay at the thought that he may leave his wife a widow, poor and destitute. No; his faith in a good Providence is too strong, his deep-hearted religion is far too intense a reality to him. It is not a mere thing of words, and form, and ceremonial,—it is as absolute as light, as air, as life, or any other abstract thing, of whose existence he is persuaded; and, besides, not having spent his money at the tavern over cards, and dice, and dominoes, he points to his club, and his savings bank, and his little investment elsewhere, and laughs at your *pity*, and your *fear*, and *doubt*, with a hearty freshness like the sound of the morning breeze blowing over the sea.

Lo! behold him now cleansed of his Vulcanian hue. He is sitting, after his tea, beside the clean hearth, where the bright fire burns merrily, while the tempest is raging without; or if in summer, by the open window; he has within, plenty of food, plenty of everything. He takes a book, it may be his family Bible, or it may be his family Shakespeare, or it may be one of those numerous and instructive periodicals which some of our presses teem out so bountifully,—it matters little what,—for you may stake your life upon the goodness of the book; and while the wife is at one side with her needlework, her eyes glancing complacently now and then upon the noble face of her burly husband, or her gentle, good-tempered face breaks forth into a question, or an expression of pleasure,—around his legs a sturdy little fellow may be clinging, or clambering up them, or it may be the little girl with the mother's blue eyes and shy reserved face, gazing thoughtfully upon her father while leaning against his knee.

We give you our word and honor, dear

reader, that upon the whole, and after mature consideration, we are greatly more inclined to admire this swart and happy artizan than Frank Wildeye in the gayest hour of his rosy wine-tinted life.

Undoubtedly Frank Wildeye, as he plunged again into the tavern, and continued his "half-quartern," had very different ideas to these which are passing through our minds while following him on this particular day; in the meantime, we will pursue our theme.

Did you ever look upon the face of a dead man? Doubtless. And is it not something very awful? Does it not calm you down wondrously, as you look upon the lineaments once well known, perhaps, and now marble pale? But did you ever look upon the face of a dead drunkard? Ah! that, do you see, my reader, is still more awful. There lies the prince of boon companions—the man who could sing the loudest song, blaspheme with an aptitude wonderful to hear, who could drink more than any other two; he is now still, rigid, and cold.

Stark are the limbs, and clammy are the hands; the oath and the obscene jest are silent for ever. The lips are thin, blue and ghastly, and the cheeks lead like and horrible. There is a gathering of frowns on the brow, that shakes one to look upon, as if he had died with gnashing of teeth; and a forehead covered with the sweat of unnameable terror, as if he had died in the dark—and struggling.

Gaze upon the other dead man, then, and listen; for be assured that solemn words are spoken to your soul, though you can trace them but dimly. Lo! even now, stark and still as the corpse is, there is a smile-like light on the noble lips—lips unsoiled by oath or obscenity. He died with his hand on his wife's bosom, while a soft rain of tears from her fell on his wan cheeks, and the children were beside him. As the sun was setting, even as the beams came over the house tops, and streamed in at his window, he had prayed, uttering strange, grand words, part of which she

heard: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth,*" and passed away.

Why is it, oh, drunkards! that when ye are compelled to listen and to think—why, I say, is it that the words "death," "to die," "to be buried," and "the judgment after death,"—why, do these make you shake, for instance, Frank Wildeye? for the words and the thought *will* come. Why have they such a power and a spell, which palsies the limbs, paralyses the tongue, and makes the heart shrink in undefined terror like the retreat of a mighty sea—why?

It was some such thought that must have passed through the mind of Frank Wildeye, as a funeral crossed his path, and drove him instantly into the next tavern bar, where he with trembling eagerness called for a quartern; and scarcely giving time to the berlingietted young lady to place it down for him, snatched it up, and quaffed it almost at a draught. "Hurrah! that did him good. Hurrah! the living alone can drink—not the dead; their lips are locked. He may die—what matters? and soon—yet, what matters? he was not dead *then*, and he had still money, and he would yet drink!"

Absorbed in his own contemplations, he observed not that he was followed from place to place, with the determination of a bloodhound on the track, and by no less a person than Mike Mudge. If Frank went into the tavern, Mike waited till he came forth, and then followed on. If he stood an instant in the street, Mike stood also. At last it was evident that Frank had spent all his money.

Mike Mudge having patiently waited for a knowledge of this, went up to him, slapped him on the shoulder with a hearty greeting, and asked, "where he was a toddling to?"

"I don't know hardly," muttered Frank, with an oath.

"I say," continued Mudge, "you seem to have been raising the wind. Now you know'd as I was reglar hard up—why didn't you come and lend me a hand?"

"I—I hadn't any," began Frank.

"That's a lie," Mudge said with great coolness.

"I—I didn't mean that," blundered the drunkard; "I left some at home."

"That's another," replied Mike. "Wot's the use of telling me such a twister as that? Sometimes, if I believe the contrary of wot you say, I get hold of the truth. Why, you'd split a board, you would—you do it without any shame. I s'pose you've spent all now?"

Frank without any attempt at justification, merely nodded his head affirmatively.

"Come along with me," cried Mike, suddenly; "I want to speak with you;" and he dragged his companion away by the arm. "I say," he began, "you've been and pitched into them at home, I find; you're a shocking brute!"

Frank, with a relay of oaths, asked, "how he knew it?" and concluded by demanding "what business it was of his?"

"I've been there," was the laconic reply; "and as to business, and that sort of talk, you may stow it. I'll shake you into respect if you begin to bully me."

Frank was silent, for he feared his companion, who was not a man to be trifled with; and Mudge proceeded:—

"I say, Frank, your young'uns will have some tin, won't they, when they're of age?"

"Yes," replied Frank; "the old man left them money; but to—me not a penny—not a penny."

"Well, sarves you right," was Mike's contemptuous consolation. "I would not have left you even a rope to hang yourself with."

Frank, with inflamed and angry eyes, glared on Mike, as if enraged with himself that he was thus compelled to endure his abuse.

"Now, listen," continued Mudge, "though I don't care much for you, nor indeed for any one—I must keep an eye to business. Have you ever thought of raising money from that which is left to the children?"

"Yes," replied Frank.

"I should have been surprised," commented Mudge, "if there was any trick as

you hadn't thought of. Well," he added, "and can it be done?"

"No," answered Frank: it's fastened every way, and I may starve, while they— and here he broke out into bitter curses against the dead.

"I have told you half a dozen times," said Mudge, "that you're not worth a crust to keep you from starving,—do you hear that, now? I'll tell you what—if money could have been raised, I'd have helped you with the dodge; but as it can't, and I suspected it so, I have arranged the business for you."

Frank stared at him with a stupefied air. Mudge continued: "I went to your house some time back, and I saw what you had done: and if you'd been in the room, I don't know," continued the brawny ruffian, looking at his hand and bony wrists, "but I'd have thrown you down the stairs, or out of the window."

"Would you, though?" muttered Frank, rebelliously, and somewhat valiantly, for the contemptuous manner of this strange being was beginning to grow unbearable. "We should have seen about that."

"Very true, so we would," assented Mike. "Well, I lifted up the woman, and had a chatter with her, I say," he added "you don't care much about her, do you?"

"No. Care I no," cried Frank.

"Then you won't miss her when you go home again," said Mike.

"What do you mean? explain all this?" cried the husband.

"She told me how you used her, and I told her in return," said Mike, with categorical coolness, "that she was a fool—"

"Ah! you did, did you," interrupted Frank, with bitter asperity: much obliged to you, I'm sure."

"Quite welcome," replied Mike politely; "only don't grind your teeth in that manner. Well, I told her to take the children instantly with her, and go or send to the persons who have the management of the children's money: she has done so, and they will be put into Chancery, my boy, or some-

thing like that, just as a fellow gets his head punched, you know."

"You have done this?" demanded Frank, in a low tone, trembling with wrath.

"To be sure I have—and something more; the children will be taken care of and so will the mother; and if you go bothering her any more, you'll be handed over to the magistrate—" Mike ceased here, for Frank had flung himself full upon him, and for an instant or two there was a desperate struggle, as Mike had been taken off his guard by the attack.

But in a few minutes the strength and agility of Mike prevailed over the drunken fury of Frank, and he shook him steadily on his legs again with no particular tenderness.

"Now you've heard wot I did," said Mike, when this was over, with a very indifferent tone and manner, "you'll never go near her again—do you understand that?"

"Never go near her again!" repeated Frank in astonishment; "and why not, pray?"

"Because I want you and mean to keep you now," was the reply, which revealed to Frank at once the purposes and intentions of the man. Involuntarily he halted and drew back.

"I will not go with you," said he; "and you cannot force me."

"Can't I?" replied Mike, with an oath, catching him by the arm. "Listen, will you: I would have spared you if you had been worthy; but you're even worse than I am, and I'm bad enough. In my breast I always carry pistols—if you ever offer to blab, I'll shoot you, though fifty policemen guarded you; and if you refuse to join me, before to-morrow morning you shall be in prison, and you will be transported for theft. You have been out with me and my comrades before this, and you are known."

Frank shuddered from head to foot—the iron will of the man he knew well—he knew also that what he said, he did; and there was that dependence placed on the words of Mudge, whether for good or ill, that it

became proverbial among the ruffians he associated with.

"Well, wot do you say?" demanded Mike. "I ain't a-going to say as it mayn't come to scragging at last; but as I keep telling you, as you deserve it, why you ought to be very much comforted. Which shall it be? will you walk with me to-night into a nice little house, and into a nice little chamber, where only a lady and her baby sleeps, and where there's a lot of watches, and jewelery, and money, eh? or will you walk into quod? Choose! I'm blest," added Mudge, "if the one ain't as easy as the other; but if you don't do the one," added Mudge, with a terrible oath, "I'll do the other; so you know what there is to expect."

The reader may be assured that Frank was as well calculated to do evil as any man in the world could possibly be, and with an incomprehensible revulsion of feeling, he grasped Mike's hand, and said, "I will do what you wish."

"That's right," cried Mudge, laughing and slapping him on the back; "that's perfectly right; so now follow me, and I'll let you into the secret, and show you the tools."

Frank obeyed his impetuous companion; and by several windings and turnings through narrow streets and dirty alleys, they came at last to a low looking tavern into which they entered. Having made a significant sign to the landlord, a villainous looking man, with a low forehead, and beamed cheeks, they were ushered through the bar into a little room, where, having been supplied with spirits at Frank's request, Mudge began to exhibit the implements of his dark trade.

There were files, saws, small crow-bars, and pick-locks, and one by one, Mudge explained their use and intention with professional cleverness in so practical a manner, that Frank had no excuse to offer on the score of inability or ignorance. "It's a very lively and pleasant occupation," continued Mudge, as he concluded, "and is nothing at all when you're used to it."

"But suppose I'm nervous," objected Frank, "and so make a bungle of it?"

"I have looked out for that," replied Mudge; "and although I'm going to let you manage the business, yet I'll be at hand."

"But that may not be enough," persisted Frank. "I shall require some powerful motive to keep my nerves strong."

"That's true," assented Mudge, and coolly added, "the matter's been thought of; so that while I am close beside you, I shall have my pistol in my hand, and if you cause the least alarm, or mismanage it, I'll blow your brains out to prevent your telling tales. Do you see now how well I've made my arrangements?"

"Umph! yes," muttered Frank, with a savage scowl; "I do see what care you've taken; but I believe it's all unnecessary."

"Is it?" retorted Mudge. "I, for my part, don't think so; but come along. Take a drop of brandy, if you like, and then let's be off."

But Frank, for the first time to the ruffian's knowledge, refused the proffered spirits. If any other of Mike's habitual acquaintance had done so, he would not have been in any way surprised, not in the slightest—but Frank! Mudge's astonishment was so great, that he drew back a step, and gazed with a troubled air upon him for a moment, muttering with an oath. "Well, s'elp me, I never did!" and then he shook his head, and sat down; but in an instant recovering himself, he spoke a word to the landlord, and bidding Frank "come along out of that," they were both speedily in the street.

By this time it was night, and the wind was blowing, while the moon hid her horns behind the scudding clouds; and, walking rapidly along the thoroughfares now partially deserted, they soon arrived at Water 180 Bridge, and crossing that, Frank found that the intended destination was Camberwell.

The houses now became less frequent, and fields and trees began to mingle with and surround them. Striking from the road, they at last got to the back of a small de-

ached villa-residence, where Mudge halted, and whispered, as the clown does in the pantomime, "Here, we are!"

Between them and the house there was a wall some eight feet high, and then a small garden. While Frank was gazing about him, wondering how he was to get in, he heard a slight grating sound, and not seeing his companion, he said,

"Mike, where are you?"

The ruffian, out of the darkness, growled a frightful curse, and said, "If you lift up your voice again, I shall be obliged to drive my knife into you. Where am I? Why here I am," and Frank, to his surprise, found that he had opened a small door and had there admitted himself into the garden. They both entered and pushed it to again, and crept slowly and softly on the grass, beside the gravel-walk; dark, as it was, the men were becoming evidently used to it.

The window of the lower floor had a balcony, and so also had the bed-room window above. Leaping with noiseless agility on to the first, and hoisting Frank up, after him, Mike again lifted his companion on his shoulders, when Frank caught hold of the rail, and in a couple of seconds, was in the balcony above; he saw a light, through the chink of a shutter.

Using one of Mike's instruments, as he was directed, he effected an entrance, and found himself in a small but elegant bed-room, the bed being in a kind of recess, so that the head was to the window, and surrounded by curtains.

A cradle containing its little inmate, was beside it, and a small table held a night-lamp, which diffused a gentle light around.

"Be quick," whispered a voice at the window; "the pick-lock will open the chest."

Frank stole a look at the bed: the sleeping lady moaned in her dream. (Mike was aware that the husband was from home beforehand); and, gripping the handle of his knife stuck in his trousers, he turned his wicked face towards her and muttered, "If she awakes—ah, well, so much the worse

for her," and he then proceeded with his work.

In less than ten minutes the room was rifled of its valuables, together with a large sum of gold, and Mudge having clambered down again, Frank was descending the upper balcony, when the sleeper was roused up, and looking round her, beheld the dark and sinister face glaring upon her through the rails. She uttered a shriek as the hideous vision vanished, and the robbers cleared off with the booty.

STEP VI. INFAMY.

SOMETHING, however, had very clearly annoyed Mudge; for though the robbery had been complete enough in its way, still there was an "after-thought" which marred its success, and detracted from its completeness, so to speak.

Mike was below, in the lower balcony, during most of the time that Frank was in the chamber,—and though he had been higher, on one occasion, either to see with what courage and coolness his associate went to work, or to aid him in clearing the chamber of its valuables, yet he neither saw nor knew anything that took place after he heard the shriek and he saw that Frank came down with rather too much speed for safety; but safe they were so far, and safely they bore off the booty.

Mike went doggedly on before, and Frank followed him silently. The night was dark, and the robbery had not taken above half an hour. While Frank was musing over the late proceedings, and thinking of his prize, Mudge turned suddenly upon him, and asked, "Wot sort of a lady was she?"

"Who?" demanded Frank, a little surprised.

"Why, the lady in the bedchamber," replied Mike.

"I had hardly time to see; but she was young and fair, had dark hair, blue eyes—He suddenly stopped, for Mike, with a great oath, said, "Then she did see you, I've a precious great mind—" and from

the great-coat pocket of the man, there issued the ominous clicking of a pistol.

"She was roused up, certainly," replied Frank, beginning to have a misgiving rising in his mind; for he remembered that the eye of the lady had been fixed upon him in a kind of dismay, yet the glance was, perhaps, sufficient for her to recognise him again,—then he thought he was too far back in the darkness, and that the rattling might also have distracted the sight; and that one small chamber-lamp could scarcely be sufficient to throw light around; besides that, she was confused between sleep and alarm; and Frank felt secure again; but he heard the clicking of the pistol-lock.

"She was roused up, certainly," replied he; "but then, you know, I was down before she woke."

"Then how could you see her eyes?" quickly demanded Mudge.

"See her eyes!" stammered Frank.—"Why, who said so?"

"You did: you'd better learn to deal with me upon the square," said the ruffian, with a kind of growl. "Try and tell me half-a-dozen words of truth. You said that the lady's eyes were blue: now, explain that."

"Oh! oh! to be sure, so I did, now I remember," replied Frank. "Upon my soul, Mudge, I must say that I'm very stupid. Why, I saw them just before I dropped."

"There, that'll do," said Mudge, in a tone and with a manner of evident disgust, as much as to imply, "The more questions I ask him, the more lies he'll tell;" but he only added, "Say no more about it. If she should know you again, my boy, so much the worse for you—that's all; I'd disown you directly, and I can prove an oath, if I need it, at any time."

Mudge then trudged resolutely forward, accompanied by Frank; and going through the Borough, the brigand led the way to some lodgings of his, hard by the Mint, a district notorious for its desperate aggregate of lawless men. Following Mudge through the intense darkness, and stumb-

ling here and there on the broken or uneven flag-stones, they at last stopped before the huge portal of a vast dwelling house, that to all appearance was deserted and empty. At this door Mudge knocked softly, and immediately a voice was heard from within. After a word or two was spoken, the door was partly opened, and they both entered.

In a little den beside the door, a powerful looking man, with a black and sinister aspect of countenance, was seated, as guardian of the place. Casting a look of cordiality upon Mudge, he merely said, "All right?"

"Right," laconically replied the robber, and then began to ascend the wide staircase. One landing after the other was passed, until Frank, wearied with the journey, asked "if they had not already gone through the roof, and were getting into the clouds?" to which Mudge made no answer; but steadily continued to ascend, until he stopped at a door on the highest landing, which he opened by a spring; and when both were in, he closed it safely after him.

A second and a match sufficed to light a candle stuck into a bottle, and Frank with no little curiosity began to look about him. By the shelving roof, and the trap at the top attainable from the old table, the man found they were in a large attic. In one corner was a rude pallet and a chair or two, together with a large, strong box; and some culinary utensils concluded the furniture of the chamber. Mudge immediately began to place food and drink on the table, and having sat down, motioning Frank to do the same, he drank off a glass of the undiluted spirits, and then for the first time spoke.

"How do you like the crib?"

"Very much indeed," was the reply; and Frank began to eat ravenously. "Very complete and perfect, I should say; but I thought you lived at the other end of London." "So I do, sometimes," answered Mike; but then you see, I'm obliged to have a

town house as well as one in the suburbs; and now as you've set up in business, you'll be forced to do the same, or else share mine."

"Ah! well, we shall see about that," replied Frank, uneasily; for he did not like the allusion to "business," and wished to drive it from his remembrance as far as he could. Once more, therefore, he applied to the spirits, of which he drank copiously.

"Now," said Mudge, when their meal was over, "let's have a look at the plunder." He then took several articles out of his pocket and placed them on the table.—There was a valuable gold watch, a diamond bracelet, several articles of jewellery, and gold and Bank notes to a considerable amount. "There's a hundred a-piece here," muttered Mudge, "if there's a penny."

Frank's eyes lighted up with cupidity—all dangers, past and future were forgotten. He stretched out his hand to grasp his portion, when Mike coolly glanced at him, said,—"You must wait a bit, my boy—we must smash these screens first:" meaning that the Bank notes must be exchanged for gold.

"We can do that, in the morning, at any of the shops," observed Frank, beginning to be alarmed lest this should be a plan for cheating him of his portion.

"What a fool you are," retorted Mike.—"If you take one of the flimsies to get change to-morrow, you'd get it at the Old Bailey or Newgate in an hour after. Why, these numbers will be all over town before ten o'clock;—but there's ten sovereigns for you," continued he, pushing them over. "I know an old fence who'll give me change out; and as there's no time to be lost, I'll go at once;" and he departed on the instant, leaving Frank alone with the golden property, which he began to count over, and gloat upon, and to form visions of a still more riotous and sensual life than he had already led; and this, alternately with drinking, occupied him till Mudge returned. By the dark, accor-

on the ruffian's face, however, Frank saw that something was wrong.

"What's the matter now?" asked he.

"Matter?" echoed Mike, with a volley of deep and bitter curses. "Why, there's that old scoundrel of a fiend robs me, that all. This is the sort of game, my boy," added Mike, savagely. "We are compelled to be robbed in order to keep our necks safe, and we are forced to rob in order to do the same thing, or else these fellows would split upon us next day;" and he here detailed to Frank's amazement, that the notes amounting to nearly one hundred and twenty pounds, had diminished by one clear half; the "fence" demanding that as the price of his accommodation and secrecy.

Frank's heart sunk within him at this news. It multiplied the dangers, exaggerated the difficulties, and at the same time seriously diminished the amount of the booty. "What use to rob in order to be robbed?" he muttered half aloud.

"That's what I say," commented Mike, who had overheard him; "but you can't help it. If you do it once with them, you must always do it, or else they are safe to sell you."

"Sell you?" repeated Frank; "how do you mean?"

"How do I mean? why, that they'll hand you over to the police, and the police will hand you into prison, and from there you'll go to the gallows or the hulks,—it don't much matter which,—and for my part," added the robber, gloomily, "I'd as soon be the first as the last."

"I say," cried Frank, with a desperate rapidity, "don't talk in that manner, that's a good fellow: it gives me the horrors, and—"

"Well, drink then, and forget it," retorted Mudge. "And now I'll count you out your share." He sat down as he spoke, and took a handful of sovereigns out of his pocket, which he spread on the table. Once more Frank's heart rejoiced,—for that store, diminished as it was, appeared almost inexhaustible. He rubbed his hands with glee

and said: "Come, this is not so bad, after all."

"Why, it ain't," responded Mudge, very gravely, "for a first attempt it is uncommon good, and that's the truth. One, two, three, &c." And he counted out to Frank thirty of the pieces; but as he flung one of them on the table, he jumped up from the table with an oath that made Frank's flesh creep—it was so horrible; and then he appeared transfixed with utter astonishment.

Frank had so often witnessed the vivid changes which came over Mudge, that he was not so surprised as formerly; but he never witnessed so terrible and vindictive an expression on his face. He growled out between his grinding teeth, "I'll kill—I'll kill the hound—I will!" and he drew his large clasp knife from his pocket, while his fingers clutched convulsively on the handle. His voice had become deep and hoarse, and he repeated with so terrible an emphasis, "I'll—kill—him!" that Frank drew back from the table.

"Look here," said Mudge, with frightful calmness, pointing to the table. "What do you see?"

"Why, gold to be sure," replied Frank.

"Fool—fool! There, look at that—and that—and that;" and he handed him in rapid succession several of the pieces, and to Frank's surprise (a most disagreeable one) they were found to be spurious.

"Not only," said Mudge, slowly, has the old fence robbed us in changing them; but he has done us regularly up by passing a lot of counterfeit coin upon me. Very well, I'll go and reckon with him;" and he rose up, put his knife in his pocket, and walked to the door. "You'd better come with me," added he, turning to Frank, who willingly consented, and leaving the treasure on the table, they both went forth.

They passed the porter at the outer door without challenge, and were again traversing the dark and lonely alleys of that filthy neighborhood. Suddenly turning up one of them, Mike tapped at a small door, when a wicket was instantly opened, and a dirty

haggard face appeared. "Who's that?" was the question.

"Open," said said Mike; "open, old Grapps—I want a word with you!"

"With me?" repeated the other, somewhat sneeringly: "and what do you want with me, Mister Mudge?"

"Open and I'll tell you. I can't talk on business in the street," replied the ruffian.

"I'd much rather not open to-night, if it's all the same to you," replied Grapps, with mocking insolence. "If it ain't very pertikler, p'raps it'll keep till to-morrow."

"No, it won't," replied Mudge. "Look here—do you know these pieces?" and he held two or three of them at the wicket.—The thin, dirty fingers approached to take them, and Frank saw that Mudge trembled from head to foot with repressed rage.

The man within turned them over very curiously, and with half-shut eyes, looking at Mudge, said, "it's a very good dodge, but it's of no use—it won't do. You're very smart, Mike; but I'm awake since very early this morning."

"Listen to me you scandalous vagabond," said Mike. "You've robbed me once in changing the notes, and you've also passed in the gold I don't know how many of these. Now, I want you to give me one hundred golden sovereigns for playing me such a trick."

"In—deed! If I want to make it a hundred and twenty p'raps you wouldn't take it?—a hundred is the exact sum, is it? Would ninety-nine pounds, nineteen shillings and elevenpence three-farthing be of any use to you? because if it would—you had best say so."

The light from the wicket was flung on the pale and working features of Mudge and Frank trembled at the audacity of the fence; but Grapps had a strong door between himself and the burly robber and was insolent in his security.

"A hundred sovereigns—" repeated Mike. "You'd better!"

"Thank you," replied Grapps. "On the whole I think it would be far better not to

do go. I wish you good night," and he shut the wicket to.

Frank saw that Mudge lifted up his two clenched hands and shook them at the door, while all his limbs trembled with fury. "It would be better—it would be better!" this was all he said; and returning the way they came, they soon got back to the huge old house.

"I say," asked Mudge of the man who played the part of porter, "are any of the boys in?"

"Not above half-a-dozen—the others are out on business," replied the other.

"Well, I've booked my 'swag,'" said Mike, with a laugh; "and shan't stir out for a day or two; so you can take in no end of eatables, and plenty of liquor for us."

"All right," replied the man; and Mike, followed by Frank, turned up stairs.

On arriving at the chamber, Mike carefully examined a small map, opened then the large box Frank had noticed, and took out a pair of pistols, which he put into his breast. Tightening a belt round his waist, and finally fixing on his boots, he seemed about to be undertaking a new expedition.

"Why, what are you about?" cried Frank at last.

"I'm going to fetch the hundred pounds," replied Mike. "Will you go with me?" "I'll show you how to tame a villain like that—how to cut his claws, and pull out his teeth."

"But what are those pistols for?"

"For use," was the fierce reply, "if needed. Will you come—or will you stay? If you come I'll promise you a hundred on your own account. Now, will you come?"

"Yes, certainly," was the willing response; and Frank moved to the door.

"We are not going out that way," said Mudge, "but this way!" and he pointed to the trap in the roof. Frank stared with an astounded and incredulous air, but Mike took a small hammer, a couple of strong books, and a coil of thin, but well twisted cord; then mounted on the table, and in another moment was on the roof outside. Frank, also, in a little time was beside him.

The air was cold and raw, and the wind swept in gusts around the chimneys, while a drizzling rain was falling; they could see black yawning gulfs around them.

"Hold on," said Mike, clinging to the coping and scrambling on. "If you roll off you'll go to smash in a moment—it's as high as a small church."

With great precaution and no little danger they passed thus over several houses, the roofs of which were higher or lower, more flat or more dangerously steep as the houses were built. The one where Grapps dwelt, though some distance off, was still adjoining the same huge stack; and at last Mudge, gripping his companion by the arm, and pointing to a light streaming out of a dirty window, but which was guarded with strong iron bars, muttered, "That's the place,—and I can see his shadow too. Wait a bit—wait a bit!"

Frank now leaped over a steep ledge, which looked so frightfully precipitous that with a shudder he crept back. "Good heaven! how will you get down?" he asked of Mudge who was busy with the rope.

His answer was to show that he had passed it round a chimney, while the loose end dangled in the darkness far below. Then he descended without hesitation by means of the cord, and Frank, all trembling, followed him. Suffice it to say, they at last stood on the top of Grapp's house; but there was no entrance to or from the roof.

Lying full length on the outer eaves, he, Mudge (looking as though the least touch would roll him over into the street) reached his arm down to a narrow garret window. It was unfastened, as its very position was supposed to ensure it from attack.

Another coil of rope had been fastened by a hook to a projecting buttress, and Mike with a desperate resolution, holding the rope firmly, flung himself, swinging opposite the window. With a tremendous effort he succeeded in effecting an entrance, and was at last in the house. Frank, by Mike's request, still remained on the roof, though his teeth were chattering with cold and nervousness.

When Mike next got into the room, a diabolical exultation filled him from head to foot. We have before this stated that the man was not all bad,—yet he was now about to commit a deliberate murder. Never before had the thirst to injure a human being crossed him; but his abhorrence of the old fence was so intense, that nothing but his blood could sooth the outraged feelings of the brigand.

He descended the stairs—no one met him, for no one dwelt with that cunning old man, who gleaned his gold so skillfully. Mike opened a door, and stood face to face with his victim. A palsy of terror, so great and wordless, fell upon the helpless man, that all his blood seemed to curdle and grow white. His lips trembled, his jaw fell, his very hair appeared to crawl about his temples with a horrible life.

