

SIBYLLA JOY;

OR,

The Mystery of the Brown-Stone House.

BY DR. J. H. ROBINSON,

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The Mystery of the Brown-Stone House.

CHAPTER I.

A BRASIER OF CHARCOAL.

It was a brown-stone house, situated at the corner of a fashionable avenue, in the city of New York. The brown-stone house had brown-stone neighbors, but none more grand and imposing. It was surrounded by an elegant iron fence, inclosing a neat margin of greensward. The brown-stone house was not social in its outer aspect; but it was aristocratic, and its master did not care to have it otherwise. Stephen Parkhurst was its master. Stephen Parkhurst was fifty years of age. In everything pertaining to his character, Stephen Parkhurst was a remarkable man. His mental attributes were not of the common order. He was a gentleman of iron firmness of purpose. His sagacity equaled his resolution. He was coldly courteous, but not affable. He possessed a singular faculty of penetrating the designs of those who approached him. This intuitive power seemed in Stephen Parkhurst something more than mere accident—it was a subtle instinct.

His forehead was broad and overhung his eyes, which were deep-set and glowed like dark yet animated opals. Thought burned perpetually in those penetrating balls. His nose was long and straight. His mouth was wide, and somewhat depressed at the corners. His cheeks, like his brow, were furrowed with care. The handwriting of Time gave a severe but not disagreeable expression to his face. He had iron-gray hair. He wore no beard. He was of medium height; his figure erect, and his step firm and assured.

Stephen Parkhurst was a man eminently fitted to take care of himself. No matter how the world might go; no matter what kind of people came to him; no matter what traps were laid for his feet; no matter what hypocrisy surrounded him; no matter what danger dogged him—he could take care of

himself. To take care of one's self is a great thing. Stephen Parkhurst was strong, and had power to protect the weak.

Stephen Parkhurst reigned alone in his brown-stone house. There was no one in the brown-stone house to dispute his sovereign wishes. Mrs. Stephen Parkhurst had left the brown-stone house for a very narrow and silent house a few feet under ground. But Stephen's life followed on, and the domestic routine did not stop.

It was a September evening. No matter what year it was—all time is the same in story—but it was not long ago. Stephen Parkhurst was at home and had a visitor. Had there been no visitor, this strange record would not have dated from that night. This visitor was a man near Stephen's own age, but much unlike him in person and character. He was taller, thinner, and less erect and manly in his bearing. His eyes went down when they should have gone up into one's face, and went up stealthily when they should have been elsewhere. His hair was gray—perhaps with age, perhaps with suffering, perhaps with profligacy. His expression was reticent and brooding. He had evidently succumbed to many things which he should have conquered; and his ideas of human brotherhood were considerably confused. There were spectral shapes fitting about his conscience. Scanning him closely, one would say that he was disposed to misanthropy, and that there was a well of bitterness within him that no moral pump could draw dry. In his dress he was not quite tidy, and he was perceptibly worn and threadbare.

This was Richard Parkhurst, half-brother to Stephen. The relationship was in blood and not in sentiment.

Stephen Parkhurst had just returned from a journey. He sat in an easy-chair casting

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furtive glances at Richard, who was not a frequent visitor. He shivered, rubbed the palms of his hands together, and said:

"The air is chilly and the room is damp."
"Yes," answered Richard, gloomily, "the air is chilly and the room is damp."

It was not frosty weather—it was scarcely cool; but the house was large and the damp had crept into the unoccupied apartments. Rooms will grow frigid when there is not human life and breath in them.

"The walls sweat with moisture," added Stephen Parkhurst.

"The furnace should have been lighted during your absence," observed Richard. "The paper is almost wet. There is a deadly chill here."

"Death is colder than you dream of," returned Stephen. "Talk not of death but of life."

"It is well for you to talk of life," said the other, moodily. "You who have riches; you who live in this glittering avenue; you who have the *entrée* of society; you who are followed and flattered; you who hold the hearts of men in your hands. Men are creatures to be bought and sold for money."

A furrow, running from the bridge of his nose to the roots of his hair, divided Richard's forehead into two sinister sections.

"Good men are not bought and sold," answered Stephen, coldly. "But we will not moralize. It is too late in life to begin to moralize, Richard. It were better to make the house comfortable than to make maxims. I am mercurial. Atmospheric changes affect me. This hanging moisture will bring on my old aches and pains. Ah! I feel them now. What folly to shiver in one's own house, when there is a labyrinth of airpipes in the cellar, and fuel in abundance."

Richard nodded, cynically.
"Heat and ventilation keep doctor's gigs from the door, and doctor's bills from our faces. Heat and ventilation are for all seasons of the year. Be good enough, Richard, to ring the bell."

The half-brother arose and pulled the bell-cord; but no one answered the call. Stephen began to be impatient. Richard looked at the fire-place and said, with apparent indifference: "The grate is crippled. You can have no fire here."

"When the master of the house is abroad, the domestic machinery gets out of order," muttered Stephen. "I have servants, but I am not served. My chills are coming! Accursed be intermittents! I cannot wait for fires to be lighted in the flues below. What shall I do, Richard?"

His teeth chattered, and he stole a look at Richard from beneath his overhanging brows. His dark eyes glowed like smoldering fires.

"I will order a brasier of coals," said Richard Parkhurst.

"A brasier of coals," repeated Stephen, approvingly. "Thank you, Richard. You were always suggestive. As a boy, I remember, you were full of expédients."

Richard kept his eyes averted, and received the commendation of his rich relative meekly.

"There are springs in the cellar, I think," resumed Stephen, meditatively. "Hence the mold upon the walls. But mold will come to us all anon."

"True, Sir," answered Richard, in a subdued tone. "But you will walk above the mold, many years—you will walk above the mold by reason of strength—till your lovely daughter has grown to womanhood, is married, and has children of her own. She will be greatly admired. How thrives she at school? What happiness to possess such a treasure! I envy you the paternity of that sweet creature. It is long since I have seen her; yet, without meaning offence to you, Sir, I feel an almost paternal interest in Ursula. Ah, Sir, if you should die?"

He shook his head as if dying would be a very bad thing for Stephen, but still refrained from looking steadily at him.

"If I should die," responded Stephen, quietly, "Ursula will inherit my fortune."

"Angels defend her!" muttered Richard, piously. Then added, with some hesitation: "And if Ursula should die?"

His voice faltered in spite of his self-control.

"In that case," added Stephen Parkhurst, with a dubious smile, "perhaps you would become suddenly rich."

Richard bowed, gratefully, and said, with warmth: "Heaven forbid that I should become rich in that sad way!"

Stephen, being tender-hearted, was much shocked. He added, presently:

"Excuse me, honored Sir; I am standing here talking, while you are shivering. I will go to the servants' hall immediately."

He moved toward the door, as if anxious to oblige Stephen Parkhurst.

"Bring me some hot brandy-and-water, also," said the half-brother. "When I have warmed my benumbed hands and feet, I will retire."

Richard hurried away with fraternal haste. Stephen settled back in his chair, and seemed to forget that the air was chilly and the room damp. He manifested some restlessness, frowned, and looked threatening.

In ten minutes, the suggestive Richard came back, followed by a servant bearing a brasier of burning charcoal; which he placed upon the hearth in obedience to a gesture from his master's relative.

Stephen Parkhurst arose, and the servant wheeled his large chair toward the brasier. He reseated himself, smiled blandly upon Richard, leaned forward, and held his hands over the pan. The coals glowed, and shot little globes of fire at him. The heat fumed up against his chilled fingers and blue lips. The servant quietly threw a cloak over his shoulders, and gave him the hot brandy-and-water. He accepted the glass, and, holding it untasted, looked dreamily at Richard.

"You have not inquired about my old friend, Norman," he said.

"No. I have been thinking of you, and not of your foster-brother. Remember, Sir, that I have not known him intimately, and never loved him. You were always fond of him; and some uncharitable persons fancied that the resemblance between you was rather too strong to be purely coincidental. But that is nothing. Slander is natural to man. There are people in the world who would die if they couldn't talk about their neighbors. The world is such a hypocrite that I hate it. It rails at the best of us. I have known it to wag its tongue at you. It has called you proud and niggardly."

"Unkind world!" said Stephen, calmly.
"How fares this Norman?" asked Richard, glancing at the brasier.

"Well. Very well. I doubt whether he be not happier than either of us."

He spoke carelessly, and sipped from the glass.

"He has always experienced your charity, I believe," observed Richard, with a less friendly expression.

"On my journey to see my daughter, I passed a night with him in his humble home. The interview awakened memories that long have slept. I softened toward Norman Drew. I shall bury all his infirmities."

Stephen Parkhurst sighed, and fell into abstraction.

"It is better to forgive than to bear malice," replied Richard, with humility.

"Benefactions are better than curses," said Stephen, nodding at the brasier in a musing manner. "Curses are the froth and spume of anger. I am making some final arrangements concerning Norman Drew."

"You can well afford to be charitable," answered Richard, uneasily. "But you are beginning to be comfortable, and I will leave you. Can I do anything more for you?"

He kept his eyes fixed upon the glass, which Stephen had not entirely drained of its contents.

"No," responded Stephen, impressively; "you can do nothing more for me!"

He paused; then, raising himself in his chair and turning his grave face upon his half-brother, asked:

"What is your business with me?"

Not quite prepared for this question, Richard Parkhurst hesitated, and was perceptibly embarrassed.

"I believe," added Stephen, coldly, "that you never call on me for naught? Is there not some trifling matter that you came to see about?"

He held Richard firmly under his eyes, and seemed to look him through with his unwavering glances.

"Nothing," said Richard, "that will not keep till morning. Pardon me for obtruding. You know that I seldom trouble you."

A bitter sneer flickered on the pale lips of Stephen Parkhurst.

"I knew not," he responded, "but that you had reached the end of wit, and had come to me in default of it. Your ways are bad, Richard. They are more than bad, Richard. They are abominable! Do not suppose that I have lost sight of you because I do not often see you. The path of your life is crooked. Vices and devices must have an end at last. Cards and cunning prosper not always. Beggary and burglary follow such beginnings. Will you never mend, Richard?"

"You are severe, Sir," answered Richard, assuming an air of profound humility. "Severe, but not utterly unjust. With God's help, I hope to begin a new life, Stephen." He drew a tattered handkerchief from his coat-pocket and wiped his eyes. "I have already begun a new life."

"Weep moderately, Richard, weep moderately!" returned Stephen, sarcastically. "Violent emotion may injure you! However, let this pass. We have not much in common. You live in the world, and I live in it; and that is about all that can be said of us. You can hope little from me. I am not a generous man. I never learned to be heroic. Nearness of blood makes not nearness of feeling. The man that I love is my relative; and no other is akin to me. Being born of my mother makes no brother for me, unless the thought be brotherly. A sister is a sister, if her acts be sisterly. I offer you no money, because the world is all before you, and you can wring money out of it. You have a great capital, Richard, to work upon. You have craft, cunning, duplicity, chicanery, device, wile, trick, and finesse for your capital. With these you should grow rich. But you look not rich, Richard!"

"I am not rich!" muttered Richard. "But this is a subject, Sir, that is painful. The rebukes of a friend are better, however, than the hisses of an enemy. You cannot reproach me, Stephen, more bitterly than I reproach myself. My conscience deals more severely with me than you have dealt. Do

not spare me; for pity were weakness. With your high notions of rectitude, your regular habits, your austerity of life, my irregularities must appear to you in the worst light, and I expect no faith from you till my conduct has fairly won it."

"I will not quarrel with your young reformation; for I know it must be weak in the legs," replied Stephen, impassively. "If you have found a new path, and it be a good one, walk on. Your feeble feet have sometimes made a fatal slip, when the road of your life seemed smooth and smiling, and full of promise. There is something prophetic in me to-night, Richard. A melancholy mist hangs over my mind. Shadows flit around me. Whence come shadows? Does death reflect itself on the ground before us, Richard?"

His deep-set and calmly-burning eyes were turned upon his half-brother. The charcoal glowed in the brazier, and the heated air charged with mephitic gases went purling upward.

Richard was standing on the threshold of the door, evidently anxious to go. The conversation had taken a turn not much to his liking. He felt out of place, and like one who is secretly followed by sure-footed justice. The glances of Stephen alarmed him; not because they were suspicious, but because they were searching. The conversation, too, had drifted to a strange point. He answered as calmly as he could:

"It does, no doubt. Banish gloomy reflections. Doubt comes with darkness, and confidence with the sun."

"I seldom have doubt and darkness," Stephen went on. "I cannot help thinking of Ursula to-night. If she should be left alone in the world, and you should go on reforming, I suppose you would look after her, now and then."

"Heaven knows I would!" exclaimed Richard, with emphasis.

"Thank you, Richard!" said Stephen, absently. Then added in the same absent way: "How the brasier glows! There is a soul in fire. It is not wonderful that some races of men should worship that mystic element. It was an inspiration, almost, to think of a pan of charcoal."

He bathed his hands in the warmth—forgetful, apparently, that Richard was in the room.

"Very wonderful is charcoal!" he continued. "It is both baleful and beneficent. There is life and death in it. It is, like all other things, good or evil, as we use it."

He drank the remaining brandy and water, and handed the glass to the servant, saying:

"I will retire now. Be sure to come and remove the brasier when I ring. It is not

well to remain too long with burning charcoal. However"—he looked at the coals—"there are not enough to harm me, I think."

He pushed back his chair, arose, and said, carelessly, to his half-brother:

"Success to your reformation, Richard! Do not put yourself much in my way till your new life is seasoned somewhat by time. I will not be ungenerous, however; I will give you—my blessing."

He drew in his breath, lifted his eyebrows, and depressing the corners of his mouth, nodded his head at his relative, who scowled, set his teeth hard together, and covertly clenched his hands. He had difficulty in mastering himself.

"Good-night, Richard."

"Good-night, Sir," said Richard, huskily.

"He bowed and retired, slowly, closing the door after him."

CHAPTER II.

SIBYLLA.

Stephen Parkhurst was alone. The servant had gone. He stood motionless a few moments, then stepped quickly to the door, and locked it. His next action was to place the brasier of charcoal in the fireplace, where the draft of the fire seizing the poisonous gases drew them up the chimney. The air was already freighted with stifling vapors. He drew down the window at the top, and the oppressive exhalations began to eddy out. Stephen Parkhurst's lungs were relieved. He leaned against the wall, and holding by the window-sash, drank in the pure atmosphere with gasping avidity.

"Unnatural villain!" he muttered. "He would kill me with charcoal. Subtle device! Unparalleled diabolism!"

He paused. The glass from which he had drunk the warm liquor was upon the table where the servant had placed it. He hurried toward it, took it up, and examined the few remaining drops, by taste and smell.

"Drugged!" exclaimed Stephen. He put the glass into his secretary, and locked it in.

"Drugged with morphine! Vile schemer! It is well for me that I am used to the drug; a fatal stupor would have followed else; and the charcoal would have done the rest. Ah, Richard! This is another of your good offices! You will soon pave hell with your good intentions! You have doomed me dead. You have watched and waited many years for opportunity. You have been a dreadful spider, weaving webs to ensnare me; lying wakeful nights to plan me out of the world; getting up in the morning, brain-racked with the plots of your pillow; swallowing murder with your daily bread, and carrying crime to your daily haunts. I know you, Richard. I

have not forgotten one fatal injury, and I will not forget it now. You have chosen your path, and Heaven being just, you shall walk in it, though you go sweating horror at every step. Time atones for nothing; it may deaden memories, but it cannot dull the edge of justice. Justice is a sword that never rusts, and it is so bright that guilt can see its face upon its polished surface. The wrongs of one whose name I will not pronounce, like the blood of Abel, call for vengeance. She shall have it, Richard. She shall have it, most infamous Richard! Heaven helps me. I will give you a plot more dark and impenetrable than any you have ever concocted in your midnight-vigils. I will give scope to your genius for villainy. You shall have a free rein and a loose bit in your mouth. The track of crime shall be cleared for you to run your course. Drive on, Richard, and see where you will stop at last; if it be not under the gallows, it will not be for lack of wickedness."

He paced slowly to and fro while he was thus muttering to himself, bitterly.

"There is Ursula," he continued. "In doing justice to Richard, must I do injustice to her? Let me ponder well. Are my nerves steady enough? Is my will strong enough? Have I counted the cost? I think I have. I was thinking, thinking all the time Richard was with me. When he suggested the brasier of charcoal, I had an inspiration, which seemed to come from the hovering soul of Norman Drew. I told him I was going to bury all my foster-brother's infirmities; but I did not tell him that my foster-brother was ready to be buried. Poor Norman! His death shocks me. That he should die on the way to me, and at this juncture, is singular. But I will turn his decease to good account."

He took a long narrow strip of paper from his pocket. It was a telegram, announcing the sudden death, at a station-house not far from the city, of one Norman Drew, who, while dying, had requested that his body should be forwarded to Stephen Parkhurst for burial.

"Gone before," sighed Stephen. "First home, that is all. Well, he died easily, and that is something. He leaves neither kith nor kin to weep for him. It is now eleven o'clock. At twelve, his body will arrive. I must receive it privately, at the side-door. The strong resemblance that the deceased bore to myself shall furnish Richard a dead half-brother, done to death with a brasier of charcoal. It requires skill, adroitness, nerve, and secrecy. In Paris, this would not be a strange thing; the French are so full of eccentricities and unnatural devices. Why, then, should it be a marvel in this motley American city? But whom shall I trust?

No one in this house is worthy of full confidence, save Sibylla; and she is too young to be a safe accomplice. Nor have I the moral right to burden her with a matter so extremely difficult to manage, and which would continually tax her brain for expedients. Young people should not be harried and worried with startling mysteries. Poor Sibylla is fond of me; and she is grateful for the home I have given her. What is about to happen will shock her. Grief will heal, though, and tears will dry. Young girls do not often die of sorrow. I shall see my own funeral, and that will be a novelty. I shall have two sincere mourners, I think—my daughter and my protégée."

He went to his secretary, he opened it, he took out a package of papers. He examined them, and upon some of them he wrote. Finally, he replaced the package, saying:

"I must send for Magnus Drake. He is most fit for these things. He is sagacious—he is prudent."

Magnus Drake was Stephen Parkhurst's legal adviser, a very shrewd and reliable gentleman. Magnus Drake carried perseverance, faithfulness, and industry into his business. He was cautious, and as earnest as he was cautious. He was adroit, and honest as he was adroit. He could be trusted, both in the great and small affairs of life. If he was cunning, it was for his client; if he was subtle, it was for the truth. To this man the thoughts of Parkhurst turned.

"Shall I send?" he queried. "There is no one to send. John has been tampered with; he brought me the drugged brandy. John is a villain. I cannot send John. I must go myself. No; I will send Sibylla. It is late, but the child has courage. The streets are still full, and no one will harm her."

Just then there was a light knock at the door.

"Her knock," said Stephen, his countenance lighting up. "She comes at the right moment. The good girl likes her protector, I do believe. Now for the part I am to act. I must be grave, to melancholy. She would remember afterward that the shadow of a coming event was upon me this night."

He arose, unlocked and opened the door, calmly and quietly. A young girl entered, timidly. Her eyes beamed, her cheeks glowed, and her fair lips smiled on Stephen Parkhurst. Her face eloquently asked:

"May I come?"

She held out her hands. Stephen received them both in his, and looked down upon her with paternal tenderness. His heart warmed toward her. He stooped and kissed her forehead almost reverently; but it was the reverence of innocence and trust; of beauty and dependence.

"I am glad to see you," she said, and her expression bore testimony to her words.

"And I am glad to see you, little lady," answered Stephen Parkhurst, very gently.

He continued to hold her childlike hands. They formed a pretty picture—the man of fifty and the girl of sixteen. One was worthy of being trusted, and the other was a creature to be loved. One was matured manhood and strength; the other, ingenuous girlhood and faith.

"I was thinking of you, Sibylla," said Stephen. "My intellect has been asking my heart if any one loved me save Ursula; and my heart said, Sibylla."

"Good heart!" murmured the girl, laying her head against his breast. "Your heart was always right."

These words were simple; but the manner of their utterance gave them potency with Stephen.

He closed the door and led her into the room. She detected a strange odor, and looked with some surprise at the pan of charcoal in the fireplace.

"I want a messenger," said Stephen.

"Will you be my carrier-pigeon?"

"Whither shall I fly?" asked Sibylla.

"Give me your commands, and let me go."

"It is late?" observed Stephen Parkhurst.

"It is never too late to do your bidding," replied Sibylla, gracefully.

"I will write a note which you shall carry to Magnus Drake, with secrecy and dispatch. You must go out by the side-door, and no one must know that you leave the house. I will let you out; and you must return in the same manner, when I will let you in. Magnus, I dare say, will come with you. Are you afraid?"

"No; dear father, I am not afraid when it is you that commands. Are you well tonight? You look pale."

"I think I am not altogether well," answered Parkhurst, sitting down and beginning to write. "My sensations are not natural; but do not be alarmed. I shall live long enough to disappoint my enemies. Go quietly for your bonnet and shawl, and the note will be ready when you return."

Sibylla Joy came back very soon. Stephen gave her a sealed note, directed to Magnus Drake, attorney-at-law, No. 7, — street. She placed it in her bosom, while her patron regarded her earnestly.

Sibylla was young, and of a small compact figure. She was a brunette. Her cheeks had a dark, rich tinge. Her face was oval, and every feature was impressed with a peculiar beauty. She was vivacious, her expression continually changing. She glowed and sparkled with every generous thought; and there were moments when she was singularly

attractive. Her forehead was not high, but in harmony with the rest of her face. Her eyebrows were dark and prettily penciled; and her hair, which was also very dark, was soft and glossy. Her nose was small and regular. Her mouth, too, was small, the lips being full and rosy. An artist had called it a sweet mouth, and wished to paint it into a pet picture of an Eastern princess. Her eyes were bright and expressive; they were grave, they were gay; they were arch, they were demure, they were loving, they were tantalizing; they were intense, and to be believed in. One could see in them no lurking art, no latent hypocrisy. In person, Sibylla was light, active, and healthful. Her movements were quick and graceful, according to the inspirations of nature.

Sibylla Joy had been the *protégée* of Stephen Parkhurst ever since she was a child of seven years of age. She was now sixteen; and so sweet in temper and so lovely in person that she was greatly endeared to her protector. In the temple of Stephen's love she stood next to Ursula. Every kind word and every generous act she had richly repaid by spontaneous affection and tender faith in him. He was her Providence; and she worshiped him as such.

"Let me out," said Sibylla, caressing the hand that had cared for her.

"I don't know, child," he answered, thoughtfully. "I am half afraid to send you. I must be careful of my pet."

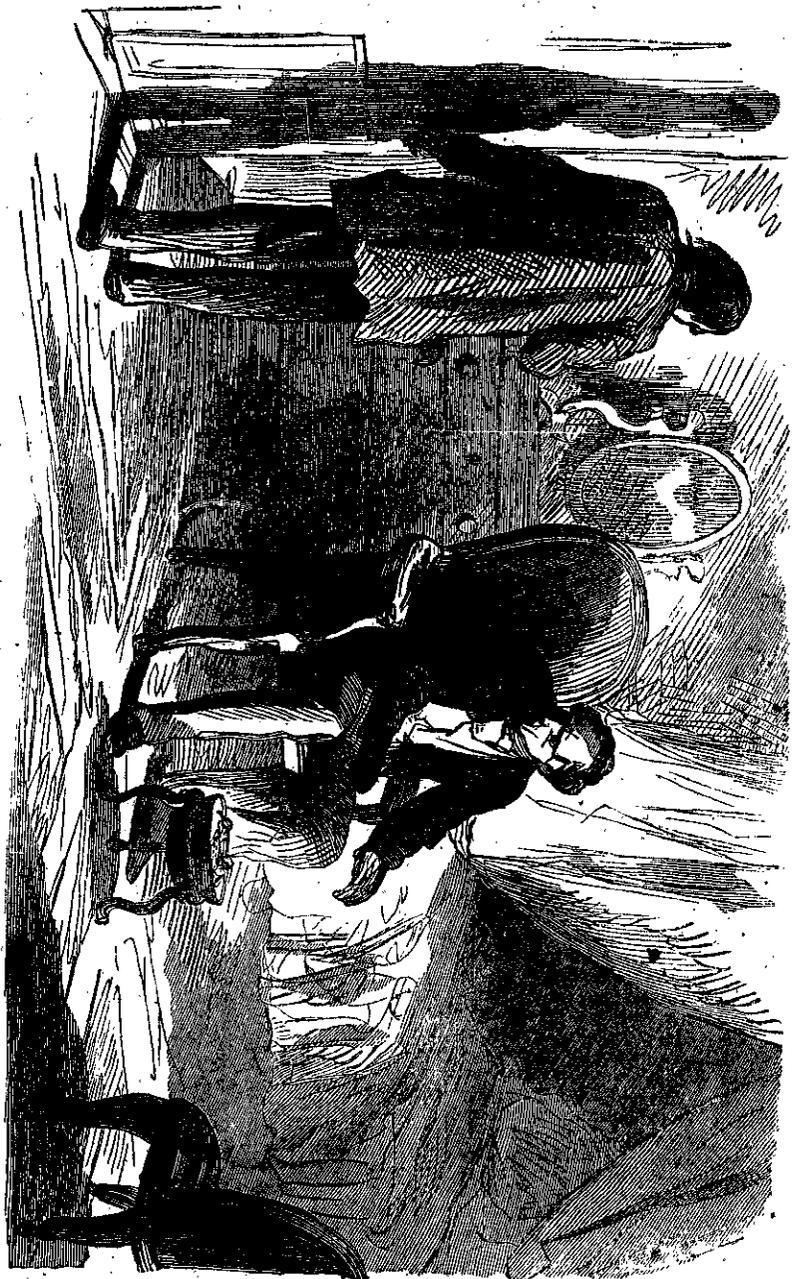
"Fear not, dear guardian. I shall glide along the streets unobserved. I am not very large, you know; but I am very quick. I am so healthy. Why, sometimes you can hardly keep up with me when we walk together. Do let me go. I love to do your wishes."

"You shall be my Mercury, darling," said Stephen Parkhurst. "I doubt whether the gods had such a messenger. Come, Mercurius."

He conducted her through a narrow hall to a side-door of which he kept the key. It was, in fact, a private entrance, communicating indirectly with his own apartments. Stephen Parkhurst was eccentric; and there were times when he wished to go out and come in without special observation. So he had a private door and carried the key. With a few words of caution, he let out Sibylla, and left the door unlocked, so that she might enter without ringing or delay, when she had performed her errand.

"Heaven bless her!" sighed Stephen. "Strange it is that in this world we are compelled to give pain to those that we love. But so it is. Is it because we love unworthily? No; it is because life is pain and pleas-

RICHARD PARKHURST'S ROOM.



ure. There could be no world without good and evil."

He returned to his room. The brasier of charcoal was still burning in the fireplace under the crippled grate; but it was powerless for evil. The deadly gases whirled up the chimney, to be lost in space. Stephen frowned, and awaited the coming of his light-footed messenger. He wrote various memoranda, and placed them in a private drawer among other papers. He was thus busied, when a soft little hand stole over his mouth. The suddenness of the action startled him; but, well knowing to whom it belonged, he kissed it, without looking up, and asked:

"So soon, child? Did you find him? Is he coming?"

"Yes, dear Sir, I have found him, and he is coming," she answered. Then added, timidly: "You look mysterious. What are you going to do? I wish you would take me into your confidence."

"Do I really look mysterious?" replied Parkhurst. "I am sorry if I do; for mystery is generally hateful; and follows upon the footsteps of intrigue and concealment. Where you find mystery you usually find evil."

"You are not evil," said Sibylla.

"I trust not," returned Stephen, in a subdued tone. "If I do not admit you to all my thoughts, it is not because my motives will not bear scrutiny. Confidence might not always make you happy; and in this instance it would impose a terrible restraint upon your actions. There are some things to which you are not by nature fitted. Whatever happens, trust in Magnus Drake. Believe in him; look to him for consolation."

"To him I owe this home and your love. There never was such a man as Magnus Drake. He took care of me, he fed, he cherished me, and, last and best of all, he brought me to you."

Her hand stole quietly into Stephen Parkhurst's.

"Praise is his due. Your lips speak his praises well. Share your love between him and me. You belong to us. And now, my dear girl, leave me. I hear Magnus Drake at the door. We are about to discuss matters of great importance, and must be alone."

He led her gently to the door, and, with a paternal benediction, dismissed her. She went reluctantly, looking back, hoping to be recalled. She came back without being bidden, while he was closing the door. She caught his hand, and placing it reverently against her heart, said, almost in a whisper:

"Hear it beat. Do you think it would betray you? Do you think there is any secret it would not keep for you?"

"Good night," said Stephen, softly.

"You think me a child!" exclaimed Sibyl-

la, dropping his hand. "But perhaps I will prove to you that I have the firmness of a woman."

"Good night," said Stephen, yet more softly.

"You have iron nerves," continued Sibylla, almost ready to cry; "but I know that you are mentally disturbed. You are going to do something that taxes your strength, and I will find you out. I love to be near you, and you push me away. I am happy to sit at your feet, and you need no servant but me to go, and to come, and to nurse you, when you are ill."

"Go! Go!" gasped Stephen Parkhurst, evidently anxious to escape the penetrating eyes and searching love of Sibylla. "He has come. Go, good child! Go, darling!"

He closed the door hastily, and locked it, leaving her standing in the hall.

"One needs iron nerves!" he muttered. "That girl has nearly upset me. I love her, I do believe. Ah, Magnus! I am glad to see you. Be seated, Magnus. I have much to say, and desire your private ear."

Parkhurst dropped into the nearest chair, and, drawing his hand slowly across his brow, added:

"The drug is heavy here, on my brain. Villains! you shall suffer for this! In my own house, too! Conspirators in my own house! Draw your chair this way, Magnus. But first give me some brandy from that bottle. I am threatened with a narcotic stupor. Powerful stimulants will conquer it."

Magnus obeyed quietly; then, sitting down near Stephen, listened to him attentively; while the coals in the brazier glowed and sputtered under the grate.

CHAPTER III.

NORMAN DREW.

Stephen Parkhurst made a statement of facts. Magnus heard him with surprise; but did not interrupt him till he had finished. He expressed doubts of his friend's convictions; but Stephen met those doubts with evidence. He produced the glass from which he had drunk the brandy, and showed him the particles of morphine at the bottom. Nutmegs had been grated into the liquid, to disguise the taste of the drug; but in the mixed sediment the white grains were visible. As farther testimony, Stephen pointed to the bright coals on the hearth. An evil intention was too apparent to be ignored. Magnus pondered, and made no additional attempt to remove Stephen's impressions. It was manifest that Richard Parkhurst, with the complicity of John, the servant, had set a trap for Stephen to fall into. It was equally clear to the latter that this profligate half-brother had long waited for an opportunity to perpe-

trate a crime revolting to civilized communities, and shocking to the better instincts of humanity.

Stephen Parkhurst, fixing his eyes firmly upon Magnus Drake, told him of the plan of retaliation which he had resolved to pursue. Magnus heard him with unfeigned astonishment. He was startled at the scheme that Stephen laid before him. At first thought, it appeared utterly impracticable; but Parkhurst conquered his objections with steady and unhesitating skill.

"Your whole plot," said Magnus, "has for its starting-point the resemblance between Norman Drew and yourself. If that similitude be strong, and to the best of recollection it is, his body may successfully pass for yours. But the whole difficulty of this undertaking does not lie in this particular. There are other things to be thought of. Secrecy is to be observed in receiving the remains of Norman Drew. It must be known that the servants have retired to their beds; that there are no lurkers about the premises; that Richard Parkhurst is not in the immediate vicinity, keeping watch upon the house. The embarrassment of the case does not cease at the funeral of your suppositious body. The necessity of your keeping out of sight will be indispensable; for it seems to me that you cannot venture to take the name and character of Norman Drew. Richard is cunning; he is bad; and being cunning and bad, you will have reason to fear and shun him. And this, my dear Sir, is not all. You will have much to contend with. Natural affection will assert itself. The tears of Ursula and Sibylla will shake your resolution. I know that you have extraordinary strength; but the grief of your daughter will appeal so powerfully to your paternal instincts that you will bid me go to her and reveal the truth; not only to her, but to Sibylla, whom you tenderly love. It is impossible that those two girls should keep such a secret. They would betray themselves in a hundred ways; it would reach the ear of Richard, and then adieu to the development of your plot, and to the slimy twistings of your foe, which you expected to witness, yourself unseen."

"Your remarks are just," answered Stephen; "but the precautions which I shall take will, I trust, render your apprehensions uncalled for. What you say concerning Ursula is reasonable, and, with persons of ordinary firmness, would be conclusive. But with me it is different. I am not organized like many—I can adhere to a purpose; and I never put my hand to a work and leave it unfinished. Ursula will be shocked; but such shocks do not kill. Death seldom breaks the heart; and you shall watch over her, Magnus. The deception shall last less than

a year; and joy shall wipe the eyes of grief."

"Sorrow leaves scars upon the mind. Grief fades the cheek of beauty," said Magnus.

"Your objections are logical," responded Stephen; "but they do not change my purpose. We will make the startling trial, and the grave delusion shall be long or short, as justice or mercy demand."

Parkhurst looked at his watch. "It is the hour," he said. "The dust of Norman Drew should be near. Will you enter with me into this plot?"

"I might well have asked more time for reflection," replied Magnus Drake, seriously. "But as your decision is made, and your will firmly set, I will spare you further argument, and act as becomes a faithful friend. If persuasion could move you, I would persuade; but as persuasion persuades not, I drop opposition and fall into the current of your design. I have myself an unpaid score with Richard Parkhurst, and I would not be loth to settle it."

Magnus drew his usually mild brow into a frown, and traveled back somewhat on the road of time, to look at some of the old milestones he had passed. Beneath the dust and moss of the milestones he found a handwriting, and read it, and went on again, in a moment, with the interrupted thought.

"Human nature is not so good a thing that it forgives an injury. The mind is a vast storehouse, in which we garner up every real or imaginary wrong—where they lie in heaps to lumber the brain and weigh down the thoughts. We find revenge among the rubbish. He who treasures wrongs is not above revenge. What shall I do first, Stephen Parkhurst?"

"Go to the side-door and wait," answered the other, quickly. "Those who will bring the body, know where to bring it. Have it brought to this room, quietly. I will step into this closet, so as not to be seen by them. That done, pay them liberally, and let them go. I thank you, Magnus, because you will help me. I know what your help is. Your help is good."

Stephen stepped into the closet, and Magnus went out to execute the wishes of his friend. It was then ten minutes of twelve. Stephen remained in the closet till the clock struck twelve, when the opening of doors warned him that Magnus was returning. Amid the shuffling of feet, he heard something heavy placed upon the table. He shivered, and thought of Norman Drew as boy and man. There was a slight delay; then Drake let them out, locked the side-door, and came back. Parkhurst came out of the closet and saw a plain box upon the table.

"Was all quiet?" he asked.

"I heard nothing, and I saw no one stirring," answered Magnus Drake.

"I think we are safe, though Richard is cunning. Open the box, Magnus, and see how this piece of mortality looks," said Stephen.

"What shall I open it with?" inquired Magnus.

"I have an implement," said Stephen, going to the closet, opening a drawer, and taking from it a chisel and hammer.

"There must be no noise," he added, "We must modulate our voices to whispers. Take this instrument, Magnus, and work softly."

He handed him the chisel adding: "A hammer is too noisy. Luckily, there are no screws to remove; the cover is nailed."

Magnus commenced the work assigned him, with steady hands, and opened the box with but little noise. The features of Norman Drew were exposed to view. A momentary awe crept over Magnus. But no change appeared in the expression of Parkhurst. His manner was grave, but not timid. Firm assurance was in his eyes, though silent pity was in his heart. He looked at his foster-brother. Done with earth and done with care, he was peaceful enough. His mortality was at rest.

"What of the resemblance?" asked Parkhurst, in a suppressed tone.

"I think this face looks as yours might, were you brought to this melancholy state. There is a perceptible difference, however. This face is thinner than yours, and the nose is larger; yet the similitude is striking, and I believe will answer your strange purpose."

"This is asking much of you," observed Stephen, calmly contemplating his friend. "Pardon me if I ask too much. You need not touch this mortality, save to help me lift it from the box. Many people shudder at the touch of dead men; but I do not. Some of the living I cannot touch without a shiver; but when the soul has gone, that only which is harmless is left. Were all my enemies dead, I should have nothing to fear from them. Put your foe in the ground and his work is done. Richard wishes to bury me, knowing that buried people hold no mortgages, and that dead hands grasp no riches, however tight they may have clutched the dollar while living."

They removed the body from the box and laid it upon the table. The box was then placed upon the floor, and Stephen Parkhurst quietly exchanged garments with the dead man. He neglected nothing. He put his diamond ring upon Norman Drew's finger; pinned his diamond pin upon his shirt-bosom; put his gold watch into his vest

pocket, and the chain around his neck. This was a work of some time; but Stephen attended to it, deliberately, and with much exactitude of detail. The tuncial task was at length completed. The mold of Norman Drew was then laid upon the bed, and adjusted in a natural position, to give the idea, that death had come upon him unexpectedly, from an unexpected quarter. Magnus rendered what aid was needful, surprised at the self-possession of Parkhurst. When this ghastly toilet was finished, he could not but confess that the deception was well-nigh perfect.

"This thing terrifies me," he said, "for its success seems certain; and that will be giving Ursula a cup of bitterness. Is it right? Is it merciful?"

"I will not recede," answered Stephen. "What shall be done with this box? It should be broken up and burned; but that cannot be, for silence must prevail here."

"We will take it apart," said Magnus, "and the boards can be quietly conveyed to the cellar. 'Tis fortunate that the box is not painted; the pieces will not attract observation."

"The wine-cellar!—the wine-cellar!" exclaimed Stephen. "We will take it to the wine-cellar as it is. I have the key of the vault, which I never trust with the servants, save when I send them there. We will put straw in it, and fill it with bottles of claret. Its shape is ordinary, with the exception of its length, which is somewhat out of the common course. But we must risk something in whatever we do. Bear you the box, Magnus, and I will lead with a light. Or, stay; I will take one end, and carry the lamp also. A six-foot box is awkward to handle. Ah, Magnus! See what they put us in when we die; and it would seem that they begrudge this much. Why cannot they give us more room. Should they crowd our mortality so? O niggardly world! O small-hearted world! Look you, Magnus: Stephen Parkhurst dies. He leaves a brown-stone house full of rooms, full of luxury, and full of servants; and they take him from all this and put him in a painted box, so shallow that it touches his nose and his toes; so narrow that it cramps his shoulders and squeezes his elbows; and so disproportionate to the ambition of man that it offends the eye."

"But the wine-vaults?" interposed Magnus.

