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TIME AND TIDE;

OR,

STRIVE AND WIN.

BY

A. S. ROE,

AUTHOR OF "JAMES MONTJOY," "TO LOVE AND TO BE LOVED," ETC., ETC.

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CHAPTER I.

"I WONDER what keeps Bill! He was to have been here by sun-down!"

"The sun is just setting, see the tops of the hills which skirt the Sound are yet lighted by him: and, brother Charles, how beautiful the bare peaks look, with those few stunted cedars, which are scattered upon them, bright with the rays of the setting sun!"

"Yes, they look well enough, Alfred; but I don't see why Bill don't come."

"He'll come; never fear that: but I hope you will not let him know how anxious you are to get the horse,—he is a jockey,—Bill is,—every inch of him."

"I'll look out for him, Alph, never fear; but I do want the mare, though; she is a beauty, I tell you."

"Some one is coming through the woods, now."

"Yes! there he is! there's Bill! I can tell by the way he drives."

The young men, who had been sitting upon the stoop in front of their dwelling, now arose and walked down the little path to the front gate, and there, leaning upon it, watched the vehicle which was rapidly approaching. It was a small buggy, in which the driver sat very erect, holding the reins, one in each hand, and, while apparently endeavoring to curb the speed of his horse, he was, at the same time, using encouraging terms to excite and quicken it.

"She's a beautiful traveller, isn't she, Alph? how wide she carries her legs, and how proudly she holds back her head."

The brother made no reply. In a few moments the driver suddenly reined up, opposite the gate, spoke sharply to his horse, threw the reins at his feet, and turning, with

a winning smile towards the two young men, looked very complacently at them.

"She's a beauty; aint she?"

The brothers opened the gate and walked round the horse.

"She hasn't laid a hair; and look at her breathing! you wouldn't know but she was just out of the stable, and I've driven her from my house, three miles, in less than fifteen minutes!"

Then pulling out a large silver watch, and carefully counting the minutes,—

"No; I'm wrong! She has come it in seventeen minutes; but I held her back. She will travel ten miles an hour with ease, and that's fast enough for every-day use. Just see what legs,—straight, and smooth, and so wide and clean as she travels,—and as gentle as a kitten. Come, boys, one of you get in,—Alph, come."

"Oh no; I don't care about it. If brother Charles wishes, he may go."

Charles looked at his brother, as though wishing to be sure of his approbation; but Alfred merely said to him, in a low tone,—

"If you feel so anxious to buy a horse, perhaps you'd better get in and see how you like her. She looks well enough."

Charles sprang in; the owner of the horse took the reins, and off she started at a fair, brisk trot. The brother stood and watched the receding buggy until it passed a little eminence, that arose about a quarter of a mile distant, and was out of sight. Then throwing away a stray chip, which he had picked up, he exclaimed,—

"I do wish that brother Charles would be content without that horse, and just let us get along as we have done with old Bob—"

"Talking to yourself, ha! Alfred!"

He looked round.

"I had no idea that any one was so near to me, sister; but I feel worried about that horse. Charlie has taken it into his head to buy him of Bill Compton."

"It is a pretty creature, though; isn't it, Alfred? I saw them as they drove off."

"Yes; the horse appears well enough, for that matter, and may turn out as good as she looks; but it does not seem to me worth while for Charles to buy a horse. We have gone on so well in the old way, that I fear to begin any changes."

"Have you talked with brother Charles about it? Perhaps, if you were to persuade him, he would give it up."

"I know, sister, if I should tell him positively that he had better not, he would give it up; but I dislike doing so, because I see that his heart is set upon it."

"Ay, ay, Mr. Alph; just see how partial you are!" And the pretty girl laid her hand on her brother's shoulder, and looked archly into his face.

"You could say *no*, with a very good heart, the other day, to me, and deprive me of a fine ride!"

"That was all for your good, you know, sister."

"Oh yes! that's well put in; and yet, when any thing is for Charlie's good you can't deny him."

"Ah, well; you know, Janette, it is a very different case."

"Yes; I know it is different; as much difference as this: you love Charlie so much, that you cannot bear to try his feelings by opposing his will, but—"

"Stop, Janette; you shall not talk so." And the brother playfully put his hand over her mouth.

"You know the reason well enough; and you can realize the difference in the cases. If Charlie should buy a horse and get cheated in the purchase, it would be but the loss of a few dollars; but, if I should have allowed my sister to ride with a man whose character is doubtful, I should have felt that I was guilty of attaching disgrace to you."

"Oh yes! I understand; that you are a good-for-nothing, dear, good brother." And kissing the hand which she had taken away from her mouth, she tripped back into the house, for the sound of wheels could be heard approaching in the distance.

The mare returned with the same free pace. The reins were in the hands of Charles, who, pleased with her driving, passed the gate where his brother stood watching the movement of the horse, and turning her adroitly round

while under full headway, he brought her up in the same manner her owner had done, and, throwing the reins down, jumped out and whispered to his brother,—

"She is the prettiest creature I ever drove."

The owner of the mare eyed the brothers keenly a moment, and then assuming a very bland countenance, said—

"I have told your brother, Mr. Alfred, that he can have this mare for one hundred dollars; and ninety-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents won't buy her. You see what she is, she speaks for herself; clean limbed, long winded, smooth as velvet, and without a single trick, and sound as a dollar. I want you boys to have her, because I know she will be well taken care of. Old Jacques wanted to buy her yesterday, but I wouldn't let the old rip have her short of one hundred and twenty dollars."

"He is rather hard with horseflesh."

"Hard! he oughtn't to have any thing but a mule to drive. He shan't have my mare; he'd founder her in a week, and then swear she wasn't sound when he bought her. No! no! I want to see Charlie behind her with your new buggy; she'll make it buz, no mistake!"

While this harangue was going on, the brothers talked apart. Charles was apparently very anxious to make some proposition; and Alfred, with his eyes bent upon the ground, and carving out certain little figures with a stick which he held in his hand, answered only in monosyllables, and appeared wholly unmoved by the enthusiasm of his brother. Finally, looking up at Charles, he said, in a low tone,—

"You know we have not the money on hand, yet; suppose we talk about it this evening, and let him know to-morrow."

Part of this was no doubt heard by the sharp-eared jockey, for he at once replied,—

"If it will be any accommodation to you, a note at three months will be just the same to me as money; and it shall lay snug in my pocket-book till you're ready to pay it, and no one will ever be the wiser. I do this, because I want you to have the mare."

Charles gave his brother a touch with his hand.

"We should like to talk over the matter a little to-

night, Mr. Compton, and to-morrow we will give you an answer."

"All right; take your own time. Shall I call in the morning?"

"Yes; as early as you please"

Again the reins were resumed, and the mare moved off in pretty style, while the young men watched her until she was over the hill.

"She's a beauty," said Charles; and then followed his brother into the house.

CHAPTER II.

THE house, into which the brothers entered and which they called their home, was a plain, unostentatious farmhouse of one story in height, and not very large upon the ground; yet, as one viewed it, with its wing at the side, and its little additions here and there, and its large dormer windows projecting from the roof, the impression forced itself upon the mind that there were many conveniences and no lack of rooms for a moderate family. It had never been painted, and although it must have seen many years from the rough and barren aspect of its clap-boards, and from the moss that had gathered quite conspicuously upon the roof, yet the symmetry of its form was as perfect as ever, and on no part visible to the eye was there any sign of decay. The front door was graced with a small portico, beneath the roof of which rested a low stoop with a single platform, having broad seats on each side, and a single stone step between it and the ground. Along the wing, which ran parallel with the front of the house, was a wide shed, formed by a continuation of its roof curving a little up, as it extended out from the building, not only letting in the light, but relieving thereby the heavy aspect of the roof in its long sweep. All the external appurtenances were likewise in good condition, and neatly arranged. A picket railing en-

closed the little establishment, forming a neat front yard, well lined with thrifty shrubs; a kitchen yard, with a road passing through it back to the barns and other out-buildings; and a garden spot, small indeed, but large enough, if well tilled, to supply all that ought to be expected from a garden. The fences beyond were of post and rail, well put up, and like the fields which they enclosed, telling of good husbandry and a correct taste in country matters. A few large weeping elms lined the side of the road, and their long branches hung gracefully over the small front yard, and when stirred by a stiff breeze, they would even sweep the eaves of the dwelling itself.

The view of the surrounding country had nothing which would be likely to attract the notice of a traveller. There were no high mountains, nor blooming valleys, nor deep-rolling river, blending in grace and beauty between verdant banks and through high and broken rocks. Nor was there a very extended view of even the commonplace features of hill and dale, and field and woodland; for the hills, although not very high,—yet rising at no great distance from two points of the horizon, cut off all other objects from sight, but their own bare peaks, in the north and east. In the west an extended tract of woodland was the only object that the eye met, after glancing across a few green fields;—towards the south alone was there any thing peculiarly attractive for the eye. It could range in that direction across a pleasant, undulating country, well sprinkled with the native trees of our forests, above whose tops arose the spire of the parish church, and scattered amid which, at short intervals, were the dwellings of farmers and sea-captains and storekeepers, and all the *et ceteras* that make up a New England sea-coast town, or village.

By this the reader must not be too sure that the scene of our story is absolutely in New England; it will be enough for all purposes to say, that the manners and customs and business of the place savored greatly of that distinguished portion of our happy country; so much so, that nothing but a very near neighborhood can account for the similarity. This, however, is a digression; for we have not yet done with the scenery. If we cannot enjoy from the windows of our dwelling a water prospect, it is a great

satisfaction, sometimes, to know that it is near at hand, and that by stepping a few rods up ascending ground or crossing a little copse of wood, the sparkling river or the deep blue ocean can be looked upon. It was not very far to the summit of the hills, already mentioned as bounding the north and eastern horizon of our home view; but when there, the eye might stretch its vision to the utmost, and water—the dark blue water—rolled and glistened even to the shutting down of the deep blue above:—and perhaps this very fact gave a charm to the hills, bare in themselves and not very sightly objects. They were associated in the minds of those accustomed to behold them, with a rich panorama of sky and water and jutting headlands and a long line of smooth white beach, with the white sails bending to the breeze, as the travellers of ocean were going and returning on their distant journeys.

The little family, whose place of residence we have been describing, consisted of two brothers and two sisters, whose parents had now been dead some years.

The oldest of the family, whom we have called Alfred, was but just twenty-one, and the brother, who has been introduced as Charles, was about nineteen. They were not absolutely related, for Mr. Stanley, the father of Alfred, having been bereaved of the mother of his infant son when about two years old, had married, for his second wife, one who had also been bereaved and who brought with her a little orphan, an infant of a year old.

No distinction had ever been made by either parent in the treatment of these children, except as their natural temperament might require it. They had lain in each other's arms in infancy; had been sole playmates in boyhood; and had worked together as they acquired strength for labor;—sharing in every joy or sorrow, a oneness of feeling was created between them that "grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength." It is very possible too that the circumstances, in which they had been placed by the death of their father, Mr. Stanley, and that of their mother, a few months later, throwing them very much upon their own resources, with the care of two sisters whom they mutually loved, might have done much to rivet the bond of affection. United as their hearts were in the

strongest feelings of fraternal love, there was, however, a manifest difference in their natural traits of character.

Alfred was reserved, plodding, and disposed to great regularity in all his matters. He was sure to rise at a certain hour, and commence at once the routine of the day. He was very solicitous that meals should be served up at set times, and disliked any interruption of his regular daily duties. This peculiarity might have been carried by him to excess; he might have grown up like a well-arranged piece of machinery;—accomplishing indeed the work of life very well; but deficient in that flexibility which can bend with grace to the little calls we must listen to, if we would do our part to throw life and happiness into the social circle. Happily for Alfred the character of Charles was the reverse of his own, in this respect. He could go to bed early or late; rise at six or seven, just as it happened. He never remembered the hours for meals, and in this way, at times, gave more trouble than was necessary. He did not relish the idea of taking up his hoe at just such an hour, and would sometimes begin before his brother, so as to get a chance to stop and attend to something else;—or he would begin later and then work violently to do his full share.

He was likewise more fond of making an appearance; liked to see his sisters in a tasty dress; and was rather given to his own personal indulgence in that respect. In all matters of ornament about the house, he was ever willing to lend a hand; was fond of parties, and ready to engage in all the lighter affairs of life.

Either brother, alone, would doubtless have run to extremes in the course to which his natural temper led.

But now the steadiness of one was a happy balance to the lightness of the other; and the finer taste and sprightlier habits of Charles waked up those sensibilities in Alfred which might have been for ever kept down by the mechanical exactness and the constant plodding of his daily round. This difference in natural disposition may also have tended to unite them more closely in bonds of affection. But be that as it may, a oneness of feeling possessed them, which was beautiful to behold.

The two sisters were cherished by them with a tender-

ness of affection even stronger, if possible, than that which bound them so warmly to each other; they were some years younger than either of the brothers, and had grown up with a feeling of dependence, which never fails to call forth the better emotions of the man; and with lively affections and generous sensibilities they had entwined around the brothers' hearts the tendrils of their own—a loving band they were; and sweet was the fragrance that surrounded them, and rich the cup of joy which they daily quaffed together.

When the father was called away by death, a task of deep responsibility fell upon her who, for the second time, was left a widow.

The property was small,—a farm of only forty acres, with the homestead already described; part of it was still unpaid for, and there were not a few scattered debts. The boys, sixteen and fourteen years of age, had been trained indeed to industrious habits; but they were very young to sustain the labors of a farm and much too young to aid her by their counsel. Friends, however, were at hand, as they often are, to give that which costs no labor and little expense. One was ready to take Alfred into his own family; he could doubtless be useful, and “he should see to it and do well by him.” Another would take Charles and “fit him to get a place in some store; it would make a man of him.” An aunt, who lived alone on a small income, offered, no doubt very kindly, to adopt Sarah as her own, and “the society she would naturally be introduced to might be of great advantage to her, and she might when old enough have a good chance to get well settled in the world.”

“And you and Janette,” said the same lady, “might visit among your friends for a while. Any of them will be glad to see you, and it may be that something will offer somewhere as a permanency.”

“But what,” said the poor widow, “what will become of this place? Must it be sold?”

“By all means. I would not think of keeping it.”

“And Peter! what shall be done with him?” Peter was an old negro that had tended her when a little child and had descended to her, being too old to be set at liberty.

"Peter! oh, he can no doubt get some place. Peter can do quite a day's work yet; many of the neighbors will no doubt be *glad* to have him; he can earn his own living yet."

Mrs. Stanley was a woman of few words; she made no objections to any of their plans, but merely said, "She thanked them all for their advice and kind offers, but she must take a little time to think what would be best."

And many were the thoughts which rushed into the mind of Mrs. Stanley, after the kind friends had retired, who had been so prompt with their advice. She was a mother, with all the true feelings of that sacred name glowing in her bosom. She had been a loving, faithful mother, not only to her own offspring, but equally so to him who, now her main dependence, had been committed to her trust when but a lisping child. She had, with untiring care, nurtured the flame of love in each of those young hearts with which she had been entrusted: it was now sweetly unfolding in their strong affection to her and to each other. They were just of an age when the joys and sorrows of a common lot, the trials and the comforts of the domestic circle, have their quickening influence. "How can she bear the thought of breaking up this heavenly charm; of loosening this sacred social tie;" of scattering these younglings she has so long nestled,—where the chill atmosphere of duty or interest would alone surround them? Would they continue to love each other, when no longer fed from the same board, or clustered round the same hearth, or exerting their united energies to gather the necessities and comforts for their common home?

Her whole mother's heart revolted at the dark picture which arose before her.

But they were in debt, and the strength of those on whom the labor must devolve was but the strength of children. Could her own untiring industry have been all that was needed, she would not, for one moment, have doubted as to the course before her.

Old Peter would doubtless have been thought by many a very poor kind of a counsellor for one in such circumstances; but Mrs. Stanley had been accustomed to hear her father, as well as her husband, appeal to the old man in many mat-

ters pertaining to their work; and, as he was likewise to be a sufferer, as she feared, by the new arrangement, it was but right to tell him of it.

Peter listened attentively; nor did he stop smoking until his mistress had unburdened her whole mind; he then stooped over and knocked the ashes from his pipe against the end of the back log, stood it carefully in its usual place in the corner, and turning his eyes up at his mistress, while he leaned with one elbow on his knee.

"How much a you say, Missus, dat Massa Stanley owe on dis place?"

"About eight hundred dollars."

"And how much you say he owe here, and dare; to dis one, and dat one?"

"Very near two hundred dollars; altogether, we owe one thousand dollars."

"One tousand dollar!" and Peter rubbed down the shin that was nearest to the fire, and then leaning over, he rubbed his fists, as though he was smoothing a large black ball, and looked steadily at one end of the back log;—what Peter always saw there it would be difficult to say, but he invariably fixed his eye upon that corner of the log when his thoughts troubled him;—at length, he again straightened up and looked at his mistress.

"I tell a you what I tink, Missus, all about it; and when I am done, *I am done*; and Missus must do jist what she tink best wid de whole on us. But dis what I say:—Dis be you home; you no born here, but your chillern all born here, but Charlie; and he no know nuttin about any oder home; the same to him as to de rest. It's a champion place, good land, good house wid a leetle mending, good barns, all tings convenient; if a you sell em dey no bring half dere value, and den *one go here*, and *anoder go dare*. How you see afer your chillerns all among de strangers? and Missus goin round from place to place; livin *here*, and livin *dare*, and livin no *where*; dat be de end on it. Now you hear to Peter. I an old man; no doubt a dat. And I can't mow, nor pitch de hay as I once could. But I can hole de plow, and I can hoe de corn, and cut de wood, and see to de critters. And den dare is Alph; why for he work for de stranger when work enuf to do at

home? and Charlie is gettin big boy, too; and good boys, too, both on em. I don't want no better help in de corn and potatoes as Alph and Charlie. Now you mine me, Missus. Sell some of de stock, and some of de hay, and some of de corn, and de straw, and I chop de wood, and you sell dat, and pay what a you can; and keep along, and keep de dear chillerns togedder; and keep de home for your own head, Missus, and no be goin *here* and *dare* and *every where*, and all tings broke to pieces."

Peter's advice accorded so perfectly with the views and wishes of Mrs. Stanley that she resolved to be governed by it; and when a few years after, she herself was called away by death, she rejoiced that her best desires had been so well accomplished. She parted from her children with the consciousness that they were strong in each other's love; and with a fair prospect before them of cancelling every debt which had been hanging upon their home.

And she enjoined them, in her parting words, "To keep together,—you will never find friends who will be worth to you *what your true love will be to each other*."

A brief description of the sisters will close this chapter. Sarah, the eldest of the two, was now seventeen, of rather a delicate form, and yet with the appearance of full health. The cast of her countenance had so much of sobriety in it, that she might have passed for one much farther advanced in life; and yet, with its sobriety, there was mingled a sweetness of expression truly captivating. The bright smile which seemed ready at the lightest cause to throw its witchery upon the beholder, was made more striking by the sober shade from which it sprang. The color of her hair was auburn, perhaps a little more tinged with the brighter hues than she would have chosen; but it was always arranged with much taste, and the modest little curl that swayed so artlessly around her snow white neck was in beautiful contrast with her clear complexion.

Janette, to whom the reader has been slightly introduced, was nearly two years younger than her sister, and the very personification of sprightliness and youth. Her countenance was never sad, although at times it could assume a serious cast. The color of her hair was dark, not black, and her eyes were probably of the same hue; but

the sparkling light that flashed from them impressed the observer with the idea that they were of a deeper tinge. Her forehead was high, fair, and open, and her other features, if not classically beautiful, were well formed and finely set. She wore her hair as her fancy dictated; but never would one have received the impression that in her thoughts any reference was had to the most becoming fashion. Although beautiful to every eye that looked upon her, it was very manifest she knew not of it, or cared not for it; and, in fact, her beauty was of that fixed character which dress cannot very well heighten or diminish. She was a child of Nature,—free from the least shadow of affectation,—a pure, bright, lovely girl, whose external grace and beauty were but emblems of far richer and more enduring attractions.

CHAPTER III.

"WELL, girls, do you know that Charles has made up his mind to buy a horse!"

Sarah suspended her needle for a moment and looked at Alfred, who had thus abruptly opened the subject, which was to be the matter for their evening's consultation. There was almost a mark of sadness upon her brow.

"You are not intending to sell Bob, I hope! Oh! do not, brother."

"Oh no! sister,—don't be alarmed about your favorite! Bob is a fixture! We must never part with him, for the sake of those he has carried so long ago!"

Sarah's brow relaxed and a gentle smile played over her features.

"Oh! I am so glad!—you almost frightened me, Alfred! I don't care how many new horses you buy,—if old Bob is only left! But what horse does Charlie think of purchasing?"

"Why, sister," said Janette, laying her hand on Sarah's arm, "it is that beautiful creature we saw Bill Compton driving the other day."

"Please, sister, don't; I wouldn't speak just so;—Bill Compton!—it sounds too familiar."

"Well, you know, sister, they all call him Bill;—but if it will please you better, I will say Mr. William Compton. Oh! I should be so glad; and then, Mr. Charlie, you will let me have one good ride, won't you? Bob goes so slow!"

"That you shall, Sis! and Sarah too, whenever you like! But we have not got him yet; and perhaps we may do nothing about it. Brother don't think it's best."

"How do you know *that*, Charlie? I have not said so, I am sure."

"No, you have not said so. But I can tell. Now, Alfred, don't you say a word—only let me tell you what I think would be the expression of your thoughts if you would let them out."

"Go on," said Alfred, a pleasant smile softening his manly countenance, "let us hear how well you can read thoughts."

"Well, brother Alph says to himself, 'I wish Bill Compton had kept away with his horse. I know it is a fine beast and perhaps worth the money; but we have got one horse,—he is old to be sure, and don't stumble or fall further than to hit his nose, or, at least, he hasn't as yet.'"

"That's good! Charlie, go on!" and Janette clapped her hands and broke out into one of her hearty laughs, in which all the little company joined her. "Go on, Charlie!"

"It will take, too, about all his share of the money this fall. But I don't care about that; but somehow I wish Charlie would be content to jóg along as we have done. However, since he wants the horse so much I shan't defeat him. I shall say nothing against it, only try to see that he don't get cheated."

"You've got it, Charlie!" and Janette cast a sly look at Alfred. "You know—brother; you know!"

"Oh, well, you mustn't mind me, Charlie; I know I am not a very good judge about such matters. Perhaps I am too much disposed to settle down and be content with what we have got. I do really want you to have the horse, Charlie."

"Do you truly?" And Charles looked at his brother with an evident mark of incredulity upon his countenance.

"Yes he does. I know he does, Charlie. Alfred would be happier to see you have your wish and gratify your taste in the matter, than merely to be gratified himself."

If Alfred had not just then turned his face from her as she was speaking, Sarah might have seen a softening of his bright eye that would almost have amounted to the gathering of a tear in it. She had touched a very tender chord in his heart. Charlie replied instantly—

"I know it, sister—I know it; and for that very reason I cannot bear to do any thing that he does not think best."

A calculation was then entered into by the brothers, as to the time when they would probably be able to realize the proceeds of such of their produce, as they designed to sell. It would in all probability be long before the note for the horse, if they gave one, would be due. Alfred, however, did not relish the idea of giving a note, and had already made some objections, which Charles was doing his best to reason him out of, when a knock at the outer door announced a visitor. It was with some little feeling of surprise among the brothers and sisters, that they beheld beneath their humble roof and even seated within their circle, a young gentleman, the son of one who thought himself the very first man in that vicinity, and who tried hard to have all others of the same opinion. The young man seemed very much at his ease, and after passing the usual commonplace introductory remarks, turned very complacently towards the younger sister:

"My sister, Miss Janette, sends her compliments to you, and would be very happy to have your company on an excursion, day after to-morrow. A small company is made up with a design to gather chestnuts. It is a beautiful road to the woods, and my sister thinks you will be gratified with a ride."

Janette looked at her sister, as though she wished the answer to be given by her, and Sarah at once turned towards her brother.

"Do you think, brother Alfred, that you, or brother Charles, can take the time just now?"

"Oh yes!" and Alfred replied with a promptness unusual for him; "Charlie can go, sister, certainly."

The young gentleman appeared somewhat confounded.

"I should be very happy, if Miss Janette's brothers are engaged, to wait upon her myself. I shall take our double carriage, and one of my sisters will probably ride with—"

"It will be perfectly convenient for one of us to accompany our sister; it is a beautiful ride, as you say, and I should be happy to have Janette enjoy it. At what time do you start?"

"At nine o'clock."

"From your house?"

"Yes; most probably. They did think of meeting at Mr. Kemble's, as young Frank has returned, and is to be one of the party."

"But probably you had better call at our house."

"Just as you please; it will be the same to us."

These questions and answers were on the part of Alfred, who, on all occasions, was looked up to by the rest to take the responsibility, as head of the family. Alfred had suited his behaviour, on this occasion, to what he conceived to be the merits of the case. It was very manifest to him, that there was an air of condescension assumed by the young man, and he did not relish it. The time had been, when attention from the family of Mr. Twineall might have been considered by him in a very different light. That time had passed. And, although Esquire Twineall, or Squire Peter, as he was usually called, was *the* great man of the place, the expounder of law, and the great advocate for the carrying into effect its minutest provisions; and, although he had thereby raised himself into a very fine house, and gathered together quite an amount of available means, and made himself the centre of all the *respectable* society in that region, and from abroad even,—yet Alfred felt by no means flattered by any attentions from that quarter. In fact, he rather feared them; and upon no consideration would he have allowed the most distinguished in the land to suppose that he considered it an act of condescension to notice those who were the very idols of his heart.

He was determined, however, that Janette should not lose her ride if he could help it; and the more so, because he had, a few days before, given a decided no to

an application of the same nature, although from another source.

Evidently disappointed, but putting the best face he could upon the matter, the young man arose, bowed politely to the little company, and retired.

"And you will take the new horse, won't you, Charlie? Oh, dear Sarah, I do wish you would go, too!"

"That would be quite a venture, sister," and Sarah looked archly at Alfred. "I think they have got one more on their list than they designed, already."

"I must say, Alfred, if you had not appeared so decided in saying that I would go, I should have put in a veto. I could see clearly that James Twineall did not relish it."

"I saw that, too, brother Charles; but it only made me more determined in my answer. Mr. Twineall shall see, as well as some others, that our sisters do not feel that any company is better than their brothers'; and they shall never want for a beau while you and I, Charlie, are living."

"And you may add," said Janette, jumping up and throwing herself on Alfred's knee, and kissing him affectionately, "that no one would be half so acceptable to us."

A new motive was now added as a stimulus to the purchase of the horse. The note was given, signed by both brothers, as Charles was not of age, and the next afternoon Charles received the object upon which his mind had been so strongly set, and was leading her up through the yard towards the stable, when he had to encounter the keen eye of old Peter, who was seated on the chopping-block, beside the wood-pile.

"What horse dat you got dare, Charlie?"

"Ain't she a beauty, Uncle Peter?"

Peter curled over his under lip, and cast a scrutinizing glance at the more prominent parts of the mare.

"Ay, ay, handsome nuff! handsome nuff! But what you doin wid her?"

"I am leading her to the stable; I've bought her; she's mine."

"What fur you buy dat critter? You no sell Bob?"

"Oh, no! no! Bob is not to be sold; but don't you like her, Uncle Peter? Ain't she a picture?"

The old man shook his head, "Ay, ay; well nuff, well nuff; but wait, you see how it end."

There was something in the old man's shake of the head that touched Charles, and made him; for the moment, wish that he had never seen the mare. He led her to the stall, looked at her fine form with admiration for a few minutes, and then went with his brother to the field. He had accomplished a long-cherished wish, but he was not so happy as he had been.

CHAPTER IV.

THE property immediately adjoining the little farm of the Stanley's was owned by a man of wealth. The possessor of many hundred acres of valuable land, with a large income from other sources, his riches had, like the rolling ball of snow, been for many years increasing almost in geometrical progression. William Kemble, the envied possessor of this wealth, had received from his father a handsome estate, and had been trained to take care of it. The same prudent management, the same tight grasp of every accumulating dollar, the same selfish calculation in every plan, the same absorbing interest in one only thought—the miser's thought—which builds around all human sympathies its wall of glittering adamant;—which cares not for the love or hate of man;—which never starts a tear for any joy or sorrow that its fellow feels;—nor sends a wish beyond the gathering heap of shining dust; this thought had, with the inheritance, descended in all its fulness upon this son.

No wonder then, that a fortune of fair dimensions had, even in this small place, increased to vast wealth! A new house had been erected upon the site of the old homestead by the present possessor. It was a large and handsome building of stone, and it looked, from its substantial make, as if the storms of heaven could have no more effect upon it, than could the sympathies of humanity upon its builder.

Of the same enduring material were all the buildings attached to the premises, and every fence that inclosed the house, or the fields, was a solid wall, apparently as permanent as the foundations of the dwelling.

It is not often that Nature deceives us in its portraiture of character. A beautiful flower may sometimes exhale a poisonous perfume, and a fair covering may sometimes conceal only loathsome ashes. But in general the sense of sight can almost surely convey the fragrance of the flower; and the rich delicacy of the fruit, tempt the palate of the beholder, before he has broken the cerement that conceals its juices. Man, too, carries more of the peculiar traits of his character upon his countenance than he is aware of. The workings of the mind throw their lights and shadows upon the outer casement, and silently, but surely, tell how mighty is their power.

William Kemble had been doubtless, when young, a person of fine appearance, and even now, he would pass for a handsome man of his years. He was of medium stature, rather slightly built, but with every muscle well developed, as though accustomed to the severer toils of labor. His hair was now plentifully sprinkled with gray, and yet so fresh was his countenance, that these tokens of age seemed to have come prematurely—like snow in autumn, while the leaves are yet green and the flowers still in bloom. His dress was plain, and without any of the graces of fashion. He evidently wore his garments because they were necessary, rather than for any addition to the dignity of his personal appearance. To look at him, as he met your salutation, with his sparkling gray eye, and rather winning smile and sprightly manner, a stranger might have taken him, for the moment, as a warm-hearted man. But if the errand was on business of even the most trifling nature, as soon as it was fairly announced, the whole form of his countenance would change; the brow would be sternly knit, the mouth compressed, the eye fixed, keen, and piercing, and not a mark be found upon his whole expression on which a hope might rest, that there would be any yielding of his own advantage. No matter what was the plea of mercy or justice one had to make.

The interior of the dwelling presented the same cold

aspect as did all without. It was well furnished, but the principal rooms being seldom used, a damp and chilly atmosphere was always experienced by those, who, by accident, happened to be introduced to them; for, as a matter of accident, it might well be considered, if strangers ever entered them. The home of Mr. Kemble, in his large establishment, was a moderate-sized square room, in one of the wings of the house. It contained a high desk, a plain table with a green cover, a stool and two chairs; but the most conspicuous and important object within the room was a large iron chest, built into the wall of the house; and nothing beside this cold black image met the eye as it gazed over the bare white walls—not even a map, to break the monotony or soften the bleak aspect of the place. Here Mr. Kemble received his visitors; and in fact it was the most proper place, for none ever troubled him except on business.

CHAPTER V.

"Oh! sister, what a lovely morning it is! and see! there is Charlie! He is coming out of the yard with Clara. How proudly she steps! *do* look, sister Sarah!"

"Do, Janette, be quiet. I shall never be able to fasten this pin, unless you become still."

"Well, I am in such a hurry!"

"There it goes! your veil is off again! I do believe, Janette, you will lose almost every thing you wear to-day."

"No danger, sister, if you tie every thing as you have this hat string. I feel as if my head was in a vice! Good-by, sis! I wish you were going too;" and Janette pulled the sweet face of her sister to her lips.

"Good-by, Janette; and do hear!" and Sarah held fast to the hand of her sister as the latter was urging her way to the door. "Now, see that you ride with Charlie—insist upon it—no matter what they say. Do you hear?"

"Yes, I hear, sister; never fear me; I shall cling close to Charlie."

Alfred now came from the yard and joined the sisters, as they walked down the little path to the gate in front of which stood the neat little wagon, with Charlie dressed in his best, and Clara with her ears moving back and forth as though anxious for a start.

"I do wish, brother Alph, that you and Sarah were going too. What a nice time we shall have." At the same time Charles held out his hand to assist Janette to her seat.

"Now, Charlie, take care how you drive; and Janette, keep hold of your veil."

"I will, sister; never fear. Good-by."

"Good-by."

And the happy brothers and sisters are parted; Alfred and Sarah as well pleased at remaining and performing their daily duties, as Charles and Janette were with the prospect of a fine holiday.

It was not a great distance to Esquire Twineall's, and soon passed over. A few light buggies were standing before the door, and some young ladies and gentlemen were talking very earnestly near the front gate. There seemed to be some little confusion in the company, and as Charles and his sister drove up, the elder Miss Twineall hastened to bid them welcome.

"It's too bad! Janette, don't you think Frank Kemble has played us a pretty trick; given us the slip!" and Miss Twineall tried to "make-believe pout," while, in reality, the chagrin she felt was too manifest to allow of the pretty pout being passed off as a "make-believe." Miss Abby was quite out of breath, and there was evidently a tremor to her words, as though she was much excited. As neither Janette nor Charles were interested in the matter, they were in no haste to reply. Indeed, they could not very well understand the cause of Miss Abby's earnestness. So, while they were looking at her, she caught her breath and began again.

"And you see, it has frustrated all our arrangements; and I don't see what we are going to do; and I don't think it was very clever in him, when it was got up almost expressly on his account."

Charles and Janette not entering into the feelings of Miss Abby, still looked on in a very unconcerned manner.

not knowing exactly how to administer suitable consolation. Miss Abby, however, was diverted for the moment by the arrival of her gay and lively sister, Miss Lucy Twineall.

"Nab! sister Nab!" at the same time very unceremoniously taking hold of the shoulder of her respected elder sister, fairly turned her round.

"My goodness gracious! Lucy Twineall, what do you mean? you hurt me awfully." But Miss Lucy paid no heed to the violent ejaculations of her sister, and went straight forward with her story in a very rapid manner.

"James has fixed it all; it will be just as nice as if Frank Kemble hadn't played us such a trick. Oh, Janette, good morning! aint it lovely? Come, get out, James has fixed it."

Janette smiled. "Oh, no, I am well enough. I have a first-rate beau, and I mean to keep him."

Both the Miss Twinealls looked very much amazed; and, as they cast their eyes over the trim young man, and the new wagon, and the beautiful horse, full of life and impatient for the start, they could not but feel that Janette was well, very well seated. Only he was her brother.

"But you know," replied Miss Lucy, "it would be very foolish for brother and sister to be riding together; it would be such dull work."

Charles was rather bashful before ladies, and his face colored deeply, and he turned towards Janette, as about to urge her to do as they wished; but Janette was ready with an answer.

"Oh, but you don't know how talkative we are! Charlie and I could ride together all day and we shouldn't then get through with the half we had to say."

James Twineall now approached, and was very complaisant. He was in fine spirits, took off his hat to Janette, accosted Charles very familiarly; and perhaps there was a little too much condescension in the manner, and a little too much apparent confidence in the opinion, that it must be very gratifying to Charles Stanley to be thus noticed by the son of Esquire Twineall, on his own premises too, where the marks of the dissimilarity in their condition must be evident to Charles. But the latter manifested no emotion whatever. He knew how to be civil, and, therefore, he

received the salutation of young Twineall with courtesy, although there may have been a little stiffness in the manner.

"Miss Janette, I believe I must claim the privilege of your company to-day, if your brother will accept of my sister in your stead."

"Oh! but then," replied the lively girl, "how shall I get a ride after Clara?—I *must* ride after Clara, she goes so finely!"

And Janette put on such a pretty smile, that Mr. James, although he blushed a little, could but take it pleasantly.

"Aye, aye, Miss Janette,—the mitten so soon, ha! Well! I suppose I must yield to the decree."

Charles saw that young Twineall was somewhat disturbed, although he tried not to show it. He whispered to his sister, and she at once cleared up all difficulties.

"Well, well, Mr. Twineall, I see Charlie would prefer Miss Lucy, so I must be at your service; but mind, Mr. Charlie, I shall ride back after Clara, if I have to take the reins myself."

This happily put things in a smooth condition; and as Miss Abby was to have Mr. Kernachan for a partner (a young gentleman from the city), all parties seemed to be suited, and the happy company started off with great glee.

What is there in motion that gives such life to our spiritual being? Man was evidently made to keep near the earth he inhabits, and to tread, step by step, across its broken surface. And yet, whenever he can by any process be borne swiftly above the soil he treads on, if it be only but a few feet, and feel the pressure of the atmosphere as he glides through it, his spirit becomes buoyant; his soul expands with the pressing current, and seems to stretch her pinions forward, that faster and faster may be the flight. How every better feeling, too, comes forth and brightens all the scene! How the thoughts are quickened; and how merrily flow the words, as trees, and fences, and brooks, and the snug farm-houses fly past, as he is borne on by the speed of a noble beast.

With a party of pleasure, horse-flesh is made of little account. Nothing but the very best each steed can do, will at all satisfy the animated feelings of the riders. On

and on rolled the light carriages;—now over a beautiful plain, along which the whole train is visible;—some near to each other, so that the lively repartee can be thrown back and forth; others again lagging in the distance, either because the horses are unable to sustain the speed,—or, more probably, because the communings which they are indulging, can be better carried on when others are not near enough for observation.

Now they pass over the gently sloping hill, across the babbling brook and up again the other side; and through the lonely forest, shining in autumn's mild and varied colors and echoing the shrill scream of the blue-jay, that has been startled from its rest and goes hallooing through the lone retreats to warn the feathered tribe that man is near. And now, thicker woods and continued hills, rising and rising with but small descents, proclaim that the mountains have been reached.

Youth is the season for the spirit's play; and shame be to him that would utter a complaining wail, or do one thing to clog the pure enjoyments of life's happiest moments. Let the woods echo with the boisterous laugh, the loud halloo the merry chat, the lively song, and the sharp scream. It is a holiday; let them enjoy it to the full—the woods are large enough and the world with its precise conventionalities is far enough away. They cannot disturb *it*; and *it* should not throw its dark frowns upon their free and sunny hour.

And now, the woods resound with the sturdy blows which the young men are dealing upon the heaps of prickly burrs which have been gathered to be threshed; while the horses, tethered at convenient distances, are looking at the strange scene and turning their ears to catch the sounds that come from far and near.

And now fair nymphs are spreading white cloths upon the rustling leaves; and piles of choice dainties are gathering thereon; and loud calls go forth to summon the more distant ones to the rural banquet.

Doctors may say what they please about the organs of digestion, and pour down their tonics to aid the gastric juice; the appetite is in the heart; let *that* be joyous, and drugs and tonics may shake in their saddlebags for ever.

And now, the relics are gathered into the empty baskets; the crumbs shaken off to the squirrels and the birds; and the little party is again separating into pairs and arranging for the ride home.

Some little difficulty had occurred during their ride out, in consequence of the impatience of Clara, the horse which Charles Stanley drove, at being placed immediately in the rear of one that was dull of speed; and she had fretted herself into a very uncomfortable state of feeling. Young Kernachan drove one which was supposed to be the swift horse of the day; a fine sorrel he had brought with him on his excursion from the city, and which had been in the habit of passing every thing upon the road. It was unanimously decided that Clara should be driven next behind sorrel, as there would be no fear of her being restrained and worried by the slow progress of her predecessor. Janette had insisted upon resuming her seat beside her brother; and, as she managed it in such a good-humored, playful way, and had made herself so popular during the scenes of the day by her sprightliness and good temper,—to say nothing of the power of her good looks upon the hearts of the gentlemen under all the excitement of a rural holiday,—all seemed ready to fall in with her demands.

Upon what trifles often depend some of the most important events of our life! Could the lovely girl have foreseen all that was to follow from the attention she attracted that day, and even from the fact of her insisting upon the seat beside her brother, and to which of course none had a better right, there would have been no smile upon her face and no sparkle from her hazel eye. The future, alas! how dark it is to us, and how happy for our present peace that so it is!

And now they are off. One by one they wind through the woods by the narrow track that led to the highway, none seemed to be in special haste, nor for some time manifested any desire to change their relative positions, with the exception of Kernachan, who, once or twice, drew up to let Charles and his sister attain a nearer position, that he might pass a pleasant word with Janette. Miss Abby was not particularly pleased with the movement, and manifested it by a resolute silence and by keeping her eyes

steadily fixed upon sorrel, who likewise more or less affected by being thus restrained, was tossing his head up and down and flinging the white foam from his bits.

About three miles from the woods, they entered upon a fine turnpike. It was wide enough for two carriages to ride abreast with ease; and scarcely had they turned upon it when Kernachan checked the speed of his horse and placed his buggy by the side of the one in which the Stanleys rode. After proceeding in this manner about half a mile, he gave the reins again to sorrel and took the lead. This feat had been accomplished twice, although not without some little difficulty; for Clara showed strong symptoms of dissatisfaction and Charles was obliged to exert his utmost strength in restraining her so as allow the leading carriage to go ahead.

It was the third time since they had been upon the turnpike, that Kernachan thus checked the speed of his horse. It was only by main strength that he accomplished it, and by using his powerful bit so violently that the foam which sorrel tossed angrily from his mouth, was streaked with blood. Having trained his horse to take the lead upon the road on all occasions, the noble beast had imbibed a spirit of rivalry that was excited according to the ability of his opponent, and perhaps his instinct forewarned him that one was near to him now which would task all his energies to outstrip. The beautiful Clara too was getting utterly indignant at the restraint put upon her, whenever the other, after travelling by her side for a time was allowed to go ahead. And when, for the third time, it was attempted, the spirit of her ladyship rose above all her habits of obedience, and she darted forward with the fleetness of a deer; "threw herself into her collar," laid her ears back, and with the grace of a beautiful trotter flew along the smooth road, keeping the end of her nose on a line with her opponent. Kernachan knew his horse well, and was aware that no power which his arm possessed could, under the circumstances, check the speed of the animal. It was a race that could only be stopped by the triumph of one of the excited creatures.

"My goodness gracious! Mr. Kernachan, do for goodness sake let me get out! there goes my veil! and my hat!"

—but she caught that—"Oh, dear! it takes—my—breath away! as a gentleman—I ask you, Mr. Kernachan,—to stop—your—horse and let me *get out*." But Kernachan had no time, or ability, to attend to Miss Abby's remonstrances. He cast a glance towards the other wagon:—Charles had braced his feet against the dash-board, taken up the reins as short as they would bear and was exerting his utmost strength. His countenance was very pale, and manifested great anxiety. Janette appeared to be enjoying it highly. She smiled as the eye of Kernachan met hers. But whether at the perturbation of Miss Abby, or with delight at the rapidity with which they were flying through the air, it was impossible to say; perhaps there was a little of both.

For more than a mile the noble beasts kept breast to breast. The road was level and wide enough and no immediate danger was apparent, although the equal abilities of the horses and the rapidity with which they were passing over the ground, was beginning to fill the mind of young Stanley with serious alarm; for he was well acquainted with the road, and knew that, unless, in some way, the relative position of the two vehicles should be changed, an awful catastrophe was before them. His only hope was, that the horse of Mr. Kernachan might be excited to greater speed and shoot ahead.

About a mile and a half from the spot where this unpremeditated race began, the road ran across a deep ravine, or dry brook. A bridge had been thrown over it, as more suitable on account of the rapid current which during a rainy season poured through the gulley, and perhaps less expensive than to fill up such a deep chasm. The bridge was on a level with the road and would have served every purpose well enough, if it had only been constructed with sufficient width. The bridge over Keese's hollow had long been a subject of town talk; and many complaints had been made by those obliged frequently to pass that way. Its width would not allow two teams to pass each other upon it; and its sides were only defended by logs pinned down along the edge of the planks.

One mile had already been passed, and as, on the wings of the wind, they were urging their way to this dangerous spot,—Charles at length deeply excited called out,

"Mr. Kernachan, let your horse go ahead, for I cannot stop mine, and the bridge is just before us."

Kernachan knew well enough that his horse was doing his very best.

"I cannot do it. You must go ahead yourself. We cannot stop either of them now."

And on and on they flew. The bridge was in sight. It was near to them: it was but a few rods ahead. Alas, his sister! to have had her then in safety, Charles would have bartered every hour of happiness for his future life. Speechless with horror, Janette beheld the catastrophe before them and instinctively grasped the arm of her brother. The road was narrowing; a few turns of the wheels and no power on earth can save them. Charles, in the agony of the moment, slacked his rein and laid a violent blow upon his mare. Like an arrow from the string she darted forward; and, violent as was the leap she made, it did not break her trot; but, as if the noble creature knew that life depended on her effort, she tore upon the bridge with the whirlwind's speed, and passed her competitor; and on and on she sped, gaining continually upon the sorrel, until, dispirited by his first defeat, he yielded to his master's will and the contest was at an end. Kernachan praised and patted his sorrel when he dismounted at Esquire Twineall's—but he has resolved that he and his good beast must part.

CHAPTER VI.

"Your most obedient, Squire, good morning, sir," and the visitor who removed his hat and made a very low obeisance, as he entered the office of Mr. Kemble, helped himself to a chair. The gentleman addressed, being at that moment occupied at his high desk, merely cast his eye round with a quick glance and then resumed his work. The visitor was a bluff-looking man of middle age; dressed with more than ordinary care for a country place; and showing very decidedly in his full and flushed countenance the marks of good

living. His hair, which a near observer might have noticed as beginning to turn gray, was arranged with care, especially around the forehead where it was frizzed and thrown back, giving a lively air to his whole appearance.

After hemming a few times, he drew his seat near the table and took up an old blotted newspaper, which had lain there for many months; and which the visitor had read from beginning to end many times already. But he must do something; and a man with a paper before him feels a little more like a man than when waiting the will of another, he may be obliged to sit, no one can tell how long, with no other employment than that of changing the position of his feet and hands. It was not long, however, that he was obliged to play an awkward part this time; for there was soon a sharp shutting up of a large book; the door of the iron chest was opened with a jerk, and the book being quickly put within its place, then closed with a heavy snap of the lock, that made the walls ring, and told to them and to all who might hear it, what an important thing that lock was; what interests were shut in behind its bolt; how many heart-strings could be touched at any moment by a mere glimpse at some little vouchers there stowed away; how many thoughts, through long and weary hours of night, were drawn to this inclosure as to a charmed spot; how many agonizing pangs and wrestlings to break free from that strong clutch; how many ties of nature, that might have yielded sweet nurture to the heart, have kindled up the pale death-fire of despair in their possessor, because the earthly substance which he once had owned—the soil on which he labored and the home in which he nightly clustered the treasures of his heart—were all now at the mercy of a miser's beck, and fast barred within that cold dark chest. Ah, that lock might well snap sharply! for sighs and tears and aching hearts are cloistered there!

"Good morning, Mr. Twineall. Your family well to-day?"

The paper was at once laid down, and a bland smile spread over the rosy countenance of the lawyer as he turned towards his patron.

"Well, sir. *Well*; all *very well*, I thank you, sir, except, indeed, my good lady. She seems to be more com-

plaining of late; and sometimes I don't know what will be the end of it. Busy with your books, I see, sir; I hope I have not interrupted you, Mr. Kemble."

The gentleman addressed changed not the business-like air that his countenance had at first assumed; he merely looked steadily at his visitor, while he was addressing him, and then, taking the chair which he usually occupied:

"No interruption, sir, I was only making a small entry in my book. I leave nothing to memory now-a-days."

"Right! right! sir, that's the true way! When it is in black and white it's safe."

"I don't know about that. I have a great many things in black and white that are not quite so safe as I could wish them."

"You have me there, sir, ha, ha! I meant we should not be likely to forget them."

"No! not likely to forget them, to be sure. Well, sir," fixing his keen eye upon the lawyer, "how do matters succeed? I mean in reference to the Apthorpe case."

"Just to our mind, sir; all done up to a T."

"Obtained judgment?"