"So," said Mike, "Mr. Grapps, I'm not the other side of the door now."

With the energy of despair the old man shrieked out for help. There might, then, have been heard in that chamber horrible curses and cries for "help," accompanied by a quick rapid stabbing, and a trampling about the floor, and a terrible blow, as from a hammer or a pistol-butt, on the frontal bone; and there might have been seen the hideous figure—the face and the throat raining blood—holding out its hands, and then, with a final stab, it fell heavily on the ground—dead!

Frank was on the roof. The appalling sound of the muffled conflict came to his ears as he bent his head over the eaves,—the trampling of feet and the deep curses also came; and then he heard steps rapidly ascending the stairs, and Mike's voice calling to him.

The wealth conveyed to Frank that night by his associate, covered as it was with blood, was enormous; and they bore it safely to their lonely garret, where for several days they remained.

No suspicions fell on Mudge, even from his associates; and the remarks he had made on entering the house had blinded the sagacious porter. There was a dreadful

alarm, and a hue and cry the next day; but the guilty parties were unsuspected. It was noticed, however, among the light-fingered fraternity, that the "fences," after this act, dealt much more fairly than before.

After this, Frank, Wildeye and Mike Mudge, under assumed names, led a gay and jovial life. They attended race-courses, betting-rooms, gambling-saloons, and theatres, and became perfect in matters of taste and fashion,—adepts in all the art of cheating and betting,—leading lives without any longer the dimmest sense of moral control; and at times boldly levying contributions on the public on the highway. Extravagance and debauchery soon wore out their finances; and they were, after a while, though living at a hotel, and paying their bills regularly, somewhat straitened at Bath.

It was a grand ball evening, and the two adventures went to it, having, at the same time, a careful eye to business; and being elaborately dressed, and somewhat known from frequenting the place, they moved about the rooms as if they were in their own proper element; but the elements of vulgarity can never be completely eradicated. Mudge was over-dressy, and Frank was half-tipsy. Be that as it may, during one dance in particular, they were strolling towards the card-room, when Frank came opposite to a lady, leaning upon the arm of her husband. Their glances met—those blue eyes seemed to scorch up the man—they took away all his self-possession; he turned pale and trembled.

"What's the matter, dearest?" asked the husband: are you not well?"

"It is he—the robber: I will swear it is he!" she cried out, while with glaring eyes she gazed on Frank, and with outstretched hand pointed him out.

In a few moments Frank and his associate Mike Mudge were apprehended, and an hour afterwards saw them safely lodged in prison. The next day depositions were made before the magistrates, their lodgings were searched, traces of the robbery in the shape of a

bracelet were found, other traces leading to the murder, and the robbery of Grappe were also discovered, and finally they were condemned to die.

But the penal laws had become merciful. After all the horror of Frank's position had passed away, for Mike acknowledged the retribution, and took it all coolly, the sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

Mudge who had very philosophically made up his mind to be hung, was transported with rage beyond the bounds of all moderation. He raved and stormed like a madman, and he looked upon the horrible and dreary waste of life before him with an eye of despair, while the heart of Frank was filled with horror and dismay.

He wrote an abject letter to his wife, but it never reached her. Every care was taken that she should be kept in total ignorance of the unhappy man's fate; and it was only some months after, when the doom was sealed, that the legal protector of the children divulged the truth to her. She mourned his loss; but her peace was sealed. She brought up her children in total ignorance of their father's fate, and as his name was changed, none knew it.

When he stood bound to his companion in the felon's dock yard, leaning against an old windlass, as Mudge was lying doggedly on the ground, Frank half-murmured: "For life!—for life! To this, then, has my conduct led me? If I had but known."

THE END.

THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS; IN SIX STEPS.

BOOK II.

BY EDWIN F. ROBERTS.

STEP I.

ECONOMY.

Industry, economy, and prudence are the sure fore-runners of success. They create that admirable combination of powers in one, which always conduce to eventual prosperity. Guided by these three hand-maids to happiness, and sustained by perseverance and frugality, no position is too high to attain, no object too far from a man's reach, and no difficulty exists that cannot be overthrown.

It was in a cottage (at Chelsea) neither very large nor very lofty, for it was, after all, but one story high, and lay before a small, neat garden, turning from the road, that on a fine summer's afternoon the scene we are about to describe, took place; but first a word or two further of the cottage.

The cottage was, as we have said, one story high, and had two rooms below, and two rooms above, or rather, the upper were, by their shelving roofs, attics. These, then, were rented from the landlord by Mrs. Douglass, the widow of an artizan. She had an only son, called Andrew, a young lad about twelve years of age; and they were visited by the widow's brother, an old

Chelsea pensioner, who came occasionally to relate stories of wars and battles to Andrew, and to quarrel now and then with his sister, whose temper, good as it was, yet could be easily roused, and the old veteran was fain to fly from the reach of her voice at times, thus leaving the field to the victorious enemy.

The widow's husband, lately died of hard drinking, had been for many years in the employ of a certain Mr. Blandford, whose vast works were no great distance from the cottage. The man, though a drunkard, was yet so good a practical mechanic, that though he was occasionally discharged, yet his good master was always disposed to take him on again; but unfortunately, though he could easily earn his two or three guineas a week, yet his depraved habits led him to the tavern instead of his home, and that home was by consequence a very poor one.

But the widow, clean, frugal, and cheerful, managed to keep her home comfortable, and to instruct her young child in the paths of peace and virtue. The example of the father was not permitted to be lost upon the boy; and he conceived such an abhorrence of drinking, that all his life he eschewed it.

Having received a tolerably good education, and being curious and fond of learning, he soon became an apprentice to Mr. Blandford's foundry, and was one of the most intelligent and well-disposed lads in the place.

The cottage attic on this day wore a singularly cheerful appearance. The floor was scoured perfectly white, and the clean swept hearth, with the ruddy fire blazing merrily, was cheerful to behold. The widow's bed with its white counterpane peeping between the striped curtains, was in one corner of the chamber. The table, with its quaint carved legs, was in the middle of the floor, and the polished chest of drawers (of walnut wood,) with its ornaments upon it, and the gay pictures above, were the glory of the room. The pleasant little window looked quite revelling with gaiety as the bright scarlet-runners climbed upward, and the sweet musk diffused its odor round the room.

Through the window the sun came; and the humming of the bees in the garden told they were busily at work, while the birds sang joyously in the eaves, and the little fruit bushes and trees were white with their snowy blossoms.

If any one at that moment had been striking out of the picturesque road into the little garden towards the house, they would have heard a loud stentorian voice cry "Zounds!"

"Oh! my gracious, there you go again. Why brother, how can you storm so?" The speaker was Mrs. Douglass, the comely and cheerful widow, having with her brother, the old pensioner, their accustomed squabble.

"Storm!" echoed the voice. "Drums and trumpets, any one would storm to hear you talk in the way you do. Why, you want to make the lad a milk-sop."

"I want to make him a good lad, and a steady man," retorted the widow; "and you're always talking about wars to him—filling his head with nonsense about honor, glory, battles, and I don't know what."

"Oh! sister, sister," replied the old cor-

poral, who was very dogmatic in his way. "Talking of battles—if you only had heard of the battle of—"

"But I tell you I don't want to hear of it," cried the widow; "it horrifies me. I am talking to you about Andrew's welfare, and how he is getting on at the foundry, and you talk about battles; it's abominable, that it is."

"Abominable!" shouted the fierce old soldier: "the finest battle in the world to be called abominable," for his hearing was very defective. "Abominable, indeed!—Hah! I like that," and he stamped about the floor, and struck his knotted stick on it, as if that should testify the strength of his arm, and his indignation at having his favorite battle so spoken of. "The finest battle in the world," repeated he; "the completest. Why, now—just listen, you obstinate old woman—"

"I'm not an obstinate old woman," returned Mrs. Douglas, beginning to laugh in spite of herself; "but as for you—you're the most obstinate old corporal in the hospital."

"Me! O, yes, of course, to be sure I am," muttered the soldier; "but, thunder and lightning!—you shall hear of the battle! You see it was—"

"But, my dear brother—"

"No trouble, bless you; no trouble at all," said the corporal, eagerly, as if he now had a chance. "I'll prove to have been the most finished—"

"Ah!" ejaculated the widow, "finished, indeed, to many a poor fellow."

"Eh!" and the gruff but kind-hearted old soldier appeared to be struck by the observation. "Why—a—why, I think you're right there, sister, though I can't very well see how a battle can be carried on without some one being knocked off the muster-roll; but forget that now and I'll proceed. It was a grey morning, the haze lay like a curtain over the lines of the enemy; but we could hear the sound of the distant trumpets and the roll of the drum; and then there came, swaying the mist like

the waving of a great flag, a rush of air, which showed us their ranks all in military array. Then began our trumpets, a clanging of weapons, together with the groaning of the great artillery, as they were brought into their places. The drums rolled and the flags waved; martial music was playing—every forehead was high—every eye fierce, keen, and bold—every nostril dilated. Then went the infantry defiling past where my post was—then swept the cavalry with their noble horses snuffing the air, and soon all was ready."

"O, mercy on me!" exclaimed the widow, her hand trembling as she followed his description. "Go on; no, I mean stop. I—I don't like it; do you hear?—gracious me, is the man deaf?"

The corporal smiled triumphantly as he flourished his stick, while he was standing in the middle of the floor, and went on: "Ah! I thought you'd be interested. Well, I was in the great square formed to resist a charge of lancers; fine bold fellows we were, five-foot-ten and a-half the shortest; and here the corporal drew himself up—"we could have eaten cannon-balls then. Well, on came the horsemen; their swords and lances flashing."

"Mercy on us," gasped Mrs. Douglass.

"On they came, thundering down with loud oncries. Our foremost rank was down on their knees; second ready—muskets were presented—and—"

"Oh, law, brother, corporal—don't finish. I am frightened out of my wits now!" and the widow seemed to be really alarmed at the idea. "See," she added, "what's come of it all, look at your leg."

"Leg!" echoed the old soldier, "what ails it?" and then he gazed upon it with great complacency.

"Why, it's as stiff as a crutch?" replied the widow. "You'll never be able to bend it again; and instead of walking as you ought, you only hobble along."

"Well—well, sister," replied the veteran, a little reproachfully. "If you'd had a bullet in your knee, it wouldn't have improved your walking."

"Nay, brother, I didn't mean to hurt you," said the widow; "as you know; but what have you got by this battle, except a lamed limb; a patch over one eye, and the bridge of your nose broken?"

"And this medal," shouted the old soldier with glee, showing the honorable testimony. "And my pension; and Chelsea Hospital. Aha! aha! Why as for my eye, that was burnt out by the bursting of a shell, and this sabre cut 'across my face was from an Austrian dragoon, whom I brought down after."

"Poor fellow—you killed him!" ejaculated the widow.

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eyes danced, his chest was heaving, and the silken hair,—such as his mother's had been—was roughly tossed about his white forehead. The mother gazed with a delighted pride upon the boy; but she did not feed his vanity by telling him her thoughts.

"Now, youngster," demanded the corporal in his dogmatic way, "where have you been till now?"

"Why, one of the young men in the designing-room," replied Andrew, "had been suddenly taken ill, and he was busily engaged with some very important diagrams. The foreman came into the large room where I work, and asked 'if any of us lads could draw'; so as nobody answered for a while, I said, 'I think I can, sir.' Then Charley Maitland stepped up, and said, 'so can I'; and I drew back, adding, 'yes, sir, Charley can draw much better than I can.' Then the foreman told us both to 'follow him into the model-room'; and I did so."

"Well, well, my boy, this seems to march on like a column to double-quick time," said the corporal, nodding his head. Go on, Andrew."

"He then," continued the boy, "showed us a lot of sketches, and asked 'if we understood them'. Charley shook his head; but as I had been reading a book on Mechanics, the other day, I said, 'I did'; and then he asked me several questions regarding them, which I answered, and he seemed quite pleased and satisfied. Charley was then sent away; and so I've been finishing them; and the foreman told me 'that they were very well and correctly done.' He then asked me 'how I managed to understand them'; and I told him I read books about such things at home."

"That was quite true, my dear boy," said the mother, who must, out of the fulness of a proud and grateful heart, say something; "quite true, Andrew,—go on, my dear—I am all anxiety."

"Right, sister, right. Go on, my boy," added the corporal; "you are in the right, depend on it. What did the foreman say?"

"Mr. Blandford will hear of this," said he, "and it will be the making of you if

you're a good, industrious lad; but"—and Andrew here cast down his eyes.

"Well, boy, why do you hesitate," cried the soldier. "But what?"

A tear or two fell down the burning cheeks of the young lad, and he trembled violently—then in a broken tone he continued his short narration. "He spoke of my father, of his vicious habits, and drunkenness, and said, 'he had killed himself by it.' The widow turned pale, and sank in the chair murmuring: 'Oh! it is too true—too true; and my poor boy must bear the reproaches his father's guilt has entailed upon him.'"

"No—no, muskets and bayonets!" muttered the corporal, "that can't be. He didn't reproach you, did he, Andrew?"

"Oh, no," replied Andrew: "on the contrary, he was very kind, and gave me good advice."

"That's very thoughtful of him," said the widow.

"Very—very," added the corporal. "I honor him."

"And then there's Charley Maitland," continued Andrew: "when the foreman told him he might go back, I felt grieved to the soul: for he looked so downcast and sad that I did not know what to do, and wished I had not spoken."

"That's my noble fellow," cried the corporal, patting his head; "that's what I call true generosity. Well, but what did you do then?"

"I interceded, and got him leave to come again; for the foreman had offered me a crown; but I said if he would let Charley come, I would much rather that than the money; but he made me keep the crown—and here it is," he added, going to the chest of drawers and taking a fat-bellied money-box made of china ware, he put the money in, saying triumphantly—"I shall soon have a little fortune—shall I not, dear mother? But what is best of all," continued he, "as I tell you, Charley is also to go in to the drawing and model-room with me."

Old Firebrace had crossed over into the corner of the chamber, and as he heard how nobly Andrew had behaved, he gave a

husky "hem!" which proved that his feelings were by no means as rugged as his manner and his accustomed forms would indicate.

Mrs. Douglass held a basin in her hands, which she placed on the table; and while a tear of joy trickled down her cheeks, she said—"I rejoice at what you have done, dear Andrew. Come, now, and take this nice warm hash which I have kept for you."

"Thank you, mother," said Andrew, and he sat down to his meal.

"Now, then, brother," began the widow, turning with a proud air to old Firebrace, "don't you think that all this is much better for Andrew than filling his mind with drums and daggers, and bullets and bayonets, and the idle, reckless life which many soldiers lead?"

Corporal Firebrace stood at "attention" before his sister, his heels together, toes out, hands down his side, and the stick carried as a musket. He "grounded arms," gave the salute, "stood at ease," without having received orders; and finally said, "I don't know, sister. You'll acknowledge that there's always two sides to a question."

"And two ends to a pudding," answered Mrs. Douglass; "but what does the man mean?"

"Mean! Why—but come," cried the corporal, after pausing a moment, "I was only about to make some invidious comparisons, and I won't to-day—no. I congratulate you, sister, and you, my brave little fellow; but I must be off, now," he added, glancing at the stolid old clock that ticked behind the door; "I shall be required at the college—they can't do very well without old Firebrace. Good day, sister—good-bye, Andrew;" and making the military salute, he left the room, the mother and the son gaily sending "good-byes" after him.

A few days afterwards, Andrew was formally installed in a higher department of his duties than he had hitherto been engaged in; and Charley Maitland was also, to Andrew's great satisfaction, elected with him. It must not be supposed, either, that young

Douglass had any particular personal liking for "Charley," more than that the principle of fair-play, made the young engineer feel uncomfortable lest it should be supposed that he had obtained his advancement at the expense of his young companion; but being now upon an equality, and starting fair with every prospect before them, we shall see how each attained his future object.

Mr. Jackson, the foreman of that branch of the establishment with which our hero was connected, was a clever and industrious man. He had by means of perseverance, industry and sobriety, advanced himself from ignorance and poverty to a position which his energy and talents had led him, and he was in the comfortable enjoyment of his three hundred a year,—a worthy example to the men and lads around him, of what well-directed powers of mind can do.

Mr. Blandford himself was much struck with an original sketch of very complicated machinery which Andrew had drawn during his leisure hours at home; and though the blundering advice of the good but passionate corporal had not contributed much to its perfection, yet there were such visible marks of talent about it, that the proprietor put the capabilities of his young pupils to a test, which had the following result.

They were both ordered to sketch a half-completed machine, and to supply with diagrams that portion of the engine absent in the original, so that they should in a manner complete it; for Mr. Blandford had determined, if the successful design should point out any thing new or striking in the way of arrangement, to adopt it in its future construction: accordingly they were set to work.

The two or three days set apart for this task were soon over, and Andrew worked hard and read harder. Charley, whose genius did not jump to conclusions as rapidly as Andrew's, was compelled to ask his advice, which was readily given; but his engine had the appearance of being a mass of screw and fixed solidity: there

was no fluency in wheel or joint, and the beam-pivots appeared clenched; moreover, he could not add a single thing more to the machine than he saw before him, while, on the contrary, on inspecting Andrew's sketch, was found a complete and well-arranged piece of mechanism detailed out, with the addition that one motive power of a new kind had been invented; and Mr. Blandford, on complimenting him, in addition to half a sovereign, said that the engine should be finished after his plan; and this was accordingly done. While the discomfited Charley only looked with deeper envy upon his friend's progress, in the meantime Andrew soon became of paramount importance. Need we add, however, that the proud and doughty corporal claimed and received from Andrew very willingly the merit of forming the whole. This was strenuously combatted by Mrs. Douglass, but the corporal flung the battle, and *this* victory, as a consequence of it, in her teeth, and marched off triumphantly.

It was, however, remarkable to all, and particularly noticed by Mr. Jackson, that Andrew generously sought to mitigate the disappointment of his rival in every respect, and as the whole circumstance was known, this, no less than many other of the lad's good qualities, procured from the severe engineer his tribute of respect—a respect that Andrew knew how to appreciate in a proper manner, and which he returned by a uniform civility, an obeying kindness, and an imperturbable good humor in every difficulty.

STEP II.

INGENUITY.

THREE or four years passed away in the drawing, and model-room; and Andrew Douglass and Charles Maitland were, during that time, fellow-students; and though the attention of both was fully bent upon the attainment of the object before them, yet there was such a sensible difference in their progression, that it was evident to all who had anything to do with that particular

department of the foundry. Charles Maitland was clever; but Andrew displayed absolute genius, and became, as a matter of course, much more important.

Andrew was now growing a fine intelligent youth. By means of perseverance, and a thirst after knowledge, and by the power of an inquiring mind, he speedily made up for all the defects of a superficial and neglected education. Good-tempered, obliging, and with a disposition naturally humane and kind, he became a favorite among the numerous workmen of the extensive establishment. His conduct and consequent advancement made him an object of emulation to many other young lads there engaged. Mr. Jackson, the foreman, spared no pains in teaching him; but the intuitive powers of Andrew soon made him outstrip his master.

Charles Maitland, on the other hand, was of a totally different nature and disposition. We are bound to show him to the reader somewhat in detail, because he plays no unimportant part in our narrative, as relating to the progress of Andrew.

He had been well, or rather *showily* educated. His parents belonged to that distinguishing order of society which is so questionable, that one scarce knows how to classify it; it was neither vulgar nor genteel; but it might be comprehended by the term *shabby-genteel*—that is, a class of persons with great pretensions, and but very limited means. Thus Charles was taught to dance, and aspired to taste and grace; and while his toes, at times appeared through his day-boots, his pumps and silk socks were in a manner perfect. He could smatter a little Latin, as a parrot can be taught, but he was ignorant of the principles of grammar. He had a few French phrases, and this was held to be tantamount to a full knowledge of the language of Charlemagne. He was taught artifice and duplicity, from the manner in which his parents lived; and a fawning address, combined with an insinuating manner to gratify the nobler, bolder impulse of the boy. This precocity displayed itself in a variety

of ways, displeasing to common sense and reason; but this was altogether unheeded by Charles.

The reader is aware that it was through Andrew's intercession, Charles was advanced from the rough work of the introductory department into the more skillful as well as profitable office of model drawing, and other branches connected with it; and it would be supposed that Charles was grateful for such a generous interference; but the contrary was the case. Charles Maitland hated his companion, because his superiority was constantly placed before his eyes, and he had no measure in the dislike which grew and strengthened with time.

In the meantime the good widow, whose quarrels with the tough old corporal did not diminish, was proud and happy to see how highly Andrew was respected, and with what consideration he was treated by Mr. Jackson; and more particularly by Mr. Blandford; and whenever the story of the battle was brought on the carpet by Corporal Firebrace, it was instantly the signal for Mrs. Douglass to contrast the advantages which Andrew enjoyed with the trackless imprudence, and the dangers consequent upon wars, battles, and sieges. While the corporal, with a stentorian voice and a flashing eye, to Andrew's infinite amusement—for he was often a spectator of these scenes—while, I say, the soldier entrenched himself in all the glory of his battle, full of military phrases, an oath or two now and then, and an infinite flourishing of drums and trumpets, the widow would triumphantly hurl Andrew at him, demolish his strong breast-work with a panegyric on industry, sobriety, and skill, and point to Andrew. She would break his battalions by a sarcasm, not ill meant, on a closed eye, a lamed leg, a crutch, a stick, or a patch over the nose; and when the fiery soldier, urged beyond his mood, resorted to a little more violence of speech, it needed but a smile on his sister's part, a gentle remonstrance, a glance of her blue eye, and the corporal was disarmed—was instantly

vanquished, the battle banished, and the smoke fled away; for the old man, who had a tender heart, loved his sister, and, if he scolded her, the more for it, it was only, as he boasted, that it should be seen he would not be the milkop she supposed him. No—by pikes and bayonets—a soldier was a man every inch of him—an engineer, and better than any who drew their tame plans in a well protected garrison—no—he meant the wall of a foundry; and he would dart a fierce glance on Andrew, to be changed into a smile at Andrew's good-tempered laugh.

It was at this time, when Andrew was in his twentieth year, that he added a new and profitable branch of art to the multifarious and comprehensive business of the worthy Mr. Blandford.

Everybody is now aware of the existence of that beautiful and useful kind of article known by the name of Birmingham and Sheffield plate. All have admired the handsome table vessels, from the elaborate tea-pot to the egg-cup, which are so durable in their wear, so cheap in their cost, and so perfect a substitute for the absence of the nobler metals, that they are all but superseded; utensils which, in fact, are within the reach of so many of the working-classes even. We say, all are now aware of the existence of such articles.

But it is not many years ago that electricity and galvanism had not been applied to these metals in gilding, silvers, combining, or their amalgamation; and the ingenuity of many, among which was Andrew Douglass, was taxed to find out something new—something that might bring reputation, profit, and respect.

Being in a portion of the foundry, where the more elaborate and refined workmanship was carried on, Andrew was seen for many days to employ his leisure hours in the shop, over an article that at first attracted but little notice; but those who knew him best had no hesitation in believing that the industrious youth was producing some article that would be both unique and striking. Having in a manner full liberty to use

the metals which lay about him, in forming little models of things, Andrew had produced several articles which now graced Mr. Blandford's offices; but as they were also reproduced by his fellows, they were not so remarkable for originality as for the fineness of their finish.

He had often noticed the beauty of Etruscan vases; and the form, variety, and elegance of the utensils in the shops of the silversmiths had powerfully attracted his attention. If it were possible, he thought, to produce out of inferior metals a vessel which should have beauty of form, and skill in execution, at an incredible low rate of cost, it would be an invention that he could lay with pride at the feet of his good and liberal master.

In the course of his reading he had come across some works on metallurgy, and the transmutation of metals formed a part of his day-dreams; though he did not go to the extent of believing that out of iron he could extract gold, or convert lead into the precious metal; but he well knew the power of fusion, and the result of combination. By mingling familiarly two metals he could produce a third, which was distinct from the original two in many qualities. By a gradual induction, he came to a conclusion on the agency of electricity from noting the effect of lightning on a rod of mingled metals which had been melted by it. At last, acting on a matured impulse, he set steadily to work.

"Why, what on earth can you be doing, Andrew?" asked Charles Maitland of him one day in the work-shop. "Here you've been, day after day, making a great basin, for aught I can guess; and what with your furnace, and blow-pipe, and galvanic-battery, and I don't know what, it begins to be quite a mystery."

But Andrew only smiled as he put his apron over his work to hide it, and playfully said, "Wait a bit, Charley, and you shall see it when it is finished." Flushed? "Boh!" cried the other with a contemptuous air. "I suppose it will be something when it is finished, with a vengeance."

It will make you the envy and the wonder of the place, no doubt," and he laughed somewhat bitterly as he consoled his taunt.

"May be so, may be so," said Andrew quietly, in reply, "but after all you must wait; and I don't think there will be much to eat in it; it has no great pretension."

"Oh, no; of course not—you have no pretensions at all, have you?" muttered the malignant youth. "You never go sneaking about Mr. Jackson or Mr. Blandford, with your plan for this, and your design for that—and whispering and speaking of things and the workmen, that are so far out of your province as to be laughable, and pretending to patronise one, as if you were a master already."

Andrew had taken off his apron, and stood quietly listening—not a little amazed also, at the tirade which was uttered against him. He was literally astonished as Charles proceeded, but the aroused feelings of the indignant youth revolted from them, and he interrupted his fellow-laborer's impertinent speech by grasping him by the collar, and in a low but trembling voice said,—

"You are telling me all this, are you? and wherefore?"

"Well—yes," replied the other, not exactly knowing what to make of the matter, and thinking he had resource in bullying, added,— "Come, leave go my collar, will you—you mean insinuating fellow!"

"You speak far too spitefully," returned Andrew, still holding his opponent's collar. "Have you any reason for it?"

"But this other only replied moodily, "Come, I say—quit your hold on my collar. You had better!"

"I will," answered Andrew, and he hurled the almost affrighted Maitland against the opposite wall with an irresistible strength. Charles was more stupefied than hurt, and he turned pale as he heard Andrew say, "The next time that you address me with such an insolent manner, and with such base words, I will, upon the spot, give you that chastisement which you so richly merit. Begone! you are a contemptible bullying coward, after all; and you thought that I feared you. I never fight or quarrel; but it is not from fear that I retaliate."

Charles Maitland returned from the work-room covered with shame and filled with rage. A bitter vindictive spirit had seized him, and he inwardly swore that some day or other, he would be revenged; and having so vowed, he grew calm and contented; he smiled again.

The next day he made a few words of excuse to Andrew, expressing his regret that he had so far forgotten himself; and Andrew received it with a good-humored grace peculiar to him; and the matter dropped and was forgotten, with the exception of Charles himself, who brooded over the affair in silence; but there was no trace of it on his countenance.

In the meantime Andrew was progressing with his work, and the vessel he was making began to bear a shape, polish and ornaments, that attracted the gaze and the attention of those who occasionally beheld him at work. At several times he was found with a paper covered with elegant scroll-work set before him of his own design and drawing, then, with a firm and skillful hand, he would use his grayer and carve out on the shining metal the same forms that were traced out on his plan. Finally, the vessel was made; and after polishing it up, one evening Andrew sought Mr. Blandford in his private office and was ushered into him.

"Well, Andrew, my young friend," said Mr. Blandford, rising up and stepping towards him, how do you do? "What have you got with you now?" he added, seeing a parcel which Andrew held under his arm, and which being divested of its covering, was placed on the table before him.

"Mr. Blandford gazed upon it admiringly; but supposing at first that it was some portion of the usual work brought in from that quarter of his factory where such vessels were made, and that perhaps Andrew had added a new ornament, or a higher polish, he did not betray so much surprise as satisfaction. But when he took it into his hands, and began to examine it nearer he was struck by the depth of its brilliancy—the beauty of the chasing, and by the appearance of the metal, which was new to him. He examined it and re-examined it, but all was fruitless.

"Why, Andrew," said he, "I think you must have meant to puzzle me, and you have very effectually done so. I declare I can't comprehend it at all. I expect this makes up a pretty sum. It's very elegant, Andrew; but I fear too expensive."

"What value should you place upon it, sir?" asked Andrew, smiling.

Mr. Blandford applied to his eye-glass once more—examined it—frowned, but like a puzzled man;—and finally, named a price at hazard, which the manufacture and value of a silver vessel of the same size would cost.

Andrew smiled, shook his head, and then said "Wrong sir."