"Can we reach them unnoticed?" "We can," answered Parkhurst, with confidence. "The servants should not be in this quarter of the house at this hour. Besides, by a little arrangement of my own, I have that vinous repository somewhat under my own eye, and can reach it by a private staircase in the small hall of the side-door, which is

ingeniously masked by a closet. I am a temperate man, Magnus, but I am choice of my wines, and I care not always to ring for a menial when my stomach or my palate calls for a little old claret. There is nothing like being able to get things without ado, and without advertising your thirst in the kitchen. It shall leave this room by the same door it came. Come, Magnus."

"Always fertile in thought," responded the latter, taking up the box. Parkhurst opened the door—not the one by which Sibylla had retired—and with one hand steadied and lightened Drake's burden. They bore it to the narrow hall. Parkhurst opened a small door which revealed, instead of a closet, a flight of stone steps. They went down the steps with the box, and, depositing it in a convenient place, filled it with straw and bottles. They packed it hurriedly, and laid the cover loosely upon it, with the direction, in black paint, which had guided it to the brown-stone house, in full view. They looked at their work, at each other, and left the wine-vault.

CHAPTER IV. THE LISTENER.

Stephen Parkhurst had arranged the interior of his house agreeably to his own ideas of convenience. The compartments devoted specially to himself were upon the first floor; and comprised a sleeping-room, private reception-room, a small ante-room, and a library. These were separated by halls, not as wide as the main hall, but sufficiently ample to suit the proprietor's notions of comfort. For the sake of quiet, these exclusive apartments did not front upon the avenue, but were situated in the rear corner of the house, two of them looking out upon a cross-street, connecting the fashionable avenue with a less noted one running parallel with it. The side-door, by which Parkhurst had received the mortality of Norman Drew, opened upon this transverse street in an unpretentious way, with a narrow strip of green and the iron fence between, with its guarding but ever-locked gate. This gate had been left unlocked on the night to which attention has been drawn. The room, in which the foregoing scenes transpired, was Stephen's sleeping-apartment, and was in the southwest corner of the brown-stone house. East of it was the library, and directly between these two and the main hall were the ante-room and the reception-room.

When Parkhurst closed the door upon Sibylla Joy, she was left standing in the hall, between his reception-room and his sleeping-apartment. There was no light there, save what crept in from the main hall, where a single burner had been left burning.

Sibylla had curiosity, but it was not of a malicious and obtruding character. She was above the meanness of eavesdropping. She would have shrunk with repugnance from taking a single step to steal the confidential words of another; but while she stood there in the obscurity, she had troubled and anxious thoughts concerning Stephen Parkhurst, which inspired her with an inquisitiveness far different from mousing curiosity and common cunning. She had noticed, closely, the deportment of her guardian, and all that was prophetic in her pure young soul assured her that matters were not flowing in their accustomed channel, and that something out of the ordinary course was about to happen. His seriousness, his impenetrability, and the sending for Magnus Drake at such an hour with the observance of so much secrecy, awakened startling suspicions. Had Stephen Parkhurst become disgusted with the world? Had he seen enough of life and was he preparing to look at the other side of the picture? It was possible. Such frightful things often happened. Perhaps her generous protector was not beyond temptation. Temptation is liable to take the best of persons and conquer them. Surmises like these disturbed Sibylla and shaped her actions. She felt an irrepressible desire to listen, and watch in some manner the conduct of Stephen Parkhurst. She knew that it was meant to listen; that it was meant to watch; but she loved him who had given her home and happiness; and her love held her spellbound near the door. She sat down upon the floor, or rather knelt upon one knee, and leaned her head against the door. She heard Parkhurst's voice; but it was low and the words were indistinguishable. Magnus Drake said but little. Now and then he made a brief reply, but his utterances were also indistinct. She remained motionless till her limbs ached, but was no wiser for her pains. Magnus went out after a time. The going out was evident enough. She did not think he would come back; but by and by he returned. What surprised her most was that he did not come alone; she judged by the shuffling of feet that at least two persons were with him. That mystified her; nor did the mystery grow less as the moments went on. Those who entered with Magnus departed; her hearing told her that. Why did they move softly in Stephen's room? Why did they speak in suppressed voices or in whispers?

A new sound reached her attentive ears. It was a crepitating, rending noise, like drawing nails cautiously, or prying against something that offered strong resistance, and yielded with creakings and complainings. Sibylla's heart beat strangely. She endeavored to look through the keyhole; but the key standing

vertically in the lock, filled it and baffled her curiosity. She arose, and glided along the hall till she reached the next, which ran at right angles to it, into the main hall in one direction, and to the side-door in the other. She paused at the corner of the mysterious room. It was well that she stopped there, for the side-door of Stephen's room opened, almost immediately. She shrank back out of sight. Parkhurst and Drake were carrying the box to the wine-vault. Sibylla was so timid and so much agitated that she did not look after them, and they passed through the hall-door unseen by her. Her heart fluttered, her lips trembled, and her respiration was painfully quickened. She wished to glance into that apartment; one hurried cast of the eye would be enough. The opportunity was favorable; it asked but a firm foot and purpose. She was turning to obey this impulse, when she observed that more light suddenly streamed in the main hall. She instantly remembered that Stephen Parkhurst had spoken of secrecy. He had certainly manifested a strong desire to be free from interruption. She considered it her duty to guard him from intrusion, whatever he was doing. Would he do wrong? Her love said "No". Standing a little back, and gathering her skirts closely about her, she kept watch of the passage, and soon heard the creaking of shoes; a very slight and suppressed creaking. A face presently pushed into view; a stealthy and anxious face; a face that had expectation and terror in it; a face that had guilt in it. Sibylla recognized those features at once. It was John Jerome, the servant that had brought Stephen the hot brandy and water. His name was John Jerome Douglas; but they called him John Jerome. The Douglas had been dropped so long that he had nearly forgotten it. He had come to the conclusion that two names would call him through life as well as three.

There was only one thing the matter with John Jerome; he was wicked. He would have been a good man, had he not been wicked; but wickedness got a side-lock upon him, and gave him a heavy fall, from which he never recovered. John Jerome never wrestled with sin after that fall. He was up for the highest bidder, and down for the lowest offices. His deeds had found a record upon his face. It was a countenance smothered with evil thoughts. Sibylla did not like John Jerome. Her dislike dated from the moment that he set foot within the portals of the house. It appeared to her that if God were going to make a hypocrite, he would make him in the shape of John Jerome. Hypocrisy is a vile thing; so vile that all the world is fond of it, and runs after it, and practices it.

Sibylla had an instinctive fear of him. Her communications with him had been limited to simple commands, and no more of them than needful. He put restraint upon himself in her presence, and practiced dissimulation; but the girl was not deceived. She saw through the flimsy veil of respect, and distrusted him still.

Seeing that face, at that hour, with its cunning and stealthiness, alarmed her. Something was afoot. The house was not going on in its usual orderly way. Why should he steal into the hall on tiptoe? There was an evident purpose of watchfulness in his manner. Sibylla resolved that he should come no nearer. She thrust her arm forward, and waved it slowly up and down. Her arm and hand looked ghastly white in the pale spectral light of the hall. John Jerome saw the hand, thought of Belshazzar, and fled.

She heard him hurrying along the hall toward the servants' quarter. She ran after him, and reached the corner in time to see his back as he passed through the door. Satisfied that this spy upon the actions of her guardian had gone, her feelings of curiosity returned and drew her footsteps back. She glided, shivering, to the door through which Stephen and Magnus had borne the box; but lacked courage to turn the key and look in. She put forth her hand several times, and her resolution as often failed. She asked her conscience, if she had a right to satisfy her inquisitiveness in such a manner. To hover around interdicted spots; to lurk at keyholes; to lie in wait at unexpected places; to play the spy upon the actions of one she loved, were things in many respects repulsive to her nature. Hence her nervous flutterings and her faltering fears.

She grasped the key and turned it with a spasmodic motion. Magnus, having passed last, had turned the key and left it in the lock. Stephen would have put the key in his pocket, being a man particular in details.

Sibylla Joy pushed open the door the width of her face, and uplifted her eyes. She saw nothing. Yes, she saw something—the foot of Stephen's bed—and the foot of a man. She was not certain about the latter; for her trepidations obscured her sight, and her haste baffled herself. She durst not look again; for she heard Stephen and Magnus returning. She closed the door, locked it, and fitted back to the other hall, where she paused, determined to put the personality of the two persons beyond doubt, by ocular evidence. She peered around the corner, and doubt vanished; she saw Stephen unlocking the door and Magnus behind him. Sibylla had not in the least lessened the mystery; on the contrary, she magnified it.

and caused it to assume vast proportions. It was a simple concealment at first; it was now a bewilderment. She flew to her first ambush, and tried to hear something that would guide her mind and shape her thoughts, or at least direct them toward a given point. Thus far, her surmises had received no impulse to push them on to certainty. She learned but little by her renewed vigil. She heard the name of Richard Parkhurst mentioned several times; but its connection with the conversation entirely eluded her. She finally retired to her chamber, disappointed, harassed by vague apprehensions, and followed by gloomy forebodings.

CHAPTER V.

DUKE MARMADUKE.

Richard Parkhurst reached his lodgings at eleven o'clock. He lived on a street more noted for its mysteries than its morals. His lodgings were more obscure than elegant, but much in harmony with his life and habits. Richard had nobody to take care of but himself. Had he had any one to take care of but himself, that boy or girl, man or woman, would have been poorly cared for. He could not take care of himself; at least, he had not. He had neither fallen into the waver nor into the fire, but he had fallen into evil company and into evil ways. Neither had he starved to death nor gone naked; but he had fed his spul on husks, and covered it with rags. In some manner, Richard had been born wrong and gone wrong; Richard's nature was inverted, either through fault of Fate or fault of his own. His moral sight saw things upside down, and after a while he came to think that that was the way for them to be. He was very acid inside, was Richard; and he liked the world as little as it liked him. He considered the world a miserable concern. Human creatures, in his ethics, were ravenous beasts, fighting for the crumbs of life, and tearing each other cruelly. He mollified his mangled conscience by pouring into it the oil of this sophistry. He affirmed that there was no difference in mankind. One was as good as another; and none better than himself. They were scrambling for existence, and he was scrambling too. Some whined, canted, and driveled, while they were scrambling; but he, scorning hypocrisy, snarled and snapped at the hands or feet that annoyed him. He had snapped and snarled so much, that a furrow was drawn obliquely across each cheek, and his brow was knitted into a chronic frown. Cunning was his counselor, hypocrisy his helper. In his daily walks he met no one whom he would not as soon have out of the world as in it. To eat, to drink, and to wear, were to

him the chief ends of existence. He aspired, however, to good eating, good drinking, and good wearing, without a single scruple respecting the methods of attainment. He had nothing to lose; millions to gain. He had a strong intellect, badly willed. An arant schemer was Richard. He lived, moved, and had his being among broken plots and pyramids of abortive projects. Artifice and shift, cabal and alternative, had a fostering parent in Richard. They brooded in his brain, and perched nightly among his fancies.

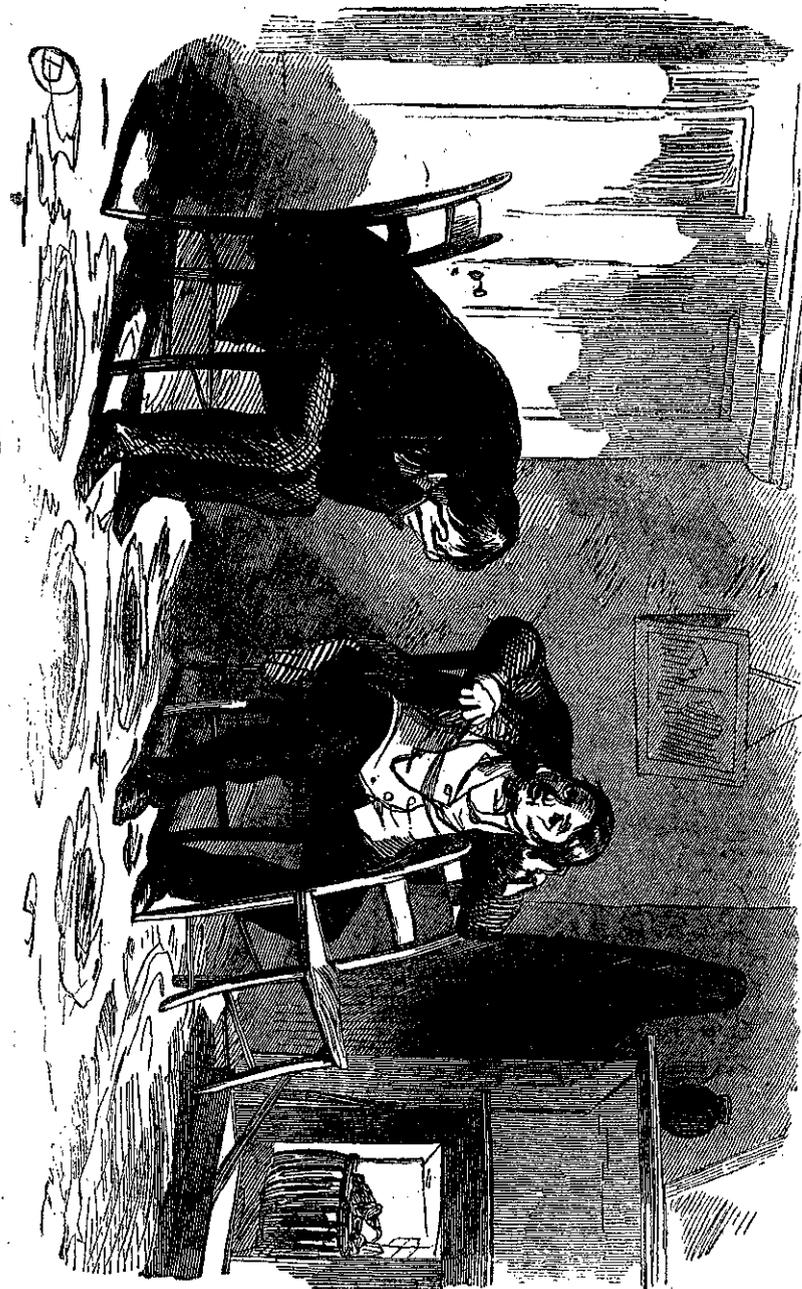
Richard, while fumbling for his nightkey, saw a light streaming through the closed blinds, and knew very well who was within. It was his friend, his familiar spirit, his prompter, his suggestive Satan, Duke Marmaduke.

This man came and went at his own pleasure. Sometimes he remained days and weeks with Richard; then disappeared without warning, and returned without notice. His flittings were eccentric, and as numerous as eccentric. He had a key to Richard's lair, and could go in and out at will.

Duke Marmaduke was an Englishman. He often boasted of his blood; but of that the author knows nothing, and cares less; being more interested in his actions than in his fluids.

Whatever had been his trials, sufferings, and temptations, they had not affected his appetite; he had accumulated more fat than grace; and his stomach was larger than his charities. His digestive arrangements were of the most ample description, and had assumed such rotund dimensions as to push him backward, and give his figure a palpable strut; not so much indicative of pride as of paunch. Marmaduke had short fleshy legs, short fleshy arms, and short fat hands. His shortness did not stop with the members mentioned; he had a short neck set upon broad shoulders. It was thick and fat, and his throat was white. His skin was fair, his cheeks puffed and rosy; his lips, red, full, and sensual, with white but irregular teeth showing through them. He had what are vulgarly called "cat-teeth" in the angles of his upper jaw, which, being long and sharp, gave him the appearance of a carnivorous animal. His forehead was arched like a bent bow, and not very high. This forehead, set upon his round cheeks, made his face look like a full moon, ruddy and beaming. His hair, which was light and thin, was parted in the middle with much care. His eyebrows were a shade darker than his hair. Marmaduke's eyes were small and round, and of an indescribable gray. They shone in the dark like a cat's. He sometimes wore spectacles with tortoise-shell bows, the glasses of

THE SAD ROGUE AND THE JOLLY RASCAL.



which were of peculiar construction. When he played a friendly game of cards, for a stake large or small, at a certain fashionable gaming-house, he invariably wore those tortoise-shell helps. They rode jauntily on his blushing nose. There was a mystery about those glasses.

In his shirtbosom there was a flaming carbuncle of large size. It was a wonderful carbuncle. It was full of rosy light. Sometimes its quenchless fires looked like blood. It flamed into Richard's eyes when he was talking with Marmaduke. It had the power of a charm for Richard. It was a sleepless eye that winked and blinked at him. He had dreamed of that carbuncle when his nights were troubled, and his slumbers were haunted.

On the fat little finger of his fat right hand flashed a large diamond, which, like its owner, had its fittings and disappearances, its goings and its comings. It darted white rays at Richard, and excited his envy; but it had not such a hold upon his imagination as the carbuncle. It is doubtful if he would have touched the latter; but the diamond would have tempted him sorely, had it been in his way. There was a great deal of life in that gem, as Richard defined life. His life was appetite, nourishment, warmth, shelter.

Richard Parkhurst entered with downcast look and reticent air. He nodded coldly to Duke Marmaduke, and threw himself into the most convenient chair. It needed little penetration to see that Richard was not in a social mood.

His friend sat by a grate in which some coals were smouldering—his feet resting upon the back of a chair in an easy manner. He was smoking a fine cigar, with an acute appreciation of its flavor. While the smoke curled lazily from his red lips, he watched the countenance of Richard; and after he had silently fathomed his sullen waters, remarked:

"You've brought home that miserable face again, Richard. I hate a miserable face. Look at my face. My face isn't miserable, is it?"

"It never will be," answered Richard, complainingly.

"No, it won't!" said Duke, with emphasis. "Why won't it? Because I won't let it. I was made to keep above the tide, and I mean to keep above it. My head is like a cork; you may push it down as much as you've a mind to, and it would bob up again. Keep fat, Richard, keep fat. A lean man never'll do anything in this world. A lean man is like a hungry dog, halting, and sneaking, and lurking around backyards, with guilty eyes and unsettled look; afraid of his own shadow, and ready to run at the creaking of a door

or the fall of a foot. Eschew leanness, Richard."

"Give me good cheer," then, muttered Parkhurst. "With good eating and good drinking I might grow fat, I suppose. Swine and Englishmen grow fat with good eating and good housing."

"It's the order of nature," returned Duke, serenely. "Go thou and do likewise. If the meanest animal can grow fat, why not man, with his voracious appetite and his vast power of digestion?"

He paused; then added:

"You're anxious, Parkhurst. What have you been doing?"

"Following bad counsel," replied Richard.

"Then you have been at work, which is not my counsel. I've always advised you not to work, Richard. Work is not for gentlemen, but for blockheads. I have never done a day's work, and I shan't have that to think of when I come to die. I told you how to be rich without work, long ago. The way was open before you. You had only to follow your nose to run into a fortune."

"I shouldn't wonder if it run my neck into a halter," said Richard. "With your hints and your promptings, your philosophy and your John Jerome I shall be hanged at last."

"Dear boy!" murmured Marmaduke, blandly. "Poor Richard is a lamb! May his wool never go to the shears!"

"The air was chilly, and the room was damp," quoth Richard, musingly.

"Go on, my son," said Duke, paternally, with an encouraging gesture.

By this time Parkhurst had fixed his eyes upon the carbuncle, and its red flame drew him on.

"Listen, Duke. I have been at Stephen Parkhurst's house. He had just returned from a journey. He received me coldly; but perhaps with as much graciousness as I had reason to expect."

He stopped. The carbuncle became the color of blood.

"The air was chilly and the room was damp," he repeated. "Stephen being cold, I gave him charcoal."

"Charcoal!" said Duke, nodding.

"Stephen being cold, I gave him hot brandy," resumed Richard.

Duke Marmaduke took his feet from the back of the chair, drew it to him, rested the elbow of his left arm upon it, removed the cigar from his mouth, and looked earnestly at Richard.

"Pause there," he said, shaking his dumpy finger at Parkhurst. "Don't tell all; leave something to my understanding. You ordered a pan of charcoal to warm your brother. But no man will sit and snuff charcoal till he dies—especially one who will benefit others

by his death. We cannot expect such goodness on earth. There is a point, Richard, where benevolence must stop. Stephen not being likely, in a normal condition, to end his life in smoke, you gave him brandy and water with a drug in it. The drug would deplete his senses, and the charcoal would do the rest. To cheat his watchfulness is to cheat him of life.

"A shrewd guess. Always a wizard; always suspecting; always tracking mischief. What do you think of it, Marmaduke?"

"I will tell you to-morrow," answered the other, shrugging his shoulders.

"To-morrow?" exclaimed Richard. "It will be a long to-morrow, and a long to-night. There never will be such a night and morning."

"Spare sentiment, Richard. Keep your head atop of the water, and spare us sentiment. Lean men are apt to moralize."

"The whole thing," said Richard Parkhurst, "was unpremeditated. The opportunity came unasked, unexpected, though not unsought. I seized upon a thought and acted upon it at once."

"Did he look at you?" asked Duke, quietly.

"Strangely, now and then. Stephen always had a way of making me shiver. He told me the plain truth, too, and it cut like a knife. I hate him for his cold, biting sarcasm."

The carbuncle seemed to wink, approvingly, at Richard. He mentally named it the devil's eye.

"Did he drink the brandy?" inquired Duke Marmaduke.

"To the last drops," replied Richard.

"What concealed the taste?"

"It was flavored with nutmeg, and was sweet with sugar."

"And John Jerome was in the secret?"

"He knows what he is there for," quoth Richard, frowning.

"An accomplice is a bad thing," observed Duke, thoughtfully. "I think your plot will fail, Richard. The thought itself was shrewd enough, and was no doubt suggested by your demon."

"My demon was here with the carbuncle," said Richard, nodding at the flaming stone.

"The chances are against your drug, and against your charcoal," added Duke Marmaduke. "Your half-brother was not born a fool. A penetrating devil walks at his elbow and inspires him with cunning. I have watched Stephen Parkhurst somewhat. Let us suppose, however, that the attempt will be successful. You will be pretty much where you are now. There will be a princess between you and the throne. Your relative has a daughter. The girl has no stomach for charcoal, perhaps. She may have a childish fancy to live, to count some of her father's

hundreds of thousands. That would be awkward, Richard."

Marmaduke threw the stump of his cigar into the grate, and glanced at Parkhurst, to see what his face was expressing.

"Time enough to think of that," he answered, with impatience. "I have some crude notions of my own; but if I fail in expedient, I'll ask a fat devil to help me."

"Better come to me," said Duke, smiling.

"I have been to you too much," responded Parkhurst, shutting his eyes, to shut out the red glow of the carbuncle. "I used to read Milton when I was a boy. You make me think of the toad that whispered in the ear of Eve; it was about an apple, I believe. An apple dreadful discord made. I hate fruit. Cut down all apple-trees, Duke, and there'll be no more of that."

"You are a tree, yourself, Dick; a mean, shriveled tree. Your foliage is dead; your sap is cold; your bark is withered, and you bear no fruit. I lie; you do bear fruit; but it is not fruit meet for repentance. Ah, Richard! You will be cut down soon. You have numbered the garden of Nature a long time. I have dug about you; I have watered your roots with my tears. Richard, I have exhausted the arts of horticulture in vain. With all my scraping and trimming, you do not thrive. There is a dry-rot in you, Richard, that the devil cannot cure."

The kind-hearted gentleman was patriarchal in his tenderness. Condescending benediction beamed on his rufescent cheeks. His fresh lips smiled in soft mockery of Richard. He was like the velvet paw of puss when she draws in the pointed claws and pushes it out gracefully for a game of catch.

"How can you be so calm and content, when I am on the rack of suspense?" exclaimed Richard. "You provoke me with your serenity! Think of the situation—realize it if you can. I have contemplated this deed for a long time; but have not felt its horrors till now. I am sweating with secret dread, and you sit and show your white teeth at me. Think of the blistering coals; the escaping gases; the subtle, penetrating invader of the citadel of existence, pouring in at every gate of life to make death. Picture him alone, standing by his bedside, growing strangely sleepy. He yawns, he yawns, he steals a stupor; he makes a feeble attempt to throw off his dressing-gown; but his falling fingers fall faltering to his side, and, staggering forward, he sinks supinely upon his couch. All things swim and swirl before his sight. Sense, and sound, and sight go out together. Pallidness grows upon his cheeks, and deadly dews gather upon his brow. His chin drops, his respiration becomes difficult, and rattles in his throat. He inhales death.

That which warms him kills him. His pulses sink, his blood grows thick, his heart-throbs cease, and so the machine runs down; and there is no more sleeping and waking."

Richard broke from the chair of the carbuncle, and looked wildly at Duke.

"Pretty, upon my soul. Go on, Dickard."

Parkhurst dropped his face into his hands; he cursed his luck, the world, and everybody that lived in it.

"You might have gone further, Richard," added Duke. "You might have painted the surprise in the morning; the consternation; the hurry-skurry of feet; the hurly-burly; the ferment; the tumult; the riot; the rum-pus; the vortex; the whirlpool; the topsyturvy; the babel within. Then come Ursula and Sibylla. Then come weeping and wailing; screeching and screaming; whining and whimpering; sobbing and sighing; muttering and murmuring. Then appears a funeral, with hearse and horses; coaches and carriages; drapery and crapery; snivelling and driveling; with priestly monodies on the dead; jeremiads, elegies, and dirges; and a solemn laudation of virtues which he never had. That's the way it goes, Richard. Put six feet of earth on a sinner, and he becomes a saint. Take your family-parson, and set him upon the parish-rostrum, with a book in his hand, over your cold corpus, and he'll whip you up to heaven in the twinkling of an eye; especially if you've paid your church-tithes promptly and without grumbling. I see one man following that funeral, whose face is bent with voiceless woe. It is a thin, lean man, rather shabbily dressed, and half-brother to the deceased. I pity that man. He is full of tears and fears. His cheeks have such a water-shed, that he nearly washes his relative out of the grave where they have laid him. That sorrowful creature looks like you, Richard."

It is impossible to describe the insinuating sweetness of Marmaduke's tone. The words flowed from his smiling lips like honey; while his eyes shone on Richard benevolently.

"Mocking devil!" murmured Richard. "I'm a villain—a foul villain; but I don't scoff at everything. I can do something besides smile. I can be serious when there is occasion. You have no conscience. Imagine yourself standing in these boots."

Richard thrust out his feet.

"I never stand in patched boots," said Duke. "Now, mark me well, Richard. You see that I am holding up my finger. Now look straight at me till I drop my finger. I have heard you patiently. I hear every one patiently that chooses to wag his tongue. Coolness and self-government are the essentials of success. If I am a villain, I am a

belma and self-guided villain. I mind my calm, and sit on an even keel. My countenance is smooth and full, with the florid blush of health and content upon it. I have a good appetite and a good digestion. I never work. I have never soiled my hands with the dirt of this earth—they're as fair and plump as a woman's. I conceal my thoughts, and I conceal my employment. I live by my wits, as a gentleman should live. I know that I must take care of myself. I have given up the idea of legacies and crops of gold. I'm a manipulator. I manipulate the fools of this world, till their money passes from their pockets into mine. Sometimes it is difficult—sometimes it is easy; but, at the hardest pinch, I refuse to give up and die. You are of a different order. I am a sweet villain; you are a sour villain—in fact, a cynical, crabbed, complaining, corroding, contemptible, careworn villain. You are truculent, disagreeable, malevolent, evil-minded, disobliging, grim, churlish, surly, and unforgiving. You are cold-hearted, but not cool-headed. You are a ruffian, a savage, a misanthropic monster. You make people hate you by your rudeness. You snap and snarl before you are hurt; and you mistake fear for remorse, and starvation for repentance. Your flashes of conscience are like heat-lightning, without report and of brief duration. I do not think I ever found so uncomfortable a knave as you are, Richard."

By this time, Richard was under the eye of the carbuncle again. He listened to Marmaduke with a lowering expression and occasional gleams of fierceness.

"I get along with you after a fashion," continued Duke. "I have given you advice and borne your ill-temper. I have helped you much, first and last. I shall expect snug quarters in the brown-stone house, Richard. Don't prove ungrateful. When your courage halted, I pricked it on. When you were hungry, I threw you such crusts as I had. You've been troubled by nobody's friendship but mine. Try to be clever. I have lent you John Jerome—make much of him. You will end in Macbeth if you have courage enough; but drop his fancies when the deed is done. Do not catch a diseased mind from murder. I would not live in the brown-stone house with a moping, muttering, mistrustful man who, through fear of justice, leads a life of misery. This ends my sermon. When you are ready, I will tell you what to do with Ursula."

He settled back leisurely in his seat, stretched his legs across the other chair, and shut his eyes peacefully. He looked like a man with a good conscience. It was a very easy, oily conscience, and sin slipped over it

with wonderful facility, leaving neither track, stain, nor scar, visible to the common eye.

"Ursula!" repeated Richard. That little word made him muse. That was a question which troubled him. Ursula walked continually before his imagination. She gave him fear and perplexity. Should the brasier of charcoal do its office upon Stephen Parkhurst, his daughter would be left to destroy the fruits of the first crime, and lead him to the perpetration of another, unnatural and villainous. He plunged into a horrible bath of metaphysics. He tried to decide which was the worst—the sending of a young girl to heaven, or of an old man to a doubtful place. He floundered about in this black pool of fancies; and if for a moment during that long night he fell into a doze, he dreamed of charcoal.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BROWN-STONE HOUSE.

There was consternation at the brown-stone house. Stephen Parkhurst was found dead in his bed. The room was in disorder. There was a brasier with some ashes in it upon the hearth. Near the brasier was Stephen's easy-chair. Stephen was lying partly upon his side, dressed as he had been the previous day. His face was pale—his expression peaceful. He had not struggled much with the conqueror of men, but sunk quietly into the arms of death. There was a strong smell of carbon in the room. The evidences of self-destruction were so apparent that an inquest was thought unnecessary. The servants of the house wagged their heads, and in low tones gave their verdict of self-murder. Fifth avenue said the same. New York repeated it; and thus it went out into the world. By some, it was thought strange that a man with so much money should take a carbonic bath, and feel it for his interest to leave his principal behind, while others wondered that he had not killed himself before, to shirk looking after so much property. Very poor and very rich people have much trouble, and get out of it by exchanging heat for cold, animation for inanimation, certainty for uncertainty, the light of the sun for the darkness of the grave, soundness for rottenness. Modern inventions furnish ready means of eternal exit. Death is a plunge into the ground. The suppositious Stephen went down among the clouds; and there was lamentation at the brown-stone house.

Richard Parkhurst was very friendly. He heard the news early in the morning, and was soon at the scene of the visitation. He assumed authority at once, and, in the absence of Magnus Drake, took Stephen's keys from his pocket, unlocked his secretary,

opened a private drawer, and, to forestall contingencies, abstracted his relative's last will and testament, and put it into his pocket. This accomplished, he went into subdued melancholy, and bore up very well under his bereavement.

Sibylla troubled him. Her genuine grief was an accusation of his crime. She shrank from him, too, and that displeased him and gave him uneasiness. Trifles disturbed him. His fears were easily awakened. It was plain to see that she avoided him. More than once, he saw her looking at the body with a strange expression, which, with all his cunning, he could not understand. He made up his mind that she distrusted him. A guilty person has no appetite for distrust. The greater the crime, the less he cares to have it suspected. Suspicion is a seed that grows rapidly when it begins to germinate. He did not wish that prolific seed to sprout at the brown-stone house.

When Ursula came, Richard quaked. Sibylla had given him trouble enough, and he was tired of the tears which he had caused to flow. Ursula was lovely even in her grief. Richard slunk away out of sight. He did not feel happy. He was full of evil expectations; but they brought small consolation for the wickedness he had done and the risk he had run. His work was not completed but commenced. A winding, dangerous road was before him, which he had chosen to walk in. He had fears of consequences, but no scruples. His dread of discovery was greater than remorse.

Duke Marmaduke was his counselor. That a crime had been committed, he affected to be ignorant, and would not permit Richard to make a plain avowal in his presence. Marmaduke wished to be innocent, of all knowledge of Stephen's decease and its cause. He was too fastidious in his notions and too cautious in his character to share, without hypocrisy, Richard's secret. The instigator and encourager of the suppositious murder, and at heart the accomplice of Richard, with subtle policy chose to wear a veil of innocence, and to ignore studiously what had been done. He smoked his cigar, watched Richard's countenance, and adroitly directed his movements. Marmaduke managed to be at the funeral without the complicity of Richard, who was surprised and startled at seeing him. He did not notice Richard; but, during the few moments that he remained in sight, kept his face turned toward the two principal mourners, Ursula and Sibylla. The half-brother felt uneasy. The presence of this man worried him. He was there to observe the two girls; to study their characters; to draw conclusions of each. He was silently obtaining that wisdom

which is not profitable unto righteousness. He withdrew quietly, and, when Richard again looked for him, he was not to be seen.

Magnus Drake was very useful and very calm. The grief of the two girls disturbed him now and then; but he quickly recovered his equanimity. His deportment toward them was paternal. It was evident to Richard that they relied on him for support and moral strength. He foresaw a struggle with Stephen Parkhurst's man of business. He perceived in him a most formidable combatant who would yield the battle-ground unwillingly, fighting as he retreated.

Richard returned to his lodgings in deep thought, fully determined to finish what he had begun. A feverish ambition worked within him. He did not feel as he had felt before the crime. His life was unnatural, and he slept less soundly. Duke Marmaduke, however, was unchanged. He had a good appetite; he was sleek and unctuous, and kept his head above the tide.

CHAPTER VII.

LUCRETIA FULLER.

Miss Lucretia Fuller, borne onward by the current of time, had shot beyond her youthful years, and was getting into the numerals that are particularly odious to women. She was housekeeper at the brown-stone house. She was thin in person, rather above the ordinary standard height, with sharply-defined features; gray, speculative eyes; firm, thin lips, and a quick, watchful expression. Thus far, she had traversed the road of life alone. For reasons of her own, she had leaned upon no male arm for support. She had either not been pleased with the beaux, or the beaux had not been pleased with her. Miss Fuller was not without ambition. She aspired to ease and affluence. She was proud, and desired wealth because it would gratify her pride. She scorned common people and the common lot of humanity. She was waiting for some rich gentleman to fall, like a ripe apple, at her feet—to be devoured. She was a lurker, on the highway of life, biding her time, and lying low amidst the concealments of her character.

She had schemed for Stephen Parkhurst; but that shrewd person had walked, untrapped, over her snares. He either did not see her purpose, or did not wish to see it. His apparent decease opened a new field of ambition. Lucretia and Richard grew friendly. They met often, and their acquaintance ripened into intimacy. Whatever might have been her age, she was not so old as to have lost her appetite for flattery, and Richard did not neglect to supply that pleasant pabulum whenever it could be skillfully administered.

They presently fell to plotting. Fuller thought she could use Richard, and Richard thought he could use Fuller. Both saw something glittering in the distance, and looked forward with expectant and greedy eyes. They groped after each other in the intricate windings of their own natures. They soon touched hands.

"Have you noticed the grief of Ursula?" asked Richard, one day when they had come to understand each other.

"I have noticed both her grief and her deportment," answered Lucretia, mysteriously. "You are a woman of observation," added Richard, bowing as if he revered her intellect.

"There are things which one cannot help seeing," said Miss Fuller.

"Poor Ursula!" sighed Richard. "I had hoped that this malady would not appear. But it is hereditary, and grief develops it. What shall we call it?"

Richard spoke softly, and leaned toward Miss Fuller, with some anxiety of expression. "There is but one name for it," responded the housekeeper, without hesitation. "And that name is insanity."

"It runs in the family," said Richard, thoughtfully. "Madness is in the blood of the Parkhursts. It is a sad, a serious thought. To be out of one's self is to be in misery."

"To be out of one's self is to be in a mad-house," answered Lucretia Fuller, in a calm straight-onward manner.

Richard thrilled from his head to his toes. "It is well that we have met," he said, slowly, looking at her searchingly. "There is sometimes great gain in making common stock of wit and invention. Shall we walk on together?"

There was something peculiar in Richard's tone. Lucretia Fuller shrugged her shoulders, and laughed ironically.

"Walk on together!" she repeated. "Whither shall we walk? There are many paths in this world, Richard Parkhurst. Some are straight, some are crooked. Some are for one to walk in, some are for two or more. I would not like to be crowded upon the way. I would have a path wide enough to feel free and easy in."

"Mutual advantages make mutual ties," observed Richard. "We help each other to help ourselves. It is the universal bond. It is the only brotherhood that exists."

"A good thought for a bad man," answered Lucretia. "I know not that all are as you say, but I know that some are. I am ready to scheme, when scheming promises adequate benefits. I see to what point you are drifting. If I drift with you I shall expect something. I cannot afford to drift idly to sea. I am not one to shut my eyes, to be deluded and to be

trifled with. I am not the good-natured creature to plot for naught. Your will, Richard Parkhurst, shall not govern my will, unless I will it. I acknowledge no master in finesse and cabal. You cannot use me for the attainment of your ends, and then shirk me because you have done with me and there is no more to do. You will do well to understand me at the start. You have a master, but I have none."

"A master?" repeated Richard, frowning. "Name him."

Lucretia Fuller smiled, and said:

"Duke Marmaduke," deliberately.

Richard changed color, and gazed at Lucretia with unfeigned surprise. She had made an announcement that startled him. He thought of the charcoal vapor-bath, and of Stephen, dead in his bed. Were this woman's suspicions on the alert? He looked at her, steadily, to get an answer from her quiet face; but Miss Fuller's face was not in the habit of answering questions. She knew how to control her facial muscles.

"Such a man I know," said Richard, moodily; "but he goes his way, and I go mine. I know that such a man lives; but how he lives is more than I know. Nor does it disturb me, that I know no more than I know—"

"You cannot confuse me with your 'know' and your 'don't know,'" replied Lucretia Fuller. "I know that you know less of what you don't know, than you do of what you do know. Knowing that is knowing what I know; and so no more of that. I have seen you with Duke Marmaduke, and I marked you well. His manner to you was confident, and somewhat more than assured; while yours to him was abject, and somewhat less than loving. That there is something between you that is to be kept in your mutual discretion, is so palpable to me that I shall not ask you to say either yes or no to it. I dare say, it may be nothing more than common strategy for bread and shelter, or the common fellowship of necessity, growing out of the instinct to eat and live. Your present terror confirms my opinion, and tells me where to look for an arch-contriver, a siren designer. Do not take the trouble to acquit or convict yourself, for I am not sitting in judgment upon your actions."

"This woman," muttered Richard, "should be Mrs. Duke Marmaduke."

He began to fear that he would not be evenly matched with Lucretia Fuller. In art she would certainly claim supremacy. He evidently could not use her, and cajole her afterward. Once with him, in his cabal, she was to be conciliated, and feared ever after. But he had gone too far to recede. He smiled at Lucretia approvingly, and said:

"We shall get along together. You take common-sense views of things, and I do like common sense in women."