"Obtained judgment; judgment recorded; got a writ of ejectment issued and served it upon defendant. All cut and dry now, sir!" and Mr. Twineall clapped his hands together and fixed his eye very complacently upon Mr. Kemble, as if he expected to meet a smile of approbation. But there was no smile, nor the least shadow of a change from the stern and business aspect of his countenance. Mr. Twineall might indeed have looked for some signal mark of favor from one on whose account he had been doing violence to every feeling that makes man sympathize with his kind. He had laid on the last stroke that crushed an unfortunate being, and cast him homeless and penniless upon the bare world.

With as much indifference as though a bird had fallen from a flock, or an insect been swept away by his hand, the man of business turned at once to another theme.

"No chance, you think, of doing any thing, by purchase of that five acre lot, with the water privilege?"

"Not much yet; time, sir, time works wonders. In reference to that matter, sir, between you and me, and the

walls here, I have a secret to let out;" and he leaned forward and said a few things in an almost inaudible voice.

Mr. Kemble made no reply; and their conversation was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of a young man, apparently about twenty years of age. He was dressed in a style more fashionable than was common for a country village; tall and rather slender in his form, with a full, bright eye, remarkably soft in expression, although of a dark hue; his hair was long and thrown behind his ears, after a fashion then common with college students, and although not always becoming, it was peculiarly so in the present instance; for it exposed to full view a set of features finely formed; open and manly, with a cast of deep seriousness not often seen upon the countenance of one so young; and strongly marked with generous and impassioned feeling. He bowed very low as he entered the office, and Mr. Twineall was immediately upon his feet and returned the salutation with a still lower reverence.

"Ah! good morning; good morning, my dear sir," and Mr. Peter took the offered hand of the youth and gave it a hearty squeeze. "I hope I see you well, my dear fellow! Why, bless my soul, how he has grown!" Casting his eye at Mr. Kemble, who sat unmoved, except that there might have been seen a slight softening of his rigid features—"And, bless me! what a likeness! a little improvement, though, on the old stock!—ha! ha! ha!—glad to see you, my dear sir; glad to see you."

The young man received the greeting of Mr. Peter in a very quiet manner. He did not seem to be much affected by its cordiality, although his bearing towards him was of the most gentlemanly kind.

The reader may perhaps as well be informed, if he has not yet guessed the truth, that this youth was the son and only child of the rich man; the heir apparent to his vast estate, and of course, in the eyes of Peter Twineall, Esquire, a person of great distinction. How long he would have continued to manifest his unfeigned satisfaction at beholding one of whom "he and all his family thought with the deepest interest," it would be impossible to say; for his whole expression manifested an overflow of feeling, and Mr. Peter's tongue was ever ready to carry out to an unlimited

stretch the feelings of his heart. But his practised eye at once observed that the son had come on special business with his father; he, therefore, immediately took his hat and prepared for departure, and, in doing so, again seized the hand of the youth and shaking it very emphatically:

"We shall soon see you doubtless at our house. My family will be very happy to wait upon one they have talked so much about. It is amusing," and as he said this he addressed the father; "it is really curious to hear the young folks talk. It's Frank Kemble and no one else—ha! ha! ha!—you would think on hearing them that there was no other young man in the world. Good morning to you. That business, Mr. Kemble, I shall look further into, but you will find matters, I think, just as I have related;" and the little man bowed himself out of the door, and left the father and son to their own communings.

"I thought you were intending to ride with the young folks to-day?"

"I did expect to have gone, but I don't feel much like it." And Frank, for we may as well call him by his name, moved his chair a little, as though the answer he gave was not very easily framed.

"Are you not well? You look paler than usual."

"Perfectly well, sir; but I did not feel much like riding to-day, and I wanted to have a little interview with you this morning, father. I have heard some bad news." Mr. Kemble looked fixedly at his son, and perceiving that his face was suffused with a blush, and that his voice trembled as he spoke:

"Speak out! Let me hear what it is! Any thing concerning yourself personally?"

"I have just been informed, father,—but perhaps Mr. Twineall has told you already,—although I fear he has not told you all. Mr. Apthorpe and his family are in great trouble."

"Well!"

"It seems he has been unfortunate."

"Well!"

"That his property is all taken from him, or about to be."

"Well!"

"And that Mr. Twineall has sent an order for him to quit even the house that shelters him."

"And by my instruction!"

"I have heard so. But I can scarcely believe, father—"

"You need not mind any of your 'buts,' Frank. I know what you are about to say. But once for all; and I wish you to pay special heed to what I say; my own business I feel perfectly competent to manage; and I will never—*never*—you hear me? never—allow of the least interference by any one! I ask no questions from you as to the manner you spend your allowance. It is, I think, a very liberal one. But as I have promised to give it to you, I consider it yours to spend, or misspend, just as you please."

The color deepened, until the very temples and forehead of the young man were burning red. It was the first time in his life he had ever ventured to suggest an idea which had any reference to his father's proceedings, and the check he had received would probably make it the last. His father's rising to unlock his chest and take out his books, gave an opportunity to the son to retire; which he immediately did, by passing into the house.

CHAPTER VII.

THE old housekeeper sat poring over her Bible, reading her morning exercise, when the entrance of Frank Kemble at once put a stop to her employment. Had it been the father instead of the son there would have been no interruption to her progress; but no sooner did her keen black eye, turning for a moment from the much-loved volume, perceive the youthful form of her beloved, than she took off her spectacles, closed her book, and laid it on the shelf. At the same time, removing her seat more closely into the corner, she drew her table, which was well supplied with subjects for the needle, close to her side. The weather was not yet cold enough to require a fire; but the old lady would have a little kindled morning and evening.

"The house was damp," she said, "as stone houses always are, and the rheumatism stiffened her joints if she didn't just take the air off the room with a little light wood."

Frank took his seat before the fire, not because he was cold, but an empty chair was there; and, moreover, he wanted to be near the old woman that he might pour out some of the feelings of his heart. She was the only one who could fully understand them and sympathize with him.

Aunt Alice, as Frank called her, was one of those specimens of faithfulness in her calling as a domestic, of which very few are to be met with at the present day. She had tended Frank's mother when a little child, and when, at the age of eighteen, she gave her heart and hand to William Kemble, Alice Thrall had accompanied her to her new home. Not designing to stay long, only until the young wife, who had never been used to care, or the management of any thing but her own sweet temper, should have learned how to go on with the circle of her new duties. Month after month flew by, and Alice could never find just the right time to leave.

The trembling heart, which had committed its choice treasures to one who she fondly thought could appreciate them, and from whom she expected a rich return,—not in gold or silver,—not in land or bonds of debt,—not even in such things as many think the female heart peculiarly delights—costly furniture and costly dress,—soon began to find that its warm affections met with no sympathy in that husband's bosom. He had no generous feelings, no noble sentiments, no refined taste, not even a relish for the common affairs of life. The rumors from the busy flying world affected him not. The changing scenes of life; the rise and fall of states; the thrilling tales that come with every post, of all that man is suffering or enjoying, fell upon his heart like rain-drops on the rock. Wrapped up within himself, and clasping the treasures that were daily heaping in his coffer, as all of earth that was lovely in his sight, he had no heart for human sympathy.

She did not discover the whole truth at once. Gradually it forced its way upon her; and as it opened, back to her own palpitating breast, one by one, came all those loving

heaven-born emotions which had, with such unbounded confidence, gone forth to find their resting-place. She was not treated rudely; her demands were not denied; her purse was never empty; but that love on which woman feeds; which nourishes her spirit, and helps it to bear the constant vexations of her daily duties; and makes her brave, unshrinkingly, the many deaths that cross her path; that love he had not.

Her parents died soon after her marriage, and she was left alone, without sisters, or brothers, or kindred of any kind. Companions and friends of her girlhood she had. To them she had told her love. And if that love had been cherished, she would have told them of its happy fruits; of its soothing, quickening, heavenly power. But woman, lovely woman, opens not her wounded heart to any eye! Deep within she hides the eating canker; and as the marks of premature decay steal upon her beauteous frame, and show to all around whither her steps are tending; none knows it but He who, calling those sweet affections to himself, prepares the sufferer for a better world.

Frank remembered his mother only as a pale-faced, lovely woman, who used to press him to herself as she lay upon her bed, and weep over him. All his thoughts of her were associated with a sick chamber, and the last sealing of her in the narrow house.

Alice Thrall, Aunt Alice, had been his mother ever since; and faithfully had she performed her part so long as he remained at home. She had also exercised a wise management over the household affairs of Mr. Kemble. And without any serious thoughts about what might be her situation, if by any cause her present place should be lost to her, she went on from day to day as though every interest was her own; although perfectly conscious that the iron heart of its owner would no more think of making provision for her than he would of giving up the least fraction of a debt.

Frank, as we have said, took a seat in front of the fire, and, with his feet stretched towards it and his hands clasped idly upon his lap, gave a heavy sigh. Aunt Alice looked up at him, with marked concern upon her countenance.

"You are not well, dear? and I thought you was going on the ride to-day?"

"I did think of going, Aunt; but some things which I have heard this morning have changed my mind. I do wish I was a rich man, Aunt Alice!"

If there was a wish he could have named, at variance with the views of Alice Thrall, this was the one.

"A rich man! a rich man! One would have thought, but,—"

Alice could get no further, and her thoughts so jostled each other just then, that she could not very easily give them utterance.

"And, yet, I don't know but I am wrong in the wish! Can you tell me, Aunt Alice, how much my father is supposed to be worth?"

Alice looked at him again; and as Frank glanced his eye towards her he perceived that she was deeply grieved.

"What is it, Aunt Alice? what have I said that pains you?"

She wiped away a tear which had started; and as she replied it was in broken accents.

"Do you think, my child, that riches will make you happy?"

"I think they would, Aunt Alice; or at least—"

"Do you think your father is a very happy man?"

"I think he might be so. I think I know how he might fill his heart with exquisite pleasure."

"Frank! Frank! you talk like a young man!—like all young people!"

"Oh! but you don't know, Aunt Alice, what I mean! I should not care for riches for their own sake, to hoard them, and count them."

"The best way to tell, my child, what we *would* do, is to look into things and see how we *have* done. Your father gives you a large allowance now, he tells me;—a thousand dollars a year;—and I was frightened when he told me,—"

"Well! say it, Aunt; say all you feel!"

"Well! when he told me that you had nothing over at the end of the year;—that you spent it all;—"

Frank was much excited, for he saw that Alice was

really distressed; the color again suffused his fine countenance, and he arose and walked the room. He could at once have relieved the old lady's heart and made it leap for joy, but, in doing so, he would have exposed a secret that he felt was sacred; and his noble spirit was sadly tossed, between his desire to relieve the mind of one who loved him so truly and his delicate sensibility towards others. But the whole tenor of his thoughts was suddenly diverted by a loud talking in the office; and, as the hall alone separated the two apartments, the voices of the speakers could be distinctly heard. He recognized one as that of the person for whom his sympathies were deeply enlisted, and stepped immediately into the hall, and would have entered the office if he had not felt that, perhaps, his presence might, under the circumstances, be embarrassing to all. His whole heart was on fire with the excitement caused by what he could distinctly hear.

"Spare but the house, then! Mr. Kemble, spare to me that! Let me have a shelter for my little ones! Take the land! You have already got it! Got it all! I am a beggar! But let me have the house! It is old, and can be of little value to you!"

"The house is in the deed. You might as well ask for the land back again!"

"I know it is in the deed! I know it is all yours! I have resisted you, I know I have; but it was for my children's sake; and for their sake I now beg for your mercy. How can I see them driven from a shelter? I have been a foolish man! I have been careless of my property! I know I have, Mr. Kemble! I might have done differently!"

"It is idle talking! I have already made a disposition of the house."

For a moment nothing was said. But heavy sobs, such as the heaving breast of man alone sends forth in his agony, broke on the ear of Frank. He could stand it no longer, but burst at once into the office. His father was sitting by the table, with the same stern business air upon his countenance which it usually wore. Before him stood a man of middle age, tall in stature, and dressed in the garb of one who belonged to what is termed the upper class of society, but which bore sufficiently the marks of long wear

to be suitable for a person who had been struggling with the reverses of fortune. His hair was long and thin, it lay in a disordered manner upon his shoulders, and increased the wild and haggard look of his emaciated countenance. His eyes were bright and sparkling, but large in proportion to his other features, and exhibited strongly a mind under deep agitation; and from their hurried motion almost indicated a deranged intellect.

Frank, excited as he was, paused an instant and bowed; and the words, "Col. Apthorpe"—seemed involuntarily to escape his lips, and then turning hastily towards his father,

"Father! father! will you step into the other room a moment! I wish to speak with you!"

Mr. Kemble immediately arose and followed his son into an adjoining parlor. It was their choicest room, well furnished, and with some few mementos of her who had once been its mistress, hanging on the bare white walls, over the high and curiously carved mantel-piece.

"Father," said Frank, the moment they were alone, "I have almost involuntarily overheard the conversation between you and that poor distressed man! He is in deep affliction! He is, I am informed, perfectly destitute! Every thing has been taken to pay the expenses of the suit! His wife has just been taken from him by death, and his daughter is almost worn down by the agony of bereavement and her sympathy for her suffering father, and his little boy lies ill, severely ill, with a fever. He is a stricken man! Don't, father, I entreat of you, press him to the dust!"

Mr. Kemble had not taken a seat, nor did he attempt any interruption until Frank had finished his petition. He then fixed his calm, cold eye upon the anxious, almost agonizing, countenance of his noble son:

"Is that all you have to communicate?"

Frank could say no more, he walked to a seat, and his father left the room.

The unhappy man was still standing when Mr. Kemble again entered his office. There was a moment's silence, and then Apthorpe continued his petition.

"What, sir, am I to do with my family?"

"You should have thought of that years ago!"

"Yes, I know I should! I should have been a more

wise and calculating man. I should have avoided running into debt! I should have sold my land! I should have lived on bread and water rather than have suffered the interest to accumulate as it has! But the past is gone; I cannot recall it! and all I ask of you now is to spare me a shelter for my little ones. For if you take the house from us where can I find a place for them?"

"That is your business, Mr. Apthorpe, not mine."

Until this last reply the countenance of the supplicant had been merely pale and wretched, and with more of softened misery in its expression than could have been looked for in features so decidedly marked with severity. But like the flash of a meteor, a change passed over it. His cheeks flushed; the veins of his temples and along his high forehead swelled almost to bursting, and on the unmoved countenance of Kemble, he fixed a dark and fearful gaze, while with maniac force he struck his clenched fist upon the table by his side.

"Yes, it is my business, and not yours! I know it is! I know it is! God's curse light on you, William Kemble, for that last reply! And it will light on you; it will come like the scathing thunderbolt, and your hard and cruel heart will yet cower under the stroke of an Almighty hand!"

He then turned to the door, and with rapid step hastened from the place.

CHAPTER X.

POLLY KELLY lived a little one side of the more thickly settled portion of the town, and perhaps was somewhat further removed from neighbors, if one followed the road which led by her house in its windings until it met the main street, than any other inhabitant. For, as you stood under the large cherry tree which threw its branches far into the street before her cottage door, and looked either way, up and down the lane, no sign of a habitation could be discovered. But, in the country, common roads are not the only avenues by which we pass from one habitation to

another, especially if we go on foot. Immediately in front of her dwelling was a lot of many hundred acres, the heavy timber of which had been spared from the devastating blows of the woodman's axe for many years; and it was even said that the "oldest inhabitant" remembered not when a tree had been felled in it. Of course there was not a small number of giants in that forest thus left by the hand of man to mature their mighty growth. There was but little underwood, and the broken and decayed branches that occasionally fell to the earth were taken care of by those who lived in the vicinity, and were poor enough to be willing thus to keep the pot boiling and the house warm. Thus for some distance through all that portion which lay contiguous to the village, it presented the appearance of our western forests. These woods extended immediately in front of the lonely cottage of Mrs. Kelly, and formed a complete screen in summer between that and the rest of the world. In the winter, when the foliage was rattling under foot, a clear glimpse could be had of more than one tenement apparently near at hand, and even the church spire in the distance, with the chimneys and roofs of the houses in its vicinity.

To go by the road to any of these habitations was quite a journey, and not to be thought of if one was in haste—a much shorter and pleasanter route lay across one edge of the woods, and by this way a few minutes walk would take the inmates of the cottage to neighbors or bring the latter thither. Mrs. Kelly was a lone woman, and had been so always for any thing that was known to the contrary. That is, she never had a husband. She had no children, of course, nor any brothers or sisters that any body knew of. One only inmate beside herself constituted her whole family of the rational creation. And as Nicoll Kelly will have more or less to do with our story, a somewhat particular description of him may be proper. Nicoll was somewhat related to Aunt Polly, as she was universally called, but what the relation was probably very few knew. If they had asked the old lady she would doubtless have told them. Perhaps they never thought it worth the trouble.

He had been with her from a child, and the name by which he always addressed her was Granny. But this did

not, very probably, express any near relationship. He treated her, however, with great respect, which spoke well for the correctness of his feelings; for she had been father and mother and aunt and every thing else that was kind and good to Nicoll.

He would have been a tall man,—he was designed for one. His head and neck and arms and body and one leg were all well proportioned and suited to each other; and they manifested great muscular power. His chest was broad and full;—his throat thick and with that hard and wiry appearance, which exposure to the weather is apt to produce, and which would be very likely to awaken in the beholder the idea of a bull that had been trained to the yoke. And his arms and hands, when bared, might lead one's thoughts very readily towards sledge-hammers and heavy levers. While his long stout body, and powerful lower limbs seemed formed to carry out the idea of great execution and untiring endurance.

We have said that he was designed for a tall man.—But by some accident in his childhood, one leg was shortened.—How much, it would be difficult to say; but it must have been no inconsiderable degree. It was stiff and bent at the knee, so much that the fore part of the foot alone of the walking apparatus was of any use, and even thus treading on his toes, did not bring the legs to a perpendicular equality. There was an inclining of the whole body, some inches, when that foot, the left one, touched to the ground. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say, in general, that such would have been the case. But Nicoll always managed to keep his body very erect, and the legs had to arrange the discrepancy between them in the best way they could. And as nature accommodates itself to its necessities, by long use, the straight leg had apparently curved a little; so that when Nicoll walked, the head, shoulders, and body went along on a straight line, and settled down altogether. The countenance of Nicoll was not an unpleasant one, after you had looked at it carefully; or had obtained a particular acquaintance with his character. But to a stranger, the first glance was, to say the least, a damper. It was a tough visage to look upon. The features were each well enough, if we except the under lip.

But in some way, he had acquired the habit of screwing them all wrong. He seemed to be always straining at something between his jaws that was hard to bite; or, as though the sun was throwing his dazzling rays immediately into his eyes, and then the under lip already alluded to, was no mate for the upper one; it was much too thick and heavy, and gave a savage appearance to the mouth. A very dark and rough affair was Nicoll's face.

There was nothing peculiar in the looks of Aunt Polly to claim a particular description. She was an elderly woman, with a cap on of course, at some times cleaner than it was at others. The apron too would get rusty before the end of the week; but it was always on.

How old she was, probably few thought to ask—she had been called old Aunt Polly for many years; but there were no signs of advancing age to those who were most intimate with her. She appeared as strong to walk through the woods, by the little path which led to the neighbors, as she had ever been; and as ready to watch by the bedside of the sick, by day, or night. She had never learned to read, but having a retentive memory, she had treasured up quite a budget of good sayings, applicable to almost every variety of circumstances. They were drawn from very different sources; but, to her mind, they were all emanations from the good book. It was a curious Bible from which Aunt Polly quoted.

Besides Nicoll and the old lady, two favorite cats, peculiar pets of the latter, must be duly noticed. One of these, perfectly black, was for ever going about with its tail curled over its back, rubbing itself, tail and all, against the chairs and the table legs, and the brush broom—and, sometimes, even against the shovel and tongs, and would no doubt have used the same liberty with the old iron dogs, that stood against the back-log, if they had not been generally a little too hot for her. But the most unpleasant thing about her was the habit of spitting violently whenever two pointer dogs, the favorites and constant companions of Nicoll, happened to approach her ladyship. She had, in some way, taken a spite against said pointers, very much to the annoyance of their master and *their* particular discomfort; for whenever they heard the sharp, spiteful

sis of Madam Puss, they made no apology for retreating at once, between the legs of their master—not always to his convenience. Her mate was a prettily marked tabby, of mild disposition and very fond of her mistress; whom she followed in the house or out of it as regularly as the hounds at the heels of Nicoll.

Nicoll had never been fond of work. He would, indeed, hoe the garden in summer, and a little patch of corn and potatoes, and gather in the wood and similar things; but it was not the employment he fancied. To wander through the range of woodland with his hunting-frock on and a leathern belt strapped around his waist, and his gun on his shoulder and his dogs by his side tracking quails and partridges and woodcock, and all the variety of game; and then with a supply of these to take a turn over to the more settled part of the town, where he could almost always find purchasers for his more dainty articles, and to stop at the principal store and listen to the news of the day, and perhaps bring home some little notion for the comfort of the old lady;—this was the kind of business that suited him, and which he followed most regularly.

Nicoll had just come in from one of these daily rounds. He had hung up his gun in its usual place, and was laying down a small parcel containing a few ounces of tea on the table beside which the old lady was sitting, when one of the dogs, who had ventured a little too near the chair of the mistress, suddenly flew back, alarmed by a violent demonstration from beneath the linsey-woolsey, and fairly twitched up one of Mr. Nicoll's main pillars. Had not the table served as a support, although creaking sadly under the weight thus suddenly thrust upon it, there would have been more quadrupeds than usual upon the floor.

"By dad! (this was Nicoll's usual rally)—By dad, Granny! that mouser o' yourn, grows too tarnal snappish!—if she keeps a-goin' at this rate she'll spit some on us into the fire yet!"

"It's their nature *too*!—you know how it goes, Nicoll!"

"Yes! I know how it goes, Granny! I've heered it often enough;—but that don't mend the matter."

"What can't be cured,—must be endured!"—so it's written and it can't be altered, Nicoll."

"I don't know as it can, Granny; but I'd only ax for ten rods distance out in the Slington (a corruption of Sington, the name by which the woods was usually known) I'd cure her! She wouldn't spit no more, Granny, I tell you."

The old lady smoothed down her petticoat, and hushing her favorite as well as she could, at once turned the subject.

"Well, Nicoll, what's the news to-day? what's a stirring down to the landing?"

"I don't know what's a stirrin' down there, for you see I aint been down so fur to-day. But I've heered news, enough on it, and I'll tell you, Granny, jist as soon as I git a little o' that mush and milk down;" and, as he said this he drew towards him a large bowl which stood empty upon the table. The required articles were soon provided, for the pot still hung over the fire, blubbering occasionally and letting off its superabundant heat, and the little pantry was close at hand, into which Aunt Polly stepped, and, bringing out a pan of milk, placed it beside the bowl, while Nicoll helped himself to the contents of the big pot by means of a large wooden ladle.

Where Nicoll contrived to store the successive bowls which he emptied, would have been a puzzler to some dainty mortals. He seemed, however, to find no difficulty about the matter.

"This mush, Granny, is better than common to-night;" and Nicoll put the ladle into the pot for a fresh supply.

"Man wants but little here below, Nicoll, nor wants that little long."

"That may be true scripture for all I know to the contrary, but it depends upon circumstances. A man who has been trampussing after squirrels and partridges all day, besides a turn down town and no individual thing to chew upon but a quid or so, why you see a *little* won't answer,—whether it's long or short don't matter,—there must be enough on it. But they say, Granny, that Charles Stanley——"

"Charles Asten you mean."

"Well, Charles Asten, Alph Stanley's brother, has been making a power of money."

"I'm glad on it, for there aint a nicer boy in the town than Charlie; he's kind to poor folks, and so is all on 'em. But do tell, how has he done it?"

"Well, it's been done for him, you see, Granny; there's been good luck in it!"

"No luck at all, Nicoll, it aint luck."

"I should like to know what you call it then, Granny?"

"Just put your shoulder to the wheel,
And soon some better help you'll feel."

"Dad! I don't know about *that*! I've had my shoulder to the wheel a good many times, but I had to do the pushing myself. But luck or no luck, they say as how Charlie Asten has made a power of money; and this is the way of it. You see Charlie, like the rest of the youngsters, got a notion of buying a horse. Bill Compton, that cunnin' old coon, thought he'd come it over Charlie. Well, you see, Bill didn't know what was in the horse no more as Charlie did. So Charlie buys him and goes off a riding—you know the young ones had a grand ride t'other day."

"Among the quality folks!"

"I don't know nothin' about the quality, Granny, but I know Charlie Asten and Janette Stanley was along with them, and I call them good quality enough for any body. But you see, by accident like, Charlie and a young fellow from the city, who is clamtrapping about here, got into a kind of a race, and the little bay mare clean run away from the big sorrel."

"There's no good in racing, Nicoll,

"Better jog an even pace
Than spoil your horse to win a race!"

Nicoll had done with the bowl and was lighting his pipe as this couplet came trembling from the old lady's lips. He took a puff or two in silence, as though digesting its subject matter.

"I never heered that afore, Granny. But there's some sense in it any how! But as I was sayin', Charlie won the race, and no sooner did they git to the end of their journey than the other youngster comes up and says: 'This mare

o' yourn must come out of these shafts, and my horse must go in, and fix the boot your own way."

"What did Charlie say?"

"Charlie was off; he'd taken a notion to the mare and he wouldn't think of partin' with her. But t'other stuck to him, and nothin' would do but have the mare he would; and have him he did; and what boot do you think he give? Three hundred dollars."

"Three hundred dollars!"

"Sure as the good book!"

"And t'other horse too?"

"Yes, Granny, t'other horse too."

Aunt Polly had stopped knitting when Nicoll began his story, and with her spectacles well up on her forehead, kept her eye fixed in quiet amazement upon him. When the whole matter was revealed to her she put down her specs, set back her chair, which had been tilted forward, and made the needles go as if to make up for lost time; but her thoughts, it would seem, had been busy too.

"I'm a thinking that it aint a goin' to do Charlie Astens no good, and you'll see it Nicoll."

"I'd risk it, Granny, for a haul like that!"

"No, no; what does it say, Nicoll?" and Aunt Polly stopped her needles again. "'Wealth gotten by vanity—I forget the rest on it, but it means the same as 'easy come easy go.' Don't never desire it, Nicoll."

"Dad! You needn't be in nowise consarned on my account, Granny, there aint no danger of sich a grist comin' to my mill."

"Three hundred dollars! Well, well, I hope it will do the boy good! but it don't seem to come in the right way, and it's too much in a heap."

"Heap, or no heap, I'm glad for one that Charlie Astens has got sich a lift. But there's some news, Granny, that aint quite so good. They say that old withered sinner, William Kemble, has gone and turned James Apthorpe and the young ones out of house and home."

"James Apthorpe and them dear children! turned them out o' house and home!"

"Its true, they say, Granny. Squire Twineall, they say, has sent some kind of a thing there, they call it 'jection,

or 'jection; what it is Heaven only knows; but it's some kind of lawyer's diviltry; and he's cleaned the house on 'em."

"And where have they gone, Nicoll Kelly?"

"How can I tell, Granny?"

"Nicoll! Nicoll! you know better an that; you never would come home quietly and sit down and eat your supper, and not know whether James Apthorpe and his motherless children have a shelter over their heads."

"Dad! Granny, as to eatin' my supper, it was a matter that couldn't be put off! A man can go a sartain time without eatin', but after that, tightening up things won't do. But, howsomever, Granny, don't take on so, for you see I can tramp it now till to-morrow mornin', and it won't be before that time that Nicoll Kelly will stop, until he knows that them that have stood by us in a bad time, have a house to shelter them. But hark! what's that? did you hear that, Granny?"

A loud cry of distress, as from the recesses of the woods, was distinctly heard. Nicoll seized his hat and flew to the door. Although lame, he was able to go forward with great rapidity. His dogs were with him, but they kept close at his heels. He paused as he entered the woods, to listen, that he might determine from what quarter the sounds came. His practised ear was not for a moment at a loss, and he started in the direction through the thick woods, with as much confidence as though he had been upon the beaten highway.

CHAPTER XI.

JAMES APTHORPE had a name for being a severe and selfish man. He had been rich, but had never been loved by any beyond the circle of his own home. There was a coldness in his manner, a sternness in his dealings, an unfriendliness in all his acts towards those with whom, as equals, he mingled, that repelled from his person all those feelings of social interest which, to most men are the desire of their

life. Like the rain which turns to ice upon the sturdy oak, was the affection of human hearts on his forbidding temperament. He had been rich. An immense estate was once registered as his. But by mismanagement it had wasted away. Loans had accumulated upon the security of all his acres. Interest had rolled up its heavy arrearages, year by year, increasing its fatal volume. He saw the gathering evils, but had neither wisdom nor resolution to meet them in time. He was ever cramped in his means, harassed by neglected obligations, and mortified by continued demands for righteous dues, which he could not liquidate. His heart did not soften under the trials which his straitened circumstances created; but gathering within itself more and more closely, as the ruin of his temporal affairs became more manifest, shut out as with a steel-barred gate whatever might have been left for him of human sympathy. He asked no favors and he consulted no advice; but down the sliding steep of falling fortune alone he travelled, until, at length, he reached the dark abyss, and found himself a friendless beggar.

And yet he loved his own. Cold as was the aspect he presented to the world, and the world to him, his heart burned with intense interest towards those it cherished. His wife and children were to him objects of tenderest solicitude, and to shield them from the breath of evil, or the shadow of misfortune, he would have suffered all that his nature could bear. Yet, although his affection for them was undoubted, it had never been manifested in those acts of tenderness which throw around the circle of home that blessed charm which softens and captivates the heart. His presence often cast a chill upon their pleasantest hours, because he carried with him into the sacred circle, the tokens of that disquietude under which his mind was so constantly suffering. His wife, a tender blossom when he took her to himself, had never unfolded with that richness which her early day had promised, because no gentle care had nursed the beauteous flower. There were too many scowls upon her husband's brow; there were too many cold and harsh responses to her gentle look and her gentler words. She doubted not his love, nor did she feel that the sternness of his manner was the token of his displeasure towards her.

"It was his way; it was his trials in the outer world; the dark clouds coming from the mist of life and shadowing his sensitive spirit." But yet it told upon her heart, not by weakening its love; but by quickening its susceptibility, until the trembling apprehension became manifest in her dejected, anxious look; and that face where beauty had beamed, became too strongly marked with the deep dark lines of sorrow. Her delicate frame was not fitted to endure the trials to which her heart was exposed. Poverty, under some circumstances, she could have struggled with and been happy. But when its crushing power was torturing the breast of him she loved, and working up his ill-regulated mind to acts of frenzy; when she saw the cloud upon his brow gathering thicker and darker; and looked into the forbidding future; there was too much of hopelessness and dread. Quietly she drooped away and was borne beyond the vicissitudes of life.

The day on which James Apthorpe was dispossessed of all he once had owned, beheld him weeping in untold agony over the lifeless body of her he loved; yes, truly loved. Alas, poor man! had those feelings which poured out their fulness at the memory of her patient love, untiring devotion, and perfect truthfulness, been expressed through life in tones of tenderness, in smiles of approbation, in all those little acts which soothe the heart, what pangs of deep remorse would your agonizing spirit have been spared!

From the pale cold sleeper, he was called to the sick bed of his little son. A fever was raging within his veins, and his bright black eye stared wildly up at his suffering father. Is he, too, about to be torn away? And must that frail beauty, bending over her beloved brother, and administering those acts of kindness which woman alone knows how to bestow, must she be left alone to suffer with her wretched father the dire calamities which a life-time has been accumulating! With thoughts such as these, he tore himself from the scene, and in his desolate chamber pondered over the catastrophe which at last had reached its climax. "The doom of justice has been issued; the penalty of the law has been exacted to the letter. What was once his, has passed into the hands of one, whose accumulating thousands are but a burden to their owner. He can-

not complain that justice has been too severe. But an extremity in human suffering he has at length reached. His sick boy! and that angel daughter! to what refuge shall he carry them!"

His thoughts overpower him; his head droops upon his breast, and his long hair falls wildly around his pain-stricken features; and tears, scalding tears, steal down his cheeks. His daughter has left the sick bed, and looks in upon him. She cannot go, as her heart prompts, and throw her arms around his neck and pour forth her sweet love into his bosom. The fault is all his own. A barrier of restraint he has himself erected; he has been building it ever since her days of childhood. It cannot keep her love from him; nor can it keep his aching heart from those pangs which love engenders, when its breathings are smothered and its beautiful expressions locked in the heart. He would lie down and die if, by so doing, he could ward off the evils which surround her. Could he even now take her to his bosom and tell her how his soul dotes upon her; and feel her warm sweet lips pressing his cheek; and be assured that their stricken hearts are flowing in one loving stream, the past all swept away, and the future to be one long day of perfect sympathy; how it would nullify the bitter trial, and pour light into this their hour of darkness. But as the heart rears its tabernacle, so it must abide the evils of its construction.

Awhile Emily gazed upon her parent, and then in trembling accents spoke:

"Father! I think Carlos is better!"

He turned and looked wildly upon her.

"Better! is he? I am glad!"

And then resumed his posture. A moment the beautiful girl fixed her mild blue eye upon his drooping head; her pale face flushed, her lips trembled, tears bedewed her eyes, and burning love shone over her expressive countenance. She gently closed the door and returned to the sick chamber. Through the long night the sufferer sat alone, brooding over his lost hopes and present destiny. At length one glimmering ray trembled in the distance. It was the last flickering from that dark horizon in which, to his mind, all human sympathy was shrouded.

"The man who had grasped every thing, might possibly, in mercy, spare the dwelling which sheltered his children. For himself he had rather lie down and die than ask the boon. But for his children's sake, his proud heart consents to become a humble suppliant.

With a faltering step, but with a determined purpose, he left his home the next morning on his humbling errand. The officer of the law had already served upon him the last formula in the stern process. It had well nigh undermined his resolution; but his children as yet knew not the extremity to which matters had come, and the effort to save them from that cruel blow he must make. How his heart quivered with emotion as he drew near and beheld the cold and stony spot where he who held this crushing power over him resided; and like a felon ascending the steps of his prison did he feel, as his feet grated upon the rough-hewn steps which led into the office of William Kemble.

His reception, and the cruel scene of that hour have already been described.

"It was not his business!"

No; it was not the business of the rich vulture, that his brother had been an unwise, improvident man. It was none of *his* business that the poor sufferer before him, had lost the last farthing which could buy food for dependent ones. It was not *his* business, that the shelter which protected them from the cold, and the storm, was wrested from them. That shelter and those acres now were *his*. The law had so decreed it, and Justice had issued her stern mandate in his favor.

"It was no business of his." Perhaps not! There is an hour coming, thou lover of the shining ore! it hastens on! an hour when that heaped up treasure shall hang out before thy sickening sight such vivid sketches of these dramas in thy life's history, such truthful pictures of those tortures which thy merciless heart now closes itself against, which one word of thy mouth or one dash of thy pen might alleviate, that all the wealth this world possesses, even if thou hadst it all, will fail to prove a recompense!

Mercy has her day of retribution! Long she endures the slight of those who spurn her gentle tapplings at their heart! But when her mighty power unlocks the rusty

bolts, opens the avenues to the closed up heart, and lets in her sweet and melting influence, then,—no hell is needed more!

Where now shall the sufferer go: hope has departed: the last link which bound James Apthorpe to his fellow-man is broken. With the recklessness of despair, he totters on towards the dwelling where his children are. It is their home no longer. He must meet them—*must tell them they are houseless*. Awhile he hurries on; but as the sight of his former abode breaks upon his view, a burning flush came upon him like the blast from a furnace. His brain whirled. His frame shook with the quickening anguish. He turned from the painful object. Thither he could not go. Death was there; yea, worse than death;—the living crucifixion of a father's heart! Onward he rushed; away from a scene he had no courage to meet. The dense forest was near, and wildly he forced his way into its deep recesses; on and on; far, far away; no matter where; away, away from man. Through the long hours of the day he hurried on. He was in the thick woods, and, as he thought, increasing the distance between himself and every human being. Faint, at last, his exhausted frame could endure no more; he threw himself upon the leaves and moss, and his agonizing mind was soon lost in a wild delirium of thought. He did not sleep. The tempest that raged within went on with accumulating power. Night had come, and strange fancies seized his brain. Horror began to creep over him, in cold and repulsive forms. Groans deep and hollow issued from his heaving breast. Then tears would come, and loud wailings, and long shrieks of agony.

Nicoll Kelly, in general, feared nothing in human shape; but Nicoll, like many in his class of life, had more or less of superstitious feelings. It would have been nothing strange to him if, at any time after nightfall, while tramping along the path which led through the woods, he should have seen a lady in white suddenly cross his path; or an old withered hag, travel before him, riding on a broomstick. He believed such things had been and might at any time again be; and he would have been discomposed. But any thing tangible, which his powerful hand

could grasp, or his unerring gun could be pointed at, he feared not.

As Nicoll hurried through the woods, and the unearthly sounds grew more and more distinct as he approached the source from whence they came, he began to have feelings which were not so resolute, and he slackened his pace.

"By dad!—I'll have a light!" So he drew forth from one of his capacious pockets a small travelling lantern, that had done him good service in many a dark night. It took him, however, longer than usual to strike a spark into his tinder-box, there was an excitement in his motions unfavorable to expedition in such a matter. At length it caught, and the little lantern sent forth its feeble light; which was merely enough to enable him to distinguish the nearest trees and his hounds crouching and trembling behind him. The time consumed in procuring the light had made a manifest change in the sounds which had thus excited him. They had grown fainter and fainter, until they had subsided into deep and heavy groans. He walked cautiously onward, holding the light above his head, that it might throw its rays upon a wider circuit. Suddenly he stopped and fixed his eyes upon an appalling object in the form of a human being, seated at the foot of a large tree, and leaning for support against its massy trunk, and pouring forth moanings like a little child. Nicoll threw the light more immediately upon the object, and the haggard and sorrow-stricken countenance of Colonel Apthorpe turned up towards him.

"By dad, neighbor! what's the matter? what's to pay now?"

But no answer was returned, and as Nicoll looked upon the miserable man, his feelings became greatly excited, and, without stopping to select his words, poured out in his own way, a string of maledictions on those who he supposed had been the cause of the calamity; and from the violent demonstration with his brawny arm and clenched fist, which he saw fit to exhibit for his own satisfaction; it would have been, just then, not a very comfortable thing for certain individuals to have been within striking distance. After Nicoll had thus somewhat relieved his feelings, he again

addressed the poor sufferer, who kept his eye still fixed upon him.

"What are you doing here, neighbor? Where are the young ones? What have you done with 'em? the children!—where are they?"

In the twinkling of an eye the maniac, for to that wretched condition had his long fast and mental agony almost reduced him, sprang from the ground, and grasped the arm which Nicoll instinctively stretched out for his own defence.

"Don't you tell them!—I warn you!—they don't know it!—let them be!—let them die!—they *will* die!—let them die!—but don't tell them!—don't!—don't!—don't!"—and his voice rose higher and higher at each word, until the last was prolonged into a howl which had well nigh unnerved the powerful frame of the sturdy hunter; and then helpless as an infant the wretched man sank to the earth.

"By dad, neighbor! you and I must get out o' here—sich another spree—and there'll be two a-howlin' instead o' one:—there's a dozen wild cats singing in my head a'ready—come!"

Nicoll caught up the helpless man as though he had been no heavier than an infant, and hastened towards his own cottage—even the presence of Granny, old as she was, would be better than the loneliness of the "Slington" with a raving man for company.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Frank Kemble was left alone, after his ineffectual intercession with his father, he threw himself upon the large sofa in no very pleasant state of mind. It was the first time he had ever attempted to influence his father, and the sad check he had received convinced him that even the love, which he still thought his parent cherished for him, was not sufficient to excite a hope that its power could ever counteract his determined will. And the feelings

which he now believed bore a dominant sway in that parent's heart, were so entirely at variance with his own, that the path which stretched before his vision of coming years was covered with a dark and gloomy mist. But for himself and his own prospects he comparatively cared not. One whom from his boyhood he had loved, was in the deep waters and struggling with life's bitterest evils. How shall he rescue her?

Youth is not the season for sober reflection, and much too often but little counsel is taken of the judgment. The feelings are strong and urge their claim with resistless importunity; and Frank has hitherto followed at their bidding.

He heard the door of his father's office close with violence, and stepping to the window beheld the almost frantic man urging his way with the desperation of one whose last hope was blasted.

Almost by instinct he seized his hat, and leaving the house took the most direct route across the fields to the dwelling of Colonel Apthorpe. He was a frequent visitor there; and his entrance into the house without knocking, and into the sick chamber, caused no surprise to the lovely girl, who was standing by the bedside and bathing the temples of her little brother. As their eyes met, her beautiful countenance slightly blushed; but for some time no word was spoken. Frank stood by the foot of the bed and looked with fixed interest at the boy, whose dark and glistering eyes were also firmly fixed upon him.

"Carlos is better, is he not, Emily?"

"Oh, yes! he is much better!—he has just awaked from a sweet sleep. He has been wishing to get up, but I have put him off until I shall see father."

"Has your father not returned?"

"Returned! from where? have you seen him this morning? do tell me, Frank;—and why do you look so sad about it? do tell me:—father went out without eating a mouthful this morning, and has not come back yet!"

There was such an earnestness in the countenance of the young girl, and she spoke in such sweet tones, that Frank could not have withheld any information it was in his power to give.

"I saw him about an hour since: he came to see my father."

"Your father!" this was said in a low sinking voice, expressive of great surprise and unfeigned apprehension. For some time not a word was said by either. Emily was preparing some food for her brother; and after she had given it to him and arranged for his comfort,—she said in a very composed tone of voice:—

"Will you step with me, Frank, into the next room?"

He followed her and she closed the door:—

"Dear Frank! now tell me, if you have any love for me, and tell me, truly,—what did my father want at your house this morning?"

Frank took her hand:—

"Emily, I have one request to make of you before I can communicate to you any thing that I know in reference to your father. Will you be mine?"

The earnestness with which this was spoken, although in tones scarcely louder than a whisper, could not be mistaken. Emily fixed her mild blue eye steadily upon him. He had been her companion from childhood; they had grown, if not to full maturity, at least to years in which warm affections are strongly cherished.

She had ever loved him; and she had never doubted that he loved her; and yet when he made this unexpected proposition, she could only look at him with amazement.

"You do not answer me, Emily! May I construe it into an acceptance?" and he took her other hand and fondly pressed them both, as already his own.

But, without releasing her hands, and suffering the tears which her emotion had started to take their course, she shook her head and calmly replied:

"Not now, Frank. Do not ask me now!"

"But I have reasons, Emily, which urge it now! I say nothing of my love! you must be already satisfied of that! I only want your consent to be mine!"

"I am in great trouble, dear Frank! My father is sadly distressed; some great disaster must be about to befall him! Through the long hours of the past night he sat musing alone, and this morning he has gone out without eating; and you tell me he has been to see your father,

towards whom he has the bitterest hatred!" Now, I ask you, by all the friendship we have indulged, to tell me if you know the cause."

"You know, Emily, that unhappy circumstances have thrown all the property which your father owned into the hands of mine."

"And even the house which shelters us?"

Frank could not reply, his manly countenance expressed intense excitement; and as Emily gazed into his animated eye she saw the tear gathering.

"Dear Frank! I feel your friendship: it is noble; it is generous; it is like yourself. But can you not see how wrong it would be to implicate you in our ruin!"

"But why need the feelings of our parents hinder a union that you know must one day be? All I wish at present is, that you will give me your pledge, so that all reserve between us may be removed, and that, as my affianced bride, you may receive more freely what I can afford from my allowance, and which I fear you will now need."

Emily was much affected. She knew the perfect honesty of him who, in all the generosity of his soul, was devising a plan for the comfort of her parent as well as herself. She loved him. She had always loved him, but never more than at that moment.

"I thank you, Frank! and if I refuse your offer, it is not that I do not love you; that I would not even die for you. But sooner would I live in a hovel and labor day and night for the support of my parent, than, under the circumstances, suffer you to do as you request. And now do not urge me, unless you wish to make me more wretched than I am!"

Frank could say no more. With a sad heart he left the house, feeling more bitterly than he had ever done that he was but a dependent, and had never yet learned how to earn a cent for his own subsistence. As he retraced his steps towards his own home, he cast his eye over a field by which he was passing, a large part of which was inclosed by a very neat stone-fence, and the rich fall feed indicated how highly it had been cultivated. He recognized it as part of the farm of the Stanleys; and in a distant corner of the field

he saw Alfred himself, toiling lustily at some large stones which, with the help of a yoke of oxen, he was gathering, to continue a line of fence. He stopped, and for a moment watched the vigorous exertions of the young man in his noble calling.

He was arrayed, indeed, in a coarse garb, strongly contrasting with his own apparel, but it was suited to his occupation, and Frank knew that beneath that linen frock there beat a pure and manly spirit;—one which, thrown upon its own resources, had steadily tracked an industrious and virtuous course, and, through many obstacles, had at length earned its possessor, a competence; and he stood on his own foundation now, a man among the best. Frank knew also what pleasant smiles and warm affections would meet that youth as he returned to his plain but cheerful home, when his daily labors were over, for he had been with them around their happy hearth, and mingled with them, though not often, in their social comforts. *He* had a wealthy father, whose vast fields spread far and wide, and whose thousands came monthly into his iron coffers;—and his home was a costly mansion, and his purse was regularly filled without care or toil. But how gladly would he have put off his fine clothing, and all the accompaniments of that wealth which afforded him such a liberal stipend, and relinquish all the prospects which the future held out, as an heir to great possessions, for the tow frock and simple cottage and daily toil of Alfred Stanley.

He would have crossed the field and spent an hour gladly in aiding Alfred in his work, and talking with him of past days, but his spirit was bowed down with its many sad thoughts, and turning into the little path, he went on his way, pondering on the sad situation in which he had left that suffering girl, and on his own helpless condition.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT rich enjoyment do those possess whose hearts recognize a common bond, whose interests blend into a common focus;—within whose breasts the same chord sweetly vibrates;—kindling the same emotions;—awakening the same joys or sorrows. It would make earth too pleasant in its fleeting state;—too much like heaven;—did every domestic circle present the same beauteous aspect, and live in the same pure atmosphere of love that floated around that little band of brothers and sisters,—the family of the Stanleys. Often did they bless the love and wisdom of that motherly heart, that had clung to the fond idea, and had struggled with them against all cold calculations, which would have sundered them while their hearts were in the bud. Their common toils and their common joys had, as she hoped and knew they would, cemented them in the firmest, purest bonds of friendship. And the love which warmed their hearts tinged their whole horizon with soft and pleasing tints. There was no fascination to them in the glitter of wealth;—they coveted no man's silver or gold;—no home had such sweet pleasures to them as that in which they nestled;—no society was half so entertaining as their own,—nor did any voice send forth such notes of music to thrill their heart as the sweet tones that came from each loving and loved one in that little band! Blest ties of domestic affection!—true fraternal love!—how many hold light by thy sacred bond!—how many blast thy sweet influences by indifference and coldness, and cast thee off for more engaging charms, or more exciting friendships!—how many lose thy hallowed power by separation, when the heart is opening its affections, and ready to mingle its sympathies for life! But gather as we may, from the outer world, into the circle of our heart's embrace, the pleasing, the entertaining, the gifted, and even the good, yet when life has consumed many years, and the heart begins to seek repose on that friendship which changes not, there is no resting-place like the true affection of one who sat with us upon the same paternal knee, and played with us around the same paternal hearth.

Alfred had finished his work for the day and was in the act of putting away his tools, when he heard the lively rattle of a wagon approaching the house;—calling to Sarah who was busy in the kitchen near at hand:

"Charley and Janette are coming, sister!"

She threw down her milk-pan and hurrying before Alfred, was the first at the gate.