Mr. Blandford guessed again a much higher amount; and Andrew shook his head. The worthy gentleman amused by this seeming riddle, cried out, "Why, heyday, Andrew, you don't mean to say it's more than that—do you?"

"No, sir, not so much," replied the young man, enjoying his good-natured master's embarrassment.

"Not so much eh? You are joking," and the engineer looked incredulous. "I don't know so much of these things, Andrew, as I do about machinery; but in my ledger (and he turned it over) I find this price named as being the value of labor and metal; and he mentioned his first price once more.

"Too much, sir," said Andrew.

"Why, you don't mean to say that this elegant thing can cost less, do you?"

"Yes, sir," was the answer. "While it would permit you to pay the artist and the workman a higher rate, the value of this metal is such that less than one half the amount you have just named will leave you a handsome profit."

Mr. Blandford was confounded—he was astonished: it was almost incredible, and he was gazing upon it with a new admiration when Andrew continued: “It is very true, sir, that the labor of this first one will be costly; for it took me a long time to obtain the material,—to design, to form, and to engrave it.”

“And is this all your own work, Andrew?” asked Mr. Blandford.

“All, sir,” was the answer: “from the first fusing of the metals to the last touch of the graver,” and a blush of pride and modesty crossed his cheek.

“It is wonderful—it is really admirable,” exclaimed his master, examining it once more. “Tell me how it has been formed, Andrew; but, mark me, if this be a discovery of your own, it is you who shall have the benefit of that discovery, and I will spare no cost in perfecting it.”

Andrew and his master then sat down in the private office together, and it was in this kindly and confidential manner that Mr. Blandford heard from his young workman's lips of a process in the workings of metals which surprised and pleased him. Detail by detail, with clearness and precision, did Andrew explain the whole process the wondrous vase had undergone; and for the first time distinctly did Mr. Blandford perceive what a treasure he possessed in the brain and intellect of the handsome young artisan. “From this hour,” thought he, “this young man's interest and fortune shall be my care.”

It was then also, that the wealthy engineer nobly met Andrew's confidence by proposing to him that this discovery should be practically developed at once. The open frankness of the young man, who declared that it was his master's interest alone which had led him to study and undertake this matter, won upon Mr. Blandford's heart; and he wisely determined to make Andrew a sharer in the profits that might accrue from it, and which there was every probability would be very great,—for the present, it was settled that preparations upon a large

scale should be begun and carried on at once.

That evening Andrew-Douglas was for the first time introduced to his employer's family, and there he spent two or three happy hours; for the first time also, the heart of Andrew was moved to its depths by new and delightful emotions, to which, before this time, he was a stranger. Mr. Blandford had a most kind and amiable wife, and when visitors of rank and distinction came to look over the vast works, Andrew had often been noticed by that lady and her eldest daughter, for his frank face, his prepossessing open address, and for the diligence and ingenuity he displayed. Miss Clara Blandford, the daughter in question, was now in her seventeenth year, and had not been spoiled by the ridiculous affectation of a boarding school education,—a system that is so pernicious in many respects—from its want of solidity and mental poverty. She was good, kind, and highly accomplished also; suffice it here to say, that Andrew went home intoxicated with ambitious thoughts for the future, and renewed resolution to “press on.”

A day or two after, it was known that some visitors of distinction were coming to inspect the works; and Mr. Jackson had orders to see that all preparations should be made to receive them. His orders were therefore attended to in all particulars; and the last place to be seen was the shop where Andrew was engaged.

All the workmen were assembled together while Mr. Blandford was leading his visitors from place to place. Andrew was busy with some work, and the magnificent new cup was before him.

A little distance off, in fact, being the next workman,—was Charles Maitland, who was casting jealous and sarcastic glances upon the envied vessel, while whispers regarding it were rife. The bellows were roaring, and the heavy hammers were clanging, and the men all busy at their employment, when the door of the work-room opened, and the master entered, followed by two gentlemen and an elderly, bearded lady,

all the bustle of work was almost instantly stopped, so far as was consistent. The hammers were put down, and the men in silence stood respectfully by, ready to answer any questions which might be put to them.

Soon this splendid vase, of which Andrew was the author, met the eyes of the visitors; and while Mr. Blandford explained to them its nature, adaptation and its comparative cheapness as an article to supersede far more costly ware, they were loud in their approbation and praise, when Mr. Blandford pointed out Andrew as its inventor.

The handsome and ingenious face of Andrew was suffused with a modest blush, as Mr. Blandford added, in an accent of pride, to the gentlemen and the lady,—“Yes, sir, would you believe it? It is he, my youngest workman, who has done this. He will do well—very well, I promise you;” and then he patted him on the forehead, while the visitors lingered about to re-examine the cup, and to discover new beauties in it.

The consequence of this incident was that, even before the works were ready, Mr. Blandford received an extensive order for a service of this ware, while Andrew, who received his commendations with a mind free from all arrogance, was compelled to give explanations at length regarding the material, and the mode of working it.

Genius always exacts its tribute, and with an instinct peculiar to itself, receives it without having its property overthrown; and the modesty of the mechanic was not less the subject of his remarks than his talents were the theme of conversation. Charles Maitland, in the mean time, with an envious eye and ear, noted the whole.

STEP III. STUDY.

It is not sufficient for one who has to make an advancement in the world, to be merely contented with plodding on with his labor, to be a mere mechanical workman, the more especially if the trade be of

a kind that can embrace such stupendous results as that of the machinist does; and therefore, books, as well as thought, are necessary to him as are his hammer and his furnace. Bellows, and anvil, or the casting-mould, are not alone sufficient; but there must be in the clear brain and the energetic intellect a fertility of invention, a boldness of conception, a soul to organize, as well as a hand to give the solid material the form and order which is first generated in the mind. This is derived from study, and from study alone; and he who has been accustomed to study, dry as its details may seem, will yet willingly acknowledge that those years and nights so spent are among the most delightful portions of his life.

Even the disputes of the old corporals about battles, and sieges, and foreign wars,—the construction of forts, cannon, and walls, were turned to use by the indefatigable Andrew, till he understood the disposition of a field as well as a Field-Marshal; and even became, from his catholicity of mind, a practical military engineer.

Since the making of the wonderful cup which had brought such reputation to Mr. Blandford's manufactory, and thus opened a new and profitable branch of business, that gentleman, as we have mentioned, had considered that he was in duty bound to attend to the fortune and advancement of one who was of such service to him. Accordingly Andrew was placed over a department which, because it was a position of respectability and of honor, brought with it also a corresponding degree of profit; and it was still from the good words of the young man, that Charles Maitland, with his ungrateful heart, rankling at the sight of Andrew's advancement, and annoyed to consider that he was thus forced to be under perpetual obligations to his rival,—by Andrew's means, we say, Charles continued to share in our here's good fortune; and both were now, mostly in Mr. Blandford's private office, or else engaged in overlooking their several departments, Andrew had all the most nice and difficult

portion of the machinery to attend to, as well as to pass occasionally through the new shops now busily erected to carry out that branch of trade.

His wages were now so considerable that he was able to give his good mother a far more comfortable home to live in, and he accordingly took a pleasant little house not far from the college, on account of his uncle, old Firebrace, who took as great a pride in the advancement of young Douglass as if he had been his own child;—nay, had almost ceased to advocate the army as a source of honor, profit, and renown.

Nor must it be supposed but that there was a physical improvement in Andrew; for a handsomer young fellow there was not to be seen anywhere; and with that quiet, retiring air,—the more indicative of a modest yet noble spirit,—he wanted not for admirers among the fairer sex; and numerous were the glances that were cast after Andrew from many bright eyes as he passed to and from the workshop, or in his evening walk; but it appeared as if Douglass paid little heed to them, remembering only the gentle Clara Blandford; for he was scarcely seen to speak to any, and even when he did, he blushed like a great girl,—while Charles Maitland, on the other hand, amused himself by plunging into all the frivolities around him.

And, then, when Andrew's work was over for the day, with what delight would he retire into his neat and comfortable little study, and pore over his books till he felt it time to go to rest.

There was his little table covered with books, papers, plans, and designs of all kinds. Here were essays on some branch of science, or on other abstract questions of human goodness, together with plans for the amelioration of certain evil conditions contingent upon manual labor, or of close factory toil. Here again were noble verses in praise of the heroism of labor, addressed to his fellow-artisans; and gladly admitted into the columns of the popular papers. Here was his little study lamp, clean and trim as it could possibly be. Before him

was a portrait of his uncle, the fiery old corporal, surrounded by the dense smoke of the battle. Next were his neat bookshelves, made by his own hands; and if you looked upon the books, if they were not very numerous, yet they were selected with great care and taste, and no little expense. There was also his drawing-board at hand, with some half-completed design or other upon it.

Here, then, night after night, while the storms of winter went moaning and howling without the windows, would he sit over his beloved books. It was thus that he became a clever and profound mathematician; it was thus that he perfected himself in the theory of mechanics, and applied his knowledge practically when at the foundry; it was thus by study of hydraulics he was enabled to give his master ideas which enabled men to triumph over the obstacles of nature, and to overcome difficulties in the building and construction of water-mills,—nay, to turn all opposition, or what seemed to offer itself as such, into as many helps and aids; he made them, in fact, subservient. It was by a comprehension of dynamics that he made water a means of power; the rough road became smooth; the inequalities of land and separative nature of water were neutralized by the well-formed viaduct or the stupendous aqueduct.

And then he would turn from the harder and drier portions of his study to things that made his eyes glisten and his heart dance. From the pages of history he gathered those lofty and solemn lessons which the august lips of the dead seemed to breathe dimly in his ears; or from the pages of the poets and the elder dramatists, there were roused up within him those fine emotions, whose workings were deep in his soul, wild, majestic, and marvellous, like the still, impassable face of a sphynx, with its calm and melancholy smile, and its unspeakable loveliness. He sought to unravel this strife of love, ambition, hatred, joy and grief, such as he saw in "Othello," in "Hamlet," in the "Revenge" Tragedy, and in those tremendous tragedies of Jon

"Undoubtedly I do so!" was the answer. "Supposing that if it were accidentally dropped or mislaid, you offered a reward for it—five guineas we will say—"

"Well," returned his master, after a pause, "I am of your opinion: I will do so."

Now, most strange to say, a suspicion of a dark and abhorrent nature had by some unknown process taken possession of Mr. Blandford's mind, which was not lessened when Andrew observed that "it would soon be found," contingent upon the offer of a reward of "five guineas." "Can it be possible," thought Mr. Blandford, "that this talented and noble boy should have been tempted in a weak moment to calculate upon obtaining money in this manner? It is impossible.—yet I cannot drive away the thought. I give him a liberal salary. In a short time his profits would have been great and important." Mr. Blandford also feared indeed himself of the strange and unaccountable aberrations of human nature, at times, which make men commit actions incredibly absurd and ridiculous, not to say—dangerous. "Was this an instance?" The heart of the good man softened instantly. "No, no," thought he; "let the box be lost; better that than that it should be found where I have now most fear.—Some time or other I will speak to him kindly and forgivingly about it."

In the meantime, Andrew, with a countenance free and unsuspecting; with an ingenuous openness and frankness on his face, had still continued his fruitless search. "That face indicates no guilt," said the good natured machinist to himself; "but if he be guilty, then I shall never trust a human face more."

It was just then that Charles Maitland came in upon some business to his master, and seeing Mr. Blandford was serious, while Andrew was looking about, he said, "Dear me, sir, is anything the matter?"

"I have lost my diamond snuff-box," replied Mr. Blandford; "have you seen it anywhere?"

"I, sir?" ejaculated Charles in a sort of alarm; "how could you suppose that I had seen it?"

"True, true!" returned the master: "how could I? and yet it is a simple question. I only asked you if you had seen it."

"Well, sir, I can answer that;" and while Andrew, who was inattentive to this conversation, was examining some drawers at the far end of the office, Charles Maitland bent his eye upon him, and leaning forward to Mr. Blandford, replied, "I saw it yesterday."

"Where?" demanded the other, in almost the same low, suspicious tone.

"Here,—on your desk," was the reply.

"Pshaw! you jest, sir!" returned Mr. Blandford. "I saw it there myself."

"But," continued Maitland, in a whisper, and still bending his furtive eye upon young Douglass in a very indicative manner, "I saw it last night."

"Last night! Where?" cried Mr. Blandford, eagerly.

"Hush!" whispered the crafty youth, his finger on his lip, and his evil eye still bent upon the heedless but anxious Andrew. "I saw it in Andrew's room."

"In Andrew's room?" repeated Mr. Blandford, turning pale. "You astonish me."

"Aye, sir—in Andrew's cabinet,—in Andrew's—the good—clever—honest—Andrew's private drawer;" and he drew back.

Mr. Blandford drew back also: there was something revolting to his open English nature in the matter—he felt a deep anger against Andrew's treachery—he felt that the confidence he so unhesitatingly reposed in the youth was abused; but at the same time he felt a deeper repugnance towards Maitland for the mean exultation, the underhanded manner in which this was conveyed to him.

"Follow me," said Mr. Blandford, as if struck with a sudden thought; "and we will talk this over, Andrew!" added he,

shilling, and I would not miss it for the world."

Andrew, without a word of remonstrance, or gesture of dissent, merely nodded his head in acquiescence, and said, "Wait here a moment or two."

The instant Andrew had left the chamber, and Maitland and two companions were waiting outside the door, Charles opened one of Andrew's cabinet drawers, and stealthily placed a small packet into it, and had just time to close it, and to take his standing before a pencil sketch made by young Douglass, whistling intently with great seeming indifference, the while, when Andrew returned with the gold in his hand.

"There is the money," said he, with a calmness almost gold, as if he were to have added, "I would give you a few words of advice, but I don't think it worth while, because you will not take it, therefore go, and act as you please."

Charles took the money, thanked him, promised it in a day or two, and then bidding him good night, joined his companions, leaving Andrew alone to resume the studies thus unpleasantly broken.

The next day all went on the same as usual till the afternoon, when Mr. Blandford came into the private office evidently much agitated and annoyed. He was nervous and pale, and Andrew was greatly surprised, thinking, in the first instance, that his master might have been taking a few more glasses of wine than he was accustomed to drink. Such, however, was not the case.

"Andrew," said he, "have you seen my diamond snuff-box, which was presented to me by the Corporation of the City, some time back?"

"No, sir," replied Andrew, "I have not seen it to-day; but yesterday—yes," he added, after musing a moment, "I saw it yesterday on your desk."

"Then I wish you to look about for it," said Mr. Blandford; "for though I can't think it is lost, I am much annoyed in

missing it. I would not part with it for any sum of money."

In the meantime, Andrew was with great cheerfulness hunting about for the box, and that with a half-smiling expression of face, because he had not a doubt of soon finding it. He amused himself by thinking what a hearty laugh they should both have, in a few minutes, over the finding of this fugitive box; but all at once he muttered, beginning to look serious, "Well, this is very strange—very strange, indeed."

"What's the matter? Can't you find it, Andrew?" demanded Mr. Blandford, looking very red in the face from anxiety and disappointment.

"Indeed, sir, I cannot," was the reply; "and yet I am almost certain it must be about. Have you not had it yourself since?"

"No," replied, Mr. Blandford, shaking his head after a thoughtful pause; "no; I am certain that I have not seen it since an early hour yesterday."

"Well, I have looked in every place I can think of," said Andrew.

"This is really quite a serious matter," continued the engineer, somewhat quickly. "It is very singular that in my own private office things cannot remain secure."

"I can answer for the honesty of every one belonging to this office," replied Andrew, with a smile.

"But you will acknowledge that a box like that cannot walk away of itself, will you not?" and Mr. Blandford, as he placed this proposition before Andrew, struck his desk with his hand, as much as to say, "that is a fact, in so much as a diamond snuff-box, not belonging to any animal of zoological confirmation, has no power of locomotion."

Andrew again smiled, and replied, "Certainly, it cannot, sir; and I make no doubt but that the box will soon be found."

"You think so?" asked Mr. Blandford, quickly lifting up his head, as though there was a peculiarity in Andrew's voice that struck him at the moment.

But whom is it that you love?" again demanded Clara; "for if I am to use my good office in your favor, I must know the person."

"Indeed!" Andrew's heart bounded at the confidential information.

"Indeed, that he does; but he affords me food for mirth. Do you know that he tells me—and tells me seriously—What do you think?"

Andrew was hanging upon every word she said, and his countenance expressed his disappointment at this last query. "I do not know," was his reply.

"He says he loves me," continued the lovely girl, bursting into a laugh that showed her splendid teeth between her ruby lips. Andrew turned deadly pale when he heard this, and she timidly laid her hand on his arm. "What is the matter with you? what have I said?"

"Nothing—nothing ails me," replied Andrew, hastily; but—and he presented her with the bouquet of flowers—"I beg of you to accept this of me—if it be not too trifling to offer."

"For me?" cried the surprised and pleased Clara. "Oh, how good of you! I assure you," added she, seriously, "that anything you offer me could not be thought trifling or unworthy."

"How kind you are," said Andrew, again casting down his eyes, and heaving a bitter sigh. "But—but—"

What can be the matter?" asked Clara, with a woman's intuition beginning to conceive the imagination of Andrew's heart, while her color went and came. "Is there anything which distresses you? anything in which I could give you my weak aid?"

"O, yes; indeed there is," exclaimed Andrew, impetuously; "it is you alone that can give me the aid I need."

"Well," said she, calmly, "explain it to me."

"That is the difficulty. You say that Charles Maitland—the name came forth with difficulty—has told you that he loves you. Well, I—"

"You also—love? Have I guessed it?"

demanded Clara; "for if I am to use my good office in your favor, I must know the person."

"Ah!" muttered Andrew, to himself, half turning away, "she will not heed me; she will laugh at me, as at him."

"You have not told me," urged Clara. "You know I am acquainted with many of our young neighbors; that I am on terms of sisterly friendship with them. Well, because you are deserving and good, and those whom you love ought to love you in return—"

"Ought!" interrupted Andrew, scarcely believing his ears.

"I will speak to them; I will represent to them all your good qualities—all your industry—your fidelity—your honesty and noble disposition—all your skill and ingenuity. I will do all this."

"Alas!" cried Andrew, though his heart fluttered with an intense delight; "I can scarcely hope!"

"Why not?" asked Clara.

"Because," replied Douglass, "she I love is so high above my station, in point of position and wealth, that my motives might be misunderstood, and subjected to insult; because the poor mechanic might be laughed at for his pretensions—"

"Then she, too, whoever be the person, would be also unworthy," cried the beautiful girl with energy. "The devotion of a good heart ought not to be so questioned!"

"It ought not, indeed, as you say," returned Andrew; "but the world has conventions which cannot be broken, and wealth is a barrier which not many surmount."

"What is her name? Who is she? Make known to me that, and I can tell you more," exclaimed Clara.

"Her name," said Andrew, slowly fixing his eyes this time full upon her, "is Clara Blandford. It is you that I love with all my heart and soul."

STEP IV.

INNOCENCE, VINDICATED.

WHEN Clara heard Andrew make his con-

session of love, and witnessed the proof of his sincerity in his true eyes, and heard it from his fervid lips, while his face was glowing with hopes created from the elasticity of youth, that believes implicitly in a good destiny, she turned pale, and then suddenly all the eloquent blood rushed to her face and neck, and overspread her with a rich and mantling hue of maiden modesty, while she felt a proud exultation at her heart.

For a moment—a long dreary age of torture to Andrew—there was silence between them, and after that, Clara, as if having deliberated upon the matter, and made up her mind, took Andrew's hand in her own, and in a low but firm tone, spoke thus:—

"Andrew, Douglass, I have heard what you have said—every word of it is impressed upon my heart. I will not even say that I was totally unprepared to hear your declaration; but I cannot assert that I *did* expect it. I am now doing what in the majority of cases would be wrong,—but I have faith in you, Andrew, and I believe, shall have no cause to repent it. You say you love me; well, I am pleased,—ay, proud to hear you say so. I should be proud even if I had no inclination to listen to you. Hold to your words, Andrew,—be true, honorable, and good, and the happiness of my life will depend upon you; for, Andrew, Clara Blandford loves you in return," and she hastily broke from him, and passing through another door speedily gained the house, leaving Andrew speechless between the depths of his unspeakable rapture, and the amazement at beholding his wildest hopes come thus within the bounds, not of practicability, but of certainty.

"And she is so beautiful," thought Andrew; "so modest, yet so noble and ingenuous. No false shame prevented her from availing and, from speaking;" and, thus he was once more losing himself in his dreamy joy, and probably would have forgotten everything about him, had he not been suddenly roused by some one tapping him on the shoulder and saying, "You are my prisoner!"

In the utmost amazement Andrew opened his eyes to the widest, to witness this singular scene and assemblage before him. He saw Mr. Blandford, Charles Maitland, and a police officer,—while the old corporal was standing by the door, evidently in great grief.

Andrew, looking towards Mr. Blandford as if for an explanation of what he beheld, saw that the diamond snuff-box was in the hand of the policeman, and he instantly exclaimed, "What! you have got your diamond box there? I am very glad to see it."

"And I, Andrew Douglass," replied his master, with a somewhat solemn emphasis, which struck Andrew as being remarkable; "I am *sorry* to see it. I would rather that it had been lost, and ten others added to it, than that it should have been found where it *was* found."

"Indeed, sir!" exclaimed Andrew; and then turning to the policeman, who grasped him by the arm, he said, "My good fellow, let go my arm, will you? I can't understand this at all."

"Werry sorry," answered the policeman "but I can't accommodate you; and I shall be obliged to trouble you to toddle with me."

"With you? Where?—wherefore?" demanded the amazed Andrew.

"To quod—for priggings—for picking and stealing," was the answer of the sententious officer in blue; "an' I'm blest if ever I see a thing worse managed than yours was."

"Will you sir, be kind enough to explain this?" said Andrew, turning to Mr. Blandford.

Mr. Blandford looked fixedly at Andrew for a moment, then turned his gaze to Charley, who quailed. He then said, pointing to his box, "Andrew, do you know where I found this?"

"No, sir," replied Andrew, with a smile.

"Well, I'm blow'd!" ejaculated the horrified policeman, looking with some admiration yet upon Andrew, as if struck with his hardihood.

"In the drawer of your cabinet, in your study, Andrew,—that was where it was

found," pursued Mr. Blandford.

Andrew was amazed—he stared still harder—he was completely bewildered.—"In my drawer!" he muttered, "my cabinet!—my study! But what inference do you draw from that, sir?" asked Andrew, suddenly.

Mr. Blandford started, and his face darkened. "What inference can I draw, unhappy boy?" was the master's reply. "but that you in a fatal moment have forgotten—"

"What, sir," cried Andrew, as if for the first time the frightful idea crossed him, "do you suspect me to be a thief?"

"Looks werry like it," muttered the policeman, who was rather taken aback by Andrew's unequivocal air of surprise.

Mr. Blandford was silent. "I beg, I beseech, I demand of you an answer to my question."

Mr. Blandford thus implored,—nay, in a manner commanded to speak, did so.—"The property has been found in your possession; the officer of justice has seen it; I would have had you escape, but he states it to be his duty to seize you."

"No mistake about that, sir," said the policeman, affirmingly nodding his head, "if the engineer had decided a grave legal question."

"What's all this about, Andrew?" interposed the corporal at this moment.—

"Beg pardon," he added, making the "right salute" to Mr. Blandford; "but his poor mother—my sister, sir—was so dreadfully alarmed,—an old fool, sir, but kind, very kind, and rather obstinate,—so I came to reconnoitre the position of the enemy; that is," continued he, interrupting himself, "to find out what I could of the matter."

"I regret, my good friend," replied Andrew's master, "that the matter is so plain. Andrew is arrested on suspicion of having stolen my snuff-box."

"Stolen! Andrew? Sounds! such a thing is perfectly impossible. Where are your proofs," cried the old veteran.

"May I ask,—pray uncle, peace! I beg of you,—may I ask how you came to find that box in my drawer,—in my study?" and Andrew's voice, as he addressed the question to Mr. Blandford, and the remembrance to his uncle, was grown hoarse and broken.

"Aye, sir, that's the point," cried the old soldier. "Guns and trumpets! let us know that, sir?"

"It was Charles Maitland who told me that he had seen it in your drawer," replied Mr. Blandford.

Andrew was thinking of Clara at that moment. He was thinking of the utter destruction of his hopes when their realisation seemed most certain, and then all was despair. He beheld her indignant at the insult which she might suppose him to have offered her. What! he, a suspected thief, with the circumstantial evidence so strong, address this virtuous girl in terms of affection! Such were his thoughts; but the announcement, coupled with Maitland's name, startled him in no ordinary degree; and it was then he became aware of his pretended friend's treachery, and the extent of his danger.

"Charles Maitland!" he ejaculated, turning his kindling eye upon the shrinking knave, who yet stood his ground with desperation, because to fall now that he had advanced so far forward in Andrew's ruin, would be his own destruction. "Is it you then, traitor as you are, who has done me this? Mr. Blandford," continued Andrew, turning towards him, "my innocence must not be made apparent by my own assertions, but by *his*," and he pointed to Charles—"not my lips but his own, must convict him of the lie, and prove to all the world the baseness of his nature, and the purity of mine, in this case at least. I will not even now condescend to assert my innocence."

"Come," murmured Z 42, "that's plucky, anyhow," for the policeman was a thought-fal official.

"Boy—boy!" cried the corporal fairly

carried out of himself, having even forgotten his famous battle in his grief,—“what have you done?”

“Do you not see, dear uncle?” replied Andrew. “I’ll tell you! I have trusted where I should have doubted,—slept when I should have watched. For him who stands there—my accuser and my betrayer, though, mark my words,—as the old proverb says, ‘those who hide know where to find’—I say, for him I have done every good, kindly, brotherly office that lay in my power to do.”

“Thunder!” muttered the corporal; “but I’ll keep an eye upon the rascal yet.”

“I would rather have lost half my fortune, Andrew, than have seen this day,” cried Mr. Blandford. “Can you prove your innocence?”

“No, sir; I cannot. I have merely asserted it, and that is all. You see, sir, that I do not weep, nor blush, nor tremble: I must be hardened in crime.”

“Wery hardened indeed,” commented the man in blue. “Never see a harder young feller in the course of my profession.”

“I would not have my liberty given me if it were offered,” continued Andrew; “for now loaded with shame and ignominy, I can endure my prison, because I shall have that consciousness within which tells me that my innocence will be shown, and must appear snowy-white in contrast to the guilt which now looks so apparent.”

“Precious plain—that’s the truth and no mistake,” interjected the policeman.

“I am ready now,” added Andrew to the policeman, submitting himself with great alacrity.

“Stop! one moment longer,” said Mr. Blandford. “From what you have said, Andrew, I infer that although you do not accuse Maitland of any participation, yet I conclude that he must know something more of the business than is apparent.”

“Ask him, sir,” was the answer. “I am not his accuser.”

“Did Charles Maitland call upon you the other night?” demanded Mr. Blandford.

Andrew here related the circumstances which the reader knows—of Charles borrowing from him half-a-sovereign.

“And you left the room to get it for him, did you?” pursued Mr. Blandford.

“I did, sir,” was Andrew’s reply.

Charles Maitland here stepped forward.—By a great effort he had schooled himself into calmness, and there was certainly a portion of dignity in his manner, but it was a dignity of position, and which was more subjective than real; because, to suspect one who has given you information for which you ought to be grateful, deprives you of that independence one ought to feel, and recalls back with tenfold power.

“You asked me a question, sir,” said Maitland, “and I answered it. Had such not been the case I would never have spoken of it; for whatever Andrew Douglas may have done, it is not I who should be informer upon him. I am bound to say that I owe him too much for the many good offices he has done me to have made him any ungrateful return; but I must protest indignantly against this course, which seeks to shift his guilt, if he be guilty, upon my shoulders; I cannot and I will not endure it.”

The attitude language, and protest so boldly used, had their full weight with Mr. Blandford, and he was about to reply, when Clara, pale as a corpse, tottered into the office, and with white lips, asked, “What was the matter?”

Her father briefly explained the cause, when, to his astonishment, she walked up to Andrew, and taking his hand, said, “He is innocent—I vouch for it.”

“You!” exclaimed the father, in amazement; and then Mrs. Blandford walked up and whispered a few words in her husband’s ear, which made him change color, while his brows darkened.

“Andrew Douglas,” said he, addressing him with more severity than before,

was and I am unwilling to believe you guilty, and I will not prosecute you.”

Z 42, at these words, lifted up his glazed head, and looked at Mr. Blandford with an expression that seemed to say, “Hallo!—what! going to let this pass? subvert the constitution? smash up Magna Charta altogether?—not a bit of it,—don’t think it.”

