

SECRETS

OF A

YOUNG GIRL

IN WORDS AND PICTURES.



FOR PROSPECTUS SEE OTHER SIDE.

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YOUNG GIRL

In Words and Pictures.

CHAPTER I.

A REHEARSAL.—A NOBLE PATRON OF THE DRAMA.

PERHAPS there is no place in the world that is so utterly wretched and cheerless as a theatre during the day, presenting as it does so powerful, and, to the uninitiated, so strange a contrast, as it does at night.

The interior of all theatres are much the same during rehearsal; it is always gloomy and desolate, and generally lit only by a faint and sickly light from the row of windows at the back of the gallery. The boxes, dress circle and the ornamental portions of the house, are covered with huge winding sheets of unbleached calico. A little elderly female is busily engaged in sweeping up the remnants of the previous night's play bills, pieces of orange-peel, and ginger-beer corks, out of the pit and as her broom knocks against the seats, a dozen sullen echoes are awakened in the vast building, adding to the sad and deserted appearance of the place.

The orchestra is lit by one little jet of gas, and its sole occupant the leader of the band, who is eliciting the most heart-rending sounds from his violin.

In the left hand corner, or, what is more properly termed the "prompt" side of the stage, is a little table, covered with manu-

script, pens, ink and paper, before which is seated a young man, with a care-worn and anxious face. This is the prompter.

Upon the stage, in groups, are a number of persons of both sexes, some flashily others seedily dressed. These are the ladies and gentlemen of the establishment—the actors and actresses—the Hamlets and Ophelias—the Rob Roys and Helen Macgregors. The lessee and stage-manager, a Mr. Bowers, is a portly-looking man, with a countenance rather inflamed with strong potations, a remarkably hoarse voice, and a style of conversation greatly enriched with curious oaths, a favorite maxim of this gentleman being that no man is qualified for the arduous part of a stage-manager unless he can “swear hard enough to split an oak tree down the centre,”—and to this maxim Mr. Bowers religiously adheres.

Strutting to and fro upon the stage, with a great show of importance, Mr. Bowers eyes his company much after the style of a general reviewing his troops—for this gentleman is never so happy as when he can detect one of his employes committing some petty offence against the rules of this establishment, so that he might be able to fine the delinquent half-a-crown or five shillings, on the following “treasury,” for the breach thus committed.

At length Mr. Bowers looks at his watch, and then gives the order to—

“Clear the stage,”

The groups of talkers disperse, and take up their respective position at the “wings,” and busy themselves with their parts and stage cues.

The stage-manager takes from off the prompter's table the manuscripts nautical drama of the “Idiot of the Ocean, or the Horrors of the Haunted Hulk,” and the rehearsal commences.

“Now, then,” cried Mr. Bowers, “all ready? Act First, Scene First—The Smugglers' Rendezvous. Cut Cave Scene—thin gloves horizon scene at back. Now then look alive there!”

And “look alive” the stage-carpenter and his satellites did, for they possessed a moral horror of Mr. Bowers' temper.

“Now then, Mr. Starmer,” cried Mr. Bowers, to a rather seedy and very mild-looking gentleman, who, though he played what is technically known as “heavies,”—that is villians of the deepest dye—looked as unlike a villian as a gentleman possibly could; “now then, Mr. Starmer, you open the first scene. You are discovered upon a keg of gunpowder, awaiting the arrivol of the pirate horde.”

Without further worde, Mr. Starmer began to recite in monotonous tones, and in a very hurried matter-of-fact manner, the following speech—for as a rule a good actor thinks it beneath his dignity to pay attention to anything beyond the mere words of his pard at rehearsal—and were he to attempt to gesticulate, or deliver his *role* in the morning with the same energy as when before the audience, he would fall considerably in the estimation of his professional brethren.

Ha! ha! I am Ricardo, the blood-stained Buccaneer of the Baltic Sea—the dreaded avenger of nine wrongs. The black flag proudly waves o'er the ocean waste; Death follows in my wake,

while my jovial crew revels upon confiscated cargoes. But hark! a voice—who comes here?”

“Now, Mr. Villiers,” roared Mr. Bowers, “where are you?”

Your cue is—“hark, a voice—who comes here?”

“Here, sir!” cried a young man, advancing from the wings, where he had been conversing with a pretty danseuse, who was attired in her ballet skirts.

“Here, sir!” replied Mr. Bowers, passionately,—“here, sir! But you are *not* here, sir! you're chatting at the wings with Miss Marian Livingston, instead of attending to your business. You are both fined half-a-crown. Make a note of that Mr. Skip,” added the irate manager, turning to the prompter.

The young actor makes no remonstrance, but confronted the villian of the drama, and the rehearsal went on:—

Mr. Starmer repeated the cue—

“Hark a voice. Who comes here?”

“'Tis I! Ferando the Fisherman!”

“You! Ha; ha! What would you?”

“Revenge!”

“Ha! ha!”

“Yes, revenge! for I have sworn to destroy you, base Pirate!”

“Away, boy!”

“Never! Come on!”

“Never! Say you so! Then die!”

Both the gentlemen carried walking-sticks—a habit much affected by transpontine actors.

“Now, Villiers,” said Mr. Starmer, raising his stick while his brother professional did the same, “now for the combat.”

The leader of the band scraped a few notes upon his violin, and to the music the actors gently tapped their sticks together, and quietly went through what at night would be a terrible broadsword combat.

“One—two—three; One—two—three; Now the same under, round lights. One—two—three—double primes—cross; now the head stroke—good!”

A few moments were occupied in this; and at its conclusion, the two gentlemen shook hands, took a pinch of snuff, and avowed that the combat would be an enormous “go” and would bring down the house.”

After this, the rehearsal proceeded with many interruptions, for Mr. Bowers was not in the best of tempers, and bullied every one indiscriminately.

Among the employes of the establishment who were assembled at the wings, was a rather good looking man, who appeared about thirty five; his features were regular, but they were strongly marked, and denoted great sensuality. His countenance did not belie him, for he was Viscount Bakeborough, who was noted throughout the Metropolis for his very extreme profligacy.

“Hollo, Maud!” cried the Viscount, to a young girl, who had just entered the building, “hollo! How d'ye do?”

"How do, my noble swell"? responded the playful damsel. What are you going to stand?"

"What ever you please my charmer," was the gallant response.

"Make it half a dozen of port," cried Maud; then turning to her companions, she added, "Here girls, here's an old friend of mine willing to stand a 'drink.'"

A bevy of the *corps de ballet* immediately surrounded Maud, and her friend the Viscount, and subdued laughter, jokes, and smart sayings, were freely exchanged, while a "super," who had been hovering around the group in the hope of earning a trifle, was despatched for the wine.

Among the *corephees* there was a vacancy, that vacancy was caused by the absence of Marian Livingston, who had been conversing with Mr. Villiers at the wing—a young lady who differed in many respects from those by whom she was surrounded.

The wine arrived, and the chaste nymphs had each a bumper.

In their hearts they would have preferred gin; but there is a class of females who think that wine is genteel to call for, and they drink it, though they would have given decided preferences to a drop of something "short."

In the meantime the rehearsal of the melodrama had concluded, and the stage cleared for the ballet.

The prompter's bell, and the manager's voice, cut the orgie short, and the admiring crowd round the Viscount broke up and hastened to their respective stations.

Deserted by his companions, the Viscount drank another glass or so, and rose a little unsteady, though perfectly coherent.

At this moment Marian Livingston came across the stage, and made her way towards the dressing-room; in order to do this, she had to pass the partially intoxicated nobleman.

"I say, my love," cried the Viscount, "come here, and take a glass of wine. Come here—don't be prudish. By Jove! you're the prettiest girl in the theatre."

The Ballet Girl stopped short, and looked at the man who addressed her with unutterable scorn. Then she inquired with cutting contempt—

"Did you address me, sir?"

"Of course I did, my charmer. How could I ever look at another woman when you are near?"

"Keep your compliments for those who heed them," was the answer she vouchsafed him.

The Viscount placed himself before her.

"Stop" he said "I shall not allow you to run away like this. You are a pretty little creature, and we must know each other better."

"Will you allow me to pass?"

"No. You do not know who or what I am," he replied.

"Yes, I do know what you are."

"What am I, then?"

"A low blackguard."

The Viscount had approached close to her, and had extended

his arm to draw the girl towards him, but ere his fingers had touched her, she had dealt him a well-directed back-hand blow upon the face, which knocked off his hat, and made the amorous nobleman stagger, holding his handkerchief to his bleeding nose.

He was too much astonished and hurt to speak, and the ballet girl passed on with heaving bosom, and flashing eye, not heeding his muttered curses, or the surprise of those around who had witnessed the *fracas*.

Hastening to the dressing-room, Marian Livingston hurriedly donned her usual wearing apparel, and left the theatre.

"Do you know the 'swell' you struck?" asked the stage-door keeper of the girl as she passed out.

"Not I."

"Why it is Viscount Rakeborough, a regular nob about town."

"Don't care who he was," replied Marian, defiantly, "gentleman or no gentleman, I served him as I will serve any man who insults me."

"Hollo! who did you say she struck?" cried Mr. Bowers, who was smoking a cigar just without the stage-door, and who had heard the conversation. "Viscount Rakeborough! The bare idea of a patron of the drama being insulted in my theatre! I won't have any gentleman insulted by a low upstart hussy, like you! You ought to think it an honor if real gentleman like that take any notice of you. But you shall leave my theatre for it, and without your fortnight's notice. Your money will be at 'treasury' for you on Saturday; but don't you show your face here either before or after that."

"But, Mr. Bowers—" began the trembling girl.

"Not another word miss," roared the manager. "I have said it. Now be off!"

The Ballet Girl left the theatre with a heavy heart, while Mr. Bowers hastened to condole with the noble (?) "patron of the drama," and inform him that he had dismissed the author of his discomfort.

CHAPTER II.

THROWN UPON THE WORLD—A BAD WOMAN.—THE BALLET GIRL TREADS UPON DANGEROUS GROUND.

DESTITUTE and forlorn, cast upon the cold, pitiless world, without a friend or a roof beneath which she could shelter her head, Marian's footsteps did not falter as she wandered along. She crossed Westminster Bridge, and gazed at the dark water, which splashed and foamed beneath the arches, with a half longing to cast herself into the cool, mysterious depths of the river, and so sink into oblivion the troubles and anxieties of her worldly existence.

But a moment's thought brought back her dormant spirit, and convinced her of the sinfulness of her wish, and, with a shudder, she turned and hurried across the bridge.

But after walking about the streets for some time, without any defined purpose, she at length sat herself down upon a doorstep.

She was now in the squalid neighborhood of St. Giles', not far from those seven branching thoroughfares, which, converging upon a common centre, give it the name of the Seven Dials.

Marian began to cry. This was a common spectacle, and attracted but little attention.

What should she do? To whom apply?

She looked at her purse, and found that she had five shillings and a few half-pence. Yes! she would take a lodging, procure some shelter ere nightfall, and in the morning seek for work, for though she was poor, she was proud, and would not, could not, accept the fortnight offered at the Royal Victoria Theatre, after the insults that Mr. Bowers had heaped upon her head.

Yes, she would do this; and, with this purpose in view, with renewed energy, she resumed her wanderings.

She went and timidly knocked at the doors of more than one house in Soho, wherever she saw a card displayed informing the passers-by that "Furnished Lodgings" were to be had by applying within.

But she looked so miserable and forlorn, that at all the places she applied the people made some excuse for not taking her. She had no luggage and no references.

What was she to do?

She turned from the last house she had gone to, heart sick, weary, and utterly worn out.

She had no alternative; she must either apply to the workhouse or spend the night in the cold, pitiless streets.

She had not the courage to pursue the former course, and she was too inexperienced in the ways of the world to know what to do for the best.

So she continued on her way, sobbing to herself. By-and-bye she stopped before the Royalty Theatre in Dean street, and gazed vacantly upon the occupants of the various carriages as they alighted and entered the theatre.

The handsome haughty dames, and their well-dressed cavaliers, the "children favored by fortune," How bright and happy they looked as they swept by the slightly clad form of our unfortunate heroine!

They seemed to have all that is desirable in life, and to enjoy most thoroughly the gifts that the "fickle goddess" showered so plentifully upon them. But perhaps they were not so happy as they appeared; half those gay ladies and dashing gentlemen had a "skeleton in their homes," had some sorrow, some crime, secretly gnawing like a cancer into their hearts.

Much is said by the *virtuous* inhabitants of the world about the sins and profligacy of the poor. But who speaks about the rich? Yet it must be obvious to the meanest capacity that in some cases the members of the pampered aristocracy are a thousand times

worse than those who rank beneath them in the social scale; and to substantiate what we advance, the gentle reader is referred to the disgraceful scenes and terrible profligacy that daily come to light in our divorce courts.

The upper ten thousand can have no excuse for their sins, they have been well and carefully nurtured, have received the best of education, and unlike the poor man, they cannot plead "ignorance" as the cause of their crimes.

