

# SHORT STORIES

FOR

## SPARE MOMENTS.

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*SELECTED FROM LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE.*

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PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT AND CO.

1869.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868, by

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

LIPPINCOTT'S PRESS,  
PHILADELPHIA.

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## LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE.

*With the July Number commenced the Second Volume.*

### SHORT PROSPECTUS.

Under the head of *Literature*, will be included an original *Novel*, by a writer of high reputation and acknowledged talent; and numerous shorter *Tales, Sketches of Travel, History and Biography, Essays, Papers of Wit and Humor, Poetry and Miscellanies*.

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SINGLE NUMBER, 35 CENTS. SUBSCRIPTION, \$4.00 A YEAR.

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## SHORT STORIES

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## SPARE MOMENTS.

[Leonard Kip]

### "ALAS, POOR GHOST!"

TWO years ago I landed at Panama, on my route from California to the Atlantic States. The voyage down the Western coast had been remarkably delightful, the sea being glassy and unruffled, with just enough roll upon it to add to the romance and keep up the sensation of motion and progress, without disturbing the health or rest of the most feeble or susceptible; the air warm and bracing; the company on board so constituted as to afford a union of many pleasant elements; the officers capable and obliging;—in fact, everything combining in an unusual degree to impart social entertainment, physical comfort, security and confidence. Day after day, as we forged rapidly onward past the not distant shore, the hours were given up to mirth, song and humor, so that many of us soon began to look forward with regret to the approaching termination of a voyage which had established so many genial intimacies and would leave behind it such very satisfying recollections.

I was not alone, having under my charge a young lady of about seventeen. She was on her way to finish her educa-

tion at some celebrated New York boarding-school; and as she was lively and agreeable, and I stood indebted to her parents for many past attentions, I cheerfully accepted the trust of becoming her escort. She was not exactly beautiful. If I were now writing a fiction, and therefore, without violence to conscience, could give full vent to my imagination, nothing would please me better than to describe, in glowing and enthusiastic colors, her many personal attractions, making them all unite, after the usual style, in a creation of surpassing loveliness. But being about to narrate a circumstance which in its more surprising incidents may well challenge close attention and scrutiny, I feel that I cannot allow myself to depart from the exact truth in even the most unimportant detail or accessory. I must therefore confess that she was not beautiful. She had handsome hair and teeth, a pure complexion, a well-shaped face and pleasant expression, a properly proportioned figure, rather below than above the average height, and small hands and feet. These were her only physical claims to attraction. But I must further

admit that she made up for any deficiencies with a gracefulness of manner and a sprightliness of conversation which rendered her almost bewitching, and almost invariably at once gave her the advantage in social popularity over those who were esteemed her superiors in mere beauty of feature or outline. Moreover, she was the most consummate flirt I had ever met with.

No one blamed her for that, since it was certain that she could not help it. It was born in her to attract, and it would have required too much self-denial not to make the best and fullest use of her advantages. She would have flirted with her grandfather had there been no other victim at hand; and the old fellow would doubtless have succumbed within the hour, and anathematized the relics of the old Mosaic law forbidding marriages in the direct ascending or descending line. And I must not forget to state that she was not one of your common flirts, who compel surrender by old, stale tricks of conversation or manner—tricks which are well known to all, and only succeed because they have been wont to succeed, and men are too lazy to avoid the snares so palpably set before them. She never made great eyes at any one; or sought for introductions with display of enthusiastic encomiums, sure to be repeated, as they were meant to be; or inveigled timid men into corners and there flattered them into boldness; or, with wily devices, stole away the cavaliers of other maidens; or took pains to dance herself into notice. Her voice was low, her manner and actions retiring and unassuming; and there was nothing in what she ever said or did on account of which the slightest offence could be taken. But it was remarkable that she was never thrown into any company without being speedily its acknowledged belle and the centre of all attraction. How she did it I could hardly tell: I have even now no more than a mere suspicion. To the best of my knowledge, it was partly her eyes that did it, for she had a 'cute, queer little way of looking at one out of the corner of the lids that was perfectly irresistible.

It was not a bold look, or an ardent glance or anything, indeed, that would be especially noticeable to a third party. A mere transient flicker—an electric tremor of the lid: what was it, in fact, or who could describe it? But whatever it might be, it seldom failed to bring down the most obdurate. And if that did not succeed, there was still another battery to unmask. This was a peculiarly effective turn of her under lip, emitting no sound, not much akin to a smile—something between a pout and a pho-pho, perhaps—a motion evanescent as a sunbeam, and still less easy to be described than the other, but, if anything, rather more effective. For it was established beyond a doubt that if her eye failed in its effect, her under lip was sure to succeed, scarcely any one having been known to stand both tests unmoved. Indeed, I am inclined to the opinion that I am the only person who ever entirely escaped. I am disposed to attribute this immunity, first, to my age, for be it known that I am over thirty, and consequently somewhat exempt from the weaknesses which lead younger men into temptation; and, secondly, to a natural dignity of character and coldness of demeanor, which renders me as impenetrable to the shafts of Love as is the hide of a rhinoceros to the school-boy's blunted arrow. Be this as it may, the fact remains, that while upon the passage down the coast everybody, from the captain down to the humblest steward-boy, yielded to that irresistible influence which surrounded her, and, according to their stations, severally testified their sense of the captivity by devoted attentions or distant respect, I alone remained unconquered and unimpressed.

Upon reaching Panama, we had of course expected to cross at once upon the railroad, and thence take the steamer upon the other side. But at the wharf we found the Company's agent awaiting us with somewhat unpleasant news. The Atlantic steamer had broken down: a shaft had been dislocated, or a flue had burst, or the boat had been doing some one of those other things that boats are

so fond of doing; and it would be about ten days before another steamer would be ready to take her place. Meanwhile, we had better not think about crossing as yet, for the other side of the Isthmus was decidedly unhealthy at that season of the year, while the hotel accommodations were limited and poor. Panama was altogether to be preferred, while those who did not care to go into the town could retain their rooms upon the steamer. A large number of the passengers resolved to avail themselves of this permission, while others went ashore to seek other quarters. Among the latter were my fair charge and myself; for, however pleasant a vessel may be when gallantly careered over the high seas, it seems a different affair when lying in port, grating sulkily against the pier, the water around it covered with rubbish and decayed fruit. Then, indeed, the poorest apartment on shore is better than the most sumptuous state-room on board. Therefore, packing into a portmanteau the necessary changes for a week, we stepped ashore and began to go the rounds of the few poor hotels.