But Mr. Blandford proceeded without heeding this dumb remonstrance. “Had this been all, I could have passed it over; but I now find that you have been pouring your insidious words into my child’s ears.”

“Father,” interrupted Clara, in her sweet, endearing voice, while she laid her hand on his arm, “he told me that he loved me,—I believed him.—I have accepted his words; and this is only the first proof of the strength of my own heart.”

Andrew, when he first beheld her enter, was staggered—it was like the sentence of his own condemnation; but when he heard those sublime words of devotion crossing her lips, his eyes, face, and forehead lit up; and the accused youth was triumphant.

Charles Maitland heard those words also, but with a different result. He had done the dark deed for which Andrew was seized, in order to remove the youth from Clara. He was determined to use, also, all the arts he was master of to win her affection, or her consent, which was to him enough. And now, suddenly, his hopes were blasted; his fine scheme resulted in his own defeat. He could have gnashed his teeth with rage and shame; for he had some intuitive conviction that Andrew’s innocence would somehow or other be made manifest;—at the present, though he would have given anything in the world to undo all that he had done, he dared not draw back, even while the one was as dangerous as the other.

The old corporal himself gazed into the face of Clara, and said, “Bless your bright eyes, Miss Clara. Attention! This will be quite as good in its way as the his-

tory of the great battle of—

“Don’t precisely see that,” muttered the policeman, interrupting Firebrace just at the important moment.

“Thanks, Clara,—my heart,—my soul, thanks you! and for you, sir,” added Andrew, turning deprecatingly to Mr. Blandford, “you will think better of me; for my innocence will be made manifest if it were only for this dear angel’s sake.”

Andrew was then removed in the custody of the long-headed officer, and Mrs. Blandford led her daughter in. Old Firebrace returned home with more cheerfulness than he had betrayed in coming; and, after some conversation with the poor weeping widow, he led her to Clara, and there ensued a long conversation between them, which ended in the widow’s being comforted in turn; and she, too, returned home rejoicing.

Mr. Blandford, who had been so struck by his daughter’s devotedness, gave Charles Maitland charge of Andrew’s portion of the business; for it was too important to be neglected; and thus, for many days, matters went on.

In the meantime, Andrew had been committed to prison; but he was visited by his mother, the corporal, and Clara, in turns; and the cheerfulness of the youth never deserted him—love sustained him, and his innocence protected him; while Charles Maitland, as if the matter had proved too much for him to bear, plunged into a career of profligacy, which, however, he managed to keep from Mr. Blandford’s scrutiny; but the old corporal, who had said that he would keep an eye upon him, did so.

The day of Andrew’s trial was fast approaching, and some evenings before it came on, Mr. Blandford,—who was firmly determined not to appear against Andrew, though bound over to prosecute,—was seated in his office holding a long interview with Corporal Firebrace, and the conclusion was, that, in the dusk of the evening, they both quitted the office together, and having walked some distance, took a cab and drove, in the direction of Vauxhall.

It was a gala night, and the countless lamps threw a fierce light upon the assembled thousands. There was music, and dancing, and revelry going on, and dissipation was evidently with the unbridled youths there assembled the order of the day.

Mr. Blandford and the corporal at last caught sight of the person they were looking for, — Charles Maitland, — who was in company with some two or three low-looking men, and one or two very showily-dressed girls, of a class about which there could be no error.

"Well, well," testily observed the engineer, "let us observe and watch him; and they went into a little arbor at the back of the one into which the reveling group entered.

Charles Maitland was drunk, — his companions were knaves, — he had plenty of money, and spent it lavishly. They drank success to swindling in all its branches; and at length, as the conversation turned upon a point as to who was the cleverest scoundrel of the lot, — Charles — for the drunkard had become a babbling fool — told them how he had, in jest, and for revenge, played Andrew Douglass the trick which had been so far successful; and the infuriated youth thus betrayed himself to the man whom he was even now robbing.

Mr. Blandford, who had heard as much as he wished, thus convinced of Andrew's innocence, hastily departed, together with the corporal; and there was great joy in both habitations that night, both on the willow's and on Clara's part.

The next morning, Mr. Blandford called Charles Maitland into the office and told him, to his consternation, all that he had heard the preceding night. He put down a fifty-pound note before the young man, lamented his folly, but told him that he could no longer entertain any hopes of him, concluding by advising him to quit the country at once, while an opportunity

offered itself, before it was too late, or he would be forced to quit it at the government expense, and thus dismissed him.

The same evening Mr. Blandford had an interview with the magistrate who had committed Andrew, to whom he related the whole particulars of the case, stating also that, though convinced of Andrew's innocence and Maitland's guilt, the first could not yet be liberated, nor the second prosecuted between themselves. The magistrate could not but commend the worthy engineer's reluctance to appear against Andrew, and truly rejoiced that he was thus proved guiltless.

The day of the trial came, and Andrew was brought forward; but as Mr. Blandford had taken a long journey, the prosecution failed, and he was liberated, while at the same time the counsel for the defence related the facts of the matter, and Andrew, amidst the congratulations of all present, — the workmen being the most numerous part, — left the dock "without a stain upon his character."

The scene changes now to Mr. Blandford's private office a few days after these events; but first a word or two relating to this same office, which has been the scene of such important matters in our story.

It was connected with the house, with the workshop, and with the garden by different doors and passages, — all conveniently builded and arranged for their various purposes.

The walls were covered with paper of a warm hue, and marked perpendicularly by a line of deep red; and between two doors was fixed Mr. Blandford's large desk, or secretary, every drawer of which was crammed to repletion with papers, whose value were almost incalculable. Plans were there of stupendous factories and engines; mining pumps of every power and description, many of them planned and designed by Andrew, while above ticked the great time-piece; and the two easy chairs were, one at either side of the fireplace.

Mr. Blandford was seated in earnest con-

versation, on this occasion, with his wife, a lady with all the virtues of her sex, added to a good-tempered disposition, which made her like Andrew, because he was so like to herself; and to sum her up in a word, she was "fat, fair, and forty." Evidently the conversation was a most interesting one; for while their countenances wore an expression of peace and satisfaction, their words were spoken in that earnest tone which denotes its importance. It was not long after, however, that many voices without, cheering some one most heartily, broke in upon them; and Mr. Blandford said, smilingly, "He is here!"

A gentle tap at the outer-door announced a visitor; and on Mr. Blandford's saying, "Come in!" the door opened, and in walked Andrew Douglass.

He looked very pale and careworn; but certainly he never looked handsomer than now. His dress was elegant and gentlemanly, and his whole appearance was dignified by the memory of his unmerited imprisonment. He had been affected to tears almost, by the unanimous joy with which his old fellow-workmen had received him; and, as Mr. Blandford now cordially shook him by the hand, and the kind greetings of the good old lady met his ears, the young man felt that he was rewarded for all.

It was at this same moment, also, that the opposite door opened, and Clara Blandford, his hope and gentle comforter, entered the office. They beheld each other, and for a few moments stood in mutual embarrassment.

STEP V.

RECOMPENSE.

CLARA had expected to behold Andrew, and she was even prepared to see him; but the tumultuous hopes and fears which pervaded her bosom had almost raised her expectation to a painful anxiety. In a previous interview with her mother, she had said, "Mother, the heart can never be mistaken; and when we feel the consciousness of truth being spoken, when we are assured that the voice which speaks to you lovingly and nobly may be listened to with a hopeful

trust, and with a certainty that you may rest upon its promises as we trust in the bounty of heaven, then it would be wrong, my mother, wrong towards our happiness to doubt or to waver. I love Andrew, and he loves me dearly. He is in disgrace, in prison, and his reputation is greatly periled; but I have given him my heart, and I cannot take it back. If my father rejects him, I should die; for we cannot mould the affections to the will of any; they are as much a portion of our life as our blood, our heart, our being."

And when the good mother, — whose anxious kindness made her in some degree comprehend and enter into her daughter's feelings, — spoke to her husband about Clara's happiness, and of that which lay nearest her soul, she spoke in such a way, that brought freshly to the heart of Mr. Blandford the youthful days of his own wooing. The warm human feelings thus returning to the radiant summer of days long past, but not forgotten, found an echo within his bosom; and he gave his word that for his part Clara should find no obstacle.

Clara and Andrew, we have said, looked upon each other; but their feelings were too great and powerful to be resisted. A movement on Andrew's part brought Clara with a hysterical sobbing of joy closer to him; and in another moment, the young man had clasped her to his bosom, and kissed away the tears from her cheeks. There needed no apology, — if such a word may be used when the holiest impulses have away, — there needed none of this to the parents when they beheld the noble and innocent youth thus offering his tribute of a loving heart to their darling child.

"Oh! Andrew," she cried, "how very glad I am to see you!" "God bless you, my sweet Clara," said the young man, a strong emotion almost choking his voice. "It is you who have been by good angel in the dark, dreary prison. When I thought of you, I could bear all without complaining — for the longest night will have an end — and a man, who ever so unhappy, has, at some time or other,

a bright, smiling moment to repay him for all he endures. You visited me in my distress, and yet cheered the gloom of my solitude."

"Do not speak of it, Andrew," replied Clara, smiling through her tears; it was little to do, for any human creature whom I might know; but for you—"

"And my poor mother too," continued Andrew, gazing upon the beautiful girl with a kind of affectionate enthusiasm; "what do I not owe you, for going almost daily to spend an hour with her; for, without you, my good old uncle would have wearied her to death; for, kind as he is, he yet says things which would have made her weep, had you not been there to cherish and to encourage her?"

"Andrew," said Mr. Blandford, at this juncture, "sit down beside me, for I want to say a few words to you." The young man obeyed him, having first placed a chair for Clara, and both were now seated between the good old people, Clara by her mother, and Andrew beside the father, though it is true their chairs had a very close approximation.

"Andrew," said Mr. Blandford, "I do not know whether I owe you any apology for the sufferings and imprisonment you have gone through; but, at all events, I was an unwilling agent, and forced into it by the presence of the officer, who had been summoned by Maitland without my knowledge. However, I must sincerely congratulate you on your freedom, and on the new lustre reflected upon your character, from the manner in which your innocence has been made to appear."

"Did I not tell you so, sir," added Andrew, with a smile; and then, all at once, his countenance saddened. "It was the bitterest irony of all," pursued he, "to know that the man I was so disposed to serve should have proved such an ingrate."

"No matter for that," replied Mr. Blandford; "the step of justice always overtakes the guilty."

"Good heaven, sir," exclaimed Andrew, "you do not mean to tell me that Mr. Charles

Maitland—is in prison? for, if so, I should rather have remained there myself."

"Calm yourself, Andrew," said Mrs. Blandford at this moment. "The unfortunate youth is free, and far away hence.—My husband had too kind a heart to prosecute him, whether men may consider him in that respect right or wrong. No; on the contrary, we may hope that he has and does carry his punishment along with him. Mr. Blandford has given him the means of leaving this country, in the hope that he will yet repent, and become a better man; at all events, there is nothing further for you to reproach yourself with."

"Ah, Madam!" said Andrew in reply, "I can recognise your own good heart in this act, and it is indeed a great weight taken from me. He has my forgiveness and my best wishes."

"Why, that is well said," and Mrs. Blandford nodded her head approvingly. "And now, my dear," added she to her husband, "tell Andrew all that you have told me."

Mr. Blandford smiled, looked complacently at his wife, and then as he gazed upon the fresh face of Clara, now all blushing—for she had a fond presentiment of what was to happen, he began,—"It is to your industry no less than to your ingenuity and talent, Andrew, that a great addition has been made to my wealth from time to time; but more particularly of late in this new branch of manufacture which has been connected with my engineering practice for some months now. My daughter has given you her heart, and I believe, with her, that you are worthy of it. I give you her hand, and my blessing—"

"And mine, also," interrupted the good old lady, pressing her daughter's head in her hands. "Take great care of her, Andrew, for she has been a loving and dutiful child, and she will make you a good and loving wife."

"I will take that care of her," replied Andrew, lifting his betrothed bride's hand to his lips, "as if she were some treasure concealed from heaven itself."

Mr. Blandford, whose voice had grown somewhat husky, coughed with great energy at this moment, and though his voice was slightly tremulous, it soon grew firm again. "I make over to you as her dowry, the whole of this business—the one of your own inventing, together with all the work-shops, properties, and profits that have been made and gained upon it—"

"Sir!" exclaimed Andrew, rising and starting with a bewildered air at his master, "do I hear rightly, or is this some dream?"

"No dream, my dear boy," replied Mr. Blandford, taking his hand into his own cordial grasp. "*It is the reward of industry and sobriety which I now bestow upon you.* Be assured, Andrew, that those are qualities which, not only in your own but in countless others, fall at least to the share of the deserving."

"Ah sir!" replied Andrew, "were all masters like you, we should have better artisans and soberer men. A word of encouragement bestowed now and then, a sentence of commendation here and there would do more good than all the distant pride which many men with false ideas build up between them and their people. If the master can make his men love him,—and he can if he chooses,—it will be found that he has always his best friends near him, that those who surround him, and are dependent on him, blend their interest in a peculiar manner with his own. Work is better finished, more attention is paid; for a word of remonstrance from a master like this, is more effective than all the abuse, and ill-language, and dismissals in the world."

"You are very right, Andrew, I believe," assented Mr. Blandford; "for my part I am on very good terms with my people, but I don't know that I ever took particular pains to be so: it came naturally doubtless, or else my old foreman, Mr. Jackson, has managed it for me."

"He is a good, deserving man," said Andrew, "and I owe him much, both for his good advice, and his attention, not only to myself but the rest of us, the younger men."

but I am going from the business in hand," exclaimed Andrew, turning to Clara, who smiled upon him with pleasure as he spoke the few words concerning the reciprocity that should exist between master and workmen.

We cannot follow out all the details of that evening's interview, the reader may guess it himself without much trouble. It was one of those days that a man may mark in white.

The wedding took place amid great rejoicings. Mrs. Douglass,—whose grief at Andrew's captivity had made her mother's heart ache while it bowed her aged head,—yet looked quite gay while being gallanted by the brilliant corporal, who, in all the splendor of his scarlet coat, made his stiff leg echo again with the firmness with which he clapped it down. The young girls laughed and giggled, and the young men, as is always the case at marriages, felt their hearts beat faster than they were wont, though the impetuous blood of youth flew dancingly enough before them in their veins. The workmen all dined together in the great rooms of the factory, and were presided over by their good master; and in the evening, while the music gushed forth upon the still night-air, and the rich harmonies thrilled in every bosom, you would have thought that the thousand lights were an illumination after a victory. The festival was kept up with an undiminished ardour.—The dance went on gaily—hundreds of couples were moving on the floor at one moment. Nothing but music, and laughter, and cries of joy could be heard.

The young married couple had, however, taken their departure some hours before, and their healths were drunk with enthusiasm by more than five hundred lips. It was then that, warmed with punch and wine, the old corporal came "out" in all his untarnished glory. Then were heard his tremendous stories of wars and battles, ringing like cannons upon the ear. Then followed songs sung by his stentorian, but rather broken voice, of General Wolfe and

General Abercrombie, and a number of other idolized military heroes, and all listened to the rapt and enthusiastic old relic of the wars, as to the words of an oracle.

It was late in the night, "to speak by the card," very early in the morning, before the feasting was brought to an end, and the grimly amiable old soldier was helped to Mrs. Douglass's house by some of the workmen, while the remainder of the party broke up, and at last gradually disappeared and broke up.

Years had passed by, and Andrew Douglass was a man forty-five years of age; but though his hair was slightly tinged with grey, and not so thick and curly as it was long ago, yet in the erect carriage, the ruddy cheeks, the clear beaming eye, the manly limbs, the sound, healthy lungs, he did not seem to have reached his thirtieth year. A furrow on his cheeks here and there, and the crow's feet at the angle of the eyes told, however, that Time forgot not to mark down his annual flight.

His good mother had died—died in her own manly boy's arms, happy and smiling. She had seen him at last prosperous and wealthy, and she was calm and joyful at the parting; for the good son had grown into the good man, and she knew they would meet again. She died! He mourned for her; but not as those who have no hope.

The old corporal, too, with his fierce and stormy heart, with his rough outside, and his child-like warm feelings, had followed his sister. His marvellous relations of battles, sieges, and stormings, were all over. The marshal trumpet and the wild drum could no more make the veteran's one eye glow and gleam as if the soldier's blood once more went through his heart like a volume of quicksilver. The excellent old warrior "slept the sleep that knows no waking," and was borne by old comrades that honored and loved him, to his soldier's tomb!

Mr. and Mrs. Blandford both lived to see their grandchildren, and to dandle them on their knees for some years. But age and

time gave them also gently into the hand of death, and they slept calmly together for as in life naught had separated them, and did nothing in death divide them.

Andrew Douglass therefore succeeded to all the enormous and wide-spread business of his late master. His works increased, his men multiplied, till the walls appeared to contain a small town; and his name was spread abroad as one of the most influential and most extensive manufacturers in England. His men were devoted to him, because he devoted himself to their good, making that his aim. His wages were liberal, and his heart open, while his hand was generous; but he gave with discretion and bestowed with deliberation; for nothing can be worse or more injurious to the deserving poor, than an ill-judged charity.

His wife was to him all that a wife can be desired to be. Loving her husband as she did, she made all his cares hers; and when Heaven blessed their union with children, she proved herself to be as tender and affectionate a mother as she was assiduous as a wife.

One afternoon—many years since their union—Andrew Douglass and his family were seated in a little garden arbour, after having distributed a feast of fruit among the children. The time was summer, and the day was delightful—a gentle breeze alone stole whispering through the leaves over head. Mrs. Douglass was fondling a little child in her arms, a girl of seven or eight was seated by her knee, while Andrew himself was being lost by a sort of waking dream.

Close beside the garden gate a little gravel path led into the private office, known before this to our readers, and above rose the high walls of a portion of the workshops. At this instant Andrew was roused up by a clear and youthful voice crying out joyfully, "Papa—papa! you're wanted;" and the eldest son of Andrew Douglass made his appearance.

He was a handsome lad, between twelve or fifteen years of age, and bore a remarkable resemblance to his father. It seemed

like a rejuvenescence of the features of our friend. He was clad in the uniform of the Military School; for having shown great talents in geometry and fortification, and a decided predilection for a military life, he had been at college for the last three or four years.

"What's the matter now, Edward?" asked his father, starting up: "I suppose its some piece of mischief you're up to again. Go and sit down by your mamma, you rogue, and let me have my nap."

"But really, papa, there is some one waiting for you." It was then that a number of the men happening to be released from labor, suddenly stopped, arrested by the sight of a handsome carriage without the great gate; but the flowers and shrubs about the spot where Andrew sat, prevented him from seeing it.

A footman in an elegant livery made his appearance, bearing a portfolio under his arm, and a small case in his hand. Taking a sealed paper out of his portfolio, he handed it after an inquiry with a low bow to Andrew, together with the case, which, upon opening, Andrew found to contain a medal,—this he gave to his wife for inspection, and proceeded to read the papers.

Certainly it must have been a very strange paper that, for it made the breast of the brave man pant and heave, and his eyes to sparkle with a sudden joy. A trembling of the limbs seized him for an instant, and then the workmen without, having heard something of the business which brought the messenger there, gave three hearty cheers to Edward Douglass, while the poor father, to the boy's astonishment, clasped him to his bosom.

STEP VI.

HAPPINESS.

Mrs. Douglass, or Clara, as we shall continue to call her, was astonished. "What is all this about, Andrew?" asked she; "and why do the men cheer for Edward, and group without there at the gate? and what is this elegant medallion for? speak! I am all anxiety."

But Andrew was embracing his son. "I gave Heaven thanks when you were born, Edward," said he, "and I thank heaven anew as if you were born to me again. This, my dear wife," continued Andrew, turning to her, and mastering his emotion, "is a letter from the Royal Humane Society, accompanied with their medal, to my—our son Edward, for saving the lives of two little boys while they were bathing. He was standing on the bank, and he heard their cry, and dressed as he was, without calculating the danger to himself, he plunged into the water, and by great exertion saved them. This is a testimony to his courage and bravery, which I prize more than all the military medals in the world, though," he added, smiling, "my old uncle would not have thought so."

Edward stood beside him, his cheeks suffused with a blush of joy and modesty.—Some of the older and more privileged men had come into the arbour, and shaking him by the hand, congratulated him on his bravery; then the handsome medal was passed round among them and greatly admired.

In the meantime the footman had departed with the carriage, for no other visitors were within it, and the mother was still endeavoring to trace the letters on the paper, but dimly, for her eyes were full of tears of joy; and when the young boy at last came and sat beside her, then the full heart of the mother found vent, and with an exclamation of gratitude she again clasped him to her bosom.

The joy of parents is a sacred thing,—the workmen curious and pleased, felt so, and they withdrew in silence, one by one, so that at last the fond parents were left alone with their children to talk over these matters, and to obtain from Edward a fuller and more detailed account of the danger in which he had plunged, and the manner in which he had so providentially saved others and himself.

"And so you are determined to be a soldier after all?" asked Clara of her son Edward, as they were all assembled together

in the harbour.

"Yes mother!" was his reply; but there was a sadness in his voice as he said so.

"My poor old uncle, Corporal Firebrace, would have been as proud of this young soldier as he was of his colours, or of relating the battle of——but I don't think I ever heard its name," observed Andrew, while patting Edward's brown head.

"Alas! my dear boy," said the mother, the trade of a soldier has only filled this world with tears and sorrow. It has perpetuated misery; and men in their cabinets have played their dark game of ambition heedless of the widows and the orphans they make, and careless of the pauperism with which they endow a country."

"But, mother," asked Edward, as if he suddenly plucked up courage to defend the chivalry of his land, "do they not protect us from foreign invasion; and prevent us from being the slaves of a more powerful people?"

"My son," answered his mother, "do not think it; if a people be happy at home they would rise as one man to wage war against the invader. Make their hearths dear to them, and they will defend them to the death. It is a war like this which God alone sanctions; but peace is also as powerful a motive to lead men. If you once get people to entertain the thought, it will become as universal as the idea of conquest."

"But see the power and the wealth which conquest obtains," said Edward ambitiously.

"So can the robber say, when after plundering travellers, and flinging their murdered bodies into a ditch he points to his treasures; and," pursued Clara, "you yourself must own, Edward, that wealth thus obtained can bring with it no blessing."

She was silent, and waited for her boy's answer; but he was silent too—for he was thinking.

"Look at what the arts of peace have done for your father," she continued.

"What war would have given employment to the hundreds in his shops, and by their means to thousands of other men? Look at

the engineer; he builds for the railway, where commerce comes and goes, leaving her profits in all hands; look at the rivers of all countries where the steam-vessels float; look at the factory and the mine, and then tell me if these could be of service to a nation who entertains thoughts only of war and conquest?"

"I am not quite sure that I shall be a soldier after all," said Edward in a low voice.

"It would make me as happy to hear you decide against it, my boy, as just now to hear of your noble conduct;" and the mother once more tenderly embraced him.

Nothing further was that day said to Edward, but his parents were, both of them, anxious that he should decide for himself; for to convince is far better than to force, and anything that has a show of tyranny only confirms the mind more in opposition, and thus destroys the good result you would look for."

For several days visitors poured in upon Andrew Douglass, with congratulations to his son upon his bravery. The news of the boy's daring act had spread itself abroad, and the grateful parents of the two little fellows whose lives had been preserved, spread abroad the deed in every direction. A present was afterwards made by them in conjunction to Edward, being a series of the classics, bound in the most costly and ornate style, each of them containing his name with it, thus being a perpetual record of the deed of fearless devotion which raised the son of the (once) mechanic to the elevation of a hero.

Time passed by however, and Edward was sent to resume his studies; but it was rumoured that his ardour for the military profession had considerably cooled. His attention was turned to a more abstruse kind of reading than geometry had hitherto afforded him. This the father obtained a knowledge of, but not a syllable was spoken to Edward: it was fondly hoped that his mother's objection against a military life would have its due weight upon him in the course of time.

Mr. Jackson, whom we must not forget, was now an old and tottering man, white with age, and venerable from a certain noble characteristic which labor and independence had stamped upon him. At the house of Andrew Douglass, (upon whose bounty the old foreman was a pensioner, if he who has given up his life in toil to accumulate wealth to another can be called so) he was a constant and daily guest.

It was to him, then, that the anxious mother delegated, in some degree, the task of weaning Edward (when at home) from the effects of the martial fever which had seized him; and the arguments of the old man were neither wanting in weight or influence; but Edward still appeared shy of coming to a decision upon the matter. Possessing a clear and comprehensive knowledge of ancient and modern history, old Jackson would describe in terse, and fitting language, the rise of empires through commerce and the arts of peace, and their fall through the love of luxury, the lust of conquest, or the wicked desires of enslaving the weaker. The picture did not want a certain kind of horror either,—crime, rapine, murder, the plague of sword and fire heightened the sanguine hues of the grave pictures, and sent the brave though trembling boy shuddering to his rest.

One day while passing through one of the suburbs of London, a crowded part close beside the city, the attention of Andrew Douglass was called to a wretched and shabby-looking individual, who, with a cadaverous face, repulsive between the ravages of famine and gin, was endeavoring to move the passers-by to pity. The equalor of his dress, the frightful emaciation of his body, the filthy skin, and matted hair, made the stout heart of Andrew, who caught a side glimpse at him, quail. It was Charley Maitland—the gay, handsome, reckless, don't-care-a-curse Charley Maitland!

Andrew Douglass stopped all at once—their eyes met. The miserable being, whose hand was extended for charity, shivered from head to foot as if he had been stricken with the ague. With a despairing cry, but

also with an imploring gesture, the victim of his own vicious passions, fell to the ground. A crowd speedily collected around him, animated by curiosity alone; and in this case they merely stared at the miserable remnant of humanity with little or no emotion.

"Wot's the row?" asked a fat butcher-boy, making his way into the crowd by means of his tray.

"Cove lussy!" replied a ragged rascal, sententially, whose Bacchic nose was expressive of his ruling passion, and who supposed that every man who fell in the street must be actuated by some alcoholic motive.

"Fetch the p'lice," said another.

"And tell 'em to bring their stretchers," suggested a fourth.

"Make way there! my good fellows!" cried Andrew Douglass at this juncture, for the look of his old false friend had pierced his soul. "The poor fellow is only weak from want of food; make way, and call a cab. I will send him to the hospital."

"Stand back, there!" cried one or two officers; "it's Mr. Douglass the great manufacturer," added one or two with deference, for the rise of our friend was as popular among the working classes of the metropolis as the story of "Whittington and his Cat."

Suffice it to say that Charles Maitland, being taken to the hospital, was there attended with such care that in a few days he speedily recovered his former strength; and on the occasion of Andrew's going to see him, he expressed his remorse and contrition for his past offence, in such a manner that the heart of Douglass was softened; and for many years afterwards, Charles Maitland, cured of his folly, found a means of living at the hands of the man whose ruin he had sought. His past life may be guessed at by the reader without our describing it.

But that which rejoiced the hearts of Andrew and Clara Douglass the most, was the announcement from Edward's own lips, that he had at last decided upon not being

a soldier; but that he would turn his energies and his talents into the direction of his father's business. The lessons of the old foreman, who with pride, pointed to the results of industry and perseverance in his father's case, together with the unspoken yet comprehended wish of his mother, had not been lost upon Edward; and in course of time he became as assiduous in his duties at the office, or in his apportioned labor in the shops, as his father had been before him.

The "Road to Happiness" thus practically exemplified by Andrew Douglass, was also open to Edward; and while the latter life of the manufacturer was passed in acts of benevolence and usefulness, the example it afforded to the younger branches of his workmen was not thrown away; and those who bore with them testimonies of good conduct from Andrew, were gladly received in every foundry of the kingdom.

A great commercial distress, however, at this period paralysed trade in every branch; and the manufacturing districts had suffered severely from it; for, as foreign commerce had not demanded the manufactured goods of England, so the operatives found themselves without employment, while the shops were full of unsold machinery, and the shelves of the various factories were crammed with goods, whose sale, if forced upon the markets, were only followed by enormous sacrifices, and by ruin on the part of the smaller traders,—for "to sell at any price" is to ruin at any cost, and one can calculate the extent to which this unprincipled practice may be carried.

Be that as it may, there was a great distress existing in the land, and it behooved those who had the means to aid them who had not. In the midst of all this, there had not been a reduction of even one man in the establishment of Andrew Douglass; for as he did not labor altogether on speculation, but mostly for "home" or "export" orders, so the fluctuations of the time did not materially affect him.