How often do we hear of some lordling taking a fancy to the pretty face of some fair girl, of gaining her affections, then suddenly tiring of her, thrusts her forth upon the world, with his child in her bosom, for all to point the finger of scorn and contumely at her!

What is the poor, betrayed creature to do? None will employ her. None assist her.

Oh! how sad it is to contemplate the cruelty of human nature. If a man or a woman once lose their caste in society through poverty or misfortune, how soon the hard hearted pitiless world is upon them, and, lest they should attempt to regain their position, how ready, how eager, to trample them still deeper into the mire!

In this world there is no forgiveness for the erring brother or sister; there only hope is in that merciful Being above, who dispenses justice to all evenly.

A girl placed in this bitter, cruel position must go upon the town, and add another to the daily increasing members of the "frail sisterhood" that reproach and blot upon society.

And then she must die, miserable, alone, and friendless, while her seducer is elsewhere pursuing his diabolical art, and not bestowing a thought upon his wretched victim.

Had Marion been less virtuous and good than she was, she would have resorted to that mode of living which any other girl "thrown upon the world" would have taken up.

But though she was a ballet dancer, she was naturally pure in mind and body, and it would have been an impossibility for her to have stooped to anything that was low or debase.

It must not be supposed that we are holding our heroine up as the only good and uncorrupted girl in the "ranks of the ballet." No, far from it.

The dancers have certainly got a bad name, and why?

The answer to this question is a mystery that we cannot solve; suffice to say that it has been our lot to have seen so much of this class, and an immense amount of good, and very little bad, have we noticed.

If one of their companions is ill, or prevented from taking an engagement, who so ready to subscribe as the "ballet girl"?

Who earns from eighteen to five and twenty shillings a week, and out of that has to find her silk stockings, her slippers, her paint, and often, beside herself, has to support an aged parent, perhaps bedridden, and some half dozen brothers and sisters?

Why, the "ballet girl."

Yes, dear reader, this is of every day occurrence, and yet many of

these girls prefer a crust of bread and slavery, to a life of indolence and infamy.

Marian moralized over this and the people that she had seen enter the theatre.

"Oh!" she muttered, "did but some of these people know of my poverty and helplessness, they would surely help me in my distress, but alas! the world is so cruel, cold and selfish, that it would bestow no thought upon me." Ever is it so; the rich are always ready to trample down the poor under their feet.

They will send out large sums of money and bales of clothing for a savage set of tattooed cannibals, in some far-off Indian Isle, and while there are many who would subscribe a handsome sum toward this, there are but few who look at home and think of their neglected native destitution.

The girls' reverie was suddenly interrupted by a woman of about forty years of age; she had evidently at one time been very handsome, but now her features were furrowed and worn from the effects of constant dissipation.

"It's a nice evening, my dear," she said, touching Marian on the arm, and looking hard at her.

"Yes it is, ma'am," replied our heroine, abstractedly.

"You seemed tired, dear; have you been walking far?"

"Yes."

"I suppose that you are going home now, eh?"

At the mention of the sweet word, home, Marian thought of her lonely position, and burst into tears.

"Hey, day! my dear, what is this—crying? here, come into a quiet street, and tell me all about it," and the woman, beckoning to Marian, walked up the street.

Marian followed her, almost mechanically into Richmond Buildings.

"Now, my dear, tell me all about your little trouble, and I will do all I can to help you. I have taken a liking for you, and may be able to assist you.

"Oh thank you, ma'am, I am so grateful," sobbed Marian, hardly liking the manner of the woman yet not, knowing what to do.

"Well tell me all," said the woman, in a caressing tone.

Thus encouraged, Marian, in a few words as possible, told her story, without mentioning names, merely saying she had been turned from the house because she had left the theatre.

"Well, my dear," said the woman, when she had concluded, "I am not rich, but you appear to be deserving of assistance; I live in Soho Square, and you can reside with me, if you like until you get something to do. Will you come?"

"Yes," cried Marian;

The poor girl was so utterly worn out that she could not bring her mind to consider whether she was doing right or wrong.

Oh! could she but have done so. Had her good angel bid her hesitate, how much misery and suffering would she have been spared.

CHAPTER III.

CAUGHT IN THE TOILS.—DANGER.—A TERRIBLE HOUSE.

MARIAN followed her conductress into a turning near Soho Square, and stopped before a large handsome-looking house; the latter gave a sharp double knock, and the door was opened by a smart-looking servant maid.

"Are the young ladies all within?" asked our heroine's companion.

"Yes, Madam."

"Come along, my dear, and let me introduce you to my daughters," said the woman, as she opened the parlor door, and ushered our heroine into the room.

Seated around the table were three young ladies, playing some strange game with cards, from which they seemed to derive considerable amusement. They were all handsome, but they were so totally unlike each other that it was almost an impossibility for any one to take them for sisters; and upon their features there was an impudent, brazen expression that made the casual observer wish to inquire into the particulars of their past lives.

"Now, my dears, I have brought you a companion; she is very lonely and unhappy, and you must take care of her, and do your best to make her cheerful."

"Oh, yes, madam, we will," chorused the girls, rising to welcome Marian, and making room for her to sit beside them.

"Now, my dear," said Madame Rosini, "do not be so down-hearted; with your nice looks you need not be long in this abode; you are not at all likely to suffer neglect as long as there are men in the world."

"I do not quite understand you," replied Marian. The three young ladies laughed, and looked significantly at each other.

"You will some day, dear," said Madame Rosini, with a sort of contempt in her tone at Marian's innocence. Of course we must do the best that we can, and you may depend upon my affection for you."

"Ah! you are kind and good."

"Well, well, perhaps I am, perhaps I ain't; but that's neither here nor there—I—I don't want you to say anything of that sort my dear; but if you are prudent and trust to me, and follow my advice, you will do very well indeed."

"Oh, madam, while I am with you let me work. I cannot eat the bread of idleness after you have been so kind to me. No, no, welcome any toil rather than that." Madame Rosini twined one of the long and beautiful ringlets of Marian round her fingers as she said, "Don't be alarmed; you will do well enough if you are wise enough. Let those toil that can't help it. You leave your future to me."

"You are too kind to me."

"Not at all. Now, you stay where you are; nobody will interrupt you here. I have business just now to attend to, but you will, no doubt, be very well able to amuse yourself while I am away, and I will think over what I can do for you. You are too delicate for

work, I can easily see, so we must think of something else for you. By-the-bye, a cousin of mine will be here to-morrow, and we will take his advice."

"A cousin?"

"Yes, and then we will talk it over together."

"Is she good and kind?"

"She! it's a gentleman."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, to be sure. Did you never hear of gentlemen cousins?"

"Oh, yes, yes! But——"

"Why, what now?"

"I don't seem to think—I don't exactly like taking a stranger, and a gentleman into the confidence of my position. Ah, it will be so much better, without any consultations or conferences at all, to give me so much work to do, as will prevent me being a burden to you. You do not know how clever I am. I can, indeed, work nicely."

"Pho, nonsense. You don't know what you are talking about. You must just leave all to me, and I will do what is best, you may depend upon that; so now I must be off, for I have a thousand things to do." And so saying, Madame Rosini left the room, and our heroine shortly afterwards expressed a desire for sleep, and was shown to her chamber by one of the girls.

Next morning Madame Rosini awoke our heroine about half-past ten o'clock.

"Did you sleep comfortably, my child?" she asked.

"Yes, Madame, very comfortably indeed."

"That is all right, now. I will send you up some coffee and a nice hot roll, and then you must come down to my dressing-room."

Half-an-hour afterwards our heroine was closeted with the mistress of the house.

"I want to show you some things. Come this way. I want to see how you become dress, for that dowdy affair you have on is not worth the name."

It was in vain that Marian protested she was contented with the dress she had on until she could manage by her own exertion to get more. Madame Rosini would take her into her own dressing-room, and then summoning Miss Warren (one of the young ladies our heroine had seen the previous night), a mysterious sort of conference was held with her which resulted in some costly dresses being brought and tried on Marian, and finally one was set aside with the remark from Madame Rosini, "that it would do for the evening very well."

Marion trembled, she knew not why, as this evening approached and before nine o'clock at night, when she was directed to dress herself, and Madame Rosini handed her out a very elegant set of opals to wear, she began to feel very much the sensation as though she was a sort of prisoner.

"Indeed, Madame Rosini," she said, "I would rather not wear these jewels, if you will permit me. And let me beg of you likewise to excuse my seeing your cousin."

"Not see my cousin! Not see Mr. Smith!"

"Indeed, I would rather not. I am sad at heart, and ask nothing further of you than your protection and your permission to earn my bread."

"Pho! What nonsense you talk, my dear! Who knows but as your face is your fortune, you may get a first-rate husband one of these days."

"No, no! Oh, no!"

"Don't say that. But it is the way with you all. It is always no, no, when nothing else is in your thoughts; I insist upon your wearing the jewels, and shall be seriously angry with you if you don't."

There was so much reality in the rapidly rising anger of Madame Rosini, that Marian, with a sigh, put on the jewels and the rich dress, and when Madame Rosini swung forward a cheval glass which reflected her whole figure, she could not but be struck with the correct taste with which they had adorned her.

Custom and experience had enabled Madame Rosini to know what would look best on the delicate and sylph-like form of Marian; she said, with a satisfied nod, "Yes, that will do. My dear, you are faultless—I wonder what people could be thinking of to neglect you so."

Madame Rosini had sent a mysterious note to Mr. Smith, and had received a mysterious answer during the day, and now, at ten o'clock precisely, a very elegant and *recherche* little repast was served up in one of the drawing-rooms.

And a sudden stoppage of a cab, on the footboard which was a tiger of the smallest size and most elaborate "get up," announced an arrival.

"My cousin," said Madame Rosini. Now, my dear, you will see a gentleman of good judgement and experience, on whose good will you may rely."

"But, madame, what do I want with good will? It is very kind of you, but yet——"

"Hush! my dear. He is here."

Miss Warren did the honors of the staircase to Mr. Smith, and announced him, with an air and manner of mysterious respect that was quite startling.

Mr. Smith entered the room with a light step and in reply to the deep curtesy of Madame Rosini, cousin merely condescended to say—

"How do?"

He was a man past, and only just past, the prime of life. An iron grey tinge, had touched his hair and the moustache looked suspicious of some infallible hair dye; in dress he was plain, yet costly, and the flash of diamonds came from his breast and fingers.

"My niece, Cousin Smith," said Madame Rosini, laying an emphasis on the cousin.

"Ah," said Mr. Smith, as he lifted an eye-glass, and took a steady look at Marian. "Ah!"

There was a slight, nervous flutter about the manner of Madame

Rosini, while Mr. Smith made what appeared to be a critical examination of the fair girl, who little suspected she had been decked out to please his eye; but when he nodded, and made a half sort of a bow, and smiled, Madame Rosini smiled, and appeared greatly relieved.

"I am delighted to see you, Miss—a—a—"

"Marian Livingston," said madame.

"Ah, yes I am quite delighted. Pray be seated. And so you have been good enough, madame, to prepare a little supper for us all three. I am really charmed—ah, yes, quite charmed."

Marion bowed to the strange cousin, and sat down. The delicately-prepared and nicely-served supper was soon discussed that is to say, Madame Rosini partook of it plentifully—Marian sparingly, and Mr. Smith turned over two morsels of chicken on his plate and consumed one.

But the wine had some charm for Mr. Smith, if the chicken had none. On taking it he elevated his eyes, and said—

"Ah, from my own people."

"Yes, cousin," said Madame Rosini, "I know you are rather particular with regard to your wine."

"Decidedly."

"So I thought it better to go to the proper people, and say it was for you."

Cousin Smith nodded approval, and filled his glass.

"Oh, if you please, madame," said Miss Warren, appearing at the threshold of the door, "you are wanted down stairs."

"How very provoking! Cousin Smith, will you excuse me for a few minutes."

"Of course."

Marian rose, too, as Madame Rosini did; but the latter almost pushed her into her seat, as she said—

"You stay with Cousin Smith, and just tell him all your story, and he will advise. I shall be back soon."

"Nay," said Marian, "I have no story, and no need of advice."

"Pho, pho!"

Madame Rosini winked, frowned, and shook her head at Marian so disparagingly, as regarded her leaving the room, that the girl, whose heart was as free from guilt as an infant's, and who had the impulse to do what others wished her, sunk back into her seat again with a timid look of indecision.

Another moment and she was alone with Mr. Smith.

A blind sort of smile, which exhibited all his teeth, came over the countenance of the cousin and he poured out another glass of wine for himself and one for Marian, as he said—

"Well, my dear, what are expectations, my dear, that is all. You are a charming young creature, and I am only all amazement to know how on earth Rosini found you? You have some story to tell, I fancy. I think she said your parents were in the country."

"I have no friends, sir, but Madame Rosini."

"Nay, pray include me, if you please." Marian bowed.

"Well, tell me all about it. A little love affair I suppose."

"Sir!"

"I say a little love affair. I fancy it was."