"I know who stands in your way," resumed Lucretia, without minding his compliment. "When people stand in our way, we wish them to stand out of it. One would rather be rich than poor. It is natural; it is the common aspiration of man. Of course you mean to be honest; but the mental malady of Ursula may result to your advantage, and give you authority here. It is a pity that the dear child already evinces the symptoms of madness. The predisposition is seen in many ways—in her excessive grief in her morbid melancholy, in her fits of distraction, in the wildness of her eyes, and in the incoherency of her speech."

"It is to me most evident," replied Richard, nodding his head; but avoiding the eyes of Lucretia.

"She complains of her head," resumed the latter, in a low tone. "She looks without seeing."

"And sees without looking," added Richard, anxious to come quickly to the support of his new friend.

"Insanity is a study," said Lucretia. "My father was insane twenty years. He was confined in a room without fire, and fought the devil all the time. My sister was insane from grief, and went about muttering, and fitful in moods; now laughing at some wild fancy; now moping in morbid abstraction; now staring at the wall; now tracing figures in the air; now sinking into a corner, like a heap of rags, gibbering and moaning."

"Fearful state!" murmured Richard. "You know but too well the premonitory symptoms. I am glad that I am not alone in my suspicions of Ursula. As her only relative, I must have a care of her. I hardly believe in madhouses. In one way and another, I have received the impression that they are lumbags; and that doctor, keeper, and attendant, are persons open to bribery and corruption."

"Lunatic asylums are for public and private convenience," remarked Lucretia, knowingly. "Put one into an asylum, and, if you have money enough, that person is as good as dead. Back up your alleged lunacy with ready payment, with a sidelong glance, and a wink, and the patient's malady will never mend. Poor people cannot do much with insanity; it gets kicked out of doors by the lunatic board. Those that minister to minds diseased, must of necessity be paid. Doctors have wives and children who must eat and wear. The world is their oyster, and they must open it, by fair or foul. The mother must have silks, and the offspring must have dolls and tops. Gentility must be kept up.

Professional people must go on wheels, though all the world go a-foot. It frequently happens, that proud people have more pride than conscience, and it is that kind of pride which is the parent of crime. People will pay more for bad actions than for good ones. So the way of evil lies open to the unscrupulous who have heavy purses. How careful ought we to be of our friends who are stricken with madness! Before consigning them to the tender mercies of heartless servants and harsh doctors, we should be well persuaded that such discipline is needful. An insane person sinks into the animal part of his or her nature; and in institutions, as animals they are treated; yet I would not have it so, Richard."

She touched him lightly upon the arm and smiled. Looking at her while she smiled, Richard thought her face interesting. She had archness; she had self-government; she had concentration of purpose; she had intensity of will. Would she cast her lot with him? Would it be safe to ask her, or to yoke with her, should she assent? Richard put the subject off for future consideration.

"There is one besides Magnus Drake," he said, "that I fear; and that is Sibylla." She is young, but her intellect has a sharp edge. She has an innocent face, but there is knowledge in her eye. She looks at me, she looks again; she does not cease summing me up, adding, subtracting, dividing; and all that." "Sibylla is a singular child," responded Lucretia. "She has talent, quickness, intuition. She will combat the lunacy of Ursula at every turn, phase, and development. She will stand at the corners of our designs, and meet them in the face with unexpected arguments, and with the fresh enthusiasm of girlish friendship."

"She knows something," said Richard, in a mysterious whisper.

"I have noted consciousness upon her face," answered Lucretia; "but of what I know not. Stephen Parkhurst died suddenly!"

"Death is in the world," said Richard, "and we cannot help it."

"It matters not to me," resumed Lucretia, with unruffled serenity. "But were I rich, I would not drink the smoke of charcoal till I had exhausted all other pleasures. A mere sensation is scarcely worth dying for, though life is made up of sensations."

"Death is a sensation that I do not covet," said Richard, "and charcoal is a sensation that ends all sensations, and ushers in eternal insensibility. I see no sense in rushing upon death. I'll not kill myself, I'll warrant."

"You will not die at your own expense," remarked Lucretia, playfully.

"But to return," said Richard, "to the matter of Ursula's insanity. As her relative,

the thought of consigning her to a madhouse is painful. It may not come to that, however."

"It will come to that," affirmed Lucretia, with emphasis. "Have you seen your brother Stephen's will?"

She looked at him steadily. He avoided her gaze and said:

"Let Magnus Drake attend to that. He has taken possession of Stephen's papers."

"But found no will," added Lucretia, smiling in her covert way.

"That is his affair, not mine," returned Richard, curtly. "There should be a will, however. Perhaps he chooses to keep it in the background, for reasons of his own. Wills have been tampered with by cunning attorneys, and persons who had not been thought of in connection with the testator have suddenly emerged from obscurity with fortunes."

"Such may be your own destiny. Ursula, poor, dear child, is not proof against the thousand contingencies of life; and the family inheritance (lunacy) follows her like a shadow. There is no harm in exercising a little speculation and natural forecast of calculation. Should she fade away in an asylum, you, being next of kin, with no one to dispute your right, will step without opposition into the dead man's shoes; eat at his table, sleep in his bed, and receive his incoming thousands. Should I be remembered? Would you hear in mind the ladder by which you mounted to affluence? Wealth makes some men insolent. But insolence won't do with me, Richard; when I have a fight to something better. Think well; and move forward with discretion. There are some steps that can't be trodden backward when once taken. Walk slowly, cautiously."

She contracted her brows and looked firmly at Richard, who asked:

"What would you like?"

"Nothing extravagant," she answered, lifting her shoulders. "An establishment in the suburbs would please me. A neat house; a pretty garden, tasteful walks, with charming shrubbery, a water-view on one side, vines creeping up to the roof, birds singing in the foliage in summer, with patriarchal trees to break the northern winds in winter. I have simple ideas of living. I should desire but a single servant. For exercise, I would walk in the grounds, or ride my white pony on the beautiful turnpikes. An income of a thousand a year will content me. I am reasonable, Richard Parkhurst. Many persons would desire more."

"You are quite moderate in your wishes," said Richard, dryly. "I will make few promises; but you may rely upon some thousands in hand, should I ever possess Stephen's es-

tates. Your reward shall be in proportion to your services."

"Do not underrate me," answered Lucretia, with firmness. "With my assistance you will succeed; without it, you will fail. Success and failure are before you; make your choice, quickly. To-day, I am in the market; to-morrow, I may be out of it, and beyond your purchase, at any price. Think of me as an enemy, Richard!"

She held up her finger and shook it at him, playfully, smiling the while.

"The Fates and Furies forbid!" exclaimed Richard. "I will think of you as a friend and helper. I shall rely upon you, and I will and do make every concession that is reasonable and adequate to the offices performed. So, let the insanity go on; let the signs of madness be multiplied; let all the eccentric phenomena appear; let fantasy play its part; let sympathy follow the patient, and pity tell its tale to ready ears. Let rumor spread report; and gossip bluster its busy tongue in repeating the story of her malady. Doubt not my faith; for, come what may, we must go on together. Who knows what may happen; what chance may fall; what changes may come; what eddies of life may seize us and hurry us on."

"Don't count on the eddies," retorted Miss Fuller, arching her neck, and pluming her pride a little for the occasion. "The tides of fortune are deceitful, and may bear us so far that the reflux waves will not bring us back to the shore. Wait till the eggs are chickens and the chickens are brooded, before you prognosticate. Hands sometimes touch; hearts meet; but, in a venture like ours, the reverse is more likely to happen. Look you for the lost will, and leave me to look after the failing reason of Ursula. So, no more. Be not too conscious of my presence when near me; and perhaps it would be well for you to feign a dislike of me. You shall hear a good account of me soon."

With a nod and a smile, Lucretia Fuller left the room; and Richard went to his lodgings, thinking of his new ally.

CHAPTER VIII.

RICHARD IS HAUNTED.

Full of his design, and inflexible in his extraordinary purpose, Stephen Parkhurst left his luxurious home and went into voluntary exile. He took humble apartments in an obscure part of the city. He assumed the name of Norman Drew, and used every precaution that ingenuity could suggest to increase the resemblance and strengthen the deception. He practiced his new character, and bore it constantly in mind. He imitated Norman Drew's manner of speaking and walking. He remembered every peculiarity,

and neglected nothing. He did not venture to attend his own funeral; but, from a convenient window, saw the dismal *cortège* roll by. One carriage fixed his attention; for it contained Ursula, Sibylla, and Richard. He felt both resentment and pity. Had there been nothing to guide him but the impulses of the moment, he would have rushed from his concealment, and dragged him to the pavement, and publicly denounced him. He put a strong restraint upon himself, and, with compressed lip and contracted brow, saw the procession wind out of sight.

Magnus Drake visited Stephen by stealth; and the first great shock of the ordeal being past, adhered to him faithfully. After considerable discussion of the subject, they decided that it would be best, for the present, to avoid Richard. Several things were to be thought of. The name of Norman Drew might not be sufficient to impose upon the credulity of the half-brother. A cast of the eye, a turn of the head, an intonation of the voice, or an unguarded expression might awaken suspicion in Richard's brain. But what would he suspect? Was not the plot so complicated, so unheard-of, so much beyond ordinary foresight, so far removed from paltry contrivance, that there was no data for suspicion to start from? Stephen believed that he had shot out of the circle of common probabilities. Would he or could he imagine that a body had been substituted for Stephen Parkhurst's? Would it occur to him that Norman Drew had deceased at the opportune moment, and, by paying the last solemn debt of human nature, rendered a strange service to his foster-brother? Surely, all this was too unlikely, too monstrous to be dreamed of, even by the artful Richard. Thus reasoned Stephen; thus he communed with himself; thus he talked with Magnus Drake. But the deductions of reason and the findings of facts are not always in unison, and so a cautious concealment was determined upon.

Stephen Parkhurst resolved to take his walks in the evening, and in those quarters of the city where he would be least likely to encounter Richard. If he walked under the eye of day, he would observe greater care respecting the streets he should traverse. But one cannot count with certainty upon the movement of another. One evening, Stephen and Richard met. He was walking on the Battery when this happened. Both involuntarily paused. It seemed destined that they should meet each other. The effect upon Richard was instant and marked. He stopped, recoiled, and instinctively put out his hands as if to repulse an unwelcome object. It seemed to him that Stephen Parkhurst had arisen from the tomb, and was standing before him. Never had the resemblance of Stephen's

foster-brother been so palpable: it was more than that—it was startling. Richard's heart throbbed violently, and, for a few seconds, the consciousness of guilt made him sick and faint. He struggled to overcome his temporary weakness, and, with a smile on his pale lips, stammered:

"How do you do, Norman Drew?"

"Well, by the blessing of Heaven," answered Stephen, refusing Richard's proffered hand.

"You have given me a shock," added the half-brother. "Your strong resemblance to Stephen quite overpowered me. I can scarcely believe that he is not standing before me."

"And if he were, why should you fear?" replied Stephen, quickly. "Dead men break no bones and tell no tales."

"True," said Richard; "but reason is sometimes taken by surprise, sensation being quicker than it. I was ever superstitious. Poor Stephen! He left us suddenly."

"Yes," said the counterfeit Norman Drew, "he did indeed. It is quite sad. But I have not been in the city long, and have learned little of the affair in detail. What were the particulars of his decease?"

Stephen looked calmly at Richard, and kept his voice regulated as much as possible, to the tones of Norman Drew. His features were paler than usual, and there was an accusing light in his eyes, from which Richard wished to turn away.

"The tale is brief; and a few words will suffice to tell it. He was found dead in his bed, and there was a brasier of charcoal in his room."

Richard looked grave, and looked down.

"Who placed the charcoal in the room?" asked Stephen, seriously.

"The air was chilly, and the room was damp," answered Richard. "The grate being crippled, a brasier of charcoal was ordered."

"At his suggestion?" continued Stephen. Richard glanced at the questioner, and saw his eyes glitter like spheres of molten glass.

"It was his own thought," replied Richard. "I rang the bell for John Jerome, and Stephen gave the order himself. The charcoal came, and was placed on the hearth almost within the draft of the fire. His chair was wheeled to the brasier, and, sitting over it, he warmed his hands."

"Stayed you long?" queried Stephen.

"Not long; for he was morose. The cares of the day had vexed him. His business had manifestly gone awry. He had lost by fire and by water. His man of business, too, had failed to account for funds which he had received. He spoke of enormous deficits, and of the dishonesty of men. He was full of bitterness. I said nothing. I stood dumb before him."

"Was Stephen Parkhurst in this mood when you left him?" asked the factitious Norman Drew, pressing steadily upon him, with question on question.

"Toward me he changed," returned Richard. "He confessed that he had done me injustice, and said: 'Forgive me, Richard.' He expressed regret, that he had not reposed more confidence in a near relative than in strangers."

"He was preparing for the other world," observed the suppositious Drew, sarcastically. "Please go on."

"Taken by surprise, I could only stammer at first some faint protestations of his past brotherly goodness. 'The world has slandered you,' quoth he, 'and I have helped the world. The tongue of detraction has been quickened by paid detractors.'"

"Said he that?" inquired Stephen, quickly, in a tone that Richard did not like. "Was John in the room?"

"He sent John away, that he might speak freely. Stephen was affected to tears. I never shall forget how he grasped my hand at parting, and how loth he was to relinquish it, and let me go. I assured him that by-gones were by-gones, and that I was not one to carry unkindness to my pillow."

"You forgave him!" interposed Stephen, with a slight curl of the lip.

"Freely!" responded Richard, sentimentally.

"And thus you left him?"

"Little thinking it was the last time that I should see him alive."

Richard pulled an old silver watch from his fob, and consulted its faded dial. He did not feel comfortable, and wished to escape the pertinacity of Norman Drew, the sight of whom put him in pain. His likeness to Stephen was terrible to his guilty conscience. He could not divest himself of the thought that Stephen had an avenger in this man. His tone was sarcastic, his manner ominous. His very person was a menace, his existence a perpetual danger. Wicked suggestions glided into his brain. His bad conscience was his monitor.

"The breath of man is in his nostrils," said Stephen. "You were greatly shocked, no doubt, by what followed; but his last will and testament, I dare say, will be your consolation."

"Money is naught," answered Richard. "I have lived without it thus far."

"True, you have lived by your wits!" retorted Stephen.

"Then live you by yours!" said Richard, sharply, moving on.

"I suppose you will be rich," added Stephen. "Ay, and happy, too! But do not abuse your power. Do not wrong Ursula;

and bear in mind that Stephen Parkhurst loved Sibylla as his own child. The deceased once told me that you were a schemer and plotter; and I partly believe it. Rely upon it, Richard Parkhurst, that there is an end to the longest tether, and that it is sometimes found with a jerk, and with sudden horror. I speak thus plainly, to put some check upon your actions."

"This," rejoined Richard, turning and confronting Stephen, "is unbecoming and injurious. It is really an insulting menace."

"Go on," said the other, without faltering. "Do not mind humble Norman Drew, the poor yet faithful friend of Stephen Parkhurst. I am a mere hanger-on in the world. I live from hand to mouth. My voice is a voice without influence. I have no money with which to make weight in society. Money preponderates in the scale, and poverty kicks the beam. Poverty, though heavy for feeble shoulders, is light for influence; too light for power. You can install yourself at Stephen Parkhurst's, order the household, and, perchance, come in for the lion's share of his wealth, while I, more esteemed by the deceased, and with a better claim by equity, shall be left to walk my weary walk out of life, poor, neglected, and alone."

"Beware of envy," replied Richard, piously. "Envy is a viper. Take it not into your bosom lest it sting you. My brother Stephen may have had some regard for you in former years; but the edge of his friendship had worn off, and he spoke of you on the last evening of his life quite indifferently."

"I cannot believe that he spoke ill of me," muttered Stephen, flushing. "I saw him a few days before his death, and ours was not a cold meeting. Indeed, he invited me to visit him, and held out expectations."

"The expectations of the wicked shall perish!" sneered Richard.

"Read in that text your own fate!" retorted spurious Norman Drew. "Your expectations are equaled only by your villainy."

"This is exceedingly slanderous," protested Richard. "Your age is your protection. My mind is too much agitated by grief to be greatly annoyed by your singular accusations. If you are in want, for Stephen's sake, I will relieve your present necessities, provided you will swallow your disappointment, and return quietly to your home, wherever it may be."

"Charitable Richard!" returned Stephen, curbing his anger. "Perhaps I had better accept a beggar's sixpence, and creep back to my obscurity, leaving you to pursue, unmolested, your ambitious projects."

"I forgive much in you on account of your resemblance to Stephen, which, to-night, is truly startling."

"A guilty conscience is followed by shadows."

Richard Parkhurst knitted his brows, and looked moodily at the putative Norman Drew. He was struggling with a new apprehension, and devising means of extrication.

"Have you comfortable quarters? Where are you housed?" he asked, with an air of forbearance.

These queries were followed by a short silence. A quiet smile curled Stephen's lips.

"Care not for my lodgings, Richard Parkhurst; but look well to your own. Let there be no confidences between us. Should you discover my mean attic, avoid it by all means. Possibly, the attic may set itself up against the brown-stone house."

Richard shivered. A deadly chill thrilled his nerves. He moved his arms and his limbs to shake off his strange emotions. He felt like one standing upon a secret trap, liable at any moment to fall and precipitate him to unknown depths. He hated and feared Norman Drew.

"You talk wildly," he answered, by and by. "You, like the Parkhursts, perhaps, inherited madness for a legacy."

"The Parkhursts did not constitutionally inherit insanity," answered Stephen. "If insanity appeared at any time in the family, it was purely incidental, and had its origin in known causes."

"It may be so," said Richard, "yet Ursula's symptoms contradict the statement."

"Ursula's symptoms!" murmured Stephen, quite astounded.

"Too true!" sighed Richard, sympathetically. "The dear girls' intellect begins to totter. The blow was too heavy for her delicate strength. Good-night, Sir."

Stephen did not hear Richard's good-night. He had heard only the words that concerned Ursula; they resounded startlingly in his brain, and shook his iron nerves.

"Has any one noticed this but yourself?" he asked, presently.

He received no answer, and, looking up, perceived that he was alone. Somewhat surprised, he moved on, muttering:

"This cannot be true. Some new evil is in perspective. I must see Magnus Drake."

CHAPTER IX.

MIDNIGHT MEANDERINGS.

Richard Parkhurst did not go far from the Battery. He concealed himself behind the nearest house, to watch the counterfeit Norman Drew. Nothing, since the apparent death of Stephen, had troubled him so much as this chance meeting. This Norman Drew, though like himself, was yet so like the deceased in every particular, that it was really

wonderful to look at him. Had it been no more than wonderful, however, Richard would have been comparatively easy; but this foster-brother of Stephen's terrified him. He had the effect upon him of a spectre called from the mysterious nether world to punish him for his crime; to rebuke him for his sins; to freeze him into ice with his accusing eyes; to dog him up and down the streets; to watch his actions, to meet him everywhere, to hold over him the flaming sword of justice.

Truly, the voice of Norman Drew came out of the grave, it was so like Stephen's. His fears were so wrought upon that drops of perspiration stood upon his brow. New York was too small for this goblin Stephen and himself to live in. His terror and his hatred grew in equal proportions. He felt murder in his heart. His evil nature pushed him on. His first great offence had already given him the overmastering momentum of crime, and he could not stop. It seemed to his perverted mind that a dire necessity was laid upon him, and that the consummation of his villainies was inevitable, and inexorably demanded by surrounding circumstances.

He followed Stephen Parkhurst. He kept him steadily in view. He stopped when Stephen stopped, and turned when Stephen turned. It was not an easy task to keep in sight of him, for he had no fixed place of destination. He walked because motion was a relief to him; and because rest was impossible. He traversed one street and he traversed another, with equal indifference. Sometimes he doubled on his track, and crossed the same street several times. It was evident to Richard that Norman Drew was thinking seriously, and was utterly absorbed in himself.

Richard grew weary and impatient; but in mischief he was persevering, and he knew that the object of his espionage would not walk all night, but seek his attic when he had tired both mind and body.

Several times Richard was very near Norman Drew; and once, in one of the latter's eccentric turns, they met and passed each other. Thanks to the darkness of the night and Stephen's abstraction, Richard was not recognized. They went from the lowest slums to the most fashionable quarters of the city, and at midnight passed the brown-stone house. Stephen paused there, and, from the opposite side of the avenue, gazed at the silent edifice. There was light in the hall and also in some of the chambers. One of the upper windows he watched with peculiar interest, for the light that glowed through its panes came from Ursula's apartments. Instinctively, he felt in his pocket for the key to the private entrance. He grasped it—that

potential bit of metal—but remembering the situation, let it slip from his fingers again into his pocket. He crossed the avenue, and stood beside the little iron gate at the side-entrance. His own apartments were dark and silent.

"The air is chilly and the room is damp," muttered Stephen, reflectively, his thoughts running upon the brasier of charcoal and the cunning of Richard. "I am glad I came here," he mused. "I was growing weak in my purpose; but the sight of this house makes me strong again. It is painful to give pain to those I love; but there is something grand and inspiring in becoming the unseen Providence of both the good and the bad. Here I am, the protecting Providence of two young girls, and the avenging Providence of a creeping slimy villain, who lies in wait for innocence and watches for the downfall of justice. I shall find consolation in the thought, that through me, Heaven will work out its ends. This shall not last long; I will not be wantonly cruel. When I have looked on a while and marked the cabals of Richard, I will restore to Ursula and Sibylla that which they think they have lost. Good night, children. Little do you suspect who watches over you."

With these inaudible reflections, Stephen turned from the brown-stone house, and walked away briskly, not wishing to be met by acquaintances or to be seen in that neighborhood. Again Richard followed, with more circumspection, and with the observance of greater and safer distance. Had he been pursuing an object for a good purpose, he would have tired and abandoned it before the midnight-hour; but Richard had a spur sharper than any incentive to goodness, than any he had yet experienced. Trudged on Richard; walked on Stephen. Up to Broadway, and down that great thoroughfare; then to the right; to the left; diagonally through a narrow street; deflecting this way and that; where the houses were huddled, and grim with smoke and dirt; where offensive odors arose from under-ground kitchens and damp cellars; where there were stalls and cribs for men and women to herd in; and still on, till he had passed the lowest lairs of poverty, and reached an obscurity less repulsive. Into an alley, into a court, and into shadow yet deeper. Stephen paused and looked back. Richard dodged behind a tumble-down corner, and avoided discovery by a miracle of quickness. When he ventured from his brief concealment, his Norman Drew had disappeared in one or the other of the gray, low-roofed dwellings. Richard groped along the middle of the court—the sunken walks being too narrow and broken for safety at that late hour. Eagerly indeed

did he inspect the black walls that environed him; the mute bricks gave him no knowledge of Norman Drew, although his inquisitive eyes questioned them over and over again. Disappointed, he indulged in some whispered expletives. He thought at first that he had received just his trouble for his pains; but reflection convinced him that his tramp had not been fruitless, even if he should make no further discoveries; for a little patient watching of the court would, in all probability, complete his wishes. He stood still several minutes, and presently, to his great satisfaction, saw the faint glimmering of a lamp in one of the upper stories of the house directly before him. This, he believed, supplied the last item wanting to crown his night's work. With a red pencil which he had been using that day, he made a small cross on the door, so that there might be no blundering should he have occasion to visit Norman Drew. Feeling that his pertinacity had been well-rewarded, he left the court, and hurried to his own lodgings, to confer with Duke Marmaduke.

CHAPTER X.

AN EYE TO BUSINESS AND THE DEVIL'S EYE.

Richard Parkhurst found Duke Marmaduke in unusually low spirits. He noticed that the diamond ring no longer sparkled on his finger—a sure sign that his finances were low. The inevitable carbuncle glowed in its accustomed place. He smoked his cigar thoughtfully. Richard told his adventures, which instantly interested Duke, the arch-plotter, who condescended to give the narrator his undivided attention.

"The resemblance is striking, you say," observed Duke.

"To me it is something more than marvelous," Richard replied.

"It was like the ghost of Stephen," added Duke, with a significant lifting of the eyebrows.

"I am terribly disturbed," answered Richard. "I feel as if I should sleep no more. Like Macbeth, I have 'murdered sleep'. Hitherto, in my uneasy slumbers, I have dreamed of charcoal; if I sleep again I shall dream of Norman Drew."

"Men often attempt things beyond their strength," said Marmaduke. Figuratively speaking, you are weak in the spine and knock-kneed, which is a pity. He threatened, did he?"

He looked at Richard, penetratingly.

"As I have told you," the latter answered. "Whether he knows anything dangerous to me is doubtful; but it is certain that he suspects much."

"Magnus Drake and this Norman Drew

will hang you," asserted Marmaduke, with a confidence that was peculiarly disagreeable to Richard, who had no good reason to like a prophecy of that nature.

"They will, will they?" growled Richard. "Well, we'll see."

"Norman Drew is manifestly your enemy," continued Duke Marmaduke. "Now repeat to me every word that he said. Omit nothing, forget nothing, slur over nothing. Unless," he added, with grim humor, "you want eventually to dance on nothing."

With a strange thrilling at his finger's ends, Richard went over his story again, supplying many things that he previously neglected to mention.

"I never knew but one case like this," protested Marmaduke, and that case ended at Tyburn, at the end of a halter."

"Cold-blooded villain!" muttered Richard. "May your white neck break a halter some fine morning. I would go a hundred miles to your hanging, and walk every step of the way."

"If I can get a ticket to the jailyard I will do the same for you with less trouble," retorted Duke, in excellent temper. "Request the hangman to give you a good fall, Dick; for there is much in being well hanged and having it soon over."

Richard shivered and gasped.

"There are times, Duke, when you're spitefully personal and infernally provoking. Don't talk of such matters. If you must ventilate your spleen, go out into the street; but don't tackle me in my own house."

"He has become a householder!" sneered Marmaduke. "I rejoice at it, because I want shelter and all kinds of comfort. I must keep my head above the tide, and at the present time it is hard work. Really, Dick, you must speedily install me at the brown-stone house. You are such a faltering fool that you need me constantly at your elbow."

The large carbuncle shone in Richard's face, and looked more like blood than ever before.

"Should I come to the end you prophesy, you would have to sit there alone," returned Richard, doggedly.

"Upon my word, that is what I'm afraid of," said Duke, with emphasis. "There are two persons who must be pushed aside. You can see that yourself without drawing upon your imagination."

Richard nodded sullenly.

"Do you agree with me that those two persons endanger your plans, and even your—"

Duke touched his white throat with his chubby forefinger.

"Certainly," was the response, in a surly tone.

"And that something is to be done!" added Duke.

Richard said:

"Yes."

"Then what is it, and how is it to be accomplished?"

"I don't know," said Richard, keeping his eyes from meeting the searching glances of Duke.

"You do," contradicted Duke. "It has been in your mind ever since you met Norman Drew. It has followed you through the streets; it has repeated its own name a hundred times."

Richard did not deny the charge. He said:

"Let the foster-brother be attended to first. I care less for Magnus Drake than for Norman Drew. But I cannot think of that of which you are thinking. We must stop this side of that. Murder is one thing and removal is another. An offensive person may be put out of the way, and yet not be killed."

"Don't talk of murder, Dick," answered Duke, fastidiously. "I have nerves, and very sensitive nerves, too. You're a dreadful bear. A man can disappear of a sudden, and never show his face again. This ghost of Stephen Parkhurst is as liable to disappear as another. Well, should he disappear, what would become of him? Nobody knows what would become of him, but everybody may try conjectures, and indulge in speculations. He may fall into the water; he may take bedbug poison for physic; he may cut his throat while shaving; he may die of intemperance; he may slip out of the world by a stroke of apoplexy or a disease of the heart; or he may tumble down-stairs and break his neck, and be trundled off, and put into the ground without observation or obituary. The same thing need not, of necessity, happen to every person. Some good people are sent to insane asylums, and that is the last of them. There are underground kens, too, where a troublesome person may be detained for years without the knowledge of those who might be interested in his fate. So you perceive that we are not obliged to talk of murder. Always be choice in your language, Richard."

"What are underground kens?" asked Richard.

"Are you then so innocent?" replied Duke, contemptuously. "Have you not walked abroad at night? Have not your adventurous feet gone down into the slums of the Five Points? Have you not been met in the face by the overpowering stench of crib and kennel? Have you not held your nose, and plunged into the midst of the reek and sweat of human degradation? Have you not climbed into squalid attics, that were like the chambers of pestilence, and descended to cel-

lars that were damp and ghastly charnel-houses? You know you have. You have walked too near the vortex of that misery not to be acquainted with it. Do not forget the have-beens and the by-gones. You have eaten your three pennies' worth of bone soup under the sidewalks and in subterranean hells. Necessity makes strange bedfellows."

"I may have eaten watery soups at the boozing-kens, but I never kept company with the thieves and cut-throats of that miserable place," asserted Richard.

"Your pride runs away with your veracity," said Marmaduke. "To confess that you have eaten offal soup is to concede the whole. Admit but the boiling of said offal soup, and you own the companionship of beggars, vagabonds, thieves, and murderers. Those who go down to Dead Man's Alley are not utterly blind. However, there are some things known only to desperate characters and great criminals."

"How came you to know them?" demanded Richard, sharply.

Duke Marmaduke coughed, changed his position, and put his cigar into the other corner of his mouth.

"Partly by accident, and partly by the agency of a fellow who was much about town. On the whole, my experience in that line at he outset was dangerous; but I escaped alive; otherwise, I should not be here. Several of the dark coves had a fling at me, and for awhile it was a dead set; but I used my daddles nimbly, and got away at last. May the damber cove of that kennel dance when he dies. As it was, my dial-plate was a good deal scored, and I kept my bed the next day on account of bruises and contusions. They will sing the dismal ditty in due time."

"What's the dismal ditty?" Richard asked.

"It is the psalm or song sung by criminals just before they are executed."

"Dismal enough," muttered Richard.

"Rather melancholy, Dick. I think you had better put your dismal ditty in rehearsal, soon. For the sake of your last appearance upon any stage, I hope you have a good voice. Let me advise you to open your mouth wide, Richard, to let out the dismal notes."

"Never mind that, but tell me what to do with Norman Drew. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."

"You tracked him to his crib. That was well thought of, and tolerably well executed. Do you know his habits? Is he fond of tipping?"

"His notions are somewhat Puritanical, I believe. As for drinking, I suppose he takes a social glass, like other folks."

"Is he benevolent?"

"I've heard him that's gone say, that Nor-

man had a weakness in the way of giving of his ready means to those that ask charity. His shillings and sixpences were liable to fall into the first dirty palm that was stretched out for alms. I have a distinct remembrance, now that the subject is mentioned, of hearing Stephen refer to this peculiarity in a facetious manner. He used to observe that one turn about town would empty his pockets of all his loose change. Poor people have their follies as well as rich."

"He must be deceived," said Duke Marmaduke. "A man's vices or virtues may be turned to his own destruction. Norman Drew disposed of, we will give our attention to Magnus Drake. I know a fellow by the name of Glum, who lives under ground; whose glims are like cranberries, and whose mawleys are like hammers. The modesty of this person is such, that he shuns the light of day, and hides his pockmarked face in his subterranean retreat. He seldom pokes his nose above the soil. Glum is a rat, and sticks to his sewer. He receives boarders, now and then, and it would seem that they are so content with their fare, that they never leave him. In some respects, Glum's nursery is better than a madhouse. There is considerable dampness down in his crypts. The floors are sometimes wet, and it is to be feared, that the sewer leaks into his obscure vaults. In such a case, the occupants might take cold; grow hollow-eyed; and yellow, and, finally, fall into a wasting melancholy, beyond the reach of physic. Glum buries them without ostentation, under the pavement, over which thousands of feet shuffle daily. It has been hinted by catty-eyed culls, that the sewer is a sepulchre; and by lushing-gulls, that his departed chicks are quietly shot into that omnium-gatherum. But whether Glum's cozy establishment communicates with that receptacle, I know not."

"You mouth the thieves' patter like a veteran rogue," remarked Richard, beginning to quail before the red eye of the carbuncle.

Marmaduke's genius seemed universal; it soared above the earth, and dived beneath it. This fair-skinned, rosy-cheeked gentleman, with all his squeamishness and abhorrence of dirt, had visited places well calculated to try the courage of the boldest. He developed new resources every day. He was fertile in expedients, fruitful in devices, and shrewd in every villainy. Richard clutched eagerly at the scheme thus ingeniously presented. He wished to stop short of the great concluding crime of wickedness; for he had had enough of that in the case of Stephen. If Norman Drew could be disposed of for the present, he did not much care what might afterward become of him. He desired to gain time to finish the business in hand.

"This," he said, with some enthusiasm, "meets my views. If you desire security and comfort at the brown-stone house, put your hand to this business, and do not look back."

"You will install me there, will you in those private rooms just over the wine-vaults? It will be very cozy there, and we will smoke Stephen's cigars, during the long winter-evenings. I shall want a key, Richard, for I am nocturnal in my habits, and side-doors are not made to rust on their hinges. And there is John Jerome. John Jerome needs a change of air. The firm of Parkhurst & Marmaduke is large enough."

"My hand on that!" exclaimed Richard, in better spirits. "That rascal worries me."

"When we are doing a piece of work," observed Duke, blandly, "we use instruments; after the work is done, we put away the instrument."

"I wish you would put away that instrument. He has already grown insolent, and takes on airs as if he were master of the situation. Now, you begin to talk to the point. Yes; the firm of Parkhurst & Marmaduke needs no partners. Brush away this fly, dispose of Norman Drew, and you shall have all that you ask."

"I will hold you to that promise. We will lose no time, but begin work immediately. Among your half-brother's effects, you probably found some banknotes; but I seldom borrow, Richard. Put up your purse. You may act the broker for me, however, if you feel free to do so, and give me something on this pin."

He touched the carbuncle with his finger. Parkhurst drew back as if afraid, threw some banknotes upon the table, saying, hurriedly:

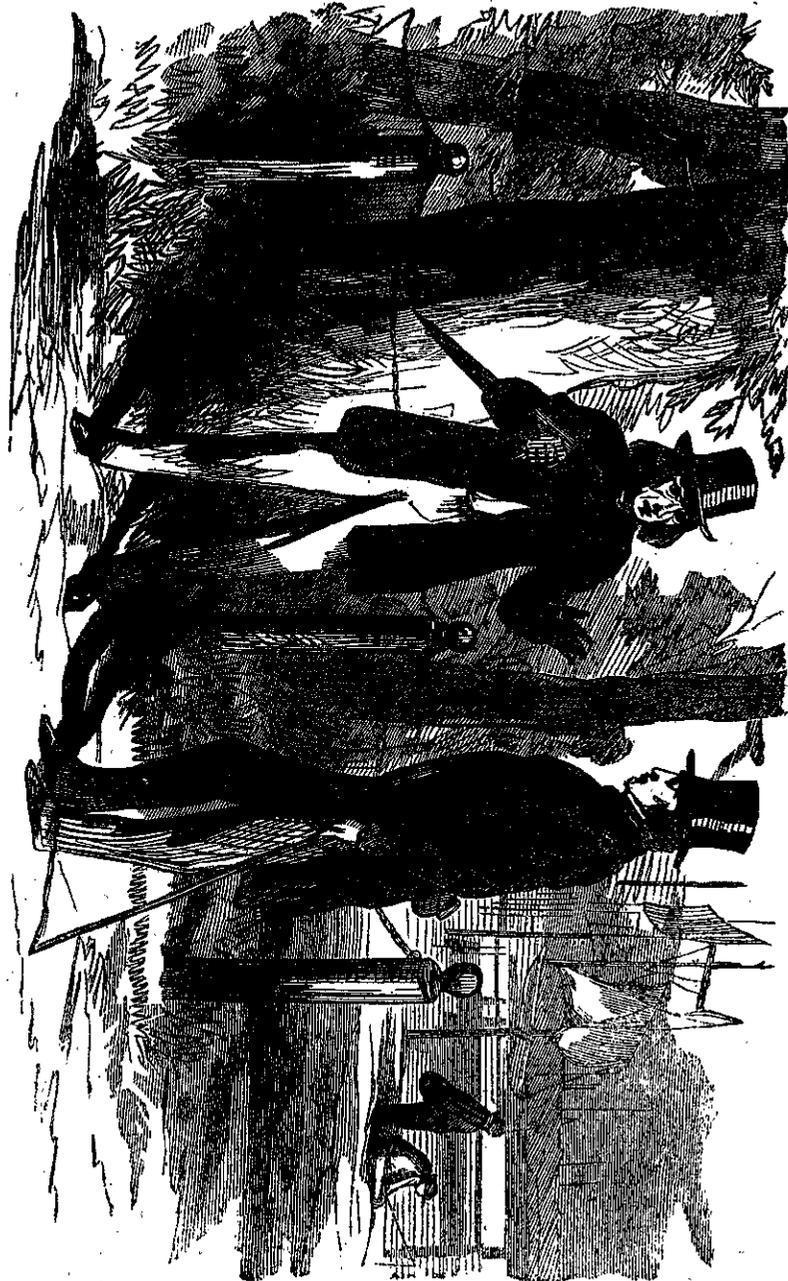
"Keep your carbuncle! I do not like it; the devil is in it."

"Very true," answered Duke, coolly. "You do not know the history of it, I suspect. It was given me in France, by an Italian who died the next morning, at ten o'clock."

"How did he die?" asked Richard.

"He died of having his head chopped off," said Duke. "He was executed. That man had dabbled in magic; and very strange things were reported of him. His face was pale to ghastliness; his beard and hair were intensively black, while his eyes glowed with unnatural brightness. His white, regular teeth shone through his colorless lips, like drifted snow. He scorned men, and life, and death. He mocked at joy and pain, and sought not human society. I sat with him on the eve of his execution, and I was afraid. The cold gleams of his eyes chilled me, like the touch of steel."

"How came you in prison?" inquired Richard, in an awed tone.



A STARTLING RENCONTRE.

"No matter; I was there," answered Duke, thoughtfully. "He asked me, with a strange smile, 'if I would like to wear his mantle'. I shuddered; nor could I help it. 'To-morrow,' said he, 'I shall lay down this body, and take another. You will not know me when next we meet.' It was an odd fancy; but I partly believed it. He gave me the carbuncle."

"He said something about it, surely," observed Richard.

"He did. 'It is a marvelous toy,' said he. 'It is the eye of Satan.' Then he laughed. 'Wear it on your breast, and nobody will over-reach you,' he added. 'The Fiend's eye is magnetic.'"

"A tale for children," Richard muttered, yet unable to withdraw his gaze from the flaming stone.

"It will tell you when we meet again," said the Italian. "It will change color."

Marmaduke shrugged his shoulders, and added: "But it has not changed color, yet. So that is why the devil is in the carbuncle. Sit with it in a dark room, Richard, and look at it steadily, and presently it will assume the appearance of a fiery eye."

Marmaduke arose, and yawning, threw himself upon Richard's bed.