He therefore, in this time of trial to the artisan, in conjunction with many others,

gave liberally of his means, in order that the distress, aggravated by a hard winter, might be as much as possible alleviated; and it was hoped that, with the coming spring, matters would (as they did) begin to brighten up.

But there also happened in conjunction to the frightful paralysis of trade, one of those strange and inexplicable events which, upon a scale vast and gigantic, appear to be the ravages of some supernatural being rather than the result of accident. In the extensive village of D—, situated in the most central part of the west of England, where foundries, factories, and cloth-mills were established and thousands of operatives dwelt, a great and terrible fire took place, which almost annihilated the property on the spot, and by means of which many lives were lost.

This again called upon the sympathies of men, and the name of Andrew Douglass was amongst the first of those who advanced to their relief. The property was insured to almost its full amount in the various offices; but the people,—the artisan, the weaver, and the mechanic—had lost their all,—their, in some cases, costly tools, their furniture, and their clothing. It was in their favor that public sympathy was aroused and turned, and Andrew Douglass, in order that he should not go half-way in the noble work of benevolence which now prompted him, determined to visit the spot himself.

Andrew Douglass was now fifty years of age. Half a century had rolled over his head, and while he journeyed on the coach, as it proceeded from London to D—, his thoughts were many and strange. The world had gone well with him; but he had looked back upon nearly thirty years of hard, manual labor, which had loomed before him like the mighty Alps. He had then never dreamt of being the Hannibal that should cross them. Never did the idea of mastery, of influence of wealth, of power, such as he now possessed, enter his mind. No! to be a good, steady workman, to support his old mother, to marry a good, in-

dustrious wife, to avoid his father's propensities for the tavern, and to be docile, obedient, and grateful to the foreman, Mr. Jackson, for all the care and attention which he bestowed upon him, were the elements of his ambition.

Well, he had done all this,—he had done it well, but he had also done much more than this, and he felt something like a consciousness of *right*, the right of enjoying a well-earned independence, steal over him as the coach rolled off and brought him nearer to the place where misery, suffering, and want had stricken hundreds of his fellow-creatures.

His thoughts, at this new transition, became full of pain. He heard the cry of children wailing for food, and the father thought of his own; he heard mothers sobbing over the starving little ones, and he remembered his own wife Clara; and at last his anxiety grew almost painful, as he reflected that every moment of delay increased the sufferings of the poor.

It was a bright, fine morning, though

very cold, when he at last found himself beneath the roof of the village curate, and seated in the library of the benevolent minister of God: the wealthy engineer learned from him the whole particulars of the disaster, and the circumstances of the sufferers.

"Here, sir," continued Andrew Douglass, drawing a considerable sum of money from his pocket-book, "here is what will serve for their immediate aid. God hath blessed my labor, and I should not forget my brethren. Distribute this for me among them, while I also, in another mode, seek to give them all the aid I can."

And having done this, he returned to his home happy and contented, followed by the thanks and blessings of the poor.

What more then have we to say? In this life of Andrew Douglass we have traced the Road to Happiness, step by step. It is an open path to all—if it be not to wealth.—To the young of this generation we only add this, in the words of Scripture, "Go and do ye likewise."

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BOOK III

CHAPTER I. LOOSE UPON TOWN.

It was on a dull November day, when the atmosphere of London was as thick, as drizzly, as smoky, and as disagreeable as it could well be, and everything felt as cold and clammy to the touch, that a well-grown youth of about seventeen years of age, was seated in a small coffee-house, situated in one of the numerous courts turning out of Fleet Street.

His coat which had once been handsome and well-cut, was now grown rusty and threadbare; his hat was seedy, his boots soiled, and out at the toes; his linen of a yellowish tinge, had shrunk under his worn cravat; in fact, he had an air of faded gentility which as plainly as possible spoke that he had fallen under the frowns of fortune, and that he was in the "sere and yellow leaf" of his luck,—in other words, he was a homeless—parentless—friendless vagabond.

His pale face was certainly handsome; but there was also in his jaded air that peculiar expression resulting from dissipation and precocious excesses. His melancholy and downcast eyes told that his heart was sunken and heavy.

"Well, Jack Hazard," he muttered, apostrophising himself, as he jingled over the few halfpence in his pocket, "you are in a nice condition now, I hope. What do you propose to do next? My father," he

continued, changing the grammatical form of his colloquy, "made a nice mess of it, when he began at the tavern, and swore that I had the sweetest voice of all the boys belonging to St. Paul's choir; and when my mother—heaven rest her, and forgive my share in her death!" he added with some emotion, "used to send me to fetch him home, he would make me drink, and sing to his drunken comrades, till I was as tipsy as himself. What between that youthful dissipation and card-playing, I am in a pretty considerable fix, as the Yankees say. Then he must needs go and win a lot of money at a Derby sweep, and that did the business. In three weeks he died raving mad, and mother soon followed. The little money he left me, found its way into the pockets of tavern-keepers and billiard-room sharps; for I must go and bet like other fools on races; and try my luck in twenty or thirty sweeps,—and, as a matter of course, be fleeced of all. What's to be done?" and he threw himself back in his seat with an air of perplexity.

"I'll tell you, sir, if you'll permit me," responded a voice almost over his shoulder. Hazard started and looked up, and met the glance of a keen, restless pair of eyes, where cunning and a sort of malicious sarcastic kind of humor lurked.

This individual was a Jeremy Diddler sort of man, but upon a highly respectable scale. The face was thin and sallow, the

hair black and curly, the mustache thick and irreproachable, the linen white, the clothes of a glossy black, and the hat, of peculiar shape, was polished to a painful perfection.

"Well," replied Jack, frankly, "if you can tell me, I shall be very much obliged to you, for, upon my soul! I don't know at this present moment what I am to do."

"A son of fortune, sir?" inquired the other, with great volubility of tone and manner. "Fickle goddess, Fortune, sir," added he parenthetically, "but worth the wooing for all that. Let us look into the nature of things gravely," and he sat down.

In the meantime, we must inform the reader that this man had for some time been a silent spectator of Hazard, who thought he had been alone, and the following soliloquy passed rapidly through his brain:—"It's the very youth, and I have at last found out my El Dorado. He plays cards—good! he's young, handsome, rather! but young—that's very good. A certain air of ingenueness goes a great way with some people, and his frank face will be a recommendation. My finances are rather limited—they always are; but I've got a garret, a bottle, and a pack of cards,—the only gift of fortune—those same cards. I'll speak to him," and as the reader has already discovered, he did so.

He had taken his seat opposite Jack, first for the purpose of being able to talk more at ease with him; and secondly to study Hazard's countenance, which spite of its pallor, was prepossessing, only that it had a precocious cleverness in it, and denoted an idea of being well up to a few tricks, as the execrable slang of this kind of people expresses it. There was also a tendency to the vulgar about Jack Hazard, which contrasted with the ease and polish—another might have termed it audacity and impudence—which was written upon the bearing of the genteel individual.

"I like you very much—I do, 'pon my word," and he held out a hand whereon

gleamed a number of very red and yellow stones set in rings of rather ponderous form.

Jack stretched his hand out just as frankly, and a masonic shake was interchanged. This seemed to have settled whatever lurking doubts there may have remained on either side,—they were instantly removed by completing the self-introduction in the following manner. The stranger gazed upon Jack keenly, knowingly; then gently closed one eye, laid his finger on the dexter side of his nose, and finally nodded his head as Jack Hazard acknowledged this pantomime dialogue.

"So," began the man, "you're down, are you? What's your name?"

"I haven't money enough for a dinner, and my name is Jack Hazard," was the reply given with some regard to sequential correctness.

"Mine is—a—Adolphe—Count de la Roos—at your service," returned the stranger, shifting his chin about in his cravat, and pulling up the collar of his shirt.—"A—a, I'm tolerable well known about London."

"Indeed!" remarked Jack, not much startled, even upon hearing the lofty title of this foreign looking highness.

"Yes,—I've taken a fancy to you; we'll go on the grand tour together. I'll protect you," continued the other, energetically striking his bosom and twirling his guard.

"I'm very much obliged to you," returned Jack.

"How have you managed to live lately?" inquired the count, leaning across the table, with an appearance of great interest.

"Why," answered Hazard, "pretty much the same, I imagine, as many other young fellows, who would be sorry to have it supposed they lived by sharpening, frequenting billiard-rooms, making bets, playing cards—"

"Cards, eh?" interrupted the other quickly. "fine study—improves the powers of

the mind wonderfully; refines the intellect. I would beg to observe that a study of the doctrine of chance beats Euclid or Bonycastle-bollow. Generals of armies, sir, go through a course of study in cards," continued the individual with a glow of pride. "I have gone through that same noble ordeal; and I may say without boasting, that I am pretty good at the game."

"No doubt of it, count," replied Jack quickly, beginning at the same time to be interested in the promises of this individual who was so liberal in his professions.

"What expectations have you?" pursued Count de la Roos.

"That of starving, for aught I know," was the answer; "for my father, who was in business as a carpenter, knocked it up before I had a chance of being able to do a day's work."

"Sensible man!" said the count. "I admire him. Work! work is plebeian"—and he curled his lips in disdain: "the votaries of fortune never work. Will you join with me?"

"In what?" asked Jack, while stirring up the remains of his cold coffee.

"Keen—keen, sir, I perceive," remarked the count. "I'll tell you—in a dinner, a bottle of fine gin, a lodging, and so forth; but, above all, in a spec—a spec, sir."

"I will join you willingly," was the reply, "as all the former are very welcome to me; and in the last one also, if it can be made serviceable to either you or myself."

"Not a doubt of it. Here, waiter! two cups of coffee." The order was obeyed; and when the attendant was gone, Count Adolphe resumed: "I was asking you what your expectations were—that is, whether you have any friends or relations who—"

"The former have discarded me," said Jack, a little mournfully; "but they were poor; and," added he ungratefully, "they were no great loss. I have some relations, I believe, but I know little about them."

"Rich?" demanded De la Roos, laconically.

"I have heard that one of them is so, but I do not know who or what he is."

"We'll find him out," said the count, brightening up, and added in a very decided tone, "we'll discover him, sir, and give you to his fond arms as a long-lost and affectionate relative. Now finish up that mahogany decoction, and let us be going. I have a few things to say to you in private." Jack did as he was desired, and they quitted the place.

The evening found them seated in a convenient attic which the count was wont to hire as his summer residence—the house being situated in that airy department of this modern Babylon, denominated Clerk-enwell.

The fashion of the West End, so far as the furniture was concerned, was more strictly followed in "the breach" rather than in the "observance." A turn down bedstead was concealed in a kind of large cabinet with folding doors, bearing impress of the "New Cut" manufacture, an old table, two or three chairs, a few culinary articles, and a great scarcity of crockery, constituted the domestic properties of Adolphe Count de la Roos.

He did not, however, waste time in apologizing for the meagreness of his accommodation; but he spread the cloth, laid food on the table, placed out the promised liquor, and taking a pack of cards from a recess at hand, began the moment the meal was over to initiate Hazard still farther into the mysteries of gaming, which plainly exhibited his superiority over the youth, whatever might have been his previous qualifications.

"You play 'all fours,' do you?" said he, during the conversation which ensued; "very good—it's a low game, but it suits a beginner admirably. The exercise of 'shuffling,' 'cutting,' and 'turning up,' is not to be despised—it gives one dexterity in the manipulation of these truly scientific auxiliaries to a man of the world; but if

you do play 'all fours,' be a master at it—avoid cribbage—it's only fit for old men and their wives—not for artists: it requires too much play; and you can't manage matters so well."

Jack Hazard acknowledged the correctness of the count's remarks, and in assenting to them promised to avail himself of the experience which that worthy man must necessarily possess.

"Now," continued the count, thoughtfully, as he caressed his chin, "I can give you an *entré* into life; but is not a very superb one—yet, that must be managed afterwards, and by your means—"

"Mine!" interrupted Jack, lifting up his eyes in surprise, while a smile of incredulity crossed his features: "how can that be?"

"Don't interrupt me," returned the count: "it's done in exceedingly bad taste, not to add that it breaks into one's train of thoughts. How much money have you?" and he bent his keen eagle-eye upon Jack.

"About sevenpence halfpenny," replied Jack, exhibiting his stock of wealth.

"Not much; but still better than none," was the comment of the sharper. "I have known a fortune to be based upon as small a foundation. The mischief of such fortunes, however, is, that they grow in the manner of an inverted pyramid: they are not secure. It is for that reason," added he, philosophically, "I have never sought to build mine upon a scale of such magnitude. In moderation there is safety."

All this while he was shuffling and cutting the cards with a dexterity and quickness which betrayed one practised in that branch of the useless arts. "Hut!" he murmured; "he must have a little more money. I never give—I can lose a little, and then we will go forth and see what can be done;" so saying, he dealt them and resumed: "We are about to play 'all fours,'" said he: "I am willing to give you a chance. Play! I put my stake down"—and he laid a crown-piece on the table—

"and yours shall he considered, if you lose, as a debt of honor. Play."

The game proceeded. Jack showed great ability, and Count Adolphe complimented him upon it, at the same time interspersing his voluble chatter with a variety of observation and instruction, all pleasantly enough intermingled, were it not for the execrable doctrines he at the same time inculcated in the breast of his new pupil.

It was not long before Hazard found himself in possession of about a pound to the evident satisfaction of his mentor, whose singularity of selection did not strike Jack as being of the wisest; but he was yet to learn that a man like the count did not bestow his philanthropy without a clear object in view.

"Now," said Count Adolphe, abruptly, as he rose, "it is time for us to go abroad; and mark me," he added, rather sternly: "the money you have won from me, must be trebled at least, before we return: so make your toilette, clean your boots, wash your face, trim your hair, brush your hat, put on that clean front"—handing him one,—and then we shall be prepared."

In a few minutes afterwards the count was pleased to pass a compliment upon the changed appearance of the young man; and certainly with a little trouble and less cost, never was a more remarkable metamorphosis. Brushes, soap, and water, had done their work well.

They went forth. It required some half-hour to elapse ere they got into the neighborhood of Leicester Square. Hazard was not such a novice as to express any surprise at the number of mustachioed, cigarette-smoking individuals who exchanged salutes with the count. To any casual observer, most of these men had a peculiar feature and mannerism that stamped them at once as members of that "industrious" class who live by levying supplies upon the pockets of those dupes, who in frequenting saloons, taverns, billiard-rooms, and so on, wish to be initiated into "life." Finally turning out of Regent Street,

the count led his *protege* to a taven kept by a pugilist, where gambling on a high or a low scale, as suited the means of the players, was carried on.

It was not long before our youthful hero found himself at home, in a little bar-parlor, having, by a peculiar species of freemasonry, been introduced to the tall gladiator who kept the house; one whose character was so far beyond all fear of criticism—it being irrecoverably lost—that he was more respected, perhaps, than many an honest man.

The company, who on the count's word had received Jack so graciously, were of a very miscellaneous kind, and consisted of the most vicious and vile of that class who are a terror and a reproach to the society that cherishes them in its bosom.

Among these were several young men of superior grade. Sons of respectable tradesmen, and city merchants; students of law, divinity, and medicine, each of whom, during his career, selects and patronizes one of these numerous mentors that are always at hand to initiate, to show, to introduce their pupils into the most fearful sinks of depravity that the West End, above all other places, can boast of.

These young men, however, by a species of convention, tacitly agreed upon among their several guardians, in the shape of pugilists, dog-fanciers, horse-dealers, &c., were at times given up to the cleverness, or the tact of the professed gamblers, who, for the permission of being allowed to fleece them whenever the opportunity offered, were accustomed to "tip" a portion of their winnings; and thus all, at one time or other, except the dupe, participated in the benefits derivable from this system of wholesale robbery.

On this evening in question, then, a huge bully of a man introduced to them a young gentleman evidently fresh from college.—One who had not as yet been contaminated by any evil influence; and was consequently, from his inexperience, the more suited to prove a "pigeon," in other words, a victim. The capabilities of many present were un-

questionable, and the opportunity too good to be lost: and while Jack sat apart, Count Adolphe and the young man's guide "about town" entered into conversation, in which the stranger joined with the simplicity and impetuosity of a boy.

He was flushed with money, and already flustered with drinking. It was wonderful to see, only that all was managed with such an air of careless premeditation, how the company gradually thinned, as if by agreement, leaving at last the dupe alone with the count, and one or two others, among whom was Hazard, seated in the room.

The colloquy turned on play. The young man proposed a game. The count "never played—except to oblige a friend, or for a glass." The game was insisted on, and finally Jack was appealed to, if he would make one; this was understood, and the game began.

The stakes were small, and the young man played and drank, and grew into love with his luck, which, because he was as yet no loser, made him imagine that he had some skill. Finally the count gave up; and Jack Hazard and the youth were left to play for heavier stakes, the others looking on and betting.

Hazard exhibited such phlegmatic coolness, whether winning or losing, yet playing with consummate skill, that the count secretly exulted in the selection he had made; but he also congratulated himself for another reason, which will appear in due time; and gave himself no further trouble about the results of the night, but sat apart, almost in silence, or betting now and then with great evident reluctance, yet merely as if willing to be obliging, and with that air of superb indifference as to the result, that any man would have imagined cards to have had no earthly interest whatever for him. The man was a profound tactician, and knew how to school himself in word and act; everything he said or did was by calculation.

As the night wore into morning, the young gamesters were still at their play.—The stakes had increased, and the youth

was growing feverish and irritable—he was losing his temper—in fact, he was losing his money. He had already paid over to Hazard a very considerable sum, and a horrible fire was beginning to burn up in his breast; but he gulped down glass after glass, and played on.

The stakes that Hazard had at any former time played for, were so contemptible in their amount when compared to the glittering heaps now on the table before him, that he also felt stealing through his heart an indescribable thrill, which at first was like a sharp twinge of agony, till at last it grew so unbearable, as to shake his nerves and disturb his equanimity. It required a powerful effort, and a glance from the count's eyes, to restore to him his *sang froid*; but he was at last collected again, and was finally the winner of a considerable amount. The young man was dragged off to bed, half mad with drinking and his losses; and the den was cleared out.

The sequel of this first successful night that Jack Hazard had spent in his now adopted profession was, that he himself had for his own share twenty pounds, a new suit of clothing, including hat, boots, linen, a watch, &c., and he was now presentable to any society chance might favor him with an introduction to.

The youth, whom he had thus victimised, was lost sight of, for the next day he disappeared; but they heard that he had returned to college bitterly repentant, much to the disgust of the pugilist whom he had selected, and who was thus baulked of a considerable allowance that he had calculated on. It was also stated that he had sworn to eschew cards and such company in future.

All connected with the business shared in the spoil, as a matter of course. Self-preservation dictated honorable fair-dealing among them; for bound as they were one to another, where unity was their only strength, to have paltered in the division of the ill-gotten gold, would have been to strike a fatal blow at their own interest; and hence arises the secrecy which exists

among that class of men with regard to these black transactions. Jack Hazard, on after consideration, when alone, felt some compunction for the extent to which he had robbed his victim; but the daily excitement under which he now labored, precluded remorse from lasting any length of time.

While this style of civilized brigandage for a time supported Jack and his new friend, it was evident that unless they could make a move beyond the present circle they were in, they must soon exhaust the means of their continual supplies; but this kind of life was a fearful one.

The blessed morning, with its sunshine, and its gentle air; or with its frost on the ground, and the bracing wind singing along the streets, was unregarded, it being spent in bed; sleeping off the fumes of the last night's debauchery, and the ill-flavor of the cigars and fiery potations, the young man was now getting accustomed to. In the afternoon he arose, and with his comrade the count, took refreshment in order to recruit and stimulate himself for the next piece of villainy to be acted in concert.

In the lower kinds of the West End hells, in the dark taverns amid bullies, panders, pugilists, and women of ill-fame, the nights were mostly spent; but the count was an indefatigable *Chevalier d'Industrie*, and left no stone unturned in order to increase the amount of their gains—to widen their sphere of action, and multiply their "means" and "appliances," in order to provide against any unlucky contingency, which might mar the tide of success.

It was in the evening, and at night, then, that these two, as did many others, reap up the harvest so plentifully sown around them.

In gambling dens, whose outward appearance was a mere blind to deceive the unwary, and to quibble with the law in case any *contriteps* should betray them into its clutches; in a place where the shop window intimated a "coffee" or "shop-

house," were some of those fearful scenes enacted, which defy the vigilance of the police, and which hurl men to perdition.

In cigar-shops, where on pretence of lounging about the ottomans of a snugly fitted room, or beguiling the tedium of an hour with a harmless game, did these two ply their dark trade. Many a dupe did they pick up, who, entering to buy a cigar, not detecting the infamous character of the place, was decoyed into a game of "loo" or "hazard," and thus paid his contribution to the general stock.

But these were the meaner places of resort.

There were also well-known establishments in the neighborhood of the Hay-market, where wine, women and play, all mingled together. These three elements of a horrible fascination seemed to have formed a lasting truce—a junction: and thus, in the very heart of a great city, sanctioned by license of the government, infamous temples of vice, of villainy, of every demoralization, lifted up their heads, and laughed, as they displayed their hideous proportions so unblushingly in the sight of men.

And then the companions—the acquaintances—of Jack Hazard! What horrible, what revolting specimens of humanity were daily added to the catalogue of his familiars.

Men saturated with crime, men whose depravity was so shameless, so far beyond description, that for want of words to designate them, they were treated with more attention and respect than those whose "honor" (for these rascals acknowledged such a principle) was more unsullied, whose pretensions were really far greater: vice in these men became dignified from the worship which meaner vices paid to it.

That which cast the unhappy youth the farther into the abhorred gulf he now lawfully entered in, was a yielding disposition, a want of moral courage of a decisively negative kind; the power of saying "no!" all of which are far too prevalent, more or less, among the young men of our day. At this

time habitual gambling had not yet become an insatiate passion with him, nor did he, with a naturally good disposition, see that he was gradually sinking lower and lower, and that ere long he would be utterly unable to extricate himself.

CHAPTER II.

FRENCH HAZARD.

In a gorgeously fitted little chamber belonging to one of the most widely-known private gambling establishments of the West End, Adolphe Count de la Ross was seated, cracking filberts, drinking claret, and half-reclining at his ease, while conversing with an individual, who, with his feet on the fender, was coolly smoking a cigar.

We have described the count, we must now give some little idea of his companion, who was no other than the huge and burly giant that kept the tavern where Jack made his first successful *début*.

The man stood six feet two, with a head and neck like those of a bull. In the thick, sensual lips, in the nose of Ethiopian formation, in the small, half-shut eyes, the seamed and bloated cheeks, you traced an exaggeration of the animal passions, which instinctively made you recoil with aversion and disgust. The saytyr-like features were indicative of a depravity that we dare not trust ourselves to any farther description.

The small but elegant room was brilliantly lighted with gas; the air was warm; the two men were surrounded with luxuries, and on the table among the bottles lay some peculiarly formed implements of gaming.

"So you think you've done the trick, do you, count?" observed the gladiator, in a hoarse, husky voice, inundating the bright bars as he spoke with a saturation of tobacco juice.

"I'll tell you what it is, Digges," returned Adolphe with an indescribable insolence of politeness: "when you make remarks of that kind, let it be done with an expression of more confidence in my skill. Do you think, with your bull-head, and your thick-er brain, that a man like myself carries on

a speculative theory for months upon the mere chance of being right or wrong? I do not think—I know it to be so."

"Well, may be you do," growled the other, "only don't be so dignified over it, and be hanged to you! or I'll get up and knock you over;" and, as he struck off the ashes at the end of his cigar, his voice died away in his throat like distant thunder.

"Ah!" exclaimed the count, "you must always let the animal exhibit itself in your nature. I don't know what could possibly have made me join issue with a fellow only fit to carry porter's loads. We shall have you spoil some of our best designs with your abominable brutality shortly."

"Come, I say, don't—draw it mild," returned the other, threateningly.

"Do you menace me, you rascal?" demanded Adolphe, turning his wicked glance upon the giant, who seemed to be awed by its power. "Do you know that I can transport or gibbet you?"

"There, that'll do," said Digges, in a gentler tone, like the subdued growl of a tiger: "I know you're a trump. What's the use of talking this way? You've picked up a feller as is well enough in his way; but what's to be done with him?"

"I'll tell you, if you'll listen," returned the count, blandly, mollified by the submission of the huge Caliban; "because you have got a part to play in the matter; and as good opportunity now, I'll explain.—You remember that some months ago I went to Berkshire?"

"Yes that you did; and took with you all the money some of us had expected you to hand over after a regular plucking—"

"It was necessary," interrupted the count somewhat hastily; "because my object demanded money. Well, my journey and my inquiries terminated in finding that a certain rich old man, worth seventy thousand pounds at least, had a son and a daughter, the former of whom, about sixteen years of age, was at college; somewhere or other; and the latter, a sweet and innocent girl, was at home with her father."

"Well, what of all this?" demanded Digges. "Ain't there many a rich old chap as is got no end of money, and a boy and a girl?"

"Very true, you old Silenus; but drink your vile rum-and-water, and hold your tongue. There's not so many of them have got a nephew, a sister's son, that they love as well as their own children, and perhaps better."

"Eh! I see," observed Digges, with an expression of great knowingness: "that's the game, is it?"

"Yes," returned the count. "The sister married a poor man, the father of this Jack Hazard, and the uncle was so enraged that he refused to have anything more to say to them. Years went by, and they lost sight of each other. I found it all out—no matter how; I introduced myself to the old man, and discovered that he had left this lad twenty thousand pounds, which he must not know yet awhile; the old man's fortune being, as I have stated, a large one,—of which the son and the daughter have their portions allotted. Now, I want to find this son,—and—you see?"

"Don't I, that's all," said Digges, taking a huge gulp of the grog by his hand.

"Well, if we can pick him up, I may also marry the girl," added the count, stroking his whiskers with great complacency. "It's difficult, I fear, but it's possible; and then—"

"Well, but what then are you about to do with this here fellow, Hazard?" inquired Digges, lighting a fresh cigar.

"He's got the true spirits of gambling in him, but he has not got enough. You don't know, my worthy, because its questionable whether you've got any feeling at all, what the power of play is—because you began to gamble with buttons before you were a year old."

Digges laughed hoarsely, till his hideous face became purple.

"Now, if I can fill this young fellow from the head to the feet full of this infernal passion—I know what it is, because it has made me—"

"As clever a rascal as ever shuffled a card. Aye—aye, I know you well, Mr. Count Adolphe de la Reos—Jones."

"Hush! you fool!" commanded the other, a slight flush brightening his sallow cheeks; "and don't mention names."

"Well—well, I'm dumb," replied Digges. "Go on, let's hear all your clever plan from end to end."

"Before this lad has his money, I want to put his foot into some dark pit of crime, the remembrance and the fear of which, added to the thirst for gaming, shall follow, haunt, and surround him, till we have sucked him dry, and then we'll make a slave of him."

"You must be the devil!" said Digges, as he turned his vast bulk, in order to take a survey of the man who thus coolly unfolded his diabolical schemes.

"Not at all," returned the other, with a complacent wave of the hand: "no need to be half so black. You see in that case he will be effectually in our power, and you shall be his keeper."

"Me?" ejaculated the brawny ruffian in surprise.

"You!" returned the count, smilingly.

"What for?" demanded Digges.

"To intimidate him, to keep him under subjection, for he may wish to break the traces, and," added the count, with the smile of a fiend, "I know of no one more fitted to frighten children—and such a child shall he become—than yourself."

"Why, you wouldn't have me break every bone in his skin, would ye?" asked Digges, still unable to perceive what the other intended to carry.

"No," was the reply; "but when he finds out that you are to be forever in attendance upon him by night and by day, with your frightful oaths and frightful face—I'm flattering you now, you great bear," added Adolphe, playfully, "when he knows that your heavy grasp is perpetually on his shoulder, the dence is in it. If he will not be subjective to any one of our very moderate wishes,"

"Humph!" muttered the gladiator, and

then he took another pull at the tumbler, ignited a fresh cigar, and appeared to be profoundly puzzled, because he was trying to think—a task beyond the powers of this Hercules.

"I am sometimes afraid," recommenced the count, sipping his claret, "that your stupidity will sadly retard your advancement; but, however, as you have been servicable upon one or two occasions, I don't care if I take a little more trouble with you than I have done;" and so saying, the count drew his chair towards the burly pugilist, and in a low and confidential tone, began to elucidate and lay before him, one by one, every step to be taken in this piece of infamy about to be executed. We do not explain them to the reader now, because they will all appear in due course as this history of vice progresses.