"I Don't understand you, sir,"

"Oh, stuff! What is the use now of playing the coy maiden in this way. I am one of the most liberal of men, as you will find. In fact, you need not have a whim ungratified, if you like; nor am I inconsistent either, without good cause. Come now, what do you say?"

Marian with her slender fingers round the stem of the glass that was before her, gazed across the table into the face of cousin Smith, with a vague idea that she was in the presence of a lunatic whom it might be dangerous to irritate.

The prominent idea in her mind was to get out of the room.

"If you please," she said, "I should like to see Madame Rosini."

She rose as she spoke.

"No, no, by no means," said Mr. Smith, springing from his seat. "There really is no occasion. I will settle everything with her, and she will have no cause of complaint. There is no occasion for any consultation. Look upon it as settled."

"Upon what, sir, as settled?" said Marian, as she looked into the eyes of cousin Smith, with a clear, innocent gaze that was far too natural to be acted, and which fairly staggered the titled *roue*—for such he was—and threw him off his balance for a moment.

"Why—why—that—that is—that you know—" Marian shook her head sadly.

"On my life," said cousin Smith, "you are a charming, exquisite, adorable girl. I really and truly love you. There is a piquant innocence about you that is as fresh as the scent of early roses. I shall—I do admire you—mistress of my heart, my fortune. There is nothing in all the world that your utmost caprice can long for that shall not be yours. The life that is before you shall be a romance. I never loved till now; I have been cold, indifferent, jaded, but now I love with all my heart."

He sprang towards her, and Marian, with a cry of alarm, flew towards the window, he being between her and the door.

"No, no!" she said. "I pray not. What is the meaning of this? Oh, sir, if you are a gentleman—"

"A gentleman? I am a nobleman. And were I ten times more noble than I am, I should be the slave of your fascinations. My adorable girl! you shall be mine and mine only."

"Help! help!"

Cousin Smith, by a judicious feint in one direction, had baffled Marian, and darted round the table, and caught her round the waist, but she was close to the window which was a French one, and to dash it open, despite the blind was the work of a moment.

"Save me! save me!" she cried.

"This is coquetry carried too far," said cousin Smith. "My dear, you will attract notice from the street."

Madame Rosini rushed into the room, and by main force tore Marian from the window and closed it.

"Are you mad, girl?" she said, "that you would draw attention to my house. Are you mad! I say?"

"Ah, thank Heaven you are here," said Marian. "You do not know—you cannot know this man."

"Hush! hush!"

"I will not hush, I am slow of suspicion, but I feel that it is infamy to listen to him, or to breathe the air of his presence. If this is the sort of protection you offer me, welcome the streets of London, even if I have to beg for my bread. Welcome even the charity

of the world. God help me! Surely in all this world there are some good hearts who will pity me.

"I throw my fortune at your feet" said Mr. Smith.

"And I despise it sir, as I despise you."

"Hush! hush!" said Madame Rosini again. "What is all this about? Oh! cousin Smith, you are too precipitate.

"Well, but—"

"I told you! I warned you!"

"Pho, Pho!"

"And you do not believe me."

Cousin Smith smiled. "Well!" he said; "if this is acting, I never saw its equal. But—"

Miss Warren burst into the room—

"Oh! madame, madame."

"What! what!"

"A man, a gentleman' asking for Miss Livingston."

"For me!" cried Marian.

"No!" shrieked Madame Rosini.

"Confound him!" said Cousin Smith.

"And he says," gasped Miss Warren, "that he will see her, that he must see her, that he heard her call from the window, that he knew her, that he—"

A tumult below was heard.

"Help!" cried Marian.

Madame Rosini flew upon her like an enraged tigress, and with the strength that no one would have thought her to possess, she caught our heroine round the waist, and fairly lifted her off the floor.

"The panelled door, Warren," she cried.

"Yes, madame," replied the girl.

A door, the whole panel of which is a looking-glass was flung open by Miss Warren, and through it dashed Madame Rosini with Marian. Miss Warren followed, and when madame had thrown the half insensible girl down upon a bench, cried—

"Hold her! tie her!" anything to quiet her. There, hold her hands. Ah, that will do! Now my dainty piece of goods, you will call out, will you!"

Madame Rosini with some dexterity, and great speed, tied a handkerchief over the mouth of Marian, and fastened her hands behind her; with another she then struck her a blow, which in the girl's terrified state almost stunned her, and she fell nearly insensible to the floor, close by the bench.

"Come!" said Madame Rosini, and Miss Warren immediately followed her into the upper room again. Cousin Smith was standing by the window, and at the moment the two women entered the room, the ordinary door of the apartment was dashed open, and George Villiers, the actor of the Royal Victoria Theatre, abruptly entered.

"Pardon my intrusion," said he, but I heard a cry from this window. I knew the voice, I partially saw the form. It is a young lady whom I slightly know, and she was calling for help, I demand to see her at once."

"Do you know, sir," said Cousin Smith, "that your coming here is a great intrusion?"

"And pray, sir," said Madame Rosini, "who may you be, that you take upon yourself to rush into people's houses in this way, without the slightest knowledge of them, and without their leave?"

"Who I am, matters little. I heard a cry of help, I guessed who it came from; and I am here to assist the young lady."

"Fetch a policeman, Warren," said Madame Rosini.

"Oh, madame!" said Miss Warren, "perhaps the gentleman may be mistaken after all, and when he owns to it, he may apologize: I don't know you, sir, and you can have no right to claim me, and if I choose, while playing at forfeits with my cousin here and Madame Rosini, to get to the window, and open it and cry help, to get back my bracelet—for that was what I had to do—what is that to you, sir, eh! eh! eh?"

Miss Warren, after this ingenious speech kept saying, "eh! eh!" and approached at each eh! a step closer to the stranger, till he found himself fairly backed to the door.

"You?" he said.

"Yes, me; what then, sir?"

"Look to the plate basket," cried Madame Rosini.

"Sir," said cousin Smith, "it strikes me that you are in a very ridiculous position. Surely in our own private house we may amuse ourselves, without folks running from the street to question us."

"Indeed!"

"Yes indeed, sir," added madame.

"Oh, very well, madame, I may have been mistaken. It may be so, very well. As you have a right to know who I am, I leave my card, and wish you a very good day."

"Mr. George Villiers"—read Madame Rosini, after the young man had departed. "Who is he? he has the appearance of an actor. Now, my Lord Duke," she continued to cousin Smith—"why have you spoiled all by being so precipitate? I warned your Grace."

"Nay, I protest."

"Oh, I did, I did. I don't know how I shall manage now; it is no use your staying here. Your Grace had better go, and I will communicate with you."

Cousin Smith, or his Grace, which ever name he was best entitled to, beckoned Madame Rosini aside. "That girl must be mine, if she costs half my fortune. You understand. Good night."

Madame Rosini nodded, and in a few moments more the cab that had been waiting at the corner of the square for cousin Smith, whirled away at a violent pace that almost projected the tiger from his perch behind into a shop.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESCAPE FROM THE SECOND-FLOOR WINDOW.—LONDON AT NIGHT.

WHEN our heroine came to herself, she found that she was lying in a bed, and Madame Rosini was by her side, bathing her temples with vinegar and water.

"Are you better now, my dear?" inquired that amiable person.

"Yes madame! But oh! what harm have I done that you should treat me thus badly—thus cruelly?"

"I treat you cruelly? You little fool, had I not done so, had we not silenced you, you would have been the ruin of us all. Truly it was a good return to me for kindness. That you endeavored to expose your benefactress to every idle fool that runs after you."

"Let me leave this house. I shall not stay here longer."

"You shall not leave here; why, what do you want? Here you can have the best of clothes, of food, money, and all like the finest ladies in the kingdom; but yet, to indulge in your infernal prudery you throw up all this, and would sooner live in the streets."

"Aye, madame! a life of poverty, rendered happy by the knowledge of my own virtue, is far preferable to a career of riches and infamy, made miserable by the stings of a remorseful conscience."

"For the love of heaven, do not talk in that sentimental and ridiculously romantic manner; it is the effect of your stage education, and the sooner you leave it off, the better it will be. It does very well in a Victoria melodrama, or Mr. Mudie's three-volume novels; but when you talk about virtue in our city, at the present day, you talk as if you were an idiot."

"No, madame, my honor is dearer to me than my life; revile as you will, but in the name of mercy let me leave this house."

"Don't talk nonsense, girl; cousin Smith will be here again tomorrow, and if you play your cards properly, undoubtedly, you will make a good thing out of it."

"I will not see him," said Marian.

"You shall," said Madame Rosini, with a dangerous glitter in her eyes. "Do you think you will gain the best of me with your petty strength of mind? You are not the first wayward damsel that I have had here, and brought to reason too."

"I defy and loathe you! almost screamed Marian, rising in the bed. "I defy you, vile woman!"

"Ha! ha! my dainty bird, we'll see; you are well caged. I will now leave you to think over what I have said; if you take my advice, you will accede to it."

And Madame Rosini sallied out of the room, closed the door after her, double-locking it, leaving Marian to her own thoughts.

Unfortunate girl! she seemed destined to fall from one adventure into another! She must escape from the place. But how? She arose from her recumbent position and tried the door.

No! it was firmly locked and seemed plated with iron; she stooped down and peered through the key hole; and she could see nothing but the most impenetrable darkness.

Then she went to the window and looked out. The moon shone brightly, and she could see that she was on the second floor, some five and thirty feet from the pavement below. Yes, if she escaped at all she must do it by the window.

Her plan of action was speedily arranged. She would wait until all was quiet, and then descend by the aid of her sheets and blankets into the streets below; she had no fear of accident in her perilous journey, for many a time as a fairy in a pantomime, had she descended from the top of the stage, with nothing to cling to but a slender wire.

She then commenced to take the blankets and sheets from off the bed, these, with the aid of her pocket scissors, she cut into strips, twisted firmly and fastened together so as to form one long rope; she measured it and found it was over forty feet in length, she then tested its strength by fastening it round a large iron hook that she found in the ceiling, and hanging upon each length separately, until she was convinced that it would bear her weight, then she put it aside; then, fastening one end of the huge rope around a heavy chest of drawers, which she drew up to the open window, then she blew out her light, and prepared to descend.

Tightly grasping it, the courageous girl gradually lowered herself until her head was upon a level with the window sill.

For a few minutes the rope swayed to and fro, and threatened to dash our brave adventuress to the ground, but she clung to it, and after many futile endeavors, succeeded at length in getting her feet against the frontage of the house; then she continued her descent, and finally reached the ground.

She wandered along, not knowing where she should lay her head. She was tired, very tired, for the reaction after her previous excitement was so great that it almost prostrated her.

On she went, until she came to the Haymarket; she walked up what is popularly known as the "quiet side."

She was neither molested nor insulted, for the Haymarket of the present day is far different to what it was many years back.

The "cafes" and fast houses were (to all appearances) closed. There were a few groups hanging about, but they looked so miserable in their tawdry finery, as shown in the cold gray morning, that it was with a shudder of sickening disgust that she passed by, for she thought of what she might have come to had but the designs of Madame Rosini been successful.

So she turned and walked slowly onwards. At length she reached the Duke of York's Column.

Yes she would sleep in the park—she had heard that hundreds of the poor slept there each night. As hundreds do. Wretched creatures!

She was poor, and our heroine turned into the park. The first, second, third and aye, a dozen benches were filled with what appeared to be bundles of rags, but the heavy breathings and shart, hacking coughs that burst from them at intervals, showed that human beings, people with souls, lay beneath—to the shame and disgrace of the richest country in the world.

At length our heroine found a seat upon which only one person was sleeping—it was a woman closely muffled up in a scanty shawl. Marian could not see her features, and without disturbing her, sat down.

She soon dropped into a kind of stupor and had pleasant dreams of happiness and comfort—of money and kind friends. So she went to sleep, but not to rest, with hopes almost as faint and comfortless as the cold, gray morning light, that some lucky accident would happen to her on the coming day.

CHAPTER V.

ASLEEP IN THE PARK.—SNATCHED FROM THE FLAMES.

“What are you sleeping here for, eh?”

These were the first words that our heroine heard, when she was awoken by a rough hand upon her shoulder, and looking up she saw a policeman.

“Come, get out of this, tramp,” and so saying, the man put her on her feet, and without a word, for she had not strength to speak, she walked away, and glancing back, she saw the industrious man in blue arousing her companion of the previous night—the man tore the shawl from the woman’s face, and awoke her.

Our heroine stopped, she thought she had seen the features before, and she hastened back to the seat.

“What, Fanny,” cried Marian, rushing back and taking the poor creature’s hands,

“Oh, Marian!”

They were known to each other, and had, by a strange coincidence, been together for several hours, without the slightest idea of their proximity.

In her fellow wanderer, Marian had recognized an old friend, one of the girls who, decked out in muslin skirts and wreaths of flowers, had so often danced upon the same boards, and together had received the rapturous plaudits of a delighted audience.

But what were they now?

What had they both fallen to?

“So you are known to each other. Ah! you’re a nice pair of birds, I’ll take my davey,” said the policeman. “Now then move on, and look sharp, or I’ll take you to the station.”