Parkhurst remained sitting in his chair. The lamp went out. The fire burned down to a few smouldering embers. Turning his eyes toward Marmaduke, he saw the carbuncle shining in the darkness. Fascinated, he stared at it, and thought of the tale Duke had been telling. The Italian's gift winked, and blinked, and flamed at him; and, finally, to his heated fancy, grew the proportions of an internal orb.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. DAVIDS.

It must be borne in mind by the reader, that, at this stage of the story, Stephen Parkhurst represents Norman Drew. If we call that gentleman by the name of the latter, the distinction must be understood. The real Norman Drew being dead and buried in the name of Stephen Parkhurst, Stephen Parkhurst takes up the broken thread of his life, and, to all save Magnus Drake, is the veritable Norman Drew.

With this statement to make the plot clear, and to prevent the confusion of persons and ideas, we follow the course of events.

Magnus Drake called on Stephen at an early hour in the morning. They conferred together earnestly. Ursula and Sibylla were talked of with much seriousness. The malady referred to by Richard, as threatening the mind of his daughter, filled him with alarm. Magnus heard the details of the previous night with surprise. His clear intel-

lect instantly seized upon the motive of Richard. He saw the danger, and for the reason that he saw it, believed that it could be averted. He assured Stephen of the utter fallacy of Ursula's reputed distemper. He had seen no evidence of insanity, and he had observed her conduct from first to last. In this manner, and with a friendly zeal, he endeavored to dispel the apprehensions of Stephen. His arguments were apt, his logic was good, but something more subtle and far-reaching than either, disturbed the peace of Parkhurst. Intuition, which is a quality of the soul, goes behind reason and nearer causes.

Magnus recommended walking in the open air.

"I have had enough of walking," said Stephen. "The smallest hour of the night struck before I retired. I must write to-day. Go you to my house, Magnus, and bring me the latest intelligence from my pets. Watch Ursula closely. I would not disturb the equilibrium of her clear and well-poised intellect. And, Magnus, there is something more. Lucretia Fuller may need a little looking after. I never knew a house-keeper that didn't need looking after. Lucretia, I used to think, was full of snares. She is perspicacious and cunning. There is no knowing what strange fancies may seize her. As an ally of Richard, she would be really dangerous."

"She shall have her share of attention."

"Where is that John Jerome?"

"I dismissed him about two days ago; but he still haunts the servants' hall."

"Get rid of him. He's a wicked fellow. He troubles me. Something may happen to Ursula, if the rascal be not driven away. Eject him by force, and not gently, either; not forgetting a discreet application of leather. Leather, in the form of boot is often a good stimulant. When will that prince of villains, Richard, show his hand? A will will be found soon, I'll warrant."

"It has been found. I received a note from the scoundrel yesterday, informing me that it been discovered in a private drawer."

"He has doctored it finely, no doubt. Let the play go on. If he has forgotten to name a legacy for himself, I don't know the man. But hurry away, Magnus, so that John Jerome may be the sooner disposed of."

"I will call for you this evening," said Magnus, "and shall insist upon walking with you a long time. So much solitary brooding will injure your health."

"I shall be ready," said Stephen. "I will wear away the time as best I can. Come early, and bring me cheerful tidings."

Punctual to his appointment, Magnus Drake returned. Stephen was awaiting his appear-

ance, impatiently. After some conversation they left the house, and were leaving the door, when their attention was attracted by a man, who seemed to be in great distress of mind. This person was telling his troubles to a woman, who was sympathetically listening to his words. Stephen and Magnus stopped; and the appearance of the stranger was such as to excite their interest. He was plainly dressed; but his threadbare garments were neat and clean. He was of middle age; and, however much he might have suffered from the world's vicissitudes, he had managed to retain a goodly proportion of flesh. His figure was short and stout; his face round, full, and fair. Some gray hairs floated on his forehead. His hat was shabby, and had evidently been subjected to much brushing. It was considerably out of style, and looked rather small for his head. His faded necktie was tied with much precision; while other details of his dress proved him a man of some taste. He was very straight. He carried a heavy cane. He had the appearance of a respectable citizen in the humbler walks of life.

He continued talking. His voice was clear, low, and complaining. His story was simple. He had lost a young daughter; not by death, but by devices, too common in large cities. She had been last seen with a person of questionable character, who had volunteered to guide her to a certain street of which she was in search. It was then about nine o'clock in the evening. It was the lowest quarter of the city. She did not return. Her fate was too apparent. She had been lured into some den of evil, and detained.

Stephen Parkhurst, whose sympathies were easily awakened, inquired the girl's age.

"Barely turned sixteen," answered the man, respectfully.

"Was Fannie as old as that, Mr. Davids?" asked the woman.

"Yes; the poor child was sixteen, three days ago. You remember the New Year's gift which I purchased for her? Her pleasure more than repaid me for the sacrifice which I made to procure it. But all that is past, and she is taken from me in a most cruel manner. O Mrs. Hall! What shall I do?"

Mr. Davids applied his handkerchief to his eyes, and was much affected.

"She was a sweet girl, Mr. Davids," said Mrs. Hall, quite melted. "But beauty is a snare. I allus said that beauty was a snare and a temptation. My Letty now is dreadful plain, and it does seem to me, that there is a Providence in it to keep her out of harm's way. I'm really glad that Letty is homely; for you see nobody runs away with a homely face."

Mrs. Hall turned to Stephen Parkhurst, and added:

"Fannie Davids, Sir, is as lovely a creature as you would wish to see. I never laid my two eyes on such a face an' figger. You'd ought to see her figger, Sir. Dear me! I never see the like, an' to think to what we females is exposed; is enough to try the patience of Job!"

"Have you put the police on her track?" Stephen wished to know.

"I've spoken to a couple of detectives, and they will commence the business to-night," said Mr. Davids. "But I'm afraid they won't manifest much zeal, Sir; for I'm a poor man, and not able to fee them very liberally."

"Fees should not be demanded by the servants of the people," replied Stephen, with warmth. "The city pays its officials; and no private citizen, however humble, need put his hand in his pocket to bribe them for the performance of an obvious duty. Nevertheless, generosity is a good thing, and all who are able to do so would do well to quicken the zeal of the faithful officer by suitable tokens of appreciation. In a case like this, one cannot afford to be niggardly; for money is but dross, while fidelity is above all price, and worthy of admiration."

Parkhurst looked significantly at Magnus Drake, who, understanding his meaning, observed:

"What my friend says is perfectly true. It is as much our duty to be generous when we can, as it is of the officer to be always faithful, whether in the service of the rich or poor. I am so much interested in this matter that I will willingly lend the influence of my voice, and the stronger influence of my purse, to rescue your daughter, and to secure the ends of justice."

"I thank you, Sir," answered Mr. Davids, gratefully. "If you would join in the search, gentlemen, I should be forever indebted to you. There are some deeds which nothing but eternal gratitude can reward. To-night, properly prepared for the adventure, armed at all points, we're going to visit the vilest slums of the city. I am sure that you will shrink from such an undertaking, and that the excitement of the search will be of a character too dangerous to be agreeable. Young men, I know, seek such excitement, because it is attended with peril; and a midnight-exploration would be tame and aimless without the element of danger. But excuse me, gentlemen; grief is selfish. A man in trouble troubles others. You have passed the age of novelty, and act from principle rather than from impulse. Good night. The detectives are waiting for me by this time. Heaven help my child!"

Mr. Davids began to walk briskly away; but his remarks about excitement and danger had influenced the minds of Stephen and

Magnus to such an extent that no argument could have dissuaded them from going with the detectives.

"Indeed, you must permit us to accompany you," said Stephen, hurrying after Davids. "I have long had a strong desire to see life in some of its lowest phases; and this seems a favorable opportunity. But believe me, a feeling more honorable than curiosity governs my present purpose."

"My friend speaks more from the heart than from the head," said Magnus. "What you have said respecting the danger but sharpens my desire and strengthens my determination. Tell a person that there is risk to encounter in a certain direction, and the probabilities are as ten to one that he will go that way immediately. We are all children about such matters. Things interdicted and things perilous have irresistible charms, and oftener influence our conduct than we are willing to allow. Mr. Davids, we will go with you."

Davids had paused, and evidently heard this decision with satisfaction. He expressed his thanks in fitting terms, and moved on again.

Looking back, presently, Stephen observed that the woman Davids had called Mrs. Hall was following him.

CHAPTER XII. THE DETECTIVES.

After a short and silent walk, Mr. Davids stopped at the corner of Pearl street, where, after waiting a few minutes, he was joined by two men. Those two men were the detectives of whom he had spoken.

Neither Stephen nor Magnus could conscientiously compliment them in regard to their personal appearance. Standing beneath the pale light of the streetlamp, with their coats buttoned to their chins, their old hats pulled over their eyes, and their dark and jagged beards bristling about their chins, they formed a picture by no means agreeable to Stephen. But this incipient feeling of repugnance he endeavored to conquer, believing that such disguise was necessary, and that their rough looks were partly assumed. Certain it is, that no one would have divined their trade; but suspected them to be diggers of ditches rather than exhumers of crime and mystery.

The detectives took the lead. They passed on and turned into Anthony street. It looks down upon the Old Brewery. The fame of the Old Brewery is world-wide. It was the grand receptacle of the outcasts, and the debris of human society. It had opened its cellular maw to receive thieves, vagabonds, and Cain-marked ruffians. It had a magical capacity to absorb vice, intemperance, and

the darkest drops of degraded life. Anthony street was one of the tunnels that poured in at all hours, early or late, and oftener late, its quota of wretchedness, to which Cross, Orange, Mulberry, and Little Water streets, contributed their motley streams.

In the centre of these converging streets was Paradise square, a dirty triangle, inclosed by a wooden paling, which was grim with blackness, hacked and notched with knives, dilapidated with age and bad usage, and much the worse for the company it had had kept. Palings, like people, are smutched by evil companionship. Old garments fluttered like tattered battle-flags on that paling, to flap out their filth in the sun.

Before reaching this pestilent area, the detectives paused, glanced at each other, and one of them said:

"If the gentlemen has any walables about 'em, they'd better not take 'em along."

"Not by no means whatsoever," observed the other. "The ideas of gen'lemen an' ladies hereabouts is some'at loose as respectin' the possession o' property; 'specially 'bout tickers and small change."

"True," answered Stephen. "It is well thought of. But what shall we do with our watches and money? We seem now to have entered the vortex."

"Jest in the nick o' time," added he who had first spoken. "We've a private orfis here. Show the gen'lemen in, Driggs, an' I'll strike a giim."

With these remarks the detectives unlocked and opened a door at the left, and disappeared in the darkness. Driggs, Davids, Stephen, and Magnus, groped in after him.

"Hurry up!" said Driggs.

And presently, after some experimental rubbing of matches, a lamp was lighted, a lamp with a very weak constitution and feeble powers of illumination.

Stephen made a cursory examination of this private office, and was somewhat disappointed with its internal arrangements. It was a very squalid affair. It contained two stools, a box, and a pine table. Stephen thought this was a very ordinary concern; but concluded that its meanness was not incidental, but from design, and to enable them to sustain the characters which they had found it necessary to assume.

"Davids, interdooce us to yer fren's," quoth Driggs.

Davids immediately turned to Stephen and Magnus, observing:

"These gentlemen are strangers to me. We met scarcely a half an hour ago."

Magnus hastened to announce Stephen's and his own name. Drake and Drew were at once made acquainted with Driggs and Droolby, men whose acuteness had never

been overreached. Stephen handed his watch and money to Mr. Doolby, and Magnus passed his over to Mr. Driggs, who happened to be nearest him. These articles were received with great solemnity. They were carefully deposited in the box.

"Will they be safe there," Magnus inquired, his face expressing some doubt.

"As a bug in a rug," answered Doolby. "Them 'ere walables might lay there a twelve-month, an' nobody'd be the better for 'em. Who's a comin' to a private detective oris for to touch the swag an' mizzle? Nobody ain't a goin' to; because as how this 'ere little spot is sacred to the eye o' the law. An' indiwidoal to break the law, must first break a lock, an' to break a lock is bu'glary."

"Nobody can't git within from here," asserted Driggs. "An'," he added, with a clearness of logic that was irresistible, "if nobody can't git nothin' from here, nothin' won't be got."

Magnus assented to this proposition; but Stephen could not quite see the safety of his property in a box secured by a cheap and unreliable lock. He did not express his doubts, and no more was said about the matter.

Doolby extinguished the light, and the parties stumbled into the street again. Davids frequently sighed, and dried his wet eyes with a handkerchief. Now and then he murmured:

"Poor Fannie! Dear girl! Unfortunate child!"

These exclamations were quite touching, and helped to dispel the rising suspicions of Stephen.

They walked as far as the Old Brewery. It was now ten o'clock, and the detectives considered it too early to commence their operations. So they turned back, and went into the old grocery on the corner; a wonderful grocery; an abominable grocery, where execrable liquors were sold to tatterdemalians. Stephen and Magnus were disgusted at the threshold, but managed to find themselves in a miserable place, where respiration ceased to give pleasure, on account of the impurity of the air and the unwashed state of the visitors. Doolby and Driggs settled among the miscellaneous dirt with admirable adaptability to circumstances. Magnus fidgeted, while Stephen, with great heroism, tried to look serene and happy. Davids was less patient than either. He was fastidious. He went often to the door, and as often returned, flushed and hot.

"It has been my motto to keep above the tide," quoth Davids. "I have kept above the tide. I have kept Mrs. Davids above the tide. I have kept the young Davids above the tide hitherto."

He paused, wiped his oozing brow, and sighed from the lowest button of his vest.

"She were a dimber mort," observed Doolby, with pathos. "He were a dark culley as took her away; an' if the devil gits his dues, we shall know where to find him. Cheer up, pal, an' you'll come out atop arter a while. We'll crack the ken to-night, or I'm a buzzard."

"He means a dark ken," said Driggs, explanatorily. "A dark ken as is known to nobody, an' where nobody knows what another body is a drivin' at."

This was so lucid and well-timed, that Doolby nodded several times.

"Grief," he added, "is inconvenient in a family. What a eye she had! She were none o' your ravin' dells, but a modest an' well-behaved un, as ever walked a pavement or wore a bonnet. Fannie Davids were a lass as were bangup. She would made a picter; that gel would."

Stephen asked Davids, in a whisper, whether Doolby and Driggs always expressed themselves in this extraordinary manner. Davids replied, in a confidential tone, that the flash was a sheer assumption, persistently practiced, so that the habit might become natural and easy; as their calling frequently took them among a class of people where this style of conversation was always heard.

"It is almost impossible to believe it," said Stephen.

"Habit is everything," answered Davids. "Wonderful fellows are Doolby and Driggs. Many are the rogueries and crimes that they have ferreted out. Justice, Sir, will keep above the tide, while we have such men in the detective service."

"If they are gentlemen," said Parkhurst, "they are gentlemen much disguised. They use the rogues' dialect with singular case."

"It is surprising!" exclaimed Mr. Davids. "Their familiarity with vice is equally remarkable."

Stephen shook his head. There was a lurking doubt in his mind that made him uneasy; that disturbed him despite philosophy; that was more subtle than reason, and greater than the arguments of Davids. His anxiety was not lessened when, soon after, he detected the latter making a covert gesture to the detectives. That gesture manifestly meant silence and circumspection. By-and-by, Davids said he could endure delay no longer, and Stephen was heartily glad to leave the place, and breathe the better air of the street.

CHAPTER XIII. AMONG THE SLUMS.

The detectives plunged at once into a dirty alley. They were in the Old Brewery. The

passage was very narrow and very dark, and much worn under foot. Doolby began to open crazy doors, and Stephen Parkhurst began to see filth and poverty at their worst. They went into holes, which were called cribs, where miserable human creatures were huddled together like vermin. In some of those sweltering graves the stench was intolerable. Stephen and Magnus often turned back to gasp for the better air of the alleys. They went up complaining stairs. The detectives used their clubs; they thumped and rattled at rickety doors, which threatened to fall beneath their blows. If the swinish inmates delayed unreasonably, if they were too drunk to lift latch, or push bolt or bar with alacrity, they were soundly berated by Doolby and Driggs. Sometimes there was considerable fumbling and shuffling before the dingy doors turned to reveal the sodden misery within. Profanity and obscenity hailed both ingress and egress, and followed them with harsh pertinacity to the next kennel. In many instances, blacks and whites were found herded together; and Driggs asserted, gravely, that the blacks were as bad as the whites. Parkhurst shrugged his shoulders, and did not express a doubt of the veracity of that knowing official. It did seem probable to him that the negro might sink as low as anybody.

In one bare crib beneath the ridgepole they found ten or a dozen hateful hags, the sight of whom made Stephen shiver. They were tattered and torn, wrinkled and wry, gray and grizzly, toothless and tart, trenchant and testy, wicked and witch-like, malignant, mouthing crores, with no place to lay their stevish heads and half-naked bodies. One sunken-jawed harridan gibbered and gibed at Stephen, and doubling her long, skeleton fingers into ghastly fists, shook them in Stephen's face, while her elfish locks drifted like coiled snakes about her shriveled face and skinny neck. Stephen recoiled in terror from this horrible shape which followed him up, menacing and gesticulating like nothing human. He thought that hell had disembogued, and lost a few of its choicest ogresses.

The crib contained but one single movable, and that was a basket.

"That convenience," quoth Doolby, pointing with a very black detective finger, "is which they goes a stealin' with."

After this enlightening observation, Mr. Doolby considerably rescued Stephen from the hag.

"Where do they sleep?" inquired Magnus, whose notions of life and lodgings seemed greatly confused.

"In their skins," said Driggs, with a humorous grimace.

"On the bare floor," amended Doolby.

Davids remarked that he should think the poor wretch would freeze in winter weather.

"Freeze!" repeated Doolby with immense contempt. "What is there to freeze of 'em? Can't freeze parchment, can ye? Can't freeze dry bones, can ye? Nor dry sawdust, nor gunpowder? Not bad, I reckon. Not wery hard, I spect."

Doolby's line of argument was considered final and satisfactory, Magnus merely observing:

"They do look very crisp and bony."

"There isn't no marrer in 'em," quoth Doolby.

The hags shrieked in concert, and brandished their skeleton arms, as if they meditated a simultaneous attack.

"Look at 'em!" added Doolby. "Look at the bingomorts! You might split 'em into kindlin's with wery little sweatin'."

"The devil might kindle his fire with them, for I wouldn't," said Mr. Davids. "And here," he added, taking Magnus by the sleeve to detain him a little longer. "I'd point a moral and adorn a tale. All this comes of not keeping above the tide."

"Above the tide!" exclaimed Doolby, with indignant incredulity. "It's a lie! Throw them 'ere critters into the water, an' they'll float like corks, every one of 'em!"

"I was speaking figuratively," said Davids. "I was referring to the tide of life which floats us all, drifting one one way, and another another. They didn't keep their heads atop of it. It flowed over 'em; it sunk 'em; it did the job for 'em. And that's where they be at the present time. They're under, and the tide is standing on 'em. There's just the difference of being above or below, topmost or undermost, hindmost or foremost."

"The tide is a standin' on 'em?" repeated Doolby, with contempt. "There isn't nothin' standin' on 'em as I can see, 'ceptin' their rags, an' them don't stan' much to the pint. Sich nonsense isn't the walley o' that!"

Doolby snapped his thumb and finger, and led the way downward toward the basement. On the way they glanced into a kennel, where there were three infants lying upon three heaps of shavings.

"Sich is life," said Doolby. "Them is from small beginnings. Tall aches from little oorns grow."

"Infants!" exclaimed Davids, sentimentally. "You're young; keep above the tide."

"They will have to begin soon to do that," observed Magnus.

"They was born under water," asserted Doolby, oracularly.

"The little coves will float one of these days, perhaps," offered Driggs, as a kind of

fourth-rate prophecy. "I've knowed the tide to lift people as was a lying low on the corral reefs."

"Bingweat!" (get you gone) returned Droolby, with severity. "Them kiddies never float the walley o' a brass button. They'll hug the bottom forever. The salt sea barnacles, which is figurative, an' means the wiciousness of sin, will keep 'em down among the swash and seaweed till their moral natur is buried in the sand."

Droolby flourished his billy, and rounded his philosophy by giving a ragged girl a gentle rap on the head, with the admonition to "give her red rag a holiday"; meaning that she should hold her tongue.

"Some on ye," he added, threateningly, "an' I dunno which, an' it don't make no great matter o' odds, as yer all a low set o' scalliwags, has gone an' spereted away a young gal, an' hid her up atween the ceilings, or atween the floors, or atween the partitions, or atween son'ers, nobody knows where, an' it's she I'm arter."

A chorus of cracked voices protested entire innocences of all then and there assembled.

"Poor little drops of life," sighed Stephen, still looking at the unwaddled infants.

"Very troo," assented Droolby. "Drops o' life are good in their places, an' convenient when the stomick is out o' order. They keeps those drops below stairs, an' I can swaller 'em with less strainin' than them aforementioned."

The detective made a motion with his club toward the sprawling infants, and descended the creaking stairs. Stephen and Magnus followed sadly. Those naked little wretches on the shavings made them ask strange questions concerning the Christian whiteness of New York. A weird crone shrieked after them as they went, hurling down upon their heads unwomanly epithets and shocking badinage. Another said—and she was as surewisk as any:

"Don't come here for yer bleak Moll. We don't keep such dainty bits as you talk of. So close your nib, and go off with your patter. If there is any law, we will have it. We won't be knocked out of our peaceful beds by every boozin' cadger that chooses to call himself a trap. We've had enough o' them, I'll warn ye. Now I think on't, it seems to me I've seen that mug o' yourn afore."

"Stow your whids!" cried Driggs, quite startled.

To "stow one's whids" is to be silent. Droolby quickened his pace.

"You don't look to me like a flycop," added the virago, screaming with provoking persistency from her filthy eyrie.

"Wery imperlit!" muttered Droolby.

They found but one crib with a bed in it, and the proprietress was as vicious a catamaran as one would wish to see. Her irony partook of the malignity of the nether world.

Creak, creak: down, and further down. The air grew thicker. The wall oozed, and the footing beneath was like the slip of hell.

"Poor Fannie!" said Davids, with a great gulp.

"That's right, Old Giglamps! Gulp it down!" exclaimed Droolby, giving Davids a smart blow upon the back.

"Giglamp", in thieves' slang, signifies a pair of spectacles; and Davids had put on a very curious-looking pair.

"Bing we to the lushin' gulls." (Go we down among the drinking fellows.) "One extreme follers hard on the heels of another. From lullaby kids we go slap to bloated sluggers."

"This is very wonderful!" murmured Stephen, looking dubiously at Magnus. "I doubt these men," he whispered. "They mouth the slang too gibbly. Keep near me, and watch every movement."

When they had gone a little further, he found opportunity to ask Magnus if he had any defensive weapons about his person.

"Pistols!" answered Magnus.

"Walk you before me, and watch a chance to slip one into my hand," added Parkhurst. "Things look a little dark," replied Magnus.

Just then, things looked light; for Droolby turned and sprang a dark lantern in his face.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OLD BREWERY.

"What's the matter with gutter lane?" demanded Droolby, scowling.

"Gutter lane" is the throat.

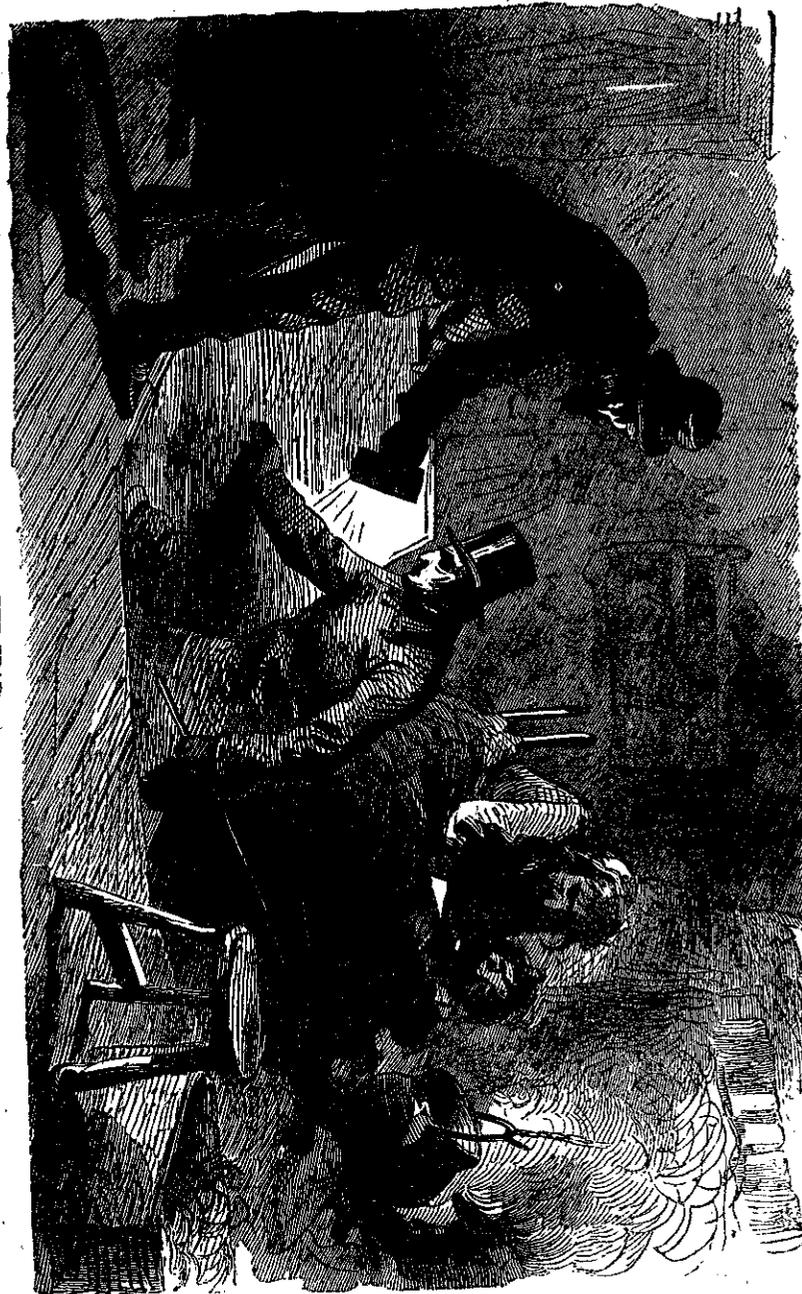
"Don't whindle till yer hurt," he added.

"Keep above the tide," suggested Davids.

"Adwise 'em, Giglamps; adwise 'em. Adwise is good for green uns. Don't be afeared, man. There's more under the earth nor there is atop on't. We shall be a-knockin' our heads agin the wrong side o' the pavements soon. There's two worlds in Gotham—one below an' one atop. Here we are below the level of the streets. Murderers' Alley is above us."

"My heart fails me," protested Davids. "This atmosphere chokes me."

Stephen Parkhurst now found himself in a situation entirely new, and its novelty did not render it less unpleasant. His friend and himself were standing upon some slippery boards in a dark and unsavory passage. Many unappetizing smells mingled there. The combined effluvia was but the prelude to the reek and fume in store for them. By



THE TRAP

putting out his hands, Stephen could touch damp walls on either side, and was often obliged to stoop, to prevent contact with the low ceiling. Droolby led the way with his dark lantern, while Driggs walked in good fellowship at his heels. The melancholy Davids was next in order. Stephen and Magnus were last. Magnus was nervously waiting a fitting moment to pass one of his weapons to Stephen; but Driggs had a singularly annoying, inquisitiveness, and kept looking over his shoulder—an action which Davids imitated. It really seemed to Parkhurst and Drake that they were rather too closely observed. But there was no help for this espionage. Stephen thought of the pure air of the country, and the contrast was as heaven to hell. He was staggered at the possibility of human existence in such a pest-hole. The tales which he had read of the crime and mystery of the Five Points began to drift through his memory with marvelous vividness. He began to believe what he had previously rejected as beyond the limits of probability.

They did not go far; but Droolby made several turns to the right and left, and appeared familiar with the way. They could hear the tramp of feet overhead. Soon, the distracted whine of a violin reached their ears. The sound proceeded from one of the kens. Droolby stopped at a door, and, turning his lantern upon Driggs, said:

"Dub the jigger!" (Open the door.)

Driggs attempted to obey this order; but the door was fastened, and he knocked with his club.

A rough voice demanded:

"Wot's the row? Hop the twig, my bobculls. There's no place for yer, here."

"Not so fast, my hemp-puller," answered Droolby. "Don't say no, without reason. We're fytbokes, an' can draw the cole when we're dry. Open, or we'll crack the ken."

"Is it Droolby?" was asked from within.

"Droolby and Driggs," said the former. "So hurry up, or we'll wentilate yer divin'-bell."

"Ain't down on us ground-swells, be yer?"

While asking this pertinent question, the questioner opened the door. Droolby illuminated the fellow's face with his lantern, and it was by no means an interesting or ingenuous countenance. It was a very ugly knob. It was not the kind of visage to stand in a banking-establishment, and to pass a check through the pigeonhole to the teller. A check wouldn't draw with that fellow behind it.

Droolby entered the ken, and the others followed. Stephen commenced an examination of the premises. The place differed from any he had seen. It was larger than the cribs above; and its perfumery was no bet-

ter. A very dismal lamp was struggling to light up its nastiness. It shone on many debased people; on bloated faces; on red and sodden faces; on pale and consumptive faces; on vicious and crime-marked faces; on faces to haunt an honest man forever after.

This, in the rogue's vocabulary, was a "flash-panny". There was a hole in one corner where bad compounds were vended at cheap rates. One part of the ken was devoted to terpsichorean exercise. In suitable proximity, a long-necked fiddle seemed bursting with impatience to let out its latent melody. The player, an uncombed individual, clutched the fiddle firmly in one hand, and brandished the all-conquering bow in the other, ready to start off at a nod or a gesture from the dominant spirit of the ken. Blacks and whites mingled without prejudice of color. Particularly nice distinctions were lost. The wretches fell to their sport with as much apparent good-fellowship as could be found in a fashionable ballroom. The violin creaked and squeaked with all its voice, and the subterranean revelers heeled it and toed it, as if life was a thing to be seized by the foretop, and enjoyed without stint.

"Innocent coves!" quoth Droolby. "This here is a scene o' mirth and hilarious joy. What a snuggery it is! I say, yer a rumbloke. Bolter!"

Bolter was the damber cove, or head man of the concern.

"Put up yer guy" (lantern), "an' tell us wot it's all about."

"Not the walley o' much," answered Droolby, with condescension. "Lookin' 'round a little, that's all."

"Yer a sly trap!" asserted Bolter, with a wink.

"There's a cly-faker as has given us some unconvenience," added Droolby. "De ye smell warmin'?"

"Don't be hard on us bobculls," whined Bolter. "We've stood a good 'eal o' buggin', fust an' last."

"Stop yer gob!" retorted Droolby, "an' tip us a couple o' inches of bloo ruin, which, among you flash warmints, is called white velvet, an' sich like abominations. Come, gen'leman, Bolter's agoin' to moisten us."

Stephen and Magnus refused this invitation, while Davids merely wet his lips with the anomalous liquor that was placed before him. The agitated state of his mind, he affirmed, had taken away his appetite for stimulants.

Stephen, Magnus, and Davids, were introduced to Bolter, who received them graciously.

Stephen was dissatisfied with the tardiness of the search. His distrust increased. He

looked often at Magnus. Could he have been safely in the street, he would have been well content. The squalid creatures about him; the tattered men and half-naked women; the nauseous fumes of gin, beer, and onions, combined with miscellaneous stenches; the tramping, jumping, and clattering; the rapid motions, the varied contortions, and the grotesque irregularities; the shouting, the wild laughter, the unseemly jestings, together with the utter abandonment of the restraints of civilized life, had such an effect upon the educated nerves and refined taste of Stephen Parkhurst, that he longed to fly from the scene as from a pestilence.

"Come, Bolter," said Droolby, by-and-by, when his taste had lingered long enough on the flavor of the detestable gin, "we must leave the dells an' the culleys, an' take a look at yer private affairs."

"Think o' my reputation," quoth Bolter.

"What if these bene coves should cackle?"

"Deek the cadger!" (see the thief) exclaimed Droolby. "He pretends to doubt Droolby an' Driggs. He's goin' to turn autum-bawler (parson), an' save his good name an' his soul at the same time. But it won't do. You'll make as likely a sprout as ever grow'd from a acorn."

"Yer mighty rough on a pal as has allus come down handsome with the cole," grumbled Bolter.

"Come, you Bolter!" retorted Droolby. "Don't go for to accuse a honest chap of bribery, corruption, blackmail, an' sich. Cut bene whids an' amputate yer mahogany (give civil words and be off with you). Yer a sly boots, an' I must see what you're got under cover. A bit o' kidnappin' has been done of late, an' I'm on the trail. So move yer pins, an' open yer private boxes."

"These coves needn't go," said Bolter, looking at Stephen, Magnus, and Davids. "There's some things they don't need to know."

"Don't stan' chaffin'," answered Droolby. "These is fren's as has a very deep interest in this case. Where Driggs an' me goes, they goes. Don't be vicious!"

Droolby scowled at the "damber cove", and made an ostentatious display of his billy. Bolter muttered, and taking a "glim", nodded to Droolby to follow.

Magnus, who was closely observing every movement, spoke in a low voice to Parkhurst, and said:

"Manage to drop behind, and escape, if possible. One of us must escape. If opportunity offers to me, and not to you, I will improve it. So let it be understood."

"I approve of it," answered Parkhurst. "It is agreed upon. The escape of one may insure the safety of both. I am afraid, Mag-

nus. A cold terror is upon me. We have been deceived. Those men are not detectives, but low villains. Give me the pistol. Now is your chance."

"Thank heaven, yes!" whispered Magnus. "Here it is, take it. Providence guide your hand should you have occasion to use it! Remember to keep behind, and if you suddenly miss me, bear in mind that it is not a cowardly desertion. We shall soon know whether these men mean mischief. In some of the murky passages one of us may loiter a moment, perhaps, without being missed; and that moment may suffice. A moment is sometimes fraught with momentous consequences."

A small revolver changed hands adroitly. Davids saw a quick, and as it seemed to him, stealthy movement; but what it had accomplished, or what it had portended, he could only suspect. That person's grief for the abduction of his daughter appeared of a fitful character. The consciousness of his trouble came and went strangely. He did not evince that constant anxiety that the ostensible situation naturally demanded. He kept above the tide, to use his own figurative style, wonderfully well. The conviction that deception had been practiced, had grown so strong in Stephen's mind, that it was very much like certainty. He glanced at the squalid faces that made the ken look like the abode of fiends, in the faint hope of finding evidence of sufficient goodness to hang an expectation upon; but he might as well have searched a Pandemonium for a cool spring of water.

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE TRAP.

Under different circumstances, Stephen would have been glad to leave the wretches, whose boisterous levity made him sick at heart; but as matters were, when he followed Droolby, Driggs, and Davids, from the lair, and the door closed after him, he felt a sort of regret; and human companionship, however degraded, he esteemed preferable to the gloomy uncertainty before him, under the guidance of Bolter.

It was then that he began to realize how much he was cut off from the busy, breathing world. To perpetrate crime in such a place, was nearly equivalent to a guaranty of immunity from punishment. A blow, a thrust, would accomplish the deed. Even a pistol-shot would attract no attention from persons in the streets. He thought how easy it was to stop the beating of a heart and the pulsation of an artery. He looked at Magnus, and sighed for Ursula and Sibylla, and the safety of the brown-stone house. Lost homes are regretted. He said to himself:

"Hitherto, I have been happy without knowing it."

Bolter entered another den, where a withered old woman was brewing some kind of a broth over a smoke. We call it a smoke, because very little flame was visible. There was a younger woman there, and a deformed boy burrowed in a corner.

"A snuggery, this is," said Droolby. "Yer own private convenience, I spect?"

Bolter answered: "Yes."

"Warm in winter an' cool in summer," added Droolby. "Twould be very pleasant, howsoever, if yer had a pluckier draft to yer fireplace."

The arrangement for getting rid of the smoke was very simple. A rusty stovepipe had been ingeniously introduced into a chimney above.

"Don't go for to give yerself the gout with high livin'," admonished Droolby, facetiously. "Use pavin' stones for soup, an' save yer bones agin a time o' need. Strong wittles does violence to the stomick."

The ancient beldams shook a battered iron spoon at the brilliant Droolby.

"Ventilate yer wickousness," said he, preserving that amiable temper that so much distinguished him. "This here is yer own hotel, an' yer not obleeged to entertain angels unawar's, 'thout givin' 'em a piece o' yer mind."

"Don't vex her," said Bolter. "Wex her!" quoth Droolby. "You can't wex her. Her temper's sweeter 'n winegar. It's jolly to have a 'virtuous household. Here's a infant, too. A reg'lar Richard Third, that infant is. He'll take to tragedy, as a fish to the water. No makin' up to do. Born with the shoulders on. What an invention! Yer a deep un, Bolter. That's wot I call lookin' ahead. 'Twas done by breakin' his back, I spect."

The deformed boy crept behind his mother, who sat gazing absently at the few smoking fagots on the broken bricks, called by courtesy a fire-place, and which was but a miserable caricature of that useful contrivance. Bolter's den was a burlesque on life and living; if things so serious can be burlesqued. Misery is often grotesque, and is always sad.

"His back might as well be broke," muttered the hag, who was simmering the witch-broth, "for all the good he does. If I had my way, I'd throw him into the sewer, hump and all. I'd send him out of this, least-ways. He's as able to go a beggin' an' stealin' as any kiddy of his age. I believes in ev'ry one doin' their part."

The ogress thrust her spoon into the diabolical caldron, and made a commotion among the bones; then added, in a dismal, croaking strain:

"Why do ye bring all these gapin' coves down here? Ain't they nothin' to do, but to poke their noses into other folks' business? Bingavast, an' leave me alone!"

"Hold up, you catamaran! Ugly woman! Ain't got a bleak mort stowed away 'mong yer duds, have ye?"

Stephen looked for the duds spoken of, but could see nothing but a heap of sticks and chips, some shavings in a box, an old tin dipper, and the kettle sweating over the smoke.

"Peer and peep!" quoth the ogress. "Yer welcome to all ye'll find. There's a good many corners, you see," she went on, sarcastically, "an' a good many holes where a gal could be hid. A gal brought here agin her will, wouldn't make no noise, I s'pose!"

"That's what I told 'em," said Bolter; but Droolby thinks I've had a hand in't."

"Stop yer patter!" retorted Droolby, authoritatively. "This ain't all, an' ye know it. Come, pull up yer traps, an' bring on."

"If I must, I must," answered Bolter, doggedly, moving the box that contained the shavings.

"I wouldn't be so tame 'bout it," mumbled the old woman. "I'd have no handogs barkin' underneath. If I hates anythin', it's the whelps o' the law, which is allus disturbin' on us, an' a stirrin' us up, an' a comin' an' goin', and takin' our bene coves away, for no reason whatsoever, an' a clappin' their wrists in ruffles. There is no liberties. Our liberties is gone, an' the traps has gobbed 'em. If I had my way, I'd dub no jigger but on compulsion."