"Now," said the count, after half an hour had elapsed, "I have finished my instructions—do you comprehend them?"

Digges laid his fingers along his nose, and looked so cunning, hardened, ferocious and wicked, as he closed one eye, that the prime minister in evil expressed himself highly satisfied.

"It is ten o'clock," he observed, taking out a splendid gold watch, "and at eleven we are to meet with a young fellow who, it appears, has just come into possession of a large fortune; so now having done business with you, you may get as drunk as you like provided you do not quarrel, and get into the hands of the police. I expect Hazard. Hah! here he is."

As he spoke, Jack, dressed in a style that, but for its glitter, might have been termed elegant; but he looked pale, careworn and wearied. His reception was decidedly cordial. The pugilist, with a vociferous oath, and with eyes moistened by the "Jamaica" he had been copiously imbibing, grasped the youth's thin, white hand in his own enormous mass of muscle and bone; the count's was also warm, but the grace with which he did it was a study.

"Well, have you seen him?" was the count's first query.

"Yes," replied Jack; "who do you think it is?"

"I cannot tell," replied Adolphe. "Some Freshman or other who thinks himself very clever, I make no doubt."

"The very same youth that you and I plucked so cleverly on the night that I first 'came out.'"

"Indeed?" exclaimed the count, somewhat uneasily. "Does he know you?"

"No," was the answer. "You forgot that he was so attentive to his glass. I have spoken with him, and he does not evince the slightest recognition."

"Ah! well, that will do," observed the count. "Where is he now?"

"In safe hands," returned Jack; "he is in good keeping, and by the time we get to the place, he will be at play, or else well primed for it."

"Let us adjourn at once, then," said the count, "that we may have a little practice beforehand; it is always necessary to keep one's hand in."

And accordingly Count Adolphe and Jack quitted the chamber, leaving the prize-fighter alone with his beloved rum. Soon after they entered a massive pile of buildings turning from Jermyn street, where they passed up the lobbies, whose doors were guarded by plates of iron, massive bolts, and strong, desperate looking men; and they found themselves in a magnificent fitted chamber, blazing with lights, with mirrors, and filled with costly furniture.

Pictures of great value were hung on the gilded walls, while busts, statues, and groups of marble were prodigally displayed between the fluted pilasters. The carpet was of the richest texture, and the colors of the most glowing kind; everything betokened an extravagance of luxury.

There were several already in the room, all at play. Hazard joined them, and soon he was all exultation, while Count Adolphe was whispering to one or two others who were all connected more or less together in their "way of business."

It was not long before the young collegian entered. It was truly the same young

man who had been taught the severely costly lesson before described, and who, it seems, had not profited by it. The pale face and attenuated frame denoted that he had for some time past, been going through a severe course of study; and now the recreation—from the solitude of his chamber into the fascinating vortex around him, where, maddened with wine, excited by play, stimulated by glitter and incessant bustle, would be all the more to be dreaded.

This excitement was visible in his fevered eyes; and, as he passed on with a handsome dashing captain, a notoriously vicious man, Count Adolphe whispered in the ear of the latter, "Well, what have you done? Is he in train?"

"In effect," returned the other, "you have but to open your jaws and he would leap within them. He has been sharpened by a little play already, though it was a difficult thing to manage at first; but I have played with him some of that very peculiar champagne; and presently he will be eager to play with any one."

"Keep him to yourself," muttered the count, who assumed the leadership in these matters. "Introduce him to Hazard; that fellow knows how to act. Avoid all reference to the past."

The captain nodded and passed on. Soon after, Jack and the young student were agreeably chattering together, surrounded by several sharps of an inferior grade—yet who were all of as great importance in their places as the central stones of an arch.

"Have you anything in your town that can equal this as a place of amusement?" asked the captain, glancing around the chamber.

"Why, yes," replied the collegian, "we have—that is—I think so; but it's so long since I was in one—and the authorities broke it up, and—"

"Confess, then," cried Hazard, "that it is far better for us, who love the excitement of such a scene, to play, to enjoy, to revel

out life, sanctioned by the authorities in a city like this."

"Why, egad! yes," returned the youth, as he took up a glass of champagne dexterously pushed to his hand by the captain; "and therefore I don't care if I make a throw with you—with any one." They all rose up and went to the table at once.

Around that board, then, were clustered the daring gamblers. Some were bold, rapacious, and willing to drag the gold out of the victims' pockets from sheer cupidity, and by dint of mere brute force, rather than endure the tedium of play, and coolly proceed by their infernal refinement of skill, to do the work of plunder in detail. Some there were who had but just dipped their foot in these fearful waters, and had drawn back, half-shuddering; but who were now emboldened by the spirit with which the players were progressing. Each man, in fact, had his own thought, his own idea, his own object; and each man, while wrapt in that thought, was profoundly watching the fluctuations of the play.

That fatal and dangerous game of "hazard" was at its height. Ravenous eyes were bent upon the table, and scarcely a sound was heard save the clinking of the gold, and the monotonous or excited voices of the desperate or daring who betted and staked, according to their inclination or their faith in the chances that were offered.

Between Jack and the young student there were heavy sums of money dependent. It was the duty of the handsomely dressed waiters, who moved with almost noiseless step to and fro across the splendid carpet, to bear wine about to any who chose to take it, though many drank mechanically when the liquor was by their hands. Few avoided it; but the professional men were peculiarly schooled in the restraint which they placed over their appetites. If they drank they drank sparingly, and what they took had little or no effect upon them. Others, again, quaffed the delicious but lethal draught in copious

bumpers, and among them was the young student.

The play grew as exciting as if those men had been engaged in a silent death-struggle. Long ago the young man had passed over to the count, to Jack and others, all the money he possessed—then he gave notes of payment; finally gold was lent him to any amount chosen, and still, like one in delirium, he proceeded.

"I'll play no more," he shouted at last in a hoarse sepulchral voice, while cold drops of sweat stood on his forehead, and his face was as pallid as that of a corpse.

"What!" said the count, in his quiet sneering way, "is this the bold gambler that challenged any in the chamber? Be it so," he added, as he buttoned up his pockets.

"Not so," interrupted Jack; "if I have been a winner, it is not with the intention of leaving you a loser, without giving you the opportunity of taking your revenge, sir. I'll double all I've won."

"Done!" cried the student, draining another bumper; and they turned to the table.

The brain of the young man throbbed like fire: his heart beat as if from tremendous throes of anguish which weighed like mountains upon him. "Fool! fool!" he muttered, upon this next cast goes fortune, happiness, life. My poor sister, my sweet Laura! one lesson was not sufficient. But hold—let me be cool—cool! I may yet retrieve all; and he sought to calm himself, but the wine he had drunken proved too much for him; and while he fancied himself gazing with a steady eye upon the table, to the others he appeared to be glaring like one who had gone mad, but had lost the sense of motion.

He was fated, however, to lose all; and while tearing a handful of hair out of his head, he rushed with a yell from the chamber, crying out—"Ruined! ruined! and undone!" a rapid trampling of feet on the stone staircase, a rattling somewhere with

out, the banging of a distant door followed, and then silence fell around.

Hazard was standing apart from the table near the centre of the floor, and the eyes of all present were turned upon him. He could count his winnings—what with gold, checks, notes, bonds, &c., by thousands. He had all this enormous wealth in his pockets; and during that deep, fierce, menacing silence, it seemed as if all those men would have rushed upon him, knife in hand, and torn the money out of his very heart.

It was during this terrible pause, too, as the last echoes of that closing door sounded distantly, that a strange and inexpressible vague terror began to steal over Hazard, till his soul was crushed, and the blood at his heart began to freeze. He met the cold mocking glitter of the count's eye.

"Hang you!" he muttered, while fiercely clenching his hand; "why don't you speak? why do you stare upon me in that manner?"

"Hush!" returned Adolphe; "the stake is not all paid yet. I have a presentiment. You should have had a little morey," added he bitterly. "I never clean any poor devil out as you have done him."

"Wretch!" returned Jack. "It was you."

"If!" interrupted the count. "I have not played with him."

"And yet," retorted the angry youth, sneering in turn, "you would share in the spoil, eh? Or, with all the ignominy and odium, am I to keep the gold?"

"I tell you," said Adolphe, impressively, though he evaded replying to the question which so nearly touched him, "I tell you something is about to happen."

"My God!" exclaimed Jack, turning white as the snow. "What is it you say? speak man! Can't you do something to break this horrible silence which is stifling me? Here, waiter—some wine!"

The waiter advanced with a salver, on which were decanters and glasses. Jack poured out a glass, drank it, and dashed it back on the tray with such violence that

some of the ware fell to the ground and was broken. The noise destroyed the spell, some resumed the play, some quitted the place, among whom were Jack, the count, the captain, and two or three others, who had been agents in the transaction, in order to receive their portion of the spoil.

Before they finally left the house, therefore the gold and the papers were fairly divided. In almost a gullen and fierce silence did Jack hand to each one his allotted portion; and as he gave Count Adolphe his, Hazard looked so dark and lurking upon him, that the other, fearful of some explosion, and remembering that he had said one or two bitter things in the course of the evening, thought to mollify the ire of the youth by a word of commendation.

"My dear fellow," said he, "you are a real Fortunatus."

"What do you mean?" asked Jack, abruptly.

"That I have never seen more skill united with calculation to a consummate coolness. Your nerves are iron, absolutely iron;" and Adolphe made two or three passes with his stick after the manner of exercising a small sword.

"You are complimentary," returned Jack with great indifference; "but that does not prevent me from demanding an explanation from you."

"From me?" exclaimed the other with an air of surprise, either real or assumed; and then he cast an uneasy glance upon his companions, who were standing by, conversing in whispers, one or two beginning to be interested in what was going on.

"Yes," returned Jack, resolutely; "it is necessary that you should account to me for some few eccentricities that I have remarked in your conduct towards me this evening."

"Behold!" cried Adolphe, with the air of an injured bosom friend; "behold the growth of ingratitude."

"Bah!" returned Jack, contemptuously. "Don't take me for a child—it will be

fatal to our connection if you do. I am man enough to trade upon my own responsibility."

"Well, then, you want an explanation," repeated the count.

"Yes—when these fellows are gone," replied the youth, decisively. "Now, on this spot; or, if you wish, it shall be in our own apartment."

"Humph!" ejaculated Adolphe: "what the deuce is the matter now; I must deal cautiously—the fellow has fire in him, after all." "Well," continued he aloud, "as it may be something particular, perhaps we had better defer it till we are at our lodgings."

"Very well," returned Hazard coldly, as he put the balance of the money in his pocket; and then they left the chamber. The two gamblers, we must add, had some time ago left their humble domicile in Clerkenwell, and now had a handsomely furnished floor in Golden Square, and thither they now wended their way.

As they were silently sauntering up Regent Street, taking a short stroll in the refreshing air in order to cool their heated brows and feverish pulses previous to entering, their attention was drawn to a group of people shown by the dim stars and the waning gas-light—for it was not far from daybreak—and among them were seen the glazed hats of two or three policemen, apparently busied with some person on the ground.

"What have we here," exclaimed the count.

"Some drunken rake, I dare say," answered Jack, carelessly; "or perhaps some unfortunate girl or other who has created a riot. Come along—I feel cold and weary."

"And I, on the contrary," replied Adolphe, "feel inclined to see more of it; besides, I have not labored as much as you have this night, and therefore am not tired."

"This is another allusion in addition to those already made," said Jack gravely; and you will not forget that I shall ask you

to explain them in detail to me this afternoon. Good morning!" and Jack left him at once.

"Perdition!" muttered Adolphe: "must I, with my incautious tongue, go and rouse up this young fellows suspicions. That heavy-headed rascal, Digges, could do no more. But let us see what there is here," and he walked up to the group.

He found that the policemen were picking up a well-dressed young man, whose disordered cravat, dishevelled and bare head, and stained face, showed that he had fallen either through violence or drunkenness.

"Lift him up," said one policeman to another: "I don't think it's drinking."

"No," said the youth in a hollow unearthly voice, that made Adolphe start: "it's not drink, it's—it's—" there was a pause, and then the man murmured a name, "Laura—sister—blessing—" and with these broken words he fell into violent convulsions.

Adolphe felt that there was something so fearfully, so unnameably terrible in this scene, that he could neither quit the spot nor advance nearer. He saw that the stony gaze of the man was fixed upon his features as they bore him off.

Two years had been passed in this vile and fearful course of depravity, and the soul of Hazard had been growing sick. He pined to be freed from the infamies he thus shared; and as he silently sought his habitation, there weighed upon him such a sadness and melancholy, that he almost started, having attained his apartments, while looking round his bed-chamber, to see whether there were not evil shapes wreathing themselves in the curtains which surrounded his bed. His heart smote him as he placed his gold on the table; and he secretly resolved to make one bold effort to release himself from the thralldom which he felt was surrounding him, even though he should use the extremest means in his perspective rupture with Adolphe Count de la Boes-Jones.

CHAPTER III.

"BOULETTE" AND "ROUGE ET NOIR."

ABOUT two o'clock in the day, Hazard arose unrefreshed from his sleep; and even while he caught sight of the money on the table, there ran a dark vein of mingled horror and disgust through the various thoughts which oppressed him, and colored both the present and the future, to him, in hues of darkness.

Do what he would, he could not rid himself of that dreadful depression. It clung around, it haunted him, it peopled the air with shadowy faces, and seemed to dig pits for his foot wherever he trod.

He dressed himself, and sought his little sitting-room, ere he went forth into the larger apartment common to himself and the count. The newspaper of the day was placed beside his coffee. He sat at the fire moodily, and mechanically began his breakfast.

After awhile, he turned his eye languidly upon the paper, and as he stretched out his hand so take it up, he muttered: "I am growing afraid of my own shadow, I think. If men will be bad enough to encourage such rascals as myself by their folly, why should they not be made to suffer for it. They provide me with the means of subsistence; and as I have no other way of obtaining a living honestly, why, I must take advantage of what fortune sends me. But it is very strange," he continued; "I can't get that poor fellow's fearful cry out of my ears, nor his despairing look and gesture, as he rushed from the chamber, from my eyes; and something seems to say that the crowd which I saw assembled this morning in the street, has some connexion with me."

He shuddered involuntarily, and opened the paper, gazed carelessly at the first page, when all at once his eyes were rivetted upon a paragraph which ran thus:—

"Next of kin.—Any person who can give information regarding Mary Copland, who in 18—, married a carpenter, whose name is not known;—or of her children, if she have

any, will be rewarded on application to Messrs. Williamsons' Solicitors, Gray's Inn."

"Mary Copland," replied Jack: "why, that was my mother's maiden name. Can it be possible that my uncle, whom I remember to have heard spoken of, has taken this means of discovering her, or is he dead? It must be so; for here," he added, glancing lower down, "is a notice from the executors of the late Richard Copland, of Burnley, in Berkshire. It is myself, then, that is meant, and doubtless he has left me, for his sister's sake, a legacy—the means of escaping from this abominable set of men with whom I am day by day sinking deeper and deeper in ruin. I will see about it at once;" and he rose up, left the half-finished breakfast, and sought Count Adolphe, with a mien and manner free from embarrassment or doubt: he felt himself now to be upon a ground so secure, that nothing could overthrow him.

The count in his elegant morning dressing-gown, was leisurely proceeding with his rather late breakfast, and as Jack entered, he with characteristic politeness bade him "good day, and hoped he was perfectly well."

"Perfectly well," replied Hazard, tersely. "And now let us have our little business settled."

The count, surprised at his tone and manner, turned to him, and felt that there was something in the wind. Hitherto he had been accustomed to command his pupil with implicit reliance on being instantly obeyed. He felt that his hour of rule was passing by, unless he could find some new means of binding Hazard to him, by such ties of fear, that nothing could break them. He thought of the previous evening's play with the pugilist Digges, of what he had seen that morning, and conscious of his power, he smiled.

"Proceed with your questions," said he to Jack; "and if it suits me to reply, I will do so, though I cannot but own that I am surprised at this conduct."

"You are vastly obliging," returned Jack, "and your surprise is somewhat premature."

"Well, then, to the point. It appears that in plundering this young man, who has so well replenished your purse and those of others, you at the same time wish to convey to me all the villainy attached to it, while you would be considered innocent—not only this, but you have, to me it seems, injudiciously taken some pains to make me feel it."

"Do not be mistaken, my dear Hazard," said the count blandly.

"Do not interrupt me," returned Jack, with warmth. "There are, I take it, little degrees of honesty between us; and though I have been the active agent in the transaction, on you, as the principal, the co-actor of the whole, rests the responsibility."

"I do not feel such a weight to encumber or embarrass me in any way," said the count, titteringly, and showing his white teeth.

"You would have lessened me to the level of the basest rascal in the whole base society we are members of," insisted Jack; "and though I am not ambitious enough to be reckoned a king among scoundrels, I merely tell you that from this day I declare myself freed from you—I am independent and will act on my own account."

"And who long will that last if you desert me—if you lose the master-mover, as you term me? If before your apprenticeship is barely over, carried away by your success—how long, I ask, will you keep yourself out of the hands of the police?" and Count Adolphe picked his teeth.

"That will become my business," retorted Jack hardly, "and you need not trouble yourself about it."

"Do you know what has become of your victim?" demanded the count with a sardonic smile.

"My victim!" echoed the youth. "What do you mean?"

"Have you tried to cash your checks yet?" pursued the count, in the tone of a man who had some unknown advantage over his opponent.

"No," answered Jack.

"Or to use those bonds?" continued Adolphe.

"No," was still the reply.

"Then do not—as a friend I warn you—do not attempt it. All your paper is useless, or useful so far as to place you at the bar of a police court, as accessory—"

"Accessory!" echoed Jack. "Accessory to what? You ask me about my victim well, I say he is yours as well as mine; he is a victim to all who shared in his gold. What of him?"

"He is dead!" replied the count, gravely.

"Dead! dead!" echoed Jack, tottering, while his face was white as paper. "My God! what do you mean?"

"You remember the crowd you saw this morning, when you left me?" asked Adolphe.

"Yes!" said Jack, and then he added to himself—"Then there must be some connexion between that crowd and myself.—Speak!" he continued, in an excited though trembling voice: "what tremendous secret have you to disclose?"

"In that crowd which you supposed to be gathered by some drunken person, was the young man you had—"

"Take care what you say," cried Jack with white lips and fiery eyes: "avoid that word 'you' when you speak of me and that man—"

"That young man had taken poison!" concluded Adolphe, gravely.

"Poison!" exclaimed Jack, starting with horror.

"Yes," replied Adolphe; "from a distance I watched the whole. Before he was taken to the station by the police, he was dead—died with the name of Laura on his lips."

"Laura!" and Jack began mechanically to repeat the words which rang in his ears with such terrible significance. "Poisoned! dead!" and he clasped his forehead in his hands, as though he wished to rouse himself up from some hideous dream.

"If," began the count, with deliberate

intonation; "If inquiry is made regarding this poor youth, and you are taken up before the authorities, what will you say?"

"Say—I? What had I to do with him more than you?" demanded Jack.

"Twenty men are witnesses to the fact that it was with you and you alone he played and lost so enormously—"

"And," interrupted Jack, "how many are there to prove that it was with you and others I can name, these winnings were divided?"

"Yourself alone," replied the count, with a grin of derision. "Do you suppose that any one of us will acknowledge his share in such an unfortunate event?"

Hazard saw at a glance the precipice on which he stood. This man would, without hesitation, give evidence against him, if the authorities used their power, and demanded it. There was but one course for him to pursue—to escape,—to wait until this dark matter should end; then, with as much secrecy as possible, or, in fact, as much as would prevent the count or any of his associates from discovering his whereabouts, he would go to the attorneys, prove his claim to the legacy he doubted not awaited him, and then they would never meet more.

Count Adolphe guessed, perhaps, a portion of his thoughts, so far as his intended escape went, and he said, "Do not think to free yourself from me, for all that. I will not betray you while you remain with me; seek to break the bond that binds us together, and you will play a hazardous game."

The young man trembled; his face grew white with fear; he saw now that he had indeed fallen into the snare which this unplying man had laid for his feet. It seemed as if the clasp of some hideous arms were round his neck, and preventing his leaden feet from flying. He tottered to a chair—while cold drops coursed down his forehead—and groaned audibly.

"Bow therefore," continued the count, "to that force of circumstance over which

you have no control. If I find that I cannot trust to you, I will have you watched."

"Watched!" cried Jack, rising to his feet.

"Yes," was the reply; "by one that, once beside you, shall never leave you.—Oh!" continued he, "I never do my work by halves; and now I trust you are satisfied with my explanations: you demanded them—you have them. I shall now," concluded the count, with a bow, "wish you a good day."

Jack Hazard staggered off to his chamber like one stricken with a fatal fever.—Before the night came on, however, Adolphe found that he had secretly quitted the house, taking with him his money and a small valise; and the ashes in the grate showed that the checks, bonds, and IOUs had been burned.

Many months went and came. The jury who sat on the body of the unfortunate collegian, found a verdict of "suicide," and after some little inquiry, which resulted in nothing satisfactory, he was buried, the only mourner being his sister, a beautiful, but now weeping girl, of about eighteen. When this was done, the poor orphan departed back into the country from whence she had come when the news of the terrible catastrophe reached her, and dwelt in the solitude of an old rambling country house.—The gamblers in town, headed by Count Adolphe de la Robs, carried on their depredations as usual. The count sought for Jack, and was unable to find him; but he examined the papers daily with the eyes of a lynx.

At last his sleepless assiduity was rewarded. There was a paragraph in the newspapers stating that a certain young man—Hazard by name, had very unexpectedly turned up as claimant to some property left by a Mr. Copland of Berkshire; that his claims had been examined, proved, and allowed, that he was the heir of a noble heritage; and then there followed a poetic allusion to the sudden caresses and reverses

fortune. Upon this hint, Count Adolphe began to re-arrange his plans—as for letting Jack escape—it was not to be thought of.

This was all perfectly true. With his thirty thousand pounds in the funds and elsewhere, Jack also found himself possessor of a lovely cousin, whose amiable and frank nature had, however, received some severe domestic check that had darkened her bright life, though what it was he could not learn. His surprise was great at the moment, when he found that her name was Laura; but as the theme which recalled that name to him was one that he dreaded, he passed it over as being a singular coincidence, but a coincidence merely.

Possessed of this property, then, he applied himself to a rational use of it. By a well-regulated course of conduct, he might hope to eradicate from his breast the seeds of that dreadful moral disease under which he had suffered for so long a time. By avoiding London, he would also be sundered from the count and his vile companions, though Hazard never thought of that man without turning pale at the remembrance of the hideous threat extended over his head. It was useless for him to say that the business was over—dead and buried with him who had been the victim of their villany. There was an infamy to be guarded against—the infamy of *implication*; and Hazard was resolved to avoid any such probability while means were in his power.

He had taken a small and elegant house in Beckshire, some few miles distant from the house of his late uncle, Mr. Copland, where he now passed several months in a retreat that was an inexpressible happiness to him, from the peace of mind he now enjoyed. At times he visited his cousin, whose gloom nothing could obliterate, and over which, on all sides, there was a mantle of secrecy so impervious and inviolate, that nothing could break through.

One day, when on a visit to her, he made a remark upon her solitary kind of life, and

on its melancholy tendencies, that was like an indirect avowal of his desires to know the causes of her present apparent sadness.

"It is a history, Mr. Hazard," she replied "so terrible, that it can only be related in desperate causes, and to desperate men. Some day you may know it: but not now—not at present."

"If you but knew," replied Jack, upon whom this affecting sight of one so young, so fair, and yet so desolate, began to fill with a profound sympathy—"if you but knew how much I desire to see you smile, to see you happy and joyous, as now in your youth you should be, I am sure you would forgive what may appear in me as obtrusive desire to thrust myself upon your secrecy. It is nothing more than a brotherly regard for your welfare."

"A brotherly regard did you say? That word again!" exclaimed Laura wildly. "Can nothing make me forget those fearful reminiscences?" and with a deep shudder she turned from him.

"For heaven's sake! Miss Copland, compose yourself," cried Jack, almost alarmed for her reason. "You surely cannot imagine that I would wilfully cause you any pain; and if any accidental expressions of mine have done so, I beseech you to pardon them."

"I have nothing to forgive you, cousin," replied Laura, with a sad smile. "Many things remind me of my griefs; and you are not to blame if you unconsciously recall to my recollection an event that would have made any other mad than myself; and why I have not been so I cannot tell," added she, drawing her hand over her brow.

"It is because heaven will not punish you for any misfortune another may have brought upon you—" began Jack.

"What is that you say," interrupted Laura, vehemently, "about 'misfortune' and 'another'?" "Do you know anything of the past?" she added, catching him by the arm, and gazing with a piteous expression

into his face: "are you in the secret of that history which has made life a blank to me?"

"No," replied Hazard: "I would I were that I might comfort and console you. I would serve you with my life, if it were possible," continued he, fervently; "for what do I not owe to the child of my benefactor, who has raised me from poverty and disgrace—"

"Disgrace?" echoed Laura: "how can that be? You do not mean to say, that because you were poor you incurred disgrace?"

"No! no!" replied Hazard, hastily, while he crimsoned and remembered the horrible life he had led, and the hideous companions he had possessed, and the pandemonium in which he had spent many and many a night, in the midst of the most shocking debauchery; and as he stood there before that pure and innocent girl, he felt himself crushed by his own self-contempt; his abasement was almost unbearable.

"You do not speak," said Laura, regarding him with an alarmed aspect.

"Pardon me," stammered the other: "I know not what to say: friendless and poor, one is easily led into temptation, and—"

"Do not say so, for the love of God!" cried Laura, with an accent that thrilled to the very bottom of his heart; "for if they who are rich are tempted, and the poor are tempted also, who is to escape from the snare of the designing? The world is, then, one pit of perdition into which all must fall alike? Do not say so," she continued, "if you would not have my soul sicken to death at the sight of such a picture as my imagination bodies forth. My cousin," said she, with a terrible and forced calmness, "you have been poor, and tempted—I infer so. You are now rich. If you know what to avoid—avoid it: if you do not—I will tell you—avoid the gaming table!" and she whispered these words—so well comprehended by Hazard, that he started half in fear lest she should know

what he really had been, and so, he, disgusted with him for ever—as she quitted the room.

For a new hope began to spring up in his breast; an undefined idea of a tranquil happiness dawned upon him. It was dim as yet, but it was very beautiful—that new hope; and as he went homeward he pondered it over, cherished it, brooded upon it, and the more he did so, the more did his heart beat with the first throbbings of a delicious passion, that for the first time began to make earth a heaven to him.

That night, then, on arriving at his home was spent in reflection, and in planning out the future. With Laura for his wife, he might defy the machinations of the count, and the reverses of fortune. He defied his fate, and trusted in himself.

It was "Derby Day" at Epsom, and the course was thronged with thousands of happy, thoughtless people, all out on a holiday, all intent upon making the most of it according to their pre-conceived ideas.

There were gaily-dressed groups of ladies and gentlemen in carriages, and on the balconies of the grand stand; and there were groups of the middle and the humble classes lying about on the grass, enjoying their "pic-nic" meal; while the booths, in all directions, were crowded with feasters, drunkards, and gamblers, cheats, gulls, and dupes. Horse-jockies boasted of their tricks and of the prowess of horses, now in the shafts of some hackney-coach; and there were pugilists boasting of old battles, and making new matches; and there was a din, a roar, a continual hubbub and motion—while the picturesque groups went to and fro beneath the sunshine. At last the bell rang.

The horses poured out to take their places for the start. The most beautiful of the most beautiful quadrupeds in the creation bounded on their springy feet, and snorted and tossed their heads, in which every delicate vein showed itself as if

sculptured there; and as the crowd ran to their places, the word was given, and off they started.

Whoever has witnessed a number of noble race-horses flying past him, must have felt some peculiar leaping of the blood about the heart; that electric impulse of motion which carries you with the head long-rider along the course, leaving you with your heart beating as if its quickened pulses beat in unison with that of the proud animal.

The race was finally over, the goal won, and the tremendous struggle at the last was the theme of criticism; and while the winning horse was paraded about, the noble animal seemed conscious of the admiration with which all regarded him. The losers and the winners of the several bets retired into the booths to pay and to receive; and in a short half-hour thousands of pounds were transferred to other pockets, not to mention the "conveyancing" of the light-fingered gentry, who were "*hic et ubique*" on the course.