The girls “moved on,” and as soon as they were some distance from that bright ornament to our civil force, they spoke.

“Fanny how did you come to this?”

The other laughed recklessly.

“I was just going to ask you the same, dear, but if you’ll listen, I’ll tell you. When I left the theatre, I went to live with Fred Blake, the photographer, in St. Martin’s Lane. Of course it was very wrong and all that, but it was a deuced sight better than kick-

ing up our heels in that blessed theatre for the money we got. Fred was very kind to me, I loved him very much, and we lived at a pretty stylish rate; at last we were so pressed for money that poor Fred went and forged another person’s name for five hundred pounds; it was found out when it was presented at the bank. The poor fellow was arrested, and last month the beak gave him ten years’ penal servitude, so I lost him, dear fellow.”

And the lost woman burst into tears.

“Oh! what a fool I am to go on snivelling. Well, old lady, since that time I have been gay. Now don’t look shocked. What was I to do? I wasn’t going to starve, and I couldn’t get work at the theatres, because they were full for the season, and so, not having any money, I ‘went to the bad.’ It’s as good a life as any other.”

And again she laughed recklessly.

“Oh! don’t laugh like that, pray don’t, Fanny.”

“Well, what’s the odds? so long as you’re happy. Now, old lady, come on for your tale.”

In a few words our heroine told Fanny Spencer what had befallen her, and in conclusion she said—

“What am I to do?”

“Do! in the first place have you any money?”

“Yes,” said our heroine; “but it is only a small sum.”

“How much?”

“Five shillings and a few halfpence.”

“What! you really possess all that, and yet you slept in the park?” inquired Fanny, in astonishment.

“Yes; what could I do? I was alone unprotected, and I knew not where to go for shelter.”

“Ah! I see, old lady, you’re not up to all the moves on the board yet; come, I say, will you let me put you in the way of building the foundation of a home, upon the strength of the five bob which you possess?”

“Yes, that I will—tell me—show me the way, and forever will I be grateful to you!”

“Look here, Marian; I am sick and tired of my present life, I am not totally depraved or bad; and if I had the chance of earning a respectable livelihood, I would only too willingly take advantage of it. You are a good hand at your needle, and I am not deficient in that branch of domestic employment; you also have sufficient money to procure a lodging for both. Let us seek for a room, and then endeavor to obtain work as dressmakers; our capital is certainly not much to start upon, but by exercising the closest of economy, I think we might be able to pull through. So come along old lady.”

And with this, the two girls, with beaming countenances, at the hopes they had raised within themselves regarding their future prospects, walked towards the Strand.

CHAPTER VI.

MARIAN IN DISTRESS.—A FRIEND IN NEED.—GEORGE VILLIERS TURNS UP—
—A HAPPY HOME.

AFTER wandering about the best part of the day, the two girls at length engaged a small room in Houghton Street, Clare Market; for this they had to pay seven-and-sixpence per week, and half a-crown of their limited means was at once paid away as a deposit, the remainder they laid out in various articles of food, which was absolutely necessary.

As the two girls lay down that night, they felt happy, for they had done their best, and they had hopes of procuring immediate employment at needle-work.

And so, with hopeful hearts, they arose early, and set forth upon their search, in spite of the rain, which was falling heavily. Summoning up their courage, they called at warehouse after warehouse, during that long wet day, only to return home the same evening, cold, chilly, tired and hopeless, and further away than ever from the remotest prospect of employment.

But the worst had not yet befallen them. Marian, with her thin boots, had caught cold on the previous day, and when she endeavored to arise, she fell back upon the bed with a moan of anguish.

"It's no use, Fanny," she said, with a sigh, "I see but one chance. I am afraid I shall be very ill—and that chance I must try."

"What is that?"

"You must go over to the Royal Victoria Theatre, and tell Mr. Villiers, the actor, how I am situated. God knows that I would not apply to him for aid could I but help it."

Fanny burst into tears as she beheld the helplessness of her companion.

"Oh! my darling," she sobbingly said, "there seems to be always some obstacle when I want to be good and virtuous—when I want to renounce the terrible life that I have led, I am prevented. Oh! why am I not dead?" she bitterly added.

"Hush, oh! hush," cried Marian. "Put your trust in Heaven. We shall yet come out of our troubles."

"Your words, dear Marian, give me fresh courage. It is foolish of me to repine, when you are lying ill, and all my energy and strength of mind is required. I will at once hasten to see Mr. Villiers, and will bring him back with me. Come, drink this cup of tea, and then try to sleep until I return."

Marian did as her forlorn friend bade her, and Fanny, hastily attiring herself, went on her mission.

About an hour afterwards, Marian was awakened, and found that Fanny had returned with the young actor, who gazed upon her compassionately, and said "I am so sorry that you are ill, Miss Livingston. And we are all so grieved at the manner in which Mr. Bowers has treated you. What can I do for you?"

"I don't know how to ask you—but you seem the only friend I

have in the world." stammered Marian, through her blushes and tears.

"It's all right," abruptly broke in Fanny. "I've told Mr. Villiers everything—all about you and I—and he's already procured me a situation in the ballet at the theatre, and is going to take you to a place where you'll be cared for until you are recovered."

"Oh! Mr. Villiers, how can I—I—thank you?" began Marian.

"Pshaw! no thanks are needed, my dear Miss Livingston. I should indeed be churlish were I to refuse to aid those who are helpless; besides, you must remember that we are old friends; and surely you do not forget the many pleasant chats we have had between the wings at night, when we have been waiting to 'go on?'"

"Oh, yes, yes," said Marian. "I can never forget you."

And then she stopped short, and blushed so sweetly, that Villiers could have kissed her, albeit he was also much confused at her naive way of speaking.

"Now, do not continue crying, I beg, Miss Livingston you know that your eyes are far too beautiful to spoil by weeping."

Marian aroused herself at these flatteries.

"Compliments are poor food for misery to feed on. Mr. Villiers," she cried. "It is not manly to insult an unprotected girl,"—and at the thought of her isolated position, her tears flowed afresh.

"Calm yourself," said Villiers. "I neither wish to insult or harm you. I will help you, if I can."

"Alas! I am indeed in sore need of help," sobbed Marian.

"I will give you shelter," said George Villiers. "Nay, do not be alarmed, my proposal is honorable. I will take you to my sister. Say you accept my offer."

Marian made no reply; her head dropped gently on one side, and she fell back senseless, and Villiers gave a cry of alarm.

"Don't be frightened," said Fanny. "The poor darling has only fainted. Go you and get a cab, while I bring her round, and get her dressed."

The young actor left the room, and when he returned, with the assistance of Fanny, they supported Marian down to the vehicle in waiting, and both bidding a temporary adieu to Fanny, the cab drove rapidly off.

After a while the cab stopped before a house in a quiet and respectable-looking street, and George Villiers executed a series of rapid knocks upon the door, which was immediately opened by a smart-looking servant girl.

"Is my sister within?" demanded George.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"All right, little one," said Villiers to Marian; "you need have no fear—you are at home, and amongst friends."

So saying, he threw open the parlor door, and ushered Marian into the room.

A young lady who was reading, rose at their entrance, and gazed inquiringly at Villiers.

"Don't be alarmed, Annie," said Villiers, smiling. "I've had an adventure. and the result of it is, I have brought you a sister home,"

"Oh," cried Marian, "how good you are. I know that I can trust you. I will make you acquainted with my story, but ere I tell it, you must both promise that neither of you will reveal it to any one until a fitting time comes,

Having obtained the desired promise, Marian, with a voice broken by sobs, related to the compassionate brother all that she knew of her history.

When our heroine had concluded, Villiers said—

"My dear Miss Livingston, you must leave this matter in my hands; as to waiting for a fitting time to arrive, that is out of the question. Come, say that you will leave it with me."

"Yes, I will," unhesitatingly returned our heroine.

"That is well. Now, then, my sister will see you to your bedroom, and, with a little nursing, you will be well enough.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH MARIAN OBTAINS AN ENGAGEMENT AT THE SLAP-UP SALOON,
AND MAKES HER FIRST APPEARANCE UPON A MUSIC HALL STAGE.

A FEW days passed, and Marian had sufficiently recovered to be able to seek an engagement, and with that idea she placed herself in the hands of a theatrical agent, who dwelt in a small court off Bow street, and who, though very ready and eager to take his fee of five shillings, was not so quick in procuring her the engagement or the salary she required.

Marian at length determined not to apply for an engagement in any of the "corps de ballet" at the theatres.

She intended to try her good fortune at one of the numerous music-halls with which London abounds, and determined to make the attempt at the Royal Slap-up Saloon, in Shoreditch, so hailing an omnibus she proceeded thither.

The manager and sole proprietor of this saloon had risen from a potman, when he was known as Bill Byles, to his present position, and had assumed the high-sounding title of Percival de Clifford. From him Marian got an answer in the negative, but several things combined induced him to alter his decision.

It had been raining, and the pavements were very muddy, and to avoid contamination, Marian raised her dress considerably on leaving the house, and by so doing she displayed a good deal of her well-turned ankles.

Mr. de Clifford had a great admiration for pretty faces and was drawn to the window to see our heroine depart. He rang his bell, and dispatched a messenger to bring the girl back.

The result of her interview was an engagement to appear nightly as character dancer and occasional singer, at a fairly good salary.

"You see," said de Clifford, when announcing the engagement of the new "star" to his stage-manager and chairman, "you see, dear boy, legs is legs, and clerks and sich like loves to look at 'em. Blow

talent, so as there's plenty of legs; it makes the men in the audience feverish, and they drink more. Now this girl's not only got legs, but she's got a pretty face, and a fine bust a top on 'em; and I tell you what, dear boy, she's a regular clipper."

The proprietor of the Slap-Up rubbed his hands with delight, while the young lady dancer, who had hitherto been the principal attraction to the frequenters of the saloon, could hardly keep her paint on so excessively warm did she become in abusing the bold-faced upstart who was about to rob her of her prized laurels.

Behind the scenes she met with a rather cool reception, she was looked upon as an interloper, and the young lady before mentioned addressed her in words and tones that were intended to be cutting and sarcastic, but to Marian they only appeared as slightly defective in grammar.

From the audience our heroine met with a most flattering reception,

They were not all critics, and did not notice that she was occasionally out of tune; if they did they did not care for it; the applause was unanimous and the management was perfectly justified in announcing that Mademoiselle Livingston had proved a most unprecedented success.

Thus it was that she commenced a new and prosperous career, which however, she afterwards found was not exactly a bed of roses for she had so many people to please.

First came Mr. de Clifford—but she managed in a perfectly excusable way to start a lively flirtation with him, and was always careful to keep that amorous gentleman at a respectful distance. For he possessed the unenviable reputation of making love to all the ladies engaged at his establishment, and if they did not listen to his overtures, he discharged them instant.

Next came the British Public—the many headed dragon that no artist dare offend. These, in Marion's case were represented by the unwashed ladies and gentlemen who could afford the necessary sum of threepence to pay for their admission into the interior of the Royal Slap-Up.

These she got on with capitally, for she speedily discovered that whatever or however she sang, provided always that her petticoats were short enough, and her attitudes sufficiently striking, she was sure to be rapturously applauded.

With the gentlemen, in short, Marian was the favorite, but the ladies were either more difficult to please, or had different tastes to the lords of the creation, or perhaps they were jealous; but be the case as it might, it was pretty certain that Marian got liberally abused by those of her own sex.

Brazen-faced and bold were the mildest adjectives tacked upon her name.

Improper, loose, and depraved, were the epithets showered upon her by the better halves of the worthy pawnbrokers and publicans situated near the music-hall,

Indeed these indignant ladies boldly declared their belief that Marian's special mission at the Slap-Up Saloon was to tempt the

aforesaid pawnbrokers and publicans from the paths of virtue and rectitude.

However, this only afforded our heroine amusement, and many a laugh she had over the comic scenes in real life that she saw enacted among the audiences.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARIAN HAS A BENEFIT AT THE SLAP-UP SALOON.—A LETTER FROM ANNIE.—AN ACT OF TREACHERY.—IN THE TOILS.

THE ROYAL SLAP-UP SALOON,

Sole Manager

Mr. DE CLIFFORD.

MADEMOISELLE MARIAN LIVINGSTON'S MONSTER BENEFIT.

DO NOT BE LATE!

UNPRECEDENTED ATTRACTION.

THESE were the words, printed in letters containing all the colors of the rainbow—and many more that don't appear there at all—at least a yard in height, on posters, stuck up on all the dead walls and available spaces round the Royal Slap-up Saloon.

It was a fact. Marian had been so successful, and had put so much money into the coffers of Mr. de Clifford, that that gentleman one day, in the heat of the moment, and assisted by one or two extra glasses of hot gin and water actually proposed that she should have a benefit night, a thing undreamt of by her predecessors; as the sagacious reader may suppose, Marian was not behind in accepting the offer.