"Safe and sound!—oh how glad I am!—I've been anxious all day about you!"

"Safe and sound!" said Janette, jumping into the arms of Alfred who was waiting to receive her. "Safe and sound, dear sister!" kissing Sarah; "oh, what a lovely time we have had!—only I've lost my veil; but never mind!" and then arm in arm the two sisters walked up the little path to the side-door.

"Sarah hasn't noticed the new horse," said Charles to his brother, who was looking with no little astonishment as well as admiration at the noble beast, a rich sorrel, who, covered with foam, was champing his bits, and tossing his head up and down, as though impatient to be freed from the restraint of his harness.

"What does it mean, Charley! this is the horse that Kernachan owns, is it not—the fast horse he has been driving about with so?"

"It was his. He is mine now—or ours; I don't like to call him mine, but I'll tell you all about it by and by;—I must go now and rub him down;—he's had a hard time of it."

Of all meals in the country, supper is the crowning one. The labors of the day are over. The beasts have been housed and fed;—the rough garments of the work-field exchanged for those befitting the social circle, and the little cares which attended the occupations of the day, laid to rest with the tools in the shed. There is nothing to hinder the free, pure play of the kindlier feelings of our nature.

It would have given any one's appetite a zest to have cast an eye over the bountiful provision which Sarah had gathered upon the table that evening! She seemed to have anticipated the effect of the ride upon Janette, and Charles, and prepared accordingly. For, in addition to the large roll of delicious butter in the centre, with

brown bread and wheat bread smoking on each side of it,—there was placed before Alfred at the head of the table, a chicken-pie,—a most tempting sight; with its puffed crust finely browned; and apparently ready to burst open with the good things contained within;—beside several dishes of knick-knacks scattered about,—dainties manufactured by their own skill, from the variety which their farm provided.

As Charles and Janette took their seats opposite each other at the sides of the table, the posts of honor being always assigned to the elder brother and sister, they exclaimed simultaneously;—

"Now, sister Sarah!" at the same time looking with smiling faces at the big knife with which Alfred was breaking into the pie;—"I thought you would both have good appetites this evening after your ride!"

"You thought right, sister!" said Janette—"I *am* hungry, and I should think Charlie must be too, for he was so busy waiting upon Miss Lucy that I don't believe he has eaten any thing. I didn't think our Charlie could be such a gallant!"

Charlie was not quick at speech, and no match in that way for Janette. He blushed a little, smiled, and then looking down at the business on the plate before him:—

"I think if you did not get enough to eat, sister, it must be very strange; for, James Twineall and Mr. Kernachan seemed to have nothing else to do but wait upon you."

"Now, Charlie, take care what you say."

"I think some of the ladies rather wished Janette Stanley had staid at home; for I saw three gentlemen at one time offering her some of the nice bits—while,——"

"Now, Charles Stanley! (they never called him Asten,) if you don't stop!" and Janette hid her blushes the best way she could;—and it was some little time before she could make any headway with the bountiful supply that lay smoking before her. By the intercession of Sarah, however, Charlie was induced to change the subject, and although during the lively chat which continued throughout the supper, Janette was more or less troubled by some sly remark from her brother, she continued to make a hearty repast for a young lady.

It *was* a pleasant hour in life ! in vain might we search through gilded saloons, and splendid festive halls, where wealth has done its utmost to gratify the eye, and the palate, for so much of pure enjoyment as filled the hearts of that fraternal band around their humble board !

And now Charles has risen from the table, and walks about the snug little room, with that restless manner which one is very apt to manifest, when any thing peculiarly exciting is on the mind, awaiting the time when we can unburden it, and its sympathies be gratified by participation with those we love.

And Sarah and Janette are with busy hands removing the table, and preparing to sit down and listen to what is yet to be told of the scenes of the past day. How like a work of magic is the transformation which a few moments bring about ! And what a pleasant light is reflected from the little round table, as Janette places the two sparkling brass lamps upon its well-polished surface !

"And now, Charlie, I wish you would take your seat and let us know the whole story ; for I am sure from Janette's winking at you so often, while we were at supper, that there is some secret you haven't let out yet,"—and, as Sarah says this, she takes Janette by the hand, and fairly compels her to sit down and be quiet ; while Charles, but too ready to get rid of his budget, draws a chair to the table, round which all are now sitting, and taking from his pocket a very plain-looking purse, to the astonishment of his brother and sisters, lays a roll of bills upon the table.

"I told you, brother Alph, that I had made a swap of the mare for the sorrel ;—but I did not tell you what kind of a trade it was. When Mr. Kernachan found that his horse was beaten, he was determined to have the mare."

"I hope you have not been racing, brother Charles !" Sarah said this with a look of deep concern.

"He could not help it, sister," said Janette, who perceived that her brother was disturbed by Sarah's remark. "The horses would go in spite of all that could be done to stop them. But oh, such a ride ! I felt as if I was flying through the air !"

"It was out of my power, sister, to prevent it. Mr.

Kernachan, every few minutes, drove up along side of us to talk with—"

Janette's finger was up and her head shaking very violently at Charlie ;—

"And the third time he did so, both horses started as if determined to have it out ;—and have it out they did ;—until the mare left him far behind. It was the first time, Mr. Kernachan said, his horse had ever been beaten. But the end of the matter is, that here is three hundred dollars which I have received for the exchange ;—one hundred I shall keep to pay the note to Compton, and the remaining two hundred dollars you must divide among you three ;—the horse is enough for my share." And he pushed the roll of bills towards his brother Alfred.

Sarah, who was seated by his side, caught him round the neck :

"Dear, dear brother ! you must keep it yourself !—Oh, it will be such a help to you !"

Janette spoke not ; but the tears started freely and mingled with the lovely smile with which her face was lighted.

Alfred was deeply moved. He loved his brother tenderly,—but never had he felt so proud of him as at that moment. His emotions made it difficult for him to speak. But he had reasons which the girls knew not, or thought not of, which made it clear to him, that it must belong to Charlie alone. He was about to say a great deal, and make some revelations to them all, when a sudden stop was put to the scene by the entrance of a stranger into the next room—the adjoining kitchen—in which old Peter was reposing in his large rush-bottomed chair by the chimney-corner. The gruff voice of the visitor was at once recognized :

"There is Nicoll Kelly !" said Janette, rising and opening the door.

"Your servant, Miss Jenny."

"Good evening, Nicoll ;" and the brothers and sisters all rushed around him. It was an unusual call ; for although Nicoll often stopped in by daylight to have a chat with Peter, he had never before been known to make such an untimely visit.

"I'll sit down, with your leave, boys and galls;—for you see I've tramped it a little more than common, to-day, and I'm kind o' tired. Ah, this chair feels good!"

"Won't you have some supper, Nicoll?—we can get you something in a moment."

"No 'casion! no 'casion, Miss Sally! I've laid in for that pretty well for *one* night. And it's well I did; for I've done some little work to-night, that wouldn't have been so clever on an empty stomach. I take it, when a man's got rough-and-tumble work to do, a bowl or two of spon, more or less, aint out of the way:—but as it's a long story I've got to tell, I may as well be at it, for Granny's 'specting me back to the Colonel's every minute."

"Is she at Colonel Apthorpe's? What's the matter there now, Nicoll?"

"Why, you see, my darling,"—and Nicoll screwed his face very hard, and shutting one eye, fixed the other very intently upon Janette, who as usual was asking the questions,—“when I was down to the tavern to-day, I heard 'em talking about the Colonel, and about it's being all up with him, and so on; and you know the folks don't feel over and above sorry when a man who has held his head so high gits into the swamp. Howsomever, that wasn't nothin' to me, here nor there. He's always treated me and Granny like a gentleman, and so says I, I'm sorry to hear such news about the Colonel. 'Well,' says Bill Compton, 'I aint sorry, and I hope they'll put a 'jectment on him and clear him out of house and all.' Says I, 'Bill Compton—your'e bound for the gallows, and if you don't get there it will be more from good luck than good management.' But, howsomever, that aint part of my story:—As I was sayin', I heered things along through the day; so when I got home and had put down a few bowls of the needful—just as I was telling Granny some of the news—there come a long howl from the 'Slington—like something I never heered afore. But as there aint many things in *this* world I'm 'feered of, I takes the little pocket lantern,—calls the pups, —and tracks it as nigh as I could."

"What was it, Nicoll?"

"I'll tell you, Jenny,—just wait till I git to it:—I tracked the noise pretty straight;—but I had to walk fast,

for I heered the groans, or whatever you might call 'em, growin' fainter and fainter, and dying away just as though its strength was departin'. So I holds up the lantern—and what do you think I see?"

"Oh! do tell, Nicoll!"

"He was a sittin' right down on the ground by the root of the big chestnut;—you know the big tree, boys!"

"Who, Nicoll? who? do tell quick!"

"His hat was gone, and his hair was hanging over his eyes;—you know it's long and thin like."

"Colonel Apthorpe!!"

"Says I, Neighbor! what doin' here?—Where's the young ones? Where's the children? And no sooner had I said it, than he started up like a wild cat and come right at me. So I jist holds him off at arm's length—for I see he was ravin' crazy."

"Crazy!—Oh, Nicoll!—Poor Emily and Carlos! where are they? what will they do? Oh Alfred, let us go and see about it at once!"

"Directly, Sally—directly; but just hear me out. 'Don't you,' says he, 'don't you tell 'em! don't tell my children that they're driven out of house and home!—don't tell 'em for your life!' He then went off into a howl such as I never heered before, and dropt right down at my feet helpless as a baby. Says I, Neighbor, you and I can't stay here, or there'll be two a howlin' instead o' one. For I felt my flesh creeping the wrong way, and my hat kind o' moving on my head. So I takes him up in my arms and made tracks for Granny pretty quick!"

"Carried him in your arms, Nicoll?"

"Oh! that wasn't much, Charlie,—bless your soul! he hadn't nothin' in him;—he hadn't eaten a mouthful the whole blessed day. So I takes him and lays him on the bed:—*There*, says I, Granny, see what that darned 'jectment's done! I'll wring his neck!—I'll wring old Twine-all's neck!—just as quick as I would that spittin' mouser!"

"But Emily, Nicoll! and Carlos!—where are they?"

"I'll tell you, Jenny, as soon as I git at it. Says I, Granny, git a bowl of milk, and give him a drink first, and then put some of the warm spon into it:—you see we always keep the big pot on; kase some stranger or so might

come along and want a little something to eat. There aint nothin' like it to fill up the chinks when a body's hungry. So Granny gits a little warm milk and give him, and that kind o' raised him; and then she dipped out a ladle full of the real stuff, and he took it down;—and then she talked to him, you know, in her smooth easy way, and then I see the tears begin to come;—so by that I knows he's a gittin' better. But he didn't open his mouth to say a word. So after a while Granny winks to me, and then she says:—'I guess, Nicoll, that you'd better light the lantern, and you and I will go along with the Colonel; for you know,' says she, 'that we was jist a goin' over to see Miss Emily and help her about Carlos.' But no sooner had she named the children, than he set down on the chair and cried like a baby; and then Granny, she set to and cried as hard as he did;—and so I bites on my teeth,—Keep in, Nicoll, says I—keep steady. It was hard work though, I tell you. I don't mind heerin' children squeel, and young galls a blubberin'—but when it comes to men with gray hairs on their head and wrinkles on their face, I don't like it; it aint natural. Howsomever I held in till they got through; but I had to squish the gums pretty hard. So I takes the lantern and Granny catches up the spitter—t'other followin' at her heels—and the Colonel he walked along a'ter us. But I tell you what, my dearies! I never see sich a sight afore, and don't want to see it agin!—for when the Colonel opened the door and Miss Emily took one look at him, she sprung round his neck, and such a to-do as there was I never seed! But the worst of all is to come yet"—Sarah and Janette were already weeping—"I believe, boys, that they aint got a mite of any thing to eat in the house!"

"Oh, Nicoll! Nicoll! don't say so!—don't!" and the girls gave full vent to their feelings in an outburst of grief.

"And I'll tell you what makes me think so;—the boy Carlos was layin' on the bed, and when Emily comes up and wipes his forehead and puts his hair on one side with her hand, he turns his large eyes up to her and says: 'I feel so hungry; can't you get me something?' I see the tears a runnin' down her cheeks all the time; and she takes up a cup of some kind of drink, and he swallows it, and she goes in t'other room, and I could hear her sobbing as if her

heart was all broken;—and Granny says there aint a scrap of any thing to eat in the house."

Nicoll had at last let out his budget, and when he had done, he put on one of his sour aspects, crossed his legs, and looked into the fire.

The girls immediately dried their tears. No time was to be wasted on them, and each one, as though they had been consulting together, began to collect some things and put them upon the table. There was a loaf of wheat bread, a loaf of rye bread, and a roll of butter; a little kettle with honey; a small jar of pickles; a large flat piece of pork; half a ham, and a pair of fowls, all ready dressed, which had been hanging in the buttery; and a little wheat flower in a very white bag, and a basket of potatoes, and such a variety of knick-knacks, all brought together in so short a time, that Nicoll himself began to be confounded. He had expected, certainly, to get something a little more suitable for a sick child at the Stanleys than could have been furnished from his own larder; but such a combination fairly made him smile, and he could have taken each of those dear girls, who flew about so quickly and gathered up the articles with such a good will, into his arms, and hugged them with delight. It would not have been well for any one after that to have said any thing to their disparagement in Nicoll's hearing; the consequences would not have been pleasant. And then Janette put on her hood and cloak, and Alfred at once prepared to accompany her, but she interposed:

"I think you had better not go, brother Alfred; Emily might feel bad, you know, and Nicoll will take care of me."

"Bless your young heart, that I will! and I should like to see the dozen men that would dare come nigh you, if Nicoll says, 'hands off!'"

So every article was packed away in two baskets and bestowed upon the noble-hearted hunter; while Janette, as confident as though it was mid-day, took the little lantern and stepped lightly off into the darkness, and Nicoll went lumbering along behind.

CHAPTER XIV.

EMILY APTHORPE and Janette Stanley had never been on terms of intimacy, for the reason that, hitherto, the circles of society in which each of them moved had been very different. Colonel Apthorpe had guarded with a foolish pride, against the introduction of his children into that class, known among them as the common farmers. They were not allowed to go to the common school,—nor to accept of invitations to their rural parties,—nor to enjoy, with the boys and girls in winter, the luxury of social sleigh-rides,—nor to mingle, more than was absolutely necessary, with any of the youth that did not properly belong to the circle which, in his vanity, he distinguished as respectable. Towards the Stanleys he had indeed manifested more complacency; but as they were not very likely to put themselves forward, and as Emily, of late years, had been confined much at home, it is probable that the two girls had not spoken to each other a dozen words during their lives, although reared within a mile of each other's dwelling. Still they were acquainted, and the pleasant smile with which Emily always greeted Janette, as they occasionally met, seemed to say, "how grateful she would be if they might be allowed to associate intimately." During the trial which had succeeded her mother's death, none of her former companions called upon her. Perhaps it was out of delicacy to her feelings. Her father's misfortunes were known abroad, and his dwelling had been stripped of every article of furniture that was not barely necessary. They could not help her, and they did not wish to intrude upon her under these circumstances. Yet, without charging them with neglect or indifference, if her youthful companions had flocked around her, and, without alluding to recent events, poured into her bleeding bosom the warmth of affection, and manifested the tenderness of their friendship, it would have nullified in a great degree the poignant suffering through which she had to pass alone. The young heart is very apt to take refuge from its severer trials in the sympathy of those in whose love sure confidence can be placed.

There was some little embarrassment on the part of both Emily and Janette, as the latter entered the apartment where Emily spent most of her time,—the sick chamber of her brother. But it lasted only a moment. Janette had thrown off her hood and outer garments, and appeared just as though she was an inmate of the family; and with her beautiful countenance radiant with affectionate interest, took the hand of Emily, who, overwhelmed by a crowd of emotions, returned a warm embrace, and fixing her full blue eye upon Janette, did not attempt to hide the tears which this unexpected token of interest had freely started.

"I only heard yesterday that your brother had been sick, and Nicoll Kelly stopped at our house this evening, and said that you were alone, except old aunt Polly; so I made him gallant me along, and you see I have taken off every thing, for I am going to stay to-night and help you, whether or no!"

Emily looked at her as she said this, while still holding each other's hands. There was truth and affection in every feature of her speaking face. She let go the hand, and threw both her arms around the neck of Janette, kissing her lips and cheeks alternately; and then, burying her face in the bosom of the sweet girl, burst into a flood of tears. Janette but needed this to open the floodgates of her own heart.

"Dear Emily!"

"Dear, dear Janette!"

"You will let me be a sister to you! will you not, Emily?"

"Oh, yes! a sister! oh, yes! You have taken a terrible load from off my heart,—dear Janette, how can I ever repay you for this!"

"Only love me, Emily, and let me love you, and let Sarah love you too!"

And, again, she imparted warm kisses on the lovely girl to whom her heart had yielded its sympathies.

"And you will tell me every trouble you have, dear Emily! just as you would to a sister, and let me help you, and bear it with you!"

"Oh, yes, yes! But, ah, Janette!" and the deep agony that passed her sensitive spirit caused her to fall perfectly helpless upon the arms of her friend.

Janette led her to the adjoining room and assisted her to the bed, and then sitting by her smoothed the glossy hair from her pale fair forehead and whispered to her those soothing suggestions which woman, in her love, knows how to communicate, even while the dew of youth is yet in its freshness. And then Aunt Polly came into the room with a cup of tea in one hand and a plate of buttered toast in the other; and Janette, thanking her for the trouble she had taken, placed them on a little table by the side of the bed. If Emily suspected the source from whence the supply came she said nothing, but took the refreshment from the hand of Janette, and, just tasting it, looked up with an expression that went to the heart of her kind attendant.

"Carlos! dear Janette—will you take it to him?"

"Aunt Polly has just gone with some to him: this is for you, dear!"

"My poor father!"

"He has had his supper, and has been persuaded to retire to rest. You see I have begun to take the place of a sister, as I told you I would!"

A faint smile passed over Emily's features, while, at the same time, the tears started again; and taking the hand of her companion she pressed it to her lips.

And now the dark night has spread its curtain around them, and they lay side by side. By degrees, the suffering girl lets out the dark secrets which have been so long shut within her own breast, until she has nothing new to communicate; and in each other's arms they, together, sink to rest. The burden of one heart has been sweetly withdrawn by the sympathizing love of another, and rested on them both,—only, now, to serve as a bond to unite their affections.

Nicoll had ensconced himself in some out of the way cover for the night. It was of little consequence to him what kind of a resting-place he had. It must have been a hard one, indeed, if his sleep was disturbed by it.

News circulates strangely in the country, and Nicoll had some very strong impressions, from what he had heard, that some further process was about to be served upon Col. Apthorpe; and it bore so heavily upon his mind that, contrary to his usual custom, he awoke quite early.

"They must keep their darned 'jectments to themselves while I am here," said Nicoll to himself, as he rose and began to tackle on his rigging for the day, shaking his head at the same time, and making up a tremendous physiognomy.

"The critturs must keep off with their diviltry, if they don't want their necks wrung!"

Taking his station on the front door-step, with his pups beside him, he kept an eye turned towards the highway, as though he expected that visitors were approaching.

About the time that Nicoll stationed himself on the look-out, two individuals were leaving the office of William Kemble; and as they stepped into the highway, they took the direction that led to the outskirts of the town. One of these was the wealthy proprietor, whose character and circumstances have been already delineated, and who was now on his way with an officer of the law to take actual possession of the premises, where the suffering family of Colonel Apthorpe still resided. The individual in company with him requires some notice at our hands, as he will be occasionally an actor in the scenes of our story.

Jemmy Towson was not a very prepossessing man in personal appearance; and yet a casual observer would not set him down in his mind as a bad man. He was rather tall than otherwise, with long features and large eyes, and a very anxious and depressed look. He always seemed to be in pain; for there was an everlasting scowl upon his brow. And the corners of his mouth, except in the very acts of speaking and eating, were drawn upwards. His nose appeared to have been designed for a long member; but, either in its original cast, or by some mishap in his youth, it had become squatted down and spread out, marring whatever of good appearance he might otherwise have possessed, and exciting in the mind of those who looked at him a feeling nearly allied to pity. His manner of dress was not remarkable for any thing, except his peculiarity of wearing an over garment, during winter and summer, which was invariably buttoned close up to the neck. It was a light-colored thread-bare concern, and so long had he worn it, that he had become so identified with it, that the "white coat" and "Jemmy Towson" were synonymous terms.

He had never been bred to any regular business and was fain to scrape together his share of this world's substance by acting as an agent. It apparently made but little difference to Jemmy what the agency was ; always provided there was no very special personal risk to be encountered. But by some freak in politics, it had, of late, fallen to his good luck to receive an appointment as deputy to an official personage of indispensable importance in a place where the rights of law were rigidly insisted on and appealed to in every doubtful case, whether of little or much importance.

As there are some duties in the rigid execution of Justice, which most men prefer not to perform, it was a great convenience to have just such a ready person as Jemmy Towson to attend to them ; he being in no wise particular, and not inconveniently troubled either with a heart or a conscience. The business, however, upon which he was intent this morning, was one which, beside the obligation resting upon him as an officer, involved more or less of personal interest on his part ; for he was not only, by virtue of authority, to put Mr. William Kemble in possession of his decreed rights, but was himself to be invested by the said Kemble, without let or hindrance, for the term of one year, with the possession of the dwelling house and appurtenances, formerly belonging to the now ejected proprietor, James Apthorpe.

It was a lovely morning, and the road by which they walked was lined with a profusion of our finest forest trees, all arrayed in those rich and varied colors which shed such beauty over the landscape on a fine autumnal day : that mellow radiance which sinks into the very heart,—a perfect lullaby to its restless desires and disturbing passions ;—when, if we have enemies, we feel ready to forgive them ; and if we have loving friends, the affections go forth towards them with intense desire : and the whole soul is softened into that delicious calm which seems a foretaste of the better state.

It is to be feared, however, that these two gentlemen, whom we are following, drink in no such delicious drafts from the beauties which surround them. One of them has too much money, and the other too little, and both have

been too long under influences unfriendly to such inspiration. Rapidly, in single file, they walk along and brush aside with their feet the relics of the departing year. What a pity that they cannot take a lesson from those rustling leaves ! It would be a wholesome one, even if for each leaf they scatter from their path, a silver dollar should be given ; and one of them, at least, will think so yet.

The sun had arisen before Nicoll took his station on the porch of Col. Apthorpe's dwelling, and was now considerably advanced on his course, when the small gate at the end of the avenue was seen to open, and two gentlemen rapidly approached the house. As they reached the porch they both looked very suspiciously at the dogs, and seemed to have serious doubts as to the propriety of entering.

"You needn't be afeered for the pups ; they won't harm nothin' but skunks and sich like varmints, without I should set 'em on ; and then there's no tellin' what they mightn't do."

"Is Mr. Apthorpe at home ?" inquired one of the gentlemen.

"I can't say, Squire Kimble ; you see I don't jist belong here."

"You seem to have taken possession of the stoop, though, as if you felt pretty much at home !" said the other.

"That's my business, you see, neighbor Jemmy. I makes myself pretty much at home any where, without it was in your clutches."

"You doubtless know, sir," said Mr. Kemble, speaking in rather a sharp tone, "whether Mr. Apthorpe is in the house."

"What will you give me, Squire, to tell you ? I wouldn't advise you to try that," seeing that Mr. Towson had put one foot on the lower step as though about to ascend. "I would not advise either on you to try to go up this stoop. It mightn't be safe."

Both drew back, for Nicoll's physiognomy had assumed a very sour aspect, and the tones of his voice were somewhat hard.

"Do you presume, sir," said Mr. Kemble, whose anger was evidently aroused, "to sit there with your dogs and keep us out of the house ? Mr. Towson you are an officer ; do your duty."

The official gentleman being thus urged, began to feel the buttons on his over garment, as though he must first fasten every thing up tight, at least over the seat of life. But as every thing had already been made as tight as could well be, he had nothing to do except to rub his hand over his chest and cough two or three times, as though some internal difficulty must be first attended to.

"Do your duty, Mr. Towson!" again said Mr. Kemble, speaking in tones so startling, that the good man absolutely made a step in advance. A look from Nicoll caused him to reconsider matters; he drew his foot back again, and began to rub his hand over the outer works of his chest.

"Mr. Nicoll!" said Jemmy in a very insinuating tone, "we have no desire to injure you, my good fellow; we have a little business with Mr. Apthorpe, and if you will please just hand him this paper it will answer every purpose," at the same time stepping up and holding at arms' length a paper which he had taken out of the breast of his coat. This, by the way, was a mere ruse to get Nicoll off from his perch.

Nicoll sprang to his feet, his jaw snapped together with a clash. He raised his brawny arm, and for a moment stood with his fist firmly clenched, and eyeing the paper and the palid face of Jemmy Towson alternately.

"By dad! if either on you come nigh me with your tarnal 'jections, I'll hammer you flatter than a pancake! *Home with you both!*" This last sentiment came out at the very top of Nicoll's voice. At that moment the door opened and Aunt Polly, alarmed at the noise, was about to inquire the cause, when a violent spitting from somewhere about the nether garments of the old lady started the pups from their resting-place, and headlong they plunged without respect of persons, off from the stoop, and alarmingly nigh unto the respectable personages immediately in front of it. Jemmy Towson, not being accustomed to the retrograde movement, struck his heels against something and came to on his back. Kicking violently with both legs, he called out murder at the top of his lungs, while his honorable employer stepped hastily to one side, and stood looking daggers at the whole concern. Nicoll was not a little pleased at the turn things had taken, and would have had not the least objections to Jemmy's lying there and kicking

up his heels for any indefinite space of time. But the noise he objected to. He felt, and truly so, that the poor, afflicted family needed rest, and, especially, the distracted sufferer at its head. This outcry, therefore, must be stopped, and that forthwith. Starting hastily down the steps, he seized the prostrate Towson by the arm, and raising him to his feet with as much ease and as hearty a good will as ever an old virago did a crying brat, marched off with him, in his peculiar manner, down the avenue towards the public road. Jemmy, who had felt the grasp of Nicoll on a previous occasion, like a halter-broken colt, submitted without the least show of resistance; and Kemble, perceiving his official authority thus paraded from the premises, walked leisurely along at a respectful distance in the rear, revolving in his mind how he should wreak a bitter vengeance on him whom he imagined was the abettor of Nicoll's presumptuous interference.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN the heart is sad, as well as when it is filled with joy, it seeks sympathy with some kindred spirit. Its violent emotions crave relief by communion with those who can understand its causes of excitement; and its joys are heightened and its sorrows assuaged when that which lay concealed within can be whispered in the ear of friendship.

Never did Frank Kemble feel more alone in the world than when frustrated in his kind, but unadvised plan in reference to Emily Apthorpe, by her own superior prudence and her spirit of true womanly independence. Aunt Alice loved him dearly; but her age and conservative temperament forbade him to hope that she could be the one to counsel him in his peculiar circumstances, or to sympathize in the sorrows which his heart endured. He had formed no friendships among the youth of his native place; for the reason that he had spent but a small portion of his time at home, and those friends in whom, perhaps, he could confide and

who were under deep obligations to him, were too far removed to be now helpers in a time of need. The only relation he had was his paternal uncle, who lived a few miles from the village; a man of retired habits, and the very counterpart of Frank's father in the matter of worldly possessions; or, perhaps, more properly, in the quantity necessary to satisfy the desires of the heart. He was an independent man; and his whole property consisted of a small farm, upon which he lived and fattened in ease and quiet;—his disposition was kindly, and between Frank and him there had ever been a good understanding.

Without perhaps realizing in what way his uncle could afford the relief he wished, yet knowing of no better friend to whom he could apply, he resolved to visit him, and had left his home a few hours after the scenes occurred as related in the last chapter, to accomplish this design. He was fond of walking, and on such a lovely day his young and unspoiled heart drank in the soft and enchanting beauties which met the eye wherever it might rest. As he passed the farm of the Stanleys, he saw that Alfred was again at work with his stone fence. He paused and watched him a moment, and then sprang over the wall which lined the highway. A new thought had passed his mind. He and Alfred had been friends in boyhood; perhaps a few years may not have so altered either of them that they might not be friends still;—his heart is aching for some kindred spirit, and the holy influence of nature has quickened its impulses. Alfred was so intent upon his work that he did not notice the approach of young Kemble.

"You have a hard job before you, Mr. Stanley!" at the same time putting out his hand, which was at once grasped in such a kindly manner, that his heart was immediately touched.

"I am glad to see you," said Alfred, smiling. "It is rather hard work, but I mean to take it easy."

"Let me assist you in raising that big stone. Two bodies at the end of a crowbar are better than one."

The crowbar was already under a large stone, which Alfred had, in vain, been trying to displace. It proved as Frank had said; and their united weight soon brought it on a level with the ground, where one of them for the mo-

ment held it until it was secured by a chain, and then the oxen performed the rest.

"You have rendered me effectual service, for I had almost given it up in despair. It requires two to work advantageously at making stone fence, but my brother is away at present (Alfred blushed a little as he said this), and I am so anxious to get along with the fence that I thought I would try it alone."

"Have you and your brother made all this fence this season?"

"Not the whole of it this season; no further than from that chestnut tree: we only work at fences after our other work is done."

Alfred now picked up his tools and placed them by the fence; and taking his hat off, wiped away the marks of his toil from his manly brow.

"I see your hair has not forgot to curl yet: do you remember how ashamed you used to be of your curly hair?"

"I believe I do remember, now you mention it: we used to have nice times once."

"Happier times than I have ever had since, Alfred; excuse me for using such a familiar term. I almost for the moment forgot that we were boys no more."

"Oh! no apology is needed. I am very glad to have these old times so forcibly recalled. We had but little care then but about our boats and our marbles."

Frank was much affected, his heart was ever ready to kindle like a live coal at each breath of air. The few words which Alfred had spoken; the kindness of his manner, and his allusion to the days of their boyhood, which Frank had by no means forgotten, all tended to win his confidence, ready as his mind then was, for the communings of friendship.

There is a charm in the intimacies of youth peculiarly their own; no other season of life has the same experience; the heart has no duplicity to conceal,—no selfish ends to gratify. It fears no danger from falsehood, and therefore opens its holy fountains and lets forth its truthful feelings. What generous emotions well up and sparkle forth! What strong desires to please, and how ready to be pleased! What a flowing back and forth of tender interest, in each

other's welfare; and how little can the richer scenes of after life repay the injury which larger experience has done to the pure warm love of youth!

Alfred was never forward in the expression of his feelings; he was naturally reserved, and the business habits he had formed were not altogether friendly to the outpouring of the warmer emotions. But they were there, and the open unreserved expression of feeling on the part of Frank, drew them forth almost without his will.

And now they commune together of the past;—each unfolding, with the utmost freedom; secrets in his own history, scarcely known to any but himself;—and as they talk and let out the fulness of their hearts, every barrier melts away, and each feels that a valued friend has been gained in the other. Time flies unheeded at such interviews, for the heart takes the dominion, and interest and dull formalities, and even rigid duty, for awhile must stand aside.

How long they might have remained beneath the shade of the noble chestnut to which they had retired to hold this feast of friendship it would be difficult to say, had they not been interrupted by the rapid approach of an open wagon along the highway near which they stood. Both turned instinctively towards the road, and the countenance of Frank became in an instant deadly pale. It was the sheriff of the county, and by his side was Colonel Apthorpe. The former was urging his horse to his utmost speed, while the poor sufferer beside him sat like one helplessly lost. His head bowed down and his body swayed by the motion of the wagon, as though the spirit within no longer had control.

The heart-sickening spectacle hurried past, and as the noise of the rattling wheels was dying away in the distance, a cry of distress broke upon the ears of the young men. It came more and more distinctly. It was the cry of a female, and it was approaching by the same path by which the wagon had just gone. They rushed to the fence, and were over it and into the highway in an instant, and both ran with their utmost speed towards the distracted being, who was flying like a frightened deer and screaming in agony.

"My father! my father! Save him! oh save him!"

Frank caught her into his arms. It was Emily Apthorpe.

"Save him! oh, save him, dear Frank! By all the love I have for you, I ask you to save my father!"

And then exhausted by the exertions she had made, she fell helpless upon his neck, clasping her arm about him, and sobbing aloud in the violence of her grief.

"Alfred, I must ask your help; for as God let's me live, her father shall be freed!"

"I will aid you, Frank, as I would my own brother. Let us take her from the highway!"

And Alfred, in his stronger arms, took the lovely burden from his companion, and bore her under the very tree where they had been interchanging their thoughts and feelings.

"You remain here, Frank, until I bring our wagon."

It was only a short distance, and Alfred was soon again with them; and although the poor girl seemed to have lost all power to help herself, she was soon carried safely back to the wretched home she had left. She had strength sufficient to thank them both for their kindness, but as her eye looked up to Frank, as he laid her upon her bed, the word "*Father!*" came from her lips with such an emphasis, and there was such an imploring look, that he could not but say to her:—

"Emily, I will sacrifice every worldly prospect, or my life itself, but your father shall be set at liberty!"

Frank spoke from his heart; and yet he little thought what the promise might cost him.

CHAPTER XVI.

FRANK mounted a horse which Alfred Stanley had procured for him, resolved to lose no time in prosecuting his purpose. The road he took led directly into the country, and into a part of it not very inviting; for in the distance of two miles there was scarcely any tenement deserving the name of a house. One or two cabins, almost hidden within the thick cedars, were the only signs of inhabitants. Emerging from

this broken and barren tract, he reined up his horse at the summit of a hill and turned off from the more public road, through a plain double gate, and entered a rich field covered with fruit-trees of luxuriant growth. The path was not much worn, but sufficiently so to direct him, even if he had not been familiar with it. As he emerged from the orchard, a plain but comfortable looking farm-house lay immediately in view, and a boundless prospect of most enchanting scenery spread out on either side. A broken and woody foreground with a long stretch of white sandy beach, the blue waters of an arm of the ocean, sparkling in the rays of a bright sun, with the white specks that were floating on its surface, and in the great distance, apparently making but slow progress on the long journey before them. And far, far over the vast expanse of water, a line of blue—a little darker and heavier to the eye, distinctly marking by its uneven profile on the distant horizon, the hills and valleys of the opposite shore. Frank had often enjoyed the sight of this extended panorama; and even now he could not help casting his eye more than once up and down through the length and breadth of the charming scene. But his heart was too sad to enjoy the beauties of Nature.

He alighted, and led his horse into the stable, as though he had been at home; and then proceeding to the back-door, opened it without knocking, and at once received a hearty welcome from a pleasant-looking middle-aged lady, who smiled graciously, and held out her hand as he entered.

"Well-a-day! Frank Kemble, of all things! how glad I am to see you; and how you've grown! And jist to see how like your blessed mother, that's dead and gone! Oh, dear me, how it brings old times back whenever I look on you! But why don't you come oftener? and how is brother and aunt Alice? When did you get home? You look pale—you aint well, I know you aint! It's nothin' but that goin' to college! I'm glad I aint got no boys to send to college; for I know, Josey, that is your uncle,—I suppose I hadn't ought to call him so now,—but you see we called one another so afore we was married; he called me Ruth, and I called him Josey, and we've kept it up ever since;—but do la, here he comes."

Frank was right glad that some one had interposed to

give him a chance to ask after the welfare of the family; for he had stood holding the hand of his good aunt, and trying every moment to interpose a word,—but in vain,—and knowing as he did, that there was no telling how long the stream would keep running, it was indeed a relief to him to have any interference; and right glad was he to behold the honest, smiling face of Mr. Joseph Kemble, his father's brother.

"Frank! my boy! how are you?"

"Well! I thank you, sir; and aunt tells me you are all well here."

"Did she! Well, that's the best news I've heard in a good while;—I only wish it was true!" The fact is, Frank did not well remember what she did say; nor had the good lady herself any distinct recollection; and when Frank made the remark she opened her eyes, smoothed down her apron, and was thrown at once into a deep reverie, endeavoring to recall what had slipped from her tongue for the last few moments.

"Well! indeed! I don't know, Frank, my good fellow, what a well day is! I look fat and ruddy, and all that; and I eat hearty, I allow; and wife says I sleep well a nights, and for all that any body can see, every thing is well enough; but this plaguy rheumatiz,—I believe it takes stronger hold of well folks that it does of weakly ones."

"Does it trouble you all the time, uncle?"

"Well! the *most* of the time:—it takes me sometimes right in this shoulder, and then it will go clean down my back, and then, may be the first thing I know, that toe will be took;" holding up his leg and pointing toward the distinguished member;—"and when it gets there, it seems to vent all its spite out. I had no *idee* before that a man's toe was such a tender part. But take a seat—take a seat."

On looking at Mr. Joseph Kemble, no one would have imagined that any bodily or mental ailments ever troubled him. His form was portly, with the fair flush of health upon his cheek, and such a merry laughing eye, as is not generally seen when the heart is sick or the body in pain.

As soon as Frank conveniently could, he made known to his uncle that he had come to see him on some special business;—and the old gentleman immediately led him

into a little side room, and taking a large arm-chair which he kept there for his own accommodation, he motioned to Frank to help himself to one of the other seats.

"You want to see me on business, ha! got into trouble a ready, and afraid to tell the old man, ha! Ay! you college boys."

"It is on business, uncle, but not exactly my own."

"Then don't meddle with it, Frank; you know what the good book says, 'Better take a dog by the ears.'"

Frank blushed, for he had not, until that moment, realized how strangely it would appear to his uncle for him to be interesting himself in the affairs of Colonel Apthorpe. But he had committed himself, and now he must go on. In as concise a manner as possible, he related the course which things had taken, and the unavailing efforts he had made to get his father to relent. And when he had got through with his story, his uncle fixed his twinkling eyes full upon the excited countenance of his nephew:

"And I suppose now, from all which you have told me, you think your father a very hard man?"

Frank felt abashed;—for whatever he might have thought, when the idea was expressed in plain words, it sounded hard; he could scarcely believe that he had indulged it.

"Why!—no!—not exactly that—I should be very sorry to say so, uncle. But I only thought that, in this case, he might have yielded; the loss or gain of the money he would not have felt."

"That is all very true. It could not have affected your father, Frank, for he is very rich; whether you know it or not, he is a very rich man. But he is peculiar,—he was never brought up to any regular business. I mean by that, to any thing farther than to learn how to keep the pennies close and make the most of what the old man left him,—and he has learned that pretty well:—for although he got pretty much all the estate, and it was a considerable one too, yet it has rolled up on his hands beyond all account. And he's welcome to it. I never coveted one cent of it—I wouldn't take his property, Frank, as a gift. It's only a vexation of spirit to him, or any one else, to have more than they want. But this aint to the point. Your father

has made the most of his money; he has gained it honestly; he loves it dearly, and he means to keep it. But what you tell me about his exercising a spirit of revenge on Colonel Apthorpe, I don't hardly understand,—there's a wheel within a wheel somewhere about that part of it. I can't hardly believe it!"

"I hope you are right, uncle, but it has seemed very strange to me that when the property of Colonel Apthorpe was decreed to my father, and when he knew that the other creditors had taken what little personal property was in the house, that he should have seized his person and placed him in jail, and brought such suffering upon his poor unoffending family."

"Families must suffer together, Frank, you can't help it; it is the order of nature. It won't answer for us in this business world to be troubling ourselves about feelings. How would it have answered for your father, when men came to him to borrow money and offered good security, for him to have replied; 'No, I can't do it; I have got the money and the security is good enough; but you have got a wife and children, and I could never bring myself to take this property in case you cannot pay.' What do you think they would have said to him; 'That is our business, Mr. Kemble,—if you are satisfied with the security we will see to the rest.' Don't you see, Frank?"

Frank had begun to see a little; he looked down and did not answer.

"And now, my boy, what would be the consequence to your father, situated as he is, with his money loaned out to half the village, and on thousands of acres in the country? Let it once be known that his heart had been melted by a pitiful story, and that he had given up some of his security, how many cases of distress would there be, do you think? It would be only for a man to act as Apthorpe has done all his life; spending and spending till the last cent was gone, and then to go with a sad story about his family becoming beggars, and not having a place to put their heads in. My opinion is, Frank, that, as the world is, your father would do a great damage to society if he could be tricked out of his dues by a tale of distress. When a man has got himself into the fix *he* has, with his great heap of

wealth, he must just shut his heart up, like a turtle in its shell."

"But do you suppose, uncle, that my father has done this from principle?"

"Heaven only knows! I believe my toe is going to have a turn! Ru—th!" Frank moved his chair back as his aunt rushed into the room. "It's took me again!" and woman like she came right at him, and catching him by one shoulder began to rub his broad back in a way that showed she was used to the business.

"Is it here, Josey?"

"It aint there just now, but it will be there soon, if you keep on pounding at this rate."

"It is in his toe, I believe, aunt," and she made a dive downwards, in a manner that indicated violent execution somewhere. But her husband caught her arm just as she was about to seize the afflicted member.

"Oh, the massys, Josey! what *do* you mean?"

"It would have been the massys, if you'd have touched that toe; it feels as if it was in Nebuchadnezzar's oven already, and spouting out fire from the end of it. There! just hold on a little! it begins to ease off! perhaps it won't be much this time; but don't, I beg of you, next time tell folks that we are all well," turning his robust face up towards her, as much as to say, "don't my looks tell the tale?" Mrs. Ruth was again thrown into a fit of abstraction; and the pain continuing to subside, she left the room and resumed her seat in the corner, trying to recall the remarks she had made about her husband's health.

"You was asking me, Frank, what or how your father feels about these matters, and I was a going to tell you, when that plaguy thing came on. You see, Frank, it aint no trifling thing to be a rich man. By that I mean, a man that has made his money and of course wants to keep it. I know some folks think it would be a nice thing to be rich; and that they would do this thing, and wouldn't do that, and all that; and may be, if they had it all given to them at once, they might make a great fuss and turn things all heels uppermost. But generally, when a man makes money as your father has, it is by beginning right, and rolling and rolling it along, until the ball gets bigger and

bigger; and the bigger it grows, the more troublesome it is to roll it over. And, as to feelings, they must keep one side, and the least said about them the better. They must get out of the way while a man is making money; and they might as well keep out of the way after he has made it. They can't stop the regular jog of business, and they hadn't ought to."

All this reasoning on the part of his uncle might, for all Frank knew, be very correct; but as it opened no way by which that deliverance should be effected, upon which his heart was set, his countenance was even more dejected than when he first came in; and he was upon the point of taking his leave, when the kind heart of his uncle at once anticipated his feelings.

"All this, I suppose you would say, Frank, is not a going to get that old sinner Apthorpe out of jail; nor them children a place to put their heads in. Well! well! we must see to that! But I tell you, Frank, it will not do for you, my boy, to be known as meddling with this matter. For if it should turn out that Apthorpe has been put into jail by your father's orders, it would be as much as all your future prospects are worth to have him know that you had raised your finger to get him out. And it won't do for me either; although I care no more for his money than I do for so many jack-stones. It's nothin' but a curse and a bother to have more than a man wants. But, as I was saying, leave this to me; I know a man that can manage the thing to a T, and do you go home, my good fellow, and keep as mum as you can."

Frank arose and grasped the hand of his kind-hearted kinsman:—

"And you will go soon, uncle?"

"I am going this very minute; we'll have him out to-night, or by to-morrow morning at the farthest. But I warn you again, Frank; let no one know that you have had any finger in the pie."

Frank had not, indeed, anticipated what might be the result to himself, nor had he seemed to care; but the serious manner in which his uncle addressed the last sentence to him, caused him to color a little.

On his return, he met his parent just at the point where

the roads crossed, which led to the dwelling of the Stanley's and to his own home. Mr. Kemble said nothing in particular, but his glance at the horse which Frank rode, was full of meaning.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN a neat cottage, which was situated on a by-road, not far from the residence of William Kemble, there lived a little old man, who had removed from the bustle of active life in the city. He spent his time in the cultivation of a small garden spot, and in occasional calls upon a very few of the inhabitants of the town, and beside his lonely fire with a volume of select literature. He was a man of few words, and those not always of the most gentle kind; so much so, that many thought him morose, and from the seclusion which he seemed to court, he was looked upon by a large part of the inhabitants as a misanthrope. He, however, troubled nobody. He interfered with no local matters, circulated no slanders; took no active part in politics, and minded strictly his own business. His family was small, consisting of himself and an old negro woman who kept his house, and a large watch-dog that always slept at the door of his bed-room. He was not what would have been called a charitable man, for he had a great antipathy to beggars; and was never known to give even a dinner to any of the sorrowful wanderers who, travelling the weary paths of life, depend upon the benevolence of their species for their daily supply. Nor was he ever known to give a cent to any of the common calls which the members of a community are subject to, in a world where misfortune in so many forms is ready to lay a ruthless hand on erring man.

And yet there had been instances when persons who, being too proud to ask assistance, were about to suffer from some turn in their affairs, which either carelessness or miscalculation had brought about, and were ready to be involved in hopeless destruction. When all idea of help

from others had vanished, most unexpectedly had this old man called in upon them, calmly and kindly he had inquired into their affairs, and then, with few words, as if by magic, had provided all the assistance needed; disappointing those who were watching for spoil, and filling the heart of the sufferer with the most thrilling joy. And then, when the tear of gratitude would be trembling in the eye, and the tongue laboring to utter the feelings of the heart, he would clasp the hand, and in trembling tones, that told of the deep and holy sympathy within, bid them to give their thanks where they were truly due.

"Thank God! not me! I am only gratifying my feelings! you have struggled long against the evils from which you are now delivered; you have never solicited help, and you never would, had ruin crushed you, and scattered your property among the miscreants who have been watching for their prey! Thank God, sir; he is the true friend."

Some few instances like this had occurred in a course of years, not known to the multitude, nor, perhaps, in some cases to any but the noble heart that thus satisfied its heavenly beatings, and the happy recipient of his timely aid.

When Frank Kemble left the house of his uncle, the latter lost no time in getting ready to fulfil the promise he had made to his excited nephew.

All thoughts of "his turns" seemed to have vanished; and the agility with which he sprang into his yellow wagon, and the brisk gait he drove towards the village, not only manifested an earnestness in his errand, but an ability to attend to business which was quite at variance with the aspect of his condition an hour before.

Few visitors ever troubled the cottage of Jeremiah Talbot; but among these few, perhaps as acceptable a guest as any, was Mr. Joseph Kemble. Not because he happened to be a brother to the rich man of the place; but there was an independence and simplicity of manners, an off-hand, open, and sometimes rather plain way, which just suited the fancy of the recluse. He did not, however, when he saw the well-known establishment drive up, make the least change in the posture of his affairs. He kept his seat, and even suffered his legs, which were hoisted upon a low backless chair, to retain their horizontal position.

"With the old book, ha, neighbor! Aint you read it through yet? or do you keep going over it like goody Blanchard does with her Bible?"

"Take a seat, sir! take a seat! help yourself!"

"That, I suppose, I shall have to do, if I'm helped at all," said the visitor, at the same time taking a chair, and as he sat down, he commenced rubbing his leg. Mr. Jeremiah laid his book upon his lap and pushed his spectacles high up on his foretop, and fastened his eye for a moment in a very quizzical manner upon the operations of Mr. Kemble.

"What ails your legs?"

"What ails yours?"

"I'm resting them; I've been taking a long walk."

"Well! I'm resting mine; and besides, rubbing I find good for the rheumatiz."

"Rheumatism!"

"Yes, rheumatiz!—you may turn up your nose at it, neighbor, but if it ever gits hold of that dry carcass o' yours, you'll twist that sour face worse than ever I've seen it yet."

"Eat less meat; drink less cider; take long walks, and work off some of that useless flesh. You are too big and clumsy; go run into debt, get yourself into trouble, and then you won't mind such a trifle as a little rheumatism."

"A little rheumatism! I should like to see you took once! but your poor little body hasn't got enough to it to have any ailments. But just put up your book, and put down your legs, and turn round and look at a man, for I want to talk with you about a little business."