"That old leddy," quoth Droolby, "is ready for the hemp. It's a pity to keep her a waitin'. But Tyburn tippets are not so easy to be come at in this 'ere free an' easy Gotham."

"Bottle yer gab, or ye'll git this kittle o' soup on yer head, as ye go down the gang-way."

While Droolby and the hag were thus patterin', Bolter, greatly to the surprise of Stephen and Magnus, lifted a trapdoor and revealed a black hole at his feet.

"Give me yer darkey" (lantern), he said, "an' come along."

Bolter stepped into the hole, and had it not been for the light of the lantern, he would have entirely disappeared in the Stygian darkness. There was a moment's hesitation about the order of going, which Droolby terminated by thrusting himself into the suspicious aperture. Driggs glanced at David, and the latter went next, with the observation:

"It looks like goin' under the tide." "Come on," added Driggs, addressing Magnus and Stephen. "Go down, an' don't be

afraid. "I'll bring up in the rear." Then to the cove: "Don't shut pan on us. Leave the hatches open, old woman. The air mayn't be like apples, below."

Driggs stepped back, and it was evident to Parkhurst and his friend, that he had set his mind upon being the last to descend. So, guided by the small red focus of the lantern, they went down a ladder, and stood on the ground. They were in a cellar, which seemed to Stephen quite uninhabitable.

"What, in Heaven's name, are the uses of such a place as this?" he asked, turning to Davids.

"You ask too much," answered that bereaved gentleman, buttoning his coat to his chin, to keep out the damp air.

"Were it clean enough, it might be used for the fattening of swine," observed Magnus, with a disgusted turn of the nose.

"Yer a squeamish cove," said Bolter. "You've lived too long atop of the ground. Fire and light make a mighty difference in the looks o' things."

"When looked at in pint of a convenience," amended Droolby.

"We're under the sidewalk, now," said Bolter, when they had walked a few paces.

"What jigger is this?" demanded Droolby, stopping near a door which his conductor had passed.

"That," replied the damber cove, "is a dummy an' a blind, an' there's no need as you should trouble yerself 'bout it."

"Quite the reverse," quoth Droolby. "Tip me yer wattles" (give me your ears), "an' hold yerself open to conviction. Dub that jigger or I'll make you whindle like a kiddy." (Open that door, or I'll make you cry like a child).

It was then that Stephen Parkhurst endeavored to use his perceptions to the utmost. The light was dim, and the faces of Droolby and Bolter looked grim in the fluctuating rays; but he saw only those two faces. He believed that he detected arrant hypocrisy in both; that the passing of the door by Bolter was a feint; that the whole scene was by pre-arrangement. But all conviction founded on reason, analogy, and speculative evidence is attended with doubt; and Stephen, though morally convinced that he was betrayed, clung desperately to hope and dubious probabilities.

"Run yer rig!" succumbed Bolter, unlocking the door with a rusty key.

"Watch this cove, gen'lemen," said Droolby, taking Bolter by the collar. "Grab him. Driggs; an' you, Davids, an' the tothers, back up my pal, to keep the thief from padding the hoof. If there's any wickedness here, I'm goin' to ventilate it."

Driggs obeyed orders. Bolter struggled.

Davids pressed forward, officiously, to aid the detective.

"Stan' off!" said Bolter. "This here isn't fair!" Then he knocked Driggs down, and a general scuffle followed, during which Stephen found himself seized by the shoulders, and pushed through the open door. All this was very sudden. There was no time for reflection on the part of Stephen; none for resistance. He was alone in the dark, before he had suspected the object of the scuffle. His first thought was concerning Magnus. He put forth his hand, hoping to touch his friend; but met, instead, the cold and dripping walls. The darkness was impenetrable. Stephen stood confounded. The danger which he had expected, was upon him. He remained mute and motionless, listening intently to every sound that reached him through the then invisible door. He heard oaths and laughter. Presently, Droolby said:

"We've got 'em wery snug."

"I pushed one of 'em in," said Bolter. Who pushed in t'other?"

"Dunno," replied Driggs. "The lantern went out when Bolter dropped it, an' I got hold o' Davids instead of the brother of the coif (lawyer).

"This is wexatious!" exclaimed Droolby.

This conversation not being carried on in suppressed voices, was quite audible to Stephen. He held his breath with expectation. It was evident that Magnus had made an attempt to escape, and was at that very moment endeavoring to make his way out of the ken. So much depended upon the success of the trial, that Stephen found it extremely difficult to maintain his calmness, and to keep his generally firm and healthy nerves in subjection.

Bolter muttered; Driggs muttered; Droolby muttered; Davids muttered. During this time, the parties were, obviously, recuperating the extinguished lantern, and some pretty startling profanities attended their efforts. The wick refused to respond, without coaxing, to the application of the match, and this delay was particularly agreeable to Stephen, who felt sure that his friend would improve every instant. Should Magnus fail, he was of the opinion that he never should see the light of the sun again. He thought he recognized, in this situation, the handiwork of Richard Parkhurst, who could not feel safe and comfortable while Norman Drew was in existence. That Richard suspected the trick of the substitution of one body for another, he could not believe. He did not court these reflections; they came to him of necessity, molded from his immediate surroundings.

He put his ear to the door.

"The fakement cove has dodged us," quoth Droolby, who was still cool. "Put after him, Bolter, an' bring him back, dead or alive. Don't stan' about stunnin' him. Stun him, if he's unconveniently vicious."

"Fust of all," said Driggs, "shut the trap-door."

"It may be too late for that. The old woman 'll know," said Droolby, beginning to chafe the tardiness of his accomplices. "Hurry up! I'll guard this ken till ye come back. The bolt is pushed home, an' I don't mind bein' in the dark."

Stephen heard the villains hurrying away, and silently prayed for Magnus.

"Let me out!" quoth Stephen, knowing that Droolby was at the door.

"Sorry to say," replied the fellow, "that the gen'lemen who was with me of late, has taken away the key."

"This is ruffianly!" muttered Stephen.

"Wery prowokin'!" responded Droolby. "Dunno how you'll git out o' this dilemma!"

"There's but one way of dealing with scoundrels like you," retorted Stephen.

"Which way is that?" asked Droolby, who seemed much at his ease.

"Money!" said Stephen.

"Money is a convenience," assented the complaisant rascal.

"Money induced you to undertake this job," responded Stephen. "You were hired to inveigle my friend and myself into this execrable den, where, to robbery, you intend to add murder."

"This," interrupted Droolby, raising his voice, "is a insinuation. It's damagin' to a upright character."

"Your Davids was an impostor, and you are all thieves, vagabonds, and cut-throats, together."

"I wish I had witnesses to this violence," answered Droolby, with pathos. "Little did my mother think that her offspring would be called a wagabones."

"Listen to me, fellow," retorted Stephen, with firmness. "I am a man not easily terrified. I never give up, tamely, to circumstances. It is my motto to struggle with Fate itself."

"A reg'lar tragedy-cove," said Droolby, sotto voce.

"If money has bought you once, it will buy you again, and I propose to be the purchaser," Parkhurst continued.

"Wery kind in ye," said Droolby.

"You understand me, I suppose?"

"I'm conversant with the King's English. Ventilate yer ideas, Mr. Droo."

"So you know my name?" said Stephen, somewhat startled to hear himself called by

that appellation in a tomb as deep and dark as that in which the remains of his foster-brother reposed.

"Was properly interdooced, 'cordin' to the oosages of high blokes, an' well-bred dodgers. Paidin' me for stoppin' to mention it. I was once a stannin' floor-manager for the balum-rancum, an' never forgets try manners. A slap-up caper-cove I be, an' can bow an' scrape with the Buck of Dookinham hisself."

"Do you know Richard Parkhurst?" demanded Stephen, in an authoritative tone.

"Ye hurts my feelinks," whined Droolby. "I can't do violence to friendship."

"Who is the scamp that calls himself Davids?"

"How dreadful he goes on. Stubble yer redrag, Mr. Droo."

"What I wish to say, villain, is this; and as you value your neck you had better give heed to it; I will out-bid your buyer. I will give more for my liberty than you will get for depriving me of it. If you want money, I'm the man to treat with. I can purchase you, one and all, with this infernal rat-hole that you scoundrels germinate in, thrown in to the account."

"A reg'lar Rosschild!" responded Droolby, with vexatious nonchalance.

Stephen thought the fellow would be astonished to learn his ability to handle so much money, and his cool, incredulous rejoinder, as sailors say, "quite took him aback". He felt a strong desire to take Droolby by the throat and compress his windpipe just enough to stop his respiration.

"If my friend escapes," resumed Stephen, "he would raze the Old Brewery from the ridge-pole to the lowest foundation-stone, to find me; and it would go hard with you underground vermin, if you be not hanged outright. As a scoundrel, your wisest course is to accept a bribe from me, and cheat not only your brother-thieves, but your employer. The old proverb says there is honor among thieves, but I doubt whether it applies to Cow Bay and its filthy, disgusting inhabitants."

"Wery complimentary! Yer morils is dreadfully out a order. I was eddicated to be troo to the proverbs, an' I don't want to be waxinated with yer doctrinings."

"Listen, fellow! Do you believe what I have said about my ability to command money?" asked Stephen, emphasizing the question by a blow upon the table with his fist.

"Well, since ye puts the question to me, square as a brick, I don't mind answerin' as I wery much doubts it. I've hearn some-what of yer history, my swell cove, an' I

know that Norman Drew is as poor as a mouse in a church-orging. A mouse in a church-orging is apt to have wind in his stomick, 'specially Sunday mornin', when the bellerses is a goin'."

Parkhurst's heart misgave him. He had lost sight of the fact that, in the character of Norman Drew, he was necessarily poor. To reveal his true name and character was out of the question. Such a revelation would not only destroy his plot, but be likely to insure his own destruction. He made an attempt to shake the obstinacy of the provoking Doolby.

"You have been misinformed," he began. "I can really and truly command several thousands."

The spurious detective received this solemn asseveration with a prolonged whistle.

Stephen, not being overstocked with patience, kicked the door, and said something wicked.

"His brainpan is cracked," solused Doolby. "This adwentre was too much for him. Then to Stephen: "Where do ye keeps the brads?"

"In various banks," answered Parkhurst. "Will ye oblige me by namin' one o' these banks?" quoth Doolby, with an unruffled assurance that outfanked the remainder of Stephen's patience.

He vented his resentment in harmless oburgations. Remembering that he was dealing with a politic knave, he rallied his equanimity, and replied:

"No matter about the banks. If you will specify a reasonable sum, my friend Magnus shall procure it for you, while I remain here as a hostage."

"Yer frien'," said Doolby, "can't be counted at the present time, havin' tookin it into his noddle to mizzle the ken. But don't inwigoate yer hopes with that. I'll wager a flimsy (bank-note) to a tanner (sixpence) that he won't pad the hoof to-night."

"Heaven help him!" murmured Stephen. "Better trust to his legs. Heayen, my friend, is rather ambigowous, an' isn't invariably on hand when wanted; but one's legs is allus with 'em."

"I want to know what you intend to do," cried Stephen.

"Wery nateral," observed Doolby. "Some'at, it'll depend upon circumstances; but I recking as how you won't see the walley o' a capuill o' sunlight in a long time."

"What! Am I to be incarcerated in this death-sweating cellar, while Richard Parkhurst perpetrates his villainy, and ruins all that are dear to me?"

"Which are them?" inquired the ruffian. "I wasn't aware, appearantly, as you had

them that is dear to ye. Perhaps, they're in them same banks as you spoke of, where you keeps yer cole."

Perceiving that he had blundered, Parkhurst hastened to correct the inadvertency.

"I referred to my foster-brother's daughters," he said, "for whom I have the deepest regard. It is not asserting too much to say, that I love them as I would my own children. I perceive that they are to be turned out of doors, and that the assassin, Richard Parkhurst, is to take possession of Stephen's fortune."

"Assassin is wery strong," suggsted Doolby, with mildness.

"Let us come to some kind of an understanding!" exclaimed Parkhurst, almost in despair. "If my friend has not escaped, and we must be kept under ground for a longer or shorter period, give us a dungeon that it is possible to live in, and food that it is possible to eat; and, after a time, we will convince you that it is for your pecuniary benefit to recede from this villainous scheme, and take the back track. I will give a thousand dollars to be set free."

"Wery reasonable! But providin' you had the brads we couldn't trust ye, for you'd be down on us with the p'lice, an' then some on us might jerk at the timber or rot in prison. It won't do. We dark uns has to look out for number one. Atween you an' I, Bolter is a hard boy, an' the old woman above is harder still. They wouldn't mind cuttin' a weasand, or snuffin' yer candle in some other way, no more'n they would walley swallerin' a nipperkin o' bloo ruin. I'm a reg'lar kiddy alongside o' 'em. But that is nix; so be quiet, an' I'll see ye agin."

"Stay! I'll give you my watch for a light, and something decent to sit and lie upon, and to eat."

"Thankee," said Doolby, playfully. "I've got the ticker in my pocket now. Yer wery kind. Got any walables 'bout ye that ye didn't fork over?"

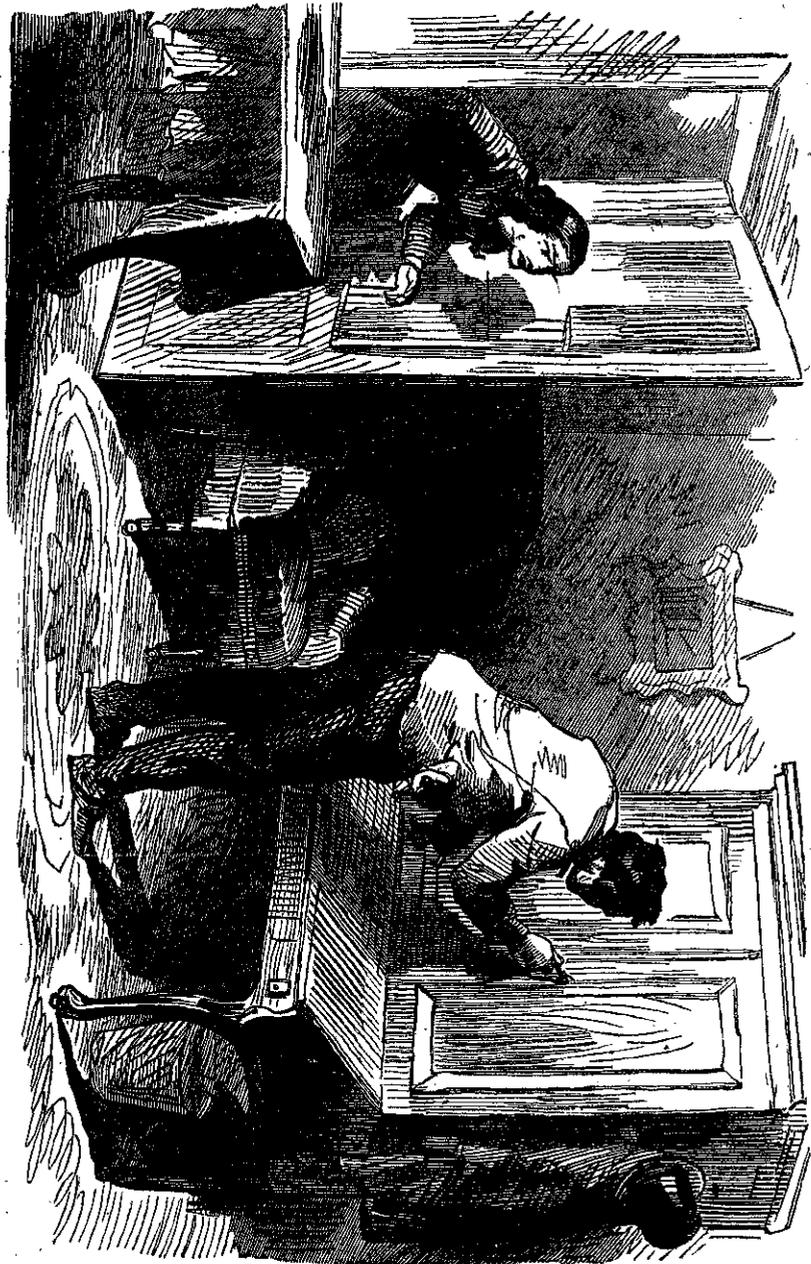
"Yes," said Stephen, feeling for his pistol. "This frankness is conwincin'. What is it?"

"Open the door an' I'll give it to you," answered Stephen, with his finger upon the trigger of the revolver which Magnus had given him.

"There's no hurry 'bout it," returned the cunning rogue. "Keep your walables till we meet again. I'd rather be excused from seein' you in the dark. I'm goin' to see what's become of the fakement-screever. I wish ye a happy noo year."

With these parting words Doolby went away.

Stephen Parkhurst was left in a state of doubt that was extremely painful. His mind



CAUGHT IN THE ACT.

was disturbed by fears that were not unfounded. His body was scarcely less miserable than his mind. The wet walls, the clayey floor, the thick and stifling air, all had their effect upon the sensitive organization of Stephen. But more than the damp and the mould, more than the nausea of the sweating atmosphere, more than the natural shrinkings from pain, more than the tortures of wild conjecture, was his paternal solicitude for the peace and safety of Ursula. Ursula took possession of the fatherly heart, and reigned there supreme, the queen of his affections. The same paternal instinct drew Sibylla into the charmed circle of his love, and held her there in the kindly folds of memory. For them he trembled, for them he suffered, for them his nature was aroused; and he resolved to bear up bravely, and to fight misfortune with all his strength, never yielding to discouragement, despondency, or despair.

CHAPTER XVI.
IN THE WINE-VAULT.

Sibylla Joy was not satisfied with the apparent death of her guardian. To her, Stephen Parkhurst was not dead. She could not, as the common remark is, "make him dead". It is a homely form of expression; but singularly applicable to certain states of the mind.

She thought that death had strangely transformed the features of her friend. She stole into the room many times, while the body was lying in the house, to look at the face of Stephen.

An extraordinary doubt grew within her; a doubt which the more she gazed the more it grew. She was bewildered. A problem was before her which she knew not how to solve.

She had seen and conversed with Stephen Parkhurst a few hours before his decease. Every lineament of his face was strongly impressed upon her consciousness. His lips, his brows, his eye-lashes, his hair, the peculiar oblique lines that traversed his cheeks, were so minutely daguerreotyped upon her memory, that not to identify him, under any circumstances, seemed to her an impossibility. Alone with that pale mortality, she knelt by the bedside; but could not grieve as she thought she ought. She arose, and said to herself:

"This is not my benefactor's face. It is like it, but it is not it. Does death change the mold and contour of the beloved face so much, that we cannot know it? Let me think," she continued. "Let me recall what happened. He sent me for Magnus Drake. He was kind and smiling, and petted me. There was a pan of charcoal on the hearth, thrust partly beneath the broken grate. That

was not a thing that I can remember having seen before; but I did not give it particular notice. I returned safely. Stephen's mood had changed somewhat. He was grave, yet tender. How I loved his calm, firm face."

She paused, and murmured:

"Not this face. He evidently desired to be alone. He enforced my going in an unusual way. There was something touching in his imperativeness. He pushed me out, and, drawn by an irresistible impulse, I opened the door again. I never shall forget his pleasant words. O gentle father! O indulgent friend! I weep to think of him as he was; but I shudder at this."

She drew back a little from the body.

"I lingered in the hall. What did I hear? The shuffling of feet, by-and-by; the suppressed voices of Stephen and Magnus, at first. The question is, What did those men come for? According to the apprehension of my ear, they brought something. One can tell when men are bringing something, even in an adjoining room. What did they bring?"

Thus far, Sibylla's train of reasoning was fair, and in harmony with the laws of deduction. She had begun rightly, and with the full force of logic. It was the proper method of analysis. A transaction must be measured by itself, weighed by its own weight, gauged by its own intrinsic width and depth. Every event carries with it its own evidence, and analytical minds will seize upon it with singular certainty.

Sibylla went on. A species of mathematical inspiration guided her.

"I heard sounds. Sounds mean something. They tell what is being done. Well, what did those sounds say? That nails were being drawn, or a box opened. Yes, a box was opened, I should think. The more I reflect, the more I am convinced. How clear it becomes! Those persons whose feet I heard, brought in a box by the private door, and the creaking and crepitation that I distinguished, were produced by prying off the cover with some instrument. The box contained—What did it contain? Wine, perhaps. A very choice wine, probably. Why did he receive it privately? Why did they whisper and step softly? Need there be secrecy about a box of wine? Not ordinarily. What next? If I am a good listener, there was considerable manipulation after the men departed. Magnus was there, and the charcoal was there. I could smell the charcoal."

Here Sibylla reached another important question.

"Would Magnus Drake go away and leave his friend exposed to danger? He would not, provided he had any means of suspecting the same. Had there been any morbid ten-

dency to suicide in Stephen's mind, the keen-witted and practical Magnus would have detected it and guarded against its fatal culmination. He would have said:—"Stephen, you are morbid. Order this execrable charcoal away! I am going to watch you." Or, perchance, he would have said:—"Richard Parkhurst has been here. I know him to be a scoundrel. He ordered this brasier. He wants to smother you. He counts on the probabilities of your going to sleep and forgetting your dangerous companionship." I am sure he would have distrusted Richard Parkhurst, having known him for many years. That miserable, scheming man should never have entered this house. But where am I? I will review the events of that night, and I will doubt less, or I will doubt more. Occasionally, I heard words. I heard the vagabond Richard's name distinctly pronounced; also another name. Whose was it? I can not recall it. But it will come to me sometime. Names come and go singularly. There were other things that reached my ears, which I will seize upon and thread together at my leisure. The employment of these two gentlemen in that room was not of a trifling character. They visited the wine-vault. Was it to carry down the wine? Should they not have conveyed it there before opening it? The next link in the chain is startling. How shall I explain what I saw, when I opened the door and looked into Stephen's room? I saw a man's foot—a slippered foot upon the bed. Stephen and Magnus being gone, whose foot was it?

At this point in her review, she was greatly perplexed. Not much less surprising was the stealthy appearance of John Jerome, and his evident embarrassment and terror, when he retreated to the servants' hall. Putting all these things together, Sibylla pondered upon them. She was not a person to be content with mere mental operations; she acted, as well as thought. The night previous to the burial of the remains of the suppositious Parkhurst, Sibylla resolved to visit the wine-vault. Knowing where the keys were kept, she procured them; and, at the hour of eleven, with a lamp in her hand, began her investigations. It was not without shrinking and trepidation that she started on her errand. She passed the room, where death had so recently been, with hurried steps and some superstitious flutterings of the heart, yet with more courage than most girls of her age would have displayed. She unlocked the doors with tolerable firmness, and descended to the vault. She found it very dark and silent. She had been there last with Stephen. It was not so gloomy, then. The kind face of her guardian was wont to make all places agreeable to her. Now, the wine-cellar

looked like a tomb. She was afraid to lift her eyes, at first, and to follow the flickering rays of her lamp into the dark background. But, rallying her nerves, she conquered her timidity sufficiently to advance. Gathering up her skirts, Sibylla walked among hampers and pipes, in search of something to bear testimony to the secrets of one eventful night.

She found a dumb witness, presently. That dumb witness was a long, narrow box, with Stephen Parkhurst's name painted upon the cover. Sibylla contemplated the singularly-proportioned box some minutes before venturing to touch it. Placing her lamp upon a barrel, she removed the cover. Within she perceived some straw and bottles. The straw was loosely put in, and the bottles not placed with much care.

"This," mused Sibylla, "is what came in at the private door."

She put her hand into the straw to test its compactness, and was immediately convinced that, whatever came in the box, that was not the original packing. She took up the bottle and examined it. It was claret.

"That never came in this box," she said. "This was Stephen's favorite brand. It is of great age, and it has been in these bottles longer than I have been in the house. Something else came in the box."

The peculiar shape of the box was unpleasantly suggestive. It made her think of the last box that human creatures require. How the mystery grew! How intensely absorbing it became! What bewildering thoughts floated in and out of her brain! There was not yet anything definite in her mind, but she felt assured that she had seized upon a clue to something very extraordinary.

She removed some of the packing, to see if she could find any evidence of its former contents at the bottom. While thus employed, she discovered a slip of paper in the straw. She seized it with eagerness. It was a telegram. It had slipped from Stephen's vest-pocket while he was arranging the bottles, and, falling noiselessly into the packing, had escaped the observation of both Magnus and himself. With shaking fingers she unrolled a long narrow strip. It read thus:

"BOLTONVILLE STATION, Sept. 25, 18—.

"To Stephen Parkhurst, No. — Fifth avenue: "A middle-aged, respectable gentleman, who gave his name as Norman Drew, has just died at this station. Finding himself dying, he requested that his body should be forwarded to you. His remains will be sent by the next train, and will probably reach you at 12 o'clock to-night.

"JONAS BROWNE, Conductor."

Sibylla read this quickly, then a faintness came upon her, and she was obliged to sit down. For a time, her ideas were greatly confused. The incongruities and possibili-

ties that crowded into her mind in a moment, could not be separated and reconciled at once. Out of the evidences before her there was an adjustment to make; but she knew not how to make it. Conjecture ran its wildest career in her dizzy head.

She put the telegram into her bosom. While her consciousness was staggering beneath the mental concussion, the instinct to preserve that important document did not desert her. It was some time before she was able to arise and replace the contents of the box, which now had a new and thrilling significance. She thought she knew what freight it had brought, and she wanted to get away from it as soon as possible.

She left the vault with emotions far different from those with which she had entered. If she was still the subject of doubt, that doubt was mingled with expectancy. If she had thrills of terror, they were exceeded by thrills of hope. She was in a glow of mental action. She walked like a somnambulist—scarcely knowing whether she went.

In returning, she heard a slight noise in the room where, apparently, the death occurred. At that hour of the night, and in that particular part of the house, any unusual sound was sufficient to startle Sibylla, or even a person of steadier nerves. Her first impulse was to hurry past the door; but her next was more courageous. Without pausing to reflect, and pushed on by the momentum which her recent discovery had produced, she opened the door quietly and quickly. Looking in, she saw John Jerome. He was standing with his back toward her at Stephen's secretary, with a bunch of keys in his hand. He was trying to find the keys that fitted the various locks, and she saw him try one after another without success. He was conducting his operations by the light of gas, which burned from a fixture suspended from the ceiling, and which was between him and Sibylla.

John Jerome was very busily engaged. He saw but the locks and the keys, and thought only of the treasure which those drawers might contain.

Sibylla extinguished her lamp, then, entering softly, turned off the gas. The sudden coming of darkness upon John Jerome gave him such a thrill of terror that he dropped his keys. The consciousness of being in utter darkness in the very room where Stephen Parkhurst had been treacherously murdered, was too much for his guilty conscience; but when he beheld the dim outlines of a figure, he lost all control of himself, and cried out like the veriest coward.

Believing that the ghost of Stephen Parkhurst had come to charge him with crime, and to avenge his wrongs, he made a frantic

plunge for the hall. Running his head against the edge of the open door he was nearly stunned. While he stood bewildered, throwing his arms about like flails, he heard the word "charcoal" pronounced somewhere in the room, in what appeared to him a goblin-whisper.

John Jerome made another dash, and fled with a precipitancy which nothing but terror can inspire, confident that a spectral Stephen was at his heels.

Sibylla, whose courage rather increased than diminished, groped upon the carpet for the keys which the rascal had dropped; found them, put them in her pocket, and went to her own chamber without allighting her lamp.

CHAPTER XVII.

AGITATION.

Sibylla's chamber communicated with Ursula's. Presently, the latter came in, and found Sibylla singularly nervous. She had flushes of heat and thrills of cold. She smiled and she wept, without apparent cause. She was so strangely fitful that Ursula was alarmed. She took her hands in hers with sisterly solicitude.

"You are ill, dear," she said. "Let me send for a physician."

"On the contrary, I am well," answered Sibylla, smiling. "I need no doctor but you."

"Something unusual agitates you," continued Ursula. "Just now your hands were cold; now they are hot. Now you laugh, and now you cry. This is not natural. This is hysteria."

"Then be reassured. Hysteria never kills," said Sibylla. "My body is well enough. Let it alone. You must allow the mind to have its fevers, as well as the body. In this world truth outruns fiction."

"What fever, what truth, what fiction?" asked Ursula, quickly. "Why do you mix things up so incongruously? I am afraid, dear! I am terribly afraid!"

"What are you afraid of?" inquired Sibylla, resting her head upon Ursula's shoulder.

"That your mind is wavering a little—just a little."

Ursula looked anxiously at her adopted sister.

"Be comforted, Ursula. I believe that, thus far, I am sane; but Heaven only knows how long I shall retain my senses. Such things are in my mind; such facts and such fancies; such realities and such unrealities; such shapes and such shadows; such fragments and such fallacies; such hopes and such fears; such a wild drifting to and fro among conjectures and speculations; such knowledge and yet such ignorance!"

This was a plethora of words for Sibylla. Ursula was amazed. She had never heard her express herself in that manner. She wrung her hands and shed tears.

"Misfortunes, like birds, come in pairs," she murmured. Then, to Sibylla: "You must go to bed, my dear. You are dying of emotion."

"Yes, it is emotion. My soul is a pendulum, and it vibrates between happiness and misery," answered Sibylla, striving to control herself.

"I cannot comprehend," said Ursula, shaking her head. "I know of no happiness to which your mind can oscillate. But there is misery enough. See how things go on in this house. Richard Parkhurst comes here too often. I cannot stir without being watched. It seems to me that Lucretia Fuller, like a still-hunter, has slow-tracked me through all this grief. Yet I have borne up. So must you clear up."

"I have kept up, and I will. You know I have been calm till to-night. And this, too, will pass, and leave me serene, and perchance more than that. There are things that I would tell you, but I dare not, I cannot. In feeling about in the darkness of these times, my hands touched something so startling that the simple telling of it would kill you."

"I wonder if John Jerome is in the house?" queried Ursula, shivering. "He must go at once for the doctor."

"No doctor, dearest. What doctor in the world is so soothing as your presence. Put your hand upon my forehead; its touch will seem like a benediction from him that has gone. You were so precious to him, that to me you are a part of him. You are the link that still connects me with my dead guardian. Dead? Who knows?"

"He lives with spirits of the just," said Ursula.

"And in you," added Sibylla. "In you lives the nature of Stephen Parkhurst. I loved him; and I love you, because I loved him and because you are like him. I wish I could sleep. If I could sleep an hour, I might awake with my facts and fancies less tangled. But I think I may venture to assure you that you may hope for an unexpected joy. Some one may be restored to you, perchance, whom you have given up for lost."

"This is the beginning of madness," thought Ursula, more alarmed than before. "I will call my maid, and my maid shall call John Jerome, and John Jerome shall call the doctor."

"John Jerome is a villain!" exclaimed Sibylla. "He has been an instrument of evil in this house. I shiver if he do but pass

me in the hall. To-night, I found him in your father's room, tampering with the locks of his private drawers."

Sibylla threw a bunch of skeleton-keys upon the table.

"Those are his keys. I caught him trying them; and, entering the room lightly, suddenly turned off the gas. The guilty wretch fled, frantic with fear, followed by the phantoms of his own misdeeds. Our good Magnus discharged him two days ago; but he has not gone. Why does he not leave us? Magnus must see to it. Kind Magnus! Dear Magnus! I love him! The sound of his coming footsteps is music to my ears. How dear are these human affections! How they enslave us! How they bind us to the earth! They bind us to earth, yet exalt us to heaven. Be of good cheer. No day so dark that there is not a star in it. No star so dark but there is a day's light in it."

Sibylla laughed and cried again.

"My crazy dove!" murmured Ursula.

"At the beginning of this calamity—before it had begun, even—a little thread was put into my hand. The end of a little thread as fine as a single filament of a spider's web. I have been following that thread, and winding it upon a spool of conclusions. The thread has grown larger and larger, until it has become a three-fold cord which cannot be easily broken."

Sibylla fell to sobbing and trembling, and Ursula ran for her maid, who came seasonably. The two began to disrobe Sibylla against her will. They persisted in undressing her, and presently had her in bed. This decisiveness on the part of mistress and maid, made Sibylla laugh the more.

"Highstricks!" quoth the maid. "Toth-erwise I never see none."

"We had better have Miss Fuller," said Ursula.

"I entreat that you will not send for her!" cried Sibylla, taking one of Ursula's hands. "I grant that, to-night, I am, like an unstrung instrument, and give forth nothing but discords; but I shall be in tune to-morrow. Sit you down beside me, quietly. Let Annette lock the doors and turn off the gas till the room is dim. Nature's doctor will come in the silent watches of the night, and I shall be cured without blood-letting or blister."

"It shall be as you wish," answered Ursula. "But if you are not better in the morning, I will have my own way about everything, and I will snuff out your willfulness as if it were a candle."

So Ursula seated herself by the bedside and watched.

CHAPTER XVIII. SLEEPING AND WAKING.

Sibylla slept; but it was a delirious sleep that lasted eight days. When she awoke, Ursula was not sitting beside her. She thought it had been a long and weary night; and so it had been. It was a night full of care and anxiety, troubled dreams, and inexpressible restlessness; but, through it all, her physical system bore up bravely. Even in her muttering delirium, her mind had a certain conscious cunning that automatically kept watch over her secrets. If her wandering thoughts now and then found utterance, little escaped her to excite the curiosity of the housekeeper, Lucretia Fuller. Not realizing that there had been an interregnum of such length between her sleeping and waking, her first instinctive act was to put her hand in her bosom, to learn if the telegram were safe. She then remembered that while Ursula and the maid were disrobing her, she had taken it from its hiding-place, and adroitly rolling it, till it was no larger than a pipe-stem, slipped it through a very small hole into the lining of her dress. This recollection relieved, for a moment, her anxiety.

Hearing a slight gurgling sound, she turned her eyes in the direction from which it proceeded, and saw a strange woman asleep in an easy-chair. The strange woman was very comfortably adjusted. Two hassocks, one placed upon another, supported her feet, bringing those important members nearly on a level with her chin. Her body, which had evidently been well-cared for in the line of nutriment, was extended indolently upon the depressed back of the chair. Her head was propped up with a soft cushion. Her face looked hot and flushed. Her mouth was open, and her chin was somewhat higher than her forehead. Sounds of a mixed nasal and subterranean character bubbled from her nose and throat. The woman was snoring. To the strange woman's right hand a little table had been drawn, upon which were arranged methodically various creature-comforts of this world, and among them a bottle of brandy and a goblet. In the bottom of the goblet were some blocks of refined sugar, saturated with the contents of the bottle. The strange woman looked as if she were herself saturated with the contents of the bottle. Nor by the general floridness of her countenance did it seem to be her first saturation.

At this luxurious creature Sibylla stared in astonishment. How came she there? What was she there for? Sibylla raised herself a little in bed, and was surprised at her own weakness. It flashed upon her that she had been sick. How long? To answer this, she looked at her hands and arms. Her hands, always white, were now nearly trans-

parent, and her arms had lost their pretty plumpness. She was startled at the revelations of her own person. She was much thinner than she had been. A single night could not waste one's body, however full its measure of pain. A faintness came upon her. The chamber did not look natural. The instant that the thought occurred to her that the room did not look natural, her eyes took in every object at a glance. She saw familiar things, and it was her own room. She wondered that she could have thought that it was not. How could it be anything but her own chamber! She was soon assured respecting that matter.

Who was this strange woman? A person procured to take care of her, probably. If that were the case, she did not like her. She was not long in reaching that conclusion.

"A nurse!" muttered Sibylla, sitting up.

"A nurse, if I ever saw one. I know a nurse well enough. A nurse is a person who takes care of herself with the pretext of taking care of others. A nurse is a good woman, who drinks the choice liquors and eats the dainties of the house; a good woman, who loves good quarters, good attendance, good pay, a luxurious couch, and easy slumbers. There reposes her likeness and counterpart. Her head is bolstered, her feet are bolstered, and her fat body flattens itself against my pet chair. That riddle, at any rate, is solved."

Sibylla paused to gather materials for fresh inferences.

"How long," she queried, "has this been? Am I really much worn with illness? Come, Sibylla," she said to herself, "be analytical, and mind your nerves. Weigh the circumstances in the balance of deduction. Do not jump at conclusions."

She slipped out of bed cautiously. She found that her limbs trembled, and that it required an effort to walk.

There was a large mirror at the other end of the chamber, and she went and stood before it. A single view of her person told the story of her illness. She thought of the telegram, and opened the dress where her wardrobe was kept. There hung the skirt in which she had concealed that important slip of paper. A hasty examination informed her that it was safe. Relieved of an apprehension, she returned to her couch, and was about to lie down, when the plethoric woman in the easy-chair had a difficulty in the extrication of some strange sound from her throat, to avoid strangulation. Rising a little from her bolster, she took a sip from the goblet, and with an eye for future emergencies, replenished it from the bottle. While she was doing this, she saw Sibylla standing by the bed, and, somewhat irritated by the spectacle, said:

"Go to bed, you crazy thing!"

Sibylla answered never a word. She stood and looked at the unwelcome woman.

"What under the sun are you doing?" she added. "How many times have I told you not to get up and make a disturbance! I can't have disturbances in the house. I can't have folks a runnin' round an' a breakin' of my rest. How be I goin' to keep up, if you don't keep down? How be I a goin' to keep up, and around, and keep a doin', if folks has no consideration for my nateral sleep? Nateral sleep is a thing as I must have. Go to bed, you Insanity!"

The strange woman's voice was thin and wheezy, and mixed up with chronic adpocers in the throat. Her manner was offensively authoritative.

"Go to bed, you Insanity!" repeated Sibylla. "What does that mean? Let me see. It means that I have been insane. Judging from circumstances, some time has elapsed since my lying down conscious, and getting up the same. This coarse woman is a sort of keeper. I will test the matter at once."

Sibylla advanced upon the woman with a tottering stage step, holding up an admonishing finger. The gesture and the attitude were a trifle startling. The plethoric woman seized the bottle and goblet, to baffle any possible design of confiscation on the part of Sibylla; to prevent any possible waste in case of an assault, she immediately swallowed what was in the goblet, and held it poised aloft, to throw, should the danger become imminent.

"Go away, you bedlam!"

This oburgation made Sibylla smile, despite her faintness and weakness.

"What ails the child?" she continued. "She never came at me afore. She's been quite peaceable-like all through it, 'cept a gittin' up now and then, and a wantin' to go to her sister. But she was easy pacified, and I'd on'y to speak soothin' to her, an' to lay acrost her a little with my chist, to keep her down."

The comfortable creature made this declaration in a spirit of mild complaint.

"Who are you?" Sibylla asked, changing her manner.

"What's the matter now?"

"You have not answered my question," said Sibylla, quite rationally.

The woman replaced the bottle and goblet, and looked inquiringly at her patient, who, with her white face and white nightrobe, was as white as an angel.