For a time without success. There are but few hotels in Panama, and but one or two of these have a comfortable appearance. These were already filled with more active passengers, who had run thither upon the first suspicion of delay, and had thus secured all the most available rooms. Here and there some small, dark corners were offered, with inflated encomiums upon their desirability; but we were not to be blinded so easily, and preferred to look farther. And so for an hour the search went on. The heat of the day had long passed over, and in this respect we had nothing to complain of; but, for all that, it is not a very delightful thing to be searching for a home in a strange city with a heavy portmanteau upon one's shoulder. And I naturally grew tired, and perhaps a little cross; when suddenly, upon turning a corner, we found ourselves in the little plaza before the cathedral.

Any one who has ever been in Panama must remember the cathedral—an immense stone structure, with two great

towers quaintly ornamented with lines and circles of the pearl-oyster shell set into the mortar—a rough, tasteless pile, indeed, but, from its very size and age, producing an impression of something grand and imposing. At any other time we should have looked upon it with interest, and perhaps have indulged in various romantic speculations and imaginings about it. But at that moment we were footsore and tired, cared nothing for churches, were altogether devoted to hotels, and would have preferred a second-rate New York boarding-house to the basilica of St. Peter or the mosque of St. Sophia. Accordingly, after a hasty and not over-critical glance at the two great towers, we were about to pass hastily by, when I was struck with a little notice in the window of a kind of exchange office opposite: "Here speakee English."

"Let us go in thither and inquire for more hotels, Lily," I said, calling her by her first name—a practice that I had thought best to introduce from the first, as thereby she might not stand so much in awe of my greater age, and our necessary communications would be rendered more unembarrassed.

"Yes, we had better go in there, Gus," she responded, calling me in turn by my first name, in order that—so that I—doing so, in fact, because it had occurred to both of us that it would be the better and more natural way while she continued under my charge.

Accordingly, we entered the little shop. The proprietor was a short, thick-set Spaniard—Don Miguel Something—with a swarthy face, broader at the bottom than at the top, a bullet-shaped head, beard and hair cut quite short, a keen, twinkling, vivacious eye, and rather a pleasant expression of countenance. To my greeting he bowed quite civilly, gave me the names of two or three hotels where we had already made application, knew of no others, had been already inquired of several times about the same matter, was sorry he could not help us; and with that was turning again to his books, when suddenly his face changed a little in expression, a new in-



terest in us seeming to appear upon it, and he said, in a somewhat embarrassed manner:

"Would the señor and—the lady, his wife—"

"My sister," I explained, telling a little white lie after the manner of Abraham, though not for the same reason. In fact, I acted from impulse, not expecting to see him more than a moment longer, and it seeming easier in this way to explain my association with Lily than to make him, with all his peculiar national punctilious notions, comprehend how I could be traveling about with a young lady no relation to me, and yet no harm in it.

"Ah, yes—your sister. And now see I the likeness—a much strong one indeed. Would the señor therefore deign to accept my hospitality for the next few days, until the steamer be ready on the other side? I have, in Old Panama, some two leagues from here, a residence: there my wife and I will be much proud to—"

Before he had fairly finished his polite and unanticipated invitation to us, I had guessed the solution of the mystery; and excusing myself for a moment, I turned to Lily. She had been standing a little behind me, and now appeared to be serenely gazing out into the street in an abstracted and contemplative manner, counterfeiting, moreover, all at once, a singular interest in the architecture of the hotel. But I was not to be deceived with such a shallow piece of acting, and drawing her on one side, said, sternly:

"This, now, is too much? You have been trying to flirt with this poor gentleman!"

"I only looked at him once, Gus," she responded—"just a little glance to see how he appeared. And a cat may look at a king, you know."

"Exactly," I retorted. "And I understand precisely that look of yours and how you use it. What object, now, can you have in trying to fascinate this gentleman? And do you know what has been the result of your one little glance, as you call it? He has invited us to come out to his country-seat, and

there, for the ensuing week, accept his hospitality."

"And do you not think you ought to be more grateful to me for procuring you the invitation, Gus? Yes, of course we will go, for it will doubtless be very delightful. What do you call it—a ranche or a rancho? Perhaps it is a castle. And there will be banana-trees growing around it, will there not? And all sorts of other queer things? Yes, to be sure we will go, for it will all be very romantic, I know, and will give me a great deal to write home."

"We will go if you behave yourself, but not otherwise," I said. "Promise me that you will not try to flirt with this worthy gentleman, or else we will have done with it, and will return to the steamer. You see, Lily, it won't do at all. It can give you no pleasure to have the poor man drawn into any of your ridiculous traps, and it may do mischief. He has a wife, and Spanish wives have the reputation of getting jealous easily. Stiletos are a part of their customary ornaments, I have heard. Perhaps it is that watches are taxed and stiletos are not. And though you are seeking for romance, and it may be very romantic, indeed, to be stabbed in a dark corner by an infuriated donna, yet it would not be pleasant, and I could hardly explain the matter satisfactorily to your father."

"But, Gus, I must flirt with some one, you know," she pleadingly responded.

"Then flirt with the muleteer or the neighboring miller, if there be one; and I suppose the Spanish race have millers, or else how could Don Quixote have encountered windmills? Only promise to respect this gentleman. It is all I ask."

"I promise," she faintly said—so anxious, indeed, to see what an Isthmus country-house was like that she would have given up almost everything. And feeling at rest upon that score—for I knew that she would not deceive me—I turned again to Don Miguel, apologized for my delay in answering him, said that I had taken counsel with my sister, and that we had concluded to accept his kind

invitation—that words could not express the deep gratitude we felt, and the like. I was a little ashamed, if the truth must be told, at the readiness with which we had met the courtesies of a total stranger, but we were sorely pressed; and I felt, moreover, that the invitation had not been extended as a mere compliment, but that we would really be very welcome.

Don Miguel bowed low to myself, expressed his thankfulness that we had deigned to honor him; then bowed low to Lily, then to both of us together. I bowed in return; Lily bestowed upon him a sweet smile, but honorably kept to her contract, and moved neither eye nor lip with treacherous intent; and so we prepared to depart, for the sun was now near its setting point, and it happened that already our host's equipage was waiting for him before the door. And as we had all our necessary luggage with us, there was no need of delay. Accordingly, we got into the vehicle—a low, open wagon, drawn by two mules; the Don took a seat in front of us; a swarthy Indian half-breed climbed into the driver's seat, and with a long lash whipped the animals into a steady trot, and so we rolled away over the rough pavement toward the open country.