Mr. Jeremiah at once arose, and placing his chair immediately in front of his visitor, sat very erect, and looked sharply at him.

"I've come a begging."

"You have come to the wrong shop!"

"But I don't want any thing to eat; they say you never give away any victuals!"

"Nor any thing else!"

"That is true, and it aint true; I believe you never give when you are asked."

"How do *you* know?"

"I don't know so much about it as some others, perhaps. But, probably, that good man, Crumby, could tell something about it; and perhaps the widow Brown could tell something about it. But all this aint to the point. I have come over to see you, as a man of feeling, and with some little amount of common sense."

"Then you have got into the wrong place!"

"A friend of mine is in a little trouble, and you must help him."

"I shan't do it!"

"It is no charity case; that is, it would be charity thrown away, and yet not altogether; for children will love their parents, and must suffer when they do; and if the heart of a poor, inoffensive girl, who would pour a blessing into every bosom in the wide world, if she could, might be saved from bitter agony, by just taking her good-for-nothing father out of the hands of old Twineall and the sheriff, it might be called a charity; although the old heathen himself might only curse you for it."

"What girl? what heathen? Who are you talking about?"

And Mr. Jeremiah placed one hand on each knee, and looked more intently at his visitor. While the latter proceeded, as correctly as he could, to delineate the scenes which had occurred at Colonel Apthorpe's, and the reasons why it would not answer for either himself or Frank to be known as doing any thing in the matter.

"And you want me to put my head into the hornet's nest."

"Just so! you've had it there afore now."

"Yes, I have, neighbor; and am by no means afraid to put it there again! It is of but little consequence to me who is pleased or displeased. But you know it is out of my common course to meddle with such an affair as this. Although, if you say it is best, it shall be done neighbor Kemble; just so *you* shan't have it to say that I *never* oblige."

"That is coming to the point. I knew before that your heart was good enough; though your head is thought to be wrong. It seems to me, neighbor Talbot, it would be a cheap way to get the good opinion of your fellow men, once

in a while, just to put your name down with the rest when they are about giving a lift to some poor devil; it wouldn't cost you but a dollar or two; and yet I know in some sly way you'll put down your thousands, and then, the next minute, turn away a poor beggar, for whom I know your heart is sorry."

"You are a pretty plain spoken man when you have a mind to be; and because I believe you are an honest one, and a true friend, I will just tell you how I feel about these things. I don't like beggars, neighbor, either of high or low degree. They exhibit poor human nature in such a debased and spiritless form, that my mind revolts from them as it does from a hideous reptile; and, moreover, the world is so full of that benevolence which is ever ready to aid those who go about with their whining, pitiful stories, that there is no danger that they will ever suffer. But those who truly need our aid are your unknown sufferers; your quiet, retiring, sensitive spirits, who struggle along under their heavy burden, keeping up before their own family a face of cheer; manfully breasting their calamities; honestly owning every responsibility, and bearing within their own aching bosoms the bitter trial which is accumulating its strength, and approaching nearer and nearer every hour." The noble spirit of Jeremiah Talbot was now kindling with his subject; his eye sparkled, and a flush spread over the fairer portions of his face. "And then to have the satisfaction of going in a private way and alone with the struggling man; inquire into his difficulties, and lay down before him the means by which he can throw off his burdens, meet his responsibilities, and stand upon his feet like a true and honest man. If there's a joy on earth, it is that, neighbor Kemble! it is that! Some few pictures I have before me, neighbor, not in oil colors. They cannot be painted by the art of man. The heart's outpourings, as I have witnessed them, can never be spread upon the canvas. But they make an impression on the heart that will never wear away."

Mr. Joseph Kemble looked up at the animated countenance of his companion.

"It's a great pity there aint more of your way of thinking."

"I could show them, neighbor, how to fill their hearts

with the purest happiness, by means of that very gold and silver which is now only a plague and curse to them. But what are you doing with your leg?"

"Sometimes, when *I'm took*, by holding on tight it kind o' stops it."

"How took? You aint afraid of your legs running away, are you?"

"No! but I'm afraid of its running down to my toe. When it gets there I'm done for. But I believe it's going off; only don't get yourself worked up so any more; it works me up too. And then I want you to go right off and finish up this business. You shall have all the money again; only get that old sinner out of jail and send him home. The other part of the business I've told you about; the getting that house for them we can attend to afterwards."

"Well! well! neighbor Kemble, as I said before, just to stop your tongue I'll do it."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Do, Janette, my dear Janette, talk to me again as you did before I went to sleep;" and Emily Apthorpe looked up at the sweet girl who was leaning over her and parting the hair from off her pale forehead. The shock which her system had received from the violent excitement into which she had been thrown was more than it could bear. With a naturally delicate frame and a mind exquisitely sensitive, the scenes of trial through which she had been called to pass, in the loss of her mother, in the ruin of her father's affairs, and the wretched state of mind induced by his calamities,—and in that crowning ordeal, when he was torn from her arms by the officer of justice, overpowered her. She never rose from that bed on which Frank laid her, where, in her helplessness he bore her in his arms, from the wagon in which he and Alfred Stanley had brought her back. For a while her reason had wandered, but the soothing attention of those ministering angels, Sarah and Janette Stanley,

had by degrees alleviated the excitement, and her spirit calmly turned away from earth, to the anticipation of that coming world, for which alone she appeared to have any interest. Her father had been released, but he came back to her bedside not as a comforter.

He had delayed too long in life that sympathy for which her spirit pined. He could not now undo the work of years; nor, when his poor broken-hearted child lay panting in the weakness of dissolving nature, pour into her soul those feelings which a loving heart, even in the agonies of death, might clasp and almost bear with it to the unseen world. He had been by her bedside; he had looked upon her pale and wasted features. But it was only a wild and silent gaze. There were no tender epithets; no soothing reminiscences—no lulling of her spirit by tones that oft, in other days, had hushed her childish griefs, and calmed her fears. These he had not given—he could not do it now.

He loved her; ah how ardently! What death would he not suffer, if by that he could bring back the flush of health upon her cheek. In hopeless agony he looked upon her,—and all his past life was written there. He saw it all; and, like a burning fire within, each token of that which had been, harrowed up his soul. To that which was to be he dared not look. 'Twas darkness—drear, deep darkness; and no light of hope threw a gleam upon it.

Upward, too, he cast no wishful glance. Proudly had he thought to do his work on earth without a God. And now in his utmost need,—a helpless outcast,—he hangs his head in gloom and sadness; a warning monument to every eye.

Emily had said some few words to let him know that she was done with earth, and wanted not to stay. She had tried to make him feel that God was good and full of mercy, and had power to change the evils which surrounded him into messengers of love. But he only looked at her as one that mocked his misery. And when he turned away and left the room, she seemed to feel as though a dark shadow had been taken from her sight.

From a sweet sleep she had awakened, and Janette was beside her, when she made the request with which this chapter commenced.

"I have had sweet dreams, Janette, such as I never had before."

"Has your sleep refreshed you, Emily?"

"I don't know; I don't think much about that. It will not be any consequence, Janette, about my sleep. I feel there will be a long rest for me; a long, long sleep. But I have been thinking of the beautiful things you read to me. 'As Jesus slept and rose again, those who sleep in Jesus will he bring with him.' Oh! why was this never told to me before! I suppose it has been; but I have not thought of it. My life is to be a short one;—it has been a very dark one."

"Perhaps it will be brighter from this time, dear Emily."

"Yes, it will be! I feel that it will be! but not here. dear Janette! I don't wish it to be here! I want to be where I can see Him 'face to face,' only Him! my Saviour! Oh, I feel that it will be a great deal better to be there! Will you read to me again the chapter you read last night?"

And Janette took the Bible, and turned to the 15th chapter of Corinthians. It was with a very trembling tone that she read; for she was deeply affected. The havoc of affliction was becoming more and more manifest, and the poor sufferer was rapidly going, as she herself had said, to her long, long sleep. Short was the contest between life and death; and very soon the spirit of Emily Apthorpe passed away, and left this troubled world behind her.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was just at the edge of evening, not fully dark, and yet into such obscurity was every object thrown, that nothing could be distinctly seen further than a few rods.

Nicoll Kelly was approaching his cottage, with some violent anticipations in reference to the big pot and its contents. No light was to be seen from within; for the old

lady had gone before nightfall over to the desolate mansion of Colonel Apthorpe, expecting to spend the night there, in company with another neighbor, that a decent watch might be kept; although the remains which still lay there, had that afternoon been placed within the narrow inclosure, and in full preparation for the interment, which was appointed at an early hour the next morning.

As Nicoll opened the gate, he was not a little startled at seeing what he supposed was a man, seated on the doorstep. On common occasions he would have thought nothing of such an occurrence. For it was often the case that wayfarers called in to get a bowl of the old lady's porridge. They felt more free to stop there than at the houses of the wealthy. But Nicoll felt, as he afterwards said, "rather scary that night, and easy flustered."

He paused, and holding the opened gate in his hand, looked with one eye rather sharply, in order to ascertain the character of the person, or thing, he hardly knew which. He was, however, not long in doubt; for in a moment more, a man rose hastily up, and walked with a hurried step straight towards him.

"Nicoll Kelly!"

"By dad! Colonel; but you shouldn't come upon a man so unawares. I might have given you an unlucky blow."

"Nicoll Kelly! I want you! I want you, now! You must go with me!"

Nicoll had retained that respect for the Colonel which all others seemed to have lost; it was not so much, probably, for his own sake, as on account of the wife and children; for them he ever felt bound to give his service at all times. But some reasons were operating upon the mind of Nicoll just then, that made such a hasty summons not quite agreeable. In the first place, he had not eaten his supper; and besides that, ever since his adventure in the woods, he felt particularly shy of night walks with such company.

"I want you, I say, Nicoll Kelly, to go with me,—to go with me *now*!"

The tones of the Colonel's voice were peculiarly sharp, and his appearance, so far as Nicoll could take cognizance of it, not very composed; he looked wild and haggard.

"Come in, Colonel, and sit down, and we'll talk about it a little."

Nicoll was very anxious to get a light, and therefore began to hitch towards the house; the Colonel at once seized his arm.

"I can't go in! I cannot wait! we must go! there is no time to lose!"

"I tell you what, neighbor, I've pulled on the old strap, and tightened things to the last hole. It's time a man had something in him. I can stand 'siderable, but when it has gone so far, there's got to be a new supply."

"I *want* you, Nicoll Kelly! I want you *now*! If you care for the living or the dead, come with me!"

His voice, as he uttered these words, began to ascend higher and higher, and his whole frame shook with excitement. Nicoll, fearing a recurrence of the scene in the woods, hungry as he was, instantly followed him through the gate, merely muttering as he closed it behind him,—

"By dad!"

The Colonel walked rapidly, taking the little path through the woods, which was the shortest cut to his former house. Occasionally he turned his head, to see if his aid was near at hand. Nicoll was not in the best of humors, and if his features could have been distinctly noticed, they would have presented a sour combination. However, he hurried along, taking prodigious jerks, they could hardly be called steps, and kept at just about such a distance, near enough to be of service to the Colonel in an emergency, and far enough off to put things in a state of defence if there should be need for it.

As they ascended the steps which led into the house, the Colonel not only used great caution himself, but laying his hand on Nicoll, enjoined him in a low and solemn tone, "to tread softly." It was not a very easy thing for Nicoll to do that; but he followed the Colonel with as little disturbance as possible; although when his heavy step came down on a plank that had become somewhat loosened by age, there was more or less of a creak.

The room into which he was led was in front, and the entrance to it close by the outer door. A lamp was burning upon the hearth, but it emitted only a feeble light

through the large apartment, barely sufficient to allow objects within the room to be visible. Nicoll observed at once the state of things. He cast his eye upon the dark-colored coffin that stood near the centre of the room upon a low table, and then instinctively turned his sight away. It was something he never liked to look at.

Without saying a word, and stepping with the greatest care, the Colonel took hold of the handle at its foot, and motioned to Nicoll to do the same at its head. Nicoll was about to hesitate, but the wild and desperate air, the pale and fearful look of this father, grasping with more than mortal energy the sad burden, at once broke his irresolution; he did as he was ordered, and in silence they, together, lifted the coffin and bore it from the house. The wretched father led the way, and urged his course towards the woods with frantic haste. In a short time they came to an opening on the edge of the forest, where the green turf of the meadows ran close to the very roots of its largest trees. To the infinite surprise of Nicoll, a lantern threw its feeble light from beneath a little heap of brush; and as they halted, the Colonel motioned to him to rest their burden on the grass. With the utmost gentleness, as though a mother was laying her sleeping babe in its bed, the father lowered the end of the coffin which he held to the ground, and Nicoll, but too glad to release his hold, did likewise.

The lantern was immediately taken from its covert, and a few feet from where the coffin rested on the cold ground, a spade was standing, at the head of what was evidently the commencement of a grave. The turf had been carefully removed and was piled up beside it, and only a few shovels full of loose earth had been thrown out. Nicoll, with all his strength and manly courage in other matters, was like many of his class, fearfully under the power of superstition. He had walked fast, to be sure, and the burden for such a distance was not a very trifling one, yet nothing more than he could have carried in his own arms. But the perspiration was streaming down his face, and his knees fairly trembled under him.

"Dig it deep!" said the Colonel, handing him the spade.

Nicoll ground his jaws together and looked fiercely at his companion. He almost felt like levelling him to the earth, and flying off for help to some beings more, as he thought, in the shape of humanity. But, grasping the spade, he went to work with the energy of a desperate man. He had never done such a thing in his life before. Money would have been no temptation to him; starvation itself he would have preferred; but he was in a fearful dilemma, and there was no way now but to do what was ordered as speedily as possible. The task was accomplished, and no sooner had he raised himself to the earth than the maniac, for he now looked like such, drew from his pocket a cord. He seemed to have forgotten nothing; and, passing one end to Nicoll, it was at once run through the handles, and then slowly and reverently the sacred deposit was settled into its long resting-place. Awhile the father bent over the open grave, resting on his hands and knees. His long thin locks fell down over his emaciated and sorrow-stricken face, and deep groans burst forth like the heavy and hollow muttering of the distant thunder. Then raising his body, while still bending upon his knees, he smote his breast with fearful violence. The lantern stood beside the grave, and its pale light, as it fell upon his countenance, displayed the fierce passions that were raging within. What thoughts, during that brief moment, worked within that bosom, it would do us no good to know! Remorse has teachings which can only be understood by those who feel its power! He arose and wiped off the big drops that had gathered upon his brow, and looking wildly at Nicoll,—

"Fill it up! fill it up, quick!"

And as the earth fell heavy upon the coffin-lid, deep groans again broke forth; again he smote his breast, and sobbed aloud. The grave was filled, the turf replaced, and some brush scattered over it; and the deed was done. A moment the wretched man stood beside the charmed spot, and looked wildly down upon it, and then, with a hurried manner, seized the lantern, and holding it before the face of Nicoll,—

"I've buried her! I've buried her out of *their* sight, and without *their* aid! And now follow me!"

Nicoll did so very willingly, for the path by which they

returned led immediately into that which would take him to his own cottage ; and thither he was determined to bend his steps, without any further let or hindrance by human beings. But no sooner did they get to the point where Nicoll resolved that they should separate, than Apthorpe again addressed him.

"Nicoll Kelly ! Nicoll Kelly ! this way !—there's one job more !"

Nicoll had lost his patience.

"I'm going *home* !" and he brought his teeth to with a sharp crack, turned short round, gave one of his dogs a kick that had got into his way, and then tramped it along at a rapid rate.

Never had Nicoll crossed the "Slington," when the path seemed so very long and the place so lonely. Once or twice he tried to whistle, but his mind was in such a state that even that familiar habit failed to calm the troubled waters. He made all the noise he could, however, by striking his staff hard upon the ground, and occasionally speaking to his dogs. It would have been extremely pleasant, as he came into the open road, to have seen the light, as usual, twinkling in his cottage. Darkness rested there, as on every thing else. His first business, on entering the house, was to lay hold of the tinder-box ; but to his great joy, just as he was preparing to strike out a spark, a faint gleam from among the ashes assured him that the fire was not quite extinguished. He immediately went to the fireplace, and was stooping over to put the decayed brands, which had fallen into the corners, upon the few live coals that the ashes had cherished, when the "pups" made a rush for the andirons, and Nicoll saved himself by a dexterous grasp upon one end of the back-log. It was idle to complain ; but when he heard the spiteful salutations which were going on in quick succession from the other side of the little room, he did vow, "that if he ever got a light he'd put an end to all such troubles, once for all."

But a voice, only a few feet from him, at once upset all his resolutions, and himself into the bargain.

"Nicoll Kelly !"

Nicoll did not speak ;—he did not stir ;—his knees dropped upon the hearth, as he was stooping over to collect

the embers, and with the most perfect astonishment, to give no other name to the feeling, he kept his head still ; not thinking it worth while even to breathe.

"Nicoll Kelly ! I want you !"

Had not the fire, of its own accord, just then sent forth a little flickering flame, it would have been some time before any objects would have been visible in the room. Feeble as the light was, however, it was better to Nicoll than total darkness, with that low sharp voice sounding in his ears, associated as it then was with the gloomy scenes through which he had just passed. A little encouraged, he turned his head, by a very slow and measured movement, until he could distinctly see a few feet behind him, the tall form and ghastly visage of the wretched Apthorpe. More and more assured, as the light increased, he gradually rose to his feet, and fairly faced round.

"By dad !"

He said nothing more ; for he was so worked up by the very unpleasant start he had just received, and his wrath at seeing the Colonel again so near to him, that it was not the most easy thing for him to get out what might express, at the time, his true feelings.

"Nicoll Kelly ! We've buried the dead, and now you must help me to bury the living !"

Nicoll moved his jaws, grinding them hard together, and, shutting one eye, fixed the other sternly upon the speaker,—

"Bury the living !!"

"Yes ; bury the living !" and as he spoke, he moved a step or two nearer to Nicoll.

"I have put my dead away without their help, and now you must aid me in putting myself and my boy where no human eye can rest upon us !"

Nicoll chewed hard for a moment, and then shaking his head very significantly as he spoke,—

"I tell you what, Colonel, I've done for you this night what no mortal man has ever got me to do before ; and I have done it, too, when there was no more in me than what is in an empty barrel. But as to helpin' you in any sich work as you're a talkin' on now, I aint not never a goin' to touch it."

The fire now burned up quite briskly, and Nicoll soon added the light of the candle to give all the cheer he could to things; and then went regularly to work to lay in the supplies. Taking the long ladle, he gave the contents of the big pot a stir or two; and then getting a pan of milk and two bowls, he placed them upon the little table which he had drawn near the fire. He then took out a plentiful supply into each bowl, adding a fair proportion of milk, and pushed one of the vessels towards one end of the table where stood an empty chair; and taking the other on his lap, began to put its contents out of sight with an expedition that was truly astonishing.

"There's a cheer, neighbor; and that's the stuff. You may not be used to it, but it's jinuine good; sit down, neighbor, and don't be afeered."

Seeing, probably, that there was little chance of his obtaining any service from Nicoll for the present, and perhaps reminded by the sight of food, of the cravings of nature, of which he had not before been conscious, the poor sufferer sat down and began with greediness to partake of the homely fare. Nicoll had got well nigh through the second bowl, when placing it for a moment on the table, and loosening a leather strap, which having been drawn, as he said, to the last hole, was getting rather tight,—

"It fills up as it goes, neighbor; there aint nothing like it, as I take it, for a hungry man!"

His companion made no reply, and without any objection, suffered Nicoll to replenish the bowl which he had emptied.

"An empty stomach aint no good company, as I take it, neighbor; it hurts a man's thoughts, and fills him with whimsies. There's plenty on it, neighbor. Eat till you're satisfied, and don't be afeered."

Nicoll had a strong hope that the supper would drive away the strange and unaccountable notions of his companion. For, although he knew him always to have been addicted to strange ways; yet the scene through which he had just passed in the woods, and the horrible proposition, as he understood it, in reference to living subjects, had brought him to the conclusion that the Colonel was "out of his head;" and the best cure that he knew of, was to put

something hearty and savory into the stomach. He, therefore, felt greatly encouraged when he saw the second bowl rapidly vanishing, and had no doubt that a few more would hush all disturbances to rest. As to his own necessities, he was "seeing to them" in a very direct manner. The kettle was immediately before him, blubbering away over the fire, and the pan of milk behind him, and having strong faith in the composition, he was not at all bashful in replenishing from both sources. How long it would have been before he had in this way "filled up," to use his own expressive phrase, it would have been difficult for a spectator to say; for it slipped off so easily, and the relish seemed in nowise diminishing by the quantity consumed. But footsteps were heard approaching; and as Nicoll cast his eye without, he saw the glimmer of a lantern, and in an instant more the door was opened and Aunt Polly hurried into the room. In one hand she carried a light, and by the other she held the boy Carlos, looking very wild and pale. She had walked very fast, for she was quite out of breath, and the unusual stare in her eyes, together with the whole aspect of her countenance, denoted very decidedly a disturbed state of mind.

"Oh, the massys! Nicoll." This exclamation escaped from her as she was in the little passage between the outer and inner door, the latter of which was open. What further she was about to say was suddenly checked, as her eye fell upon the person of Colonel Apthorpe, with his long hair hanging down over his face, as his head was bent over the bowl which Nicoll had just replenished. As the Colonel turned his head and saw his son,—at first a scowl gathered upon his brow; but the next moment he rose from his seat, and drawing his child towards him, took him between his knees and commenced smoothing his dark glossy hair with his hand;—parting it to each side of his forehead, while his eye was fixed intently upon him. Occasionally a tear would start and steal down his cheek; and sighs, deep, heavy sighs, would come forth from his heaving chest. The old lady was so confounded by the unexpected sight, that she either forgot the subject most upon her mind, or dared not to mention it; while Nicoll lost no time in preparing a bowl of his panacea, and placing it in the boy's hand.

"It will warm your stomach, boy, and kind a courage you up! it's kept me alive afore now!"

"You found you had no more work to do, I suppose, Mrs. Kelly?"

"Anan!" This was a way of answering common to persons of Mrs. Kelly's class, when not exactly comprehending a question, or not quite ready with an answer.

"I suppose you found there was no need for any further watching. Poor thing! we have put her to rest, Mrs. Kelly—they need not trouble themselves to-morrow—we have buried her; it is all over, Carlos." The boy had put down his head and hidden his face in his hands. "And now, I and my boy will soon be out of their way; we will go where they will be no longer troubled with us."

"Colonel, take another bowl; it's good and hot yet!"

"Nicoll Kelly, you have done a good service for me to-night, and I will do as much for you when you want it." Nicoll scratched his head, and shut up his eye, but said nothing. "And when I die I want you, Nicoll, to do the same by me as we have done by her;—do you hear me, Nicoll?"

"You had better take another bowl, neighbor; you will sleep all the better for it!"

"I have no time to sleep; I have a long journey to take this night; but I want your help, Nicoll Kelly. It is the last thing you will have to do for an old neighbor."

"By dad! Colonel; I've tramped a pretty good round to-day, besides some other things not worth while saying any thing about. But as to making any more journeys to-night,—without it was a case of life and death,—it can't be done, no how."

"If the Colonel," and the old lady spoke in a very weak and trembling voice, "would only be content to stop with us to-night, we will accommodate him in our best manner, and in the mornin' Nicoll will do what he can to sarve you, that I know." And as she said this she gave a slight hunch to Nicoll, near whom she was sitting.

"By daylight, Colonel, I'll do *most* any thing to sarve a neighbor; and, as Granny says, we'll do our best, an you'll stay with us to-night."

"Stay, Pa! do stay!" and the boy put his hand on his father's shoulder; "and to-morrow we will go to that place."

"Yes! to-morrow, Carlos! we will go where none that

we have ever known will come near us; if they do—" and the scowl which gathered upon his brow told but too plainly what that "if" implied. "I've disappointed them for once. How they would have gathered about us to-morrow, with their long faces, and their low whispers, and taking their hats off as I passed along behind the coffin of my child, with their eyes gaping at me as I stood over the grave, to see how I would bear it; and then, when they had paraded me back to the house which they have stripped of every thing, and turned me out of, they would have driven off merrily to their homes, and cared no more whether I or mine had a roof to cover us, or a crust to eat, than they would for the dog which they kick from the door."

Nicoll had got through with the bowl and was just about to light his pipe, when the last paragraph of the Colonel's grated upon his ear. He raised himself up, and putting one hand on the mantel-shelf, held the pipe which he had filled in the other.

"Colonel! neighbor Apthorpe!" and Nicoll stretched out his hand, pipe and all, "some of what you say may be true, or it mayn't. I can't be 'countable for all folks say, or do. Human nature is just what it is. There's some curoosity at funerals, like as not. They aint places that I often visit *voluntaarily*. Some folks like to go to them,—every one to their notions. All well and good. And then again you say about your things being took, and all that. It's all hard, and them that has done wrong—if so be they have—will have a heavy tussle one of these days. But that last I can't agree to *no how*, Colonel!" and Nicoll brought down his hand with such violence that a piece of the pipe-stem went jingling on the hearth. "There is them," and Nicoll's hand went up again, "and Granny here knows who they be too;"—Granny ran over a few words in a very low tone,—she was mortally afraid of the Colonel, and ever had been; "who could take the victuals out of their own mouths to give to you and your children. Yes! there's some; God bless 'em! that I've seen with the tears a running down like babies, while they was filling my arms full of the best they had!" Here Nicoll stopped; he would have been glad to have told him some things, which upon a second thought he concluded not to. He did not know how the Colonel might

take it. "No! no! Colonel! as we make our bed, so we must lay in it."

The old lady was very much alarmed to hear Nicoll repeating one of her proverbs; although it would have been just what she would have said herself, if she had dared. Whether the meaning conveyed by it touched the Colonel, or whether he began to feel the need of rest, he arose from his seat, and in a quick and not very complaisant manner asked, "whether the bed they spoke of was ready?"

The old lady at once led them into a room, small indeed,—very small,—but clean and decent; and curtsying good night, came back with speed and took her seat by Nicoll.

"Do tell, Nicoll, what has been the to-do about this thing! There was I and Aunt Polly Bishop, a setting up and taking a drop of tea, and sich like; and then when we'd done, says I, 'Aunt Polly, hadn't we better go and take a look in and see that all is right?' So she takes the candle, and I goes ahead. You know I aint afeered, Nicoll, about sich things.

"Them as have a conscience clear,
The dead nor living needn't fear."

"That's as you say, Granny; all don't feel alike."

"Hold up the light, Polly," says I; "hold up the light, for I don't see nothing." So she held up the light, and there was the table a standin' in the middle of the room, and the light a burning on the hearth; but the cops was gone. "The massys," says Aunt Polly, and "the massys," says I; but what to do we didn't know. So we looked round in every hole and corner of the room, and nothin' was to be seen; and then we goes in the entry, and we looks there; and then in the north room, and so clean up stairs to the garret, and clean down to the cellar. "The massys," says Aunt Polly, "I feel as if I should fly out of my skin. I can't stay here no longer. I've seen many things in my day, but I never seed a cops go off afore. I can't stay," says she, "and I won't." Says I, "Aunt Polly, it's kind a 'raculous; I don't think its safe bein' here." So I takes Carlos by the hand, and the lantern; and Aunt Polly, she run straight home with all her might. But do tell, Nicoll, if you know any thing about it; what's come on it?"

Nicoll puffed away so as to make quite a cloud of smoke around his head.

"I should have left, an I had been you, Granny, or Aunt Polly either; such things aint agreeable; no how."

"But what does he mean? Has he buried her?"

"I aint no sexton, nor pall-bearer, nor grave-digger, Granny; them is matters as I let alone. You had better take a bowl of the stuff; there's plenty on it left, and then go to bed; for there I'm a goin' as soon as this pipe is out. I've done more to-day an common. There, Granny, that crittur's at it again; she's had me in the fire onst to-night a ready,—she'll burn some on us up yet! see if she don't!"

As the old lady could get no satisfaction from Nicoll, she caught up the "spitter," and, taking a light, shuffled off to her little room; while Nicoll, taking down an old overcoat, threw it over his shoulders, and laid himself before the fire.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEN Frank Kemble saw that the flower he had loved was sinking into decay; when he saw that the sweet spirit, with which he had communed from childhood, was too far on the journey to its final home to be called back by earthly sympathies; he tore himself from a scene his feelings could not bear, and with his whole soul wrought up almost to frenzy, by instinct rather than will or inclination, sought his father's dwelling,—his own cheerless home.

The feelings of youth are often too strong for the curb of reason, even if reason should attempt to take the direction. Frank had, indeed, for a time, been somewhat calmed down by the prudence and moderation of his uncle. But it lasted only while the influence of his presence was upon him. It was enough for him to know that a lovely girl, whose noble, generous spirit was worth a prince's treasure,—was sinking into the arms of Death; a victim to a train of circumstances which his wealthy father, if not the instigator of, was, at least, clothed with power to restrain. Justice, ties

of kindred, or the necessary issues of our social condition, were nought to the excited mind of Frank, but cobwebs spun by theorists, and as easily swept away. What was property,—or right,—to the heart's warm love and deep emotion!

As Frank entered his father's office; he saw, at the first glance of his eye, that some unusual trial was agitating him; and perhaps his own mind was, just then, in a frame to be as well pleased with a frown as a smile. Mr. Kemble immediately left his desk, and with a pale and excited countenance approached his son.

"I thought, when some time since, you took occasion to interfere with my business, that I gave you to understand that I would allow no person whatever to presume upon such a liberty!"

The whole of the address was delivered in a low, husky voice, as though the speaker was exhausted by his passion. Frank flushed, partly through alarm, at the strange earnestness with which his father spoke.

"I am not conscious, father, of violating your injunctions!"

"You are not conscious, sir?"

"I am not, father!"

And Frank looked firmly at his excited parent, his own countenance glowing with emotion.

"Do you presume to tell me, to my face, that which is false! Have not I traced you through all the crooked way in which you have been contriving to thwart my plans? Do you attempt to deny that, through your instrumentality, that villain Apthorpe has been released from the jail, where he ought to lie and rot?"

"I have no intention, father, to deny that I have used my influence to deliver Colonel Apthorpe from a cruel and unnecessary imprisonment. But I had every reason to think that I was taking him from the clutches of the vilest scoundrel who pollutes our village. I have been well assured, by those who ought to know, that my father never could have done that deed."

Perhaps Frank could not have said any thing so truly cutting to the heart of his father. It was, indeed, an act perfectly foreign to all the previous course of William Kem-

ble. It was the first time he had ever allowed his passions to make use of that power, which as a moneyed man he wielded, to crush or torture a victim. He had been exacting to the last cent; so long as there was the least ability to pay, or the smallest amount of property to be seized. But his heart had comforted itself with the thought, that he had never made use of the torture, when the power to pay was evidently taken from his debtor. And he would now have given all *that debt* away if he could have blotted out this one act; for it was by his orders that Apthorpe was imprisoned, although Frank had been assured by many, that Peter Twineall was the true actor in that drama. The mind is never so sensitive to the charges of others, as when its own consciousness acknowledges the justness of the accusation.

"And who, sir, do you brand with such a title?"

"Peter Twineall; and I fear not to say it, father; he is an insinuating, crafty villain!"

The calm, cool, and determined tone in which Frank said this,—sealed his fate. The deep passions in his father's heart prevailed. Walking to his desk, he drew forth a roll of bills, and laid them on the table before his son.

"There, sir! these will keep you from starving for awhile. *I have done with you for ever!*"

He walked back to his desk, opened his account-book, and continued writing. Stunned as by a severe blow, the young man stood for a few moments, looking in a wild abstracted manner at his father, as though uncertain as to the true meaning of his last words. But the man of business wrote on,—and heeded not the solemn pleading of that silent look. And then Frank went into the house, and to his own room,—his no longer now. He took a few articles from his trunk, tied them into a small bundle, and without trusting himself to see the faithful old Alice, whose chair he heard rocking and creaking in the adjoining room, he again entered the office, where his father still retained his seat at his desk.

"Father! good-bye!" And Frank held out his hand.

Not a muscle of the stern man's countenance moved; nor did he pay the least regard to that outstretched hand. Alas! could some spirit from a better land have whispered

to his heart, and broken that dark and deadly spell, what throes of anguish might he have been spared! Calmly, coldly he wrote on.

"Father! I beg of you to hear me; to take my hand;—let us part in peace!"

He turned a leaf over in his book, numbered the page, and still wrote on.

"Good-bye, father! We shall, probably, *never meet again!*"

Awhile he held forth his hand, and looked with an agonizing, piercing gaze, upon that cold and immovable countenance. And then he turned and walked to the door, and the dark curtain dropped its heavy folds between them for ever!

When Mr. Kemble left his desk, and walked towards the table where his son had stood, a shock of surprise passed over him as his eye fell upon the roll of bills. Frank had not touched them. And there they lay, mute mementoes of the scene which had just passed. How the sight of these curling papers went to his heart; and as reason had begun to resume her sway,—how he looked upon them, and read the secret of every evil that had cursed his life! Money had been the idol of his heart. To hoard it, and count its rolling thousands, as they poured in year by year, had formed the chief pleasure of his life. And like the fiery vapor, whose path is marked by barrenness and death, so had this loathsome passion blasted, with its poisonous breath, all loves and hopes, and every joy the heart is wont to cherish. And what now can it bring to cheer his desolated life? What solace can it offer for the loneliness in which it has placed him? To and fro,—to and fro,—within his cold dark room, he walks; and there still lay that little roll of bills! He durst not touch them, for they seemed to him the price of blood. And then, the image of that noble son, standing with outstretched hand;—and that voice, trembling in its deep emotion,—"*Father! good-bye!*" Oh! how the billows heave within; and his agonizing spirit bursts forth in the bitter cry,—

"Oh, my son! my deeply injured son!"

And no sound comes back but the sighing wind that moans fitfully past;—the requiem of every earthly hope.

And then, again, the dark clouds gather upon his mind; and pride and passion unite their angry forces, and throw their deep shadows upon every better feeling, and deaden his almost penitent heart into cold and resolute forgetfulness.

CHAPTER XXI.

SOME weeks had passed since the scenes recorded in the last chapters; and all know what surprising changes take place by the intervention of only a few days; a few weeks, therefore, are quite long enough to overspread our moral and social horizon with a new aspect.

"There is something the matter, Alfred! I know there is! I know you feel bad at what I have told you about Charlie!" and Janette left the seat by her sister, and in a playful manner took up her foot-bench, and placing it beside her brother's knee, looked up into his face with a smile, while she leaned her arm upon him, in hope of clearing off a cloud that had evidently been resting on his brow all the evening. But Janette perceived that the expression of his countenance was rather more sad.

"It is no laughing matter, Janette; and I fear that Charlie has received more encouragement at home, in his plans, than I could have expected."

"Not from me, brother Alfred, I assure you," said Sarah, looking with much earnestness, and speaking in a quicker manner than she was accustomed to. Janette blushed a little, while she still looked up at her brother with the smile lingering on her beautiful face. "Perhaps," continued Sarah, "it is only an idea which has been put into his mind lately. I think we can persuade him to give it up."

"But that we must not do, Sarah. Charles is too easily influenced; and I am sure, as he now feels, he will not be happy again to go and work as we have hitherto done. The change in his feelings has been coming on for some time. I have noticed it ever since that unfortunate ride; for so I must call it. He has never been himself since then."

"I have always feared," said Sarah, "that the great price for which he sold his horse would, in the end, become a disadvantage; although I know, at the time, I felt rejoiced that such a sum of money was thrown into his hands."

"And the attentions of Mr. Kernachan to him have, I fear, been of no benefit. Calling for him so often to take a ride, and——"

"I know what you are going to say, Alfred;" and Janette had no smile upon her face now; "but I ought not to be blamed for that. I certainly have not encouraged Mr. Kernachan's attentions, and have, almost invariably, declined going when he has called for me to take a ride. And you know, brother Alph, I have been most of the time engaged with Emily Apthorpe!"

Alfred looked at Janette,—her bright eyes were glistening with the gentle moisture which told that her feelings were touched. He remembered how devoted had been her attentions to that suffering girl, and he knew how true her heart was to them all.

"No, Janette, I *don't* blame you! forgive me if I have seemed to! But how can I have Charlie go away! we have been so long together; we have so grown into each other's habits! Who shall I have to talk with during the long days of summer? and what will our little circle be worth in winter evenings, without Charlie to give life and interest to it? You both know my habits, and that it is not in me to make myself agreeable even to my sisters."

"Now, Alfred, you shall not talk so!" and Sarah arose and took his arm, for he was then walking the room. "We love Charlie! we all love him! his company is very dear to us! we shall miss him, I know we shall; but, dear Alfred, what should we do without *you*! You are our stay! our counsellor! our all, dear brother!" and Sarah burst into a flood of tears.

It was no common thing for Sarah to weep, and Alfred felt assured that the very depths of her soul had been touched. At once the spell which had been upon him was broken; and he resolved to stifle every selfish feeling, and meet the trial with a manly spirit.

The change which had taken place in the mind of Charles was brought about by circumstances, which had

been gradually exerting their influence for some weeks. The ride, as had been intimated by Alfred, was doubtless the first cause. The large sum of money,—large for him,—which had been thus suddenly thrown into his hands, had quickened his desire for more. Not, indeed, for its own sake, for his generosity prompted him to divide it with his brother and sisters, if they could have been induced to receive it. But it was obtained so easily, that it opened to his mind a new and readier way of gaining property, than he had hitherto followed. By one lucky hit, he had realized more than he and his brother could have done by many months of patient toil. And he looked back to the labors of the just ended season, with the comparatively small returns which might be expected from them, with feelings very nearly allied to contempt; and the prospect before him of the same moderate results for future years, with the same incessant toil, was repelling,—a slavery from which he shrank. He had also found it to be very agreeable to ride off with a sprightly, entertaining companion, behind a fleet horse, and with every thing in fine style. In his old farm dress he did not feel at ease; and he was glad of every opportunity to doff it. He felt of more consequence, more like a man, when in his best suit. His sisters, too, proud to see him appearing as well as the best, may, perhaps, have encouraged this feeling more than they were aware of. Their readiness to prepare every thing that he fancied; their unguarded expressions of delight, when they had put on the finishing touches of his dress; and all the *et ceteras*, too small in themselves to be particularized, of that influence which they whom we love are constantly exerting upon us, affected the mind of Charles, already biassed; and led him to wish for a pursuit in which he might appear every day in his best, or, at least, not in such rough and uncouth garments as he and Alfred put on when they went to their work.

Perhaps the most powerful influence of all, was the intimacy which he had formed with the young man, who has been introduced to us under the name of Kernachan. He was in nowise remarkable either for elegance of manner, or for beauty of person. But he had an easy way with him, which banished all restraint; and while he made himself

perfectly at home wherever he was, kept so far within the rule of good manners as to make his freedom rather agreeable than otherwise. He was fluent of speech, and of course from his residence at the centre of interest and excitement—one of our largest cities—it would have been very strange, indeed, if he had not acquired sufficient accomplishments to amuse and even fascinate a circle brought up in the seclusion of the country. Why he had taken such a fancy to Charles Astor, it might not be so easy to determine. Possibly it was the modest, unassuming, and kindly disposition of the latter; or it may have been that Charles might be made a means of introducing him to more fascinating company. Nevertheless he courted his acquaintance with much assiduity; almost every day Charles was invited by him to take a ride; and then he would return and spend the evening with the brothers and sisters. His familiar, free and easy way, did not altogether please Alfred; and yet his presence made the social circle so lively that he was fain to put away whatever he thought might be prejudice, and allowed himself for the most part to be pleased like the rest. But when the guest had departed, and his reflections were allowed their free play, there was invariably something that he could not approve. He did not like his freedom of manners, especially towards Janette, nor did it meet his views of propriety to have her throw off so much of maidenly restraint before one comparatively a stranger, and allow a freedom of speech which would have been scarcely meet for a near relative. And then there would occasionally be an idea thrown out, which, at the time, appeared harmless enough, but which, to Alfred's "sober second thought," had an aspect not at all pleasing. And yet he could really find nothing so very remiss, which he felt authorized to bring up as a charge either against the young man, or his brother and sisters, who appeared not only satisfied but almost delighted with his company. To Charles every thing seemed to be as it ought, and he saw in Richard Kernachan only a noble-hearted, generous fellow. So much confidence did he place in him as to unbosom to him all his feelings.

It required very little persuasion to bring Charles to the feeling that the country village was, upon the whole, rather a dull place,—well enough to spend a few weeks in,—but

affording no opportunity for a young man of energy to push his fortune in the world, especially if he had his own fortune to make. And it was very fascinating to Charles, as he rode by the side of his new friend, to listen to his exciting stories of the manner by which *he* had risen in a few years to be the managing person in a large establishment, with a fine salary, and many weeks allowed in the year for his own pleasure. And it was also a great desideratum to the mind of Charles to be situated where he could acquire that ease of manner, that readiness for conversation, and that power to make himself attractive, which he witnessed in the example daily before him in this young man.

Charles was somewhat stimulated in the feelings last expressed by the frequent contrasts which Janette, and sometimes even Sarah, would make between the social powers of young Kernachan and those of most young men in the village who visited there. "It was no trouble to entertain Mr. Kernachan; he could converse freely upon any subject; and the time passed unheeded. But the others were so slow of speech, and seemed to know so little beyond what they had learned at school, that it required a constant effort to prevent long and painful pauses in conversation."

With so many motives to urge him, it was not strange that Charles should have decided,—“that with the consent of his brother and sisters, he would relinquish the farm, and seek his fortune amid more congenial influences.” There were no secrets in this little family, and the very first idea which Charles entertained respecting a change for life was at once brought out before them all; and every new thought, in connection with the subject, which suggested itself, was exposed to those who were so deeply interested in his plans. And while nothing definite had hitherto been decided upon, yet it was very clear to his brother and sisters that his heart was fixed upon the adventure.

On the evening, however, of which we are now describing the scenes, it had been ascertained that Mr. Kernachan could introduce their brother to a firm of some standing in the city, and no doubts need be entertained that his influence in his favor would be effectual. Charles had not told them that he had determined upon going. But they knew enough of his views and feelings to satisfy themselves that

a reasonable prospect of a good situation had been only wanting to fix his decision, and such was now offered to him. It was this new phase in the circumstances of the case, that had caused the manifestation of feeling on the part of Alfred. He saw that a separation must take place; and the prospect had filled his mind with sadness. It was, however, but a momentary triumph of the selfish principle, and soon put down. The overflowing of Sarah's heart had brought him to himself, and after a short pause in the conversation, he opened in a new strain:—

"Well, girls, you must not say one word to Charlie of any of the feelings I have let out to-night! I am going to put on a cheerful face about it; and we must all do every thing to make him feel that, although he may wish to try a new situation, yet his home shall be kept open for him whenever he may desire to return!"

An interruption was now caused by the entrance of some persons from without. They proved to be young Kernachan and their brother. Alfred received the companion of his brother with more than usual civility; and Charles's bright smile and elastic spirits threw at once a charm over the circle, which, if it did not dispel every shade from the heart, made, for the time, a happy change in every countenance. After passing a few pleasant repartees with Janette, Mr. Kernachan took a seat by Sarah.

"I fear, Miss Stanley, that you are almost prepared to look at me with an evil eye, not only as a very idle fellow myself, but making a truant of your brother."

"Oh! not at all, sir! He seems a very willing truant. But he has worked hard through the season, and is certainly entitled to a play-spell."

"And I hope that the decision to which he has come as to a change of business, meets with the approbation of you all. I think, indeed, that no inducement would tempt him to leave unless he could be assured of that."

Sarah blushed, and was about to reply, when Charles stepped up and whispered a few sentences in her ear. She turned and looked at him with much surprise:—

"Not to-morrow, brother!"

"Mr. Kernachan says that he must go to-morrow!" and Charles looked towards him for a reply.

"Yes; to-morrow! I have received advices to-day, which will compel my immediate return. Believe me, I obey them most unwillingly; there are charms here which I feel it hard to break from. But when business calls, you know, pleasure must give up her claims."

As he uttered the few last sentences, he fixed his eye expressively on Janette, who, upon hearing the exclamation of her sister, had risen and was standing by her. She blushed; for there appeared so much meaning in the look, that it was impossible for her not to feel that he designed to connect her with the sentiment expressed.

Janette had certainly no feeling towards Kernachan that she would have cared to conceal from the whole world; and yet so sensitive is the female heart to the attentions of the sterner sex, so susceptible of the warmer emotions,—that it awakens at the least sign that its love is wanted. And let no gentle reader start at this plain insinuation. Examine your hearts, and if any of you have resisted as yet, even to that dubious period in life which has been assigned to the respectable society of old maids; yet as you cast your eye, or rather your thoughts, back through the flowery path of youth, how many times has your heart been set to beating, and your cheek been flushed, by attentions or expressions of emotion, which you never intended to reciprocate; examine yourselves, before you blame this lovely, unsophisticated child of Nature for manifesting emotion when an address was directed to her heart by one whom many would have been but too happy to accept as a lover. How much it is best to expose of this susceptibility, is another thing; and perhaps it might have saved some sad aching of the heart in more than one, could Janette have restrained the blush, and have been able to cover her emotions by a cold and indifferent demeanor.

After the announcement which had been made that Mr. Kernachan was to depart so soon, and as doubtless Charles had decided to go with him, it was not in the power of the brother and sisters so to conceal their feelings, that a stranger might not perceive the shade which had been thrown upon them. Kernachan had good sense enough to realize that his presence might be an intrusion upon a circle such as this, on the last evening they were to be to-

gether. He, therefore, as soon as he could with propriety, took his leave.

After the departure of their guest, as the girls were about to leave the room, in order to prepare for the morrow, Alfred requested them to remain a moment, as there was a little business matter which he wished might be attended to then; and taking from his pocket a small document, he laid it upon the table and said,—

"You know, I suppose, brother Charles, that as our laws are, a distinction is made in the relation we hold to each other?"

"How so?" and Charles, who asked the question, looked at his brother with marks of deep astonishment on every feature of his countenance; while the sisters, with their eyes still red with weeping, lifted up their heads and reiterated,—

"How so? What do you mean, Alfred?"

"I mean in reference to property. We have not all, in the eye of the law, an equal right to the property upon which we have been living. You know it has never been the subject of conversation between us; nor do I believe it has entered our thoughts. We have been as one. We are one. We have clung together in trouble. We have been happy together in prosperity. And sooner would I lie down and die than know that in either of us there exists a feeling that would separate for one moment the interest of one from another. But, as I have said, the laws make such a distinction in the right to property, that, as things have stood, in me alone has been vested the full title to this house and the land attached to it. Originally it belonged to my mother, and as no disposition was made of it by either her or our father, its legal ownership is in me, or rather I should say *was* in me."

"And why not, brother, in you still?" said Charles, looking at Alfred with much earnestness. "In whose name could it better be?"

"Sure enough!" said Sarah, "where could it so well be?"

"My dear brother and sisters, much as we love each other, we must not forget that we are no longer children. Charles and I, at least, have come to years that call us to make our own choice for life. It cannot be expected that

we shall always remain clustered in this pleasant home. We have labored together to retain it; you have all an equal right to it with me. And this paper, which lies by me on the table, is a conveyance of it in such a manner that we are all now joint owners of our common home."

"My dear, dear brother!" and Charles arose, and grasped his hand, looking at him with every feeling of his heart glistening on his fine countenance.

Sarah and Janette spoke not, but flinging themselves upon his neck, wept those silent tears, which true affection pours out on the bosom where it feels at home. The property they valued not. But the exhibition of his generous spirit;—this free and unwished for manifestation of disinterested love, was richer, dearer to their loving spirits than their tongues could express. Long and silently they remained thus clustered in each other's embrace;—drinking in such draughts of true fraternal love, as none can taste but those who, trampling on the baser thoughts which self, that hideous monster, raises in the heart, blend their whole souls in one pure flow, and lose their being in each other's welfare. And who that reads the gushing thoughts that flow forth from the countenance of that brother, who stands and grasps his hand, and in the silent tears those lovely girls are weeping on his neck—but feels that he is richly paid for his adventure? Wealth cannot buy true friendship. Its price is set too high; and none but those who, in the dawn of life, and while the early dew is fresh upon them, prepare their hearts by careful nurture of each nobler feeling, can ever, in this calculating world, know the pure bliss of an unselfish love.