Jack Hazard was there also, in his own handsome equipage, attended by his servant, endeavoring, in the midst of the hurly-burly, to escape from his own thoughts,—seeking, like one of old, for rest, and finding none.

With a gloom upon his brow, and with a growing melancholy in his soul, he wandered about on foot; never remaining long in one place; taking refreshment mechanically; and not from any gratification which the rich food or the wine gave his palate.

At last, towards the evening, he found himself in one of those gorgeous booths which are established for the use of those who are able to pay the most extravagant prices. One of those places where, until lately, "*roulette*" and "*rouge et noir*" were the allurements to hundreds whose brains had become bewildered with drinking. The place was hung with chandeliers, the sides formed of rich and tastefully arranged tapestries. Wine flowed like so many streams, and temptations of every kind held themselves out to the unwary.

At one of these tables stood Count Adolphe de la Roos, disguised for some purpose or other, with enormous whiskers, moustachios, &c. None who knew him ever so well, would have recognised that peculiar face under that mass of artistically arranged hair. The deception was complete.

He was, with impudent volubility, calling upon those around to "make their game," to "back their own opinion," interweaving the somewhat amusing slang of the men who are accustomed to their trade, with promises of enormous wealth on the spot; and those who crowded round, flung down their money with avidity; for there had been a run of luck against the bank,—and though some cautious winners had departed, there remained plenty more to pay up the deficiency with ample interest.

Hazard advanced and looked on. He was unmindful of the burly giant of a man who stood almost beside him; he was unmindful of the winks and nods that were passed around; he did not remark the keen and rapid glance which the count flung upon him, nor the sarcastic lifting of the eye-lid with which he appeared to accompany that glance: Hazard was absorbed in his own thoughts.

Since the day that he had parted from the gambler and his companions, he had avoided all such places, the fearful tragedy with which he was so intimately connected, was still remembered for the first time, then, since he again stood upon the steep of the horrible gulf.

He felt, gradually creeping over him, that unconquerable desire to place his money upon the fatal board; he felt it creep through his bones and marrow. The spirit of gambling, with all its excitement, its hopes, its fears, its diabolical joys, and its infernal miseries all mingled together in that sentiment that was fast asserting the mastery over him.

His working features betrayed it, as did his nervous manner and his twitching hands. One of the men who well comprehended his work, took up a salver and wine, and bore

the decanter with the peculiar champagne to him. The young man poured out and drank, and instantly taking money out of his pocket, he advanced to the table, and placed it down.

Those who know anything of these games so common at race-courses, need no description of them; and those who do not, are far better left in all ignorance to all relating thereto. If we can show the consequences of these habits, as exemplified in the hero of this story, it will be sufficient for our purpose.

Seized with this sudden mania, Hazard forgot his usual caution. Men thronged to the table, he had once known, but now, blinded with wine, urged by this fiery desire, and tortured with remorse, he was carried beyond all self-control. He played now with a fierceness, an avidity that occupied the attention of all present. In a moment the second step to ruin had been taken; in an instant all his good resolutions were gone to the winds.

CHAPTER IV.

DICE.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Hazard," said a rough voice, with a peculiar emphasis, in Jack's ear; while at the same time a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder.

Hazard started at that ominous sound, and beheld the diabolical countenance of Digges.

Wild with his heavy losses; excited by the wine—by the lights—by the newly-aroused passion which now held him wholly captive, the climax of his horror arrived, when he found himself face to face with the pugilist; and, when like one waking up from a stupor, he began to recognize those tell countenances around.

None remained in the booth but those whom the count and his associates knew well, and there was consequently no one to keep them under restraint by his presence. Hazard uttered a cry of fear, and would

have fled, but the grasp of the giant held him back.

Count Adolphe tore off the bearded disguise which so effectually concealed his features; and as he walked towards Jack with an exulting smile upon his sallow face, the youth shuddered as though some evil demon were stalking before him, arrayed in all his horrors.

"You are welcome, Mr. Hazard," said he, mockingly. "I thought you would not desert your old friends altogether. You appear to be much affected, too, by this meeting; indeed, I am so myself; and now, pray tell me, are we to congratulate you or not?"

Jack, in a thick, hoarse whisper, said to the giant, "Take your hand off my arm, or I will do you a mischief."

"You will, eh?" growled the other; "of what sort, eh? Have you taken plenty of slap-up lessons in the noble art of self-defence, as to be able to pitch into me, eh, eh?"

"You needn't gripe his arm so hard," interposed Adolphe, blandly. "I dare say you are very glad to see him, are you not?"

"What, me?" responded the other; "I believe you—a flimsy for fifty wouldn't delight me more."

"Well, then, let go your hold, for I wish to speak a few words to this young gentleman by ourselves;" and obedient to this mandate Hazard's arm was freed.

"I regret, my dear friend," began the count, "to see that you evince so little gratification at meeting your old companions, and I may say, your bosom friends. Has your success in life made you heedless of them, or have—"

"Once for all," cried Jack, hoarsely, "let this be understood, that I disown, disclaim, and hate you."

"Alas! and wherefore?" demanded the count, shrugging his shoulders.

"Do you suppose," retorted Jack, "that I am mad enough to permit you and a parcel of such scoundrels as you to hold me in

bonds as the slave of your will? You are acting a ridiculously silly part; for if I am supposed to be useful to you, this is certainly not the way to go about obtaining my assistance."

"There is great possibility that you may be in the right," returned the count, taking a seat apart, and intimating to Jack that he should take another.

"No," replied the other, hastily, "I will not stay here."

"But, my friend—you will," was the answer.

"It must be main force, then, that shall prevent my quitting this accursed spot," and he strode to the entrance of the booth.

"Digges!" the imperious sound of the count's voice interrupted the bravo while half-way in the contents of a tumbler of rum-and-water. He looked up. "The door!" continued Adolphe, pointing to it; and in a moment the huge form of a man was between Hazard and the entrance.

"I begin to comprehend your drift," said Hazard, witnessing this; "you must therefore have some very powerful motive, or I must be to you an object of great interest, when you resort to this threatening act of violence."

"Since you are rich, you are an object of my tenderest regard," was the answer; "but take my advice and be seated—we will talk it over at leisure; and though I felt some little resentment at the treatment I have experienced, still it is possible that compliance on your part may restore you to my former friendship."

"Your friendship!" echoed Hazard, with a scoffing laugh. "Well, speak on," and he flung his hat on the ground, and sat close to the man he so much abhorred, while he at the same time feared him.

"And now," said Adolphe; "permit me to ask you how your cousin Laura is?"

Jack started uneasily—he felt that there was a lurking menace in the question; yet how could the count know anything of her? It passed his comprehension.

"Allow me to congratulate you upon

your accession to an ample fortune," continued the wily sharper. "I am not so well off but that I may feel happy in accepting a liberal mark of friendliness at your hands."

"You are very kind," retorted Jack, "I own I must lament my folly, that has brought me once more in contact with you but it will not last long."

"Longer than you suppose," returned the other, with a smile. "But let me proceed. Speaking of Miss Copland—you see I am aware of several things appertaining to you; and not to mystify you longer on the matter, I will inform you that the whole of my knowledge is derived from the papers—asking questions, and so on, which puts me in possession of more than you wot of. Have you not observed a certain air of secrecy and sadness that shrouds your cousin, her gloom, her dejection?"

"Yes," was the monosyllabic reply.

"And do you know its cause?"

"I have endeavored to do so," answered Jack, "but have not been able to ascertain it."

"Shall I tell you?" asked the count, helping himself to wine.

"I shall be glad to know," said Jack, his curiosity overcoming his disgust.

"Did you ever hear her speak of a brother that she once had?" demanded Adolphe.

"Never," returned Hazard, a vague presentiment beginning to dawn upon him.

"Do you remember the young man who took poison one night after leaving the gaming-table?" and Adolphe, like a torturer playing with his victim, continued to wear the same atrocious coolness of manner.

Jack felt his limbs tremble as the dry leaves do when shaken by the autumn winds. "Yes," replied he, "I remember that, alas! too well."

"That young man was Laura's brother," added the count.

Had Jack been struck through the heart with a dagger, he could not have felt a more deadly pang of pain and horror, than he felt at that announcement.

"If you do not therefore fear the questions which the judges might ask you, supposing you were placed in the hands of the police, you will at least be tractable enough in anything I may reasonably—mark I say reasonably—require from you, in order that this may be kept secret from her. I have taken means that you cannot escape from it, in order to have every movement of yours watched; and if I had not been secure in thus meeting you, you would have seen me before. You now perceive that you cannot escape from me."

"What is it that you require?" asked Jack, in a low and hollow tone.

"I am bound to look after the interests of my companions," returned the other, in a tone of disinterestedness; "and as I want to set up a small business establishment of my own, a little money would be useful."

"What amount do you require?" said Hazard. "Name the sum, and end this scene, for I may grow mad enough to mar both you and myself."

"That is coming to business at once," returned the count, highly gratified. "You see," added he, pointing to his companions seated apart from them, "that we are about a dozen in all, and a hundred pounds a piece would—"

"You shall have it," said Jack, hurriedly rising up.

"I shall require another thousand for my speculation in which you shall share—"

"Not a farthing," exclaimed Hazard.

"My dear friend, I insist," interrupted Adolphe, complacently; "because, as it may lose, and I may call upon you to support it—it is but fair that some portion of the profits, however small, should find their way into your pockets."

"I will double the sum you ask," returned Jack, "if you will relieve me of your presence and free me from all fears for the future."

"I will accept your offer, and give you a year: Upon my word I couldn't afford to do more," continued he, like one who was being driven down in his price.

"I agree to your terms, vile as they are," began Jack, when the count touched him on the arm, saying: "Do not forget, yourself, you must not couple those terms with my name, I am a great stickler upon points of 'honor,' and now give me your check, and trust my word for the rest."

Pen, ink, and writing materials were brought, and the check for upwards of two thousand pounds was drawn out without a sigh, the loss of the money became secondary with Hazard when he reflected, what a condition he would be in should he be shown to Laura as the author of her brother's suicide.

Months passed over, and the gloom of the young man now rivalled that of his cousin. He sunk into an apathy from which he scarcely made an effort to lift himself. He saw her at times; but he felt like a criminal before his judge. He remembered then every word, and the cause of those words, with which she had in part unfolded the sad story of her sorrow; and now that he knew the whole, he dared never to refer to it more.

At the same time he was also compelled to bid adieu to the pleasant fancies that had for a short—a very short time, given him glimpses of a happier future. His life was one continual suspicion; one series of fears darkened the vista before him; and though the count never troubled him, still the sight of the pugilist Digges, who now and then crossed his path, reminded him that he was under surveillance; and though the man's rude familiarity was sternly checked, yet he stood too much in dread of exposure to irritate the surly brute too far.

He scarcely knew how his days were passed. At times an indolence seized him which also brought with it such a weight of misery and heartache, that he could have

laid down and died. It was the curse arising from his want of education, that he knew not how to bestow his time. Books he had in plenty around him; but he derived no pleasure from them. Pictures, he had looked upon as mere auxiliaries to the furnishing of a room; but further than that they ceased to interest him. Horses he had, and he often used them, and to some little extent he had created a little acquaintanceship among the small squires, the farmers, jockies, and so on, of the neighborhood; but even these were of a class that showed him he was not in the circle he wished to be in. There was drinking at the fair, and a game of bowls on the green, and rustic festivities, where vice in a mean and depraved garb still exercised her rule.

If he moved abroad, the hateful form of the giant Digges still crossed his path; if he stayed at home, the huge animal would force himself upon him; and still laboring under the dread of exposure, he allowed himself to be plundered. At times, too, a short and laconic note from the count, reminded him of the terrible power he had over him. But he did not demand money; and further than that Hazard knew himself to be under the eyes of the bruiser, he experienced no other annoyance from Adolphe de la Roos Jones.

In the meantime, with one excess or another, he was impairing his fortune, which he took no heed to guard. Having taken a sad leave of his cousin Laura, under some pretext or another, he went to Paris in the hope of being able to drown his cares and remorse in the dissipations of the capital. The gaming-tables found a practised man to be their easiest victim; for he seemed to squander away his gold with a recklessness that would have beggared him, had he not been stopped by the following occurrence:

He was one night in the Palais Royal, playing with the same avidity as ever, when a tall man in a cloak touched him by the arm, and said:

"The count wants you."

He turned and recognized the brutal countenance of his watcher.

The terror with which this man inspired him was now complete. He had established so entire a despotism over Hazard—had exercised it with so much rigor, that the unhappy youth gave himself up unresistingly to it. He began to dread the sound of that heavy foot, the sight of those drunken and bloated features; in fact, the man had but to will and Hazard to obey. On this occasion, then, with a new sinking of the heart, he followed the pugilist to a neighboring apartment, where the only person he met was Adolphe Count de la Roos, in person.

"Soh! you're quite Parisian in taste, eh, Mr. Hazard?" began the count with a smile.

"I congratulate you; I have no doubt but that you have learned something here that may be highly advantageous to us, only I regret that I must recall you back to England."

"To England!" echoed Jack. "Wherefore?"

"Because, you will remember that the year of grace I gave you is nearly up. Miss Copland is also anxious about you, and has been asking questions which I can answer; and because, also, my speculation has not turned out so well as I fancied it might. I shall require further help from you."

"You are pitiless," returned Jack, in a tone of hopelessness. "You have broken faith with me in placing this hideous brute as a watch upon me; it has drawn me from London in the hope of losing sight of him."

"Do you mean that Digges, here?" pointing to him, "has been annoying you?" demanded Adolphe, as a man would, who is about to do away with an intolerable nuisance.

"I do," was the sullen reply.

"There, Mr. Hazard, be under no further apprehension about him; he shall be discharged forthwith;" and with a wave of the hand, the gladiator disappeared, grin-

ning as if he enjoyed the sight of another in a worse dilemma than his own.

"What is it you said of my cousin?" asked Jack after a pause.

"Why, nothing, in particular—nothing, in fact, that you cannot learn for yourself. But, you are injuring your health, your morals—and, what is of more consequence, your fortune—here. Return, then, with me, and I will introduce you to our new society. No words, I insist upon it. I want to introduce you to the world; I have a noble—a grand speculation in view, and you must share in it. It is true that though my last one was remarkable for its ingenuity, it was also one attended with much risk. Come with me to my lodgings—in the morning we will have our passports and depart."

Jack rose up and mechanically followed him. He seemed like one that had given up all hope of escape. He was pale, ghastly, and worn, but he was obedient. Two days after they were in London.

It was twelve o'clock at night; and the degraded sharpers were plaining their trade in a place that existed within the last twelve month; and which, as we have ourselves seen it, we will describe.

An extensive range of cellarage, situated under a large shop, at the corner of one of the great public thoroughfares of the West End, had been taken, and, with taste and elegance, was fitted up as "wine vaults;" a name which veiled over darker purposes.

Descending a flight of steps out of the street, the visitor found himself in a handsomely papered room, before an elegant bar, on the other side of which was a little carpeted chamber fitted with tables and chairs, and capable of holding a dozen people or more—heavy crimson curtains concealing those within from the public gaze.

Further on, by a narrow lobby, there was on the right a larger chamber, furnished with boxes, for the accommodation of those who entered. Not a ray of the blessed

sunshine penetrating the mysteries of those places, consequently, night and day, the whole was lighted with gas. There were also two other rooms on the left.

The commodious arrangement, the snugness, the secrecy, in fact, of the whole, was admirable; not an inch of room was lost; and all that could be made available was used.

There is one part yet to describe, which, for the labyrinthine nature and the singular means by which it was attached, exhibited no little skill in construction. It was perfectly unique in its way, and it was so situated that a stranger would not have dreamed of its existence; and had he even been told of it, he would have found its discovery next to impossible.

This place, then, was a long vaulted chamber, situated under the flag-stones of the street, entirely apart from the main chamber, and was about twelve or fifteen feet wide, by about twenty-five or thirty in length. The ceiling, originally rude and blackened by coals and other articles stored there, had been cleaned, plastered, and painted over, as were also the walls; and around a long table where couches fixed against the walls, on which the guests could either sit or recline. This was the "business" apartments, the *adytun*, the inner, secret place, where gaming was carried on with an avidity and success that augured well for the pockets of the proprietors, and was sadly expressive of the demoralization of the society that frequented the place.

At first the victims were silly, half-brained young men, who were willing to be thought "trumps," "slap-up fellows," "gents," clerks, shopmen, &c., &c., who, after losing their own money, began to speculate with that of their employers, and with their usual luck.

On this night, then, Hazard was, for the first time, introduced to the place, and to many of his old associates; he did not seek to avoid any. He drank with them, played with them, and entered into their plans as if he were only beginning his noviate; but

that which certainly did startle him most was the sight of his Frankenstein—Digges, sitting at the end of the table, apparently occupied with guarding a small cupboard, of which mention will be afterwards made.

"Glad to see you, sir," said Digges, as Hazard entered.

Hazard turned an inquiring look to Adolphe who calmly said, with a wave of the hand, "You must excuse him; but as we are now in England, the land of freedom, and so forth, I have no control over him; besides, he is useful here. That place where he has been stationed, is a very important one. As long as you are with me, he will not trouble you."

Hazard's curiosity got the better of his disgust. He returned the salutation of the bruiser with an indifferent air, and proceeded to examine the spot. He found that it was a small trap, turning ingeniously by a touch of a spring, and opening into a little well; and that again terminating in a narrow, sliding grating, where cards, dice, &c., could be flung, either to be recovered, or cast into the sewer below the street, should they at any time be alarmed by the approach of the police, who sometimes were very pressing in their inquiries and researches.

"How do you like our preparations?" asked the count in a confidential manner, as if he were submitting a proposition to the leading member of a firm.

"Admirably adapted for running the snare," was the reply.

"It is astonishing how well you comprehend things," returned the count, with great condescension. "I was sure of meeting your approbation."

"Alone!" echoed Jack.

"Yes—it is yours. I have laid out your money upon it—I have held it in trust—at a loss I admit; but still in honor—honor you understand me. I am bound now to give up my trust to you."

"You are wrong—I have nothing to do with it, nor will I have."

"Pardon me, it is you who err. You have to do with it. The premises are in your name,—in effect, the debts are in yours also. I have done everything for the best; but I could not beat fortune."

The cool insolence of all this did not amaze Hazard, who quietly retorted: "You have a quiet way of your own in arranging matters. How long do you suppose I shall endure it?"

"Until I set Digges on your track again," replied Adolphe, with a smile so full of meaning, that the trembling map stealing a furtive glance at him who sat beside the "trap," flung himself into a chair.

"Come—come," said Adolphe, "I bear some of our fellows without; and, as I live, they've hooked a 'friend' or two," added he, stepping to the doorway, whence he could hear but not see, nor be seen. "As I have said, this is your property. I am going to retire from its management. Hem! Come," he added in a commanding tone, "let's to business." He then took a seat, handed the cards, poured out wine, flung down a bale of dice, and made a sign to Digges, who instantly responded to it by a nod of intelligence.

They sat down, three or four sharper joined them, and they began to rattle the fatal cubes on the table. In a few minutes there arose a peculiar, stealthy, but busy noise which could not be heard with out, and yet it had a significant sound.

A group of five or six entered. Two were more than half drunk, and the others were partially "spring," as in gentish slang it is termed. Among them were the purveyors of victims to this horde of banditti, who thus dug their almost royal living out of the industry and the homes of men.

The two youths with a reel, an oath, and much of swagger, began to exhibit those peculiar signs of an intemperate brain, and of an intemperate spirit. One of these taking the dice-box with great indifference from the hand of the count, challenged him to play.

Hazard and the count were then playing together. The latter with the coolness of a man who was throwing merely for his own amusement, while Hazard, who had gold of his own left in good store, (for his extravagances had not yet vitally affected the bulk of his fortune,) was beginning to feel the old evil influence creeping over him, and the excitement was becoming more and more powerful. He was fast forgetting Laura, who during his voyage to Dover, and after landing, had continually engrossed his thoughts. He was forgetting also the infernal net in whose meshes the count was closer and closer winding him. He forgot Digges, his greatest living terror, if we set aside the unnameable dread that he had of exposure to his cousin.

His old habits returned therefore in full force. A ravenous avidity to win—to play, took possession of him. He felt as he used to feel when in the early stages of his professional career he used to play for his daily subsistence. He accepted the challenge at once. Four sat to play and to bet, the others were lookers-on.

The two young men were type of a class easily recognizable in London. They wore peculiar coats, peculiar hats, were intimate with the minor theatres, and talked of ballet girls. They had money in plenty; but where Hazard had seen hundreds staked, he saw here merely pounds,—paltry objects for your gamsters upon a large scale,—placed on the table—great stakes however for these ridiculous stupid dupes, while the sharpeners themselves scarcely took the trouble to conceal their contempt of them. The game went on, till no sound was heard save the lively rattle of the dice, and the suppressed cry which told the number thrown.

As was usual, and as had always been the case with Adolphe, the game went on till Hazard alone was the opponent. It seemed to be a part of this man's plan to involve the thoughtless young gambler in all the consequences of his vice. At the time, Hazard was never conscious of it.

Carried away by the spur of the moment, he played with what might be called an inordinate appetite for it. Both the young men were severe losers. They had no chance in any way with a man who could throw to a miracle, and the more particularly when the count had kindly lent him his own dice, which were loaded, and of which no one took any notice.

It was during the intensest portion of the game that a single whisper was heard breathing through the wall, by means that no one could discover, and the word was the ominous one of "Police!" Then there followed the heavy tread of men on the stairs without, accompanying the same by a rattling of the bolted doors.

CHAPTER V.

"ECARTE."

"Who's there?" demanded some one from within. The gamblers were on their feet listening intently, and then followed the deep sonorous command, "Open the doors!"

Count Adolphe was observed to smile triumphantly.

"Who's there?" again called out the voice within, though it was well known who insisted upon entrance.

"Police!" was the stern reply; and there was now no further hesitation.

The count winked, made a sign to Digges, who quietly advanced and picked up the dice from the table, when one of the young men seeing what he was about, and enraged by his serious losses, made a snatch at it, and was instantly knocked down by one of the sharpeners while the others, dreading exposure, made no attempt to assist their prostrate comrade.

Hazard, pale as death, was leaning against the wall of the vaulted chamber. There were the damning evidences of play before him. All at once Digges quietly opened the small trap fixed close to the chair he had occupied the whole time, and cast the box, dice, and all into the little cell, from whence a touch of the foot ap

the floor would precipitate them into a sewer beyond all chance of recovery.

The count cast a glance towards Hazard, as if to call his attention to the clever contrivance; and the young man partly relieved from the dread that weighed upon him, breathed more freely. All this time the noises at the doors without and within continued. The police grew impatient, for they knew that their entrance was purposefully delayed; but they at the same time felt convinced they should capture some of the gamblers this time; and the keeper of the wine-vaults having allowed a space of about ten minutes to elapse at last took down the bolts, and the police entered.

"Why didn't you open the door before this?" asked one of them, gruffly.

"Why," replied the man, an impudent cool rascal, one of those who will take money for being kicked—a bravo to boot, who could fight when required; "why," said he, "I was just dozing off to sleep, arter blowin' up my precious luck."

"Who have you got here?" demanded the superintendent, going behind the bar, and peeping into the little alcove.

"Not a single vun, s'elp me!" returned the man. "There's only been two cooves in to-night as only called for a pint of wine, and—"

"Cut all this short," observed the other. "Now, my men, look about, and bring out a few of these sharp gentlemen;" and instantly the search began.

"Keep silent, every one of you," said Count Adolphe, who, through a door had heard what was passing in the outer-room. "There's not the slightest cause for fear, for there's nothing to give evidence even if they should find us out; and to make all sure—" here he made a sign to Digges, who with his foot touched something, and then a slight rattling sound followed. Cards and dice were instantly consigned to their effectual secret place, so that the rats in the sewer might gnaw them if they liked—they were irretrievably gone.

Adolphe turned the lights down, and whispered in Hazard's ear, "Follow me!"

these fools will get us into unnecessary trouble, I fear from their agitation;" and in the partial darkness Hazard followed him up the side of the wall. The end of the vault appeared smooth and solid; but by a touch, a small door opened, an almost imperceptible one, as it was formed by the end of a table. Stooping down, and going through, they found themselves in a passage at the bottom of some kitchen stairs, belonging to the house above, but which were rarely used.

With the greatest imaginable coolness, the count led his companions up the stairs, passed through the front passage, and, opening the door, they were instantly in the street. The policemen, who were without, found the other corner, not seeing them, as a matter of course.

He had the hardihood, however, to lead his companion through the three or four men stationed at the top of the cellar stairs; and calmly asked them "if anything was the matter?" Hazard shook; but the policemen, as he answered that there was "nothing particular," thought the gentleman was very cold. With those yet within, however, we have naught further to do; the two therefore got clear off.

The next morning the count and Hazard breakfasted together; and it was during an after conversation that the first serious opposition on the young man's part was offered, and so decisive had he become, that the count really feared that even resorting to the actual fulfilment of his threats would scarcely be sufficient to wring more money from his victim.

"Are you becoming, then, so insensible to the consequences of Miss Copland's possessing a knowledge of past transactions, that you not only refuse me aid—but dare me?" asked the count, and then continued; "I have repeatedly spoken of this matter to you, and I repeat it now for the last time, because, as I am in extremity I must know your answer."

"My answer has repeatedly been given," replied Jack, "in money and checks. Would you rob me of all?"

"Will it be necessary that Digges should once more guard your health?" retorted Adolphe.

"I would advise you not to press a desperate man too far," said the other, with a darkening brow and a heightened color. "I have shown to you, in many instances, that I am not mercenary; but threat upon threat cures a man—and I have been a passive victim so long—have endured so much—have responded to your demands entirely—and am so thoroughly disgusted with your rapacity, which you have not the sense to disguise, that I now altogether break from you."

"You do!" echoed the count, in the most utter amazement, and in no little fear. "Have you well weighed what you are saying?"

"I can scarcely have said time to do that," returned Jack. "With your lordly nature, I suppose you have hurried and precipitated both yourself and me; but I repeat, I will neither be bullied or compelled to adopt the course and measure you have proposed to me."

"Do you know well the extent of my power over you?" demanded the count.

"If you mean that I dread Miss Copland's being put in the possession of the fact, that I was one great agent in her brother's suicide—I do," was the brief answer.

"That is well," returned the count; "but now, at the same time, that you know my demand and my intention, once more, what is your answer?"

"I have no answer to make," said Jack, while his heart beat quickly. He was growing ready for a quarrel; he was ever so desperate.

"Then assure yourself that I will make use of the power I have in more ways than one," replied the count; "and yet, before the word comes, I should like to meet you here in about a week, for I shall then have something as an inducement to show you."

"I do not propose to come," said Jack, with a contemptuous look. "Do your worst, and then—beware!"

The count started, turned pale, and he faintly smiled. "I shall leave London to-morrow for the country," said Jack, calmly; "and I leave you with this piece of advice, when you find another fool so tractable as myself, for your own interest's sake, take more care in your way of working upon him;" and he quitted the room.

Hazard kept his word; he left London the following day; and, to his astonishment, found that Digges was also an outside passenger by the same coach; but seeing that he could not escape from him, he doggedly resigned himself to his fate, and arrived, after some months of absence, at his own home.

His meeting with Laura was affecting but brief. She was still as melancholy as ever, and the fearful secret that Hazard carried within his bosom chilled all the warmth of his heart. They parted, therefore, with a greeting so short and distant, that neither of them could well comprehend; and each thought the other was greatly altered.

A letter was handed to Hazard by Digges one day. It was from the count, and contained both a command and a threat—in case that command was not obeyed, instant exposure should take place. Hazard was to be in London, at a certain place, well known on a certain night; and there were one or two other minor conditions of no great importance attached; but they went to say that he (Hazard) was sought for, by the proprietors of the last place we have described, for rent, &c.; and that proceedings would be taken against him if he did not appear.

Hazard, to the astonishment of Digges, showed no emotion on reading thismissive. He merely told him, with a smile, that he should be there; and the man departed.

One day, soon after this last occurrence, Laura was sitting in her room, and entering the room, and saying that a stranger was at the outer door desiring to speak to her on very particular business.

"A stranger!—on business—to me?" repeated Laura, while an unknown fear took possession of her. "What does he look like?" asked she, in the vague manner that persons sometimes do when laboring under an uncontrollable excitement, as if a frivolous question could dissipate the momentary gloom any unexpected occurrence throws upon them.