Through narrow streets, where the overhanging balconies of the opposite houses almost met—along broader ways, where were a few fruit-shops—past a plaza flanked with a dull, dark, windowless convent, in front of which stood a tall stone cross upon three high steps—past a ruined church, with a banana tree growing up in the open doorway—then through one of the city gates—and so out into the open country, while, from every cracked bell of each steeple behind us, the Angelus rang out in discordant peal. After that ensued a somewhat monotonous drive through the unpaved roads of the suburbs, lined upon either side with thick tropical forests, having here and there a break, through which we could see a small native hut, with a little clearing about it, or perhaps again a distant view of the bay. In about half an hour there came a sudden turn

of the road, bringing us, to higher land and a more extended prospect. We were now nearer the water, where, within a few yards, sparkled in the setting sun the waves that may have rolled over from the Asiatic coast, now rippling on the beach with a low, soft murmur, like the sigh of one who has at last arrived at the end of a long journey and may prepare to take his pleasant rest. And before us was Old Panama—to all appearance a mass of modern huts and ancient ruins—here a knot of rough bamboo erections, with half-naked natives squatting at the doorways; there a mound overgrown with vines and bushes, and only by its elevation showing that piles of crumbling walls lay beneath; and yonder a little church, not exactly in ruins, but sadly out of repair, and already half covered with the tropical overgrowth which so surely invites decay. And most prominently of all things, before us appeared a pile of something which might have been a convent or fort or barracks, but which, as we came nearer, resolved itself into an extended private residence, consisting of a centre building of no very great size, but made to appear much more imposing than it actually was by the tall adobe wall built at some distance about it, so as to form a considerable enclosure or courtyard within. This was the home of our host; and beneath a wide archway in the wall the carriage now drove into the central court, where the mules stopped of their own accord, and the native driver, throwing himself off his seat with a loud whoop, flung open the door for us to descend. Entering the house, we were at once shown into two separate and adjoining rooms, having for the moment but little time to make any extended observation of the place. All that I noticed at the time was, that the house seemed to have been erected at different periods, a portion of it appearing to be quite new, while the rest bore marks of extreme age, the difference between the two being quite perceptible, since the one portion was joined abruptly upon the other, the line of juncture commencing about midway at the

bottom, and running off in a jagged course upward and toward the west, until at the top the newer part spread over very nearly the whole roof, leaving of the original building but a single small tower.

And now I come to the wonderful portion of my story—a matter so surprising, indeed, that I can scarcely expect any one, in these unbelieving and practical days, will credit it. Indeed, I have never yet found any person who, upon my verbal narration of it, would yield me his conviction: but, on the contrary, I have always been met with an incredulous shake of the head, or at the best with silent stolidity. Under these circumstances I almost fear to continue, and perhaps would even now break off and leave my story all untold, were it not that I feel assured there must somewhere in the world be those who are accustomed to deal charitably with strange recitals; not blindly scoffing at what they cannot for the moment explain, but willing to acknowledge that there are yet many things which, though beyond our comprehension, may still be true, and hereafter, perhaps, capable of satisfactory elucidation. To my personal friends I can only say that, however singular my story may appear, they must remember that I have always borne the reputation of being one who, both from natural solidity of character and sedateness of demeanor, as well as from an utter absence of the imaginative faculties, has in his temperament not the slightest affinity with what is commonly called romance; and that, moreover, there can be no object to be gained by detailing circumstances which have not occurred; and therefore they should well weigh, not merely the probabilities, but also the possibilities, of my narrative before making up their minds to discredit it.

Well, we had just completed our toilets when our host summoned us to dinner; and, guided by him, we entered the dining-room—a large, somewhat unfurnished, and, to our Northern eyes, dreary-looking apartment, though doubtless it had all the decorations and con-

veniences that could be required in that climate. In the centre stood a long table, having upon it a sumptuous repast of vegetables, fruits, wines, coffee and a little meat. At each side two plates were laid out, and at the end a single plate. Near the door stood Don Miguel's wife, a short, stout woman, who, by her extremely dark complexion, seemed to be of more mixed blood than himself. She was arrayed in rather a profusion of jewelry, had fine eyes and teeth, and had evidently once been handsome, but had bravely gotten over it, though still retaining a pleasant, affable expression of countenance. Not having been much accustomed to see strangers, probably, she received us with some embarrassment, not speaking a word in reply to our muttered salutations; and I may as well say here that, whether from a lack of knowledge of the English language or from natural diffidence, she never opened her mouth during the whole time of our visit, but maintained a rigid silence, doing such of the honors as fell to her lot in utter taciturnity—softening her features into an occasional smile, however, in order to mark her approval of us. Hearty and good-natured in appearance, she was by no means the person who would take sudden fits of jealousy and handle revengeful stilettos in dark corners; and I noticed that Lily looked up pleadingly at me, as though seeking to be released from her promise. But I was obdurate, affected not to notice the glance, and only attended to the courteous motion with which Don Miguel waved us to our places at the table.

I had supposed, of course, that he would assume the head of the table; but to my surprise, placing Lily at his right hand, he stood at one side, while his wife and myself, in obedience to his gesture, went opposite. Here for a moment we remained, when suddenly there appeared at the head of the table a fifth figure, who saluted us gravely, upon which, with a like inclination of the head, we all sat down. At the instant I did not take particular notice of this person, not looking at him, in fact, otherwise than with a casual glance out

of the corner of my eye, so that I saw only the outline of his form. A father or elder brother, was my natural supposition, or, if not, clearly some other relative, entitled, by the custom of the place, to the post of honor.