The paper to which Alfred alluded was a deed, by which he had made his sisters and brother joint owners with himself. And to convince his brother that this had not been done by him with a view to lure him away from the plan which he had now in prospect, he showed it to them dated on the day he reached his twenty-first year.

It was in vain they remonstrated with him; so soon as the violence of their emotions had subsided—

"Let me just burn up this paper, Alfred, and put things as they were."

"It will do no good to burn it now, brother Charles; it

has been placed, as you see, upon record, and no consideration would tempt me to recall what I have done, even if I could; especially as you are about to leave us. You will feel that you are not cut off from us, but have still an equal interest in this dear old spot."

"Well!" said Janette, breaking away and wiping off the tears, while a bright smile played cheerily on her animated countenance; "I am going to set the table and have something to eat! What, between Charlie's going away, and Alfred's doings, I have been so worked up that I am as hungry as though I had not eaten all day."

And a happy social meal that was! and the play of lively feelings was not even disturbed by the thought of the morrow's partings!

The morrow had come, and old Bob, the good old whitey, was standing before the gate, harnessed to their best wagon, and ready to do his part in this sundering of family ties. The brothers and sisters had said all their parting words, and were walking down the little path to the front gate, when the faithful old Peter beckoned to Charles to come to him. Charles had not neglected to bid the old man farewell, and was not ashamed, as he wrung the hand of the faithful negro, to show that the feelings of childhood were yet fresh in his heart. Peter had not approved of the step he was taking. The world which surrounded Peter appeared so peaceful and happy, so full of every thing which ought to satisfy desire, that why his young master should wish to leave it was most strange to him. But Peter could not see that brighter circle beyond the pretty picture which his own mind enjoyed, and which played before the ardent gaze of the young man. Charles obeyed the summons, and as he came up the old servant grasped his hand with a warmth that could not be misunderstood. He had no more to say, so he looked into the face he had so long loved, and a tear trembled in his eye.

"God bless you, Charlie! God bless you!"

Not a word more was uttered—Charles dared not trust himself to speak. He walked towards the little group awaiting him, jumped into the wagon by the side of his brother, and the scene was at an end.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was not often that the yellow wagon of Mr. Joseph Kemble was seen at his brother's door; and, therefore, when old Alice looked out at the window and saw it drive up, she exclaimed:

"What can be the matter now? What can have brought Mr. Joseph here so early?"

Mr. William Kemble made no reply to this remark of Alice, but pushed back his chair from the breakfast-table, and stepping to the window, looked out to see whether any of the men were on hand to take charge of the horse. As he perceived that his brother had already placed the reins in the hand of one of them, he resumed his seat, while Alice quietly placed an extra plate and chair before it, on one side of the table, and as she resumed her place, the portly form of Mr. Joseph presented itself within the door.

"I thought I'd come right in without knocking! What! not done breakfast yet! But I forgot you are quality folks!"

"Sit down, brother! sit down! Alice has just put a plate there for you."

"I don't care to eat, for I've done breakfast an hour ago. But I'll sit down, for standing don't agree with me: it brings on my turns."

"What turns!" said Aunt Alice, looking alarmed, and Mr. William fixed his eye upon him as though he united in the question.

Mr. Kemble took the seat and adjusted himself in it, and then putting one hand upon the table, while with the other he performed some sly manipulations about the knee-joint, he looked very intently at a curiously carved silver coffee urn that occupied a conspicuous position immediately in front of Alice.

"Well! I don't know just what to call 'em,—but I'll be took sometimes,—and it most clean stops my breath."

"What! in your stomach!"

"No! no! not my stomach! Every thing is right there, I hope; it's the only well part about me."

"You look well, brother."

"So they say; but you ought to know by this time, that a man can look one way and feel another. However, my ailings aint where they can well be seen. It would be a strange thing if a man must show it in his face because he has a pain in his toe."

"In your toe! Mr. Kemble!"

"In your toe! brother!"

"Yes, in my toe! How you both look! did you never hear of such a thing afore?"

"Oh, yes, brother; but I thought I heard you say just now that it took your breath away sometimes."

"And why shouldn't it?"

As neither Aunt Alice nor Mr. William Kemble could say why it should not,—having had no experience that way,—no reply was made; and the conversation at once turned upon other subjects.

"And now, brother, since you have got through with your meal, if you can spare a little time, I should like to see you in your office."

Without any reply, Mr. William Kemble led the way thither.

"It's a kind of dark, gloomy hole you have got here;—it's enough to give a man the blues. But every one to his notion. I suppose my low ceiling and low windows, with the rose-bushes climbing up around them, and the beautiful waters sparkling in the distance, as I look at them, would be all thrown away upon you. I suppose the click of that iron bolt which fastens the old chest up in the wall there, is pleasanter to you than any thing else; but each one to his notion!"

Mr. William Kemble received this apostrophe of his brother's with rather a gracious manner for him; and even suffered a smile to steal over his features as he replied,—

"You know, brother, I never had much taste for such matters; and I have been obliged so long to keep my mind on other things, that I suppose my office and the business of it have become associated with my feelings very strongly."

"A second nature!"

"I suppose so!"

"Well, I pity you; and I suppose you pity me! so there it is! I have as much money as I want for all my

necessities, and you have so much more than you want, that your mind is continually occupied in meeting the demands of others. But this aint the business I've come upon this morning. I've heered some strange stories, and I thought I'd come right to the fountain-head and get at the truth at once. Where is Frank?"

Mr. William Kemble did not answer, but his countenance immediately assumed a severe aspect.

"Perhaps, brother, from your looks, you mean to say 'that's none of your business;' but I have come to have a plain talk with you, and I don't wish to make you angry. But has Frank been turned off, as the report says?"

"He has gone away, I suppose."

"And been thrown upon his own resources?—A boy who has never known what it was to earn a sixpence in his life, and who has been brought up to depend upon his father for every thing he needed, and no more fit to seek a living in the wide world than a baby!"

"He is a man; or, at least, he thinks he is one."

"Very true, brother! He is a man grown; and a fine-looking one, too; with a heart as noble and generous as ever beat in a human breast. But how has he been trained to bear the storms of life? You have always made a gentleman of him; filling his pockets with money, and never teaching him one single thing in the way of earning a cent for himself. You have reared him as a hot-house plant, and now turn him off to bear the extremities of life. Is that wise, or kind, brother?"

It was rarely indeed that William Kemble allowed his passions to gain the ascendancy. But the point his brother had touched was a tender one; and the fearless, open manner in which he addressed him, while his calm blue eye settled with an intense gaze full upon him, stung him to agony. He arose from his seat deadly pale, walked with rapid strides across the room, and then returning struck his clenched fist with almost maniac rage upon the table near which his interrogator was seated.

"That's my business, sir, and not yours!" and again he strode across the room. "Who has a right to lecture me upon the manner in which I have treated a—"

"Don't say it, brother; don't say it!"

"A worthless, ungrateful son!" and then again he paced the room to and fro; at first with rapid steps, and then, as the fierce tumult within began to subside, his gait was less hurried, and his countenance manifested less and less of that terrible commotion that had so suddenly been excited. Apparently unmoved, his brother maintained the same calm manner; nor did he attempt to resume the subject until fully convinced that the storm was over.

"As I said, brother, I had no design in coming here to excite your feelings, or to meddle with transactions, which, as you say, are not properly any business of mine. But what I wanted to know was, whether you were aware of the rash step which your son has taken?"

"What step?" and the agitated father paused, and fixed upon his brother a gaze of intense interest.

"You do not know, then, that Frank has gone to sea?"

"Gone to sea? how? where? in what capacity?"

"It is a serious business, brother, as times now are, with every nation at war, and each one pulling and hauling for their own rights, and trampling on the rights of every one else. How many of our young men have already been impressed on board of British men-of-war,—and what security would such a fellow as Frank have? They would seize him at once, and—"

"Brother! I charge you to tell me at once, has my son gone to sea as a common sailor?"

"Not only that, but he has gone with that old heathen, Frost, who will be running his vessel into every out-of-the-way hole and corner, cheating the government and every body else, and who wouldn't be too good to throw any of his men in the way of a press-gang, if he could get ten dollars by the job. But, brother, what's the matter?"

It was his turn now to be excited, for Mr. William Kemble had sunk into his chair, and a deadly pallor overspread his countenance. The poor sufferer did not speak; but his eyes rolled wildly, and a spasmodic motion of the muscles of his face told the alarmed brother that some fearful event was about to take place. He stepped hastily to the door, and in a loud voice called for Alice. And there was no time to be lost; for their united aid had scarcely borne him to his bed when his whole frame was seized with

appalling convulsions. Medical advisers were sent for with the utmost speed; and it was soon noised abroad that the rich man was lying at death's door. How quickly were assembled there all that variety of counsel and aid which is so ready to administer promptly, when abundant means are at hand to repay their assiduity.

Long and terribly did his hardy frame writhe with spasmodic throes, increasing in their intensity, until the agony seemed more than nature could endure; and each assistant at the harrowing scene looked on, almost with desire to see the sufferer released by death. And when, at length, the poor racked frame was permitted to rest from its convulsive tossings, a deep and heavy sleep came on. There he lay, senseless as in death, while the hard heaving of his chest and the fitful beating of his pulse were all the tokens of life that still lingered in the body.

Among the foremost of those who rushed to the dwelling of William Kemble, when the tidings spread abroad of his sudden illness, was Peter Twineall. And no sooner did he come among the throng that had assembled, than he at once took his station as the master spirit, and gave forth his orders with as much confidence as an heir apparent to a throne might do, when the head that had worn the crown was about to put on the attire of death. And no subalterns around a dying prince ever paid more strict attention to the orders of him who was about to be their master, than did those who were surrounding this stricken man to the authority of Peter Twineall. And perhaps it was well, at the moment, that some one should have been on hand to take the direction; for poor old Alice loved the sufferer too sincerely to be able to witness his agony, and Mr. Joseph Kemble had as much as he could attend to in his own afflictions, having retired as soon as other assistance arrived into one corner of the room, where he remained a long time in a stooping posture, busily employed with his nether extremities,—sometimes rubbing violently, and sometimes grasping tightly, and screwing his face into all manner of grimaces. And as it had been long known that Peter Twineall was the legal adviser and confidential agent of Mr. Kemble, each one the more readily yielded to him the responsibility of directing.

And never did Esquire Peter appear more self-possessed, nor more ready in pouring forth instructions on every side. He was perfectly at home, whether in the sick room, or amid the domestic arrangements, or the labors of the farm, and gave his directions in that clear, decided manner, which showed that he was very certain that the authority by which he acted was legal and strong.

No sooner did he perceive the melancholy condition into which his patron had fallen,—and that nothing could be done around the sick bed but listen to the heavy breathing of the patient,—than he called the physician aside into a private apartment, and carefully closed the door.

“Doctor, I want you to tell me in the strictest confidence, and without any prevarication, what you consider to be the condition of your patient. Matters of great moment depend upon what you may say.”

The doctor was, perhaps, not the most gifted of his profession, and the consequential air of Twineall, as he thus appealed to him, affected his sympathies. He was all at once thrown into a very abstracted state; drew his silver snuff-box from his pocket, and commenced administering to his olfactories copious supplies of maccoboy. Having completed this operation, he very graciously handed the open box to his companion, who, taking a very small pinch, apologized by saying, that he “only occasionally indulged in the practice.” The little doctor—for he was a small man—then straightened himself up, to make the most of what there was of himself, and looking earnestly at Mr. Peter, broke forth into a long dissertation on the peculiarities of the nervous system. He talked very fluently about the great sympathetic, and the cervical, and thoracic ganglions; and the cardiac flexus, and the hepatic, renal, and hypogastric arteries; giving a minute account of all their ramifications and connection with the great cerebral apparatus; and finally commenced showing how they all acted sympathetically; and would have gone on, doubtless, to give the various symptoms attendant upon diseased action in any, or all of them, if his impatient listener had not been just then too much in a hurry.

“That’s true, doctor; very true; but to the point. What do you think of the patient?”

The little man was somewhat “struck aback” by the abrupt interruption; but he answered very promptly:

“A decided case, sir! a decided case, Squire Twineall!”

“Of—of—”

“Cerebral paralysis!”

“How will it probably terminate?”

“Hard to say, sir! hard to say! He may linger,—linger a good while!”

“And have his reason?”

“Doubtful, sir; very doubtful.”

“At present he is unconscious?”

“Decidedly so; knows nothing, and nobody!”

Mr. Twineall now took hold of the lappel of the doctor’s coat;—an act of familiarity that made the little man straighten up again.

“Doctor! I believe I can trust to your discretion!” The doctor coughed,—not very loud,—just enough to clear away things. “I am placed in a delicate situation!” The doctor opened his eyes,—they had been shut for a moment or so, and looked not only very wise but very much elated. It was no small thing to be in the confidence of Peter Twineall, Esq., as things then were. “Your testimony may be of infinite consequence; therefore, doctor, I say to you what I shall reveal to no other human being.” The doctor raised himself upon his toes, and then settled back with a slight sigh. “Things have come about very strangely! Only yesterday Mr. Kemble signed a paper, which will empower me to act in his stead. I shall, by virtue of this power, take possession of his effects. I feel that there is no alternative.”

Now Mr. Twineall was well aware of a weak point in this poor doctor, which would no more have allowed him to retain the purport of this disclosure, than a sieve could retain water. Whatever of secrecy Esquire Peter was desirous of keeping inviolate, he very carefully preserved in his own breast. It would not have answered his purpose to tell the doctor that the document was only designed as a temporary expedient, to be used by Mr. Twineall during the contemplated absence of Mr. Kemble of some weeks, in order to attend to a large estate of which he had become possessed in a distant part of the country. It had, indeed,

been executed, but Mr. Kemble had safely locked it up in his iron chest. That he had been appointed executor of his will was indeed a fact; and the powers granted to him, as such, were so extensive that the lawful heir, if he should ever return, would, in case of the death of his father, have had but small chance of receiving a cent from his vast estate.

Thus artfully had this wily man coiled himself into the confidence of one naturally distrustful, as well as proverbially shrewd. As Esquire Peter had taken possession of the key which secured all Mr. Kemble's valuable papers, he was not long in withdrawing therefrom those which would be of essential consequence to himself; and these once in his hands, he felt quite secure that the property of William Kemble was, for the time, at least, if not *in perpetuo*, at his disposal.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HANOVER SQUARE, in the city of New-York, has, like many other parts of that growing metropolis, undergone great changes; and these too perhaps within the memory of some who may read these pages. The mere mention of the little triangular block of houses that once occupied the open space now crossed in all directions by the busy multitude, will doubtless awaken in the minds of some, dim recollections of old buildings with wooden stoops, upon whose broad seats might often be seen in the early morning, or at the decline of day, some of the indwellers thereof, with the old Gazette or Evening Post in their hands, conning in quietness, beneath the shadows of the trees which lined the sidewalks, the news of the day. There was no hurry in those days; and they who tended stores, or worked at their ledgers, in their plain snug counting-rooms took time to eat, and sleep, and say their prayers, and have an hour's converse with a neighbor, without the fear that the world would run away from them if they were not arrayed with wings, and ready

every moment for a flight. The dwelling and the store too were close together; and while the man was busy at his desk, or spreading out his goods before his customers, he could hear the tottling steps of his little ones at their play above, or the sweet voice of their mother singing her lullaby to the nursling on her lap; and the better feelings were aroused within the merchant's breast, and purer thoughts than those which gain awakens, would spring up and cheer him on.

In those days, too, it was a matter of no small consequence to be connected with an establishment that had maintained itself for years, and had its regular run of trade; whose customers paid their semi-annual visit just as certainly as spring and autumn came. And the stream that ebbed and flowed, and left its fair amount of golden treasure as their profits, was so quiet as to make but small disturbance in the outward aspect of affairs. It was doubtless a very satisfactory arrangement for those who had got into the full flow; but certainly not so well adapted for scattering the precious dust as the present rush and scramble.

Not very far from this little triangular block, and in full view of the gilded "Franklin head," that kept so long a faithful watch, and, like a guardian spirit, hovered over the entrance to the old Gazette Office, was the stand of Willson, Munger & Co., a wholesale drygoods establishment. Not a wealthy firm, as estimated by the present currency, but in those days, looked up to as one that had a very solid foundation, and to be envied for its sure and steady gains. The Mr. Willson, or head partner, might have been taken for a member of the society of Friends. There was that placid, steady air about every movement, whether at the desk or behind the counter. His hair lay so smooth upon his forehead, and his face had such a soft and mellow aspect, and his eyes looked so meekly at you through his neat silver spectacles, that one might be almost certain, even before he spoke, that the tones of his voice would be rather pleasant than otherwise. His dress, too, was very much in the style of the Friends; for he wore small-clothes with a neat, but very unassuming, steel buckle at the knee, and stockings ribbed, so as to fit closely to the leg, and show to good advantage a well-turned limb; while his polished

shoes were always as bright as if there was no such thing as mud or dust in the great city. The cut of his coat was of the same order, except that the collar was turned down, and that, with the color, which was black, or very near to it, were the only distinctive marks which separated him in externals from that sect, which has, by its neatness in dress, its rectitude in business, and its consistent benevolence, so long held a prominent place among the merchants of our country.

The Mr. Munger was only there in name. He was stationed in one of our southern cities, where he kept an office, and an eye open upon the cotton trade; and from which source it was generally understood some of the larger amounts had been put to the right side of their balance sheet. The Co. was a Mr. Dugan, a relative of young Kernachan, who has already been introduced to the reader.

Mr. Dugan was a shrewd business man, about thirty years of age; but apparently something in advance of that. Although not remarkable in personal appearance, yet with those who might be favored with his intimacy, there was a pleasant aspect to his countenance; for he could converse fluently, when upon the right subject, and had a very agreeable smile, and a manly voice, and having stored his mind with general knowledge, was never at a loss to entertain a companion in a leisure hour. But he was a thorough man of business, and in all matters of buying or selling was perfectly at home. He had been taken into the concern as a partner after many years of service as a clerk; and being without a family, and economical in his habits, he had rolled up quite a sum on the credit side of his account in the ledger. Having been so long in the store, his acquaintance with all the customers, and his perfect knowledge of goods, caused the elder partner to throw upon him the principal responsibility of the business, and to confine himself to an oversight of money matters, and conducting the correspondence.

There was, however, in all their affairs such deferential reference to the elder partner, as clearly pointed him out as the main-spring and superior manager of the concern.

Richard Kernachan had also been with them, until lately, for some years; and had become quite a favorite

with Mr. Willson. He had left them for a situation which afforded him a larger salary,—much larger than Willson, Munger & Co. could even think of paying. And as the habits of the young man were such as required no small annual income to indulge them, with their full consent he accepted an offer that suited him better. Although Mr. Dugan was the relative of the young man, and of course naturally might have been supposed desirous of retaining him, yet he had made no objections; and although he said little about it, he felt greatly relieved when he had left. A new hand was, however, needed; and as Mr. Willson had originally come from the country, he had a great partiality for it, on account of its steady habits, and very naturally thought that a lad uncontaminated by the ways of the city would be a desirable acquisition. Had Mr. Willson consulted with his partner, most likely Kernachan would not have been commissioned to do any thing about it. But as the young man came in to say "good-bye" on the day he started for his rural pastime, the elder partner followed him to the door, and in a very confidential manner requested him to look out for such a one as he thought might answer their wishes. And as the old gentleman returned to the office, he took a seat beside his partner, who was busy with the morning paper, and then made known to him all his thoughts in reference to the kind of youth they needed; his desire to procure one from the country; and the directions which he had given to Richard concerning it.

"And now what do you think of it?"

"Just so!" This was Mr. Dugan's reply on all occasions; a kind of acknowledgment that he understood the remarks made to him, without any reference to his own opinion of them, good or bad.

"Would it not be much safer to get a youth who has never come in contact with the vices to which so many in the city are addicted? Now what do you think?"

"Just so! Well, sir! they are less likely to have it in them, I know, when they are fresh from the country. But the thing is, to keep it out of them after they get here. Sometimes they go faster to the Old Harry, when they get a going, than if they had been brought up in the midst of the mischief."

Mr. Willson looked a little down as his staid partner thus delivered his opinion.

"True! true! that's true! You are very right. I know there is danger from inexperience. Youth needs watching, but we must attend to that, and try to keep a guard."

Had Mr. Willson himself gone out upon an exploring expedition in search of the ideal youth, that was to take a station in his store, he could not have appeared better pleased than he was after a few days' trial with Charles Astén. He was by no means an unreasonable man to please; and the hearty manner in which the young man took hold of the various duties assigned to him, the suavity of his manners, his respectful deportment, his increasing attention to each little matter, together with his neat personal appearance, prompt and ready air, and apparent capability to learn, were so satisfactory, that Mr. Willson was quite in raptures; and stepping across the store to his partner, with a countenance beaming with satisfaction, congratulated him as well as himself upon the lucky hit.

"A prize! a prize, Mr. Dugan! we have got a prize in that young man."

"Just so!"

"Richard has shown his excellent judgment in the selection."

"Just so!"

"The country, after all, is the place, as I have always said. What do you think of it?"

"It works well so far. A year or so will try him."

The old gentleman looked a moment at his partner, as though he expected him to say more; and then, with a slight shade upon his countenance, turned and walked back again to his books.

Mr. Willson did not occupy with his family the upper part of the store, as many, if not most merchants, in that neighborhood did; but he lived in a small street, some blocks distant from his place of business. This fact, as well as some other considerations of a family nature, induced him to select a boarding place in the vicinity of the store, where Charles could board and spend his sabbaths. For his lodging, a bed, which had been used by Kernachan, still

lay under the counter, and as it was thought a matter of safety against fire and robbers, to have some one sleep in the store, it was decided that Charles should occupy it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It may seem strange to one who has never been so intimately acquainted with the habits of life in both city and country as to compare, understandingly, the two, that a sense of loneliness is perhaps the most unpleasant feeling with which a stranger from the country has to contend. The houses so closely united, with their inhabitants shut up within them, present a cold and forbidding aspect. "No admittance except to privileged ones," seems inscribed over every knocker. And as the stranger walks through the long ranges of brick walls, he feels as though excluded by strong barriers from the sympathies of his fellows. And when he looks amid the throng which hurries past him, in the street, he plainly sees that every eye is fixed on some engrossing object far ahead, and in their haste to reach it, none have time to turn a glance at him. And if he should be sick, or in distress, he would sooner think of asking aid from trees and shrubs amid the lonely forest, than from those forms of humanity who flit so coldly by him.

To Charles Astén all was new. He had never seen a large city before. For the first fortnight it required such constant attention on his part to learn his routine of duties, that he had little time for any notice of his own feelings. And then, too, he found some things to learn which are often harder to acquire than opening boxes, or packing goods, or depositing money in the bank, or even sweeping and dusting, and making fires. Charles had to learn that he was but a subaltern. That he was never expected to speak unless spoken to; nor to laugh, if a joke happened to be struck off by a visitor, or by one of the partners; nor to sit down upon a chair in the presence of the latter, under any

circumstances; nor even to notice what might be going on around him, apart from the business, any more than the ink-stand into which he dipped his pen. It happened very well for Charles, sensitive as he was, that these matters of etiquette were one day revealed to him by the misdoings of a neighboring clerk, who had come into the office of Messrs. Willson, Munger and Co. on an errand; and whose obliquities so aroused the elder partner, that as soon as he had left, he could not avoid pouring out his indignation.

"Young men, Mr. Dugan, seem to be losing all their manners now a-days! Did you notice that fellow? How he lolled down into that chair, and while you were standing, too, Mr. Dugan!"

"Just so!"

"He has been badly brought up. I wonder if the firm he lives with allow him to take such liberties with them? I should not have wondered if he had entered into conversation with one of us. A young man that does not know his place makes himself very disagreeable!"

"Just so! *tired*, I guess; Charley Upham keeps him on the trot."

"In my day, Mr. Dugan, I should as soon have thought of taking a liberty with my employer as I should with my minister."

This was not lost upon Charles Asten; and he really felt rejoiced that the young man happened to forget his manners, for the timely hint which he had received.

As the boarding-house, to which he had been assigned, was not a very desirable place at which to spend his evenings; he found it more agreeable to his feelings, lonely as they were, after the business of the day was over, and the partners had retired, to draw his chair up before the fire, and enjoy his own reflections. How quickly did his thoughts carry him, again, to his own dear home. The kind and cheerful words of his brother, the lively laugh of Janette, and the calm and womanly care of Sarah,—the cheering light of their little room, the rest so refreshing after a day of manly toil, the perfect freedom from all restraint, and even the patriarchal admonitions of old Peter,—all formed a picture so captivating now, that he almost doubted whether even the attainment of his highest hopes

would compensate him for their loss. And yet it was no vain thing that such scenes were still refreshing to him. A charm they held over his youthful mind, that would have made even an evil thought a crime. For upon that lovely group on which his memory dwelt, a sweet bright halo of purity reposed. Still to be one of them, no stain must soil his heart. The golden chain which bound him to that dear circle of loved ones, he would never, no, never, suffer to be tarnished!

It was about a fortnight after he had come to the city, as he was one evening putting up the shutters to the front windows, that a young man, about his own age, happened to be performing the same operation in the adjoining store. A smile, as was very natural, passed between them; and as one of the shutters, which Charles was placing in the case-ment, did not fit easily, the other youth, in a spirit of kindness, stepped up and endeavored to assist him.

"Thank you," said Charles, "this shutter never goes in easily; it troubles me every evening."

It was soon made to take its place, and then the iron bar was swung across, and the bolt put in; and Charles was about to enter the store to secure it within, when the other youth, still lingering by the door, seemed disposed to open a conversation.

"Do you sleep in the store?"

"Yes."

"Don't you find it lonesome?"

"Sometimes. Do you sleep in yours?"

"Yes; and I am glad to know that you do; for I feel lonesome enough, I tell you."

"Then it is you that I hear singing?"

"Why can you hear me? well, there's some comfort in that. And if I had known that there was any one here that I should have dared to introduce myself to, I should have been in here before; or have asked you in to see me. The young fellow that used to be here held his head so high that one couldn't come near him."

"Come in now, then," said Charles, "it will be half an hour before supper-time."

"Well, I will, as soon as I have fastened up, and fixed the fire a little."

The young man soon made his appearance; and Charles, having replenished the fire, and placed a chair for his visitor, they sat down together, as fully prepared to have a free chat, as though they had been formally introduced by some common friend.

There was a free and easy way which the visitor had, that at once overcame that natural bashfulness which hung about Charles, sometimes to his discomfort. He had been for some years in the city, and had acquired that peculiar address which goes far in giving currency to the individual. And in a short time, there were but few things in their mutual history that remained unrevealed. Charles forgot about his supper until long after the hour had passed; but that deficiency could now be readily supplied.

"These suppers in the city," said the young man, whom we shall hereafter call Henry Hastings, "are no great loss, after all. I go almost every evening to *Billy's*, and get a bowl of mush and milk, or pie and milk."

"*Billy's*! where's that?" and Charles looked as though the articles named would be rather acceptable than otherwise.

"It's only a clever walk from here; and a nice place it is; clean as a new pin. Have you a mind to go?"

"Why, yes! I think I should. Some pie and milk would relish just now. I have been used to that at home."

The appearance of things at *Billy's* justified the commendation which the young man had bestowed upon it. It was a plain, unpretending establishment; where the simple refreshments which have been mentioned were served up in a manner that gave one great confidence in partaking of them. And if every place of resort in the great city presented the same aspect as did this simple restaurant, there would be less danger to those who frequent them. It was conducted by a colored family; but with a quietness, order, and mildness of manner, that well accorded with its harmless bill of fare. Charles was highly pleased with the repast; and the trifling sum which was demanded for it, led him to feel that a walk to *Billy's*, even every evening, would be rather pleasant than otherwise. And when he parted with his companion for the night, he retired to rest with a consciousness of contentment which he had not felt since he had occupied his lonely bed in the store.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHEN Peter Twineall took possession of the effects of Mr. Kemble, he found at once at his control a vast amount of money in loose and disposable funds. A floating capital is a mighty power. There is in every community such a number, who, by launching headlong into speculations of various kinds, make themselves dependent upon those who can aid their necessities, that, no matter from what source the supply may come, they must bow to any Croesus who will mete out to them the golden treasure.

There was much talk, as there always is, at first, when any such event takes place as had occurred at William Kemble's; and for a time it seemed, from the accounts which some old ladies circulated, as though a combined attempt would be made by the whole township to oust Twineall from his place of power. But it turned out very differently from what the old ladies declared to be the truth. For instead of being put down, he was raised up. Offices were forced upon him; on all public occasions there were two or three voices at once calling out his name to take the chair. Hats were raised on passing him, that had previously refused any such tokens of complaisance; and clients urged his attention to their business, who before would have travelled many miles for other advice and service. All these favorable circumstances had an effect, the reverse of what is usually expected from a sudden elevation to the pinnacle of prosperity. And the fact was duly noted, by those who were foremost in their praises of the worthy man, that he was even more affable than formerly, and had a smile and a pleasant word for the poor as well as the rich.

Finding that it would be more convenient in superintending the multitudinous interests now committed to his charge, and especially as he had made some changes in the domestic arrangements of the family of Mr. Kemble, that needed his peculiar watch, he had, of late, removed to the office of his patron, and had carried thither, or caused to be

carried there, his portable desk and large rocking-chair, and some few trifles in the way of pictures, with a view, no doubt, of throwing a more cheerful air around that gloomy room.

It had been an unusually busy day with the Squire; and many a merry jest had he bandied with those who had come and gone. The shades of evening had settled down at last. His windows and door were closed, a moderate fire was burning in the large open fireplace, and two lamps were throwing the light of their united rays upon the walls and the iron chest, and the little pictures which stood upon the high mantel-shelf. The little man, after arranging some papers that lay upon the desk, carefully deposited them in the safe; and then lighting a segar, threw himself into the rocking-chair, and, after a few violent puffs, held the smoking thing in his hand, and looked into the fire with a serious cast upon his countenance, which none who had witnessed his smiles and jests that day, could have supposed that smirking face was ever troubled with. Peter Twineall was on a pinnacle; but none knew so well as he what dizziness such an elevation sometimes causes, and what danger there was of a sudden slip.

He had, to be sure, guarded against such a calamity as well as he could. He had displaced old Alice from her station as housekeeper, and from watching, as she would wish to have done, around the sick bed; and, as she would not be driven from the house, had assigned her a room in one corner of the great building, where she could sit and read her Bible, and think over the strange doings which her life had witnessed. In the place of Aunt Alice, he had procured a specimen of femininity of the masculine order—a young woman who had been born and reared under circumstances not very propitious to the development of the softer feelings. But she answered well the purpose for which he had hired her; which was, to keep a strict watch over the sick man; to see that no one, without the consent of the physician or the Squire himself, was allowed to enter the room. As to the housekeeping part, there was little of that business now to be done.

He felt pretty safe, therefore, that the sick man would not alter materially without his knowing it. But there was

another unguarded point, and from that quarter serious consequences might result. Frank Kemble was the son and heir. He was away, to be sure. He had gone off under the frown of his parent; he was on the treacherous ocean, and might never return. But if he should, there were some rights, he was well aware, which the young man possessed *de facto*, which would place him, the said Peter, in a very delicate situation; and although he was now a judge and a select-man, and a person of much consequence in that region; yet, there were powers above him, and forms of process that might, in such a case, give him more or less trouble. And, moreover, Peter Twineall had now fully tasted the sweet cup of prosperity. His life hitherto had been one keen and untiring struggle for the delicious draught. He had sipped the nectar, and his soul was fired with the infernal cup. He must drink now to his heart's satiety. He had felt the luxury of beholding the obsequious multitude, cringing for his favor. He had felt the delirium of power, as he held at his abeyance the thousands, which so many were crouching humbly at his feet eager to receive. And could he yield it back again? Ah! that shade upon his brow tells but too truly what a wrestling there will be, should that hour come upon him! And he fears, already fears, it may!

Suddenly he exclaims aloud—

"He ought to have been here half an hour ago!"

The exclamation had scarcely escaped his lips when a very dubious kind of tap was heard at the door, and Mr. Twineall at once stepped forward to open it.

"Ah! it's you, is it? Come in!"

The man came in; and, as the light shone upon him, it at once exhibited the full-length of our friend Jemmy Towson.

A slight smile just passed over the corners of his mouth, and was off in an instant; for, at the first glance, he had perceived that the countenance of his patron was unusually severe. He took off his weather-beaten hat, rubbed his hand across the front part of his light-colored coat, which, as usual, was buttoned up close to the neck; and having once or twice uttered a sound from his throat as though suffering from some obstruction there, he gave a

slight cough. It was, doubtless, intended as a token that he had made unusual haste, and was in consequence, therefore, unable to speak. And it had, very probably, the designed effect. For the face of the Squire assumed a more bland expression, and the tone of his voice softened considerably, as he requested him "to take a seat and draw up to the fire."

"Not cold at all! but somehow"—and the speaker commenced again rubbing his chest—"whenever I run, or walk a little fast, there's a kind of choking up here, that troubles me exceedingly."

And in confirmation of what he had said, he commenced coughing in so violent a manner, that Twineall moved his chair once or twice. It took some little time for Jemmy to get to rights again; and as soon as there was a little cessation of his tremendous explosions, the Squire commenced on the business in hand.

"Have you found out any thing from Marsh about that brig?"

"I have, Squire!" Another explosive attack occurred, and the Squire really seemed to look at him with commiseration. "I have seen about it, Squire, and I guess I have got out pretty much all you want to know." Now the fact was, that Jemmy knew very little of the true intent for which he had been set to work. He was not the man to whom Peter Twineall would unbosom his secrets. And yet the heart of Jemmy had been very much elated with the idea which had been so solemnly impressed upon him, that secrets of great consequence were committed to him, when requested to obtain a certain species of information. "And I did not have to ask Tim Marsh either! A glass of punch, and half an hour's chat with old Slosson, his man of all work, just did the thing, you see! The brig, you know, must not come back here, or cannot without breaking the embargo. But I learned something out of the old man which I rather think, if the punch had not been pretty high seasoned, he would never have let out. There is expected a certain vessel"—and Mr. Towson leaned over and put his hand on one side of his mouth, as a sign that the utmost secrecy was to be observed—"in about a month hence, that will be run into Crook's Inlet, or Cedar Cove, as some call

it, where her cargo will be landed in the night and taken charge of by the Bushwickers, those wild heathen that live along around there. Whether the goods are to remain there your honor can answer as well as I can."

"And the vessel is this very brig?"

"The very, very same!"

Whether the intelligence thus communicated, was agreeable or not, it was impossible for his informer to surmise. The countenance of the Squire changed not, but Jemmy thought that an expression passed over it, like a cloud across the sun. It was but a momentary shadow, however; and when the former again spoke it had assumed the same cast which it had worn all the evening, but more serious than usual.

"You spoke to me the other day about a little money?"

"I did!" And Jemmy rubbed rather nervously across his breast, and fumbled away at the forepart of his neck-cloth, while the Squire opened his large, red pocket-book, and handing him a bill of some value,

"Will that answer at present?"

"Abundantly!—quite sufficient! But I hope, Squire, that this little piece of news which old Slosson has let out will not get abroad."

"Not from me, sir! not from me; no fear of that! It may be well though, Mr. Towson, to keep a little note of the time when that vessel may be expected, and about that period there may be something stirring that may give a clue to matters."

"I shall keep an eye on things, that you may depend upon, Squire!"

"I can think of nothing else to-night. You will drop in occasionally!"

And Jemmy arose, rubbed with great care his napless hat, and placing it with both hands upon his head, bowed low, coughed a very little, and departed on his way.

Very shortly after the departure of Jemmy Towson, the door which led into the house was gently opened, and a small man with a ruddy face entered, and stepping very carefully, as though in a sick room, came close to the fire, and commenced rubbing his hands.

"What's the news to-night, Doctor?"

The Doctor being thus addressed, turned his face round, still rubbing his hands, and looked down at the Squire, who had not left his seat in the rocking-chair. The look which he gave was so peculiar, that Twineall felt that the Doctor must have something more than common to communicate.

"Sit down, Doctor! sit down! I feel that you are so much at home here now, that I hardly think it necessary to pass the compliments that I do with others!"

The Doctor did not reply, but continued rubbing his hands; sometimes looking as though a smile was about to play at the corners of his mouth, and then as if a frown was gathering on his brow, and at length he bolted out:—

"It's queer!"

"What, Doctor? what's queer? The patient, is he any worse?"

"Can't say!—but it's queer!" And the Doctor turned his back to the fire, and hooking his two forefingers together as he put his hands behind him, opened the palms to the genial heat. "He's no better! that is, there is no change in his pulse; rather, I should say, upon the whole a little less strength to it. I fear,—I fear,—there will be a gradual drooping away;—a wearing out of nature." And the little man at once launched out into quite a minute description of the operation of the great sympathetic upon the human system. The Squire had listened to it many times before. But at this present juncture he was a little impatient.

"I know all that, Doctor; but why do you think he is getting worse, wearing out?"

"I was about to tell you; but let that suffice. There are times when strange turns come over him. The nurse had told me about them, and said she was afraid. 'Don't be alarmed, madam,' said I, 'it's nothing strange.' But to-night, not an hour ago, I witnessed it myself, and I must say, it's queer!"

Twineall was now too much excited to sit still,—so he arose, and appeared to have something to do at his desk; he moved a paper, or something like it, and then returned and stood by the Doctor.

"You had better take a seat, Doctor! Take the rocking-chair!"

"Prefer standing, sir; prefer standing; and besides, I must go back! I wish to watch the symptoms a little; then I have some calls to make, and the evening is slipping on;—prefer to stand, sir! But you remember when Kemble was in health, and was at all aroused, what a piercing eye he had!—like a basilisk;—cut, sir, as it went. Well, sir, as I was standing by his bed, and watching his heavy breathing, and looking into his deadly countenance,"—the doctor spoke this in a very low tone, and with a measured cadence; "all at once his eye turned up at me and flashed with a brightness that fairly made me start. It was like the awakening of a corpse. A moment it rested on me; and then at other objects in the room. I spoke to him, but no answer. He closed his eyes, and every thing went on as before. I believe, sir, at such times he knows what is going on; and perhaps, sir, if you should go up and speak to him,—being an old friend—he might be aroused into one of these spells, and you could witness it yourself."

But Peter Twineall would then no more have looked into the eye of William Kemble, with a consciousness that it recognized him, than he would have invoked his spirit to appear to him after death.

"But you say, Doctor, that you consider him, upon the whole, no better."

"No better, in reality! It may be, sir—it may be—that before a demise there will be a season of returning consciousness; but it is very doubtful!"

"Well, Doctor, I think that this new feature in the case should even make us more watchful that there be no intruders; yourself and the nurse are all sufficient."

"You may depend upon it, Squire, I shall attend to your instructions faithfully!"

"And be sure, Doctor, that I am informed of every change, either way, before all others. I am placed in a very responsible situation, Doctor, as you must understand."

"Certainly, sir! certainly, you are!" and the Doctor walked out as softly as he had come in. He did not understand fully about the Squire's responsibility; nor was it the interest of the latter that he should; but the little man had a weak point, and perhaps more than one; and Peter Twineall knew where he might be acted upon.

How like a troubled dream was the confused and distracted condition into which the wily man now found himself ! Awhile he walked his lonely office, revolving rapidly in his mind the foreshadowings of that drama which he saw must inevitably, in a short period, come to its climax. What plans he devised to avoid a catastrophe to himself, and to keep fast his clutch upon that which his heart loved so well, will better be developed in the progress of our tale. With a sadder heart than he had ever known, he left the office, and departed to his home.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TIMOTHY MARSH was a keen, money-making man, ever on the watch to gather in the golden store, and not at all scrupulous as to the means by which it was obtained. He had commenced by keeping a store at the landing ; a place which not only served as a ferry to the opposite shore, but also as the dock, to which were moored the few vessels which sailed to and from the place. Two sloops, a schooner, and a brig, constituted the whole amount of shipping. But as the entire fleet was now owned, or controlled by Marsh, it made him a man of much consequence ; and in his sphere gave him as much influence as the largest ship-owners in our greatest commercial cities.

He was a spare, consumptive-looking person ; but as tough as India-rubber, fearing neither heat nor cold, and as ready to brave a storm as any sailor that worked in his employ. He had been, it was thought, very lucky in getting off his brig a few days before the embargo was declared ; and some went so far as to say that he had acted upon advice from high quarters. But if his vessel was not to be allowed to return, except in ballast, a great drawback must accrue against his anticipated profits. And Timothy Marsh was not the man to put up with drawbacks, if they could by any means be avoided. Foreign goods, of a certain kind, had risen greatly in market : the only question was, how could

they safely be got there. He had resolved to run the venture as has been hinted at, and the situation of things in that vicinity was favorable to his plan.

A few miles from the harbor was a cove or inlet, of some considerable size. The difficulty of the entrance to it from the waters of the Sound was, perhaps, the principal reason why it had not become a harbor itself, and had not been used, as most inlets are, for the carrying on of the coasting-trade, if not for foreign commerce. But the passage which led into it, although of sufficient depth for vessels of large size, was so narrow and winding, that it would only have been possible, under a peculiarly favorable state of both wind and tide, for a vessel with sails to have made an entrance. The only service, therefore, to which this body of water was applied, was to afford subsistence to a small number of wretched inhabitants, by its supply of sea food of various descriptions, which in small boats they carried along the coast, to those places where they could best find a market. On both sides of its shores arose hills of considerable size, the surface of which was broken and rocky, and covered chiefly with low stunted cedars, and having here and there a clear, level spot, which bore a scanty crop of corn or potatoes. These were the only productions of the earth which its cultivators there thought worth while to raise. Far removed from all religious privileges, and living thus in almost a state of nature, it could not be expected that a very refined condition of society, or very correct morals, should exist. The only chance for improvement was for those who happened to stray off into the nearer towns and villages and let themselves out to service, where the habits of society were regular ; and those who did so seldom returned to carry back the new and better customs which they learned.

And thus this isolated place, from generation to generation, had remained in almost heathen darkness ; and yet not many miles removed from a society flourishing in its best condition.

Their dwellings were little better, in general, than huts ; although, occasionally, some of the more enterprising had erected buildings that were comparatively comfortable ; and among these, the most noted was their tavern, or store

as they sometimes called it. It was a long, low building, not very unlike those which are to be met with near the shore in many of our small sea-port towns; with a piazza in front, running the whole length of the house, having an upper and under story, and benches above and below, against the side of the house, through its whole length.

It was the daily and nightly rendezvous, and from thence the inhabitants, in general, procured their supplies of rum and molasses, the staple articles of use. The source from whence this fountain was supplied was the thriving establishment of Timothy Marsh. And as there was always a balance against them on his ledger—and their request for credit had never been denied by him—it was only a natural result, that his will and favor were of some material consequence in that region.

Twineall more than suspected what the shrewdness of his emissary had found out. It was what he feared; but the certainty once ascertained, he was not long in digesting a plan to meet an event that might prove fatal to his present position. More than once already, since he had become the dispenser of loans, had Timothy Marsh been favored with assistance. And for special reasons, known to Twineall, he had little doubt that a call would be made upon him soon again, which he had firmly resolved to make the most of.

Not many days after the interview which has been recorded between the honorable gentleman and Jemmy Towson, while seated in his rocking-chair, with his eyes closed and in deep meditation on the twists and turns of fortune, he was suddenly aroused by the entrance of a gentleman without the ceremony of knocking.

"Good morning to you, Squire! a cool day for the season!"

"Ah! good morning! good morning, Mr. Marsh! walk in, sir; glad to see you!"

Mr. Marsh did not resemble Jack Frost, as he is usually represented; for his nose was not red, nor his cheeks full, but it might have given one a chill to look at him. His high cheek bones, flabby cheeks, and broad staring eyes, formed such contrasts to each other, that the separate formations of the countenance appeared more unsightly by

the combination. A man ought not to be judged too harshly from his looks; and yet it requires sometimes a vast deal of faith to believe in the pure morality of one who carries about with him a visage that personifies mischief.

It was not often that Mr. Marsh smiled; he did not seem to be made for it; but as he uttered the salutation just recorded, there was a visible contraction of the muscles about the region of the mouth. It did not soften his features much; and Squire Peter, who noticed it, put about as much faith in it as probably it deserved. He was, however, himself in a very cordial mood, and throwing a whole blaze of sunshine from his own animated features, hastily seized a chair and placed it near the fire.

"Take a seat! take a seat, my dear sir!" At the same time dropping into his own, he opened the palms of his hands to the fire, and commenced warming and rubbing them alternately; the Squire was very nervous, and he must do something.

"Unbutton your over-coat, my dear sir, or you will not feel the benefit of it when you go out! A chilly day, sir! very!"

Mr. Marsh took the seat without replying to the last request, and kept his coat, which was a coarse loose garment with three or four capes to it, still buttoned up to his neck. Neither gentleman uncovered, but sat with their hats on. The Squire looked very prim in a new fashionable beaver, and his visitor appeared as a man might, who was about to go out into very dirty weather.

"I've called to see you this morning, Squire, about a little money; I've got short, and must have some help."

"Well, friend Marsh; you know I am ever ready to oblige. A little! ha! If that is all, I think you can be accommodated; but I hope it is only a *little*," laying a strong emphasis on the word; "for there has not been a time since I have been managing matters here, that our funds have been so low. How much will do you?"

Marsh did not immediately answer; but turning his eyes full upon Twineall,—

"Did I say a little?"

"So I understood you; and in fact, if it was any amount it would be utterly out of my power to help you."

"I want six thousand dollars; and I must have it."

"Impossible, my good sir! utterly impossible! It can't be done—haven't got, I was going to say, six thousand cents; but I believe I could muster rather more than that. But six thousand dollars, neighbor Marsh; I don't believe it is to be had in the place."

"Squire!" and Mr. Marsh still looked at him in a very fixed and anxious manner,—“I am not joking;—the money I want; must have it; or the consequences may be serious! If you have not got it on hand, you know where to obtain it. And get it you must, if I have to pay you five times what it's worth. You *must* help me now, Squire."

Twineall took both hands, and gently raising his hat from his head, placed it carefully upon the table. And then running one hand over his forehead, began to twist his fingers among the loose hairs which dangled there, and to look into the fire with an aspect as demure as if the world was about to be convulsed, and his decision alone could arrest the calamity.

"Ask your own price, Squire! we shall not quarrel about that! But get it for me you must!"

The Squire still remained absorbed in thought;—and it could even have been perceived that his hand moved more nervously upon his forehead, and his countenance began to assume an unusually pallid hue. At length, bringing his hand down quickly upon his knee, and turning full upon Marsh, whose large rolling eyes were still staring at him:

"I tell you what, friend Marsh; it is true, as I have said—I have only a trifle of money on hand. But the article, I suppose, might be obtained. But, neighbor, I have a question to ask you."

"Ask away!"

"What security can you give me? The amount, you know, is no trifle. I am acting for another, and times are like to be ticklish."

Marsh did not change color—it was almost impossible for his sallow complexion to do that. There was, however, a nervous twitching about the loose covering of his cheekbones. But he kept his eye fully fixed upon his interrogator—nor did he at once make a reply.

"You must not think hard of me, neighbor Marsh, for

making this proposition; and to show you that I am willing to make the matter easy as possible, I will say to you at once, give me a bottomry bond on the brig which you are expecting back, and a respondentia bond on the cargo, and the money shall be raised."

"Of what avail to you, as security, will be a vessel that cannot come into a port in our country; without, indeed, I should choose to let her come home, without a cargo, to lay and rot in our harbor?"