"He is a tall gentleman," was the servant's reply; "very elegantly dressed. A foreigner, I should think, ma'am, by his moustachios and his large whiskers."

A foreigner! echoed Laura, still more and more agitated, though she could not define the cause. "Well," she added with a sigh, "show him into the parlor, and I will come to him," and the servant left the room to obey her order.

When she was left alone, she endeavored to collect her wandering thoughts, but only lost herself in the mazes of her fancy while trying to find out for herself what could possibly be the business of this stranger—but all to no purpose. As a last resource, then, she determined to go at once and thus solve a mystery that was growing painful to her.

"No doubt, madame," began Adolphe, (for it was really he,) with a charming naivete in his manner, and accompanying the same with a kind of easy sliding bow, as she entered the chamber, "you are surprised to see a stranger desirous of having a few moments' conversation with you upon a topic that is so very important to yourself."

"To myself, sir," added Laura; and then with great agitation, added: "Yes, I am surprised—I am alarmed; for heaven's sake say at once that nothing dreadful has happened."

"Not that I am aware of, madam," was the answer; "in fact, my business has more of reference to the past; and let me add, that it is for your sake alone."

"The past?" echoed the poor girl, turning pale. "Is there, then, left me no forgetfulness of that fearful time?" continued she, half aloud, and then added: "Pray do

not speak; I have reason to dread, I fear; and unless it is absolutely necessary for me to know what you would communicate, I would treat to be spared the recital."

"Madam," returned Adolphe, slightly—very slightly disconcerted, "you will be the best judge, of course; but unless you hear me it will not be possible for you to tell. I can only assure you that I do it from the best, the purest of motives;" and he laid his hand upon his heart, with a glance of profound commiseration, and with the fervent accent of truth in his voice.

Laura recalled all her courage; she felt that she ought to hear what he had to say. Perhaps that great and restless element, said to characterize woman's curiosity, also had its effect; and therefore she replied, "I may do wrong in not hearing you; be pleased, therefore, to proceed."

"You had a brother—" began the count, when he was stopped by an exclamation uttered by Laura.

"Is it of him you are going to speak?" she demanded in a whisper.

"I must be firm," said Adolphe, making his eyes look moist, and assuming a look where pity was struggling with the dictates of conscience; "and so must you, Miss Copland. It is of him I am now going to speak."

"Well, then, speak!" and, drawing in her breath through her set teeth, Laura sat down as though determined that however dreadful were the details, she would hear them without shrinking.

"I was one night induced to enter into notorious gaming-house in London. Madam," added the count, seeing that Laura turned pale, and red, and bent her dark, piercing eyes upon him in a manner that would have shaken his coolness, if that glance was not diverted from him, "Madam, I am no gambler; but I was unhappily a witness of the infamous transaction which deprived you of a brother."

"You were?" cried Laura, with flashing eyes; "and why did you not come forward at the time of the inquiry?—why did you not speak?"

"I dared not," returned the unblushing man; "I dared not provoke the vengeance of men who have not hesitated at assassination when they have a revenge to take."

"My brother—my brother," said Laura, half aloud, "you shall yet be avenged. I beg, sir, that you will conclude your narration."

"While a careless spectator at the table, I found out that an organized plan of robbing some victim had been formed; that the business was already progressing; and soon after your brother entered the chamber."

"Oh! why does God desert us at times," murmured Laura, rocking her body and wringing her hands; "why are we left to follow blindly the impulses of passion?"

"The principal agent in this black business," continued the count, "was a young man, whose fair exterior, plausible tongue, and winning address, sufficed to veil an atrocity that stopped at nothing, as I afterwards found."

"His name!" cried Laura, wildly, "that I may pursue him through the world, until I wreak upon him the vengeance that my poor brother's remains demand. His name?"

"In good time, Miss Copland," said Adolphe, and then added to himself, "Egad! what an inventive genius I am. She will be fit to hang him when I have told her all, and that will be the best thing for him." He then resumed: "This youth plied your brother with wine, and step by step, led him onward to the moment when reason lost her sway; and he became as complete and helpless a victim as ever was the lamb in the shambles. For the second time your brother became his prey, and the prey of the sharps around him; until the last fatal moment arrived, and your brother became a suicide."

Laura gave vent to a suppressed shriek; in fact, while he was detailing to Laura so much truth mingled with so much falsehood, he heightened the terror of the scene in order to make her as vindictive as himself.

"His name—tell me the name!" was now the burthen of Laura's angry and vehement demand.

"Since that time," said Adolphe, evading a direct reply, and assuming remorse, "I have been agitated with a restless feeling that left me no peace. I thought the matter well over, and at first determined to let it rest in peace and fall into oblivion; but when I saw that there was one near you; one whom you trusted; one with whom you were in daily communication; one who, by his infernal snares, could deceive you, and me, and all around him—I thought it time to act;" and, as a climax to this speech, Count Adolphe rose up.

Laura rose also, but she seemed bewildered. She did not appear to comprehend the meaning of what was said. Whether it was fear, stupor, or incredulity the count could not tell, he found that he had drawn too much upon her imagination.

"I fear I do not comprehend what you say," replied Laura, at last; "there is something very dreadful in all this—there is a person whom you know that was the cause of my brother's death. Yes," she added, brightening up, "that is clear enough; but you also spoke of another."

"You have a cousin, have you not?" demanded Adolphe, with a touching simplicity of manner.

"Yes," answered Laura; "one whom I esteem. He has been very kind to me. Mr. Hazard was a young man—"

"The very name," cried the count, striking his forehead, as if his memory was suddenly refreshed.

"What do you mean?" asked Laura; "and what can his name have to do with your communication?"

"Have you ever asked him to tell you of his past life? Has he ever spoken of it to you? Has he ever," continued Adolphe, kindly, "told you that he was once the companion of gamblers and sharpers? One who dwelt in a society where all that is vile, depraved, and wicked, is alone the object of pursuit,—has he ever told you this?"

"No," answered Laura, in a tone of anguish; "for the love of heaven keep me no longer in suspense."

"Has he never told you that he and the consummate gambler whom I saw on that eventful night are one and the same? that Mr. Hazard cheated, robbed, and ruined your brother; that he was the cause of his unhappy death?"

"No—no; you must be wrong; it is impossible. You are either misinformed," said Laura, "or else there is some wicked design, of which I can only catch a slight glimpse."

"I trust you do not suspect me of deception," returned the count, with great dignity. "If I thought so I would at once retire; and even now, if you would rather wish to believe him innocent instead of being as he really is—guilty; instead of being a bold, daring, and desperate man, to whom the sentiments of honor and pity are strangers, you have but to say so and I am gone." He made a step or two towards the door as he spoke, when he was arrested by a faint moan, and then he saw that Laura had fallen fainting on the floor.

He lifted her up, placed her on a chair, and then looked round for restoratives. There was wine in a buffet at hand, and he poured a little out and placed it to her lips. She recovered but slowly.

While this man was gazing upon that marble face, and on the closed and purple eyelids, he felt no remorse or pity for the pain he had caused. He felt no compunction at the merciless manner in which he had destroyed the little remains of happiness that might have been in store for her. He exulted in the success of his abominable plans; and felt a fierce gratification in knowing that he had at last placed an insuperable barrier between herself and Hazard; and thus effectually shut out all hope from the bosom of the latter, who was now to be the object of loathing and hatred to the woman he had begun to love so fondly, so fervently.

During all this time, there had been a

watcher and a listener to this conference. On that very day Hazard had ridden over to see his cousin; and having put up his horse, unseen by any, had entered the house. He was passing by a chamber adjoining that which held Laura and the count, when the sound of voices startled him. Pausing for a moment, he recognized that of Adolphe, and understood the nature of the treacherous communication in a moment.

He therefore stood and listened. As the disclosures of Adolphe advanced, the blood which fear and dread had almost stagnated, began to glow with a fire and energy of hatred, that he was up to that time a stranger to. Had the count witnessed those lurid eyes, and beheld the thin, bloodless, and compressed lips—had he gazed upon the white and pallid face where a fearful purpose was beginning to stamp itself, he would have paused—he would have been silent.

When Hazard heard the moans and the fall of the poor girl, his first impulse was to rush in, and lift her up; then strangle Adolphe upon the spot. But he restrained himself, and heard the whole without moving hand or foot.

Laura, on opening her eyes, as consciousness dawned upon her, beheld the count, and felt towards him such an inexpressible horror, that she could scarce conceal it; but she said with all the calmness she could command: "I thank you for the disclosures you have made, and I will act upon them. You have done me service. Even though it is one that makes the whole of my life the more bitter, still I cannot but thank you; and now I entreat that you will pardon me holding further conference on the matter." After a few moments; they parted; the count leaving with many protestations and apologies.

Adolphe and Hazard met in London at the appointed place and time. Their greeting was brief, and the count said in a tone of meaning: "You being here so true to your appointment—"

"Not to mine—to your own," interrupted Jack quietly.

"Well, my own, then," resumed the count, blandly acknowledging the correction; "convinces me that it will not be necessary to proceed any further. And when I have shown you what you will see to-night, I also trust you will not further hesitate in acceding to my desire. It is a speculation that, with some little capital—immediate capital—will realize a princely fortune."

"How much will that capital come to if written down?"

"A couple of thousand will quintuple itself before midnight, or else I am wrong in my calculation," answered the count, now almost regretting the step he had taken, seeing that Hazard was now so singularly tractable; but it was now too late. In the mean time he received the money—left Hazard for the present, with a promise to meet in the evening.

At night the gamblers were met together in the gorgeous chamber of a gorgeous "hell," just newly opened, where ecarte was played, and where lords and commoners, and wealthy men of all grades, castes, and classes passed to and fro before the table, sat awhile to play, and then afterwards sauntered about the rooms,—the splendid suite consisting of several. At the head of the table, as it may be called, sat Count Adolphe as croupier; and beside him, with an air of indifference upon his pale but handsome face, sat Hazard. Both these men were fostering their two separate passions, though the count little dreamed, as he made an occasional remark to his companion, of the terrible fancies that haunted him.

"You are pale to-night—nervous rather, I think," said the count, during an interval of the game. "Take some wine."

"You will find me cool and collected enough for what may be wanted," replied Jack.

"Do you mean anything by that?" demanded Adolphe, throwing some hauteur into his tone.

"No" answered the other, with a laugh

that, however, sounded oddly enough in the sharper's ear. "No,—what should I mean?"

"I am not quite sure what you should mean," retorted the count; and he turned his attention to the gaming-table, which began to be more crowded.

The money that set up the "bank" of the table, at which Adolphe was chief, had been, as we have related, extorted out of Hazard by means of threats as the count supposed,—by means of the physical terrors inspired by Digges, as that worthy himself imagined; but from the now calm, cold, and impassable face of Jack nothing could be gleaned.

Magnificent women came to the table, staked their money, lost it, and retired for more. Hazard played with all or any; and the bank was becoming richer by many thousands. The young man, with a quiet smile, seizing an opportunity, leaned towards the count, on witnessing the last accession made to the golden heap, and said: "As you are so successful, you will not object to return me the money I advanced you to-night."

"Impossible, my dear friend," was the reply; "but you shall share. I look upon that as a proof of your respect for my forbearance—In fact, it is a little remuneration I am rightly entitled to."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Hazard, while his face became still more frightfully pale than ever. "Well, well—perhaps you may be right, who knows? But excuse me a short time," added he, rising; "the heat is oppressive. I am only going into the next room." And he left the count busy with the players.

Adolphe, when Jack had gone away, motioned Digges to come nearer, and, somewhat abashed, that worthy agent, obeyed. "You have received orders from me not to let that fellow out of your sight," began the count with an ominous twinkle,—"have you done so?"

Digges stared a moment, swore a tremendous oath, but nothing could overcome the mastery the sharper's eye had over him.

"Three days ago he made a bolt," he began.

"Three days ago!" echoed Adolphe, turning pale. This was the day on which his visit had been made to Laura.

"Curse me if I know how it was," added Digges. "I watched him every day about the house in the country, and followed him when he went out, but I lost sight of him for a few hours. I suppose he only went out for a gallop across the fields; he's very fond of that, specially when its moonlight."

Adolphe caught sight of Hazard returning, and he hastily said, "That'll do. Retire! go to the door—watch well." And as the bravo obeyed, he resumed his play as if nothing had happened; and Hazard again took his seat.

Hazard drank, and played, his face grew of a still more deathly cast. He spoke not a word, or only replied in monosyllables, that showed him to be occupied by thoughts far distant from the business and the crowd around him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "LAST GAME."

It was two o'clock in the morning when the party broke up, or at least partially broke up; for there still remained some, either desperate or hopeful, who yet continued to stake their gold upon the table.

The count quitted it, and Hazard, still frightfully pale, followed his example. But there was such terrible and untrembling coldness about him; such a calm tone in the voice; such a quietude of gesture and manner, that, for one who had always been so excited with play, it was not only surprising, but alarming.

For, as Adolphe was gazing furtively upon the face, white and colorless as the purest marble, he could not help noticing it; and thought to himself that either he had made up his mind for some dreadful crisis, or had at last succeeded in mastering his emotion; or, in fine, he could not well make it out; but it troubled him.

"Will you take a glass of champagne?"

said he to Jack, as he drew on his coat. "You look dreadfully excited."

"I!" returned the young man, putting on his hat; "I excited! Nonsense. No—no wine for me—not that, at all events. Come, shall we depart? I want a walk—the air must be pleasant."

"Very likely," assented Adolphe; and then he paused, and looked towards Digges, with the intention of asking him to accompany them; but that worthy was far too much enveloped in his rum-and-water to be made available; and without further hesitation they quitted the place together.

They turned down by the Old Palace Yard, and found themselves beside the park gates, when suddenly the count stopped.

"How is this?" said he; "we were going homeward, and all at once I find we are going farther away from it."

"Never mind," was the response; "so much the better. I can't bear a roof above me just now. Ah!" he added, as he bared his head, and inhaled the sharp but refreshing breeze. "this is delicious; I feel myself growing better for it already. Let us have a stroll first, and then—then for home."

"You are amazingly fond of the fields, I daresay," returned the count, pettishly; "but as you will;" and they began to walk on, passing the Green Park and the Palace, till they arrived at the path branching off by Constitution Hill; and crossing the road, scarcely a word having passed between them, they scaled the railings, and were soon on the sward.

The moon shone with a soft and lucid glow over the undulations of Hyde Park, and flung her bright beams upon the rippled surface of the Serpentine, giving the whole a kind of fairy-like splendor. The trees in the distance were softened in umbrageous masses; the green tints being involved in a tender haze that made the whole seem slumbering in the fresh autumnal air.

The two men were walking on, with a rapid step; neither of them for some time

speaking to the other, when the count, as if eyes began to kindle with a fierce light—he had been suffering under the weight of unpleasant fancies, suddenly stopped, and said, "Why are we rambling thus far out of the way; let us return; I'll go no farther."

"Nay," replied Hazard, let us complete our walk; it will not take us very long; and, besides, I have something to say to you."

"To say to me?" echoed the count, uneasily, while retreating to a short distance from his companion; "why can you not speak as we walk towards my lodgings. I begin to feel cold."

"Cold!" repeated the youth with a laugh that jarred unpleasantly on the count's ear. "Nonsense; you might be colder. Come! let us walk a little more briskly, and when in yonder copse we will halt and talk together. Another such opportunity may not occur, for I shall leave England to-morrow, and shall not return."

"You leave England, and will not return; echoed the count, while all his base designs upon Hazard returned, upon him with such intensity and force, as to deprive him of the tear that had begun to fill his mind. "What! after having told you that it is necessary you should remain—that I require from you still more help?"

"Still more?" returned Hazard, but very quietly. "Why do you not tell me, that I should assign over all my wealth to you at once, and that then, when I can be no longer an object of interest, I may go where I will?"

"Even then," retorted Adolphe, "I feel no inclination to part with you;" and he laughed in turn, but it was a low chuckle of exultation.

"You have already had from me about six thousand pounds," pursued Jack, following the idea which now distracted his thoughts.

"It is the price of a secret worth, I trust, treble that amount," was the cool answer.

"Do you not think that you have held the sword of terror over my head long enough?" demanded Hazard, while his

* What more do you require of me?"

"You must be my companion through life," returned the count. "You are now beginning to be known. You hold, in the country, where you reside, a character of respectability, which wealth always confers upon a man, but you must not become too respectable. I know not how soon I may be called upon to shelter myself beneath it. If it be necessary, I can refer to my friend, John Hazard, Esquire, of Berkshire, to bear testimony to my integrity; and because whatever odium attaches itself to me, a portion of it will also fall upon you. Consequently you will clear us both."

Jack started, and the count could hear him grind his teeth with repressed rage, and he muttered half aloud: "This man, then, is determined to pull his fate upon his head."

"What's that you're saying?" inquired the count.

"Nothing—nothing," replied Jack, carelessly; and then he suddenly turned to Adolphe, and in an appealing tone cried, "Spare me! I beseech you, for the sake of us both, spare me any more of these horrible scenes. Why did you drag me into this wretched business to-night?"

"In order that you might see the splendid beauties that are now gathered round my—your table," was the answer. "Spare you? Nonsense! I cannot afford to do that."

"Let us understand one another thoroughly then," said Hazard. "What sum of money do you demand, in order to free me forever from those threats you perpetually urge?"

"Why, I scarcely think that I could name a sum," returned the count, as if calculating. "I think it better as it is—yes, decidedly so—unless—"

"Unless what?" inquired Jack.

"Perhaps—you—a—have a mind to marry your cousin—in that case—"

But the ashy whiteness of the young man's countenance alarmed the count, and

so much the pallor, as the fire in those lurid eyes, which he now began to note with something of a fearful interest; and he fancied that some dread inexplicable purpose was lodged in them.

"If I could restore to her, by that, some portion of her lost happiness—if I could even be to her, in some little degree, the brother she has been robbed of, God knows how anxiously, how tenderly I would cherish and protect her;" and the young man's head fell on his breast.

The count made no reply—he scarcely dared to break the sudden silence that fell upon them.

"Look around you," pursued Jack, extending his hand, and pointing to the trees and the glimmering water; "and if you can be affected by the quiet loveliness of nature, give way to its impulse, and let your humanity for once be touched by it. You have pulled me into such misery and degradation, in which I am about swallowed up, that no language can describe it; for years you have pursued me, like one in pursuit of a mortal foe, and yet I have never injured you. What little good was left in me when you first saw me, you have taken infinite pains to obliterate."

"There was very little virtue lost, my friend," returned Adolphe, with a sneer, "when you bade adieu to the remnant of yours."

"It is very true," was the quiet assent; "but why have you made me a criminal? why seek with such a complication of skill, art, and determination, to make me an utter villain? why still thrust me lower and lower in the scale?—why?"

"Because it suited, and still suits my purpose best," was the count's reply. "Because—"

"And," interrupted Jack, "you still will persist in doing this—or you will make a full revelation to Miss Copland?"

"I will, undoubtedly. You comprehend how matters stand?" responded Adolphe.

"Traitor and knave!" shouted Jack, darting upon him, and grasping him by the throat before Adolphe had time to stand on

his defence—"where were you two days ago. Have you not already told me?"

"No—I swear! Let me go;" and he struggled violently.

"Let!" cried the infuriated man. "You have done so. I overheard the whole—I was in the next chamber to you. Dog!" he ejaculated, his features writhing with the intense hatred that was mastering him, while his gripe grew closer upon the throat of the man. "You have blighted my existence; and that poor child whose brother was your victim—yours—you must go and poison the little that remains of life to her."

"Loose me—spare me!—and—and I will trouble you no more. Mercy—mercy!" gasped the half-strangled count.

"I have implored mercy from you, merciless villain, and you laughed at me. I have acceded to all your wishes, and have permitted you to rob me in every shape and way,—first of my innocence, then of my happiness, of my gold, and now of my life. The last game is yours or mine.—There is no mercy for you—you must die! the world can no longer hold us both!" and he thrust one hand into his breast.

"Mercy! my life! for the love of God I beseech you!" cried the count, in an agony of terror, and almost helpless under the superhuman strength which now overmastered the stronger man; for the count was tall, muscular, and powerful, added to which, he also preserved a certain amount of animal courage which now totally fled when he discovered that Hazard knew his treachery, and had threatened him with death.

The breeze rushed by, and the leaves rustled against one another with a mournful sound, and the moans died away upon the surface of the lake, while the moon at the moment was obscured by a cloud.

"Now, pray to God," the count heard his enemy say in a deep vindictive whisper, "for I am about to kill you, to rid the earth of one of its evil spirits."

"Mercy!" was all that the strangled man could say.

"No mercy for you who never had pity or mercy for me, or any. No pity for you who have so unrelentingly followed me. Yet, even while I was your only object, I would have endured your persecution; but now that you have involved one, pure, good, and innocent, and whom you, wretch that you are have irretrievably wronged,—I tell you that you must die;" and instantly there followed a snapping sound like that of a spring-dagger, when the blade is shot open.

The count made a tremendous effort, and Hazard stabbed him in the breast. Blow after blow followed, till a perfect rain of blood drenched the clothing of both. The throat of the unhappy Adolphe could only give vent to a guttural grcining—for he could not cry; and the murderous work went on.

When the moon again emerged from the clouds behind which she had veiled herself, as if fearing to witness the hideous deed, she shone upon the form of Hazard all covered with the life-blood of his victim who now lay on the ground still faintly moving, and then at last was still. The murderer lifted up his dripping hand to the sky, and in a loud voice cried: "I am the agent of heaven's vengeance upon this man whose life has been one long crime;" and then he sorrowfully bent his eyes upon the bleeding corpse.

"Two lives will be demanded at my hands," he muttered, "in that hereafter I shall soon hasten to; and how, oh! how shall I answer?" and he clasped his forehead with his hand.

"What is this so warm, so wet, about my face?" he cried, extending his hands to look upon them. "Blood! his blood! Murderer that I am, what is to become of me? the prison, the gibbet for the gambler, for the shedder of blood!" and then with one wild and prolonged cry, he ran from the spot.

Still his clothes were saturated with the sanguine stream, and the evidence of his

guilt was hardening upon his hands. He halted. The instinct of self-preservation, prompted him to cleanse the gore from his person; and he endeavored to wash himself in the waters of the lake till he found, that they, too, were becoming red; and, once more he fled,—his head turned over, his shoulder, and horror expressed in that terrible gaze he cast behind, as though the face of the murdered man was following him. Fear lent him swiftness, and he was already far removed from the spot, when he heard some voices and the sound of approaching footsteps.

What was to be done?—could he dare to meet them, whoever they were?—could he bear without quailing the glance which they, out of sheer curiosity would cast upon a man panting, disordered, his clothes dripping with wet, and his hands cloyed with blood? He darted among the trees and hid himself, and the intruders passed by; but they took the path which would lead them to the dead body. In half-an-hour the deed would be known, but in a little less time than that, the stars would be out, the moon gone down; for, about an hour before day break, there is generally an interval of almost utter darkness, and during that darkness he would get to his lodgings; he could admit himself with ease; he could make preparations for his escape; he could even defy any proof of the assassination being brought against him. But had he presence of mind to endure the whole horrible details of the inquest, should he happen to be called upon?—Such were the thoughts that occupied him.

He hastened—he ran, till he was in a profuse perspiration. Leaping the railing of the park, he now found himself in Oxford street; he was therefore not very far from his residence; and avoiding the principal thoroughfares, lest he should be seen by any of the police or the cabmen, he took all the more retired streets till he arrived at home.

He put his trembling hand in his pocket, to take out the key, but the fingers were

lumbered with cold, and stiff with the congealed blood; He shivered with cold and terror in every limb, and he cursed the delay which his want of self-possession caused, and which might yet subject him to discovery; but finally he got in, and quietly closed the door.

He stole up softly into his own chamber. It was perfectly dark; but the pale, spotted face of the murdered man glared through the darkness with a kind of supernatural whiteness. It was horrible; and he now began to know what remorse was.

He groped about for the match-box and struck a light, which he applied to the candles on the table. As he turned he caught sight of his own features in the mirror, and almost shrieked out in terror; but the sentiment of safety prevailed, and he began to take off his clothes, though the sight of his stained garments so appalled him, that terror almost palsied and paralysed every faculty.

He poured out some brandy and drank it at a gulp to stimulate himself, though the ardent spirit almost failed in its effect. He then kindled the fire, cut his coat and waistcoat into strips, and piled them on the grate till they were burned to tinder, though the smell of the burning wool made him fancy, now and then that the flesh of his victim was on the embers.

Every precaution he thought of he adopted. In fine, he one by one destroyed every article of the clothing he had worn the previous day, and thrust them into the grate, to the imminent danger of setting the house on fire; but guilt in a greater or less degree, always leaves some track of its footsteps, some marked evidence of the deed of blood; and there were a dozen unthought of circumstances and things, that would have convicted him immediately had there been a search made in his chamber.

He went to bed, but not to sleep. The dreary hours that crawled on were full of horrible visions, in the midst of which the face of the murdered man perpetually showed itself to him in such ghastly wise, that the miserable youth was almost maddened at

the sight. Seas of blood ran around his feet; and shapes of terror appeared to wreath themselves around his struggling form.

The next day, the body was found in the park, and the town rang with the terrible act that had been committed. It was in everybody's mouth, and each new recital was heightened by additional horrors which were cast around it. The gamblers who had passed the previous evening with the count, stared at one another with fear and dismay, and then in low voices began to talk the matter over, till they came to the circumstance that Adolphe had quitted the gaming-house in company with Hazard, and their pale cheeks told the rest, though they scarcely dared to speak the suspicions that grew into certainty.

Digges was the first, however, who did so, and in his coarse and brutal way, he without any hesitation said, that Hazard had "at last cleared off his score" with the count. He well knew to what extent the principal mover of all these evils had tortured and persecuted the youth. He alone was cognizant of the great debt of fear and hatred which the young man owed him who had so irretrievably ruined him; but there the matter ended. Not one of them thought of giving any information to the police, how in full search after the murderer, until that communication should be wrested from him. Their own lives were too dark, too guilty, for any among them to make an open confession, which might perhaps involve themselves to an extent they had so much reason to dread; and before noon they had, one by one, either got out of the way into hiding, or had entirely left London; so that even when the officers of justice had obtained some clue to the companions of the count; none of them were to be found; and Hazard did not dare to encounter the sight of any human being in the streets. He remained therefore, within, still busied in preparations for departure, and destroying the still remaining evidences that to his fear he discovered in his chamber the next day, until those were

altogether obliterated, and his arrangements complete.

He was not certain whether his lodgings were known to any or not; but still, as not one came, he began to feel more reassured; he had so far recovered himself as to ask for the newspaper, and there, to his dismay, read with alarming accuracy the particulars of the revolting homicide. How the reporter dwelt upon the magnitude of the crime, and the fearful struggle that must have taken place during the conflict. How, with practised judgment, they had drawn the almost correct conclusions, and the dark hints of the probability of the officers of justice being upon the track of the criminal, almost petrified Hazard with dread of the fatal consequences of this last crowning piece to all his former crimes. The paper dropped from his hands, and for awhile, with motionless limbs and haggard looks he continued to gaze upon it with the strange fascination with which the frog looks upon the snake about to devour him, but is unable to avert his eyes, or remove from the spot.

His first impulse, upon coming to himself, was to go and deliver himself up; but the dreadful thought of public execution, and the disgrace that would thus be entailed upon Laura, prevented him. Upon more mature deliberation—a conclusion probably arrived at through the instinctive love of

life to which all cling—he made up his mind to return, before it was too late, to Berkshire, settle his property upon Laura, and leave his native land forever. But his mental agony increased to such a degree as first part of his resolution was promptly acted upon according to his wishes, the land to which he journeyed was that bourne from which no traveller ever returns. His broken constitution could not bear up against his malady, and a plain tombstone shortly after marked the resting-place of Jack Hazard.

Laura did not long survive her cousin. A settled melancholy took possession of her, and in a few short months she was borne to the grave amid the tears of all who knew her, and the sorrow of the neighborhood.

Before she departed this life she bequeathed the whole of the Berkshire estates to a charitable institution, and the hand of providence could be seen in the arranging of events so as to take from out of the hands of the vicious what only gave more ample means for them to indulge in vice, and bestow the property upon an institution that was calculated to protect the youth of future generation from the snares into which the unfortunate Jack Hazard fell.

Digges, after a short run, was at length arrested, and convicted of manslaughter, and is now serving the remainder of his natural life in chains in a penal colony.

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