"It's took a turn!" muttered the woman. "It's goin' to show itself different. We shall have tother side on't now, which is dismal and toploftical, as 'tware. I'm dead opposed to that side on't. Howsomever, for the sake o' quiet, I'll humor her, and fall into the folly on't."

"I'm a woman," she said, assuming all the dignity she could command, "as gives up her own will and pleasure for the will and pleasure o' others. I'm one as has left the alloornments of this vain world for a life o' usefulness in the medicated chambers of sickness."

"But that does not tell me your name," replied Sibylla, curtly.

"Oh! if that's what you want, 'tisn't of no consequence. Howsomever, it's Abigail Vaughn. For short, called Nabby. Nabby, only by them as I takes to my bosom. No Nabby by them as don't take me to their bosoms. Nothin' to you, my dear, because you are unhinged, mentually, an' don't know Nabby from Nabbitail."

"I think there will be no difficulty about that, Madam," answered Sibylla, with self-possession. "I need strength more than friendship. I shall take nothing to my bosom at present but pure nourishment—some chicken-broth, or some arrow-root gruel."

"Eh?" queried Abigail Vaughn, considerably disconcerted.

"How long have I been ill?" continued Sibylla, retreating to the bed, and sitting down upon it.

"A longer or shorter period," answered Nabby, with some hesitation.

"I suspected as much," said Sibylla. "You are a definite person at an answer. Now, can you not inform me how many days I have been confined to this chamber, and kept in this bed?"

"Eight days," replied Nabby, getting more and more erect in her chair, and staring more and more at Sibylla.

"I hope you have managed to keep comfortable," added the latter.

"Tolerably," replied the nurse. "Tolerably, for me. As good as could be expected for one as don't live for herself. As good as could be expected for one as makes a daily sacrificsh of herself."

Abigail Vaughn continued to regard Sibylla with a steady gaze.

"Don't go for to play rational, Miss, for you know you ain't," she added. "You're out o' your head, and you knows it, and I thank a person as is out of her head, and knows it, to go to bed."

"And I would thank you," retorted Sibylla, "to get out of that chair, and bring me some water, and order a cup of tea and some cracker-toast, and go and ask Ursula to come to me."

"The dickens and the dogs!" muttered Nabby. "Here's a pretty mess! Here's a string o' things! Here's a sleeplessness! I wonder how long a woman would live at this rate?"

"Are you going to move?" inquired Sibylla, with decision.

"Eatin' an' drinkin' isn't good for you," quoth Nabby. "What's the matter with you is the brain. You don't want cracker-toast and water on the brain, do you? I knowed a patient once as was down with a bilious fever, which had taken him off his pins, as 'tware, to be clean finished an' done for by swallerin' a simple quart of milk-porridge. Milk-porridge, jest as 'twas milked from the cow, an' no question asked."

"Go for Ursula," said Sibylla, lying down, and feeling weary.

"Sick people mustn't ax for things as their nusses thinks isn't good for 'em. Them which have a good nuss has a treasure hid, as 'tware, in a measure o' meal. Miss Parkhurst isn't here, an' you mustn't ax questions, nor go to botherin' yourself, because yer brain is what's the matter."

"Ursula gone!" said Sibylla, thoroughly surprised. "It cannot be possible! Where has she gone?"

"Hug your pillar, an' never you mind. Take care of your brain, an' Ursuly 'll do well enough. She's with them which 'll look after her, I'll warn ye. There's another case of brain. The brains o' this house is in a terrible state. They say it's hereditary, an' is likely to bulge out at any time. Things as is hereditary will bulge out, sooner or later. Hers bulged out, an' yours bulged out, as 'tware. Once bulged out mentually, and yer bulged out for life. That was the case with him as swallied the charcoal. It come on of a suddint, and ye see which follered. He went to work an' smoked hisself. The smoke went in, an' the breath went out. Breath and smoke don't get on together."

Sibylla Joy arose in bed with sudden and singular strength. Her firm and noble character showed itself prominently. Her eyes, beautiful and expressive, were turned accusingly upon the red-faced nurse.

"Stop talking to me in this manner!" she said. "I will not hear it—I will not bear it. Do not come into this house to measure your strength with mine. When I speak to you, answer me to the point, and wait till I speak again. If you want to drink brandy and eat good things, do as I bid you. Know that I am mistress, and that you can never get above your station with me. You may be a fly, to annoy me, but I can brush you away. Through obedience to me, you will remain in this house longer than by any other means."

Abigail Vaughn slowly pushed the hassocks away with her feet, and sat bolt upright, presenting to Sibylla a face expressive of as much astonishment as it was capable of manifesting, and that was not a great deal; for there were so many cushions of fat under

her facial muscles, that they did not readily respond to her emotions.

"Well, well! I never did hear the beat on't? I never see a Insanity so cur'ous since I began to go out for the benefit of 'others. But I'm not a woman to bear hardness, an' I don't mind what's said in the ravin's of deliriums. Be quiet, child,—be quiet! Miss Parkhurst has gone to the hospittle to be cured, an' you're left sick to home, with yer mind in a state that's like broken glass."

"Gone to a hospital!" exclaimed Sibylla.

"To what hospital? For what purpose?" To a mad-horspittle, where they keeps loonatticks," replied Abigail.

"Ursula insane! It is false! cried Sibylla, indignantly. "This is something devised by Richard Parkhurst."

"Don't speak ag'in yer on'y guarjun an' pertector, who will take possession of this ere brown-stone property to-morrer."

"What do you say?" demanded Sibylla, sharply starting up.

Abigail repeated the statement made respecting Richard Parkhurst.

"Heaven help us!" murmured Sibylla. "Heaven help us, for Stephen Parkhurst won't!"

She sank back to her pillow and was silent a few moments.

"Richard Parkhurst," she said, presently, thinking aloud, "coming to this house to have his own will and way; to sit in Stephen's place; to say this shall be done and that shall not; to be a gentleman instead of a vagabond. Well, this is changing the order of things."

"An uncommon nice gentleman is coming with him to prevent him from being lonely in the house. An' sich a cowbuncle as the gentleman wears! An' sich a rajunt stone on his little finger!"

"A gentleman coming with him! A gentleman with Richard Parkhurst! That must be a new development in his life. What is this person's name?"

"It's something that repeats itself, an' there's a deal of Dooke in it. It's Dooke Dookeadoo, or some sich cur'ous thung."

"An adviser and accomplice," said Sibylla. "Well, we shall see. Let them come. One, both. One little girl may be wise enough to manage them."

Abigail Vaughn quietly took a little brandy, and dropped another block of sugar into the goblet.

"One little girl as keeps her elders and betters awake; her elders and betters which is a sacrificsh offerin' for others."

Abigail hiccoughed, and showed maudlin symptoms.

Sibylla felt her own pulse, and counted carefully the arterial strokes. If they were

not healthful, they promised health. They were not strong, but they were calm and regular, and the nervous susceptibility of the system had culminated in mental clearness. With proper nourishment, she knew she would soon be well. She needed nutriment more than medical attendance. The crisis had passed, and the youthful powers of life had asserted their supremacy, and were victorious over emotional agitations. She said to herself:

"This is a game, and I will help play it. Had I been trusted, it might have been better, but confidence was denied me. I am partly the possessor of a mystery which is prophetic of great things. Was it really prophetic? She thought, she believed in her heart that it was. But had there not been a failure in some part of the plot? She suspected so; but that was not clear. She had faith that something wonderful would finally happen.

Where was Magnus Drake? She first thought this question, then asked it. But she might have saved her breath; for Abigail Vaughn had sunk into a drunken sleep. Sibylla struggled bravely with circumstances. She reflected upon what she had heard, and planned what she would do.

CHAPTER XIX. FROTHINGHAM.

Love is a great traveler. It goes everywhere. It has been found in the most remote countries; where civilization is at the lowest. The savage breast responds to the gentle sentiment. It is scarcely to be inferred that the article is wholly monopolized by the human race. It affects both monks and monkeys. Love happens to all. It may occur at any age and at any place. It is both acute and chronic. It may come in a moment, or it may be the growth of years. It is fast, it is slow; hot, cold; wise, foolish; merry, melancholy. It sees more than there is, and is blind.

Hubert Frothingham fell in love; or, rather, love fell into him, in a moment of time. He saw a face that charmed him. He was stopping at a country-inn, when a comfortable traveling-carriage, drawn by two horses, was driven to the door. The carriage-door being opened, a well-dressed gentleman stepped out. The gentleman was followed by two ladies and a maid. It was the younger of the two ladies that attracted the attention of Hubert Frothingham. After alighting, she threw back the folds of a thick veil and looked about her anxiously, Frothingham thought. Her eyes rested an instant upon himself, and that glance enslaved him. He was a strong-winded and sensible young man, but a face conquered him: Perhaps I do him some injustice in stating that he was vanquished by

a face; for the lady's person was worthy of her features. It appeared to Hubert Frothingham, who was a close observer, that her expression was troubled, and her movements hesitating and apprehensive. Her companion, who was a pale, thin lady, somewhat advanced on the road of life, took her by the arm and drew her into the inn with more haste than gentleness. As the lovely young creature went in, Hubert observed that there was a silk cord attached to the white wrist of one hand. At the moment, that circumstance did not excite his curiosity; but, afterward, it became a subject of thought.

The maid, alighting last from the carriage, followed the ladies with downcast looks, and with eyes that seemed to Frothingham a little red with weeping. He gazed at this new and bright star which had so suddenly fallen into the firmament of his life, till the last fold of her draperies had swept out of sight.

The gentleman who accompanied the ladies, though well-dressed, did not present to general view a face calculated to inspire confidence. It had a brooding and sinister look. The glances which he threw to the right and left upon entering the inn were furtive and restless, and gave one the thought that there was something that he feared or remotely anticipated—a latent danger that might cease to be hidden by and by. The parties were soon shut from sight, and Hubert Frothingham had been stricken with a shaft from Cupid's bow. The arrow had not glanced nor rebounded from his breast, but pierced that tough and industrious muscle which throbs so unceasingly, and performs so much labor during the life of man. There quivered the unexpected bolt. Surprised, yet pleased, with the pain, he did not struggle to withdraw the dart, but permitted it to rattle in the wound.

He had intended to leave the Golden Robin—that was the name of the inn—that very day and within the hour; but he changed his purpose without knowing why. It was then late in the afternoon, and Hubert walked about the inn in a restless manner. He went around it as many times as the Hebrew warriors encompassed Jericho. He looked up at the windows, he watched every figure that passed or repassed him within the precincts of the now charmed house. He discovered her chamber, presently, and her window became the target of his curious eyes. He was afraid that the parties in whom he was so much interested would resume their journey before fortune had had time to do anything in his favor. He went to the stable and examined the carriage to see if it did not need repairing; and, finding it in good order, he gave the hostler some money, and asked him to look at the horses' feet and see which of

them had cast a shoe. The rascal came to him anon, with a serious face, with the information that the off-horse had torn off a shoe while standing in the stall. The young lover fed him again to carry the information to the owner, who came to the stable frowning and out of humor. With evident reluctance the horse was ordered to the smith's. The hostler was very humble, touched his old cap to the gentleman, said the horses were "fine bastes", and used his brush, and cloth, and wisp of hay, very assiduously upon the legs of the quadrupeds.

Hubert Frothingham sauntered back to his beat, apparently unconscious that a mishap had happened to any guests of the house.

Hubert walked over to the smith's, to see if the job was done well, or, possibly, for exercise. He paid the smith liberally, too, for doing a little work for him which kept the stranger's horse waiting for his shoe two hours. All this might have been accidental, but it looked like design. The traveling-carriage, which had brought the young man's destiny, remained housed at the Golden Robin that night. Frothingham walked beneath a certain window till a late hour, with an abstracted affectation of carelessness and utter indifference to everything pertaining to the Golden Robin. If he thought himself observed, he protracted his walk beyond the area of the inn, and came back as rapt and absent-minded as before. He tired every observer that night, and regulated his conduct with such skill that he was not the object of suspicion.

The lights died out in the Golden Robin. Not entirely, however; there was a faint glow in the little office, and a faint glow above in the lady's chamber. He kept his eyes upon that window, and sighed when he thought of the fair occupant. While he was looking for the fiftieth time, the curtain was put aside and the sash raised. Then a white hand was thrust out, and a slip of paper fluttered to the ground. Hubert saw it descend with heart strangely expectant. The wind caught up the paper and carried it a short distance. He ran after it, and very soon had it in his hand. It was not folded; it was simply twisted. He untwisted it quickly, and with eager curiosity. Upon it was written, with a pencil, the following words:

"SIR:—The unhappy writer of these words is the victim of a wicked plot. I am unjustly accused of insanity, and the persons with me are committing an outrage upon my liberty by taking me to a mad-house. I am obliged to write the lines by stealth. If you would do me the greatest service that it is possible for one human being to render to another, you will convey this information to—"

At this point the communication ceased. It was certainly an abrupt termination. It

was evidently incomplete. The writer had been surprised in the act of writing it; and no opportunity being given to finish the sense, had dropped it out as it was, hoping it would be of sufficient importance to attract attention.

Hubert Frothingham read it several times, by the faint light shining through the office-window. He could not form an opinion immediately. Having committed it to memory, he put it into his pocket and lingered near the spot where he had found it. Occasionally, he passed the window of his unknown charmer; but the light was extinguished, and the curtain and the window were quiet. He continued to pace to and fro, hoping that the sash would be again raised and another slip dropped. To his disappointment, nothing of the kind occurred, and he retired to bed at a late hour, his imagination tenanted by the face and figure of the fair stranger.

CHAPTER XX. THE ASYLUM.

Hubert Frothingham was a young man of good family. His father had enough of this world's substance to gratify every reasonable desire. Hubert was well educated. He graduated with honor at a famous institution. He was endowed by nature with many noble qualities, both of head and heart. He was magnanimous and he was brave. He was healthy and he was wealthy. He had been cast in no ungainly mold. He had just proportions of person, and intellectual gifts of more than average value. Having enough to eat, to drink, to wear, and to spend, nothing, apparently, stood in the way of his enjoyment. He was master of his own movements, and could follow the lead of his desires. His face was prepossessing, and, when animated, something more than that. There were times when Hubert was positively good-looking. There were ladies who actually thought him handsome; but, having traveled, he was not so much flattered by their good opinion as he was by his own self-esteem.

He arose in the morning, after a short and not very refreshing sleep. The very first flush of consciousness brought to him the image of the young lady; nor was he averse to such a visitor, impalpable though it were. He hugged the shadow to his breast, and played with the chain that enslaved him. Having leisure upon his hands, he had now an opportunity to employ it, and to keep out of idleness.

Upon descending, he learned that the traveling-carriage had already left the inn. The hour being early, this was a surprise to Frothingham. Eating his breakfast with

more haste than appetite, he ordered a horse to be saddled, and was soon in pursuit of the object of his admiration. Having learned the direction in which the vehicle had been driven, he was soon cantering after it. Arriving at a cross-road, he was for some time in doubt; but by dismounting and making a close examination of the carriage-track, he definitely determined which way to go. He pressed forward with impatience, the miles slipping easily from beneath his horses' hoofs, but he did not overtake the travelers; they strangely eluded him. He kept the trail with difficulty, and by making inquiries of persons whom he passed or met on the road. He found a farmhouse where they had stopped a few moments to procure some milk; and the information which he received there respecting the country and the roads, enabled him to go on with greater confidence and courage. The day was far advanced before he caught a glimpse of the vehicle, which was then slowly winding its way up a hill. He was careful to keep at a safe distance behind, and finally had the satisfaction of seeing the carriage stop before a large square building, and in a spot so lonely that it was a matter of surprise to him.

Frothingham, having paused long enough to satisfy himself that the travelers had not made a temporary halt, rode slowly back to the nearest farmhouse, forming various conjectures concerning the parties, and reading the unfinished note for the hundredth time. The singular affair grew more interesting. It was the beginning of a romance, and he resolved to follow it to the last page. If wrong had been committed for any one of these selfish purposes that govern the actions of men, he had time and inclination to trace it to its source; and he could think of no better or more pleasing employment. Had the young lady been put out of the question, it is probable that his zeal would have been less eager and his actions less prompt.

He suspected the uses of the square building; and a few careless inquiries at the farmhouse settled all doubt on that point. It was a madhouse. It was not called a madhouse by the benevolent persons interested in it. Certainly not. It was called an Asylum for Abnormal Persons. A very delicate and genteel appellation. A few of the country-people had ventured to call it an Insanery; a piece of irreverence which had called down the rebukes of the keepers. It had been spoken of, too, as a private hospital for the insane. However, the mere wording could not disguise the uses of the concern.

Frothingham was not much surprised at the confirmation of his suspicions. With the mysterious, incomplete little note in his hand, he would have been extremely dull

not to infer that an institution of that nature was the object of the journey.

Having, by his frank and engaging manners, secured a welcome from the inmates of the house, and good quarters for his weary horse, he waited till evening before proceeding to take a nearer view of the isolated institution for the treatment of "abnormal persons." As he approached it, he was yet more impressed with its lonely situation. It was far from railroads and important highways. Was this for the quietude of the demented minds? Was the solitude accidental?

A nearer view failed to produce more favorable opinions. The institution was surrounded by a high wooden fence, which gave it the appearance of a prison. He cautiously advanced, and at a prudent distance made the entire circuit of the asylum, observing closely every window. Some of the rooms were lighted, while others were dark.

Hubert seated himself upon a bench beneath a tree, and took counsel of himself. He said to himself:

"There is a person in that house who has excited my curiosity and my sympathy. I have followed her hither. I wish to help her. How shall I do it? She will be closely watched, and I must be discreet and cunning. How can I communicate with this young lady? I will be in wait, and trust to Providence."

Frothingham was not in a hurry to go away. The new emotion which the lovely stranger had inspired, influenced him more than he realized. So, buttoning his coat about him, he watched with the stars. The house became quiet at length. One light after another disappeared. The opening and shutting of doors, the echoes of footfalls, and the many signs and sounds of human activity that give life to an inhabited dwelling, ceased to be heard. This was Hubert's opportunity. He arose and approached the gate, which was a large and awkward affair, constructed of heavy timber. This gate, which seemed too ponderous for its uses, he examined with the hope that he might find means of opening it; but discovering a padlock and chain on the inside, concluded that entrance by that portal was not probable. Having been taught from boyhood that persistency was a good thing, he thrust his arm through the gate and felt of the fastenings, to see if forgetfulness or neglect had left a single chance for a further prosecution of his investigations. It often turns out that carelessness leaves open more loopholes for failure and discovery than the most persevering and prying mind can make. So it was in this case. The bolt had been turned; but the key, by some slip of consciousness, was left in the

lock. Frothingham, by a trifling effort, reached the key and gave it a sudden twist, and the work was done. Removing the padlock and chain, he pushed open the gate and entered the precincts of the madhouse. A large dog came down the graveled walk to meet him. Hubert was not afraid of dogs, but, under the circumstances, he was sorry that the proprietors of that abnormal concern kept one; but there was no help for it. He must retreat or meet the enemy boldly. So he plucked up courage and said:

"Poor doggy!—nice doggy!"

Doggy did not seem much flattered, but walked straight on.

"Good fellow! Noble canis!"

The great fellow was willing to be a good fellow, a noble canis, and a poor doggy; but not to sacrifice his sense of duty to flattery. He did not growl, but he looked very dignified and firm.

"Don't!" added Frothingham, retreating—"don't! I keep dogs myself!"

Even the fact of his being a dog-holder did not stop canis.

"Smell of my legs and you'll smell 'em," continued the intruder, resolved to use every lawful argument known among dogs, before resorting to harsher methods. The dog's present object was not to inquire about the stranger's canine friends, but to put a stop to his curiosity. Instead of smelling in a truly investigating spirit, he came up with business-like reticence of purpose, and quietly set his teeth into the baggy part of Hubert's pantaloons. There was neither haste nor violence about this; it was simply a matter of business. It was like an officer's tapping one upon the shoulder, and saying: "You are my prisoner."

"An incorruptible fellow!" laughed Frothingham, patting the dog upon his shaggy head. "I would give a hundred dollars for you, old fellow, even though you keep me here till morning."

The young man put forth all his dog-knowledge. He flattered, he coaxed, he reasoned. He assured his captor over and over again of his attachment to the whole canine family, from the smallest ratter to the sturdiest mastiff. Canis listened to these arguments. His calm courage and his insinuating manner of speaking, carried conviction through the shaggy canine knob. With a dog's sagacity, he perceived that he had caught a good fellow, and began to like him. You may trust a dog to know whom he likes. He soon discovers those persons who have a fondness for his species, and there is something in such that prevents him from hurting them, and disarms animosity. So this dumb guardian, after a time, yielded to the caresses of Frothingham sufficiently to let go of his

pantaloons, and to take the subject of further aggressive movements into consideration. The blandishments of the young man caused him not only to suspend hostilities, but to accept his advances with some favor. He received his familiarities without resenting them, wagged his tail a trifle, but without warmth, and finally permitted him to walk on, but slowly and with circumspection, he keeping continually between him and the house; a precaution which Hubert thought unnecessary. So far, all went well; better than he had expected. He had now an opportunity to look at the silent edifice at his leisure. Of course, he sought for her window. No other window interested him. He did not know how he should find it, but trusted to that chance which often accomplishes things unexpectedly. There were now but two or three lights visible, and one of these, he conjectured, might shine from her apartment. These windows were neither shaded nor curtained, but they were latticed with iron rods. The thought of their uses gave him unpleasant feelings. He could not contemplate those tell-tale bars without sadness.

A lost mind is more melancholy than a lost body. Among all the world's wrecks the most mournful is a wrecked intellect.

Had he fallen in love with one of those wrecked intellects while it was drifting past him? Possibly; but he doubted the girl's insanity.

Considerable time elapsed before Hubert's vigil was rewarded; but patience, that cardinal virtue, by and by made him ample amends for his watching and danger. One of the windows, that which had been dimmest, suddenly became illuminated. A light had obviously been placed near it. In this brightness appeared a form that he immediately recognized, and which he was never, never to forget. He beheld before him, not far distant, the heroine of the Golden Robin, whose name and history he was so anxious to learn. At sight of this gratifying vision, he started forward with such eagerness that his canine monitor made a low, warning sound, somewhat down in his chest.

"Don't be a fool, Carlo!" muttered Frothingham. "I can't take anything—can I?"

Carlo, sitting upon his haunches, with his long, bushy tail lying straight and motionless upon the ground, his long ears hanging to his throat, the top of his large head on a level with his back, his nose thoughtfully depressed, and his eyes speculatively downcast, answered never a word to this reasonable inquiry.

"It's nothing but a girl, and we're all fond of 'em, you know," quoth Hubert, fawning rather abjectly, I must confess, upon the dog.

"You don't think I can get her through those bars, do you?" he continued, manipulating the unresponsive poll of Carlo. "Come, Sir, be reasonable, and you shall go home with me to breakfast."

The knobby head looked doubtful about that; but the young adventurer, taking silence for assent, moved forward till he reached an easy angle of incidence to the window. There was a trifling remonstrance on the part of Carlo, who seemed somewhat in doubt concerning the line of duty.

Frothingham had heard of throwing pebbles against panes, to attract the attention of fair lady; so he groped for some pebble-stones, and, finding some small ones, threw them. Some of the first ones came back without touching, but, after a little practice, he succeeded in striking the grating, and finally, the window. The expedient was entirely successful.

The young girl, as if conscious that some one was making signals to her from without, shaded her eyes with her hands in her endeavor to see objects from below; and, failing in this, moved the light and tried again, with different results. Frothingham placed himself in the most favorable position, waved his handkerchief, and held up the slip of paper which he had received from her on the previous night. The captive saw both the handkerchief and the paper, for the night was silvery with light. Certain it is that the maiden's heart throbbed faster for what she saw. She thrilled with the thought that Providence had sent her a friend. She remembered the face beneath, upturned and bathed in the starry whiteness. She produced from somewhere, I know not where, the flimsiest little handkerchief in the world, and held it up to the panes. It was to Hubert like the fluttering of a white dove's wing. That was a messenger of peace to Hubert. It was the very spirit of love descending upon him. His sensations were of a kind never before experienced. He was enamored of a beautiful girl, and this was the beginning of favor. He was so elated, and there was such a promise of happiness in the heavenly bow of expectation, that he was ready to hug the moody Carlo, as a token of perpetual amnesty. That quadruped, having resumed his sitting, tipped his head a little, and listened dogmatically, blinking now at the grated window, and now at his charge beside him; not quite able, with all his canine clairvoyance, to quite understand the meaning and the moral of the scene. He knew, however, that he was the hub and the centre of the whole thing, and that it would stop did he not permit it to go on out of sheer condescension.

The parties were face to face. One was a

prisoner above, the other was a prisoner below. The object to be attained was intelligible communication to be accomplished? They stood and looked at each other. He was not very fully revealed; but the young girl, standing in a focus of light, was a fair target for his admiring eyes. He made a motion for her to raise the window. She made the attempt at once, but it was fastened, as he feared. Then he began to devise something else. While he was devising, she caught an inspiration and outstripped him. The flash of her diamond ring flashed that inspiration into her mind. Instantly she had one of the sharp points of the diamond against a pane, and was cutting into its hard surface as if it were soft metal. Hubert saw her hand traveling in a little circle, and wondered what she was doing. By-and-by he saw that same girlish hand strike upon the pane, when a small wheel of glass leaped through the lattice and fell at his feet. It made some noise in falling, but disturbed no one apparently. Carlo, however, suspected that his goodness was being abused, and looked suspiciously at Frothingham, who picked up the glass, his circulation considerably quickened by expectation. Holding the diaphanous circle toward the light, he perceived some characters were written upon it with the sharp facet of a diamond. There were the letters plowed delicately into the clear substance, but he could not read them easily. He turned the glass to various angles with the moon, and, finally, with much straining of the eyes, read:

*Magnus Drake,
Attorney-at-Law.*

Below these words were some fainter lines that he could not decipher. Although glad to receive this communication, it must be confessed that it did not convey a definite idea to his mind. He was disappointed. He wished to know the name of the young lady, her history and condition. He held up his left hand and wrote upon it, in pantomime, with the other. Immediately she produced a slip of paper and began to write with a pencil. All was now going well; but accident, which is sometimes a roaring lion, interrupted the silent proceedings, and marred for the time the plot. In stepping backward to obtain a better view of the pretty figure, he stepped upon a rolling stone, lost his balance, and fell against a semi-circular flower-stand, heavily freighted with flower-pots. There was a grand crash. The earth and vases, with their various plants and shrubs, were precipitated to the ground with a clattering that was truly startling. These arrangements had no sooner gone to the dogs than half a dozen windows on the lower

floor flew open, and as many night-capped heads were thrust out in inquiring haste.

Hubert Frothingham did not stop for farther developments, but patting Carlo by way of a peace-offering, hurried from the yard. The dog, with unexpected good-fellowship, followed him, and they left the premises together.

CHAPTER XXI. GORDON'S.

On the following day, Frothingham inquired about the hunting and the fishing privileges, and finding them desirable, immediately dispatched a note to a college-friend, requesting him to come to him at once for a few days of sporting and rural enjoyment.

Frank Southerly was a young gentleman of equal expectations, and in close fellowship with Hubert. They had manly faith in each other, and mutual confidences had given mutual grounds for that faith. Placed as he was, Frothingham desired the advice and co-operation of Southerly. The novelty of his present undertaking afforded a certain measure of excitement, but it was not unmingled with doubt and uneasiness. His friend had some experience and was fruitful in expedients; and in that restless state of mind in which he found himself, he believed that Frank would be a suitable and successful diplomatist.

Hubert went home with a bit of glass in his pocket and a large dog at his heels. The bit of glass had information upon its surface, and the large dog had information beneath the surface of his shaggy head. The young man had about as much comprehension of one as of the other. The writing was quite as obscure as the intentions of Carlo. He looked at it again and again, after he had retired to the little bedroom assigned him by the hospitable farmer. It still read:

*Magnus Drake,
Attorney-at-Law*

The lines beneath these words remained as indistinct and unintelligible as when looked at by the light of the shimmering moon-beams. The diamond point had evidently slipped, and whatever else she had intended to write was lost. He added this name to the unfinished note, and the meaning was yet incomplete; for where should he look for Magnus Drake? There was such a person in the world, doubtless; but the world is a pretty large place to look over. It was rather discouraging to search for Magnus Drake in so wide a field. Love itself might tire with a search so extended.

He retired to rest long after midnight, with his mind teeming with images of the fair

lunatic. Her beautiful face was set in his dreams, and her lovely person danced through his imagination like a sylphide. Arising at a late hour in the morning, and raising the little white curtain to let in the golden beams of day, the first object he saw was the nose of Carlo pressed against the pane of the low window, watching for his new master. Hubert could not help smiling. The eccentric behavior of Carlo amused, while, at the same time, it pleased him.

"Ah!" said he, "I am a dog-charmer."

He raised the window, and putting out a soft, white hand, conveyed his matutinal greetings to his new ally, who received them with dignity and satisfaction, and put his two large paws upon the sill, wishing to enter. Being flattered by the predilection of this prince of dogs, Hubert pushed up the window to its full capacity, and permitted him to come in. He made his *début* with one strong bound. He sat upon his haunches while Frothingham was writing his pressing invitation to Southerly, and seemed well content with our hero's society. Hubert talked to him as if there were knowledge in that serious head. He asked him if he were not a trifle surly on the previous night, and wished to know his opinion of the young lady at the window. Did he think she was crazy? Did he think she ought to be there? Would he go up with him to see her? Would he carry a note to her? Dogs had carried notes. So had pigeons. At any rate, they would have some pleasant walks together.

To all this Bow Wow wagged assent. Thus was rapport established between man and dog. They breakfasted together, with much politeness on the part of Hubert, and much decorum on the part of Carlo.

Farmer Gordon, Mrs. Gordon, and the little Gordons, were delighted with the acquisitions to their household. Both man and dog were popular with the little folks, who declared that the character of the latter had suddenly changed for the better, as he was wont to be exceedingly churlish up at the large house. Mrs. Gordon, who was a sensible woman, affirmed, after Frothingham had gone out to look at the farm with her husband, that dogs instinctively knew good-hearted people; and that a man who is fond of dogs would be fond of his wife; and, for her part, she would rather have a sagacious dog select a husband for her than a match-making mamma.

"That young fellow," quoth Mrs. Gordon, "will be a favorite among the ladies. And did you notice, Matilda?—Matilda was the oldest daughter!—what small feet and hands he had? His hands are white enough, I hope? But a lad can't have white hands and work on a farm. Bless you, Mr. Gor-

don never had white hands in his life; but he's been a good husband for all that. I shouldn't wonder if this Mr.—"

"Frothingham," prompted Matilda. "Was dead in love with somebody up to the Insanery."

"I think so 'no!" said Matilda, with a slightly contemptuous jerk of his head. "He wouldn't go wandering about in the night if he hadn't got somebody in his eye."

"He acts just as your father did, Matilda, when he first saw me," replied Mrs. Gordon, with simplicity. "They said he was dreadful absent-minded like in those days."

"Was you pretty, mother?"

"I don't know, child; your father thought I was. Leastwise, he said so, and he did talk a good deal of nonsense, dear; and I was silly enough to hear him, and to grow fond of him. Now, I suppose, if he had told me that I was sensible and homely, that nothing would have come of our courtship. Men don't marry girls altogether for their intellect, I suppose, but for something that is womanly about them, that can't be told or described, nor scarcely known by any name. Don't be strong-minded, my dear, but be a woman."

"He wouldn't go and fall in love with a lunatic, would he, mother?" Matilda asked, naively.

"Bless you, child, love is an accident! It is as much an accident as being run over by the cars, and is sometimes about as sudden."

"Dear me!" murmured Matilda. "I thought it was a pleasant thing."

"It's pleasant enough, for that matter," answered Mrs. Gordon, keeping quietly about her work; "but it isn't so comfortable at first, when people don't know how they stand, and how the yes and no question is. And sometimes a girl don't know her own mind, that's a fact. When a girl don't know her own mind, she must be worked round careful, and not hurried; for if you hurry her, you lose her. When the thing is mutual, why, of course, it is different, and those two people are ready to fly into each other's arms at the first opportunity, unless," added Mrs. Gordon, prudently, "she should be coquettish and play shy, just to bring him out, and make him fonder of her, and more earnest. But it's best, dear, not to carry that sort of thing too far; for some fellows are impatient, and so blind that they can't see love in a roguish eye. But a proud girl, once caught, she's as gentle as a dove. As I was saying, this young man has something on his mind; and if it isn't a young woman, I am greatly mistaken."

"Perhaps he has got relations in that terrible house," suggested Matilda.

"Heaven pity them if he has!" said Mrs. Gordon, shaking her head.

"Perhaps he's insane himself," observed the girl.

"One kind of insanity," returned the mother. "That kind which comes of itself, and goes when it pleases, and does not depend on the state of the body. He will not go away in a hurry. He spoke to me of staying some time, and of having a friend coming to see him."

"I shouldn't wonder if the two should carry the crazy lady off."

"All persons are not mad who are sent to madhouses," returned Mrs. Gordon, with emphasis. "I've known people to be shut up in asylums, who could not, from the very nature of their organizations, be insane. I knew a man who sent his wife to an Insanery, because she discovered a disgraceful intrigue carried on under her very nose, and involving the reputation of a bright young girl. Well, she went among the unfortunate ones, and she can tell you how folks are treated by hirelings who have authority, and can do as they please without regard to justice, decency, or the common claims of humanity. If our friends won't take care of us when we're out of our mind, strangers won't. Do not expect of strangers what you do not expect of friends. Doctors are good enough and sensible enough, but they're apt to become careless and hardened, and impenetrable to the outcries of human nature. A doctor is a being who is case-hardened by the contemplation of pain. Doctor Brooks, who keeps the house on the hill there, which is called a hospital, is not a man to be trusted with sick minds, nor well ones, either, for that matter. He tried to get a living by general practice, failed, and grew sour, and has growled at everybody ever since. It is whispered," continued Mrs. Gordon, pausing in her work, and lowering her voice, "that he is as cruel as a tiger, and rough as a bear. I should rather be an Algerine than be Doctor Brooks. I pity the creature that he once turns the key on, provided he's well paid."

"All kinds of stories are afloat, mother. Some of the neighbors say that the house ought to be torn down, and Doctor Brooks thrown into the river. Mr. Frothingham had better not love anybody up there. You, being older, ought to advise him to keep away, and not to run risks. He might be fired at from a window, or some of the Doctor's attendants might surprise him and do him an injury. Perhaps, when his friend comes, he will tell him what to do. He's a very nice gentleman, at all events, and how he made that mammoth dog follow him, is a perfect mystery. I'm afraid he has winning ways, mother. However, I have a beau, and there is no danger. Beside I'm nothing but a country-girl." Matilda smiled, and went on with her work.



CHAPTER XXII.

CARLO'S DOOR.

Upon that day, Herbert Frothingham saw the traveling-carriage which had conveyed the young lady to the hospital pass the farmhouse, on its return to the place from whence it came. It then contained but two persons—the middle-aged lady and the gentleman with the sinister face. The thought at once occurred to Frothingham to have the vehicle followed. But whom should he employ for such a purpose? Gordon's son was too young to be trusted with such an undertaking, and his hired man was evidently not acute enough for such a business. He took Gordon aside, and made known his wishes. Gordon, being a very sensible and discerning person, immediately offered his services, provided Frothingham thought him a suitable agent for an employment requiring no little tact and prudence.

"That a great wrong has been done to a certain person," said Herbert, "I have not the slightest doubt. In my opinion, the persons who have committed, and are continuing that wrong, are in that carriage."

"It would not be the first time," observed Gordon, "that wrong has been done up yonder, through the agency of Doctor Brooks."

"It is not only the duty of every honest man, but the privilege, to ferret out acts of perfidy and injustice; and having time, inclination, and means, I am going to make a mysterious subject clear and manifest, and give plotting villainy its due reward. I shall gratefully accept your friendly offer. Saddle your best horse, Mr. Gordon, and follow yonder carriage. I will make such amends for your absence as money can make."

"As for money," answered Gordon, cheerfully, "I have no pressing need of it, being comfortably cared for, so far as the world's wants are concerned. I suppose that you will not like your agent less if he has in this service a higher incentive than money; and to see that concern leveled with the dust, I would keep in the saddle not only a day, but a week."

Frothingham expressed his thanks with warmth, while the practical Gordon ordered his man to bring the horse ready to mount, and went into the house. In fifteen minutes, he was trotting after the carriage, and Frothingham felt that he had secured a valuable assistant.

That night, he again visited the scene of his recent adventures. He approached the gate with more cautiousness than on the previous occasion. This time the key was not left in the lock. That carelessness had not been repeated: a circumstance that did not surprise him, as he expected, after the disturbance of the previous night, more vigi-

lance would be observed to keep out intruders.

Carlo, still satisfied with his adopted master, walked contentedly beside him. Finding himself forced to remain on the wrong side of the paling, he threw himself upon patience and philosophy, and made his observations at a safe distance. As a matter of course, the window where he had seen the fair face and figure was the special object of his attention. There was a feeble light there to guide his gaze. That light was the star of his hopes. It threw its pale rays upon the woman that he loved. Youthful enthusiasm painted her in beautiful colors. She glowed beneath his fond imagination till she was little less bright than an angel.

The thing called love is full of absurdities, when looked at by the merely worldly and practical eye; but it is true to itself and its causes, and is not so much a matter of chance as of fate. The ocean of life is full of eddies and under-tows, which set strongly toward matrimony. These eddies and undertows, seizing men and women, hurry them toward the vortex with irresistible force. Hubert had fallen into an eddy, and was drifting on rapidly. He was ready to incur any risk to stand once more face to face with the fair young creature who had bewitched him. He could not sit there and look idly at the window-panes. To attain, one must work. Would she not expect him to return? Would she not watch for an opportunity to communicate with him? The answer was obvious.

He looked at the paling. Palings were not impregnable. Palings were made of wood, and wood was assailable by simple means. He began an examination of the strength of the inclosure. While thus employed, Carlo suddenly disappeared. He looked to see what had become of him, and discovered a hole by which he had crawled through the paling. The aperture was not of recent origin, and was evidently the work of Carlo, having been made partly by digging and partly by tearing off the wood with his teeth.

"Here is an opening," said Frothingham to himself, "not only for Carlo, but for me. If love is aspiring, it is also groveling. Carlo can crawl through to get a bone; I can go through to get a sight of a lovely face."

Frothingham hesitated. He had some qualms of pride about accepting Carlo's door. If Carlo could make a door, couldn't he make a better one? Full of this idea, he started off in search of a lever. He was lucky enough to find a stout limb, straight, and of sufficient length. Armed with this simple form of power, he returned, and, by puffing one end into Carlo's door, soon loosened a pale, which, once loosened, was soon removed. This

was, indeed, an achievement! It was silently accomplished. There was nothing, now, in the way of barrier, to hinder him from walking in. He saw no one; he heard no one.