But when, a moment after being seated, I glanced more deliberately at the stranger, there was something about him that sent a chill through my veins and seemed to freeze my power of speech. This man—if man or human being it was, and from the first, though I had no especial belief in the supernatural, I felt a sudden doubt of the fact—was tall and thin, and arrayed in a costume such as I had never before beheld. It was the costume of a warrior of past days, indeed, clad in breastplate and gauntlets, and with clumsy, basket-hilted sword at his side, while the doublet beneath was slashed and tied with points and ribbons, and below his dress was gathered into a heavy fold above the knee, the leg further down being displayed in well-shaped tights. Altogether a singular costume, but yet it was not that which impressed me the most. The dress itself might possibly be the fancy of some eccentric old citizen, attached to the customs of past days, even as with us there will occasionally be one who affects the cocked hat, long queue and big shoe-buckles of Revolutionary times. But it was rather the air and attitude of the man that startled me. The face was grim and thin, and the beard, descending to a point, made it appear yet grimmer and thinner. And his eyes were set with an unearthly, ghastly stare; not like the eyes of any living man that I had ever yet seen, but with a vacant and soulless look, as though all actual expression had faded away, leaving nothing but the dim, sightless, spiritless orbs. Turning his head neither to the right nor left, and, after his first courteous salutation, seeming to take no notice of any of us, but rather to gaze off into some far-distant region, there he sat, touching nothing before him, and appearing like some old-fashioned figure-head affixed to the table, or like the death's head at an Egyptian feast. Was it

strange that after my first impulse of curiosity was satisfied, I felt convinced I was looking upon something other than mortal? And then I remembered that I had not seen him enter—that no door had opened to admit him—but that he had suddenly appeared, as though he had risen from the ground or been created out of the air. Again that chill went through me, and I began to wish that I was elsewhere—on the steamer in a storm, anywhere than where I was; and I stealthily glanced around the table to see how my companions might take the matter. And first I looked at Lily; but she sat cool and collected, a model of hardihood and propriety. It was scarcely possible that she had failed to see all that I had seen, for I never yet knew anything escape her active eyes. At the least, she must have taken notice of the stranger's queer costume. But there she sat, without a flush upon her face or a tremor upon her lip. I had always known that she was afraid of nothing; but now, that she could so easily adapt herself to the society of spirits, what hope could I have of her? Then, looking toward my host and hostess, I saw that they also appeared unmoved, though rather grave and quietly disposed. Only the former gave evidence of any perception that there was a fifth person present at all, and he did so with a certain significant expression, as though he would have me defer my curiosity until he might be more at liberty to enlighten me.

Accordingly, I held my peace, and as much as possible avoided any direct observation of the stranger; only occasionally, as I could not help it, casting a sly glance in his direction out of the corner of my eye, and then looking away again as I saw that he preserved throughout all the same unvarying, stony, imperceptive stare, touching nothing that lay before him, and only for a single instant appearing to notice us. This was when Don Miguel, filling the wine-glasses, bowed slightly and deferentially toward the end of the table; whereupon the stranger bowed in return, almost immediately thereafter resuming

his old attitude and expression. Thus the dinner went on, myself in something of a nervous tremor, my host and hostess grave, dignified and undemonstrative, and Lily unblushingly rattling away, as though ghosts or masqueraders had been the ordinary companions of her life. All this was intolerable to me, and there were times when I felt like rushing from the table at any expense of courtesy and demanding to be taken back to Panama. But at length the dinner ended: the last banana was eaten and the last nut cracked. Then our host arose. The stranger also arose, returned in dignified manner our salutations and slowly walked away, his heavy basket-hilted sword clattering at his side. But I could not help noticing that before he had fairly crossed the room, and while yet within several feet of the door, he seemed to vanish or melt away, as though he had been carved out of the mist.

"And now tell me all about him. Who is he?" inquired Lily, with a ringing laugh, turning to our host. I was about to reproach her for what might well be considered a social impertinence, but Don Miguel came between us and protected her.

"It is well," he said. "Your sister is curious to know; why not, then, ask? For myself, it gave me pleasure much to tell her. That was I about to do, be it said. Therefore now sit you both down again, and I will narrate to you all I know concerning it; which is not much, to be sure."

Thereupon we sat down, grouping ourselves carelessly about him, and he gave us the whole story as well as he was able, protracting with his broken English what might have been told in fewer words.

Until the previous spring he had lived in Panama, quietly and unostentatiously. But having prospered in business, and being moreover inclined to a country life, he had purchased a large plot of ground within the limits of Old Panama, the place where the original seaport had been located. It contained only ruins and a few native huts, but the region

was comparatively healthy and the view was pleasant. Therefore, marking out his foundation, he had put up that large, roomy residence. Not building it entirely anew, though, for it chanced that there stood upon his grounds the remains of an old erection, two, three or more centuries old—who could tell? These ruins were so stout and well cemented that the temptation to adopt a portion of them was not to be disregarded. The new portion of his house was therefore continued upon the old, thus saving the cost of almost all the foundation, a large surface of wall, and a goodly piece of the lower flooring; and thus, in less time than would otherwise have been required, there was a pleasant and substantial residence where before there had been an unsightly waste.

The Don and his wife were well pleased with the result, and fondly looked forward to years of tranquil and uninterrupted enjoyment. But upon the very day of their arrival, when they proceeded to sit down at their first meal, they beheld this singular ghostly figure standing solemnly at the head of the table. For a moment they thought that it was a trick of some friend coming among them in masquerading guise, but almost immediately the lifeless, spectre-like gaze from those eyes struck them with affright; and the Don, instead of insisting upon his rightful seat, sank down trembling at the side of his wife, near the other end of the table. As may be imagined, the meal was not a cheerful one, their silent attention being fixed upon the intruder, who sat calm and motionless, touching nothing, and apparently gazing into some distant region, rather than taking any notice of themselves. When, at the end of the short repast, they arose, he also raised himself, bowed solemnly to them and so departed, moving a step or two toward the door, and seeming to vanish into thin air before he had reached it. At the next meal and the next it was the same, and so on, in fact, ever since that time. At first, they talked of moving away and leaving the stranger in full possession; but little by little, as time

passed on and it became evident that no harm was intended, they abandoned the ruinous idea. And, after all, it was no very great harm to sit down twice a day with that apparently inoffensive spirit; though it must be confessed that, as he never spoke to them and they did not dare to address him, his presence scarcely produced an enlivening effect. Once, in a fit of desperation, the Don had come to the table early and taken his rightful seat at its head. The stranger appearing and finding his place occupied, had simply frowned and stalked away with an air of offended dignity. They thought then that he had left them for ever; but that night there were strange noises about the house and shrill cries seemed to float in the air, and the next morning nothing went right in business matters. They were glad, therefore, to leave the chair of honor once more vacant and so invite him back again, lest his displeasure might lead to further annoyances and losses.

And did they never see him excepting at the table? I inquired.