On the night of her benefit the magnificent orchestra of the "Royal Slap-up Saloon" played a choice selection of operatic airs, so tortured and altered that it would puzzle the composer himself to say whether he was the author or not.

At length the overture is concluded, and lightly tripping down the stage comes the fair Marian, gracefully acknowledging the somewhat noisy greeting she receives from the audience.

Our heroine had a new dress and a new song for the occasion of

her benefit, and fully succeeded in working up the audience to a high state of excitement.

She was attired in a somewhat mysterious dress, vaguely believed in by the theatrical people as a correct costume of Troubadors of the fourteenth century, and she appeared to perfection in her tight-fitting costume.

She came forward and sang a song (which, by the bye, had nothing whatever to do with the troubadors) which was encored.

She sang another and that was rapturously encored, then she varied the performance with a dance, and if the song was rapturously encored, goodness, knows what adjectives will apply to the dance.

The audience seemed to think they could stay there all night to see her stand on the tips of her toes, with one leg out at right angles like a maniacal teetotum, and they never stopped to inquire whether it was in keeping with the character she represented.

But Marian got tired of this sort of amusement sooner than the audience, so, after having been called six or seven times in succession, she refused to appear any more, and the threepenny paying public had to content themselves with the "Virginian Minstrels," and a choice selection of negro melodies.

When Marian left the stage, a letter was thrust into her hand by Mr. de Clifford.

"Dear me, Miss Livingston," said he, "I am afraid something has happened to Mr. Villiers—a carriage is waiting for you."

Darting a frightened look at the manager, Marian hastily tore open the note, and read the following lines:—

Royal Victoria Theatre.

DEAR MARIAN,—

My poor brother has had an accident at the Victoria Theatre; some heavy scenery has fallen upon him. Come at once to the assistance of

Your's Lovingly,

ANNIE.

P. S.—The carriage of the doctor who is attending him will convey you hither.

Marian dashed past Mr. de Clifford, and, hastening to the dressing-room, she rapidly changed her dress. Outside the stage-door she found a man waiting for her.

The man assumed an expression of the deepest sympathy as she approached.

He was a respectable looking person of middle age, neat in his attire; in fact, what physician's servant might be supposed to be; yet, with all this, there was something in his silent movements calculated to raise mistrust in the mind of an observant individual.

"I am ready to go with you at once," said the excited girl. "Oh pray let us hurry."

Had she been calmer, she must have wondered at the style of the

carriage waiting to receive her, which bore little resemblance to the kind of vehicle usually employed by medical men; and she also would have remarked the presence of a man enveloped in a loose over-coat, who sat in the rumble of the carriage, smoking a cigar.

But as it was Marian saw nothing; the carriage-door was opened for her, and she sprang into it, and sank, half fainting, upon the seat.

"Pray beg the coachman to drive quickly," she cried, in an imploring voice, as the man closed the door.

"Oh, yes, miss, we'll drive fast enough," he answered, with a sinister grin, as he ascended the box, and the horses started off.

The man wrapped in the over-coat, and seated in the rumble, was the same nobleman, who, under the name of Cousin Smith, had persecuted Marian at Madame Rosini's in Soho Square.

One or two gentlemen were laughing at the corner of the street, and watched the departing vehicle.

"By Jove! the Marquis has won the wager," said one of the party.

"Yes! and his bird is helpless now," said another of the gentlemen, with a significant smile. "But, messieurs, let us to a more lively part of the town."

The carriage in which Marian was seated, drove at a rapid pace, but to the young girl's dismay and terror, it was not going in the direction of the Victoria Theatre.

She was in an agony of excitement, thinking that the coachman, through mere ignorance or stupidity, had taken the wrong way, and that time, precious time, would be lost.

She pulled the check-string violently, but the driver took no notice, only he seemed to drive faster every minute.

Rendered desperate by her fears, Marian would have endeavored to have sprung from the carriage, at the risk of her life, but she found when she tried the door of the carriage that it was locked; she then beat desperately, with her hands, against the front windows of the carriage; the coachman must have heard her, but he did not even turn round, and took no notice of her frantic summons.

Marian strained her eyes endeavoring to discern where she was, but the neighborhood seemed entirely strange to her, and a feeling of despair came over her.

By-and-bye, the houses grew more scattered, there were trees, and a country road.

A road which seemed to be interminable to the distracted girl, who watched it from the open window; she felt she was the victim of some conspiracy, but she did not for a moment doubt the story of Villiers' accident.

After an hour's rapid travelling, the carriage pulled up before an old fashioned inn.

It seemed as though the travellers were expected, for though it was past midnight, a man came out of the stables directly the vehicle stopped.

CHAPTER IX.

MARIAN CONTINUES HER STRANGE JOURNEY.—A STARTLING RECOGNITION.
BLACK IVIES.

THE lights were all out, and the inmates had evidently retired to rest long before, but the stable yard was open, and a light in one of the sheds within.

No time was lost in waiting for, while an ostler removed the jaded and steaming animals from the carriage, a second man came out of the stable yard leading a pair of fresh horses.

Marian thrust her head out of the window, and saw a tall slenderly built man, standing a little way from the carriage.

"Oh! sir," she cried, "as you hope for the mercy of heaven, tell me the meaning of this mystery."

The Marquis, thus addressed, approached the carriage window; his face was shaded by the brim of his hat, which he wore low on his forehead, and by a Cashmere shawl which enveloped his chin.

The night was dark, though fine, and Marian could not recognize her profligate persecutor.

"My angel," answered the Marquis, in a light, laughing tone, "pray don't give way to that silly grief, and spoil your deuced beautiful eyes; your mind may be perfectly at rest with regard to Mr. Villiers' accident; it is only a fiction, and as far as I know, he is as well as ever."

"He is not ill? But the letter from his sister Annie?"

"That letter was only part of an innocent stratagem, which I am sure you will pardon when you know its motives, my dear."

The fresh horses were harnessed by this time, and the driver was in his seat before Marian could ask another question.

At last about two o'clock in the morning, the carriage stopped before a dreary building, with a castellated roof and circular towers at each end of the wall.

In the past it might have been taken for the feudal castle of some lawless, marauding baron, but, in the present day, it looked more like a madhouse or a gaol.

The Marquis came to the carriage door and assisted Marian to alight. The poor suffering girl was utterly worn out, both in mind and body, by the events of the night.

Marian alighted from the vehicle with a tottering step, and must have fallen to the ground had not the Marquis supported her.

"Oh! where am I," she gasped. "Why am I brought here?"

"Have patience, dearest and loveliest of girls, and you shall know all; ask no questions now," answered his lordship, in a tender whisper.

A stifled cry burst from Marian's lips—there was something in the speaker's words that chilled her to the heart.

It was the tone of a triumphant lover—who believed that his victim was in his power.

Inexperienced as Marian was of life's perils, her instinct seemed to reveal to her the danger and misery of her helpless position.

But gentle though she was, she had the proud and noble spirit of a true woman, the spirit that boldly asserts itself in the hour of danger and difficulty.

"Why am I brought here?" she demanded almost fiercely drawing away from the Marquis' supporting arm. "Who are you that have been base enough to betray and lure me away from my home under such cruel pretences? My helplessness should have rendered me sacred."

"My dearest angel," returned the Marquis, paying but little attention to the impassioned speech, "do not be such a prude. Did you but know the absorbing love—the devoted admiration that I have for you—I am sure you would pardon all. However, you must let me defer all unpleasant explanations until to-morrow."

Marian was almost fainting, and she was too weak to make any further struggle to extricate herself from the power of her persecutor; she sank upon a bench in the entrance hall, which was dimly lighted by one lamp.

A blear-eyed, wicked-looking woman, had admitted his lordship and his trembling companion into the hall, when the Marquis committed Marian to the old creature's charge.

"You received my letter?" he asked.

"Am I better," mumbled the crone, "No, your lordship, I'm rather hard o' hearing still."

"Did you get my letter," shouted the Marquis, his eyes flashing with anger.

"Yes, yes, I got the letter," said the hag, dimly understanding what was wanted of her, "and all is ready for the young lady. The blue chamber makes a nice birdcage. But she's a bonny bride—a bonny bride."

The old woman led her charge up the broad oaken staircase, and ushered her into a room at the end of a long corridor.

Marian had scarcely strength to totter to a large, four post, old fashioned bedstead, that looked like a hearse.

Upon this the luckless girl sank helplessly and hopelessly.

CHAPTER X.

THE BURGLARS.—A STARTLING SURPRISE.

It was night. The clock in the tower of the parish church had tolled forth the hour of twelve, and all the inhabitants of Rainham near which village Black Ivies was situated, were wrapped in deep repose, and unconscious of existing things:

As the clock chimed the quarter, the noise of wheels might have been heard rapidly approaching, and a light dog cart, containing six men swiftly approached the village.

The cart stopped before a door that opened from the kitchen into the yard, and one of the men drew from a bag a centre-bit, as used

by carpenters, and made two holes in the door, one above each bolt.

A thin, sharp, well-oiled saw was then introduced, and cut two circular holes, through which the burglar introduced his hand, and noiselessly and cautiously drew back the bolts.

Then lifting the catch, he opened the door, and the whole party entered.

"Get the bag," he whispered, "and slip these things in it; it is splendid booty, and well worth the trouble it has cost us."

So saying, and without noise, he very rapidly turned out of the box a valuable service of plate.

They carefully stowed in the bag that held their tools, the silver service, and a variety of smaller articles, then all silently left the room, closing the door behind them.

Not content with the amount of their plunder, they determined to visit some of the other apartments, and they proceeded to another room, the door of which they found strongly bolted. Cautiously they proceeded to undo the fastenings, and opening the door, our heroine was discovered asleep.

On entering, the man stumbled, and fell with a curse!

This was sufficient to arouse the sleeper, who seeing four men in her room, with a scream for aid, leaped from her bed, and rushed frantically to the bell-pull.

Seeing her intentions, the burglar stepped forward, and caught her loosely-clad form in his arms, and placed one hand over her mouth to prevent her raising an alarm.

In a moment her head fell gently on one side, and with a smothered sigh she slipped from his arms and fell senseless upon the floor of the room.

The burglar then turned the light of the lantern upon the face of the helpless girl.

With a curse he recognized her.

It was his reputed granddaughter, Marian Livingston!

Like a flash of lightning his fertile brain formed a daring plan.

"The girl is here," he thought. "How she came here I neither know or care. But if she has any influential friends, it will be dangerous to let her remain here, for she might make awkward disclosures respecting me. Whereas, if I could keep her in confinement until this hubbub has blown over, I might manage to cut off to America, and she could go to the devil. The boozing ken in Pie Street abounds in old cellars. Once get her there, I should have her quite safely under my eye."

Then turning to his comrades, who were ransacking the cupboards, he made them acquainted with his plan.

"How will you manage to convey the girl up to London without detection?" inquired one of the men.

"Leave it all to me, it shall be done without risk to any of us."

After some hesitation, the others consented; and then, by the direction of Ralph, wrapped a blanket round the senseless girl, whom Ralph raised in his arms, and carried to the cart as if she had been a child, while the others followed, bearing the girl's clothes and the bag of plunder. They got into the cart, and the vehicle was driven back to the village as the clocks were chiming.

CHAPTER XI.

A LAMB GUARDED BY WOLVES.—A STRATAGEM, AND EXPLANATION OF WHAT IS SEEMINGLY IMPROBABLE.

WHEN our heroine returned to consciousness, she found herself dressed, and seated in a cab by the side of her captors.

"Where am I? Where are you taking me to?" cried Marian, in great alarm, trying to rise, but immediately falling helpless upon the seat when she found that her ankles had been tied together, and her arms securely fastened to her sides.

"You are in London, my dear; and we are conveying you to your future residence," replied Ralph, with a sneering laugh, in which the other men joined, evidently thinking that their leader had said a good thing.

The strange position in which our heroine found herself, together with the sinister looks of her ruffianly companions, their audacity in carrying her off so very openly, in the broad daylight, through the crowded streets of busy London, and a keen sense of her own helplessness, paralysed her with horror.

The cab was proceeding at a rapid pace over Westminster Bridge, and Marian, making a strong effort, endeavored to shake off the lethargy and the terror which she now experienced, and which almost overpowered her, and, giving full vent to her lungs, uttered piercing screams for aid.

The cab drove the faster.

A second scream, more wild and piercing than the first.

The two men laughed, rolled, looked stupid, hiccuped, fell into each other's arms; cried, and acted every other prank of the drunkard.

The men on the box remained as they were, only driving the faster and apparently paying no attention to the farce being so well played inside the vehicle.

Marian, alarmed beyond measure, screamed louder than ever.

A foot-passenger and a policeman, hearing our heroine, and having a vague suspicion that something was wrong, stopped the cab before Westminster Abbey, and, as is usual in London, a crowd of the curious soon collected.

"Hallo, cabby, said the foot-passeenger, what sort of a fare have you got."

He was followed up by the policeman, in a bullying tone.

"You may well ask that, gentlemen," said the driver, touching his hat in mock humility. "Why, yer see, this yer party's been out all night, a having a bit of a spree, and they ain't quite recovered yet. I wish I was rid of them, I does."