The hour was eleven o'clock and thirty minutes. It was the time when working-people are in bed with their dreams. Mad people, being very hard workers—their brains never rest—might also be supposed to be courting slumber; while their keepers and attendants, weary of their benevolent efforts through the day, would be snoring in the deepest prostration of sleep, unless some extraordinary emergency required more than ordinary wakefulness. It was then that the friendship of the dog served him a good turn. As if conscious that some danger attended this nocturnal visit of his new friend, he trotted around the inclosure, with his nose now to the ground and now in the air, came back to Frothingham, and looked up into his face with a reassuring wag of his tail. The young man, taking courage, soon found the wreck of the flower stand, and, after watching the window a few moments, repeated his expedient of the previous night. The rain and rattle of the pebbles against the panes had no immediate effect, and Hubert sat down amid the debris of the flower-pots to wait patiently the course of events. Presently the light disappeared and the window was dark. In a short time, however, his perseverance was rewarded; for the light reappeared with the glow and brightness of the previous night. His heart jumped joyfully; and more joyfully still when that form which had haunted his sleep, greeted his sight. He sprang to his feet and waved his handkerchief.

"Ah!" murmured Frothingham; "if I could only get near enough to speak to her!"

He then observed—what he had not before noticed—that a lightning-rod descended from the roof and passed very near her window. Being young and strong, and accustomed to gymnastic exercises of the most fatiguing kind, it occurred to him that he might ascend to the window by means of the rod. When she had answered his signal, he tried the climbing experiment, and presently drew himself to the top of the first window without making sufficient noise to attract attention. Standing upon the window-cap, and stretching his hand upward, he could nearly reach the iron lattice of her prison. He was near enough to make himself heard without raising his voice to a very dangerous pitch. He said: "Lady, I am here. Can I serve you? Speak to me, and do not fear."

The person addressed put her mouth to the circular hole in the pane, and answered, with singular clearness:

"I thank you for the interest you have

manifested in an unfortunate stranger. If you love justice, you can do me the greatest of favors—restore me to liberty and my friends."

"Nothing would give me so much pleasure," responded Frothingham. "I will do whatever you bid me."

There was palpable earnestness in Frothingham's voice, which carried conviction and confidence to the young lady's mind.

"My name is Ursula Parkhurst. I live in New York; or at least I should live there, to be at home. I am here because I am rich, and an unprincipled relative desires to possess my wealth. If I am insane, I have been so from my birth. I wish to escape from this miserable place. I am treated with rigor, and Richard Parkhurst does not intend that I shall leave this house. I saw you on my journey here. Your countenance looked kind and benevolent, and I appealed to you. I began to write, but was surprised, and threw it out unfinished. But it was not in vain. You read, you believed, and you are here. How can I repay such goodness?"

"Think not of that," answered Frothingham. "The consciousness of serving you will be more than payment. Indeed, I have thought of little else since I saw you. I confess that I have seen nothing but your face since you alighted from the carriage at the inn. The Golden Robin is no longer common-place in my recollections, but has become the data from which I reckon time. When all other places are forgotten, that country-inn will be remembered. Obedience to you, Miss Parkhurst, will be happiness to me. The story of your distemper, your face contradicted and settled forever."

I am unspeakably grateful for your faith," answered Ursula. "The way grows clear before me, and I have confidence to-night in the triumph of justice. You must go to Magnus Drake."

"I will find a shorter method than that," said Frothingham, quickly. "I will take you from this prison without waiting for the apparently tardy steps of justice. I have sent for a trusty friend, who will probably arrive in a few days. Let patience be your physician till I bring you freedom."

"Speak very low," admonished Ursula. "I am not alone in this house. There are other unfortunates here who may hear you. Discovery would disappoint me too much. I have lost much, yet I have much to live for."

Her voice was pleasant to the ears of Hubert. Her confidence charmed him. The thought of being useful to her gave him a pleasure before unknown. It was not easy for him to maintain his position; but unusual excitement gave him unusual muscular strength.

"Risk must be incurred; but I will be dis-

CHAPTER XXIII.

A LETTER.

creet, and make the danger as small as possible. Have faith in your destiny, and have faith in me. Whatever happens within these walls, remember one who cannot forget you is waiting and watching without. No matter whether the night be fair or foul, I will come with it, and remain till the stars pale in the light of morning. I will come because I love you, and my soul is yours. You need not answer this presumptuous avowal. I ask nothing in return but the privilege of serving you. That will content me. You need not encourage my folly by smile, or look, or word. Forget that I love you, and permit me to be the most earnest as well as the most respectful of your friends. Forgive me, Miss Parkhurst. I have said too much."

"It were better left unsaid," answered Ursula, with gentleness. "Sudden emotions should be distrusted. Sensation and sentiment are often confounded. The light of lightning is intense, but brief."

"You have put the effect for the cause. Love is lightning, and lightning is eternal. Its life is hidden with the elements. The flash is but its momentary manifestation. Tonight, my love flashes upon you, but it shall be dark and dormant hereafter, save at your bidding."

"Be silent!" responded Ursula, whose heart was beating fast. "Is it a fitting time for this? Ought you to speak thus, or I to listen? Reflect that we are strangers, and that the imputation of a dreadful malady rests upon me. I do not know you. Even your name is unknown."

"It is Hubert Frothingham. I am a graduate of Harvard College, and my home is Baltimore. I am of good family, and my worldly affairs are all that can be desired."

"Hush!" interrupted Ursula. "I hear some one moving in the next room. Say no more, but go away quietly."

"Yet a few words," returned Hubert. "I shall come with my friend to liberate you. We will bring ladders and proper implements. Expect me till I come, and be not discouraged though several nights should elapse before my coming with this object in view."

"I will expect you patiently, and never lose faith. I have a friend who would aid me—my father's business-agent, whose name I wrote upon the glass. He would find me eventually, I am sure; but something may have happened to him, and I will trust in you. Good-night."

"Good-night," responded Hubert; then cautiously descending to the ground, he left the inclosure, replaced the palling as well as he could, and, with Carlo at his heels, returned to Gordon's, well satisfied with the adventures of the night.

Abigail Vaughn slept on, turning all sorts of wheels in her nose, and blowing her breath through her lips and drawing it back, as if those organs would, sometime, be her total strangulation. This nasal and labial symphony fell discordantly on the ears of Sibylla. It seemed profanity to see that woman in that chair, exhaling brandy, and dozing through drunken dreams. Thinking of the changes that had come upon the brown-stone house, she was sick at heart. But there was an immortal courage in Sibylla. She would not be put down and conquered by her inferiors. There was something more to be done than crying and sighing. The long, golden sunbeams, stealing through the curtains, fell cheerfully upon her bed, and danced graceful minuets upon her hands and arms.

"I need a tonic," said Sibylla. "I know what I need well enough."

She arose, mixed and drank a small quantity of brandy and water, then arranged her hair, and dressed herself with as much care as usual. This done, she went into Ursula's chamber and found it terribly vacant. She saw things that made her flush with indignation. Lucretia Fuller's wardrobe hung in Ursula's closet; and various little articles of dress belonging to that lady were scattered about the room. Evidently, Stephen Parkhurst's house had fallen into the hands of servants.

"The conspiracy deepens," she murmured.

"Richard Parkhurst is in the ascendant. The weakest go to the wall. Ursula and I were the weakest. But we will see who is the strongest, anon. Stephen Parkhurst, like the Sphinx, will rise from his own ashes; and when he arises it will be in wrath. But where is Magnus? I wonder if he has been here during my illness? Have I muttered? Have I revealed secrets during my delirium? I think not. I have a conviction that I have not. So they have sent Ursula away. They took her from me while I was sick and unconscious. That must have grieved her. What an outrage upon justice has been committed under this roof! Did she leave no word for me? Perhaps she left a note somewhere for me to find. Ursula is cunning and not easily outwitted. I will look in her writing-desk."

The desk had been moved, but the key was in the lock. She opened the desk. Within, were some drawers, and one of them had a secret slide at the bottom. The existence of this slide was known only to Ursula and herself. Where would her friend be so likely to leave a note as there? She opened the drawer hurriedly, touched the

little spring that held the slide, and found what she had hoped to find—a note, with "Sibylla" written upon it, in Ursula's neat and pretty handwriting. Seizing it with eagerness, she read its contents, which ran as follows:

"SISTER SIBYLLA.—We are the victims of a wicked conspiracy. Richard Parkhurst wishes to possess my poor father's property, and to accomplish this object he will not hesitate to perpetrate the worst of crime. I am forced to leave you, sweet Sibylla, while you are suffering from a severe nervous fever. They tear me from you. Heartless wretches! I have clung to you as long as they would permit me. Your poor head has rested upon my bosom days and nights. Dear privilege to be near you! The friendship of a human creature is worth so much! Your delirium was of a singularly quiet and methodical kind. You were neither violent nor noisy. You lay patiently upon your pillow, with your bright eyes fixed, now upon heaven, now upon me. You whispered strange things into my ear with a coherency of thought and reasoning that was marvelous, and the effect produced upon my nervous organization gave some coloring to the charge of hereditary lunacy, which was at that time hanging over me. I fear I must have shown signs of insanity when the doctors came to examine me—sordid and egotistical men bought over to the interests of Richard Parkhurst with my father's money. My consternation, indignation, and excitement, all operated against me, and I was pronounced insane. Imagine my feelings, dearest Sibylla! They are going to take me away. I cannot help myself, and Magnus Drake does not come to my aid. Where is he? What has happened? I have trusted in him, and you have trusted in him. I have written to him, but my notes went through the hands of servants, and probably never reached him. Going to a madhouse! Is this possible? Have such dreadful changes as these passed over my father's house? There is hope somewhere, surely. Hope is not dead, nor can it die. It is in you. You will recover. You will arise from your bed, strong and beautiful, as you ever were. You will demolish with your clear intellect this refuge of lies, and I shall be saved! In this faith I leave you. I may resist injustice, but I cannot escape its consequences. If I appeal to strangers for help, a certificate of lunacy will be thrust into my face, and that settles the question. If I knew where they were going to imprison me, I would tell you; but I do not. Beware of the housekeeper! Watch Richard Parkhurst, and communicate with Magnus Drake as soon as possible. Before I close, I must inform you that Richard has brought a stranger here. He is a fair-faced, soft-spoken, and unctuous fellow, who has villain stamped upon his brow. His name is Marmaduke, and he goes about the house as if he intended to remain in it. He is one of those evil spirits with whom the sinister Richard takes counsel and associates. A will has been found, in which Richard is made executor of the estate and guardian of the heirs. Our guardian! To think that Richard should presume to enter this house with the presence of authority! He has the hardihood to talk of legal rights, and of carrying out my father's wishes; when the latter, while living, did not honor him with the slightest trust or confidence. As you know, he seldom admitted him to the house, and had the greatest contempt for his character and person. Indeed, he held him in abhorrence. It is an unhappy hour; but I do not despair of justice. Keep a good, firm heart, and all may yet be well. I have grown suspicious of Richard respecting matters immediately connected with our dear father's death. Even in your delirium, you bade me have heart of hope, and your words had singular potency. You are the dearest little enchantress that ever was. I know that you have discovered something; and that discovery lies at the door of your illness. It was too much; ap-

parently, for your nervous system. But your secret is evidently of a joyful nature. How can one guard a secret in delirium? Yet you guarded yours. I leave this rambling letter with some faith that you will find it. So, farewell, till this cloud shall reveal its silver lining. URSULA.

"P. S.—Richard and the housekeeper are going with me. Annette has been dismissed, and another maid, a relative of Lucretia Fuller's, and the instrument of our enemies, ostensibly takes her place. I am to be carried somewhere into the country, as far from friends and civilization as possible. It will be some horrid out-of-the-way place, where no one will think of looking for me. Oh, misery. U."

CHAPTER XXIV. SIBYLLA HELPS HERSELF.

Sibylla read this letter, and put it in a safe place. While it made a deep impression upon her mind, it was not without a good effect. It gave both strength and courage, and she felt within her a new power to combat with Richard Parkhurst.

It was yet early in the morning. There was some stir in the servants' quarter; but the former order of the house was gone, and proper hours were neglected. Sibylla went below, having first taken a look at Abigail Vaughn, to see if she slept soundly upon her brandy. She left her as oblivious as could be desired. She looked into the dining-room; it was silent and vacant. She went in. She was hungry, which was a good sign; and, feeling that food was necessary to sustain her, took a cracker from the side-board and ate it. It had a healthful sweetness to her taste. While she was eating it, she saw something lying upon the floor. Perceiving that it was a letter, she stooped and picked it up. Letters seemed to be the order of the morning. This was directed to Richard Parkhurst, and it lay, with a napkin, under the table, where it had accidentally fallen. Sibylla put it into her pocket and left the dining-room. She walked quickly to Stephen's room, and listened at the door. Hearing no sound, she entered. The apartment was without an occupant.

"Ah!" thought Sibylla, "Richard has not the courage to occupy this room, or to sleep upon this bed. His dreams would be haunted by Stephen, and his miserable conscience would bring spectres to his pillow."

Having noiselessly locked the door, she sat down in Stephen's chair, and read the letter directed to Richard.

"MR. PARKHURST.—The plan you propose for the disposal of the housekeeper appears to me entirely practicable, and the thought is worthy of your genius. It will be very easy to detain her when she comes with the other young lady to visit the patient. Of course, much prudence must be observed. You informed me that she was very shrewd; and, judging from what I saw of her when she was here, I fully agree with you. As these proceedings are somewhat extraordinary, and not sustained by the laws of the land, they will necessarily involve considerable expense. If said persons can be held in abeyance while

you convert the property into money, preliminary to leaving the country, a few thousands will be a cheap purchase of so many advantages. What you do, however, should be done quickly, lest some unforeseen accident compromise us both. My institution is so essential to your success that I anticipate much liberality on your part. There will, no doubt, be a high scene when the lady finds herself outwitted.

"Miss Ursula has been singularly quiet and resigned since your departure. There was every reason to suppose that she would be stormy and threatening, and I know not how to account for her gentle deportment. There has been no disturbance around the premises since the night you were here, and that I am disposed to attribute to the dog, which has not been seen since. Perhaps he has become disgusted with the society of lunatics, and has gone in search of a master of a different trade.

"As dates and postmarks are often dangerous, I send this by a trusty messenger. Send the patients as soon as you please.

"Yours faithfully,
"J. D. BROOKS, M. D."

This significant epistle threw yet more light upon the designs of Richard Parkhurst. It was an important link in the chain of evidence. She resolved to preserve it carefully. A happy thought occurred to her; she would inclose it, with a letter of her own, to Magnus Drake. She lost no time in hesitation, but, sitting down to her guardian's desk, wrote:

"DEAR FRIEND.—Things are going badly here. I have been ill eight days, and you have not been to see us. I fear something serious has happened to you. Richard Parkhurst has made and is making sorrowful changes here. Judge of the evil times upon which we have fallen, when I tell you Ursula has been pronounced insane and sent to a madhouse. The inclosed note, which I found this morning, will throw some light on the matter, and show you what is in reserve for us. I know that there are some strange circumstances connected with my dear guardian's decease, and am inclined to the belief that a startling deception has been practiced; and if my suspicions are well founded, you are a party to it. I was a listener upon that night so crowded with mysterious and, as it would seem, fatal incident. Proof is now in my possession that the body of Norman Drew was expected to arrive at twelve o'clock. At that hour something did arrive. A long and heavy box was delivered quietly at the side-door, and brought into the house by men, whose slow movements and shuffling feet, as heard by me from my concealment, plainly indicated that their burden was not light. I heard the rending of wood and the starting of nails. I am too weak now to write the details. An empty box was carried into the wine-vault by two persons, where it was filled with straw and bottles. While those persons were in the vault, a third, living or dead, remained in Stephen Parkhurst's room, lying upon Stephen Parkhurst's bed. For this assertion I have the evidence of my eyes, and the convictions of my judgment.

"Now tell me, dear Sir, what I am to think of all this? Was ever anything so distracting, and so mixed with light and darkness? How can I help feeling a thrilling inspiration of hope? and yet the mere human will could attempt a plot so complicated, and involving such cruel consequences. But my guardian was not cruel. To me he was all gentleness. I am aware, however, that his hatred of Richard was intense. He despised the low and vagrant villain who lived by his wits, and brought disgrace upon his kindred. Your dislike of him, I am sure, was no less. You and he might have planned a singular vengeance, and set fatal traps for the feet of Richard.

"But if so, why not come to the rescue? Why let the wicked hand fall so heavily? I should have been

taken into your counsels. If this thought be not madness, I should have been most useful, and a nervous shock would have been spared Ursula. In recalling my guardian's manner, I am convinced that he had a great purpose in his mind upon that night. If you think I am getting wild in my expressions, I should like to ask you, if Stephen Parkhurst died, what became of Norman Drew's body, which arrived at midnight? Was it buried in the cellar? Was it hidden between the floors? Was it sent to the surgeon's? Was it carried to the deadhouse, to receive a pauper's burial? Answer if you can.

"Should this reach you, your good sense will better dictate what you ought to do than I can suggest. My hand is weary with holding the pen, and I must cease writing. I must add, before closing, that, upon awaking from the nervous crisis induced by some discoveries that I had made, I found an intoxicated and vulgar woman, bolstered up in my chair to the last degree of comfort, sleeping a drunken sleep. Imagine my feelings! But I came out of my crisis wonderfully calm and bright. I am weak, but well; and I should not wonder if this weary hand, and this poor, girlish head, should circumvent Richard yet.

"Yours, hopefully,
"SIBYLLA JOY."

Having carefully directed her letter, her next thought was to procure a trusty messenger. Going to the front of the yet quiet house, she opened a window, hailed the first lad who came down the avenue, and filling his hand with silver pieces, soon had the pleasure of seeing his nimble feet hurry away with boyish eagerness to perform her important errand. She closed the window with a sigh of satisfaction and relief.

CHAPTER XXV. AN AMBUSH.

Sibylla returned to the apartment which she had left, sustained by a strength that was surprising. Recent experiences had taught her to move quietly, and to depend more upon her own efforts than upon others. Soon after entering the room rendered so sacred by former associations, she became conscious that one of the adjoining rooms was occupied. She heard voices; masculine tones, that presently grew louder and more distinct. Sibylla had learned to be a good listener. Cunning was her line of defence; and, from what has been seen of her character, it will be understood that no opportunity of surprising the secrets of her enemies would be neglected. In a moment, she had placed a hassock upon the carpet, seated herself upon it, and put her ear to the wall. There was a door communicating with the room, but Stephen Parkhurst's bed had been moved against it, Richard being afraid of Stephen's ghost, and having a superstitious terror of that apartment. She was not kept long in doubt respecting the parties engaged in conversation. One was Richard, unquestionably, and the other she readily decided was the person referred to by Ursula in the letter that she had left for her under the secret slide in the drawer. The conversation soon grew interesting, and

flowed on without restraint. Richard Parkhurst and Duke Marmaduke had every reason to believe that they were utterly alone. The author, who is privileged to see the whole situation, will permit the reader free access to those who talked, and her who listened.

Richard, well dressed but still sinister, sat opposite his Satan, who, in an elegant morning-gown, was lounging upon a cushioned chair, giving sage advice. They spoke darkly concerning some things, plainly about others. The housekeeper was often referred to. Marmaduke was particularly pleasant in his remarks respecting her. He smiled and he rubbed his hands together, looking benevolent all the time. Although Sibylla could not see him, the writer reveals it, through virtue of his ability to observe passing events on either side of the wall.

"The housekeeper," said Marmaduke, "is a very nice person, and deserves particular attention; but, as a matrimonial companion, she is too smart for you, Richard. Marry her, and you will soon be in leading-strings. She would soon get your head under the tide, and sit upon it. She does not want you; she wants the money. You are afraid of her, and you know it."

"She is very shrewd," responded Richard. "True," said Marmaduke, "and we will catch her in her own net. Cunning people are apt to stumble into their own pitfalls. I have saved you, Richard. Admire my genius."

"The salvation exists in theory, only," answered Richard.

"It will soon exist in fact. The moment the girl is able to sit in the carriage, send her to Doctor Brooks, in the care of Lucretia Fuller, and the thing is done. Do not be niggardly with Doctor Brooks. If you want a good rascal, pay him well."

"I am troubled about Magnus Drake," Richard observed.

Sibylla held her breath, and listened with almost painful intensity.

"Your plan failed in execution," he continued.

"His escape was simply an accident," replied Marmaduke. "The plot was successful, and the miscarriage of any part of it is to be attributed to the cunning of the lawyer. Lawyers are people who mean to keep their heads above the tide."

"All seemed lost when you informed me what had happened; and the not lodging of any complaint with the police-authorities, and his apparent silence, are matters of surprise."

"Perhaps he never left the slums alive," said Marmaduke, thoughtfully. "He may have shared the fate of those who have lost

their way in Murderers' Alley, never found it, and have never been found. When Time at length gives his evidence, it will be but the spectacle of a few discolored bones beneath the floorings."

Sibylla shivered. What new crime had these men perpetrated? The danger that surrounded her was never so apparent then. Magnus Drake had fallen, into evil hands. His silence was evidently owing to unavoidable circumstances. He came not, because he could not come.

"I cannot imagine what has happened to him, unless he lost his way in the manner you speak of. He might have run the wrong way in his eagerness to escape, and, in running the wrong way, ran upon the wrong men to help a person in extremity," answered Richard Parkhurst, uneasily. "Droolby and Driggs are clever rogues, but not clever enough, even with your help, to make a clean job of a dirty business."

"I confess," returned Duke Marmaduke, "that I feared we should not be able to keep above the tide. The facts in the case, were these: Two persons were to be kept quiet. You did not know how to keep them quiet. I, being your Astinodous, devised a scheme by which the object in view was to be reached. I assumed a disguise, and became the bereaved Davids. A fictitious daughter was fictitiously lost. The persons to be inveigled fell into the snare. Compassion carried them where Prudence said, 'Do not go.' They were caught with chaff. One was a lawyer. A plague upon all lawyers, I say! They are threefold more the children of the devil than the fallen angels. Unnatural cunning, crooked devices, unexpected plots, sudden turns of subtlety, and damnable invention, are among their qualities. Commend me to something slippery if it be not a lawyer! Bring me an unscrupulous adviser, a sly speculator, a false friend, a wily flatterer, a deceptive hope-giver, a fawning dust-eater, a greedy knave, and an unconscionable devourer, if it be not a lawyer. Deliver to Satan, on his guarded throne, a lawyer, manacled with the deepest damnation of sin, and let him plead his own case, and he will outwit his accusers, bleach his misdeeds, and worm himself into some subordinate office in the realms of hell."

Duke Marmaduke paused, and wiped some drops of perspiration from his fair brow, while the carbuncle stared at Richard, and the diamond on his little finger flashed white light in every direction.

"So much for lawyers; so much for that glib-tongued brotherhood that casts itself upon society, to magnify human disagreements, and to feed the flames of hatred with the dry kindlings of legal technicalities; so much for



AN EPIGRAPHICAL RESTORATIVE.

a profession that sets the world at differences, and communities at variance. But I will go on with my statement. The attorney, having examined the witnesses of his judgment, established an *alibi*, in fact. Of a sudden he was elsewhere. Norman Drew—

Sibylla Joy thrilled with expectation. Her person seemed the subject of successive galvanic shocks. That name was full of hopes and fears. On that name depended the solution of a mystery.

"Norman Drew," added Duke, "went in, and Magnus Drake went out. The failure of half the plot threatened to be the failure of the whole. One went down under the pavements and human feet, and into the reek and dampness and death of the dark kens, while the other went we know not where. We have heard nothing from him. He is alive, or he is dead. If he is alive, and in his senses, you will hear from him sooner or later. So what you do, you must do without delay. Your policy is this—Convert and pocket."

"I believe you," said Richard. "You should have been a lawyer yourself."

"I preferred a quiet and honest life," replied Marmaduke, smiling.

"Convert and pocket," repeated Richard.

"Convert, pocket, divide," added Duke, blandly. "Remember your friends, and your friends will forget you. Forget your friends, and your enemies will remember you."

The eye of the carbuncle winked wickedly at Richard. Richard felt that he had a master.

"I shall follow your advice," he said. "I wish the girl would get well. I can't understand her illness. However, I won't complain, for it hastened the lunacy of Ursula. The moment she is conscious she will call for Ursula, and I shall be but too glad to gratify her wishes. I shall have a grim satisfaction in the torture and disappointment of Lucretia Fuller. I will look into the hall to see if she is listening. She is a dreadful mouser! I scarcely dare think in her presence, she pounces upon one's unuttered secrets with such catlike quickness."

Richard arose, opened the door, looked into the hall, and returned to his seat, relieved.

"Instead of a wedding-ring," quoth Marmaduke, "you will give Lucretia Fuller a strait-jacket."

"A strait-jacket will be good for her," asserted Richard, "and it will avenge the fate of Ursula."

"It will be dramatical," said Duke. "It is poetical justice. Keep an eye on Droolby, Driggs, and Bolter. Knaves that are bought once can be bought again. Rascals are always on sale, and they go quickly for ready cash and plenty of it."

"You might have included John Jerome

in your caution. I wish he was out of the way. Well, Lucretia must go, if we have to devise a new pretext. Sibylla will gladly remain to take care of Ursula, and in that way I hope to gain sufficient time. By the way, we must still continue to have Drake's office watched. I have a presentiment that danger will come from that direction, and at a moment when we least expect it. You must be very busy, and very shrewd, Marmaduke, or we may be hanged yet."

Sibylla's heart quickened again.

"Speak for yourself, Richard; I had nothing to do with the charcoal. I do not belong to the Carbonari."

Just then the breakfast-bell rang.

"I have an appetite," quoth Drake. "This settling of estates is a wearisome business. What would you do without me?"

Sibylla crept behind a curtain, so that if they looked into the room, in passing the door, on their way to breakfast, they could not see her.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ABIGAIL CAST OUT.

WHEN they had passed, and with them the immediate danger, Sibylla thought of her youthful messenger, and returned to the apartment from which she had successfully dispatched her letter. Looking into the avenue, she discovered her Mercury, sitting upon the opposite curbstone, waiting patiently for notice. She tapped upon the window, and he sprang across the intervening space in a moment. There was smiling intelligence upon his countenance. Standing on tiptoe, and stretching upward as far as he could, he offered a letter to Sibylla, who reached it by virtue of a long arm. It was directed to her in a hand that she presently recognized as Magnus Drake's, although without its usual clearness and firmness. She was giddy with joy, and sat down quite weak and faint. The boy went back to his former place. Sibylla, when she had rested a little, opened the missive, and read the following answer:

"DEAR SIBYLLA:—Many things have happened since I last saw you. I have been sick with a fever, contracted by damp, foul air, and excitement. The crisis has passed, and I am rational, but weak. Fall readily into the plans of Richard, and go with the housekeeper to the asylum. A watch is set upon the house, and the carriage will be followed whenever and wherever it goes. Have no fear about the consequences. Faithful agents will be near you, and the downfall of Richard is near. I will not now answer your arguments concerning the name of Norman Drew. It is wisest to let that subject remain as it is, for the present. Besides, I am too weak to enter into statements and explanations. You can see, by the crooked lines, that my hand trembles. You may speak the most cheering words to Ursula. Look upon your enemies as conquered, and the victory of justice assured. Have full faith and confidence in your firm, true, and loving friend,

MAGNUS DRAKE."

Sibylla kissed this precious document, and waving her hand to the boy, who still sat upon the curbstone, watching the window, she hurried to her chamber with light and happy footsteps.

Abigail Vaughn was yet wandering among her brandy-fancies. Sibylla rang the bell, then adjusting her pillows, threw herself upon her couch with feelings of infinite relief and fervent gratitude. All was going well. The current of events was flowing smoothly. The struggle of faith and hope seemed nearly ended. She felt that she could fall into a peaceful sleep, so great was her confidence in Magnus.

Lucretia Fuller came by and by. She liked to answer that bell herself. There were reasons obvious why she should keep guard over Sibylla's chamber. Seeing that young lady lying upon the bed, in a becoming wrapper, with her hair neatly arranged, and everything about her person looking tidy, she was considerably surprised. Sibylla closed her eyes, and permitted her to look at her leisure.

"Who rang?" asked Lucretia Fuller.
"I rang," answered Sibylla. "Have this drunken woman removed, and bring me some nice tea and toast."

Miss Fuller dropped into the first chair, and stared at the fair patient. It was evident that a change had taken place. Sibylla had passed from incoherency to perfect consciousness. Sibylla pointed at Abigail Vaughn.

"Take her away! I cannot bear it," added Sibylla, with firmness. "If you are not shocked by such shameful conduct, understand that I am, and will not tolerate it."

"I am shocked," replied Lucretia Fuller. "It is not becoming to have such a person here. She shall go away. You appear quite restored to yourself."

"You shall soon learn, Miss Fuller, that I am," returned Sibylla, promptly. "Obey me as if I were the mistress of the house, and you will not regret it."

The housekeeper flushed somewhat and was startled.

"I observe," added Sibylla, "that you think yourself to be mistress of the brown-stone house; but that will not, can not be. Misfortune will visit you, as it has visited others—as it has visited me. You have but one thing to cling to, and I am that."

"I do not comprehend," said Lucretia Fuller, turning pale. "I hope you are fully restored, however."

"Do not doubt it. I am restored, and Ursula will be restored. I am going with you to see her, and to bring her home. You had better have her room prepared for her reception."

The housekeeper breathed more freely.

She thought she saw Sibylla running eagerly into the trap that was set for her, and felt a load suddenly lifted from her mind.

"I rejoice to hear you talk so hopefully," she answered. "Yes, we will go to Ursula. Your presence will help her, if there be anything curative in nature. We will start as soon as you are able to go."

"That will be to-morrow, or even to-day. But to begin with, do what I have bidden you, and that will suffice."

The housekeeper rang the bell, and waited for it to be answered without uttering a word; but she looked straight at Sibylla. Uneasy thoughts and uncomfortable sensations affected her. The confidence of Sibylla, the firmness of her demeanor, the perfect faith in herself and in her cause, had a strong influence upon Lucretia. She had not in this struggle met that peculiar kind of strength. There was something in the power of prophetic innocence difficult to battle with.

A strange servant came, after a time, and came tardily. It was not so under the sway of Stephen Parkhurst; the servants came promptly and with mien respectful. When servants govern servants, things go not smoothly. The servant who becomes master is apt to have a hangdog look; as if he had no business to command.

Lucretia gave an order for tea and toast, with an injunction to hurry.

"That woman!" said Sibylla, looking at Abigail when the servant had gone.

"I will deal with her myself," replied Lucretia.

"Let me see you deal with her," added Sibylla, watching the countenance of the housekeeper closely.

The latter approached the nurse and shook her gently. Abigail responded by a nasal explosion of unusual vehemence. Sibylla raised herself in bed, frowning a very trifle. Fuller shook Vaughn again, but shook her as if she was afraid of giving offence. Sibylla raised herself more, and put one slippered foot upon the floor. Abigail turned a succession of mucilaginous wheels in her throat, and seemed near death from internal drowning. Sibylla frowned more, and both slippered feet found the floor. She was beside Lucretia in a moment. She pushed her away with her transparent hand, with an unpretentious dignity that was indescribable.

"You are afraid of this woman," she said. "I see fear in your manner. But I am not afraid."

There was a silver ice-pitcher upon the table, half-filled with water. Sibylla turned out a gobletful, and dashed it into Abigail's face. She started up, gasped, shivered, as the icy little rivulets found their way down her person; tossed her arms, turned her head

to the other side, made an uncommon complication of the wheels, then relapsed into her sodden sleep.

"It does not work," muttered Sibylla. "We will try what virtue there is in stones."

There was a bottle of spirits of ammonia upon the table, of great strength and pungency. A single snuff would nearly unroof one's head. Sibylla shook it, removed the ground-glass stopper, and clapped it to Abigail's nose. The effect was immediate and marked. The nurse surged forward with one grand snort. The wheels stopped revolving, and Vaughn quivered like the corpus of a galvanized frog. There was something more in ammonia than Abigail had dreamed of. An act of sternutation was her first tribute to the ingenuity of Sibylla; then she opened two eyes, that were redder than ripe cranberries, and about as expressive. She made some frantic motions with her arms.

"Arouse yourself," said Sibylla, "and leave the room."

Lucretia regarded the young lady with increased wonder.

"Mem?" mumbled Abigail Vaughn, not well knowing what the matter was.

"Go out, and never come in again!" added Sibylla.

"In her tantrums agin!" muttered the nurse.

"Push her out, Fuller! Have her put into a hack and trundled off, bag and baggage."

Lucretia not stirring, Sibylla pushed her out herself, left her much astonished in the hall, and closed the door upon her.

Presently, the tea and toast came up, and Lucretia watched her while she ate and drank, with an expression worthy the attention of physiognomists. The sudden recovery of Sibylla was a mystery to the housekeeper—while her firmness of character was equally surprising.

CHAPTER XXVII. TO DOCTOR BROOKS.

The recovery of Sibylla was considered remarkable. Richard was pleased with the prospect of getting her away so soon, and of using her to such advantage in the disposal of Lucretia Fuller. Duke Marmaduke saw her several times previous to her departure for the extremely nice residence of Doctor Brooks, and informed Richard that he did not like the girl's expression.

"That young woman," said he, "is going to keep above the tide. She has made up her mind not to sink, and she'll float like a cork, Richard."

"Yes," answered the latter, with a shrug, "she'll float to Doctor Brooks'. When a

person floats to a madhouse, that's about the last of their floating."

"Perhaps so," returned Duke, reflectively. "My carbuncle turned pale last night. I don't like to see it change color. How does it look to you, Richard?"

"Like a dead man's eye!" muttered Parkhurst.

"Like Stephen's eye," observed Duke, in an undertone. "And that is why the devil is in the carbuncle."

"Bah!" exclaimed Richard. "What nonsense is this! One would think us children, scared by the goblin-tales of some old trot. May you, and your carbuncle, and your Italian, be —!"

"Kindly, kindly, Richard! This eccentric eye may wink at your hanging yet. It will be blue, then, perhaps. Blue and sulphurous."

"Don't fret me!" retorted Richard. "I have enough on my mind, without listening to your infernal prophecies. I wish you would burn that diabolical stone. Whenever I have hearkened to your advice, and looked at that carbuncle while you dealt out your sophistry, my judgment has been taken captive, and I have followed your promptings, Satan's Eye has already winked me to the foot of the gallows, and I want it to wink no more. Here are a hundred dollars; take them, and give it me."

"Not for a thousand!" replied Marmaduke, smiling. "By the way, the air is chilly and the room is damp. Order a brasier of charcoal!"

"For your own use, willingly," said Richard, scowling. "Why don't you be comfortable, and let me alone?"

"If I let you alone, your affairs would soon drift away, with you. But let things be hurried. The lawyer still troubles me; for if he turns up, you are turned out."

"The carriage is at the door," observed Richard, rising and preparing to go. "I must take another journey into the country. This insane business is getting to be a bore. Keep things straight, Marmaduke, and mind your cups. Stephen's liquors are good, but use them sparingly. When I return, the brown-stone house will be clear, and I shall be its master."

"Dreadful deceiver!" quoth Duke, playfully. "Where will Lucretia be? In prosperity how soon we throw away the ladders by which we climb to success. Artful Richard! Who knows but I may be your next victim?"

"I am acting by your advice, as you well know. Now for a drama and Doctor Brooks. Good-morning, Satan."

So Richard left the house, and entered the carriage with Sibylla Joy and Lucretia Ful-

ler. He tried to be cheerful and even playful. He was very lover-like with the housekeeper. He got possession of her hand behind the cushions, pressed it, and looked at her admiringly. Sibylla good-naturedly shut her eyes, and had curious thoughts while the farce went on. She pictured to herself the disappointment to come, and believed that the wrath of Lucretia would be amusing. If her lashes quivered and opened now and then, it was to look out and see if the carriage were followed. But whether she could see any one or not, she knew that the carriage would be followed. So great was her confidence in Magnus Drake, that she had not a lingering doubt but that the carriage would be followed. In that faith she rested in perfect peace, and the motion of the vehicle was a soothing lullaby to her nerves.

Richard, with wonderful foresight, had had a hamper of wine placed in the carriage, and, by and by, he drew a cork, and clinked glasses with Lucretia, while the carriage rolled easily onward. The wine set his nerves more firmly; and, warming Lucretia, it made her more gracious than usual. Richard, surpassing himself in hypocrisy, asked her to name an early day for the eternal consolidation of two hearts. Miss Fuller drank a little more wine, then put her handkerchief to her eyes, or, more truthfully speaking, one of Ursula's, which she had abstracted from her drawer that morning.

Richard, of course, was obliged to whisper while the sick girl was asleep; but the sick girl was conscious enough for both. The villain, as he looked at her now and then, could not but be impressed with her quiet face and sweet expression. When a consciousness of his sins came over him, when he realized what he was and what he might have been, when he reflected upon time mispent and talent abused, when the terrible conviction crept over him that life had nearly lapsed and slipped away, and he had grown viler instead of better, he confessed to his darkened soul that he would rather be that girl than himself, and that it might perhaps be a privilege to kneel at her feet, and make humble confession of all. But that hour had passed. Hitherto he had had sin without its wages; now he was to have its payment in silver and gold and good banknotes. Why should he recede when the cup was at his lips? So, as all bad men do, he mentally ran his course to reach the end at last in reality.

Sibylla revived after a time, and began to talk. She said:

"You are getting along bravely, Richard Parkhurst. All things prosper under your hands."

"After a fashion," replied Richard.

"The death of my guardian has changed

your fortunes," she added. "You no longer go about with downcast air and drooping head. You have cast your old slough, and now go about as a gentleman, forgetful of the vagrant schemer who used to appear at intervals at Stephen's door."

Richard heard this language with undisguised astonishment.

"Between cups and lips there are fatal slips," continued Sibylla.

"Don't talk, young woman!" said Richard; "don't talk! It is best that your mind be kept quiet."

"Keep yours quiet, if you can," retorted Sibylla. "Keep the ghost of Stephen quiet, if you can."

"What have I to do with the ghost of Stephen?" muttered Richard, in a petulant manner.

"Much," answered Sibylla, assuming a mysterious manner. "It follows you; it looks over your shoulder; it gesticulates with its shadowy hands, and points to a brasier of charcoal."

Richard Parkhurst grew deadly pale. "She's wandering again," observed Lucretia, glancing at Richard.

"I have wandered much within the last ten days," replied Sibylla. "I have walked among impalpabilities, and have been lost among fragments of disjointed thoughts; but in all my walkings there has been a constant vision of crime."

"Soothe her, if you can, Lucretia!" exclaimed Richard; "she annoys me dreadfully."

"Be calm, dear child!" admonished Lucretia. "Do not give place to fancies. Fancies are but the flies of the imagination that buzz about distempored brains. Brush them away, child! brush them away! You are troubling our worthy friend."