Yes: now and then he was encountered stalking gloomily up and down the hall, and, upon meeting any of the family, would courteously step aside to let them pass, gravely bowing as he did so. There was a portion of the old building which had contained a recess hardly large enough to be called a room, though in its day it might have been occupied as such. At the rebuilding the place had been converted into a lumber-closet, but the ghost had several times been seen to go in thither, as though he claimed it for his own quarters. Consequently, as might be imagined, it had been left to him altogether, no one caring to follow him and dispute its possession.

But did he never speak? Did they have no conjecture as to who he might be?

No: he had never uttered a word. Possibly he was not permitted to converse with mortals, or it might be that, being a spirit, he was unable to talk. Once, however, a sheet of paper having been accidentally left upon the table, he had stooped over and written something

that might have been intended for a name, as another person would introduce himself by leaving a card. And here the Don, rising, took down the paper from behind his bookcase. There was a single character in the centre, poorly written, as would be natural with one belonging to the olden time—something that might have been a name crudely jumbled up into confusion, or might have been a quaint device after the style of an antique monogram. Whatever it might be no one could conjecture, and the matter was all as dark as before. After this, paper had been purposely left in the phantom's way, in the hope that he would further try to define himself, but all in vain. As though the first essay should be held sufficient, he had never made another attempt to enlighten their ignorance.

But, in fine, who is he, and what does it all mean?

Who knew, indeed? He was probably some cavalier of other days—perhaps of two or three centuries past. That fact his costume seemed to establish. And he had doubtless once lived in that house, else why should he now linger so pertinaciously about it? If any supposition could be formed at all, it was that, having once resided there, he considered it still his own house, regarding the rebuilding and additions simply in the light of a restoration; that upon this principle he looked upon the Don and his wife, not as the owners of the property, but rather as guests; and that he daily appeared at table in the post of honor for no other reason than that he might entertain and honor them with his presence, possibly doing so at considerable inconvenience to himself. But, after all, this was only a conjecture, though perhaps the most plausible one that could be framed. And if it were a true one, it naturally led to a further inquiry: Might not the spectre some day get the idea that they had stayed long enough as guests, and so set himself at work to make it uncomfortable for them? In fact, while the present was a mystery, the future was entirely dark and uncertain.

This was all that the Don could tell me, and of course I could be of no assistance to him. But the story impressed me deeply, and indeed contributed somewhat to my satisfaction, since I had been apprehensive that, after the first novelty was over, my visit might prove monotonous; and I could now give myself both amusement and employment in watching the spectre, for I felt that I need no longer be apprehensive of him. If the Don had so long been treated with civility as a guest, how much more would Lily and myself be entitled to courtesy as doubly guests? Therefore, while wandering about each day from seashore to little church in desperate attempt at occupation, I constantly looked forward with eagerness to the recurrence of each meal, finding the chief pleasure of my life in sitting at the long table and stealthily watching the ghost.

For a day or two all went on as at the first. We took our usual places; he then came in; we courteously bowed to each other and then sat down. As before, the spectre remained motionless and abstracted, eating and drinking nothing, and taking no notice of us other than to bend in acknowledgment of the customary toast, and also to salute us gravely upon his departure. Then, little by little, I began to notice a change in him. His bow became more gracious, abating something from its stateliness and acquiring a kind of friendly deference. Then his eye lost a little of its vacant, far-seeing stare, a new kind of light seeming to come into it, warming his expression, as it were, into something of interest in what transpired nearer at hand. Once his features broke into a kind and not unpleasant smile. And I noticed at last that instead of looking upon his sitting as a stately ceremony, to be terminated as speedily as possible, he became reluctant to leave the table, rising up with a dissatisfied air, like one who is compelled to leave an agreeable party. All this change of manner, coming on within two or three days, surprised me greatly, and was not without its confusing effect upon the Don; and it was not until the fourth

day that I fathomed the mystery. Then, happening to cast my eyes suddenly upon Lily, I saw that, although she was meekly pretending to look unto her plate, her face was slightly turned toward the head of the table; that there was the old dangerous twinkle under the corner of her eyelid; that her under lip was getting ready for its part: in fine, that the foolish girl was actually flirting with the ghost!

Startled and worried, I took the earliest opportunity to speak with her, firm in the resolution to give her a good scolding. She saw me coming, read my intention in my face, and at once proceeded to attempt a diversion. Drawing from her pocket an old letter from one of her New York acquaintances, she said, with a sweet, artless smile:

"I am so glad you have come: I have been wishing all the afternoon to see you. I wish to read you a letter I received last month from dear Jenny."

"I have heard that letter a dozen times already," I said. "And I do not like your dear Jenny, who writes a great deal of nonsense and spells curbstones with a *k*. Now do be serious, Lily, and listen to me. What is the meaning of this conduct of yours at the table—this trifling with the feelings of the ghost? Whoever heard of such a thing before? You must give him up—indeed you must."

"If I give up the ghost, I shall die," she answered. It was a very foolish and ill-timed pun, and I resolved to take no notice of it.

"I really believe you would die if you could not flirt," I said. "But now, do you not see the danger of your present course?"

"What danger can there be?" she responded. "Is it not the safest thing I could do? If I flirt with men, they all want to marry me, and that is inconvenient. But a ghost could not marry me. On the contrary, he might prove a good friend to me, and show me where money is buried, and all that. And you know—"

"I know that you are a very silly girl, and I suppose you will insist upon

your own way. Only remember that I have warned you," I responded. And this was all I said, though I had come meaning to scold her; for though, by reason of my superior age and gravity and sedateness of character, all her arts were lost upon me, and I was not to be inveigled as other men were, yet there was something in the way she sometimes looked at me that fairly disarmed me, appealing to my pity, I suppose, so that I could never bear to be harsh with her. Therefore I now let her go without another word of remonstrance. And she, disregarding my caution, but rather acting as though with my permission, from that time carried on such a course of deep and dangerous coquetting that I became fairly bewildered with the depth of her powers and the magnificence of her execution.