"Yes, but what makes the woman scream so?" inquired the policeman.

"That's my wife, your honor," readily replied the youngest of the two men, with a decided Hibernian accent; and the colleen thinks that I have bolted from her, so she's yelling after me. Them that's with her is her brothers, but, shure they have been having a drop of

the craythur and by the powers of Ballyshannon, they're as tight as drums."

"Nice lot, ain't they, gentlemen?" said the pretended cabman, as he drove on, while the sympathising passenger passed on his way with a shrug and a shudder.

The cab turned down Smith Street, and passed through several dirty and seemingly deserted thoroughfares, for the majority of the people living in these miserable habitations being like owls, only make their appearance at night, and at length the party arrived at their destination, "Thieves' Kitchen," in Pye Street.

Poor Marian, who was, almost speechless from fright and the effort of her unavailing screams, was hastily lifted from the cab by Ralph Dearwood into the passage of the house.

When Marian recovered her senses, she found herself lying upon a lump of dirty straw, in a dark, damp cellar; a lamp was left burning upon a shelf casting a faint light over the wretched place—the loathsome hovel.

Where was she?

No answer to the momentous question that she continued asking herself.

Grim silence reigned—so deadly, that it appalled the imagination, and would have terrified the stoutest nerve.

Marian clasped her hands over her burning brow, and tried to collect her scattered thoughts.

She remembered now—the man entering her room—the treacherous handkerchief—the passage in the cab going across Westminster Bridge—and her swoon when she alighted in Pye Street.

She made an attempt to rise, but nature was too exhausted; she fell back upon the straw, and dropped into a heavy fitful sleep, broken only by dismal, horrible dreams.

A key was inserted into the rusty lock of the grated oaken door, which was thrown open, and a man entered.

The lamp had almost expired, so that Marian could not see the face of the person whom instinct told her was her gaoler.

"Are you awake?" demanded the man, abruptly, and in coarse tones.

"Yes," said our heroine, faintly fancying she recognised the voice of the visitor.

"Who are you? What do you want?" she timidly asked.

"As to what I want, a few words will inform you; and as to who I am, look."

So saying the man turned up the lamp, and revealed the features of the villain, Ralph!

"Ralph!" cried our heroine.

"At your service," he replied with a sneer. "Now, my dainty bird, what I want is to keep you caged up for a short time."

"And am I to remain here?" asked poor Marian, who was almost too ill to express surprise, or to ask for mercy.

Ralph nodded.

"For how long?"

The question was asked with a shudder.

"I don't know."

"Why am I torn from my friends? By what right do you confine me here?"

"Because you are a bar between me and liberty—because, were you free, I should rot in a felon's dungeon."

Then Ralph, as if fearing any further conversation, turned his back upon his victim, and left the cellar, closing the door behind him with a bang, he then ascended the steps.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ESCAPE—A PERILOUS ADVENTURE.—IN A LONDON SEWER.—MARIAN IS THREATENED WITH A HORRIBLE FATE.—THE RIVER.

TWICE a day, in the morning and evening, Ralph Dearwood brought Marian her food, consisting of the commonest and coarsest description. At first her stomach revolted at such fare, but hunger soon overcame any prejudices she might have felt.

On no occasion did Ralph ever speak to her, though her prayers and entreaties to know the term of her unjust imprisonment might have moved a heart of stone.

How long she had been confined she did not exactly know, but she thought fully a fortnight must have elapsed since she was taken from Black Ivies.

"What would Villiers think, in what light would he view her sudden disappearance (surrounded as it was by such very suspicious circumstances)? would he think that she was really depraved and abandoned? "that she had again thrown herself upon the world," and was pursuing a low, sinful career of miscalled pleasure? would he cast her image from his heart and replace it with another?"

No! the thought was madness, death to our brave heroine; her heart yearned towards him, she must fly to Villiers, and explain away all doubts, and prove herself pure, still good and true.

But how to fly, how to escape from her accursed prison, and once more breathe with liberty, beneath the bright canopy of heaven—that was the dark question she now asked herself.

Poor Marian turned many plans over in her bewildered brain, but in all there occurred some insurmountable obstacle—some impossible obstruction to overcome—to her success.

At last capricious Dame Fortune smiled on our sad héroine, and dispelled the dark clouds that gathered round her.

The cellar was extremely damp, and in many cases the brick-work had fallen away.

The holes thus caused had been filled up with stout boarding roughly nailed to the wall.

This was more especially the case with the part opposite the door.

To this place the attention of our heroine had frequently been

called, as at times she could distinguish the sound of running water apparently proceeding from the back, and a wild, adventurous scheme of immediate escape developed itself to her disturbed mind.

Could she but break through the dilapidated barrier, she had a vague notion that she would find herself in a branch of the sewers—those gigantic arteries that convey away all the impurities of our mighty metropolis into the dirty bosom of Father Thames, and Marian knew that if she could but follow the narrow stream, sooner or later she would come to some outlet for her escape.

She was aware of the peril she must encounter upon her dangerous road—that of suffocation by the noxious gases with which the sewers abound, or perhaps death by drowning, should the river be at the high tide.

But the brave, high-spirited girl determined to risk all, for death was preferable in any shape to this long solitary imprisonment, which she felt was slowly but surely stealing away her bright senses.

One evening after her appointed gaoler had just brought in the miserable meal, replenished the lamp with fresh oil, and had departed without a word, our heroine commenced to put her plan of escape into execution.

With ready ingenuity she tore open the lining of her dress, and took from her corset a piece of steel that is commonly sewn in the front of that habiliment, to support the bust.

With this frail instrument she proceeded to pick away the cement that bound the bricks almost indissolubly together.

At last, with a sigh of joy, she loosened the first brick, and threw it on the floor, then another, a third, and so on until she had made a hole in the wall about a foot square.

In another two hours the courageous girl had pulled down some of the boarding, making sufficient space to creep through.

Her pretty, white, delicate hands, were scratched and bleeding.

She tore her handkerchief in strips and bound them up, then taking the lamp in her hand, she proceeded on her adventurous way, trusting to Heaven for protection and delivery from her troubles.

By the light of the lamp our heroine saw upon the wall, in the water upon every side of her, a host of moving black animals.

They were rats!

The fiery red eyes of these vermin seemed to gaze with astonishment at the intruder into their subterranean territory, but the light prevented them from assailing her, and they fled in dismay.

Onwards, still onwards, our heroine trampled on through the dismal sewer; at length, thoroughly fatigued, she stopped, and placing the lamp beside her, sat down upon a stone that happened to be placed against the wall.

Exhausted nature must be restored, and, strange as it may seem Marian was soon overcome by deep sleep.

When she awoke next morning it was to a new horror; by the pale dim light of dawn struggling down from a grating far above her reach, she saw her protecting friendly lamp had expired.

But this was not all.

Dozens and dozens of rats surrounded her, nearer and nearer the

creatures approached, until one, more venturesome than the rest, leaped upon her lap, and was speedily followed by others.

Marian arose with a piercing scream of hopeless agony, and shook them off.

The truth struck her at once.

She was attacked by rats!

Fortunately several pieces of wood were lying near, and seizing a piece, the poor girl defended herself as best she could. But for this lucky chance our heroine must have fallen an easy prey to these ferocious animals; as it was, it was as much as she could do to keep them at bay.

The morning was far advanced before she was entirely free from her assailants.

When at last she had driven them off, the frightened girl discovered that she had received several bites during the contest, but of these, though they smarted intolerably, she took no notice, for she was too grateful to that Omnipotent Being in whom she put her whole trust for her deliverance and protection.

Still it seemed to her tortured mind that she was reserved for another equally horrible death—Starvation!

Poor girl! she began almost to despair of ever quitting the cellars alive.

With sinking heart and depressed spirits, she again proceeded on her road.

With nothing but impenetrable darkness before her, splashing and walking through the mire, from which a dreadful, overpowering smell arose.

By andbye, with an exclamation of heartfelt joy, she halted.

A gleam of bright heavenly sunshine came from a grating far above her head; she was evidently under a large and populous thoroughfare, for the noise of wheels unceasingly rolling sent a thousand echoes rumbling through her vaulted noisome prison.

In vain she screamed for aid.

Her voice was lost in the distance, and never reached the street above.

The busy, ceaseless din and whirl above her, drowned her cries.

While intently listening, in the vain hope of hearing some response to her unavailing cries, she heard a noise, evidently at some distance behind her.

It sounded like the regular beat of the piston of a steam-engine.

Marian, in horror of some fresh peril, was wondering from what cause it could proceed, when a stream of water came flowing swiftly along the sewer, carrying with it much of the lighter refuse lying about.

“Great heavens!” cried she, in her horror and despair, “they are flushing the sewer!”

Such indeed was the case, there having been a scarcity of rain for some weeks previous.

The volume of water increasing every moment as it flowed on to the river, showed Marian that shortly its force would be stronger than she would be able to stand against.

It increased rapidly, and our heroine was thrown down, and carried with immense rapidity along with the stream.

In vain the poor girl made frantic and almost superhuman efforts to catch hold of the rough walls, but they seemed to glide from her grasp.

She gave herself up for lost! Providence, however, decreed that she should not perish in this way.

Throwing up her arms despairingly, in futile attempts to keep her head above water, which each moment got higher and higher, her hands came in contact, with a large plank, that was being borne along with the resistless torrent.

This she caught hold of, and by great exertion, managed to support herself.

With only this plank between her and death, she struggled for dear life upon the bosom of the angry flood.

Would she never reach the river?

Each moment seemed a century of agony and hopeless suspense.

Yes, at last she sees a light faintly glimmering in the distance; it was so small that it seemed like a star, but, as she rapidly approaches, it assumes larger dimensions. Heaven be praised! it is the opening of the river, and Marian can hazily distinguish the outlines of the houses upon the opposite side of the river.

With a rush, the seething, hissing waters fall into the Thames, along with them, wet through, and half blinded by the sudden transition from darkness to light, comes the shivering form of our unfortunate heroine, holding on to the plank with that tight despairing grasp that persons can only do when in the last extremity.

A horrible death seemed inevitable to the wretched girl.

The force with which the waters dashed into the river, carried Marian into the middle of the dreadful stream!

“Ahoy! ahoy! ahoy! Look! a woman in the water! The bows of the barge will run her down!”

“No, nothing can save her, mate. Poor soul!—a suicide, I shouldn’t wonder.

These words passed between the two men aboard of a barge laden with coal, that was coming down the river under heavy sail.

Poor affrighted Marian was right beneath the bows of the vessel, she recognized her danger, but escape was hopeless.

The men who had spoken saw it also, but they were powerless to avert the catastrophe. The huge, unwieldy boat struck the plank from the grasp of the girl, who, with a heart-rending scream, sank beneath the rippling waves, into the cold, mysterious depths of the filthy and impure river.

CHAPTER XII.

VILLIERS RECEIVES A SHOCK.—THE SUSPICIONS OF MR. DE CLIFFORD.—THE ACTOR ARRIVES AT BLACK IVIES.—THE DEAD BODY.—WHO IS THE MURDERER.

By a strange coincidence, upon the night that Marian was so cruelly abducted from the Slap-up Saloon by the Marquis of West-

wood George Villiers, in consequence of a change in the programme at the Victoria Theatre, was free for the evening, and he hastened over to Shoreditch, with the intention of accompanying Marian home; but, of course, upon seeing Mr. de Clifford, with whom he was personally acquainted, that gentleman informed him of the message which our heroine had received.

"Great Heavens!" cried Villiers, "there is some base treachery at work; unfortunate girl, is she for ever to be persecuted!"

The manager gazed at the actor with some surprise.

"Well, I don't know about persecution; but if what my stage door keeper tells me is true, I think it looks like a planned job."

"Planned job," almost shrieked Villiers, "What do you mean?"

"Why, what I say," coolly responded the manager. "Miss Livingston has gone off in a carriage with the most notorious profligate in London."

"Who? what?" asked Villiers, in utter bewilderment.

"Why, Miss Livingston has gone away with the Marquis of Westwood."

"The Marquis of Westwood! Great God! she is lost!" and Villiers almost staggered, so powerful an effect did the intelligence have upon him.

"Not she," replied Mr. de Clifford, "he always pensions them well off—when he's tired of them—only she needn't have made such a mystery about it. I'm sorry to lose her, for she was a great draw and no mistake; but I suppose she's like the rest of them, prefers a lady's life to stage work. Blest if I know what's coming over the women; they only seem to come into the profession to make a shorter cut to ruin."

"Your observations are, in the generality of cases unfortunately too true, but with Marian Livingston I am sure you are wrong," was the reply of Villiers.

"Well I hope so," returned the manager. Then, as if an idea struck him, he added: "If you *really* think it wasn't a planned affair, and the letter wasn't a blind, you should make haste if you want to save her."

"What shall I do? what can I do?" demanded Villiers.

"Why follow them."

"Which way did the carriage go?"

"Down to Black Ivies, by Rainham, in Essex, that's where he's gone now, for the coachman passed a joke with my stage door keeper, and told him their destination."