"Neighbor Marsh, I may as well be plain with you. It is no secret to me, that your brig is coming back and expects to land a cargo; and perhaps, if I chose, I could tell you where."

Marsh rose quickly from his seat, raised up his clenched fist, and bringing it down with much force upon the table, sent forth a volley from his lips that made even Twineall color, and almost repent that he had touched the subject. He gave him the lie direct, and stamping his foot violently upon the floor, exclaimed:

"I demand, sir, instant, the author of such a vile calumny; if you are not the scoundrel that has started it yourself!"

Twineall had expected an outburst of passion; although he had not anticipated the terrible oaths which were then flying about his ears. He was in the fight, however, now, and must get off as he best could. He was no match for his opponent in the peculiar dialect in which the latter was throwing out his ideas, and could only for the time remain quiet and bear the tempest. Watching a momentary cessation, he ventured a suggestion:

"Perhaps, neighbor Marsh, your secret is as safe with me as with most others; and the more so, as I am willing to be a sharer in the risk."

There was much reason in this remark, and Marsh had cooled down enough to appreciate it. He fixed his flashing eyes steadily upon Twineall, as though he wished to read the true sentiments of his heart. But it required a shrewder man than Timothy Marsh to read so abstruse a riddle as the heart of Peter Twineall. As he did not reply, the latter again threw in a suggestion:

"You had better take it coolly, neighbor Marsh! You

and I are old friends. We have been too long acquainted to quarrel at this time of day. And it would not, under present circumstances, be either for your interest or mine, to have any misunderstanding between us. Sit down, neighbor; sit down, and cool yourself."

Another volley of desperate sentiments followed these remarks; but it was evidently only for effect—they being merely random shots, and not applied to any one in particular.

He took the seat, as requested, and thereby showed his willingness to put himself under the guidance of the man who had thrown him into such a state of excitement.

"I suppose I am not to know from whom you have obtained your news. But one thing I want to know; did that young Kernachan give you the information?"

This last question was such a surprise, that Twineall for a moment was silent. His thoughts, however, were soon again at his command.

"So long as it is true, neighbor, no matter where it came from. But have you considered what the consequences might be, if, when the brig gets into her destined port, any of the hands should take it into their heads to walk home? It would be no great travel, you know."

The look which Marsh gave his tormentor was such a combination of surprise, anger, and alarm, that the latter burst out into a fit of laughter. And Marsh, overcome by the fascination, and perhaps not knowing what better to do, joined with him. And then, after sending forth a flood of profanity, as though to relieve the oppression under which his foul spirit labored, he settled down into a state of comparative quiet.

"Your crew was shipped from here, was it not?"

"Only one; the others were sent from New-York by an agent there. They are all foreigners except that one, and are shipped for twelve months."

"Is the one you speak of shipped for the same time?"

"Can't say! The captain took him without much bargain about it. Why you see, Squire,"—and Marsh stooped over and almost whispered,—“if you don't know it already, it is the son of the old fellow here; Kemble's son; Frank. You know they had a falling out, and the young fool goes

and throws himself out of the frying-pan into the fire. The old man, I suppose, was tight with him; but I guess he will find Frost a little tougher chap to deal with than he ever got along side of yet. He's clever enough ashore; but at sea he's worse, they say, than twenty thunder-gusts!"

"That's the captain you speak of?"

"Yes; and a fine fellow he is, too; up to any thing!"

Peter Twineall was now, all at once, taken with a fit of abstraction, which lasted so long that his visitor began to apprehend some new difficulty, and was anxious to have matters closed.

"How soon can this money be had?"

"Well! I've been thinking, Marsh, that you and your vessel will both be in rather a bad fix. It would not be a very likely thing that a young fellow like Frank Kemble, after the trials of a voyage, and a new hand too, when he comes to set his foot on shore, so near the place where he was born, would be satisfied without a *sight* of it at any rate. It seems to me a most unfortunate thing all round."

"Twineall! I ought to have taken you into my counsel before! You can see breakers where I should never dream of them! Before that young fellow shall be allowed to touch his foot on shore, I'll have him chained neck and heels in the fore-castle, or I'll have him watched by the folks on shore! There is not a man among them who, when I say the word, will stand one moment to ask questions. They will do what I tell them; *no matter what!*" And the strong emphasis which the speaker laid on this last word, showed plainly his own desperate character, and that of the tools which he expected to make use of.

Twineall was strongly excited. The more clearly he perceived that in Marsh he had met with an accomplice, whose desperate character would lead him to hesitate at no extremity to attain his end, the more violent became the emotions which agitated him: an end which he had again and again revolved in his mind, but which at times his better feelings revolted at, now that a fair prospect had opened for its accomplishment, seemed too desirable to be thrown away. And yet it was a fearful step in the path of damning iniquity, not to fill him with a secret horror. Frank Kemble, he felt morally certain, was the only hindrance that

might effectually interpose to prevent his holding with a firm clutch the power which he then possessed. And yet to plot a deadly sin against one whose rights he coveted, was a crime so blackly marked, his very soul shuddered at the thought. And perhaps, even now, the desperate act would not have been committed, had not Marsh, from his own vile thoughts, thrown out a suggestion that was too strong to be resisted.

"It would suit all round, Squire, wouldn't it, to have this youngster safe on board a British man-of-war? He would have a chance for a long cruise, and be under pretty safe keeping."

Twineall fairly started; but the die was cast, and, like a resistless flood, the powers of evil rushed upon him. At once he stooped over, and in a low tone for some moments barely whispered out the thoughts which had been so long contending within. With strong emphasis Marsh replied:

"Leave it to me! leave it to me! *It shall be done!*"

Alas, poor human nature! When the barriers of virtue are torn away, swiftly it drives on the raging billows, a hopeless wreck.

Peter Twineall, for a golden bait, has parted with the last virtuous thought. No tender sympathy, no generous impulse, no yearning love, can ever bless him more; but blackened by a crime his own heart itself can never pardon, for evermore a hideous moral monster he must grope his way.

All restraint was now removed between these accomplices; and they freely conversed about their plan, in all its bearings.

"Kernachan is, then, your agent in the city; and for that purpose he was here this season?"

"Not exactly! Richard is a smart fellow, and up to every thing. But he is only, at present, in the employ of the house, who will probably have before very long, if all goes right, a pretty assortment of good things, I can tell you. But he's restless; and between you and me, Squire, he has proposed to go out in the brig if she has the good luck to get clear of the gun-boats. But not a word! remember, whist as a mouse!"

"No fear of me!"

"And now for the money! Do you still want your bottomry bond, or whatever you call it?"

Twineall smiled, but made no reply.

"I think, Squire, you and I will have no need of any more bonds now to keep us true to one another, ha?"

Without further remark each arose from his seat. Marsh walked to the door, and as he took hold of the latch, asked in a much milder tone than he had used throughout the interview:

"When shall I call?"

"Any time to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXVII.

It is never safe for those who wish to carry out a bad design, to trust implicitly to the hardness of a woman's heart. The female whom Twineall had engaged to attend the sick chamber of his patron, was procured by him from among the inhabitants of Cedar Cove, an account of whose habits and character has already been given. She was, as has been said, masculine in her appearance, and yet not ill-favored; but with a fire in her eye, which gave a sure token that the sensibilities could be easily aroused, and, when stirred up, that she might be dangerous company.

As she expected to find in Aunt Alice a querulous and whimsical old lady, and one who would be peculiarly jealous in regard to all the interests which she had so long managed, Margaret,—for that was her name,—made no scruple of exercising the power placed in her hands in the very spirit of a termagant. She resolved, as she had been advised to do, in the very beginning of her administration, to let all around her see that she was mistress, and that her word must be law. But it is hard contending where there is no opposition.

Alice had not read her Bible in vain. Its sweet promises were not only a sure resting-place for her troubled heart, and enabled her to bear, without murmuring, the

trials of her way as they arose; but she had learned some lessons from its wise teachings, which instructed her how to meet the harsh, and sometimes rude, treatment to which she was thus exposed. To all the evil or wrong which at any time assailed her she presented, as her only weapons of defence, a soft answer and a loving heart. The first was sure to nullify whatever of evil there might be in a malignant tongue, and the last made her ever ready to do an act of kindness when an opportunity offered.

Against such kind of opposition Margaret's temper could not act. She would have fought like an Amazon against violence of any sort; but as to contending against kind words and kind deeds, she could not do it. Rudely as she had been trained, her woman's heart was true to its nature. Already had Aunt Alice been appealed to for advice, and when, upon a sudden turn of illness, the old lady had faithfully tended her during a night of suffering, the stern Margaret was completely subdued; and there was nothing within her power to do which she would not have done for Alice Thrall. The orders to her had been very strict, not to allow any person whatever to enter the sick chamber; but as she knew no other reason for the injunction aside from the fear of disturbing the patient, and believing that an old domestic like Alice, who was so kind and gentle, could not, by her presence, do any harm, she had frequently of late asked her to the room, while she was otherwise employed.

On the morning when the scene occurred, which has been related in the last chapter, Alice had been invited by Margaret to step in and stay with Mr. Kemble, while she attended to some matters below stairs. This the old lady cheerfully assented to; and taking her knitting, seated herself near to the bed, where she could watch the pallid countenance of the helpless man. Alice had no reason to love William Kemble. He had treated her only with bare civility, and his reserved and harsh manners were not calculated to win the interest of those around him. But she had never indulged a thought of evil towards him. She had watched his welfare with a single eye. He had been the husband of her who once was all of life to Alice. He was the father of Frank; and although she had heard it

whispered that the son had been treated harshly, and driven from his home, she could only grieve in her heart for all that was wrong, and pray that it might turn out for the best. Towards him who lay upon a bed of suffering, perhaps his bed of death, not a shadow of an evil thought affected her pure mind; and she would gladly have tended him night and day.

As she sat and watched by the bed, at times she would cast her eye upon him; and when she thought of all the past, she would send an ardent prayer to Heaven for his relief. Then wiping away the tear that her sensitive heart had forced out, she would look down again at her knitting, and watch for sounds of approaching footsteps, that she might retire and not bring blame upon the kind young woman who thus indulged her. Suddenly, as at one of these occasions she raised her eye from her work towards the bed, she perceived that his face was turned, and his keen and piercing eye fixed full upon her. A strange feeling came over her; for it was like the sudden waking up of the dead. Her first impulse was to call for help; but her better judgment came at once to her aid. She felt that an alarm might be attended with fatal consequences, so she resumed her knitting as though nothing had occurred; only glancing her eye up occasionally,—and whenever she did so it met the same keen, piercing look.

"Alice!"

The knitting dropped from her hands. She could not help it. She was utterly confounded. But she did what she could; and, rising, stood by the bed-side, as though awaiting his will, as in days past.

"Alice! where am I?"

"In your bed; please sir!"

"Where have I been, Alice? What has been the matter?"

"You have been sick, Mr. Kemble; please sir, very sick! but I hope you are better!"

"Why are strangers here, Alice? and where have you been?"

Alice was perplexed. Any kind of deception had ever been foreign to her nature. She knew no other way than to speak the simple truth at all times. But the truth here

involved a mystery which she had never been able to fathom.

"I understand, please sir, that it has been by the orders of Esquire Twineall!"

The sick man started, as by the power of a muscular spasm. His eyes glared at her a moment, and then rolling them back into his head, his whole frame shook with a strong convulsion. At once she cast aside all fear, and, seizing his arms, held them firmly down; at the same time saying all the soothing things which came to her mind. But he was lost to all sense of sympathy, and lay and writhed beneath the apparent agony of violent spasms. She would have called for help; but the impression was strong upon her that he was conscious, and that an outcry might increase his terrible excitement. And so she stood and watched his distorted features, and felt the convulsive throes as they passed rapidly through his frame. By degrees, the contortions grew less and less terrific, and the limbs became more quiet. And then she bathed his forehead with a soothing lotion, and applied stimulants to his nostrils, and did such things as her experience dictated; her own nerves, at the same time, becoming more calm, and her mind resuming its even and natural temperament.

More than an hour had passed; a much longer time than she had ever been left alone in the sick room, and yet Margaret did not come, nor could she hear her footstep about the house. And every moment she expected the entrance of Squire Twineall, who usually visited the room at that period of the day. "But she had been doing her duty, and if evil consequences came of it, she could only leave them with Him, who could order all things well."

At length she heard a door closed below; and, in a moment more, the young woman entered the room breathless with haste, and with a countenance expressive of deep anxiety. She looked wildly at Alice, and then at the sick man; and perceiving that he was asleep, or that his eyes were closed, she touched the arm of Alice, and beckoned her from the room. Leading the way into an adjoining apartment, she closed the door; and, placing a chair for Alice, and taking one herself,—

"You must sit down, Mrs. Alice, and tell me what to do; for such a quandary I was never in before!"

"What has happened to you, child?"

"Well! I will tell you; but you must not breathe a word to living soul! No, I won't say so, neither; for may be you will think we oughtn't to keep it to ourselves! But first, do tell me who Frank Kemble is, and is he any relation to the man I've been tending?"

"He is his son; his only child!"

"How you talk! how old is he? and what has he been doing?"

"He has never done any thing out of the way; without it was to help a poor person, or any one that was in trouble. Frank always had a tender heart from a child; if he had a penny he would give it to a poor boy if he met one. He would give away the very clothes on his back, and he has done it, as I am knowing to."

"What should any one want to hurt him for, then?"

"Want to hurt him! Who can be so wicked as that?" And Alice looked at her with an earnestness which her countenance was not wont to assume.

"Well! I must out with it, for I can't keep it in no longer, and may be you'll know what to do, for I am most crazed. What with the fright, for fear he should look into the closet, and what with the things I've heered, I aint got no sense left in me! I am a poor ignorant girl, Mrs. Alice, and don't know the good things that you do, and may be sometimes have treated you as I had not ought to; but you will forgive me, won't you?"

And the tears started freely, as her bright eyes looked imploringly at the old lady.

"I have nothing to forgive, dear child; you have only done as you have been bid."

"That is true, Mrs. Alice! But I've done. Poor and ignorant as I am, Margaret M'Gree knows too much to join with their wickedness to the innocent. And I suppose I feel it worse, because our own Tom was *pressed* in the same way. It's three years since Tom was pressed in a man-of-war, and may be he is dead; but we don't know; we never hear from him, any how. He was taken out of the very streets of Halifax, and put into the service."

"But Margaret! Do tell me! That dear boy, Frank Kemble, has not been *pressed*! Oh, Margaret! do tell me, quick!"

"I'll tell you, Mrs. Alice, he's not been *pressed* yet, may be; but I will try to think how it was: but I was in such a quake, and the dreadful oaths that Marsh swore; it made my flesh crawl all over! I have been used, I know, among our people, to hear most any thing; but I never heard before the like as what came out of the mouth of that man: it's dreadful to think on!"

"But where was you, Margaret? How did you hear it?"

"Do la, Mrs. Alice! aint I told you yet, how it was? Well, I left you with Mr. Kemble, you know, awhile; and I thought I'd just run down and sweep the office, and put things a little in order there before the Squire came in. So I kindled the fire, and brushed things up a little, and was in the deep closet, you know, close by the fire; and all at once the Squire came in, and seeing the door nearly closed like, he ups and shuts it to; and just as I was thinking what to do, for you see, if I had come right out, he would, may be, have asked me who was with Mr. Kemble; and whether the doctor was there? So just as I was in this quandaary, who should come in but Tim Marsh! I knew him by his voice, for I've heard him and seen him often down at the Cove! But I didn't know before what an awful wicked man he was; he's worse than any we've got among us, Mrs. Alice, that he is! But as I was saying, at it they went, and one time I thought they would get a fighting; but by and by the Squire cooled him down a little, and then he agreed to keep Frank Kemble from coming home, and to put him on board a man-of-war, and let them do what they liked with him. But I know one thing that will ding all their plans; his great vessel is coming into our Cove, and if I don't spoil their fun, my name aint Margaret M'Gree! But only to think, Mrs. Alice, the Squire is as bad a man as Tim Marsh!"

Aunt Alice listened as though her life depended upon what she was to hear. But after all, the poor old lady had only a confused idea of what had been related to her. And if it had been otherwise, her mind was not equal to suggesting a remedy. And all she could do was to pray that the evil designs of the wicked might be frustrated.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE times which preceded the embargo of 1807, were, indeed, hard for the commercial world. The terrible war which was raging between the mighty power of England and the great Napoleon, had more or less affected all the civilized nations on the globe. Our country, indeed, remained neutral. But we were then in our infancy as a nation,—we were, indeed, rising fast into consideration, and felt secure in our power to maintain our independence on the soil, which had been redeemed to liberty, by the strong hand of our noble sires and the good help of our God. Our adventurous mariners were piloting our ships on every ocean and sea, and into every port where either our produce was wanted, or their commodities demanded by us. But to defend this commerce, and maintain our just rights upon the great highway of nations, we had, as yet, a feeble force—a few frigates and sloops of war—manned, indeed, by spirits as brave as ever hoisted their country's standard to the flowing breeze. But what could they do against the vast marine of England? or how could they reach the imperial power who lorded it over the down-trodden nations of Europe, and rescue the confiscated property of our merchants from the decrees of Europe's master, who, in the plenitude of his power, had levied upon it in every neutral port where, on the faith of the law of nations, our merchants had consigned their ships? The Orders in Council on the part of Great Britain, and the Berlin and Milan Decrees by Napoleon,—those acts of high-handed injustice to every neutral power,—came upon us like the avalanche, or the tornado; and, helpless to resist their fury, we could only bar our doors and windows, and keep as close within our inclosures as possible all the interests that were exposed.

But superadded to all the injustice which our nation suffered in the seizure and confiscation of our property by the great belligerents, a greater and more touching wrong we had to endure,—a wrong which reached to the bosom of many a family, and caused many a bleeding heart through-

out the whole seaboard of our country. And this was laid upon us, too, by her who has been ever styled our Mother Country; a title which is never given but it inflicts a blot upon that holy name! Let England be our fatherland—we will own with pride the stern yet glorious parentage—but let no hand of him or her, who calls our happy land his native home, e'er place upon his page so foul a slander of that sacred name!

England has ever claimed the right to exact allegiance from any citizen she ever had; and insisted that no act of theirs could ever break the bond; and when their aid was needed, and a call was made to rally round her standard, all her sons must come. This, in theory, might have sounded well enough; but when the claim was enforced, and with her strong hand she seized those who had made their home with us, and ventured forth beneath the guerdon of our flag, it not only bore heavily upon those who were torn from the protection which they sought and the country which they had begun to love, and where their interests were clustered; but it violated the noblest feelings of a nation which had opened wide her arms to receive and to bless the stranger and the outcast, from whatever region they might come.

But even this might have been borne, had her demands been limited to taking wherever she could find, in their helplessness, her native citizens. Her reckless plunderers stopped not at this; but when their eye fell upon a young and promising seaman that spoke the English tongue, his solemn protestations that Columbia was his native home, his papers which proved him such, and even his manly tears which told how bitter was the thought of parting with the Stars and Stripes, all availed nought. They had the power; they wanted the men; and with unfeeling clutch they bore the victim to their men-of-war. But thanks to the great King of Nations, and to the brave hearts which met the ocean tyrants in their power and pride, and brought down their high looks, those days are only themes of history now.

When Frank Kemble, in a spirit of desperation, threw himself on board a vessel bound for a foreign port, the dangers from impressment were at their height. And to

avoid the calamity of having perhaps the most of his crew taken from him upon the high seas, and his vessel left without hands to manage her, Marsh had purposely procured a crew of Portuguese and Spaniards. In fact, so alarming were the accounts which came with every returning vessel of the seizure of our citizens by British vessels and British press-gangs, that it was almost impossible to procure either native Americans or any who had been born in the British Isles or colonial possessions. The lamentable catastrophe which had befallen even a vessel of war, from which three citizens were taken amid the very guns which dared not thunder in the presence of the English lion, had increased the alarm.

But Frank Kemble had no thought of this. His heart had been smitten with a stroke that had nearly paralyzed all feeling, and he feared no danger. He was also, by a strange combination of events, in a moment thrown penniless upon the world. His father had for some years given him a yearly stipend, both when at school and on his entrance into college. It was an ample allowance, and Frank had never been a spendthrift. But his heart was open, as charity itself, to every call upon his bounty. There was always some friend that he had made at school or in the higher institution, who needed help; and Frank could no more see one, in whose welfare he was interested, struggling manfully against the pinchings of poverty in the acquisition of an education, than he could, without plunging into the stream itself, have seen them battling with the waters and in need of help. His father had never brought him to a reckoning for his expenses, and therefore, as youth might be excused for doing, he let his purse-clasp spring at every call, merely reserving sufficient for himself to maintain a standing of respectability without incurring debt.

The amount which had been paid by Mr. Talbot for the release of Colonel Apthorpe, Frank had that very day received from his father, as the last of his yearly allowance, and immediately handed it to his uncle to be repaid. It took at the time nearly all he had with him; and doubtless, when his father laid down the roll of bills upon the table, it was with the knowledge of this fact. For he had tracked out the whole manœuvre which had been contrived to avoid

his coming at the facts. And this no doubt caused that deep pang, which like a dagger struck his heart, when he perceived that his cast-off son, whom he had ever cherished in the lap of abundance, and never suffered to know a want, had gone, by his bidding, into the wide world penniless. And this too doubtless caused that violent revulsion of feeling, when the fact was stated to him, of the desperate act to which that son had been driven.

And Frank would no sooner have touched that offering from a parent, who had, as he laid it down, branded him with falsehood, and turned him away as he might have done the most degraded hireling, than he would have signed the acknowledgment of his forfeiture of every noble principle.

It was already on the edge of evening, when Frank left his father's house, and repairing for the night to a tavern in the village, had time, during its dark and dreary hours, to devise his future course. It was a beautiful night above. The stars shone in unusual brilliancy; and when his agitated feelings could not be calmed to rest, he rose, and sitting by the window, looked up into the bright canopy above. "The hand that held those radiant orbs, and marked their path through space, could find a way for him;—could keep him on the land or sea." And then his eye fell upon the distant water, glimmering peacefully in the mild light which the stars sent down; and he felt a longing to be on its bosom;—to be floated off, he cared not where;—for all the land on which he looked, and which had hitherto spread out such beauty for him, had lost its charm. He knew that a vessel was to sail on the morrow; and with a haste that often—far too often—marks the youthful resolution, he determined to make an effort to go with her. When the morning came it shone in beauty too; and with almost a feeling of joyful freedom he hurried to the shore. He could have a berth, but it was only that of a common sailor. The lively manner of the captain, his pleasant smile and cheerful words, led him to feel that the hardships of the service would be made easy to him. But there was no time for thought; for the brig was in readiness to slip her fastenings and be off. He closed with the offer made to him, and had barely time at the seamen's warehouse

to purchase a dress befitting his new occupation; and on the deck he stood, a companion of the crew, and bound for scenes of hardship and danger he had not taken into the account of his desperate adventure.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE day had already passed its meridian, when the quiet domicile of Joseph Kemble was disturbed by a pretty loud knocking at the outer door.

"Come in!"

The latch was immediately raised, and the intruder, opening the door, was at once in the presence of Mr. Joseph and his good woman. Mr. Kemble was sitting in his big chair, with one foot elevated upon a stool, and his wife on her knees, either rubbing or about to rub the extended limb. All operations, however, were suspended, and the good people fastened their eyes upon their visitor as though transfixed with the most perfect astonishment.

"Wife!" said Mr. Kemble, "get a chair, and then look out and see what kind of weather it is; for there must be something out of the way. There is a hurricane a coming, or may be it's an earthquake!"

But before his good woman could arise from her humble position, the gentleman had helped himself to a chair, and, without saying a word, seated himself in front of his host.

"Rubbing your leg again, ha!"

"I wish you had popped your old head in a little sooner, and you would have seen something that would have made your heart ache if there is any ache to it! I've been took awfully; it will be the death of me yet!"

"Very likely! that or something else! You don't expect to live always, do you?"

"You are a Job's comforter, and always was! But what upon earth has brought you here? The embargo aint off, is it? or, may be, war is declared?"

"I am a fool; or getting to be one; and if I live much longer, I am afraid I shall be as big a one as any of you!"

"That is coming to the point, now, neighbor. But I know there must be something the matter. Of all things! that Jeremiah Talbot—the man-hater—should leave his old roost and come away out of the world to see me! You frighten me; I tell you, you do! Wife, you can go now and finish your work in the pantry; the pain is about gone."

So Mrs. Kemble, taking the hint, shuffled off, and closed the door after her.

"Now, neighbor! out with your business quick; for I am naturally a little fidgety, and my flesh is crawling all over! What upon earth do you want?"

I don't want any thing for myself, only if I could find such a thing as a case to shut my heart up in, I should like *that*; such a fool as I am becoming! I have seen the time when you might all cheat, rob, murder and hang one another, and I should not have cared a straw about it. But if you can but let that leg of yours alone long enough to listen to me, I should be glad; for I tell you, neighbor, I have not come all this distance, on foot, too, without an errand."

"I thought as much!"

"And it is more your business than mine, after all. This is a wicked world, neighbor Kemble!"

"I believe you!"

"And it grows worse."

"I can't say as to that. It has always been bad enough since my day."

"I have come to tell you of a piece of villainy, which has just come to my knowledge, that is equal to any thing I ever read of in the dark ages!"

"Is that the book you are always poking over? I thought it must be something dark; or you would not always have such a sour face!"

"You know that your nephew has gone to sea?"

"I do; or, at least, so they say."

"What would be the consequence if he should not get back for many years; not until he had been entrapped on board a British man-of-war, and made a galley-slave of?"

Mr. Joseph drew his leg from the stool, and placed it

firmly on the floor beside the other, and straightening himself up in his chair, looked firmly and with deep anxiety at his questioner.

"I have reason to believe that a plan has been laid to prevent your nephew from returning to his home, and to throw him into the hands of a foreign press-gang."

"How do you know it?"

"Why, to be serious with you, Mr. Kemble, I have learned it in a way that is something out of the common course; and my informer is a man that would not be very likely to obtain much credit from a common jury; yet it has come to me in such a shape that it bears the marks of truth,—so much so, that I have felt compelled at once to let you know of it, and consult with you as to what course had best be pursued. You know a man by the name of Bacon?"

"A Bushwacker?"

"Yes! I believe they give him that title; and he belongs to a lazy, drinking gang—down in the Cove among the cedars."

"What of him?"

"He has worked for me occasionally, and seems to be a young man that has some feelings of humanity about him. He is a good worker, rather passionate I guess, but if I mistake not, disposed to better his condition and get away from the tribe he has been brought up with."

"That is just what I have thought of him, too! Bill Bacon is not the worst young man I know of by a good deal!"

"It seems that he is very intimate with the young woman who has been hired to nurse your sick brother. I guess they think of marrying; at any rate, he is a confidant of hers, and in that way the matter has come to my knowledge. Although what induced the young man to think that I had better know it, is more than I can see."

"Bill Bacon has more sense than people in general give him credit for."

"He had been at work for me to-day, sawing and splitting wood, and I noticed that he would sometimes suddenly stop short in his work, and appear to be absorbed in deep thought, and then would go to work very fast again. It was just after dinner, as I was busy reading—"

"The dark ages?"

"When all at once he came into the room where I was, and said that he had something on his mind he wished to get rid of. Fool as I was, without thinking, I said, 'If you think it will do you any good, unburden your trouble to me.' So he told his story. It seems that the young woman who lives at your brother's by some accident overheard a conversation between that —, between Twineall and Tim Marsh; two persons of equal merit as I view them."

"Both villains!"

"And so far as I can make out from the statement of Bacon, to whom the young woman told the story, a plan has been laid to retain young Frank Kemble on board the brig when she comes into the Cove."

"What does she go in there for?"

"That is another great secret, neighbor! You can guess, though, I should think; but that I care nothing about. The embargo is a great humbug, and those who laid it may take care of it for all me. The vessel, at any rate, is expected there, and some of the men are every day on the look-out; and at night, two fires, as Bacon says, can be seen on different sides of the narrow channel, at the mouth of the inlet, to guide her, should she come at that time. And the whole train of blackguards about there are to be on the watch to seize your nephew should he by any means get away from the brig. And should he get into their hands, I fear, neighbor Kemble, he will be worse off than on board a British man-of-war."

"Did Bacon tell you this?"

"Yes; and much more, which has slipped my mind! But he says that if it should be known that he had exposed this business, his life would be as soon taken as the life of a racoon. We must be careful, then, neighbor Kemble, how we manage this matter. But something must be done; and that soon; or the vessel may be in and off again, and your nephew probably never see his home again."

"Oh dear! oh dear! I wish I was young again!"

"Young again! you are as young as I am!"

"Yes; but this plaguy —," and Mr. Kemble sup-

plied the deficiency by rubbing his limb, and making short groans.

"Your leg is more trouble than it is worth! You had better get rid of it and have a wooden one. *That* wouldn't need rubbing."

"Wouldn't it; ah! but as you say, something must be done,—leg or no leg: I wish Tim Marsh and Peter Twineall were well hung."

"Rather a charitable wish, and yet I don't know but they richly deserve hanging."

"Hanging is too good for them! I'd fix them if I could have but the management of their carcasses; I wouldn't kill them outright!"

"You'd give them the rheumatism?"

"In the toe;—in both toes;—I would! That would fix them for the rest of their days;—they would have something to think of then besides deviltry!"

"Well! I am almost sorry, neighbor, that I did not apply to some one else, of common humanity. Your toe is of greater consequence to you, I perceive, than the fate of your nephew."

"Aint I going this very minute to rig up the old wagon, and ride over and see Nicoll Kelly?"

"What can *he* do?"

"Nicoll Kelly can do more for us in such a scrape as this than any man I know of; or any six men.—I have been a thinking;—though I have to rub once in a while, it don't stop me thinking, not a bit; I have been a thinking what was the best course to pursue. We must be wary if we mean to get the upper hand of the serpents. In some places it might do to go and warn the collector, and let him know that there was a trick about to be played upon him. But Bill Compton, who is horse jockey and collector, and many other things too, not worth mentioning, is a little too much of a chum with Marsh, and like as not if the whole thing could be known, gets his part of the speculation. So I should feel no safety in saying any thing there; and then, too, if we should make any noise about it, Tim Marsh would be just cunning enough to send off a boat to cruise for the brig, and away she would go, heaven knows where; and then where would poor Frank be? Nicoll

Kelly knows the whole concern down there; and they all know him; and it's all owing to Nicoll, as I hear, that they treat that old heathen Apthorpe so well, who has gone to live among them. But I tell you what, neighbor Talbot, we shall have to make fire fight fire. We shall have to put our hands in our pockets. Marsh has no doubt promised them plenty of rum and molasses. *We* must give them money. It will be a dreadful kind of a muss, any how. Oh, dear! oh, dear! But what upon earth is to pay now? one of my brother's men!" Mr. Kemble exclaimed thus, as a man on horseback rode rapidly to the door and dismounted in great haste; and as the door opened delivered his message, still holding his horse by the head.

"You're wanted, sir, at your brother's! He has asked for you, and Mrs. Alice begs you will lose no time!"

"I'll be there to rights!" and the messenger mounting his horse, galloped off with great speed.

"I hope I shall stand it all! but I don't know! Too much hurry and bustle;—a man can't live and die in peace in *this* world, that I see."

This latter sentence was delivered to his wife, who had just waited upon Mr. Jeremiah Talbot to the door, who hurried off as soon as he heard the purport of the message from Mr. William Kemble.

"Don't worry, Josey; don't hurry; it may bring on a turn." And the good woman looked quite anxiously at her husband.

"I'd never hurry, wife; nor worry neither, as you know, if things could ever keep quiet; but I believe they can't!" And Mr. Joseph left the room to make preparations for an excursion.

CHAPTER XXX.

As Mr. Joseph Kemble opened the door of his brother's house, he was met in the passage by the little doctor himself.

"Ah! good evening, sir! good evening, Mr. Kemble!

glad to see you, sir. I hope you are in good health; any trouble now-a-days with your old complaint?"

"No!—yes!—why I have turns occasionally. How is my brother, doctor?"

"Your brother, sir!" and the doctor, with a very important air, took Mr. Joseph Kemble by the button-hole and spoke in the most bland and gentle tone imaginable. "Your brother, sir, is in a very peculiar state, and must be kept in the most perfect quiet; *out*, sir! he's out! quite wandering!"

"Does he speak at all, sir?"

"Well! he does say things, occasionally,—incoherent though,—very!"

"I understand he has asked for *me*!"

The doctor opened his eyes very wide, and seemed the picture of astonishment.

"Some great mistake, my dear sir;—some great mistake! Who could have been so—so unwise as to mention such a circumstance! He is, indeed, not at all himself, sir! I hope you will be satisfied with my word, Mr. Kemble; nothing but the most perfect exclusion from persons and things can save him, sir!"

The little doctor was right, probably; and to do him justice, although a weak-minded man, and not very learned, yet he would have scorned being a tool of mischief. He was quite elated by the pretended confidence of Twineall, and very conscientious about keeping out all intruders; his opinion coinciding most fully with the very strict injunctions he had received.

"There can be no great harm, doctor, in my just looking in upon him."

"I would not have it for the world, sir! I must,—I am extremely sorry, but I must say,—I cannot, under the responsibility that rests upon me, permit it, Mr. Kemble. I hope you will excuse me, sir; but I must act upon my professional authority."

Mr. Kemble colored a little, and his eyes twinkled with an excitement not usual for *him*.

"I don't know, doctor, any thing about your professional responsibility; but one thing I know, that when the brother of Joseph Kemble says that 'he desires to see him,' he

shall see him, if all the doctors between this and doomsday stood in the way."

The doctor now colored too, and not a little either, for he had a light complexion, and was choleric also. For a moment he looked confounded; and then placing himself on the stairway, at the foot of which they had been talking, seemed determined to prevent all progress in the direction of the sick room.

"I am his physician, sir; intrusted by competent authority with that responsibility. I shall maintain it, sir!"

Mr. Joseph was a person of very mild temperament, and seldom let the affairs of the world stir up much of a tempest within; but he could be roused; and when once excited, the lion was rampant and terrible. He made no reply to the doctor's last remark, but seizing the little man by the "fixings" on his upper garments, whirled him from his stand and left him somewhere in the broad entry; not stopping to look where or in what condition, and proceeded at once to his brother's room.

The sick man was alone, and Mr. Joseph took the precaution to fasten the door as he entered the room; and it was well he did, for in a moment more the little doctor was turning the knob, and there might have been no little disturbance around the sick bed. His step was however soon heard retreating down the stairs and out of the house; doubtless on the way to look up that important personage whose power and authority had thus been trifled with.

"Brother! you look feeble! but you are better, are you not?"

The brother turned his eye at Mr. Joseph as he thus spoke. It was bright as in health; but the emaciated countenance, the hurried breathing, and the trembling of his hand as he attempted to wipe the moisture from his forehead, all told that nature was sinking beneath the power of the great destroyer. Again Mr. Joseph spoke:

"You have expressed a wish to see me, brother?"

"I have!" The voice was feeble and broken. "I have much to say and to do, and I fear but a short time to do it in. I am going, brother, going away from life!" He paused, and then with deep emotion, his lips quivering as the words

came forth, and his eye almost moistened with a tear, while his trembling, cold hand fell upon his brother's: "Joseph, my brother!"

The heart of that brother was throbbing with intense excitement. Not since their boyish days had the voice of affection sounded in his ears from the lips of him who had thus spoken—"Joseph, my brother!" It brought back days of childhood, and a parent's home, and all the peace and comparative innocence of youth. Alas! what a long, cold, heartless chasm, did all the past of life appear, from that hour to the present scene! And again the sick man spoke:

"I see!—I see now!—but I have not seen it before!—I have been eager for that, which now is only a weight—a heavy weight upon my heart!—I am rich, brother;—but oh, I am most wretched!"

And the last words came out with such a deep emphasis, that his breath seemed to depart with them. Mr. Joseph Kemble was much alarmed; and immediately handed him some stimulant that was standing on the shelf already prepared. But the sick man shook his head:—

"No, no, brother!—I have taken too many of their preparations already!—but promise me one thing;—you will not leave me, Joseph, in the hands of strangers?"

"I will not, brother!"

"And now sit down!—sit down by me! I have much to say to you! Frank—my poor boy—has he been heard from?"

Mr. Joseph shook his head: "Not since he sailed."

"I fear I shall never see him again;—the past is gone—I cannot mend the evils now. But send quick for Peter Twineall. He has, I fear, a paper in his hands. Alice says he has taken possession of all my papers. It will make Frank little better than a beggar the rest of his life."

Mr. Joseph had feared this. He knew Twineall well, and felt assured that he would not have dared assume the power he had, without some show of reason. But he was equally confident, that at a juncture like the present, with an instrument of such a nature in his hands, and the maker of it too feeble to go through the formalities of another, that he would not be very ready to give it up. The sick man continued:

"I have injured my child enough already. You must help me, Joseph, to prevent his whole future life from being under the power of one whom I now think to be a very bad man."

Never had Mr. Joseph Kemble been in such a dilemma before. He had never troubled himself with business matters, beyond the simple detail of his own affairs. He knew but little of law, and liked it less, for even the little he did know. If Twineall should learn how very low his brother then was, he would without doubt absent himself from the place on some pretence, hoping that death might intervene and leave him with the power he then possessed. And he also feared lest some violent interference by Twineall and the physician at the bedside of his brother might induce at once his dissolution. He must do something without delay. So, leaving the sick chamber, he repaired to the room which Alice occupied. Both she and the young woman who was with her at the time seemed alarmed at his entrance; for his countenance expressed such unusual excitement.

"Alice!"—he spoke in an earnest manner—"I wish you to go to the room of my brother; and see to it that no one enters it till I return."

"That's good! that's good!" exclaimed Margaret, clapping her hands; "it's time he was seen to!"

Mr. Kemble looked at her a moment, as though surprised at her expression of feeling:

"Then do you go too! and at your peril let no one enter. You look as though you was a match for the doctor, at any rate. He don't want any more doctors; pitch him out of the window, if you can't keep him out otherwise."

"I'll pitch him far enough, if that's all."

And Mr. Joseph went at once into the office, as much to have a little chance to collect his thoughts, as for any thing else. He seated himself in the big chair, and began, as was his custom, to stoop over a little and rub one leg. He would doubtless have had a bad turn, if his mind had not just then been intent upon the complication of duties which had so suddenly been thrust upon him. There was Nicoll Kelly to be seen, and arrangements made to endeavor to rescue Frank from the terrible snare laid for him;

and then there was the sad condition of his brother's affairs;—a dying man, with an immense estate, likely to fall under the supreme control of a very artful man. And both matters must be attended to at once, and without any noise made about them either. And to his great consternation, at that moment the little great man, with the doctor at his heels, was coming into the house, and both in great haste. He could only sit still, and wait the movement of things. He heard the quick step of the doctor, who on entering the house had preceded his employer, and was running up the stairs under great excitement, and feeling, doubtless, very confident, his authority being so near behind him.

"They will have their match, or I shall miss my guess," said Mr. Joseph, rising, and stepping gently to the door which led into the hall.

The doctor, as has been said, was not a very large man; but being a man, he felt very indignant at the usage he had received from Mr. Joseph Kemble; and much more so, on arriving at the head of the stairs, to find himself confronted by a woman, standing outside the door of his patient's room, with her arms folded, and with a flashing from her eyes that betokened mischief. In a very stern voice he commanded her to step aside and allow him to enter.

"I have my orders from them as have a right to say who shall go in and who shan't; and your carcass shall go over them there banisters, before you shall stir a foot in there;—so get out with you!"

The doctor could not help casting a glance at the aforesaid banisters. They were low, and it would require only a small force to send one over their broad flat rail. But it was only a glance he gave, and turning very indignantly towards the Amazon—

"If you don't get out of the way, you hussy, and let me into that room, I'll pitch you over the banisters you speak of, in a moment! Out of the way!—don't you see the Squire?—Esquire Twineall is here!"

Esquire Peter was not just there. He stood some ways down on the stairs, looking remarkably grum; but apparently not thinking it worth while to venture too near. Women in general are lovely beings, no doubt, and full of patience and kind feelings, or they would never get along

as they do with their ruder halves. But occasionally a specimen is to be met with of rather a fiery turn, and who can stand very little in the way of a rebuke or threat. Margaret was one of these; and scarce had the little doctor finished his last sentence, before he felt himself on the way to find a bottom somewhere. He went feet foremost, however, and that saved any broken bones. Esquire Peter was down as soon as his aid, but it was by the way of the stairs. He did not relish the manner the doctor had taken to reach the bottom; nor did he stop to pick up the little man, but hastened into the office, as much probably from habit as any thing else. He was in a violent passion, however, and had some other feelings not so easily thrown off as anger. He was in a state of great perplexity, which was not at all relieved by seeing Mr. Joseph Kemble sitting, apparently very much at his ease, in the very chair he had himself so long occupied. He entered the office in such a hurry, that Mr. Joseph was moved to let go his leg and straighten up a little; as though he was not certain what might be the order of the day, and a state of preparation for the worst could do no harm. Neither party for some moments felt inclined or able to say any thing, and their eyes met with a dubious expression on both sides, to say the least, and perhaps a little more fire on the part of the Squire's than he would have cared to manifest, if he could at once have lulled his troublesome passions to rest. He had not much time indeed for reflection, but it occurred to him instantaneously that a calm and unruffled appearance would be most suitable. As soon, therefore, as he came to himself, he bowed to Mr. Joseph, and looking into his full round face, endeavored to satisfy himself as to the state of things.

"I hope I see Mr. Kemble well this evening."

"Indifferent well, sir! but stirring; pretty well for me!"

"Glad to hear it, sir! Have you seen your brother. Mr. Kemble?"

This question was asked in a tone of voice that at once opened a flood of light upon the mind of Mr. Kemble. Peter Twineall, he knew, would not for some thousands have allowed that interview, if he could have prevented it, and was evidently in a towering passion, for what had al-

ready occurred. But it was plain that he did not feel perfect confidence in his own power; and Mr. Joseph resolved at once to attack the foe.

"I have seen my brother, sir, and I find that his mind is quite restored. He understands himself perfectly."

"You think so, sir? You know sometimes, Mr. Kemble, that persons in his condition have an apparent return to reason, but it is only momentary."

"That does not seem to be the case with my brother, sir! And to convince you, Mr. Twineall, that his mind is sane, he has requested me to ask you immediately to his bedside. He wishes that instrument which you drew up for him before he was taken ill, and which was not designed for use until after his death; but which you have seen fit already to take into your own hands."

Never was Peter Twineall so completely at his wit's end before. But to hesitate now was ruin. He therefore answered promptly:

"Whatever papers I have, Mr. Kemble, as agent for your brother, shall be delivered up to him whenever he is pronounced by his attending physician to be in a sane and sound state of mind; and until then, I must decline, sir, giving up any of my trust. My station, sir, is one of great responsibility."

Mr. Kemble stooped over and gave his leg the slightest rub, and then straightening himself up again, looked at Twineall with a cast of countenance not easily misunderstood. He was deeply excited.

"That your station, sir, is one of great responsibility I frankly allow. But at present the responsibility you speak of is one that will crush yourself. Yes, sir! one word from my mouth, spoken aloud, and you are undone, sir! It would not be very wholesome for you, Mr. Twineall, to be breathing the air of our town, if it should be known that you have conspired with another villain to entrap and deliver over into the power of a foreign press-gang, the son of him whose property has raised you to the little consideration you have had. And I will publish it, by all that's sacred! I'll publish it throughout this town, before to-morrow's sun shall rise, if you do not at once place in my hands that instrument of which I speak!" and the heavy

fist of the speaker came down upon the table with a crash.

The color flew from the face of Twineall as though the hand of death had suddenly been laid upon him. His knees trembled, and with overpowering emotion, he sank at once to the chair by which he had been standing. There was silence for some moments, while the piercing eye of Joseph Kemble rested upon the countenance of the stricken man. At length Twineall asked, in a voice so husky as scarcely to be audible:—

"Are you sure, Mr. Kemble, that you are making a righteous charge?"

"As sure, sir, as you are yourself, that what I say is true. Mr. Twineall, I shall deal with you frankly. I have no desire to injure you;—if you have been so unwise as to implicate yourself with a great villain, I should advise you to get out of the scrape as soon as you can."

Mr. Twineall arose, and taking the key from his pocket, walked to the iron chest and threw back its strong sharp bolt. He then commenced overhauling the various papers which lay carefully folded in the different apartments of the chest. Mr. Joseph Kemble, though unused to the details of business, had shrewdness enough to perceive that this was only a feint either to deceive or to gain time. He therefore quietly arose, and walking to the door which led into the house, turned the bolt, and putting the key into his pocket, walked very deliberately back again to his seat. Twineall observed the movement, and casting his eye to the other door which opened to the street, observed that the key from that had also been removed. With a hurried manner, and in a voice that manifested great excitement, he immediately addressed his opponent:

"What am I to understand by that, sir? do you presume to turn the fastenings upon me? Do you take me for a child, sir, and think to frighten me into compliance with an unjust demand?"

"I don't want to frighten any body, Squire; but I mean that you and I won't part company until I know that all is right, and that instrument you pretend to be looking for where it is not very likely to be found, is in my hand; and I only tell you, neighbor, that in a few moments I expect

persons here who are coming to attend my brother through the night, and unless you at once do as I have said, you shall be put in charge of lawful authority, and your villainy exposed to the world."

The calm and decided manner in which this was said, showed Twineall that he had mistaken the character of Joseph Kemble. A moment or two he walked the room, and then suddenly stepping opposite the table by which Mr. Kemble was sitting,—

"What guarantee shall I have that this falsehood which has been invented to destroy me, shall not be circulated to my injury, if this paper you speak of is given up?"

"Why, I can tell you, Squire, just what guarantee you can have. Hand to me that paper, and then I shall let you out of this trap; and when you get out, you can take counsel of your own wits, and pursue that course which seems best to you."

Twineall, not caring to be any longer under circumstances which might indeed prove serious, drew forth a large red pocket-book from his inside pocket, and undoing the clasp, took the paper which was within, marked *The Last Will and Testament of William Kemble*, and laid it on the table.

Mr. Joseph Kemble did not hesitate at once to break the seal, and perceiving his brother's signature and the date corresponded with the time his brother told him it had been executed, immediately arose, and walking to the outer door, opened it and stood waiting for his guest to depart. Twineall hesitated, as though still anxious to have some further conversation, but hearing just then persons entering the hall of the house, he suddenly passed out and walked rapidly away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ONE part of the important business which Mr. Joseph Kemble had in hand being so happily accomplished, he at once returned to his brother's apartment. As he entered

the room, Aunt Alice was standing quietly by the bedside, with her little old-fashioned Bible clasped in both her hands, and the tears stealing down her furrowed face. She had been listening to the agonizing outpourings of the dying man, who, as he drew nearer and nearer to the dark waters, seemed to have more clear convictions of the folly of the past, and darker anticipations of that which was before him. The desire of his eyes had now become a canker at his heart. The fascinating charm, which had lured him on through life, had now been broken, and all the good which he had cast aside for *that*, and all the evil of which, for *that too*, he had ever been the cause, now haunted his trembling spirit, and tossed it as the frail bark is tossed on the raging billows of a wintry tempest. And he was now looking to this aged companion of his past days, whose humble carriage, and ungrasping, quiet spirit he had almost despised, for some crumbs of comfort to feed his fainting spirit; for some little light, feeble and twinkling though it might be, to cheer the heavy gloom that had risen up and was closing fast around him.

As his brother came up by his bedside, again the eye of the dying man was fixed upon him; and putting out his weak and trembling hand towards him:—

"Oh, my brother! Joseph, my brother!—I see it all now! Bubbles! bubbles!—Where is Apthorpe? bring him here! I want to see him before I die!—Will no one bring him to me?"

"You have never wronged him, or any one else, brother! You forget; your mind is weak. You have been always strictly just. You have paid your righteous dues to every one, and have only sought justice, strict justice from them!"