For never yet did ghost have a harder time than this one upon whom she now practised her subtle arts. Hamlet's father was supposed to be miserable enough, but at least he knew his fate and what he had to expect, and was only fettered of his freedom at certain set periods, which he could easily remember. But this ghost of Lily's was not only kept in a continual state of uncertainty and bewilderment, and tormented with all the usual ups and downs of hope and despair which commonly beset a lover's mind, but his very hours were no longer his own, the daily regularity of his life being constantly disturbed; for now Lily, under pretence of making prolonged explorations of the surrounding country, would wander off and return long past the usual hour for dining, so that often the ghost, coming in at the proper time, would find the family not yet assembled, and would be obliged to wait despondently for many minutes before taking his accustomed seat. And when he was in his place, she would continually, with artful glances, provoke him to new extravagances, but all the while executing her work so cunningly and demurely that the Don had not the slightest suspicion of her agency in the matter, but rather imputed the change in the spectre's conduct to the natural ex-

hilaration created in a long-secluded nature by sudden introduction to new and lively society. His eye constantly grew brighter and more life-like, his fits of abstracted gaze less frequent. He paid increased attention to what went on at table, until at times, for many minutes together, his face beamed with a steady smile. Once, at some merry speech of Lily's, he threw himself back in his chair and opened his mouth as if in convulsions of laughter, though not the slightest sound came from his throat. Again, apparently making up his mind that it would be proper to be more socially inclined, he watched when the Don drank the usual toast, and instead of contenting himself with a stately bow, filled a glass from the decanter and placed it to his lips—not swallowing anything, however, perhaps from being forbidden to drink wine, or perhaps from having no stomach under that doublet and breastplate. And he would purposely prolong the repast as far as possible, and upon leaving would turn around with more than one farewell glance of idolatry and passion before melting away. It seemed, too, as though now more than ever before he was encountered in the long passages of the house, and that he always contrived it so as to meet Lily. At last his devotion to her culminated in an act so grotesque and singular that, as I now recall it, I think of it rather as a dream than as sober reality.

It was a little before midnight when I was aroused by a hurried knock. I had not yet undressed myself, and instantly opening the door, saw Lily standing outside, with her dress and shawl thrown hurriedly upon her.

"Come out here," she exclaimed, "and tell me what you make out of all this."

In our passage-way there was a window commanding a view of the courtyard below. The moon shone brightly, and upon gazing down I saw the ghost standing beneath Lily's room. He was dressed as usual in doublet and breastplate, but now he wore in addition a richly-plumed cap. In his hand he held an old guitar, without any strings, upon

which with the fingers of one hand he went through the motions of executing an air, while his mouth opened and shut as though he was accompanying the notes with a song. Of course not a sound came from the old stringless guitar, nor yet from his lips. As he thus stood and let his fingers play upon the sounding-board, as though pinching vibrating strings, and moved his mouth to some hidden metre, opening and closing his jaws, now with a spasmodic jerk, and again with a slow, protracted motion, according as the exigencies of the song required; and looked languishing up at the window, advancing and receding with a series of low bows; and rolled up his eyes to the moon, throwing into his sober old face all the expressions of strong passion, not a sound all the while being heard;—it formed altogether such a ludicrous picture that I could scarcely keep from laughing aloud. Lily, less cautious, did actually emit from time to time a little squeak of merriment. At last the song seemed to end, and the serenade with it. Tucking the guitar under his arm, the ghost looked up for applause. Fully bent upon carrying out the frolic to the utmost, Lily broke a rosebud from a vine that grew close to the window and tossed it down to him. He gallantly picked it up, kissed it ardently, then stepped back a pace or two, and so, waving his hand, vanished into thin air, after his usual manner.

All very amusing, indeed; but I was grievously tormented in my mind with the fear lest Lily might carry the matter so far as to make mischief; more especially when I saw the ghost appear at breakfast with the rosebud sticking out from a slash in his doublet, and with a smile upon his grim face, as though with the conscious assurance of having been bountifully favored in the lists of love. I was therefore never in my life more delighted than when, a few moments after, there came a special message to me from Panama. The disabled steamer had been replaced; the cars would start for the other side of the Isthmus in two or three hours; we had not a moment to lose, and by night we would

be careering over the Caribbean Sea, leaving the tropics far behind us. All was at once confusion as we made up our little parcels and bade good-bye for ever to our kind host and to his quiet, unsophisticated wife. And as I thought upon the strange scenes of the past few days, I resolved that I would never again take charge of another wild young lady, nor would I lose this one from sight until I had fairly removed her from all further danger.

A prudent determination, probably; for, as we walked the last time from our rooms through the long hall, who should appear but the ghost? His costume was the finest, his breastplate burnished, his slashed doublet tied with new ribbons, the rose still in his bosom, and a ring in his outstretched hand. A queer, quaint old ring, I could see at a glance, made of beaten gold and having what appeared to be a jewel of some value set in the centre. One of those old-fashioned pieces of the workmanship of a past day, indeed, which derive their value partly from their age, and with a little alteration of the setting would serve for ring, button or breastpin, as the taste of the wearer might dictate. Holding this forth with a low bow, the ghost made as though he would present it to Lily, who upon her part looked irresolute and sorely tempted to accept it. But I dashed between them, and the ghost, with no very pleasant expression upon his grim visage, stalked wrathfully away, his old sword rattling against the stairs as he reached the end of the passage and began to climb up to what was considered his especial apartment.

"Are you crazy?" I exclaimed to Lily, in response to her momentary look of indignation. "Do you feel sure that he offered that ring to you simply as a complimentary parting gift? May he not rather have chosen to consider it a betrothal pledge?"

"How foolish you are, Gus!" she somewhat savagely retorted. "Have I not already told you that the chief safety with a ghost lies in the fact that you cannot marry him?"

"Not marry him! Of course not.

But, for all that, a ghost who imagines that he has a house, and that he must entertain its real owners as his guests, may well be capable of fancying that he is the betrothed cavalier of a blooming young lady. You do not know ghosts as well as I do," I continued, pretending to an immense experience in the article. "Would you be pleased if, under the mistaken impression that you had accepted him, he were to follow you to New York? I do not know whether he is tied down to this place otherwise than from choice or past association. I presume that he could travel about if he wanted to. A pretty acquisition he would be to your boarding-school dinner-table, would he not? Now, then, say good-bye to our friends and let us be off."

A hasty adieu, a jump into the little carriage, and a crack of the whip; and so, under charge of the half-breed driver, we were whirled away, my spirits gradually rising as we swept farther and farther along from the haunted house. Haunted no longer, perhaps, I reflected with some trepidation, for what if the phantom should actually take it into his head to follow us? What if even now he were to rise out of the ground and take his place on the seat beside Lily. Or, if we were really freed from him for ever, might we not have brought dire trouble upon our entertainers? For the deserted lover might become cross and ill-tempered after our departure, and make the house too hot for those whom he called his guests. But, on the other hand, he might take his affliction so much to heart as to pine away, becoming the ghost of the ghost of himself, and so entirely disappear from among them.