"How am I to get there?—there will be no trains or conveyance at this hour," said Villiers.

"No, you'll have to cab it, if you can get a 'shoful' to take you," replied Mr de Clifford. "It's a long journey, but I wish you success, and you can tell her that the shop's open whenever she likes to come back."

With these words Mr. de Clifford shook Villiers heartily by the hand, and the actor hastened on to engage a cab.

We will pass over the weary journey, and merely say that the cold grey morning light was breaking when Villiers arrived at his destination.

A cold, bleak wind blew round the walls of Cypress Grange, as Villiers entered the northern shrubbery.

He felt its influence, for a slight shiver passed over his frame as he lit a cigar and looked round upon the desolate scene, which appeared so cold and cheerless in the bright rays of the midnight moon.

"Wretched place," he muttered; "it's enough to give one the horrors."

He paced moodily to and fro before the building which he anathematized.

And not without cause, for the appearance of the northern wing of the old edifice was sufficient to make the mind run riot with dismal thoughts.

This part of the building had been uninhabited and neglected for more than half a century.

In the time of the previous Duke of Westwood, the whole range of the north rooms had been stripped of their finest pictures and most valuable furniture, to assist in re-decorating the west rooms, which now formed the only inhabited part of the mansion.

The south side itself consisted of stables and out houses, with a ruinous wall in front of them.

The outside range of north rooms from the weedy, deserted garden and gloomy shrubbery below showed plainly enough that many years had elapsed since any human being had resided in them.

The window panes were broken in some places, and in others they were thickly covered in dirt and dust.

Here, the shutters were closed; and there, they were only half opened.

The untrained ivy, the rank vegetation, growing in fissures of the stonework, the spiders' webs, the rubbish of wood, brick, plaster broken glass, rags, and strips of soiled cloth which lay beneath the windows, all told the same tale of neglect.

Shadowed by its position, this ruinous side of the house had a dark, cold, wintry aspect, even in the bright sunny days of that August month.

Lost in the labyrinth of his thoughts, Villiers moved slowly past flowerbeds, long since rooted up, and along gravel paths overgrown with weeds, his eyes wandering mechanically over the prospect, and his feet carrying him wherever there was a trace of a footpath.

At first his eyes rested vacantly on the lonely, deserted north front of the house; but gradually they became attracted by one particular window, exactly in the middle, on the floor above the ground.

This was the largest and gloomiest of all the row. There was, however, one peculiarity about it.

A light faintly glimmered through the casement. The panes of the large windows were yellow with dust and dirt, and festooned about fantastically with cobwebs.

Below it was a heap of rubbish scattered over the dry mould of what might once have been a bed of flowers or shrubs.

Near this lay an iron garden-seat, covered with the rust of ages.

As these struck the eye of Villiers, his countenance suddenly brightened with an expression of intelligence.

He started.

A flush of color flew into his cheeks, and he hastily advanced closer to the wall of the house.

"I'll risk it," he said to himself, abruptly.

Then he commenced noiselessly dragging the old iron seat to the top of the mound, and silently raised it against the wall, immediately beneath the window.

By standing upon it he found that he could place his hands upon the window ledge, and with but slight exertion raised himself up, so as to enter the room.

He satisfied himself that the casement was opened.

He tried to peer into the room, but the blind prevented him from seeing its occupant.

Villiers placed his hands upon the ledge, but a strange feeling came over him, and he paused.

"What the devil ails me?" he whispered to himself; "I feel as nervous as a whipped child. There is a strange weight at my heart. Surely this cannot be fear!"

He raised his hand to his forehead, and drew away.

It was wet.

With a muttered oath at his fears, he swung himself up with a vigorous effort, and, thrusting aside the dingy blind, he stepped across the ledge and into the room. A dark, sombre apartment, with gloomy, oaken panels, and heavy carvings.

In one corner a small camp bedstead, upon which lay the figure of a man.

It was the Marquis.

It was towards this spot that Villiers glanced.

He seemed to be peacefully slumbering.

Taking the lamp in his hand, Villiers approached the bed.

He bent over the Marquis, but no sound of regular breathing reached his ear.

Again did the peculiar sensation which had before assailed him strike his heart with a dreadful chill.

An irrepressible feeling of awe seemed to overpower him.

"Surely this is more than sleep!" he muttered. "Oh, God! what is this!"

As he spoke he recoiled from the bed with a thrill of horror.

Every drop of blood seemed froze in his veins.

His very circulation became stagnant.

With a trembling hand he drew aside the top of the sheet, which concealed the features of the Marquis, and an ejaculation of terror escaped from his lips.

Exposed to his gaze was a countenance blackened, swollen, and distorted, with the agonies of suffocation.

With a low cry of horror, Villiers reeled like a drunken man, and staggered against the wall of the apartment.

He felt weak, sick, and ill.

The lamp fell from his enfeebled grasp, and was shivered into a thousand fragments.

He was alone in that deserted wing with the corpse of a murdered man!

A thousand terrors seemed to seize upon his soul, and, for the moment, and he sank beneath the horrors which had fastened upon him.

"*She* has slain him," he muttered to himself; "*she* has slain him. Oh, Heaven!"

Then the thought rushed upon him with the rapidity of lightning. "If I am found here, I shall be accused of this crime!"

With a vigorous effort he recovered his self possession, and again slowly approached the bed.

He touched the fingers of the murdered man.

A cold chill of death struck into his very marrow, and, with a nameless terror upon him, he hastened to leave by the way he had entered.

CHAPTER XIII.

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.—THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE.—A LIFE SAVED.—A LIFE LOST.

THE severe shock caused the affrighted girl to loose her hold, and with a heart rending shriek, she sank beneath the black river.

Rapidly as all this had happened, as rapidly did the banks of the river become thronged with spectators, of all ages and sexes, who with beating hearts and straining eyes anxiously awaited the appearance of our heroine.

Here was a splendid opportunity for the hero of our story. In ordinary novel form, the hero of the story is supposed ever to be in the vicinity of his beloved, ready and willing to aid her in any emergency, at the risk of his very life.

Then where is Mr. George Villiers? Ay, indeed.

Had he been going to a morning rehearsal at the Royal Victoria he would have had to cross Waterloo Bridge, and might have been attracted by the crowd on the river bank, and God knows but what he might have been the means of rescuing his loved one.

As it was, through the sudden disappearance of Marian, his health had become seriously affected, and he had not been able to appear at the Royal Victoria for over a week.

But succour was near, a rough-looking mechanic, who looked incapable of doing aught else besides emptying pots of beer, and smoking short clay pipes, threw off his coat and cap, and without more ado, sprang boldly into the river.

There was a murmur of admiration among the spectators on the bank, as he rose to the surface of the water.

Brushing his hair back from his eyes, he looked expectantly in every direction. Presently a dark mass of hair appears for an instant above the dark stream. There is a loud, sudden cry of "there! there she is."

The mechanic darts forward and makes a frantic clutch at the hair, but misses it, and it disappears.

Half smothered cries of despair burst from the group on the shore.

Now the mechanic has disappeared. Second after second flits by, but nothing appears except a few bubbles. Presently, however the mechanic appears, with the apparently lifeless form of the Ballet Girl across his shoulder.

A loud shout of applause greets him as he strikes out towards the shore, he makes very slow progress, though the distance between him and the bank is short but he seems a terrible long while reaching it. Is it his helpless burden that retards his actions? He seems a sturdy fellow? What can it mean? Will he never reach the bank?

Ah! he calls for help, he struggles desperately, but all in vain. The demon cramp has seized him and his legs become like rigid blocks of stone. Thrusting the young girl towards the shore, he makes a frantic, but impotent effort to follow her, but sinks with a cry of horror.

By wading up to his armpits in the water, a youth managed to catch hold of Marian's dress and drag her to shore, where a hundred ready hands awaited him.

In the meantime a boat had been put off, and every effort made to save the mechanic, but in vain. When his body was recovered life was extinct.

Yes, this obscure hero, this nature's nobleman who had little worldly possessions to give in charity, had given his very life to save a stranger's; ay, and there are thousands like him to be seen in our City of London every day.

He had been spending his dinner hour by the side of the river, and he had met his doom.

Alas for the generous thought that prompted the act—also for the anxious wife and babes that await his coming home.

Unromantic as it may seem, after receiving a stiff glass of brandy, from some friendly hand, Marian was hurried off to the nearest workhouse, as speedily as possible by the blue-coated guardians of the streets.

Having every attention paid her, she soon recovered, and was able to satisfy the master of the workhouse, that her presence in the river was the result of accident.

She considered it prudent to keep her name and the particulars of her story secret, but her first thoughts were to send for her old and tried friend, George Villiers.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE MURDER.—GILBERT HAWKE, THE DETECTIVE COMES UPON THE SCENE.—ANOTHER DANGER THREATENS THE BALLET GIRL.

BACK to Black Ivies, back to some half dozen frightened servitors, who, half awake and partly dressed, had been awakened from their slumbers by the loud clanging of the alarm bell, which aroused the echoes of the night.

The search, led by the gardener then commenced; the outer doors were opened, and with trembling steps, they sought around but without any great success; that the mansion had been entered there was no doubt.

The moon shone through the thick foliage, and they saw upon the dewy grass the imprints of many foot-steps.

Evidently there had been a struggle of many men—and a desperate struggle too.

A little further on was a pool of blood, and gory stains befouled the green herbage which grew so abundantly around, and the dead body of the faithful house-dog was speedily discovered.

Without doubt it was an attempted burglary.

Crouching near the ground, and holding their lanterns low, the foremost of the party proceeded on their way.

Through the dark and lonely plantation which surrounded Black Ivies they slowly followed the sanguinary trail.

With pale visages, but with the determination of sleuth hounds they could distinctly trace the path which had been followed; suddenly they were aroused by one of the party, who uttered an exclamation of astonishment, all looked in the direction in which he pointed.

Lying upon the ground was a woman's cloak.

Advancing towards it with hasty steps the old gardener picked it up. "This," he said "may furnish some clue to the mystery." Then bidding his associates to follow him he hastened back to the house to confer with his master, the Marquis of Westwood, who, in the first moment of their alarm they had forgotten.

To their astonishment, lights were moving about the northern wing; quickening their footsteps they neared the building, when they were met by the old hag who acted as housekeeper.

In disjointed sentences she informed them of the murder of the Marquis, and the disappearance of Marian, while at the same time her eyes fell upon the cloak which the gardener carried.

"Where did you find this?" demanded the hag.

The gardener told her.

"Then the girl to whom that cloak belonged committed the murder," cried the old woman vehemently, "I know it by the trimmings."

Without more ado, the gardener despatched one of the men with a telegram to the chief police office in London, desiring the inspector on duty to send a detective down to Black Ivies at once.

And then he visited the apartment where the dead body of his master lay, and there remained until the local police arrived to take possession of the premises.

An early train brought down Gilbert Hawke, the detective, who, with rapid professional dispatch proceeded to put matters into a business shape.

And when he heard of the abduction of Marian Livingston from the theatre—her arrival at Black Ivies—the mysterious murder of the Marquis, and her strange disappearance, he gave a long low whistle, expressive of the most profound astonishment.

"Well," he muttered to himself, "this beats cock fighting into fits. Here's this blessed girl of George Villiers turning up again. She's like the heroine of one of Miss Braddon's novels, always in some scrape, and getting mixed up in other people's affairs. I don't believe that she's had anything to do with the murder; but it looks

suspicious, and, if I didn't know something about her I should think that she knew more about the burglary and murder than she would care to talk about at the Old Bailey.

The blackened and distorted features of the murdered man plainly showed that his death had been caused by suffocation, and that the pillow had been held over and pressed closely upon his mouth, until life was extinct.

Strange to say, the door of the apartment was securely fastened upon the inside, and whoever had perpetrated the foul deed must have entered by the window, and the pocket book, and the personal jewellery of the Marquis were also missing.

CHAPTER XV.

VILLIERS AND MARIAN.—LOVER'S VOWS.—BRIGHTER DAYS IN STORE.

SEVERAL days have passed since the recovery of our heroine from the effects of the river's chill, and when next we behold her she was seated beside her now acknowledged suitor George Villiers.

The scene is the snug little sitting room of the above-named gentleman.

There is no light save the cheerful blaze of the bright coal fire, that casts a ruddy tint upon the features of Marian, who looks positively lovelier than ever, upon the evening in question.

George, sly fellow that he is, has got his arm around her waist, her lovely head rests upon his shoulder, and her hand in his.

George's sister has been sent upon a long, bootless errand, and the lovers are supremely happy.

"Bless you, my own darling Marian, you don't know how great is my happiness to fold you again to my heart, for I had given up all hope of you. I deemed you lost to me for ever," murmured Villiers, pressing Marian's cheek with his lips.

"And I need not assure you further than I have already, dear George, how happy I am at being again restored to you," said Marian, "only I fear the persecutions of the Marquis of Westwood."