"Justice! justice!—ah, my brother! Yes! justice as the law defines it!—But, oh! oh! oh!"

Alice immediately hastened to get a stimulant from the shelf. But he again refused to receive it.

"It is within; deep within!—Frank! my poor boy! Where is Twineall? bring him here."

And Mr. Joseph placed the instrument in his hand. Tremblingly he opened it, and casting his eye over it and at the signature, handed it to his brother.

"Burn it! Nothing now can interfere with the rights

of my son if he ever returns. And if he does not, it will be all yours, Joseph."

"God forbid! I don't want it, brother; not a cent of it!"

"Tell Frank that it was his father's dying request, that in all his dealings with his fellow-men, he must remember mercy! He may be a loser by it; many will take advantage of it; and he will meet with much ingratitude; but still tell him to remember *mercy*; and I know he will! How he pleaded for Apthorpe! But, oh, this burden! I will give all I've got! yes, the whole! It sinks me! Oh, Alice, talk to me; tell me again some of the things which you said to me just now!"

Alice turned to the brother who was standing yet by the bed, and in trembling accents replied,—

"Perhaps Mr. Kemble had better say something. He knows more than I do, and can make it more plain."

Mr. Joseph was much affected. But, alas! what could he say? He was himself a man of the world. He had not indeed coveted riches as his brother had; his mind had been contented with small things. And yet his heart had been as truly fastened to the portion which he possessed, as had been his brother's to his accumulating thousands. He knew nothing of that trust in God; that love of better things; that holy principle within the heart, which elevates it above the earthly influence, and leads its panting aspirations to the only source from whence they can be satisfied: the fountain of eternal love!

"Maybe, sir"—and she again looked at Mr. Kemble—"if I get the big Bible you will read to him the very words which our Saviour himself spoke; there aint nothing like it when the heart is sad and weary;" and she stepped to a richly finished clothes-press, and took from a shelf a handsomely bound Bible, and placed it on the stand by the bedside, and then retired to a by-corner of the room. The dying man turned his anxious eye towards his brother, as though waiting to hear the words of life.

But of what use was the Chart of Eternity to one who had never examined it, and knew not where even to find the directions for that awful voyage? Upon the shore of that vast ocean had these brothers at length come in to

life's journey; and upon its boundless bosom one of them at last was about to launch. Dark clouds and impenetrable mist hang their heavy drapery over the whole horizon; and the rolling of the distant thunder, and the heavy moaning of the troubled sea throw their gloom into the weak and trembling spirit of the hapless voyager. A little longer would he wait. A better preparation for the stern encounter, he feels within his inmost heart, he sadly needs. Alas! cannot that wisdom which has proved so profitable in all his worldly calculations, help him now? Cannot the brother by his side—a strong man, whose arm is yet unparalyzed by age, and whose judgment is so ripe and sound—throw light upon his path and send some drops of comfort to his heart?"

"Read to me, brother! Talk to me about the Saviour! Alice has been reading, how when He died He saved a thief upon the cross—and she says He will save me. Oh do you think He will? Do you know about Him, brother? Has He been a stranger to you, too? Joseph, my brother, have we both walked the wrong road? Have we both lived for nought? Alice! Alice!"

And quickly she was again at the bedside.

"Tell me! oh tell me! my time is short!"

And at once she opened her little well-worn Bible. Her Saviour's history was no strange subject to her,—it had been the solace of her heart for years, and she well knew where to find all the precious passages that showed forth His love; and in her feeble, trembling tones, she read them to the dying man. While, on her dear old face, now dear to him as no other friend's could be, he fixed his eye, gazing intently, as though every interest for the coming world was concentrated in those golden passages which, in her wisdom, she selected.

"Oh! Alice, read that again! read that again!"

"Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." And as though his soul had caught a hope it could not lose sight of, he repeated,—

"Him that cometh unto me, I will in—no wise cast out!—in no wise!—no wise cast out!"

And then his lips moved, although no words came forth,—and the shadow,—the dark shadow from the hand of

death, passed over his still expressive features, and, like a blighted leaf, he dropped and fluttered, to his long—long rest!

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHARLES ASTEN was peculiarly fitted by nature and his previous habits of life to enter fully into the enjoyments of the city. The very contrast which its pleasures presented, to those which the country affords, was sufficient of itself to fire his mind and lead him captive. The young man, who for a while became his constant companion, was one with whom he might, with comparative safety, have associated; for being differently constituted, and with very limited means, simple recreations satisfied his taste. And having friends in the city to whom he felt somewhat responsible, a check was held upon the natural impulses of youth. But Charles, beyond the thoughts of home and the pure influence which those thoughts maintained, had no hindrance to the pursuit of his own inclinations; he had come to the city, too, with more means at his command than most of his age are intrusted with at the commencement of their course. The money which he had realized from the sale of his horse, besides what he had expended for a decent outfit, was quite a sum in pocket; and as the place which he filled at present supplied his necessities, he had quite a surplus at command, which he felt at liberty to use as his inclination dictated.

The simple and quiet restaurant at Billy's, presented nothing that could alarm the most fastidious; and the trifling cost at which its luxuries were obtained, induced a frequent call; until he began to feel almost at a loss for part of his evening's entertainment, if the weather or other obstacle interposed to prevent a visit there. Billy's, indeed, was not a dangerous place. But *the habit once formed of visiting a place of public entertainment every evening*, it required less persuasion to visit more exciting scenes.

Richard Kernachan did not often visit the store of Willson, Munger and Co. during the day. He was well aware that he was no favorite with the younger partner; and being engaged in a very different line of business, he was not often necessarily called there. But after Charles had been in the city a month or so, Kernachan began to make frequent calls at evening, which to Charles were peculiarly acceptable; for his life and gayety, and easy pleasant manners were just what he seemed to need. It was also quite an act of condescension in one who occupied the station Kernachan did, thus to notice a "raw youth" from the country, and who had little to return as an equivalent. It was, too, a very delightful thing to have some one to talk with about home; one who had been at that dear old place; and knew all about it; and who seemed, at all times, ready to bring up the little band who dwelt there as subjects for conversation; and Kernachan would sometimes, in his free and easy way, tell Charles just what he thought about the loveliness of his sisters, and especially the enchanting beauty of Janette. It, indeed, made Charles blush a little, as was very natural; but yet it was so pleasant to hear them praised, and for qualities which he knew they possessed, that he thought the better of Kernachan for the exhibition of his good judgment and correct taste.

"What a pity," said he, one evening, as he had been descanting upon the virtues of Janette, "that she cannot be a while in the city! She has never seen it, has she?"

And when Charles replied in the negative—

"I tell you what, Astén; I have got an old aunt in the city, and I mean to have your sister Janette come down and spend some time with her! You'd like that, wouldn't you?" and slapping Charles on the knee, in a familiar way, looked at him for an answer.

Charles smiled, and merely answered, "That it *would* be pleasant," in a careless manner, as though he thought the whole was a jest, or perhaps the mere overflowing of the warm heart of Kernachan for the moment, which might not again be thought of.

There was, likewise, a little pleasant bantering of Charles for his dissipated habits, and for venturing to such a dangerous place as Billy's; and for keeping such danger

ous company as that soft youth in the next store; and then laughing heartily, as though he wished to get rid of the excessive mirth which the prudence and caution of Charles had excited within, he, in quite a serious tone, and with a manner that bespoke real earnestness, thus poured out his feeling of interest for the young man:—

"Astén! I don't know why it is, but I have always, from the first, felt a peculiar interest in you, and I think I have manifested it; haven't I?"

Charles could not deny that he had. "Certainly he had, in every way."

"Well, now, Astén, I wanted to get you here to make a man of you. What would you ever have been, poking about alongside of a yoke of oxen; or behind a plough? you would have made a living, may be, such as it was. But you would never have been any thing more than a drone. And now you are here I want you to wake up, and see a little what's going on! what things are made of! So just get your hat and walk along with me, I'll show you something a little better than Billy's!"

Charles, as his brother had said, was too easily persuaded; he could not resist the earnest manner of Kernachan, and therefore followed at his bidding.

His companion, doubtless aware that too sudden a change might rather defeat than further his plan of introducing his novice to what he called "the world," merely piloted him to an oyster-cellar; and to show his disinterestedness, would not allow Charles to pay one cent for the really excellent entertainment which he ordered to be served up. And then, on their return, walked him, *nolens volens*, into a very tastily-arranged bar-room; and, calling for their best Madeira, and pouring out a glass for each,—

"Here's to the friends we love best!"

It was, indeed, the genuine article, and the thing was done with such an air of politeness, that Charles really felt flattered; and perceiving that Kernachan was noticed with much consideration, not only by the bar-tender, but by several well-dressed young men, who were in there at the time, he could not but think that it was quite generous in a person of such distinction, to be so particular in his attention to him.

Somehow Charles did not feel quite as happy that night on retiring to rest; and yet he could not think of any thing that was really out of the way. It was his first peep into "the world" which his companion was about to introduce him to.

It will not be necessary to follow our "man of the world," for such, in its fullest sense, was Richard Kernachan, through all the gradation by which he led, as a sheep to the slaughter, the unwary youth, who, with no guile in his own heart, and ever accustomed to purity and truth, "thought not evil."

Whether Charles Asten might be brought to cast away his integrity, pollute the fair character which he had ever maintained, and prove recreant to those virtuous principles which hallowed his home, may not have been the motive which actuated Kernachan in the wily course he took. He was seeking his own ends, and the ruin of the unwary youth was a matter of no moment, if those ends could be accomplished.

Time flies swiftly amid the excitements of a city life; and the steps which lead from one scene of dissipation to another, each more fascinating and dangerous than the last, are so easy of descent, that it will not be surprising to any who have tasted of the luring baits which each holds out, that in a few months Charles should have become at home among scenes which once his unpolluted mind would have shrunk from. And still his confidence in him who had thus led him amid the pitfalls of destruction, was as strong as when at his persuasion he had left the honest and honorable employment of a rustic life. We must not, however, suppose that Asten was as yet a reprobate to virtue. His tempter knew too well his part, and saw too clearly how strong was the power of the holy principles in which his follower had been trained, to risk a proposal that might startle his fears, and awake him to the danger he was in. He must first accustom him to the sight of evil; and when once accustomed to look unblushingly at her shameless visage, the more readily might he be ensnared by the destroyer.

To those who have been from their earliest days accustomed to attend upon theatrical performances; who go

there with their parents or guardians, and know nothing of the attachments connected with such establishments, many of the evils of such exhibitions are doubtless in a great measure obviated. They become accustomed to the excitement, and its power is weakened. They are not brought into contact with that which is unsightly and debasing, and are therefore comparatively in little danger. But to the young man whose first visit is at a period when his passions are easily wrought upon, who has no friend to check his liberty, and fears the observation of no watchful eye, there can be no set of influences so powerful and dangerous, combined in one establishment, as in a popular theatre. The gorgeous paraphernalia dazzling with its brilliancy, the enchantment of the novitiate by the well-arranged plot and the finished acting, are enough of themselves to take his passions captive and bind him in their charmed embrace. But when to these is added the refreshment saloon, where the young and thoughtless, as well as the middle-aged and hardened debauchee, mingle and encourage each other in the exciting cup, it need not be a wonder that from this vestibule of sin its votaries are hurried on to the deep pit of ruin.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"WELL, Asten, I am a little late to-night; but we shall be in time for the second act. I've been running these two hours to find a fellow that owes me a hundred dollars, and I can't find him all over! It's confounded bad for me too, as you know I am going to the country to-morrow. How are you off?—any thing over? Confound it! I never borrowed a cent in my life; and I'd rather be whipped than ask a favor, even from you."

"I can let you have it—two hundred, if you want."

"You can't, though; can you? By George! I don't like to take it; I *do* want two hundred; for I've got to let that old dried bacon, Tim Marsh, have a hundred dollars on account of our firm. They don't know the old fellow as

well as I do; and think a hundred dollars is neither here nor there. But I know he'll ask for it the first thing. So if you can just as well spare the two, I'll really be obliged to you.

Charles, too glad to accommodate one to whom he felt deeply obliged, opened a drawer in the desk where he kept his private funds, and counted out the required sum. It was, however, within a few dollars, the whole of his remaining stock. The drafts of late upon it had been more copious, and sometimes even such as to cause him some twinges of conscience. As Charles closed the desk and was handing the money to his companion, the latter remarked in a very careless manner—

"Does the old man keep money on hand, in the desk, as he used to? I used sometimes to insist upon his taking it out and depositing it. I've known the old fellow have three or four thousand dollars laying in his desk, a week at a time, without depositing it. I did not feel safe to have it so."

Of course Charles could not contradict his statement, and only replied—

"Did he? Well, I think he has generally, since I have been here, been very particular to send all except a trifle to the bank. But he had some paid in this afternoon—about a thousand dollars; but he has put it in the safe, and the key of that, you know, we put in the desk; and the key of the desk I keep in my pocket; so that if any one should break in while I am out, they'd have to hunt a little; and I don't think they'd ever find it where Mr. Willson puts it."

"What, back behind the papers, in the left-hand pigeon hole? Ha! ha! ha!—how often I've laughed in my sleeve to see how sly the old fellow would poke that key away! So he keeps it there yet, ha?"

"Did he use to keep it there? Well then, he has chosen a new place; for he always tells me to put it in the blind drawer. No one would think it was a drawer, you know."

"Well, Astén! now we have done with money matters, let's talk about something a little more pleasing. Have you got your letter ready? What do you think! I have persuaded my cousin, the old maid you have heard me speak

about, to go with me, and be company for Janette on the way down. My aunt is so crazy, from what I've told her about your folks and that certain young lady in particular, that she said, for fear she might not be willing to come alone with me, that Liz should go along. So you see, Astén, we will have her down. And then shan't we have fine times? But I tell you one thing—you must make up a little white lie, when you see the old lady, just to help me out of a scrape; for I have promised her faithfully, every week for a month past, to bring you to see her. But you know how it's been. And now come; let's be off. I am going to show you something to-night, a touch above common."

All this conversation, as the reader has doubtless understood, was carried on in the store of Wilson, Munger & Co., and from whence the two young men departed, as had been agreed upon between them, for the theatre. Charles handed the letter, which he had written to his sister, to Kernachan, who was about to visit their village on special business with Mr. Timothy Marsh; and in his kindness of heart for the benefit of Janette, that she might see a little of society, was to do his best to get her to make a visit to Mr. Kernachan's aunt. Charles had not yet been introduced to this lady; but several appointments had been made on different evenings, when Mr. Kernachan would take him to his aunt's establishment, as he called it. But it happened that some unforeseen event had occurred at each time to prevent Mr. K. from keeping his engagement. So that in fact, although Charles was very familiar with the name of the family, and of its different inmates, and with their situation and circumstances,—highly independent and rather fashionable,—yet, as has been said, he had never had the pleasure of an introduction.

The purport of his letter to Janette was to add his persuasions to those of Mr. Kernachan, that she should come down. It was a desirable chance for her to be introduced to good society, and to see a little of the world.

There was, however, one idea which Kernachan had dropped, in the fluency of his conversation, which had awakened a train of thought in the mind of Charles, and made him a little doubt, for a moment, the propriety of the

step when considered in all points. It was that it might be necessary for "cousin Liz" to go along, lest the young and timid Janette should have scruples in accompanying a young man, comparatively a stranger, on so long a journey. Charles, for a moment, felt the flush which some thoughts had started. But the letter was in the hands of Kernachan, and, although Kernachan was a little gay and thoughtless, he was a noble, spirited fellow; and it would be very unjust to have the shadow of a suspicion respecting him. So it passed off, and soon every other feeling was forgotten in the excitement of a popular tragedy.

In the course of the evening, Charles was introduced to three men, not exactly young men, for they must, from their appearance, have been verging on to forty; but they were lively, social fellows, and had very much the aspect of gentlemen. They were very cordial in their bearing towards Charles; and after commenting on the part of the play which had been gone through with "as a trashy, wishy-washy concern," invited the young men, Kernachan and Charles, to go with them and get a lunch. The latter declined; but Kernachan, taking him by the arm, and whispering in his ear,—

"Fine fellows! first cut! their company'll be as good as a play, and better than this last act has been!"

Charles did as requested; but his own feelings would have been better pleased with a sight of the play, poor as they called it. Kernachan had generally done the catering in all the little entertainments he and Charles had enjoyed together; but in this case he was a silent partner—one of the three gentlemen taking upon himself to order such a variety of "knick-knacks," together with such a supply in the drinking line, that Charles was alarmed; but as Kernachan smiled, and jogged him in a quiet way, as much as to say, "Let him go it! we are only passengers!" his alarm subsided; and being called to the bar to take a little something to whet their appetite, did as his companion desired, leaving responsibility with him.

In a wonderfully short time, they were summoned into an adjoining room of small dimensions, but neatly furnished, and with a table spread so luxuriously that Charles had never looked upon any thing quite so tempting before.

"And now," said the elder of the gentlemen, as he pushed his plate from before him, "every man must do as he pleases; no compulsion at any table that I am the head of! But after oysters and cold turkey I always throw down a glass of brandy, and it aint a bad bottom for the champagne to rest on;" and pouring out a glass of the burning liquid for himself, pushed the decanter to the next. "Here it goes! no compulsion; but, as an old hand at suppers, I give my advice, all follow who will!"

And all did follow without hesitancy, until the decanter was placed before Charles Astén. He did not wish to take it. He felt already excited by his unwonted indulgence, for the wine had passed freely during the supper, and he was about pushing the poison from before him when Kernachan whispered:—

"You aint afraid, Astén! do be a man for once!"

He had not let go of the bottle; and he poured out his glass as the rest had done; but the utmost he could do was to swallow half its contents, and, the iced champagne following immediately, he was glad to cool his burning throat even with that.

But we will follow the dreadful scene no farther. Alas! poor Charles! Could he whose tender love so long watched over you with fraternal care, whose heart could never rest if a smile was not on your face, have been near you now! Could you but have caught a glance from his eye, or a beckon from his hand, how quickly you would have rushed from a scene which, even now, your judgment condemns and your better feelings loathe!

How long he sat there, or when the scene broke up, he knew not! for soon all before him was an indistinct and troubled vision; a dream of darkness and woe!

The morning had long been throwing its bright beams into the crevices of the window, and through the glass frame above the door; and yet he lay upon his bed, apparently paralyzed by the strange and frightful remembrances which crowded upon his waking mind. That feast! how his heart sickens, as its disgusting scenes come back to memory in all their horrible freshness! And how did it end? and at what hour? He could not tell. And how did he reach his lodging-place, and who accompanied him?

Some faint idea fluttered before his agitated mind of opening desks and drawers; and as he awoke to a more clear and distinct analysis of his situation, a frightful thought broke suddenly upon him. Had Kernachan been with him? Was Kernachan a ———?

At length he became conscious that the hour of the morning had passed at which he usually arose. He sprang from his bed. He was dressed just as he had been the previous evening. At once he proceeded to the door;—it was unfastened, and the key on the inside. In great alarm, he took down the shutters and prepared the store, as he best could, in the usual manner, and then sat himself down upon a chair in a state of great exhaustion. His whole frame shook with agitation; a deadly sickness came over him, and he knew not but his hour of dissolution was at hand. How long he thus sat he knew not; but when the elder partner, Mr. Willson, came in, he was still there, and too helpless to rise.

Mr. Willson, though a strict man in all business matters, was blessed with a kindly heart. He looked with deep interest at the pale countenance of the young man.

"You are not well this morning, Charles!"

Charles did not reply; but the sympathy of his employer was at once excited. He hurried from the store, and in a few moments was back again with a carriage at the door.

"Come with me, Charles, you are too unwell to be here!"

Apparently without any will of his own, assisted by Mr. Willson, he walked to the door and entered the carriage.

"To my own house, George!"

The driver touched his hat, and as the distance was not great, the carriage was soon brought to a stand before a plain yet comfortable-looking house. A portly lady, of some fifty years of age, opened the door at the knock of the driver, and as Mr. Willson helped the young man into the house, she looked somewhat amazed; but with a countenance that manifested readiness to do any thing that could be needed.

"Katy! this young man is sick! We had better get him into the back spare room!"

And with surprising agility, for a person of her dimensions, for she must have carried about with her some two hundred pounds of flesh and blood, she ran through a long entry and then up a flight of winding stairs into one of the very neatest of bed-rooms. It was in the back building of the house, and was lighted by two windows at the side and one at the end; and from every window could be seen the waving branches of fruit and ornamental trees, with the clear, open sky above, and an abundance of grass and early spring flowers beneath. And all around, the eye looked forth upon deep yards ornamented with the same tokens of Nature.

The effect upon Charles was like the touch of a magician's wand. He sat down by a window, and his eye became riveted upon the objects that met his gaze. He appeared not to heed the conversation that was going on between Mr. Willson and his housekeeper; for such was the situation which the lady before mentioned held in his family. The former, having great confidence in his physician, was disposed to send immediately to him. But Mrs. Katy, not having the smallest particle of faith in doctors generally, and their own in particular, was urging him to leave the young man with her.

"He don't need the doctor, Mr. Willson; just let him be awhile, and when he gets to bed I will give him a bowl of something warm and nice."

"But I fear sweating him, Katy;" Mr. Willson had experienced some of her warm administrations. "He looks exhausted already; I think we had better get the doctor!"

"No, no! no, no! his medicines will exhaust him ten times worse! Mind, I tell you so! Just leave him to me! but see! see!—"

And she directed the eye of her master to the young man. His head had dropped upon his hand, and the convulsive throes, which shook his whole frame, could be distinctly seen across the room.

"Just leave him to me, Mr. Willson! leave him to me! Like as not he's home-sick! He's got a nervous shake!"

As Mr. Willson was rather nervous himself, and did not exactly comprehend what kind of a shake his housekeeper alluded to, like a sensible man, he concluded to leave

him in her hands; and he could not have done a better thing.

Woman was doubtless made to soothe the sorrows of man! For what sound so musical as her soft kind voice, when the heart of man, sunk in despondency or overwhelmed with life's bitter cares, draws in upon itself, and feeds upon its griefs, and wraps about it that heavy drapery which shuts it from the outer world! The very tones in which her words of kindness clothe themselves, have a power so nearly allied to celestial influence, that she may well be called his angel!—A ministering spirit from a better, purer world,—pouring the cordial of her unselfish love into his bosom, and teaching him, by her example of humility, forbearance, charity and hope, to throw off his earthly dross and anticipate the bliss of Heaven!

No sooner had Mr. Willson withdrawn, than Mrs. Katy gently closed the door, and stepping up to the young man, laid one hand upon his back and the other upon the rich curls, which lay all uncombed upon his forehead, and just whispered:—

"You are in trouble, dear, aint you?"

The torrent of his feelings burst forth. He wept, as he had not done since he was a child upon his mother's knee. Gently she caressed him; as though she had been that mother. There was no prying into his secret—no needless questioning. But she told him, "that she was a mother, and that she had a boy just of his age; and that he need not fear but if there was any trouble on his mind,—no matter what it was,—that he might freely tell her, if it would be any comfort to his heart!"

Many long months had gone by since Charles had listened to the accents of love and tenderness, and now they went to the very depths of his heart. He could have told her every fear and every fault. "He had fallen: he felt that he had. And when he looked forth upon those rural beauties, from the window by which he had taken his seat, swift as thought, rose up before him his own dear home; its fresh bright mornings and its glorious evenings; its peace and manly labors and refreshing rest, when work was done; and richer far than all, those loving faces, where purity and friendship shone in every lineament. Alas! alas! how

could he meet their smiles again; or listen to their words of love! He has fallen! fallen! And now what was he?"

Mrs. Katy had great faith in sweating as a means of cure. But she also laid much stress upon something refreshing and nourishing, to "strengthen one up," as she termed it; and so convinced was she that the young man needed something of the kind, that forthwith, she had a neat little breakfast of tea and toast on the stand beside him. And it was all done so quickly, and without his having any opportunity to negative her operations, that he felt called upon, from mere civility, to partake of it.

The doctor was not sent for, and it was soon very manifest that his services were not needed. A few kind words, a few fresh and pure thoughts, kindled at the altar of his beloved home, had done more than could all the drugs that ever were compounded.

"And now," said Mrs. Katy, "when you have eaten your breakfast, there is a bed. Just lie down, like a good child, and take some rest, while I fix up a little down stairs, and then may be you will feel well enough to come down in the parlor."

But Charles could not sleep. There were some things upon his mind which, now he felt a little returning strength, must be attended to forthwith. "He had come to himself," and was firmly resolved to unbosom all the past to the confidence of those with whom he had been living. Let the consequences be to him what they might, they should know the worst. As yet no crime blackened his heart. His virtue had received no real stain. The degrading scene of the past night he felt deeply humbled for; but it was as though one had fallen by venturing too near a precipice,—he should have been more on his guard; but his injuries were not mortal, and for ever more he intends to watch each avenue to evil. There were also some things in connection with Kernachan which he could not unravel; and there were some unpleasant thoughts which would come over him in reference to the expected visit of his sister to the city. He most heartily wished that he had never written that letter, or in any way encouraged the matter. His first resolve was, therefore, to unburden his mind to one of the

partners of the concern, or to both of them; and then take what steps he might think best in reference to his sister. These thoughts had been agitating his breast, forming themselves into shape, while the good Mrs. Katy was preparing his breakfast; so that when she expressed her intention of leaving him, and her wish that he might take some rest from sleep,—he thanked her heartily, but said, “he had no occasion now for such indulgence; but if she could possibly send for Mr. Willson, or Mr. Dugan, it would be a great favor to him, and might be to them.”

As Mr. Willson was occupied when the messenger which Mrs. Katy had sent, delivered the request of young Asten, he asked his partner “to go and see what was wanted; for he himself must attend to his bank account.”

“These blunderheads have made some gross mistake; sending me a notice that our account is overdrawn; a circumstance which, as you know, Mr. Dugan, has never occurred yet!”

“Just so!”

“Please go, Mr. Dugan, and see what the young man needs; and bring back with you the key of his desk, as I cannot get into the safe; and I shall wish to deposit that money we received yesterday afternoon.”

“Just so!” and Mr. Dugan went on his way.

Not long after he had left the store, Mr. Willson was thrown into a state of perplexity, by finding in the bank-book a charge against their account per check of two thousand dollars, of which he found no mention in his check-book; and which, of course, he was certain was some error of the “blunderheads.” He was obliged, however, to wait until the return of his partner, as it was a period of the day when their store could not, with propriety, be locked up.

The revelation which Charles made to Mr. Dugan, of every step he had taken since he had been with them, which led to the scene of the past night; and which he related with fulness of feeling that left no doubt on the mind of his employer, that he had been the dupe of a designing villain; and although the young man, he firmly believed, yet retained his integrity, he feared there had been some iniquitous proceedings going on during the unconscious state which he had frankly confessed he was in through

most of the night; and, therefore, as soon as he had finished, Mr. Dugan inquired,—

“Have you examined the desk and safe this morning?”

Charles acknowledged he had not.

“Just so! have you the key?”

The key was still in his pocket, and with some hope that his fears were unfounded, handed it to Mr. Dugan, who at once left the house.

There was a little relief now from the heavy pressure which had been resting upon him. He had manfully exposed his errors; and the performance of that duty had a tendency to give a spring to his almost paralyzed mind. But the relief which he had obtained was of short duration.

No sooner had Mr. Dugan left the house, than Mrs. Katy entered the room where they had held the interview, a lower front parlor, and invited him to walk into their sitting-room, which was adjoining and merely separated by a folding-door. He could not well decline the courtesy, and therefore arose and followed her. As he entered the room, Mrs. Katy, smiling very pleasantly, introduced him to a young lady seated by a table, and busily employed in sewing.

“This is Miss Gertrude, the daughter of Mr. Willson; I don’t know but you have seen her before.”

Charles made a respectful obeisance, but he was greatly confused. He had, indeed, had a glimpse of her before, as she had called on some occasion to see her father at the store; but he was busily engaged at the time, and merely noticed that she had a pleasant voice, and from the glimpse which he caught, he thought it was a very pleasant face. But now with a full view of her person, attired in her neat calico dress, and having her hair arranged with peculiar care, and her bright eye in steady gaze upon him, he was conscious of loveliness which he had not anticipated from the mere glance his former interview had afforded. She could not be called beautiful; and yet there was so much of kindness in her look, and the smile which barely played over her features was so unaffected, that the heart of the young man was at once touched by it; and although confused, as has been said, by so sudden an introduction, and with his naturally retiring disposition, yet he felt, after a

moment's interview, a thrill of pleasure he had not experienced since the time that he parted from the loved ones at home.

It is probable, too, that Miss Gertrude had not previously noticed the young man; for as soon as the smile passed away, she, more than once, turned her eye upon him with a serious and scrutinizing look, which might have been criticised, had any person besides the simple-minded Mrs. Katy been present to witness it.

Charles had much improved in his personal appearance since he left his home; and although the ruddy tinge, imparted by the suns and storms of the country, had given place to a more delicate hue, yet the loss of color was more than compensated by the manly character which rigid attention to the duties of business had imparted to the expression of his countenance; and a style of dress better calculated to improve a naturally handsome face and form. It was not possible that there should be much restraint where Mrs. Katy could control matters; and in a very short time she had drawn out of Charles a full account of his family and the scenes of his home.

"And you say that your sister, that one which seems to be your favorite, is coming to the city. Who will she visit? Have you friends in town?"

"She will stay, if she comes, with an aunt of Mr. Kernachan's."

Mrs. Katy and the young lady looked at each other in mute astonishment for a moment, and then the eyes of both were directed towards him; while, with united voice, they asked,—

"What Kernachan? Not Richard?"

"Richard Kernachan; the young man who was formerly in the store of Mr. Willson."

Mrs. Katy looked again, in great astonishment, at Miss Gertrude.

"I never knew he had an aunt, nor any relation here but Mr. Dugan!"

"He has not!" the young lady replied; and was about to make further inquiry of the young man, for she perceived that his countenance was deadly pale, and an expression of painful anxiety had gathered upon it; when a sud-

den interruption was made by the entrance of both partners of the concern with three other gentlemen, one of whom Charles recognized as the cashier of the bank in which the firm did business. The ladies at once arose to retire, but Mr. Willson, taking Charles by the arm, led him into the adjoining room, whither the other gentlemen followed.

Without any thing being said by either Mr. Willson or Mr. Dugan, who rather seemed to keep back and be lookers on, the cashier held up before the astonished youth a check for two thousand dollars, signed "Willson, Munger & Co.," and, in a stern voice, demanded if he recognized that signature.

Charles was in no condition to act with the promptness which the case demanded, and the sudden flashing of his countenance, followed by a pallor which was almost death-like, did not pass unnoticed by him who stood holding up the check, and with his keen eye was watching every expression that passed over his face. As Charles did not answer immediately, the cashier again addressed him,—

"I ask you again, young man, and your answer must be given without delay; you know that to be the signature of Willson, Munger and Co.?"

"It certainly resembles it, sir!"

"Don't you recognize it as theirs? And is it not filled up in your own handwriting?"

"Indeed, sir! I do not think I ever filled up a check for them of so large an amount!"

"We wish no prevarication, sir! That is your handwriting; and you *know* it is; and if you deny it the consequences may be very serious."

Charles was much agitated, for he was very weak; and his mind was so harrowed up with what he had but a few moments before learned respecting Kernachan, that he could scarcely bring himself to speak at all. But he looked steadily at the paper for some time.

"I cannot, sir, if my life was to answer for it, remember that I ever filled up such a check. And I should say the writing is not mine, although much like it!"

"Then, sir, you deny your own handwriting! Do you also deny that this is the signature of Messrs. Willson, Munger and Co.?"

"I cannot say, sir; indeed, I cannot!"

"Young man! I tell you once for all, that you must not trifle with us! This check was filled up by you! it is your handwriting! Any who have seen your writing will swear to it! If Willson, Munger and Co. did not sign that check you know who did; and if you do not wish to be apprehended for forgery, you must, at once, tell for what intent you filled up that check, and who signed it."

The hand of the young man dropped from the paper, and the deadly paleness of his countenance would have alarmed his inquisitors, had they been possessed of the common feelings of humanity. It only seemed to stimulate to more harsh measures; and as both Messrs. Willson and Dugan had retired, at the call of Mrs. Katy, on some special business, Charles had not even their presence to encourage him through the ordeal. As no reply was made by him to the last demand, one of the gentlemen, being a director of the bank, and a man of stern and rather commanding presence, stepped up close by his side, and addressing himself to the cashier,—

"I can see no occasion, sir, for our being troubled any farther in this matter. The sheriff will be here in a few moments to take charge of him. His whole conduct is an acknowledgment of guilt; a few days in the prison will doubtless bring the truth out of him."

Driven almost to the point of distraction, at length he replied,—

"Indeed, gentlemen! it may be because I am unwell, and not in full command of my thoughts; but I have no remembrance of the check in any way!"

The three gentlemen looked at each other as though at a loss what step next to take; when one of them, the director who had last addressed him, motioned to the others to withdraw, saying, at the same time,—

"I will remain until the sheriff comes!"

No sooner had they left the house than he walked to the door, and, turning the key, stepped back in a rapid manner to the seat where the astonished youth still sat. The director was a large man, with a countenance that might have been called handsome, for his features were regular and well set, and his hair and eyes dark. But his

complexion was of that pallid hue which usually denotes strong passions. As he knit his heavy, dark brows, and fixed an angry scowl upon the trembling youth, he raised his clenched fist and shook it in a violent manner close to his victim, as he pronounced, in a deep heavy undertone,—

"Now, you young villain! I will let you see that you cannot impose upon *me*! I *know* you, sir! I know you! I have seen through your cunning! You have been squandering money, and have forged that check to help you in your dissipated course. But I am determined to push this matter to the last extremity! You have no one to bail you (he had ascertained that the young man had no friends in the city, and probably none in the country that could give bail for him), you are at my mercy, and you shall rot in prison if you do not confess your crime!"

And then he paused, still holding out his clenched fist, and trembling with the excitement into which he had thrown himself.

The feelings which rioted in the bosom of the youth it would be impossible to describe. His physical strength was prostrated, and many things which his tormentor had said he felt to be true. He had squandered money, although it was his own; he had no friends that he knew of who could come to his aid, and the thought of his helpless condition added to the weakness of his mind and body. And then, too, above all his own pitiable condition, was the harrowing, distracting idea that his sister, his dear Janette, was, through his means, in danger of falling, as he feared, a prey to a bad and dangerous man. In an agony he exclaimed,—

"What do you want me to do, sir? I am an unhappy young man! I have done wrong! I know I have! Oh that I had never come from my home; or had never been born!"

Just at that moment, the latch of the door was turned, but the unfeeling monster who stood glowering in anger over the suffering youth, stirred not; nor did he heed the repeated effort made to open the door.

"You confess then, sir, your guilt? you did it?"

Charles answered not, for he was convulsed with weeping; and his heavy sobs could be heard in the adjoining room. The door which opened into it had not been locked;

a piece of furniture was standing before it, but it opened from without. Woman's ear is quick to discern the cry of anguish, and Mrs. Katy had now her whole heart alive with interest for the young man. A full disclosure had been made by Mr. Dugan of all that Charles had told him, both to Mr. Willson and the two females. And they, in turn, had communicated to the gentlemen what Charles had said about the aunt of Kernachan. Light, as though from heaven itself, broke upon their minds. They saw an unsuspecting youth, with his virtuous family, about to be plunged into ruin by the arts of a deceiver. The money which had been deposited in their safe was likewise missing; and but little doubt remained upon the minds of both the partners that Kernachan, or his accomplices, had taken it. Their own generous, noble spirits acquitted the young man, who had told all his shortcomings in such a manly way to those from whom, of all others, he would have been most anxious to conceal them. They had not a shadow of doubt as to where the guilt rested; both in reference to the money and the forgery. But they could not, as things were, do any thing to interfere with the course the officers of the bank chose to take, as the loss fell upon the institution.

But Mrs. Katy was influenced by no such considerations, and caring neither for law nor bank officers, she no sooner heard the tokens of distress, than she flew to the door, opened it, pushed away the table, and taking no notice of the gentleman who, in all his importance, frowned indignantly upon her, she threw her arm around the agonizing youth,—

"Tell me, dear!—what is it? What has been done to you?"

"I wish to see my employers! I must see Mr. Willson or Mr. Dugan!"

Both gentlemen immediately approached, and Mr. Willson being, with all his apparent meekness, a little testy when occasion called for it, spoke in rather a sharp tone,—

"I am not accustomed, sir, to have the doors of my house locked against me!"

"Perhaps, sir," and the director looked rather severely as he said it, "you are not in the habit of having rogues in your house!"

"Rogues, sir! No, sir, I am not! Nor do I believe that young man to be such,—if to him you apply the term!"

"Whether you believe it or not, he has confessed his guilt!"

Charles rose as though he had sprung from the hiss of a deadly serpent; his fair countenance, although bathed in tears, was animated at once with a life it had never known before.

"It is a falsehood, sir! a cruel, wicked falsehood! I never owned myself guilty of that crime with which you have charged me! No, sir! I am as free from blame for that as any one of you who stand before me! I have done wrong; but what wrong I have done my employers know. You may place me, as you say you will, in prison, and there let me die; but I will suffer imprisonment and death itself before I will ever own a crime that my soul abhors!"

No one who looked upon the glowing countenance of the young man, as his excited feeling rose higher and higher with the quickening thoughts of the wrong which had been done to him, but must have felt that he was innocent. But the unmoved official coolly replied—

"Well, sir! very well! all very well! You have acknowledged it to me, and that's enough!"

The sheriff, who, as has been said, was sent for, now arrived, and, at the request of the director, took the young man into his custody.

A scene of confusion immediately ensued, not on the part of Charles, for he submitted to what he could not help. But it was a new thing for this quiet family to have an officer of the law there; and his very presence threw them into high excitement. Mrs. Katy wringing her hands, and calling upon Mr. Willson "to do something or another;" while Miss Gertrude, with all her woman's heart glistening in her bright eyes, was looking up at Mr. Dugan, and asking him, "Whether he believed him guilty? Could he do such a thing?"

"Guilty? No! No more guilty than I am!"

In company with the officer Charles now came into the room into which the family had retired, and in a very composed manner, for his feelings, excited to their utmost, had

imparted strength to his whole system, addressed Mr. Dugan :

"I have a request to make of you, sir; and if ever I am in a situation to repay it, I will do it even to my life's blood;—that you will go yourself, or get some one to go, with all the haste that can be made, to warn my sister of her danger. Oh, sir! I could willingly die this moment to save her from what I fear!"

"Just so! don't be alarmed, Charles! We shall be your friends!"

"Yes, sir!" and Mr. Willson addressed himself to the gentleman director, who had followed to the door of the apartment, "it shall be seen that Willson, Munger and Co. are not afraid to be bail for a person whom we believe wrongfully criminated. Under present circumstances we have refrained from interfering. The check is a forgery; that we can swear to. But we shall not see injustice done to a friendless youth because you, gentlemen, *one* or *all* of you, may think we had no right to meddle with it."

Charles could only look with intense emotion at his employer. His heart was too full for utterance; and when he saw the smile of joy that mingled with the tear upon the face of the daughter, as she gazed upon her father's animated countenance, he felt, indeed, that he was not friendless. And his spirit blessed the noble man, and more than blessed the daughter; he could almost have laid his life down at her bidding.

It will not be necessary to follow the party to the court of justice. Suffice it to say, that Charles, on the testimony adduced, was committed as a criminal for trial, and bailed out on the recognizance of Willson, Munger and Co.

In the mean time, Mr. Dugan had not been inactive. He had, by strict inquiry, ascertained the fact, that Kernachan was about to go abroad, and that the vessel, in which he was to sail, would probably depart in a day or two. He had already left the city, and, as his employers said, did not expect to return.

Although Charles had some reason to rejoice when he found himself, by the kindness of his employers, again at liberty; yet when he learned this new item in the affairs of Kernachan, he was in an agony to be on his way to pre-

vent the mischief which he feared from this designing and unprincipled man. Mr. Dugan was also eager for the chase. He had no confidence in Kernachan, and doubted not that, could he but be seized, the evidence of his guilt would be found upon him. It was, therefore, but a few hours after the forms of law had been complied with, in the case of Charles, that they both were driving rapidly towards the home of the latter.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NOTHING could have filled the hearts of the little family of Stanleys with more joy, except the presence of Charley himself, than did a sight of Richard Kernachan; as he came in unexpectedly upon them, about the middle of a fine spring day. The good news which he brought from their brother, the liveliness of his own manner, and the seeming affection which he manifested for them all, caused their hearts to respond most cordially; and they received him almost with fraternal interest. Alfred was absent and not expected until the evening. This "he regretted most sincerely."

"I like your elder brother! There is something so sedate and manly, and so truly sincere, that, although I think a great deal of Charley,—I call him Charley now altogether,—yet I should get most warmly attached to your brother Alfred! And you are all well, you say? but I need not ask. Why! Miss Janette! I never saw you look so well, and your sister too. At the last flying call I made, you all looked rather down."

"I suppose we had hardly got reconciled to Charley's absence. How does he get along? Has he sent a letter?"

"Well; now to tell you the truth, I came off in such a hurry, that I had no time to let him know I was coming. You see I am pulled and hauled every way; indoor man and outdoor man, too. I sometimes hardly know whether I am standing on my head or my heels."

And then pulling out his watch,—

"I declare how time flies!—twelve o'clock already!"

"But you are not going, Mr. Kernachan? do stay and dine with us!"

"Would with the greatest pleasure; if for nothing else, just to take a good, long look at that young lady's red cheeks. How you *have* altered—I don't mean for the worse!"

Janette and Sarah both smiled, not, indeed, because of his notice and flattery; but he seemed so cordial, so disinterested, so off-hand and noble-spirited, that they passed over these little discrepancies,—as his way,—not meaning incivility. They took it playfully,—as it appeared to be given. They had decided evidence of his generosity in his treatment of their brother; and, therefore, trifles they passed over, as such. As he was not to leave town for a day or so, "he should run in frequently."

"And, by the way, Miss Janette!" This he said as they were waiting upon him to the door. "I am going now to attend to some business, and mean, if possible, to get through so as to take a little ride this afternoon, and I shall be extremely pleased to have your company. Now, no putting your veto on it, Miss Sarah!" seeing that Janette looked up to her sister, as though she expected she would answer for her. "You must not refuse me so small a favor! I don't get a chance to ride with a lady once in an age!"

"You will not go far, then? Sister Janette is not quite so well as she appears."

"Just as far as she pleases, and no farther! Half a mile, or to the ends of the earth!" and he broke out into a hearty laugh as he said this.

The ladies had to join in it, of course; and as Sarah could think of no real objection, it was decided that she should go.

"At what time shall she be ready?"

"Well! say three o'clock! I will endeavor to be here precisely at that hour."

And the parties bowed to each other, as with a light, elastic step, he walked through the little door-yard to his establishment, which was waiting at the gate.

The reader may, perhaps, wonder that Mr. Kernachan said nothing about Janette's visit to his aunt's; nor of the letter which Charles had given him. But Mr. Kernachan had accomplished all that he wished by the pretended interest for Charles Astens's sister. He had received his two hundred dollars, and had obtained, besides, through his means, many times two hundred more; and now, filled with the spirit of Evil in all its baseness and malignity, he was about to clutch in his hellish talons a pure, lovely, unsuspecting victim.

At the appointed hour Kernachan was at the door, and the simple-minded Janette, arrayed in her neatest apparel, fresh as the lovely opening rose with the morning dew upon it, stepped forth, and, with a light heart, tripped joyously down the little path and through the gate, and, waving adieu to her sister, was driven speedily away.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SARAH STANLEY began to look with some anxiety for her sister's return long before the sun had set; and then, when the shadows of evening were settling around, she took her station on the stoop, watching in every direction, and listening for the sound of wheels. The coming storm added to her anxiety, because she knew that Janette was timid; and the aspect of the heavens betokened a severe tempest. But she watched in vain, and the darkness and rain at length compelled her to retire within the house. All that she had ever heard of the faithlessness of man, now came to her mind; torturing it with thoughts which almost destroyed her reason. And then, awhile, she would even comfort herself with the hope, that some accident had occurred. And terrible as would have been the calamity, she almost thought, that to hear of the death of that beloved one would be a relief. And thus, hour after hour, the slow, sad moments numbered themselves, and still no sister came. At length, joyful sound! she heard the rapid approach of

wheels! She rushed to the door, and opening, it, flew to the gate—

"Oh Janette! Janette! is it you?"

"Dear sister Sarah! is this you?" And although she could not see, she knew the voice.

"Oh! Charley! my dear brother! But where is Janette?" and she burst into an agony of tears.

"Tell me quick, Sarah! has Janette gone?"

"Gone where, brother? She rode away to-day, and has not come back yet?"

"With Kernachan?"

"Yes! with Mr. Kernachan!"

Charles could endure no more. He had been under intense excitement all the day. He had not eaten, and his frame was exhausted. Staggering to the stoop, he fell prostrate upon it. The gentlemen who were with him, and had now alighted, immediately flew to the assistance of the almost distracted girl. They carried Charles into the house, and administering such remedies as were on hand, soon recovered him from the swoon.

"He ought to have something to eat or drink," said one of the gentlemen, in a voice that was rather grum, but manifesting, in his countenance—although a severe one—much interest for the young man as well as his sister.

"Just so! He's been on the tenter hooks all day! Come, my good fellow, cheer up; and take a little of this your sister has prepared for you!"

Charles did as requested, but the agony of his feelings was too intense to allow him to partake of food. He took a glass of the cordial, and then, looking at the gentlemen,—

"We must return immediately!"

The person, however, who had first spoken, was very busily employed in a conversation with Miss Sarah; and showed, from his questions, that he was not only interested but at home, in the work of tracking a villain. It was, however, some time before Sarah could understand that they were in pursuit of Kernachan. And when the whole truth was revealed to her, she threw herself upon her brother; and both of them, unmindful of the presence of strangers, wept as they had not done since they had stood together round the grave of their parents. The gen-

tllemen were not unfeeling spectators of the trying scene; and one of them, more than once, had to wipe away a tear, although it had been long since such a weakness had gotten the better of the man. So soon as the violence of their feelings had, in some measure, exhausted itself, Charles introduced to his sister Mr. Dugan—a partner of the house in which he was a clerk. The gentleman bowed very low to the salutation of the sister, and in a plain manly way expressed such sincere sympathy for the trial which had come upon them, that Charles was surprised. He had never before heard Mr. Dugan deliver more than two sentences at a time.

The other gentleman was the sheriff of the county; a man every way fitted for his post, and yet with a heart that could feel for distress.

"Don't be alarmed, Miss!"

This he said rather for the sake of quieting her fears, than from any encouragement which his own mind then indulged. The fox had clearly thrown his pursuers off the scent.

It was, however, a great relief to Charles that Kernachan had not delivered his letter. It took one bitter ingredient from the cup that he had not been made in that way, immediately and almost solely, instrumental in bringing about the calamity.

But what was to be done? For Sarah could give no clue to the road which had been taken, after losing sight of them from the house.

"Was the carriage, which he drove, taken from this place?"

Sarah could not tell; but she thought she had seen it before.

It was then proposed by the sheriff that they should make inquiries at the places where it was likely the conveyance had been obtained, and they were about to leave for that purpose, when a young man entered the kitchen and inquired for Mr. Stanley. Sarah at once stepped in and asked his errand.

"I wanted to ask Mr. Stanley if his sister didn't go down to the Cove this afternoon?"

"Why, sir? tell me! did you see her?"

"I didn't just see her myself; but Pap said, as he was a coming from the edge of the Cedars, he seed a young man and a young woman a riding, and they turned the lane to the Cove, and he was pretty sure the girl was one of the Stanleys. Well! just about dark, a horse and gig went along by our house, and there wasn't any one in it; and Pap said, it was the very same one he seed a going to the Cove. We tried to stop the horse, but he only went the faster, and we thought, may be, something had happened; and as I was coming to the mill, Pap said I'd better stop and see about it."