Whatever the issue of it, I never heard. Gradually we left the house behind us, the open country became wooded road, the city gates appeared,

and we rolled rapidly once more over the rough stone streets, through narrow passages, along open plazas, and past the old cathedral; and so on to the railroad, where, in a few minutes, I saw Lily safely tucked away in a convenient seat of the middle car.

There was still an hour to spare, and I turned again into the city to make a few purchases. First, a little fruit, then a Panama hat, and after that I bethought myself to gather together some light reading for the voyage up. Near the rear of the cathedral was a small book-stall of limited capacity and offering few inducements to purchasers. A few Spanish novels, an assortment of religious books—these seemed all. But I noticed upon an upper shelf a very old volume—so dingy, indeed, that I lifted it down for closer examination. It was a century or two old, and contained the lives and exploits of a dozen or two of the most celebrated Spanish cavaliers, with rough engravings. As I turned it hastily over, I came across what for the moment seemed to freeze my blood; for there was the portrait of the ghost—life-like and unmistakable, in spite of the inartistic execution of the cut. And, as though to resolve all chance of remaining doubt, beneath it was a fac-simile of his signature—none other, in fact, than the same queer, jumbled scribble of characters which Don Miguel had shown us for our bewilderment. I gave one hasty glance at the letter-press accompanying the portrait; and then, purchasing the book without dispute about the first-named price, rushed back to the cars.

"There, there!" I exclaimed to Lily, thrusting the open volume before her. "Do you not recognize him? Now, at last, you have something to write home about! Whom do you think you have been flirting with for the past week? Look! As I live, with none other than old Vasco Nunez de Balboa himself!"



## LADY HAUGHTON'S MISTAKE.

By [Annie Thomas]

"Lord of all the love I cherish,  
Reigning on through life and youth,  
Such affection ne'er can perish:  
Love is lord of all in truth."

"I AM so lonely up here by myself, I will try and amuse myself by composing something," I thought, humming the words which stand in inverted commas at the head of this page.

Some one whom I knew very well and loved very much had a short time before written the words which I have quoted, and they came into my head one crisp December morning as I stood at a window in one of the rooms of Haughton House and looked and listened—looked with all my power of sight, and listened with all my power of hearing—to the shouts of laughter and the ringing sleigh-bells that rang up and mocked my solitude.

It was my first visit to Haughton House. I had only come to it the previous evening, and I was very much in love with its air of substantiality and antiquity already. It was called after the family who had built it and who had inhabited it for two centuries and a half. Its architecture was of that square, massive, well-proportioned order that has come to be conventionally designated as the "Seventeenth Century" or "Queen Anne's" style. But Haughton House, in spite of its red brick walls, its square sides, its long, narrow, innumerable oak-framed windows, and its apparently interminable, long, straight, oaken-floored and sided corridors, boasted of earlier birth. In fact, it had been built by a certain Sir Hubert Haughton at the end of the sixteenth century: its date was on the arch over the rich knobbed entrance door—1584; and Haughtons still lived and kept great state in it in the year of which I write—1867.

It offered a square front to the visitor on whichever side it was approached. I had been very much impressed on the previous night, when I was driven up to

it in the moonlight, by a wealth of griffins that sat about on every available piece of masonry in their silent, stony, splendid stolidity. Lions without end adorn the door-steps of suburban villas near London; but these griffins had a look about them, especially in the moonlight, of having weighed life and found it very much wanting in the elements of excitement. Like a worn-out belle at the end of the season, they looked very much as if they had found the game to be unworthy of the candle.

But if I had been impressed on the previous night, when I saw it under the depressing influences of cold and fatigue, how much more reasonably was I impressed when I got up fresh and eager for it all in the morning! When, after a few minutes of watching and waiting at the window, I made up my mind to cast myself forth alone into the wilderness of corridors that intersected each other, I half expected to see a lady in hoop and farthingale, or a cavalier in a velvet doublet, to appear; and if either had done so, I should only have thought the accessories still more perfect, and should not have been alarmed in the slightest degree.

Having set the scene, it is time to introduce the characters. Expediency, overcoming etiquette, induces me to bring myself forward first.

I, Margaret Glynn, was here at Haughton House, not on account of my own "fair merits," but solely and wholly by the good-will and for the pleasure of my brother, whom people happened to want this year, because he had made his name sound very satisfactory in the ears of all such as cared for him. So when they wanted Bertie at Haughton House, he frankly told them he wanted me still more: therefore I was included when the formal invitation was sent, and we both went down on the gay principle that rarely fails us Glynn—of taking all the brightness life brings to us.

"What can have put this pretty creature in a state of dissatisfaction with herself or any portion of the world?" I thought, as I looked at her. She had been a beaming embodiment of joy and gladness the night before, when we arrived. Now she looked unmistakably sad, and sadness did not so well become her.

Florence was not very tall, but she had a graceful, supple figure, full of yielding lines, and a little, dark, oval, intelligent face that looked better when animated than in repose. She had dark hair too—the greatest drawback to her beauty in the eyes of those who believed that their enthusiasm for "Titian red" or golden locks was because they were more beautiful than any other, not because they were more fashionable. But it was no drawback to her beauty in my eyes, or in the eyes of my brother—I knew that very well. It was light, cloudy, bronze-black hair, and she wore it in a wonderful manner, wrapped about her handsome little head in a way that defied investigation. She was dressed, too, now in a way that appealed to my artist feeling. Her dress and jacket and hat of gray velvet were trimmed with bands of feathers made from the gray gull. The one color predominated to such a degree that it was a relief, instead of an offence, to the eye, that tiny tie of scarlet which she wore round her throat. Her dress was looped up over a gray petticoat; and so much of her "hose" as could be seen between the tunic and the tops of her neatly-fitting balmorals was gray also. As I looked at her, I felt almost as if my own costume of black and violet were antagonistic to good taste.

"How active your brother is!" she said, as we neared the lake: "he is still pushing mamma's chair about." I looked, and behold, Bertie had in truth converted himself into a "propeller power" for Lady Haughton, who loomed larger than ever in the rarefied air, and seemed to be enjoying herself immensely.