Then let your fears rest, for on the night he carried you off to Black Ivies, he was murdered; but let us change the subject, dearest, let us forget the past, and talk of the future. I saw Mr. de Clifford to day, and told him the whole affair, from beginning to end and when I had finished, he said that 'the shop' was still open to you, and he should be only too glad to see you back again and 'under the rose,' said he, 'there has been a great falling off of patronage, since Miss Livingston's absence, and he begged me to let him announce you for Wednesday next.'

"And did you give your consent," she asked, with mock displeasure.

"No! dearest, not until I had consulted you, but when I came home from the theatre to-night, there it was, on flaming colored bills, as large as life."

SLAP-UP SALOON,

Re-appearance of the Great
MISS MARIAN LIVINGSTON,

(After her severe indisposition.)

who will appear in

New Songs! New Characters!! and New Dances!!!

"Then I suppose I have no alternative but to accept the engagement," returned Marian.

"As you please dearest, for my part, I should like to keep you off the boards altogether. Answer me freely, Marian dear, will you be my wife?" asked Villiers earnestly.

"Yes, George, with feelings of deepest joy, here is my hand, and with it my heart, and may Heaven deny me its mercy if ever I prove false to you," said Marian fervently.

"Bless you, my darling," cried Villiers rapturously, catching her in his arms and smothering her lips with burning kisses.

"I shall engage myself to Mr. de Clifford for three months at least, and by the end of that time, I also shall be able to have a benefit to bring as a dowry, ah, ah."

"You intend to appear at the Slap-up Saloon, then," said Villiers.

"Most assuredly," replied Marian.

"When?" was the inquiry. "Next Wednesday night, according to agreement," answered Marian, laughing.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DECIDED SUCCESS.—A STRANGE AND UNEXPECTED SCENE.—REAL OFFICERS AND A REAL ARREST.

THE Royal Slap-up Saloon was crowded to suffocation on the night of Marian's re-appearance, there was not even standing room, and lots were unable to gain admission at all.

The audience wanted Marian Livingston, and her only, and when she did make her appearance upon the stage, her reception baffles description.

There was deafening whistling, loud clapping of hands, and perfect shouts of applause, and it was full three minutes before it subsided, during which Marian bowed her acknowledgments over and over again.

She certainly looked charming in the elegant costume she wore, that fitted her faultless figure to advantage, and displayed fully her fair and graceful proportions.

She entertained her hearers with a new burlesque sketch written for the occasion, and she had just concluded, when two real detectives came bounding on the stage, and seized hold of our heroine.

"Your name is Miss Marian Livingston, is it not?" said one.

"Yes," gasped our heroine, in a terror-stricken whisper.

"Then I charge you with the murder of the Marquis of Westwood."

"Surely you cannot mean what you say," she cried, fully realising the danger of her position, "I am innocent of the charge, indeed I am."

"I hope you are, Miss," returned the officer, somewhat gently, "I hope you are for your own sake, but that you will have to prove before a magistrate. You will have to come with us Miss—"

Mr. de Clifford confronted the officers, and wanted to know what it was all about.

One of the detectives explained.

"Well, I think, at least, you might have waited until the young lady had left the stage.

Shouts of approval greeted this declaration.

"We had orders to take her the moment we clapped eyes on her, for fear she should escape us," explained the officer.

"Drop the curtain," thundered the indignant proprietor.

That night poor Marian passed in a common police cell.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRIAL.—THE BALLET GIRL'S STORY.—TERRIBLE EXCITEMENT IN COURT.—GUILTY.

At length the momentous day that was to decide Marian's fate arrived. The Court was crowded with spectators, and when our heroine was led trembling and sobbing into the dock, a mingled murmur of pity and admiration could be plainly heard in every part of the Building.

The judge having partaken of a slight refreshment, which occupied that worthy gentleman considerably over half an hour, took his seat, and the trial commenced.

Marian related in a voice broken with emotion, the particulars of her abduction, the forged letter she received at the Royal Slap-up Saloon, her mysterious journey to Black Ivies, how, when she arrived there she was locked in a room, and never saw the Marquis after, and how she was also re-abducted from Black Ivies by the burglar Ralph Dearwood, the man who called himself her uncle, how she was confined in the cellar by him, her flight through the sewer, her immersion in the Thames, and finally her rescue from death.

The pathetic and artless manner in which she told her story, rivetted the attention of all present, even the doubts of the strong-minded judge seemed somewhat shaken.

But when the cloak was produced, (which was identified as Marian's and which the old housekeeper found in the Marquis's chamber at Black Ivies,) matters took a vastly different turn, and although George Villiers had gone to the expense of engaging counsel for his beloved one, and they pleaded eloquently in her defence, the impression the production of the cloak had created in the mind of the judge remained just the same till the conclusion.

The judge and jury now retired from Court, to decide their verdict.

A buzz of excitement followed their exit, which lasted for some time.

They seemed to the impatient spectators as though they would never return, so long were they absent.

The suspense shared by the disinterested parties was bad enough but not a thousandth part of the torture that tore the heart, and racked the brain of George Villiers. He feared the worst, and it was almost more than he could do to conceal from the coarse eye of the curious, that poignant anguish which was likely to impair his reason for ever.

As for poor Marian, she had scarcely been conscious a minute since the disappearance of her judges, and when they did return, and pronounced a verdict of wilful murder against Marian Livingston, she uttered a heartrending shriek that sent a thrill through every breast, then fell back as if lifeless, caught in the arms of her jailors, who carried her gently from the dock.

The hitherto stoical judge seemed deeply affected, and there was not a dry eye to be seen in Court.

When Villiers heard the horrible doom of her he loved better than life itself, he fell to the earth as if shot, in a swoon.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE TRACK.—THE STRUGGLE.—THE ESCAPE.—RALPH REACHES LIVERPOOL.—APPEARANCE OF THE DETECTIVE.—THE CAPTURE.—CONFESSION.—DEATH OF RALPH.

The news of the mysterious murder of the Marquis of Westwood spread throughout the land, with the swiftness of electricity. The papers were full of it, painting it in a most vivid and lucid manner.

The question was, who did the deed?

Gilbert Hawk the detective, had taken upon himself the responsibility of the answer.

Nothing had escaped his keen business eye, and on the day of his professional visit to Black Ivies, he discovered many little bits of evidence that were likely to furnish him with a clue to the mystery, in which both the murder and the robbery was wrapped.

On one piece of proof, he was determined to act without further loss of time, which was simply this:—he had traced the wheels of the trap (which had contained the burglars and their booty), to that inn of doubtful repute, the "Flying Highwayman," in Dead Man's Lane.

When he reached the "Flying Highwayman," he found the potman putting the shutters up, as if no more customers were expected.

Entering the house, Hawke discovered the landlord sipping some hot rum.

"What do you want to know," asked the landlord eagerly.

"I want to know who were the men who did that job over yonder the other night," said Hawke quietly; "Oh don't look so innocent,

you know what I mean, the robbery and murder that was committed at Black Ivies. Who were the men?

"Well then, it was Ralph Dearwood's gang that committed the robbery, but whether he committed the murder, I can't say," stammered the landlord.

"Yes," said Hawke, writing in his note book, and the next question is, where shall I find them?"

"The Old House, in Pye Street, London."

"Are you sure," said the detective, eyeing him searchingly over the top of his book, "for I would have you remember, that if you send me on a fool's errand, it will be the worst day's work you ever did in your life, so beware."

"He went straight to Pye Street after the robbery, but he told me he should start for America to-morrow."

"I have succeeded better than I thought for," muttered Hawke to himself, "I am on the right track at last, and will never rest until I have brought the villain to justice."

On arriving at the house in Pye Street, Hawke soon found the room occupied by the robber Dearwood.

"Now to slip the handcuffs on while he sleeps," mentally exclaimed Hawke as he took them from his pocket, and approached the bed. But at this juncture, Ralph Dearwood started in his sleep, and partly woke up with a loud cry of alarm.

Gilbert Hawke saw that he had failed to secure his man thus far, drawing his pistol from his pocket, he cried, "Surrender, Ralph Dearwood, or you are a dead man." Ralph returned no answer to his threat, but quick as lightning knocked the pistol from the detective's grasp, which went off with a loud report.

Then commenced a struggle of a most desperate nature. They were both powerful men, and the contest was severe in the extreme, and they rolled over and over upon the floor, kicking, biting, punching, dashing one another's heads upon the hard boards until they were stained with blood. Now they were upon their feet again, dealing each other the most dreadful blows, hissing like angry serpents as they delivered them, and panting like hunted beasts, as the blood streamed down from their hands and faces.

Just as Hawke had overpowered his antagonist, and was in the act of slipping on the darbies, a blow on the head from behind laid him on the floor, insensible.

"Well done, Jerry, well done!" gasped Ralph, you have just saved my bacon, another moment he would have had those cursed bracelets on my wrists, and then he would have been more than a match for both of us."

Wearing the disguise of a farmer, and losing as little time as possible, Ralph, with a number of other emigrants, got on board a noble vessel called the 'Venture.'

All day he remained below, walking up and down the cabin with rapid strides, bursting with smothered fury and impatience.

In this manner he passed the whole of the day, and when evening came he ventured on deck, muffled in such a manner that only his nose was visible.

One of the sailors passed close by him, and in a low voice Ralph asked him when the ship would sail.

"At daybreak," returned the sailor, as he passed on.

"Good," muttered the burglar to himself; "I've watched pretty closely all day long who's come aboard, and I aint seen anyone as looks anything like a detective. I think I have managed the business proper this go. I've got the swag nicely stowed away in my trunk, and in a few hours more I shall be free, free!"

"Not so," cried a voice at his elbow, "not while I have life to take you."

The ruffian gazed up with a look of alarm, and there, in the moon light looking like a spirit from another world, stood the form of Gilbert Hawke, the detective.

"By Heavens you shall not escape me, surrender!" he cried levelling a pistol at the other's head.

The ruffian saw that his chance of escape was hopeless and he knew that if he was taken his doom would be the scaffold.

"I surrender," he cried, holding out his hands for the steel cuffs.

The detective lowered his pistol, and in an instant the burglar drew a sharp murderous looking dirk from his breast coat pocket, and made a stab at Hawke, who, at once took aim and fired. There was a report and a cry of agony, the ball had carried true.

Ralph knew that his moments were numbered, and was in a fever of anxiety to disclose all he knew that was likely to be of any service to the ballet girl, before he drew his last breath.

He stated that on the night of the abduction of Marian Livingston, he had broken into Black Ivies, as we have already described, but the Marquis discovering him and his fellows, they had taken his life to prevent prosecution and punishment; during the revelation of his crime, his voice sunk to a whisper, that was scarcely audible, ever and anon fighting for breath to finish his arduous task, and on its completion, his spirit passed away.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE INNOCENCE OF THE BALLET GIRL.—HER RECEPTION BY THE BRITISH PUBLIC.—VILLIERS DOUBTS AND FEARS.—RE-UNITED.

THE ballet girl became quite an heroine of romance in the eyes of the British public. And loud was the voice of indignation against the accusing judges; but it mattered not now, her innocence was established in the eyes of the whole world.

What glorious news to her grief-stricken lover, George Villiers. He had already pictured her as lost to him for ever. He knew from the first she was innocent, but he also knew and felt that he was as impotent as a child to prove it; he felt that there was no hope for her.

Had he not been blessed with a sound constitution, George Villiers would have fallen a victim to that fell disease—insanity, so excessive was the rack of mind and body.

But now her fair name was cleared of the foul charge of murder her prison doors were thrown open and she was free to depart.

Mr. Bowers had been present at the performance of our heroine, at the "Royal Slap-up Saloon," on the night of her arrest, in company with Mr. de Clifford, and he expressed himself very much pleased with her appearance and her style of talent, and now that the forthcoming pantomime was the sole subject of his thoughts, and the circumstances of Marian has been put to him by Villiers, he considered she would be a great draw, being shapely, and a great public character, also possessing a charming appearance, a good voice, and considerable ability as an actress, that he engaged her at once to play prince in the pantomime, at double the salary offered by Mr. de Clifford, and Marian accepted the engagement with joy.

We have little more to say, save that Marian gave her hand and heart to George Villiers.

She still continued to appear on the stage, for her reputation as an actress was now considerable, as was her salary also, which enabled the lovers (for although man and wife, they were lovers still,) to have many comforts they would not otherwise have enjoyed.

After six months of married life, which was a season of uninterrupted happiness to both, Marian found that she could not keep on the stage, for the cares of a mother would soon take the place of the cares of the stage; and the constant affection and solicitous attention of her loving husband, effectually put an end to the trials and temptations that beset the Adventures of a Ballet Girl.



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CAUGHT IN THE TOILS,

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The Burglars,

A Startling Surprise,

A ROMANCE OF LIFE BEHIND THE SCENES

LONDON AT NIGHT,

AN INTERESTING ESCAPADE,

SNATCHED FROM THE FLAMES,

Asleep in the Park,

-OR-

THE STRANGE NIGHT,

AN ACT OF TREACHERY,

Another Danger Threatens the Ballet Girl.