Sarah could only wring her hands, and look in speechless horror at the gentlemen, who were also at hand and listening to the story.

"My good fellow," said the sheriff, "could you pilot us to the road they took?"

The youth did not answer at once; but seemed to be hesitating for a reply.

"You know the road, then, do you not?"

"I know the road, sir; but it aint a very likely place to go at nights."

"Is the road so bad?"

"Why, sir, the road aint so bad as the folks are. Pap says he wouldn't trust his life among the bushwackers, no time."

"We don't want you to risk your life. Can you only put us upon the road?"

"Oh, yes, sir! the road turns off near to our house."

The sheriff now saw the way clearly before him; and resolved at once to call upon the deputy, and summon a posse of aids. There was evidently warm work before them, and they must be prepared for it. At first, Charles was strenuously advised by the officer and Mr. Dugan to remain where he was. But his determination to find his sister, if he died in the attempt, silenced all objections. And once more, Sarah, with the old servant, was left alone to sustain, as she best could, the horror of suspense, and all the excruciating agony of thoughts which would, in spite of every effort, pour their heavy waves upon her soul, and bring, at every surge, the blackness of darkness.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A VERY common resort for Jemmy Towson, when he had no urgent business on hand, was the bar-room of the tavern. And it was no very unusual thing for Jemmy, after having listened to the interesting debates which are generally carried on there, and delivered himself of all the smart sayings which composed his stock for the evening, to drop himself into a chair in one corner of the room, and tilting it back against the wall, resign himself to rest, and sometimes even into the very arms of Morpheus. And so long would these excursions into the land of dreams be extended, that sometimes the good-natured old host would be obliged to give several severe shakes, either at his shoulder or his head, before sufficient consciousness could be restored to enable him to understand that it was time to lock up, and for honest people to go to bed. At such times he would, after stretching his arms out at full length, and yawning once or twice, look in a very honest way at him who had thus interrupted his slumberings and say—

"Is it possible! No, it can't be! I haven't been asleep, have I?"

This evening the good man had retired to his chair much earlier than usual; having been heard to say "that he was very tired with running here and there all day, and didn't feel like talking, and should take a snooze."

His snooze, however, was scarcely entered upon, when he was suddenly brought to his full senses by a shake and a voice very different from those of the worthy host, and, on opening his eyes, they met at once the keen glance of his superior, who also taking him by the arm, led him immediately into an adjoining room.

"Towson! are you armed? or have you pistols? or daggers? or any thing of the kind on hand?"

Jemmy was wide awake. The rough shake and the keen look, to say nothing of his walk into another room had thoroughly aroused him. But the strange queries, in reference to such dangerous articles as had been named

threw him for the moment into such a state of alarm, that he could make no reply. He felt the buttons on his old overgarment even up to his neck, and then rubbed his breast quite violently ; coughing at the same time, and breathing, in the interval, very short and thick.

" You hear me, don't you, Towson ? There's a bad job on hand ; and you and I have got to manage it."

" A bad job ! what !—what ! any—any thing like to be dangerous ?"

" Yes, bad enough ! There'll be blood spilled, like as not ! But, life or death, I'll have the villains ! Say quick, have you any weapons, or do you know where to get them ?"

" You wish them for yourself ?"

" For myself ? No ! I never go on such a scrape as this without the needful ! Not I ! But *you* will need a pair of pistols, and we must take two or three smart fellows with us, all armed to the teeth ; for, from what I hear, the gang we are to go among is bad enough for any thing, and the fellows we are after will be hard game."

Jemmy rubbed his breast very feelingly ; and had a fit of coughing, which, from all appearances, would end in strangulation. But he contrived to bring out a few broken sentences between the spasms.

" This cough—will be—the death of me—yet.—I will do all in my power—but—"

And here the spasms were so violent, that Mr. Sheriff at once left him and returned to the bar-room, immediately proclaiming the necessity he was under of demanding aid in the name of the county, in arresting a gang of desperate characters who had collected, as he had reason to believe, in Cedar Cove. Three young men at once offered their services, and as their appearance manifested strength and resolution, they were accepted.

The party was soon sufficiently armed, and were mounting their horses, when Jemmy made his appearance. He stood in the door-way of the tavern, looking very much like a man who is about take his leave of earth and earthly things. For his face, as it reflected the lamp-light, was very pale and ghastly ; his eyes stared in a wild manner ; his hat was pressed down far on his head, and a red handkerchief enveloped his neck and chin. Some species of weapon

he held in his hand, but what it was the Sheriff did not stop to inquire, merely telling him to jump in quick, as there was no time to be lost. Jemmy hurried as fast as the nature of the case would admit, but it was with great difficulty he at length hoisted himself into the wagon.

" What have you got there, Towson ? Your weapon is heavier than yourself !"

" Well, it *is* heavy. But if I once get it up, it will come down with a vengeance. It will break skull and all. A crowbar will make clean work, when you once get it a going."

His companion felt almost disposed to pitch him and his instrument together into the road ; but as the leaders, who knew the road, had started ahead, he merely contented himself with letting off a volley of missiles from the end of his tongue, which, however, had no other effect than to produce another attack of coughing.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE party which left the Stanleys, reinforced by Deputy Towson and three stout men, had entered the Cedars and were drawing near to the tavern, which was well known to some of the new recruits, and of which, as they rode along, they had recited many very unfavorable reports, when suddenly, the men in advance of the rest, who were acquainted with the route, halted, and requested the others to listen. And at once each of the party sprang to the ground ; for close at hand was heard the loud oaths of persons under great excitement ; names were called out, and there was all the confusion attendant upon a violent *melée*.

" Follow me, gentlemen !" exclaimed the officer, who now assumed the command.

It required but a few moments to make their preparations, and, following their leader in single file through the thick and bushy cedars, they soon came to an open place

on which the clear rays of the moon fell; and towards one end of which a violent contest was going on. As the combatants were in some measure hidden by bushes which had grown up from the stumps of the clearing, it was impossible to ascertain the numbers engaged; but Charles distinguished, amid the din of voices, that of his brother Alfred, calling loudly for Nicoll Kelly. Rushing past the officer, and almost frantic with excitement, he threw himself towards the spot from whence the sound came, and calling aloud,—

"Alfred! Alfred Stanley! here's help!" attacked the man who had grappled with his brother, and was making every effort to throw him down. At once Charles was prostrated by a severe blow from his brother's antagonist, who had let go his hold to engage his new opponent. But before he could follow up his advantage, the sheriff seized his arms. Charles at once clasped his brother's hand,—

"Where is Janette, dear brother? where is she?"

Alfred grasped with all his strength the hand he held, but he could not speak. His very last breath was nearly expended, for he had been contending for his life, and his antagonist was a powerful man. Alfred could but faintly say,—

"Nicoll Kelly! will some of you help him?"

But Nicoll called out close at hand,—

"By dad! but they've got their desarts at last! the sarpints have!"

And indeed, as the party now closed in to look on or to help, as the case might be, there lay three stout fellows—near to each other, all alive, but sadly bruised, with no disposition whatever to test the strength of that arm again, which had thus levelled them to the earth.

"The sarpints have got their desarts! But," said Nicoll, looking at the sheriff, whom he knew, "if what I hear is true, there's them down at the tavern that it belongs to you to take charge on. These poor devils have been sat on, by that one you hold in your hands; don't let him go, I beg on you, till you hear the whole on it. But don't lose no time to get to the tavern, for there's more nor half a dozen on 'em that has run like partridges so soon as they seed your face, and there'll be a clearing out, depend on it."

Nicoll's advice was at once taken; and with all the speed that could be made, the party hurried towards the rendezvous.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WE have seen with what a light heart Janette sprang into the carriage by the side of Kernachan, and was driven off at a rapid rate. The village was soon past, and the road which he took led immediately away from even the scattered farm houses and into a portion of the country which was seldom travelled, except by those who might occasionally visit the woodlands, which rose almost like mountains at some miles distant. Janette thought not of the loneliness of the way, for a constant flow of conversation was kept up on subjects, which from their nature were agreeable to her; being on the part of Kernachan narratives of her brother's general life and duties, and on her part, of the outpourings of her sisterly feelings in view of all the prosperity before him, and in expressions of gratitude that he had thus been introduced. She could not but notice, however, a strange and not altogether agreeable turn, which her companion occasionally gave to expressions on her part of mere civility. The further they proceeded, the more frequent and startling these became; until intentionally, she changed the theme of discourse, hoping thereby to prevent what had begun to affect her unpleasantly. He was not, however, to be driven from his purpose; and after a period of longer silence than had occurred since their ride commenced, Mr. Kernachan ventured to lay his hand upon hers, and in strong and unequivocal language, began to express what he called the feelings of his heart towards her.

Janette was so taken by surprise; and the language addressed to her was so new; and the circumstances in which she found herself placed,—were so foreign to every thought of her heart; that for some moments, the tumult that had been thus stirred up within, prevented her making any reply or doing any thing to manifest what she really felt. There

was nothing in the manner of the gentleman which might be construed into an impropriety. Janette had never before been accosted in such language, and the liberty he had taken in clasping her hand might, after all, be an allowable one where Mr. Kernachan had been brought up.

Yet still, to her it was new and strange, and her whole soul shrunk back, and like a timid dove she would have flown if she could.

Emboldened by her silence, and perhaps construing it into a tacit acceptance of his favor,—he again poured out in warmer language such sentiments as are often common to the honorable suitor and the vile deceiver. Confounded, alarmed, and overpowered with emotion, the trembling girl burst into a flood of tears, and endeavored to release her hand from his embrace;—failing to accomplish that, she asked him as well as her excited feelings would permit,—“to return at once, and take her to her home.”

He did not reply, but as she cast an imploring look up towards him, the peculiar smile upon his countenance filled her with inexpressible alarm. And mustering every energy of her soul, she resolved rather to die than retain her seat any longer. They were now in the thick woods, and upon a road that Janette had never travelled before; only she knew that it led to Cedar Cove, a place associated in her mind with all that was low and dangerous. Just at that moment, to her inexpressible joy, she thought she saw the form of a traveller on foot, far ahead on the road; and although it was now dusk, and objects could only be indistinctly visible, yet an impression was made upon her mind that it was the form and gait of Nicoll Kelly. The only doubt that troubled her, was—the very unlikely circumstance that he should be so far from home, at such an hour, and in a region that he so seldom visited. But they were riding rapidly, and of course gaining every instant upon the foot traveller. Again, for a moment, the form was brought more conspicuously to view by its crossing a slight elevation of ground, and the outline of the person could be distinctly seen upon the distant horizon. Her joy would have been complete; for she was certain, she could not be mistaken, that she knew a deliverer was at hand in the person of an old friend,—when to her horror, she saw him turn

from the road and hastily urge his way into the thick cedars. Whether Kernachan saw the object or not, he was, for the time at least in which it was visible, silent; and when it vanished from sight he released the hand of Janette, that he might more easily urge on the speed of his horse. With the swiftness of a bird, and nearly as elastic, the frightened girl bounded from the carriage; and uttering a scream of alarm, which echoed far amid the lonely forest, fell heavily upon the ground. It was impossible for Kernachan to stop his horse at the instant, for he had just laid the lash severely upon him. And before he could bring him under the power of the reins, a man sprang from behind a rock at the edge of the woods, and seizing the helpless girl in his arms, took her from the ground as though she had been a baby.

“Oh! Nicoll! is it you?—save me! Oh! save me, Nicoll!”

“By Dad!” This was all Nicoll could say, for it was indeed he.—He knew it was Janette; but how she had come there, or what was the matter, he did not stop to inquire. She had called upon him to save her, and that he meant to do at the expense of his life, if necessary. And never did Nicoll have more need for the strength of his arm than at that moment—for Kernachan had not only great muscular power, but he was well armed for his desperate undertaking.

As he turned his horse's head upon the road to retrace the space he had passed over from the spot where the poor girl had made her desperate jump,—he gave a peculiarly shrill, sharp whistle, which must have been heard in that lonely region for a great distance, and springing from the carriage the moment he had stopped his horse, he came up to Nicoll, looking fiercely at him, and then in a commanding tone ordered him to assist immediately in placing that lady in the carriage. Nicoll had laid her down at his approach.

“By Dad, youngster!—if you lay your finger on that gal—I'll wring your neck like a —.”

But Nicoll was stopped from finishing his sentence by a well-aimed blow at his head, which made him stagger as he had never done before; and had well-nigh felled him to the ground. Before he could recover himself the young man

was upon him and would, doubtless, have laid Nicoll among the stones and shrubs that were so plentiful in that region, had he not been able to give a back-handed blow, not with his full strength, but enough to send his antagonist reeling to the ground. Had Nicoll been as quick of foot as he was strong in hand—he might have prevented any further injury by holding his antagonist down, and tying his hands and feet if he had chosen. But Kernachan was upon his feet in an instant, and drawing a pistol from his breast, fired in the twinkling of an eye.

Nicoll's arm, which was raised at the moment, fell to his side; and Kernachan, seeing that his opponent was disabled, if not fatally wounded, immediately attempted to seize the trembling Janette, who was now sitting up and screaming in agony. But as the vile wretch stooped to lay his hand upon her, a blow, as from a sledge-hammer, sent the body of Kernachan some feet through the air, and it lay on the road to all appearance a lifeless heap.

"By Dad! he's got his deserts.—But come, my darlin', we mustn't stay here!—there'll be more of the varmints along soon.—That whistle o' his'n wasn't for nothin'.—But I must tie up this arm first, or they'll track us by the blood." Janette was now able to rise, although sadly bruised, and in excruciating pain; the extremity in which she felt herself to be, animated her with the energy of desperation,—she assisted Nicoll to bind up his wound, and then by his help was enabled to make some progress, by his taking her up under one arm occasionally, and aiding her over the more rough and broken places. Scarcely had they got a hundred rods from the place, when they could distinctly hear the voices of men and their foul oaths. They were manifestly interested in the man who had been left helpless there, and Nicoll feared they would soon be scouring the woods in search for their lost prey.

"And, now, my darlin', we will just sit here where we be, for a while, till they've got out of the way, and left us a clear track,—and then I'll just take you up and carry you across to the Colonel's. He's queer and ugly to most folks: but crazy and heathen as he is, he won't harm you, *that* I know."

"Does Col. Apthorpe live any where about here, Nicoll?"

"Jist about half a mile, but we've got to go back the way we come, and cross the road there, and follow the gully round to the t'other side;—it's an out-of-the-way place to be sure;—but it's the best place I can think on at present; and by nine o'clock I've got to be at the south part of the cove to meet our company about that other business."

"What business, Nicoll?"

"Well! if you aint heered, Miss Jenny, there's no time now to talk about it: any more than there is to ax how you came to be here."

All this was said in almost a whisper. So fearful was Nicoll that their voices might reach those who were still to be heard around the scene of the catastrophe. It was indeed a trying moment—and the result to both Nicoll and herself, Janette feared, and with good reason, would be most serious.—There were many voices, and those of men apparently under the excitement of liquor;—for at times they would shout out unmeaning oaths, and yell with a power of voice, that might have been mistaken for an Indian war-whoop.

At length, the voices began to grow less distinct, and the practised ear of Nicoll could tell that they were on their way to the tavern, the great rendezvous of the place. With much caution they now returned to the road, and crossing it near the spot where Janette had sprung from the carriage, they entered a gorge in the hills, in which Nicoll soon found a narrow path somewhat beaten. This afforded to the suffering girl a little relief from the painful efforts she was obliged to make, when stepping amid the loose stones and sharp rocks, which covered almost the whole surface of the ground.

Several times had the muttering of distant thunder been heard—but so intent upon other things were they, that it was but little heeded. But the storm was evidently near at hand, and sharp flashes of lightning streaked down amid the woods, lighting up their path and showing the broken rocks of the gully which surrounded them.

Nicoll endeavored to give all the assistance in his power; but the path was so narrow, that he could only occasionally afford any aid when a projecting rock, or other impediment, made it necessary to sustain her tottering step by a firm grasp of his hand. At length he suddenly halted,

and as Janette came up, he struck his staff heavily upon a rocky shelf that rose breast high immediately before him.

"Wait a bit, my darlin'!—you can never mount this without my help!"

Placing one hand upon the rock he drew himself up, and then seated on the ledge with his feet hanging over, took Janette by the arm.

"You must help yourself a little, if you can do it—just try to reach my foot!" It would have been in vain had the effort depended upon her own strength. But the powerful arm of Nicoll raised her, as if she had been an infant—a moment she rested on his foot, and then he placed her beside him on the rock.

A few steps further they turned an angle in the path, when Janette suddenly exclaimed,—

"Oh, Nicoll, what is that?"

"Now you hear him—he's in one of his turns—it's the lightnin'—the wicked heathen that he is!"

It was indeed a scene that might appal the stoutest heart.—The dark cloud had nearly reached the zenith, and vivid streaks of lightning flashed from point to point amid the rolling heaps, illuminating the whole horizon by its constant blaze. The small tencement which the wretched man inhabited could be distinctly seen, settled low down beneath one of the dark frowning rocks that formed the very apex of the hill—on a level spot in front of his dwelling, the maniac stood—for he was little less at that time. He had a club in his hand, which he brandished wildly through the air; his head was uncovered, and his long streaming hair could be seen at every bright flash from the clouds above.—The raving words he uttered could be distinctly heard—but Janette closed her ears against the horrid sounds—Nicoll seized her arm—

"You must not go nigh him now, follow me!"

A rod or two from where they stood was a spring,—and Nicoll, feeling among the stones which surrounded it, found a seat for Janette.

"But you will not leave me, Nicoll?"

"I'll venture it!—If I can but get the club from him, I'll carry him like a baby.—But you must have a shelter

from this storm that's comin', if I have to pitch the old heathen to the bottom of this break-neck hill."

Nicoll hurried on his way towards the raving man hoping to approach him unobserved; but making a false step just as he was within a few feet of him, his staff struck heavily upon the rock. Apthorpe turned suddenly round. He fixed his glaring eye a moment on the intruder, and then sprang like a tiger at his prey, levelling the club which he held directly at the head of Nicoll; but in an instant it was flying in the air, and Nicoll's arm was holding him in a firm embrace. Loudly the madman called for his son to bring the gun.

"What do you want of a gun, neighbor? can't Nicoll Kelly come near you but you must come at him like a mad cat. Carlos, run to the spring and bring up Janette Stanley."

The struggles of the distracted man at once ceased. The mention of that name was like oil upon the troubled waters. Nicoll unclasped him.

"Is this the way you serve an old friend that has done you many a good turn, neighbor?"

"Nicoll! Nicoll! ha, is that you, Nicoll?"

"Yes, it's me, colonel. But if that club a yourn had a hit my pate, I guess there would have been an end of Nicoll. But there's one come to beg a shelter under your roof that you little expected."

"My roof! who? who wants to see me?"

"One that James Apthorpe ought to remember to the day of his death."

Who tended your Emily when the last sickness was upon her? who sat by her night and day, and laid her out in her last white dress?"

"Nicoll Kelly! Nicoll Kelly! don't mock me! don't bring my dead to mind! don't tell me that Janette Stanley has come to this den to see a poor outcast whom all the world hates! don't mock me, Nicoll Kelly!"

Carlos in the mean while had flown to the spring, had thrown himself into the arms of Janette and then led her along by a side path into the house; and as Colonel Apthorpe entered his abode Janette held out her hand to him.

"Have you forgotten me, Colonel Apthorpe?"

"Forgotten you! forgotten you! can a father forget the angel that tended his dying child!"

And the poor old sufferer burst into a violent flood of grief. The storm which was so threatening in its approach, passed off with but a few drops of rain; and soon the clouds lifted up in the west and a bright moon came out. Janette's first care was to see to the wound of the faithful Nicoll; and as the light shone upon him he presented indeed an appalling sight. For the wound he had received, irritated by the exertion he had been obliged to make, had bled profusely and stained the whole of his garments on the left side. He utterly refused, however, to have it touched; merely suffering a ligature to be bound upon the wound, which was in the fleshy part of the arm, and then wrapping an extra cloth over the bandage already on, he stepped out of the door to take a view of things there. The hill upon which this house was placed, was only a short distance removed from the south end of Cedar Cove, and from it could be had a full view of all that was going on around the inlet. Could Nicoll have had a choice, he would never have returned with Janette so near to the most thickly settled and nearest part of the Cedars; for although he had been obliged to make a circuit of some distance to reach the place, yet it was to avoid approaching the rendezvous, or tavern, where he knew that evening there was to be a scene of unusual rioting. And should those from whom he had rescued her, but have a suspicion where she then was, his life at least would be in imminent danger. The brig, Nicoll saw, was afloat; and he thought he heard the yo—heave—yo—of the sailors hoisting the anchors or sails. But listening more intently he was satisfied that the noise was on shore; and that something had gone wrong, for men were calling to each other in a confused and boisterous manner, and the sounds were drawing nearer and nearer to where he stood. He rushed into the house again, and in great haste asked—

"Colonel, have you a gun?"

"Yes, and well loaded, too!"

"Let me have it! It aint my way, in general, when dealing with my fellow-critters, to take any weapons but my own knuckles; but there's more stirrin' to-night than common. and may be I shall have use for it."

Carlos had brought the gun while Nicoll was talking, and looking to see that the flint was in order and the priming in the pan, he turned to Janette, who, almost unnerved by the prospect of any new difficulty, was looking at Nicoll with a countenance of great distress.

"Now, my darlin'! don't be consarned!—There may be some trouble, but if the folks which I have got together are true, as I take 'em to be, we'll have some help here afore long."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHEN Frank Kemble once more beheld the distant hills of his native place, a crowd of emotions rioted in his bosom. His heart yearned to behold again the few faces that he loved, and the spots that had been familiar to him from his childhood. Even the unkindness of his father was forgotten; and he resolved that his first efforts should be directed towards softening the hard feelings, which his excited parent had manifested at their parting hour.

"He will surely," thought Frank, "be willing to forget the past, if I throw myself upon his love, and tell him how true and strong is my affection for him."

Frank had been fully satisfied with his experience of a sea life. He had borne his trials manfully,—severe as they had been,—and was resolved, the moment he could land, to bid adieu to it for ever. As the vessel drew near to the coast, however, he perceived an unusual anxiety on the countenance of the captain, and was more than once puzzled at the strange manœuvring of the brig, especially when a distant sail hove in sight;—and could not understand why, when the breeze was fair and she could have been safely run into her port by day-light, that she was kept off and on, until the sun had set and nothing was to be seen in the distance, but the dark shadows of the hills and the twinkling lights on the distant headlands.

His surprise, however, was at once dissipated, and his suspicion of improper motives fully confirmed, when, instead

of continuing her course towards the harbor from whence they had sailed, the prow of the brig was suddenly turned and directed between two opposite lights, where she was soon winding her way, by the aid, as he perceived, of watch-fires, through the narrow channel of Crook's Inlet. He knew the place well; and felt assured that for no good purpose was she thrust into that secluded port.

It was midnight when the anchor was let go. A boat was at once sent ashore, to arouse the inmates of the tavern, the hatches taken off, and all hands set immediately at work in unloading the cargo. Unwilling as he was, Frank had no alternative but obedience,—for the captain had assumed a severer command than even at sea, and a short time after communicating with the shore, he issued orders that none of the crew should leave the brig at the peril of their life. He also was conscious of a constant watch over himself personally, by the keen eye of the commander, and at times fears came over him of some evil design against his liberty to leave the vessel, even after her cargo should be discharged. The work had been continued through the night, and the greater part of the next day,—the men from shore working with the crew, and apparently in good favor with the captain; for grog was served out plentifully: and Frank heard it whispered among them, that they were all to be treated by a carouse at the tavern, when the brig was unloaded.

Presently, as one of them was assisting him to lift a box to the side of the vessel, in a whisper scarcely audible,—

"Your liberty is in danger. To-night at 9 o'clock friends will be waiting for you at the south end of the Cove. Take the boat if you can."

Frank was horror-stricken, but he made no reply,—and his good sense told him to restrain all attempt at explanation. He must meet the danger as he could.

He felt conscious of its truth, from the fact that he was kept constantly on board the brig, and not even allowed, as the others, to step into the tavern. And he firmly resolved that he would risk his life, rather than miss the chance for his escape.

To his consternation, however, he heard the captain issue orders, the moment the last box was taken on shore, to haul

out into the stream. It was then just the edge of evening, and he had no reason to anticipate that those who were to aid him would be on hand. But fearing lest the last chance for his deliverance might be lost if he delayed, he sprang at once into the boat, and pushed her off. The captain had but just turned his back upon him to take his station near the helm, when he heard the splash of an oar, and in an instant understood the cause.

Excited almost to frenzy, he rushed towards the bow of the brig, and madly seized handspikes, and anything within his reach, and hurled them at the youth, who, impelled by the desperate circumstances of his situation, was working as for his life, with one oar at the stern of the boat; he having lost the other in his haste on pushing off. Exposed as he was, however, nothing aimed at him took effect; and his heart began to leap with hope, when to his dismay he saw the captain, followed by a few of the hands, spring into the water and make for shore, doubtless intending to cut off his retreat through the woods.

Nicoll, however, had not left matters to the faithfulness of those whom he thought he could trust, among these ignorant and generally unprincipled men. He knew that Alfred Stanley was a friend to Kemble; having opened the case to him, they selected a few choice hardy fellows among the farmers to be on hand in case of the worst.

And as the distance and the nature of the ground were both obstacles to travelling there in the evening, Alfred and two companions had gone on the morning of the day in which Kernachan had arrived, to the place of rendezvous. Alfred had not intimated his errand to his sisters, lest their fears should have been excited. He merely told them that he was going on business, and might not be back until late.

When Nicoll asked for the gun, and delivered his charge to Janette, "not to be consarned;" he was himself not very easy in his mind.

The brig, as has been said, was out in the stream, and there was evidently great confusion on shore; and he had heard several shots fired, and was conscious that a rush was making towards the shantee of Col. Apthorpe.

Scarcely, however, had he proceeded two rods from the

house in the direction of the water, when he was met by a company of friends or foes, he could not tell which, in a narrow pass, which would only admit a small number at a time.

"By Dad!" he called out, "don't one on you step one inch further, or I'll blow you to atoms." And he cocked his gun, and would have been as good as his word in an instant, if a voice had not called out,—

"Nicoll! Nicoll! it's friends!"

"Who be you?" Nicoll did not recognize the voice.

"It's me!—Bill Bacon!—come help!—we've got Kemble, but whether he's dead or alive, we don't know!"

Nicoll threw down his gun and came to their assistance. It was Bacon and one of his companions; and they were carrying the young man, who lay helpless in their arms.

Although Nicoll had but one arm, he used that effectually in assisting them with their load up the steep ledge, and into the house.

"Put out the lights! put out the lights!—so the drunken fellows can't find the place, for they are all after us!" And Bacon himself who had issued the order, executed it in an instant.

"He's been struck with a club. But come, Nicoll, we must march, for Alph Stanley and the rest will all be killed." And the three men rushed from the house, Nicoll tearing himself away from Janette, who in an agony at the mention of her brother's name, had seized him and was calling upon him, "in mercy to tell her what was the matter!"

CHAPTER XL.

THE man whom the sheriff had seized and whom Nicoll designated as the leader of the mischief, was the captain of the brig, who, indignant that he should be thus handled, poured forth tremendous oaths, threatening all manner of evil against those who had connived at the escape of his crew—or at least one of them. But the captain was now in strong hands and had to step lively. As the officers

thus accompanied entered the tavern, there was a rush from the back door, by most of those who belonged in that vicinity, and had been carousing there. The presence of an officer of justice was not agreeable to them. But four men dressed in rather genteel style, suddenly came out of a room adjoining the bar, and with the quickness of thought the sheriff laid hands upon them both.

"Gentlemen! you are my prisoners! If you submit peaceably, well and good. If not I have a force sufficiently numerous to compel you to." They looked a moment to see that his words were true, and then stepped back into the room from which they had just emerged, followed by the sheriff and his party.

A sad scene here presented itself. For on a rude bed lay the wretched Kernachan, pale as though life had ceased, and every thing around him covered with blood.

He cast a fierce look at Mr. Dugan his relation, and at the two brothers Charles and Alfred Stanley, who all had rushed into the house in expectation of seeing their sister; for Charles had taken the opportunity to tell his brother a little of what had happened.

Kernachan could only speak in a whisper; he requested Charles might come to him.

"I wish to see your sister, before I die! Where is she? is she killed? I fear she was much injured."

It would have been long before any satisfactory explanation could have taken place, for both were ignorant as to what could have become of her. Nicoll, however, had followed on to the tavern, and hearing of what was going on in the room, ventured to enter.

"The dying man knew him and wished him to approach. 'I have hurt you badly, I fear, but you have been well revenged, and then said loud enough for all to hear, 'This man is not to blame for my injury; I brought it on myself, I tried to take his life. Is Miss Stanley alive? and where is she? I wish to see her before I die.'"

He then requested the sheriff to approach.

"I suppose I know who you have come for?"

"I have come to arrest you, and these two with you, for robbing the store of Willson, Munger and Co.; and for forging a check in their name for two thousand dollars."

"It is too true! It has been divided among us: you will find what I have received in the lining of my coat!"

The money was immediately taken from its place of concealment.

"Now gentlemen," said the officer "you can either disburden your pockets of the balance, or have it taken from you; just as you please."

They perceived there was no chance for escape; and in a few moments, Charles, to his unspeakable satisfaction, saw the evidence of his own innocence placed in the hands of the officer. But a shudder passed through his frame as he recognized in the two individuals the persons who had been companions at that supper, the very thought of which was like a dark cloud upon his sight.

Kernachan again desired those who knew him to come near.

He acknowledged freely all his wickedness; and told the young men to look upon his dying bed, and receive instruction.

"Ask your sister to forgive me!"

These were his last words. And the struggles of death almost immediately coming on, most of those who had crowded into the room retired, and very soon the tidings were spread in whispers around, that the young man had breathed his last.

When Frank Kemble awoke to a consciousness of his situation, the first object that he looked upon was the lovely face of Janette Stanley, beaming on him with a kind smile upon her countenance, and her soft hand bathing his temples and forehead with the simple restoratives she had been enabled to find in that destitute abode. He was in much pain, but the beautiful vision was almost too fair to be true, and it was not until she had spoken to him, and explained as far as she was able, the circumstances in which he was placed, and the means by which he had been brought there,—that he could be made to believe its reality. It was not long, however, that she was thus left almost entirely alone to wait upon him; for footsteps were heard approaching; and if Janette had not been almost hardened by the scenes of trial through which she had already passed that evening, new terrors would have agitated her mind.

But the tramp of Nicoll caught her ear, and all fear at once fled. In a moment he entered, and as the light fell upon those who accompanied him, she uttered a scream of joy, and rushed into the arms of her brothers. Words cannot express the mingled emotions which agitated each heart of that little band. And the only expression of their feelings was in those tears which affection, in its hour of deepest emotion, calls to its aid.

Some few explanations were attempted; but the whole scene was too complicated to admit of a full development under their present circumstances. It was enough that she was safe, with sturdy arms around her, sufficient now to protect her from evil. Nicoll was already by the side of Frank, and after convincing himself that he was not only alive but like to do well, broke out into a long harangue on the villainy of the "serpents," that had "sot" their heads together to plan the mischief!—

"By Dad! though some on 'em has got their desarts!—Fur the Captain is gone to limbo;—and old Marsh is a lying up at the tavern with a broken pate, and a sore heart, for his whole trick is found out, and the goods is all in the hands of them as will know what to do with them; and such a fright as some other folks has got will be a warning for their deviltry in time to come."

There was no time to be lost now in returning to the village; and as Frank Kemble could not well be removed that night, Alfred Stanley and Nicoll Kelly determined to remain with him; Nicoll first ascertaining that the Colonel had wherewith in the house to replenish the big pot; of which from necessity the latter had learned the use. For said Nicoll, "After sich a night as this, a few bowls of the genuine stuff won't be amiss!" and looking at Frank, "For bruises and sich like there aint nothin' up to it,—it warms inside and out!"

It had been determined by the sheriff that he should remain through the night with those he had arrested. The conveyance he came in, therefore, was at the disposal of the party; and as Mr. Dugan likewise concluded to stay and see to the decent interment of the remains of Kernachan. Charles and Janette were provided with the means of travelling, and were soon piloted by Nicoll to the open road.

The meeting of the sisters can be better imagined than described. It was not merely life from the dead; it was light and joy and the heart's richest emotions,—instead of darkness and misery and despair.

And then as both Charles and Janette unfolded, each the mysteries of their individual trial, and the steps by which they had been delivered, Sarah could only lift her heart in overflowing gratitude to their great Preserver.

And now their old dear home is to be again a scene of social enjoyment; for Mr. Dugan had told Charles that if he pleased they would spend a few days there. And Frank Kemble had asked the privilege of a home with Alfred until his strength should be restored. The trying scenes which had taken place at his own house were so recent as to render a return there immediately, repugnant to his feelings.

It was the evening of the second day after the scenes which have been just recorded, when, arrayed in their neatest attire, with every thing around them shining in its best dress,—the two sisters and brother were watching anxiously the arrival of their expected guests. Janette had been running to the door, or sending Charley there to look out for the carriages, for some time before the evening had fairly set in:—and even now, although the bright light within had thrown all without doors into obscurity, yet she would, between every visit from the pantry to the table she was setting, run to the window, and shading her eyes from the blaze of the lamps peer as far as she could into the darkness. So eager was she to welcome the party to the comforts of her home.

"Run, Charley, run!—open the door!—they have come!" at length she called out, on taking, perhaps, the twentieth look. And Charley ran at her bidding, and opening the door, Alfred, with Frank leaning on his arm, and Mr. Dugan following, were at once within the little room.

Frank was still in his sailor's rig, and Janette really thought she had not only never seen so handsome a sailor before;—but had never noticed that Frank Kemble was so fine a looking fellow. He had altered, indeed, since they had last seen him,—but not for the worse. The exposure and trials he had endured, had imparted a more manly

character to his countenance; and even his dress, so in contrast with his situation, had its influence in his favor.

A good supper is no bad part of a hearty welcome; and when Sarah earnestly attempted it, she could gather together as great a variety of tempting dishes for such a meal, as a hungry man need desire. Mr. Dugan had never seen such a table before, he was very sure; and had never eaten with such a relish. And so long did he seem disposed to sit and hold converse with the sweet little mistress at the head of the table, that Frank and Janette, more than once, had a pleasant wink at each other, at Sarah's expense,—and all through the long evening, for they made late hours that night, Mr. Dugan did not seem to realize that there was any one in the room but Sarah,—and to the utter astonishment of Charley, there appeared to be no end to the flow of his conversation. Never before did he suppose that the man of business had thoughts for any thing else, or words to spare on any other subject. Mr. Dugan had risen immensely in the esteem of Charles, within the last few days. The feelings of his heart, as well as the treasures of his mind, had been revealed in a way that could not be misunderstood.

But, dear reader, can you have patience? A heart scene is at hand. We have stumbled upon one of those cases where love has most unexpectedly thrust his little meddlesome self in our way. Mr. Dugan was a bachelor, of a little more than thirty years of age, who had untiringly attended to the routine of business, and apparently never suffered his mind to wander from its engrossing interests. He had, however, found time to read, and had laid up a fund of useful knowledge, as well as a good supply of intellectual dainties,—so that he was not only at home behind his counter and at his desk, but in the politer circles of life could hold his place with ease, and was often the bright star in many a social circle.

He had, however, resolutely set his face against the softer feelings, and had not hesitated to declare his determination to pass his pilgrimage alone. It is never worth while for poor feeble man to make rash resolutions; for like the armor of Achilles, there is always some unguarded part, some avenue to the heart, in which, before he is aware,

the little urchin sends his arrow: and man, stern, resolute, determined man, yields a ready victim and goes chained for life!

That evening, as has been said, was quite a long one in that happy circle, and the next day Mr. Dugan showed no disposition to go abroad. He said he felt so much at home; he loved the quiet of their little room so well; it was so sweet a resting-place; such a delightful contrast to the whirl of business; that he cared not to leave it for the little while he stayed. And the next evening, and the following day, still found him ever pouring out to the listening ear of Miss Sarah, some sparkling thought, or reading some fine extract, that he had chanced to light upon. And even sometimes he gazed at her in a fit of deep abstraction, until the lovely girl, conscious of something wrong, she knew not what, would blush and blunder with her work, and wonder what ailed the man, or what ailed her. All the meanwhile the little mischief-maker was winding his coils about, and smiling to see the work progressing so silently, yet so sure.

And yet Mr. Dugan was a man not easily deceived, as to the value of the commodities he dealt in, nor could he be taken advantage of, by any exterior polish or tinsel show. He had mingled sufficiently with the flutterers of fashion to understand their worth, and he had never before met with those qualities with which his heart could truly sympathize, and was therefore not conscious of his own weakness.

The whole scene was new to him. He had been born and educated in the city, and had only seen the country, as he stopped at its taverns, or congregated with the multitude, at those places of public resort to which crowds from the city, as well as from the country, pay their annual visits. He had never mingled with those who had been reared upon their own soil, surrounded with the loveliness and the beauties of nature: where every flower and every tree speaks a lesson of purity to the heart, and where the very freshness of the world which incloses them seems incorporated with their being. It must not be wondered at, then, if a pure and discriminating mind should have been affected when so unexpectedly brought in contact with loveliness that had never breathed a tainted atmosphere; and whose very thoughts seemed to well up from a fountain of purity.

And then the warm and undisguised affection that flowed from heart to heart around this band of brothers and sisters, was so catching in its influence, that one could scarcely witness it in all its simplicity and truthfulness, without wishing to be a sharer with them.

It must not be thought strange, then, if Mr. Dugan should have wished to prolong his stay, and seemed in no haste to return to the drudgery of business.

But how was Sarah affected? And were there any feelings at work to make her enjoy the social scene, beyond the mere desire to make the visit agreeable to the patron of her brother? This question can be better answered by the result, than by any train of reasoning. For the heart of lovely woman, when in its purer state, can never yield but where its resting-place is found. No external advantages,—no coveting of wealth,—no desire for a better condition, mingle with the free surrender of her confidence and love. And when the morning came that their guests were to depart, and when they were borne away, after all the farewells had been said, why did that lovely girl, clasping her arms about her sister's neck, and pressing her fondly to her palpitating heart, shed such floods of tears?

They were not signs of sorrow; but the mere overflowing of that love which bound them to each other, at the thought that the beginning of their separation had commenced

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FRANK KEMBLE recovered rapidly from the effects of the injuries which he had received, under the kind care of those two ministering spirits that had taken him in charge; and so contented was he with the lovely society he had fallen into, that he seemed in no haste to remove to his own desolate home. He had, however, arranged things there upon a different footing from what they had been while his father lived.

Old Aunt Alice was no longer housekeeper. Her life

of faithful service was rewarded by a settlement, that made her independent for the remainder of her days. She was not to remove from the home she had so long blessed. Frank would not have missed her dear old face, nor have been without the privilege of her wholesome counsel and her ardent prayers, for any earthly consideration.

His business matters likewise had been attended to in a way which convinced all, who had any interest therein, that he by no means intended to squander the inheritance he had received. Mr. Jeremiah Talbot had been consulted by him, as a person in whose judgment he could confide; and the old gentleman entered into all the generous yet prudent views of the young man, with an ardor that showed a great change from his former self. He even became so closely attached to his protegee, that not a day passed but he would spend many hours in his company.

The spring had now burst forth in all its beauty, and Frank yet lingered at the Stanleys. A great intimacy had been formed between him and the little family;—pleasant rides and pleasanter walks were constantly enjoyed by the two ladies and himself, while Alfred was busily employed with the pressing labors that the opening season forced upon him.

The evenings alone found them all together, holding such sweet converse and enjoying such rich scenes of social intercourse, as none can know, but those whose unselfish spirits, blending in harmony, taste the bliss of pure friendship. There must be an end, however, to all earthly scenes, whether of sorrow or of joy.

Frank felt that the time had come, when he could no longer plead an apology for lingering there, agreeable as it was to his feelings. He must take the responsibilities of his station, and do all in his power to shed the blessed light of a pleasant home upon his own dwelling.

The last evening which he expected to spend with them was at hand. But as the sun had not yet gone down, and the air was soft with the balmy breath of spring, he playfully asked "Sister Janette," a title which he had often given her as well as to Sarah,—if she would not take one more walk to the pleasant grove to which they had so often resorted. Janette colored a little; for hitherto Sarah had always made one

of the party. But she could not say nay, to one whom she had allowed to call her by that sacred title; and throwing on her pretty gipsy bonnet, she took his arm; and although her step had a little nervousness in its tread, she endeavored to assume as playful a manner, as if her sister had been, as usual, resting on the other arm of her companion. Frank, however, seemed to have lost the vivacity which generally marked his conversation; and more than once before they reached the terminus of their walk she had rallied him upon his sober countenance and silent tongue. It was, indeed, a lovely evening; and the sun, about to bid adieu to the clouds which were clustering still around his path, threw back upon them such a flood of rays that they seemed like a golden vesture which he had left behind, to bless the earth awhile with its light and beauty when his quickening beams could be no longer felt. And as the youthful pair entered the grove, every joyous bird that had perched upon its roost, was pouring forth its sweet evening hymn to the Being whose hand had meted out to them the pleasures of the past day. Janette had just pointed to the glowing west, and was about to utter an exclamation of delight, when Frank, who had been silent for some minutes, gently grasped the hand which was leaning on his arm.

"Dear Janette!" He said nothing more; but the tremulous tones in which he spoke these words clearly revealed that he was oppressed with deep emotion.

And why does the lovely girl thus droop her head? And why that sudden tremor which, like an electric shock, has seized her frame? Does fear disturb her? Why then recline upon that arm, and make no effort to withdraw that hand? Would she not trust that noble youth, as surely as she would the dear ones that have from life been nestled with her?

"Dear Janette!—will you be mine?—*can* you—*do* you, love me?" What! nothing but tears to give, in return for that manly heart which has thrown its burning thoughts open to your ear!

"I have troubled you, Janette!"

"Oh, no! no! no!"

"Then you *do* love me? and I may hope you will be mine?"

The reply which Janette made is too sacred but for the ear of "faithful love." It was only whispered from her trembling lips, and yet it filled his heart with the joyful assurance that the lovely being by his side was *his* and only his forever.

The moon was just rising in beauty as Frank and Janette entered the gate, and smiled pleasantly to Alfred and Sarah, who, each seated at a window, were enjoying the soft air and the loveliness of nature in her evening dress. As they entered the room, Janette still leaned on the arm of him to whom she had now committed her pure and loving heart.

"Brother Alfred!" said Frank, immediately stepping before him with his lovely burden,—*"I have a great favor to ask of you! Can you spare me this sister, whom I know you love so dearly? She has promised to be mine, with this proviso,—that her brother Alfred gives his full consent."*

Alfred could not reply. But rising from his seat, he clasped her fondly to him,—and then taking the hand which she had released from her lover, he placed it back again,—

"She has been a dear sister!—may God bless her and you too."

Frank's next care was to get the wretched Apthorpe from his retreat, into some more comfortable situation. This he found a more difficult undertaking, than any he had attempted. It was in vain, that he presented him with a deed of all the property which he had lost. He resolutely determined never to set his foot again on a place associated with the terrible vicissitudes of his past life. Into the house of Frank, too, he would not enter. That also was connected with an hour of misery he could not forget.

And it was only when the beautiful Janette united her entreaties, that for her sake and for his boy, who with tears begged the wretched father to listen to her plea, he was induced to accept a comfortable dwelling, which Frank should erect for him, close by the residence of Nicoll Kelly, and until that was finished, he was to share the humble home and fare of the latter. He was not just the companion Nicoll fancied, but his regard to those who were doing their best for the comfort of the sufferer, induced him to assent to the proposal.

As for Nicoll himself, there was not much to be done. His contented mind, his plain diet, and his wandering habits, made all plans of improving his condition superfluous. There was, however, such a supply of the little luxuries which Aunt Polly fancied, so constantly on hand, that Nicoll had no occasion thereafter to concern himself about any outlay for her.

It is doubtful, however, whether the bountiful supply of the choicest game which the woods afforded that always hung in the larder of "his darling," as he called the pretty bride at the Kemble mansion, did not fully repay the cost of Aunt Polly's extras.

Mr. Joseph Kemble had some terrible "turns" daily, for some time after the scenes attending his brother's death; and his good wife was kept in a constant state of alarm. But hearing that an eel-skin tightly bound above the afflicted part would be a remedy against the evil, and having firm faith in very simple means, he tried the experiment, and to his great joy found relief. So fearful, however, was he of any thing that might cause excitement, he would, for no consideration—not even to grace Frank's wedding—leave his home. He was contented without the world, and the world soon forgot that he existed. It was, however, a pleasant relaxation for Mr. Jeremiah to walk out to his abode, and talk of old times and better days; when every thing was so quiet, and when people lived and died in peace; and Frank, too, and his lovely wife were often at his house, and never left the old man without a blessing on their kind hearts.

Mr. Peter Twineall, Squire Peter, for some cause which none cared much to inquire into, made a sudden disposition of his property and removed to the city. It afforded a larger sphere for his talents. It was often remarked by those who cared to say any thing about him, "That somehow since Squire Peter had pulled up stakes, things had been more peaceable and quiet than they had ever been known since the memory of the 'oldest inhabitant.'"

Mr. Marsh had a great deal of trouble about his worldly matters, and laid much of the blame on "that scamp," as he was pleased to call his old friend. But as people in general had formed the opinion that there was not much

of a choice, as to the honorable character of either, it was of little consequence to them, whether his difficulties had been brought about by his own mismanagement, or that of another.

"He had got his deserts," as Nicoll Kelly often said, and that was just as it should be.

Charles Asten returned to his situation in the city, with some lessons which he never forgot.

He became more than ever a favorite with Mr. Willson; and as Mrs. Katy insisted upon it, that "Mr. Willson had ought to take him into his own house, and see to the young man, and not leave him to get into the snares of evil doers;" he, to gratify the good lady, and, perhaps, some one else, who did not like to appear forward in the matter, consented to it.

It was indeed a snug house, and Charles found the company there so agreeable, that he never after cared even to spend an evening at Billy's.

When Sarah and Janette were about to bid adieu to their dear old home, those who claimed an interest in them, and by virtue of their union had become entitled to their worldly effects, requested Alfred to grant them a moment's private interview.

He left his weeping sisters, and as the three brothers closed the door and were alone, Mr. Dugan took his hand, and speaking in a tone that betrayed the deep feelings that oppressed him,—

"We feel, my dear fellow, that we are taking from you those whom you dearly love! You have acted nobly by them; you have labored untiringly in your youth to sustain and cherish them; and teey have told us of your generous, noble deed in dividing your patrimony with them, unasked, unwished for, as it was. And now, as sharers with them in all the blessings which your love and faithfulness have conferred, we must share with you in your generous act. The title which our partners now possess to this dear spot, we would not for their sakes, nor for our own, wish to give up; but you must accept, as a brother's gift from us, this trifle."

Alfred could not reply, but pressing warmly the hand he had held for a moment, gave vent to his feelings, which

had already, before this interview, been excited to their utmost stretch.

"We wish," said Frank, "to enjoy our prosperity with you, we wish you to erect for yourself a handsome mansion on this spot, so sacred to us all,—accept it as a brother's gift, dear Alfred!"

"I will! since to reject what is so nobly, kindly given, would only do violence to your love. I will erect a mansion, as you say, more fitting to receive my friends than the old home, and I will place it near this spot. But while I live, and this tenement which has held us all so long, shall last, it must remain just as it has been; for every board that covers it, and every room within it, are hallowed by associations that I never, never wish to lose!"

And now, dear reader, the road we have travelled together, has come to a turning point, and we must part. If you have enjoyed the journey, we then part friends; and may hope to roam again side by side; and if you have not, it is high time that we separate.

THE END.