Sibylla smiled faintly. "Our worthy friend has trouble enough," she responded, sarcastically. "In the long and restless dream which I have had, I have seen him walking, walking, like another Cain. Once, I saw him in a dark compartment that was very cheerless. The air was chilly, and the room was damp, and he kept ordering brasiers of charcoal, till he was surrounded by a circle of glowing embers."

Parkhurst stared at Sibylla with parted lips and pallid cheeks. A dewy perspiration stood upon his forehead. Lucretia Fuller was observing him. Her keen eyes were looking through the imperfections of his moral armor, and she believed she had found a new hold upon his fears. She did not regret this discovery, nor could she contemplate the calm face of Sibylla and feel at ease. The conjunctive stars of the hour ruled her spirits gloomily. The beginning of the end seemed near. And so the travel-

ing-carriage rolled onward toward the nice establishment of Doctor Brooks.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE HOUSEKEEPER ENTRAPPED.

Doctor Brooks received his visitors with bows and smiles. They were ushered in with obsequious alacrity. Sibylla shivered as she entered a portal devoted to such execrable uses. She begged to see Ursula at once. The doctor said:

"Of course," and requested the housekeeper to go and prepare that unfortunate young lady for an interview with her "interesting young friend". Miss Fuller was bland and willing, and followed the attendant graciously. It being nine o'clock in the evening, the attendant carried a light, which she held high above her shoulder, to enable Lucretia to make her way without stumbling. There were corners to turn in that house; and some of them were very sharp corners.

We must go with the housekeeper. It were not fitting to lose sight of her on this occasion.

Lucretia was lighted up stairs, and through various turnings and narrow halls, till her conductress reached a certain door.

"This is not where I left her," said Miss Fuller.

"No," answered the woman; "we have changed her since."

She unlocked the door, and held it open for Lucretia to go in. Lucretia went in without doubt or misgiving. The woman, who was no other than Mrs. Brooks, went quickly after her, taking the key from one side of the lock, inserting it upon the other, and turning it.

"What need?" asked Lucretia, wonderingly.

"The dear girl is quite bad of late," quoth Mrs. Brooks, "and might make a desperate attempt to escape. The poor thing flutters like a bird in a cage. She'll break her wings yet, I'm afraid."

"Against the bars?" said Lucretia, looking intelligently at Mrs. Brooks.

"Against the bars," said Mrs. Brooks. "We've had to put her in one of the barest rooms. The barest rooms are those which have no furniture in them, and are for frantic patients. They are the stoutest cells in the house, too, and do not look out upon the court."

By this time Mrs. Brooks had reached another door, grated one-half its length. Through the grating a dim light could be seen.

"Enter gently," advised Mrs. Brooks, "and do not give her a sudden start. Call her name softly, Madam. She is not dangerous, but timid. Advance without fear."

Lucretia advanced and pronounced the name of Ursula, as she had been bidden. While she was saying the name of Ursula, and peering into the corners of the cell with the expectation of seeing her, Mrs. Brooks shut the door upon her, locked it, and drew the key. The noise of doing this made Miss Fuller turn, when she saw the woman's face at the grating, looking through.

"What have you done?" asked Lucretia.

"I have locked you in," said Mrs. Brooks.

"What for?" Lucretia demanded.

"To keep you from getting out," replied Mrs. Brooks, with composure. "Your food will be put in to you, through a slide in this door, every day with great regularity. If you are docile and quiet, you will be very comfortable. In a niche at the right-hand corner, you will find a bed, which you mustn't tear to pieces; and you'll find one chair in the room, which is screwed down. We screw 'em down to prevent 'em from being broke. Be a nice, good woman, and your friend Richard will do all he can for you, and perhaps sometime you'll get well, and be the same as the rest of us."

Lucretia Fuller, discovering at that moment the chair that was screwed down, it luckily received her person, very dead and helpless. Then her anger, like the rebound of a steel spring, brought her back to herself as suddenly.

"He has betrayed me!" she exclaimed. "The infernal villain has played false!"

Mrs. Brooks turned to go away.

"Woman," screamed Lucretia, in a fury of anger, "I denounce Richard Parkhurst as a murderer! He murdered Stephen Parkhurst, his half-brother; and has broken up his household through false accusations of insanity! Revenge! Revenge!"

"Be a good, gentle lamb!" advised Mrs. Brooks, maternally. "Be a lamb, or we shall have to order you into a jacket."

"A jacket for me!" gasped Lucretia, hysterically. "Barbarians! Monsters!"

"We don't like to put 'em into jackets, because it's a trouble, and it takes three or four of us, sometimes, to do it. Mad people are so vicious."

"And I am mad, I suppose?" panted Lucretia.

"As a March hare."

"Singular madness that affects an entire household!" cried Lucretia, wringing her hands.

"When these kind of cases set in, there's no knowing where they'll stop," Mrs. Brooks observed; "and what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Be very mild, and don't damage the things. Pleasant dreams to you. Be a shining light to all in the house. Good night, my dear."

With these valedictory words, Mrs. Brooks went away as calmly as she came, and Loretta heard her lock the other door. She heard no more for a long time; for she fell upon the floor in strong nervous convulsions, and remained there, unheeded and uncared for, eating, in solitude, silence, and darkness, the bitter bread of disappointed ambition. In the first lull of her nervous pain, she thought of Sibylla's warning, and murmured, despairingly:

"The girl was right. Her mind was something more than prophetic. 'The hopes of the wicked perish!'"

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUSION.

Sibylla had some doubts about being permitted to see Ursula; but after the return of Mrs. Brooks, and some consultation with Richard and the Doctor, she was presently conducted to that young lady. The meeting was quite affecting to the feelings of each, finding free expression at sight of each other. Mrs. Brooks quickly withdrew, not caring to witness their girlish ecstasy, under the peculiar circumstances.

Sibylla had much to say, and after weeping and smiling a becoming time, began her singular story. First, she wished to know if her nerves were strong.

"Very strong," said Ursula, thinking of the young man whom she expected that night, with a ladder to climb into her window, to release her. "I, too, have had adventures, which I shall tell you, by and by."

"The world is full of such strange things," observed Sibylla. "I have come to you full of hope and cheer. We shall be restored to our own, and our own will be restored to us. But I cannot, dare not, tell you how much to hope, and what great things I expect."

"My poor Sibylla! I fear you are not yet yourself. Your mind is wandering upon the old, sick track."

"I knew you would think so. Let me see your eyes; they look calm and firm, and I shall show you something."

Sibylla drew a small silk purse from her pocket, took from it a long, narrow strip of paper, and handed it to Ursula. It was the telegram which she had found in the box. Ursula read it, and said:

"This is news to me. I knew not that Norman Drew was dead."

Sibylla remained silent, to give her a chance to follow her thoughts.

"Nobody came," mused Ursula, going step by step into the intricacies of the case. "Where did you get this?"

Sibylla took Ursula's hand, and resting her weary head upon her shoulder, in a low,

sweet voice, gave a distinct and detailed statement of the incidents of that night, the morning of which had brought the announcement of Stephen Parkhurst's death. Ursula was bewildered. At first, Sibylla's calm logic startled more than it convinced; but, after a little while, she fell to sobbing, and was very nervous. She continued in this state till ten minutes after midnight, when something like hail was heard rattling against the window. Ursula arose, blushing.

"What is that?" inquired Sibylla.

"Pebble-stones," answered Ursula, somewhat ambiguously. "He is throwing them against the panes, you know."

"Who is throwing them against the panes?"

"Frothingham, to be sure," said Ursula. "But I have not told you about Frothingham, have I? The noblest fellow! He has cheered this miserable imprisonment, and now he has come to take me away. There! Do you not hear a ladder being placed against the wall?"

"Heaven has saved you from escaping in that manner," answered Sibylla. "We have only to be patient, and trust in the promise of Magnus Drake."

"You have no doubt?" queried Ursula, looking earnestly into Sibylla's eyes.

"No doubt," responded Sibylla, unfalteringly.

"And that 'no doubt' sank deeply into the young girl's heart, and brought her a world of faith and confidence.

Some one was at the window, then, tapping lightly upon the panes.

"Can you speak to him?" asked Sibylla.

She said "Yes," and went and spoke to him.

"Is it Mr. Frothingham?"

"It is, and my friend is below. We have come to release you from this prison, and to conduct you to a place of safety."

Ursula replied:

"Many, many thanks! My prospects have brightened since you were last here. I have heard from my friends, and all goes well. My sister, Sibylla, is with me. They sent her for evil; but Providence willed it for good. She brings assurance of safety, and inspires me with hopes so wild that they push me to the brink of that insanity of which I am accused. It is better to be freed from this injustice by the strong and crushing hand of the law, than by clandestine flight."

"Do you feel so well assured of this that there is no cause for distrust?"

"Quite sure," interposed Sibylla, stepping forward.

"Hush!" whispered Frothingham. "Carlo is growling."

"Come down!" said a voice from below.

"Some men are forcing the gate. Faith, it is already open!"

Looking down, Hubert Frothingham saw persons entering the yard, and he was greatly relieved by seeing Farmer Gordon among them.

"Our friends!" cried Sibylla, clapping her hands. "Among them there is, I'll warrant you, the man whom Richard Parkhurst calls Norman Drew. You will see, now, if I am not right."

"Gordon! Gordon!" said Frothingham, raising his voice cautiously.

"All right!" answered Gordon, approaching him.

"Who are those with you?"

Putting her ear to the window, Sibylla heard him say, in a low tone: "New York detectives."

"Ask him if Norman Drew is with him," added Sibylla, in a tremulous voice.

"The young ladies wish to know if Norman Drew is with them?" said Frothingham, delivering the request to Gordon.

At that moment, a middle-aged man, who had advanced to the foot of the ladder, exclaimed: "He is!" threw up his arms, staggered a few paces toward the house, and fell insensible to the ground.

"I know him!—I know him!" gasped Ursula, and knew no more till she revived slowly and painfully, two hours afterward, in her father's arms.

To describe that scene, would be a vain effort. For a time, the most intense feelings of human nature were called into action. It was feared, by her friends, that her emotions would prove too powerful for her delicate strength; but she came round, anon, and was able to enjoy happiness as great as it was unexpected. For a few days she was extremely fitful, and slept but little, starting up wildly whenever she lost herself in sleep. These nervous manifestations finally subsided, but not till they had created considerable excitement in the mind of Stephen Parkhurst, who already regretted an experiment attended with so much pain and danger.

The detectives performed their duty faithfully, and without delay. Richard Parkhurst was closeted with Doctor Brooks, when his attention was arrested by a gentle knocking at the door. Opening it, a stranger stepped in, and, bowing, wished to know whom he had the honor of addressing. Richard grew pale about the mouth, and Doctor Brooks began to bluster. The stranger put his hand upon Richard's shoulder, and said:

"I am a detective officer. Richard Parkhurst, you are my prisoner. This is no Doolby and Driggs affair. I have been watching you some time. Doctor Brooks, you and Mrs. Brooks will bear him company."

You've done business so amicably together, that it would be a pity to part you."

"On what charge," stammered Richard, "am I arrested?"

"For the murder of Stephen Parkhurst."

"It's an accusation without foundation, and there is not a witness to testify against me!" exclaimed Richard, defiantly.

"I will call a witness," answered the officer, gravely. "I will call the ghost of Stephen Parkhurst." Then, in a loud voice, he summoned the ghost of Stephen to appear, and in walked the ghost, pale enough for the best ghost that ever was.

Richard's natural cowardice rendered him an easy dupe, and the real Stephen struck him with all the terror of a real ghost. With a cry of horror, he shrank into a corner, and turned his face from the accusing form.

"I accuse you, Richard," said Stephen, in a solemn voice, "of being guilty of the worst of crimes. I accuse you of conspiring against my life. I accuse you of being an unnatural villain. I accuse you of perjury, and of the blackest ingratitude. I accuse you of all the meannesses and vices that distort the character of man. You are beaten down and crushed. I leave you, with the curse of Cain upon your vagabond head. I leave you to the society of criminals, and to the fate of felons. Good night, Richard! Good night!"

He paused on the threshold as he went backward from the room, and added, sepulchrally:

"The air is chilly, and the room is damp. Good-night, Richard. Good-night!"

"Ah, what a night!" groaned Richard. Something seemed to whisper in his ear.

"The wages of sin is death."

On the following morning, Richard, very haggard and hopeless, in irons, and in the good company of Doctor Brooks and his wife, made a quick and safe journey to New York, and lodged, the ensuing night, in the Tombs. He sent for Marmaduke to come and see him, but that worthy gentleman, either warned by the Devil's Eye, or his own prudence, had changed his quarters, and could not be found. He never was found by Richard. The latter, after being in confinement a long time, was sent to a lunatic asylum, where, after moping and pining some months, he hanged himself with his pocket-handkerchief, not being able to keep above the tide of circumstances so well as his friend Marmaduke, who, when he made his sly exodus from the brown-stone house, carried a bottle of old claret and a dozen silver spoons with him, to enable him to float better. It is to be supposed that the carbuncle looked pale on that occasion, and winked ironically at its owner.

So Richard found a house at last; a very

narrow house, that answers all ambition and serves for all time. Doctor and Mrs. Brooks went into long retirement at Sing Sing; but never sang well nor cheerfully after that. The insanity of the Parkhurst family, by some means, did not agree with them. The resuscitated Stephen—who had some difficulty in proving his own identity—followed all parties concerned in the conspiracy with relentless rigor.

Bolter, resisting an arrest by a detective-officer, was shot; while Droolby and Driggs, for their many villainies, received the awards of justice by being sentenced to an unusually long period of imprisonment. When Droolby was arrested, a large sum of money was found upon his person, which he had received from Stephen Parkhurst, as the price of his delivery from the slums of the Old Brewery, and which was returned to him.

Lucretia Fuller, after being kept a while in Doctor Brooks' establishment, to see how she liked it, was set at liberty, much subdued and humbled by her experience. That famous institution for the reception and cure of abnormal persons was shortly after visited by the indignant people of that neighborhood, and reduced to a heap of ruins. Some black-

ened stones and a few charred sticks are all that remain to tell where the building stood.

That eccentric dog, Carlo, adhered strictly to the fortunes of his new master, and was a great favorite with Ursula when she became Mrs. Frothingham. Frank Southerly fell in love with Sibylla, but that young lady was so nestled about the heart of Stephen, that he did not wish to lose her; and said that the fellow must wait, as he might grow young himself, and take it into his head to ask her to become mistress of the brown-stone house.

After a while, it transpired that Sibylla was the daughter of Magnus Drake, and that the revengeful feelings of the latter toward Richard had something to do with the girl's mother. But that was a subject never referred to. Magnus was very fond of her, and all his property will fall to her, eventually.

John Jerome was caught setting fires, and got his deserts at last.

Stephen Parkhurst still lives in the corner-house, widely known by his charities, much respected as a citizen, happy in his domestic relations, and not disposed to try dangerous experiments.

[THE END.]

Saul Sabberday; or the Idiot Spy. A tale of the men and deeds of '76. By Ned Buntline. Illustrated with several full-page engravings by Darley. The attention of the reader is led to the days of the American Revolution, when deeds of great valor and heroism were enacted. Saul pretends to be an idiot, and by that means gains access to the enemy's camps and reports their doings to American commanders. Saul renders much service in those trying times, and was selected to carry intelligence to Gen. Washington; mounting the horse of the lamented Ethan Allen, he galloped to White Plains to the camp where Washington was giving orders to his Aids. Saul rushed into the presence; and seeing the Commander-in-chief, shouted, "you are a man like other folks!" The chief hastily opened the dispatch and a glad smile illumined his countenance. Saul is then employed on perilous services which he faithfully executes to the perfect satisfaction of Washington, who rewards him. Saul finally marries Luly the untutored child of Emathle, the dread Chief of the Seminoles, but now the fully developed and educated woman of civilized life. Washington is present at the wedding and thanks Saul in the name of a Free Country. Price \$0 25

The White Wizard; Or the Prophet of the Seminoles. A tale of strange Mystery in the South and North. By Ned Buntline. Six full page engravings from designs by Darley. The reader's attention is called back a period of nearly forty years ago when Spanish pirates and American slavers infested our Southern coasts; when New York Merchants, some of whom now wallow in their gilded mansions in our fashionable streets, were engaged in fitting out vessels to catch "black-birds," as well as "green ones." The White Wizard is a Caucasian, who is leaving civilized society with his young wife and darling child of two years. They are overtaken by a pirate vessel, which pour shot and canister at the small yacht upon which is the White Wizard. A shell falls upon the wife and she is killed. Through the aid of some kind fishermen he manages to escape with his little yacht up one of the small rivers on the coast of Florida, where he falls in with a band of Seminoles. After consultation he is accepted by them as their "medicine man" and is named Arpiaka the "White Medicine." They dig a grave for his murdered wife beneath a tall magnolia. He carved upon the tree, as he sighed "Lost, lost, forever!" one word—"LONG." In the morning, his hair, which was a glossy brown, the night before, had been changed to a snowy white!

"The murderers of my wife, seek my blood, they would rob me of my child!" said Arpiaka.

"They had better put their hand in the nest of the hooded Cobra than seek my white brother among the Seminoles!" cried Chikika. "We will go half way to meet them!" The child Ona is stolen by one of the fishermen who turns traitor, and taken to Havana to Senor Ribera, who is authorized to pay ten thousand dollars for it. Ribera employs an assassin to kill the fisherman after he departs from Ribera's house, and take half the gold for his trouble and return the balance to

Ribera. "He waited for the return of the assassin. He had not long to wait. In a very few minutes that individual came in and emptied out the gold upon the table which Pedro, the fisherman, had carried away, as well as other valuables found upon the murdered scamp, who had deservedly met death just when he has consummated his villainy and received his reward." There are hundreds of very beautiful scenes and historical incidents in this book that only such a writer as Buntline could so elegantly portray. Price \$0 25

Sea Waif; or the Terror of the Coast.

By Ned Buntline. Embellished with ten full page illustrations by Darley. This interesting story opens at the commencement of our American Revolution with Sea Waif being engaged, by old Phineas Cringle, as the Captain of the Tyrannicide, a privateer. In his first adventure he sinks a British Sloop of War, which is escorting some half a dozen transports, and captures them all and brings them into port, by which Cringle gets over a hundred thousand dollars prize money. Sea Waif makes the Tyrannicide the terror of the Britishers and after many adventures is taken a prisoner. Sea Waif has been picked up when quite a child, by some fishermen off Nantucket Shoals and is adopted by a hermit who names him Edward Sea Waif, because he is a waif of the sea. At the time he is found he floated ashore on an old sea chest, wherein were a number of articles with crests upon them, which finally leads to his identification as Lord Francis Egerton. After being released and exchanged he assumes his position as a peer of the realm, comes back to the land of freedom where he marries Kate, the daughter of old Cringle and returns to England with her. All the characters in this beautiful story have happy lives and it finally winds up by everybody being pleased and satisfied. Whoever reads this story will most assuredly have their full money's worth. Price \$0 25

Man-of-Wars-Man's Grudge. By Ned

Buntline. A romance of the Revolution. The chase—the fight—the baffled suitor—an alderman of the olden time—the tory—love and duty—mistress and servant—boquet—tete-a-tete—enemy in sight—Cora Bedford—crime and misery—fate of war—surprise—cruise—love's stratagem—spy—night scene in Philadelphia—fiend in human shape—welcome visitor—abduction—strange interview—woman's kindness—disclosure—capture—parole of honor—a visit—two villains—social dinner—storm at sea—fight—foiled and killed—five beautiful engravings by Darley.

Price \$0 25

Stella Delorme; or the Camanche's

Dream. By Ned Buntline. A wild and fanciful story of savage life. Illustrated by six full page engravings in Darley's best style. The author of this Indian tale has been exceedingly prolific in his description of savage life as it is in our Western Wilds. This is one of the very interesting stories that Buntline so well knows how to weave, that when once the reader begins to scan its pages he cannot leave it until he finishes its reading—for every page is a new scene. Price. \$0 25

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FREDERIC A. BRADY'S CATALOGUE.

BRADY'S CELEBRATED "MERCURY" STORIES.

Luona Prescott; or the Curse Fulfilled.

A tale of the American Revolution. By Ned Buntline. We will give a short synopsis of its contents, viz:—curse of the dying and the mission of the living—a history of wrong and desolation, cry for vengeance. Military drill and funeral. We will—pulpit *versus* pills. A picture—mystery. Rum and recruiting. Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boy. Assault on Quebec—Montgomery killed. Battle on the lake. At Jame. Arnold in action. Hot and cold blood. Semus Heights. Arnold in Philadelphia. Arnold's first false step and leads—where? Washington and the reprimand. Favor asked and granted. Arnold's treason. Andre's capture. The traitor's escape. The warning of Luona. Washington discovers the treason. Arnold awakens to misery. Luona at home. Terrible conclusion. Seven illustrations by Darley. Price\$0 25

Our Mess; or the Pirate Hunters of the Gulf.

A tale of Naval heroism and wild adventure in the Tropics, by Ned Buntline. Illustrated by five engravings by Darley. This is one of Buntline's Sea Romances, for which he is so eminently proverbial, and into which he casts so much exciting interest. This story is unsurpassed in perilous adventure and Nautical romance by any other author. Price\$0 25

English Tom; or the Smuggler's Secret.

A tale of Ship and Shore. By Ned Buntline. Illustrated with six engravings by Darley. The reader is taken to a New England village and finds Mr. Drummond on the lookout for the 'Scud' a vessel commanded by Frank Hewlett, a most unmitigated rascal. Hewlett has a wife in New York circumvents the ruin of Betsey Hunt, the daughter of the tavern keeper of the village, and also endeavors to marry Rosalie Drummond. Poor Betsey is induced to come to New York, where the ceremony of a mock marriage is performed. She is then left to her own resources and after being locked up in a brothel in Mercer street, makes her escape and through collusion with Miss Drummond she baffles and exposes Hewlett to his shame. Old Drummond has been an English smuggler, and the facts being known to Hewlett he tries to take advantage of the facts to the disparagement of Drummond, and is finally foiled in all his attempts. Hewlett's conduct exposed he is convicted of Bigamy and serves the state in the capacity of a convict. Rosalie Drummond is proven to be the legitimate heiress to an earldom in England and only the adopted daughter of Drummond. The secret of Drummond the smuggler, is that he is supposed to have murdered the Earl Delorme, (the father of Rosalie) when he had in fact only wounded him. Delorme comes to America and the real son of Drummond marries Rosalie and becomes thereby the heir to the earl's estate and title. The publisher can scarcely give an outline of these interesting tales in this little catalogue, but feels assured that the readers of these books will be amply repaid for both time and expense in their reading. Price\$0 25 (and the book mailed free of postage.)

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Morgan; or the Knight of the Black Flag

A strange story, of by-gone times. By Ned Buntline. Illustrated by Darley with ten full size engravings. The author carries the reader to the days of the "Merry Monarch," Charles II, and faithfully pictures some of the persecutions of the Hebrews at that time. Morgan the hero of the plot is a young Welsh nobleman deeply in love with Miriam, a young and beautiful Jewess, the daughter of Solomon, surnamed "Solomon the Jew." The attention of the reader is called to the following extract to show the style of the author in the exciting tale:—

"Thou art of those who believe that the glories of the Holy City will be yet revived!"

"It is a part of our creed. Were it not for that hope the doom of the Hebrew were dark, indeed! Persecuted by all men—reviled and hated—they know little of joy on earth!"

"All men do not hate thy race! Some pity more than they hate."

"Pity!"

The jet-black eyes of the Jewess flashed like fire as she echoed this word.

"Pity!" she cried. "Give us hate and scorn, but not so base a thing as pity! Pity the hound which howls when you scourge him—pity the slave which kisses the hand that smites him; but pity us not, for we yet are proud amid all suffering and all persecution."

There are many exciting and interesting scenes in this book that will chain the attention of the reader to its very last words. Price\$0 25

Death Mystery; a Crimson Tale of life

in New York. By Ned Buntline. Eight elegant engravings by Darley. This is perhaps one of the most interesting tales ever penned by Buntline. A woman is the leader of a band of murderers and cut-purses; whom she visits in various disguises, so that her own band fail to recognize her. She visits the gambling-hells of New York; breaks a number of the Faro Banks, inveigles her betrayer and causes his ruin. She exhibits the most relentless hate, and proves that a neglected woman is the most to be dreaded of all characters. She saves many of her sex from destruction; and finally winds up by causing those who had persecuted her formerly, to meet at her house, which is an elaborate establishment in one of our best localities, and poisoning them with some refreshments, at a ball which she gives for their amusement. Previous to their deaths she informs them who she is, how they spurned her with their persecutions, and she now condemns them to condign punishment. Price\$0 25

Hilliare Henderson; or the Secret revealed.

By Ned Buntline. This work contains a number of illustrations by Darley, and is the antecedent of the Death Mystery. Here are set forth all the machinations of the characters spoken of in the Death Mystery. To have a complete estimation of the Death Mystery with all its exciting incidents the reader must have a copy of Hilliare Henderson. Price\$0 25

FREDEBIC A. BRADY'S CATALOGUE.

BRADY'S CELEBRATED "MERCURY" STORIES.

Grossbeak Mansion: A Mystery of

New York, by Ned Buntline. Illustrated with eight full page engravings by Darley. The author and the designer of the illustrations have here produced a most interesting and readable book of ninety closely printed pages. This Grossbeak is a retired captain and ship owner, residing in Bleeker street, some twenty years ago—Grossbeak is one of the old-fashioned, jolly sort of Seadogs, who is now enjoying life in a pleasant, rational and charitable manner. Old Levi Martin is a skin-flint merchant and Ship-owner in South street. Young Martin, his son is introduced in the second chapter. He is delineated as one of those free and open hearted sailors, who is full of affection for his profession, as well as the weaker but fairer sex. Old Martin gets married for the second time, during the absence of his son on a voyage to the East Indies. This Mrs. Martin, as the sequel proves is a perfect she-rascal, who with her mother, has inveigled old Martin, in the hopes of either killing him themselves or driving him to suicide, that they may enjoy his property afterwards. Young Martin upon his return from his long voyage, during which, at Calcutta, he was made the Master by the American Consul, asks his father where his sister is; to which the father cannot reply, inasmuch as the machinations of the wife and the mother-in-law, have driven her from her parental home. The daughter, however, has married the object of her choice, her husband dies and leaves her the mother of twins, which she causes to be sent to Mr. Grossbeak, without telling him whose they are, except that the twins are born in honest wedlock. Grossbeak receives them, and with his daughter, a very interesting and beautiful young lady rears them. Grossbeak has two ships left, one of which he places under the command of young Edgar Martin, who makes a great deal of money with her, and he finally marries Lizzie Grossbeak. The sister of Edgar becomes a companion to a lady who purposes making a tour through Europe. On the European travels they meet with many thrilling adventures; are taken captives by Italian Banditti. The leader of the brigands became acquainted with the lady at a large soiree in Paris, and he falls desperately in love with her. He treats her well as a captive, she is attended by the Chief's sisters, and receives the treatment due a lady. The brigand is afterwards surrounded by troops and he is slain and she thereby escapes from him. Finally the whole family meet in New York, and everybody is made happy by the denouement. This is one of Buntline's happiest tales, and will well repay a perusal. The publisher takes much pleasure in recommending this series of books to the general reader, under the full conviction that they will give general satisfaction. Price\$0 25

Pathaway; or the Mountain Outlaw.

A tale of the Northern Trapping Grounds; by Dr. J. H. Robinson. Beautifully illustrated with eight full-page engravings. The reader is in this highly interesting story given an excellent idea of our American Trappers. Some of them are white men and others of the Indian stamp. The thrilling and exciting adventures of our heroes of the

forests of our almost boundless country is so elegantly delineated in this story, that to give even a faint outline of these tales would appear to be a work of supererogation, yet we cannot refrain from telling just a little to give the general reader an idea that he is paying the trifling amount of twenty-five cents for something intrinsically worth ten times the amount in pleasure to himself and to others when he is sated. The first scene opens by a trapper discovering that some rascal has been pilfering from his stock of furs, which he supposes are safely stowed in a *cave-de-sac* in the wilderness. He sets to watch in the night but is unable to discover the thief. While he is on the watch for the pilferers, he discovers five men approach a stream with a burden from which afterwards is seen to arise the form of a lovely young girl. These men tie her up in the covering, and with rocks fastened to the bundle cast it into a river. The trapper springs into the stream, and being a hardy swimmer succeeds in bringing up the body, to which he applies friction and stimulants and restores her to life again. She stretches out her arms, imploring mercy, which the trapper answers in the following strain:

"You're safe, little woman—you're safe. The wretches have gone, and you are with a man ready to die for you! No more need of asking for mercy, gal; no more clasping of them while hands in despair, no more turnin' of that pale face to heaven!"

"The girl was assured—she felt, she knew, that she was indeed safe, and seizing the sun-browned hand, kissed it and dropped tears upon it.

There are very many touching incidents in this work, of trapper habits and adventure. Graphic scenes and beautiful turns, all of which must interest every reader. Price\$0 25

The Rattlesnake; or the Rebel Privateer.

A tale of the present day; by Ned Buntline. Handsomely illustrated with six full page engravings by designs by Darley. This beautiful story opens by the introduction of a Lieutenant of Our Navy, having intimate relations with a highly respectable family in Boston, named Winchester. Ashton is the accepted intended husband of Fluta Winchester, who is entirely loyal to the American Union, while Ashton is a rebel. Ashton resigns his commission in the Navy and succeeds in obtaining the command of a clipper brig from Ichabod Snaggs, another *seesh* Scamp. This Snaggs managed to get from Jeff Davis a *Letter of Marque*, and with that authority, Ashton sails the brig from Boston; endeavoring first to abduct Fluta Winchester on board. The United States Marshal pursues the brig but fails to catch her. She proceeds to sea and meets many adventures. The character of Doctor Umbilicus, the surgeon, is most graphically described in Ned's versatile manner. The reader will find this book full of exciting adventures and enough scenes of interest to hold him "spell-bound" until "the end" is reached. This story is pleasing, interesting and highly entertaining, leaving a direct sensation on the mind, hallucinating in its character. Get a copy, the Price is only\$0 25

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BRADY'S CELEBRATED "MERCURY" STORIES.

Ella Adams; or the Demon of Fire. A tale of the Charleston conflagration. By Ned Buntline. Illustrated with six beautiful engravings from designs by Darley. The author as well as the designer of the illustrations are so well known to the general reader that the publisher need make no comment on their productions, and therefore simply announces the facts. Miss Adams is a New England school teacher in South Carolina in the pursuit of her profession. A party of the so-called regulators have a chivalric antipathy to New Englanders and after persecuting her in all the manifold ways that such characters do, causes her to leave that part of the country; previous to which they tie her to a tree and whip her on her naked back. She escapes through the agency of a negro and goes to Charleston where she is hidden by a Spanish Quadroon named Sanchez. Sanchez has suffered a great deal by persecution and has a band who finally set fire to the city. Ella Adams escapes from the city through the agency of her lover, who comes there through the blockade in disguise. This is one of Buntline's highly wrought stories, that will pay the time spent in its perusal. Price\$0 25

Millrose; or the Cotton Planter's Daughter. A tale of South Carolina. By Dr. J. H. Robinson. Illustrated by eight full-page designs from Darley. This story is an episode of the present civil war, which is distracting our once happy and peaceful country. The scenes, as the title indicates, is laid in that nest where first was hatched the germ of rebellion. It recounts many tyrannies practised by the demons of discord upon those who chanced to differ from them in opinion as to the correctness of their proceedings. While this work does not enter into the discussion of this political question, it yet describes the many hardships that are and have been endured by the Law and order party. The heroine of our tale is the orphan daughter and heiress of a large cotton planter, now under the guardianship of her uncle, a perfect tyrant. She is locked up in a chamber at the top of the mansion, and is rescued by an evildoer who pretends to whip Niggers and be with his employer in all his nefarious purposes and deeds, yet succeeds in rescuing the orphan from the clutches of her guardian through the instrumentality of a yankee carpenter and an old slave who is devoted to her interests. All the various scenes and incidents are beautifully described in the Doctor's peculiar versatile and interesting style. Failing to have and read this interesting story, would be an irreparable loss to any reader who desires to be classed as such. Price...\$0 25

Catholina; or the Niche in the Wall. A Tale of Louisiana. By Dr. J. H. Robinson. Illustrated with ten full-page engravings from designs by Darley. The reader is introduced, in the first scene to Jean Louis, a bricklayer, who is very poor, and as usual, has a large family. He is called out of his house at midnight by two men in masks, who seize him and place a hoodwink about his eyes, force him into a carriage and after making many turns stop and lead him to a vault, where he is compelled by means of pistols

and glittering steel to close up a wall in which is placed a live man in a state of somnolence. The unfortunate victim becomes partially conscious of what is going on and in his agony makes a myetic sign of distress, which Jean Louis understanding, drops, inside of the tomb, a large jack-knife; by which means the intended victim finally escapes. About a year after the above event, the same would-be assassins endeavored to make away with Catholina, the daughter of the man supposed to be entombed, by administering poison to her. They call in Dr. Merigny, who instantly makes the discovery of the poisoning. The Dr. directs to be left alone with the patient, and after explaining to her the state she is in, gets her confidence. He stains her face and arms to resemble yellow fever and gives her a powerful dose that causes her to appear as dead. The same persons attempt to assassinate him on his way home. He escapes, and with Jean Louis gets the body of Catholina and restores her to life. There are a large number of very interesting scenes in this work; among which may be noticed that of the son becoming acquainted with the fact of the supposed murders of his cousin, the beautiful Catholina; her father; Dr. Merigny; the confederate in all these crimes, as well as many others having been committed by his parents. We would like to give a larger outline of this very pleasant book, but chose rather to make the reservation of some for the reader.

The price is only\$0 25

Elfrida: The Red Rovers Daughter. A new mystery of New York. By Ned Buntline. Illustrated by ten elegant engravings by Darley. This story is one of those "Tales of Mystery of New York," in which Buntline far excels all competitors. It is written in a bold and vigorous manner, and the reader will be enchanted to the end, and then be filled with wonder at the author's versatility in his depictions of actual living characters. To read this book is to be highly pleased. Price\$0 25

Mountain Max; or Nick Whiffles on the border. A tale of the Bushwackers in Missouri. By Dr. J. H. Robinson. Seven handsome engravings from designs by Darley. In this work we have the adventures of Nick Whiffles in Missouri. Dr. Robinson has made these border Bushwackers quite famous, as every reader of these stories must admit. Those who have not read this book have indeed missed a most delightful and interesting entertainment. Don't fail to get a copy at once and read it attentively. Price\$0 25

Thayendanega the Scourge; or the War Eagle of the Mohawks. A tale of Mystery, Ruth and Wrong. By Ned Buntline. Several beautiful full page illustrations by Darley. This is another one of Buntline's tales of the "poor Indian." It is exceedingly delightful to travel through this beautiful story, with such a descriptive writer, and to follow the hero of the tale through all his manly bearings. The stoicism of Thayendanega leaves a pleasant thrill on the mind of the reader long after he has concluded its reading. Price.....\$0 25

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BRADY'S CELEBRATED "MERCURY" STORIES.

Scotto the Scout; or the Union Rangers. A tale of the Great Rebellion. By Dr. J. H. Robinson. Handsomely illustrated with eight beautiful engravings from designs by Darley. This neat and chaste story gives a number of vivid scenes in the civil war of the United States, under the administration of President Abraham Lincoln. This Scotto is a kind of Spy for the federal forces under that brave man Geo. B. McClellan; and gives much valuable information in reference to the position of the troops in opposition. He passes several times through the confederate army, and while making observations for "home use," meets with many pleasant and some very unpleasant adventures. Scotto is taken prisoner by some of the Black Horse Cavalry and when asked by Beauregard to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy, replies in following language:

"If all the trees in yonder run was men, and all the branches and leaves on 'em was bayonets, and all the grass growin' round 'em was dead-shot rifles, and if all the sun-beams let down from heaven was rebel halters, I swear to ye that I wouldnt swear allegiance to your one-horse consarn! You wince, do ye? Perhaps you ain't in the natur' 'o change, dead to condemnation and remorse. Think of what you've lost! You've lost the Revolution; you've lost your history; you've lost the Cowpene; and the memory of the Swamp Fox, and the Santee!"

There are very many such beautiful and homely thrusts in this work, which the author presents to the readers. Price\$0 25

Nightshade; or the Masked Robber of Eveslow Heath. A Romance of the Road. By Dr. J. H. Robinson. This book introduces the reader to many scenes in the life of an English Highwayman in the times when the country was not gridironed over with railroads and traveling after Steam-horses prevalent. As the weary wayfarer travels homeward he is halted on the road by "your money or your life!" But that is in the past. The interest of this story consists in describing so beautifully very many incidents of daring as exercised by the bold and bad men of former times. This story is illustrated by nine beautiful engravings from designs by Darley and its price is\$0 25

Blanche; or the Lost Diamond. A Tale of the Lights and Shades of London. By Septimus R. Urban. Beautifully illustrated with elegant designs by Darley. The opening scene is in the Weaver's Home.

"Husband—Giles—dear Giles. Oh, say a word to me—to the little ones. God sees us yet, dear Giles, and will send us help. I am not hungry—oh, no, no! and I don't think Mary and Luko are very hungry, dear Giles. They will soon sleep. I will go out and see if—I can borrow—"

"Mush, Emma, hush—no! no! It is not borrow. It is beg—beg. You mean beg."

Here apparently is a weaver and his poor family in a state of starvation. This is one of the shade pictures. Now for the light one.

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This Giles Hilton becomes possessed of a very valuable diamond which he has given to Mr. Meaw the dealer in precious stones, to sell for him, and takes an advance of ten thousand pounds upon it. While the diamond is in the possession of the jeweler it is stolen and a false stone put in its place, which is only discovered when Giles calls for more money. He is arrested for changing the stone and trying to defraud the jeweler. He is finally acquitted of the charge by the confession of the actual thief and he is restored to favor. This book abounds in interesting scenes and is recommended with much pleasure to the reader. Price...\$0 25

Patriot Cruiser; A Story of the American Revolution. By Sylvanus Cobb, Jr. Illustrated with designs by Darley. This story is printed from good large type and is therefore easily to be read. The opening scenes are during the dark days of the American Revolution, and commence in the year 1775. While a British Naval force was in the harbor of Massachusetts an army was quartered in the good city of Boston. The trouble against English tyranny was then brewing, and little could be said by either Whig or Tory to each other that was not termed menacing and inflammable.

"Either the English King must withdraw his troops and concede to the reasonable demands of the colonies, or else—"

"What?" asked the stranger, as Vincent Gray hesitated.

"Else the colonies will make their own bargain, even at the point of the bayonet!" This was said in a low, firm tone, which told what the speaker meant; and that it was the sentiment of others besides himself.

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