A large company had assembled. Many of them were staying in the house: others were visitors from the neighbor-

hood. Among the latter was a Mrs. Morley, the married daughter of the Haughtons' nearest brother-baronet—a Sir Digby Denny. As Miss Denny she had been fast friends with Florence Haughton, but she had married and got into another set now; and this was their first meeting since an accidental one in a London ball-room early in the past season.

Mrs. Morley had driven down to the lake-side on a tiny sledge drawn by four handsome little gray ponies. Their harness was blue leather and silver; her dress was blue and silver; the cushions of her sledge were of blue velvet; the reins were held aloft over the dashboard on a silver swan's outstretched neck. It was a chariot for a fairy queen, and she who drove it might have been Queen Mab herself.

She was a beautiful little woman, with flickering blue eyes and glittering yellow hair. Her features were not sharp, but they were very fine. She was a brilliant, sparkling creature, and I took a dislike to her at once, for I saw she was watching my brother, and I fancied she was watching him superciliously.

As soon as we came upon the scene, Mrs. Morley beckoned Florence Haughton up and offered her a seat. As Miss Haughton shook her head in the negative, and glanced toward me as her reason for doing so, I heard Mrs. Morley ask:

"Who is she?"

I felt the answer rather than heard it:

"Miss Glynn."

"His sister?"

"Yes. Hush, Amy!"

"Those people should have no relatives." Bertie Glynn is delightful alone, but—

"Hush!" Miss Haughton said suddenly, and as she turned away from her friend and to me instantly, I was in time to see that she had enforced her caution with rather a forcible frown. The whole of her little face, from the knitted brow to the firmly-closed mouth, looked so haughtily pretty in its indignant anger that I felt proud of my partisan.

"Will you take my arm and walk

down to speak to mamma, Miss Glynn?" she added aloud; and as we went off together, she said, "Has your brother ever spoken to you about Mrs. Morley?"

"Never," I replied.

"I wonder at that, he used to admire her so much. When we knew him first, Mrs. Morley scarcely spoke of any one but Mr. Glynn; but she did not like him to be catholic in his tastes so far as society goes: she wished to keep him to herself."

"What! a married woman?" I asked bluntly; and Florence blushed scarlet as she answered:

"She always says it is the talent she acknowledges, not the man she is paying attention to: however that may be, she has not forgiven mamma for asking Mr. Glynn so much; and I see she hates to find he is here now."

As she said this we neared the spot where Bertie, tired with his labors in her service, was resting on the back of Lady Haughton's chair. He took off his hat as we approached, and I did not wonder at Mrs. Morley, or any other woman, acknowledging his talents and liking to pay him attention. He was such a fine, stalwart, open-browed, handsome young fellow that no woman could pass him by in scorn or unobserved.

"Your brother is too good: he will not let any one share his labors," Lady Haughton said, stretching her hand out eagerly to me. "He must not tire himself, must he?"

I looked at Bertie, and Bertie colored. "I shall never feel tired while I can give you pleasure, Lady Haughton," he said, earnestly; and then Lady Haughton looked round at him so tenderly that I felt convinced she would favor his suit with her daughter should he ever venture to urge it.

I have said that Lady Haughton was large, massive and handsome. She was more: she was voluptuously handsome and tender-looking at times, and to-day her costume heightened her mature charms and softened her age, which was about forty. She was in purple velvet and ermine, with some arrangement of black lace and crimson roses nestling

upon her lustrous dark hair. There were roses on her cheeks, too; and her eyes sparkled brightly one moment, and veiled themselves languishingly beneath their long lids the next, in a way, I thought, most marvelous for a woman of her age.

"Your old friend, Mrs. Morley, is here, on the bank, Mr. Glynn," Florence said suddenly, cutting into the midst of my meditations concerning her mamma most ruthlessly. "Won't you go and speak to her?" she added, as I looked at her. She was looking straight at my brother, and there was a fine glow on her brow, and plenty of scarcely-subdued animation over all her face and figure.

"Not yet," Lady Haughton pleaded softly, as Bertie said, "Yes, I'll go." Then she laid her hand to "detain him," she pretended, even though he had said he would not. And as she did it, I saw Bertie steal a glance at Florence.

"What does all this mean?" I thought; but I had seen too much of men to venture to look as if I thought it. Florence Haughton's face was younger, truer perhaps, at any rate more tell-tale, than mine. She saw her mother lay a pleading hand on Bertie Glynn's arm: further, she saw (as I did) that Bertie Glynn looked pleased, and Miss Haughton's dark face burned with a blush, the nature of which I could not attempt to analyze.

"Come back with me, will you, Miss Glynn?" she said in her clearest voice: "some one must be civil to Mrs. Morley, since she is here."

"Not yet. I wanted to give you a slide, if Lady Haughton has had enough of it," Bertie said, quickly; but before Lady Haughton could say whether or not she had had enough of it, Miss Haughton answered for her:

"Thank you, no, Mr. Glynn. Mamma has not had enough of it— And I have," she added, as she turned and walked away, signaling to me to go with her.

The young lady was evidently upset, but what it was about I was very far from guessing. Whether it was the absence of any one, or the presence of any one, it was impossible for me, a stranger in the land and to her temperament, to

tell. So I walked by her side in silence until it pleased her to speak.

"Your brother is a very good-natured man, is he not, Miss Glynn?" she said, at last.

"I think him perfection, you must know," I replied, laughing. "Bertie and I agreed long ago that we would leave the discovery of each other's faults to the rest of the world. What makes you ask?"

"Idle curiosity, I'm afraid," the girl said, smiling. "He has been pushing about that chair of mamma's for a long time."

"Perhaps he feels no fatigue in the service of your mamma," I said, laying a slight stress on the word *your*.

"Perhaps. Lady Haughton always prided herself on her popularity," the girl replied, haughtily, and I began to repent me of my allusion and to wish I had left it unsaid. I had no time either to rectify or to make my mistake worse, for we were within ear-shot of Mrs. Morley in a moment after.

The lovely lady in blue and white palpably allowed herself great license: she availed herself to the full of that law of liberty which every British subject enjoys. "I only came down to Denny Place last week, Flo," she began at once, "and I found nothing had moved on since I was there last. I look forward curiously to see what change has come over Haughton House."

"None," Florence said, most emphatically.

"None? That's nonsense. Why, every one knows that Lady Haughton disdains to be tried by her peers any more, but will seek her suffrages from the noble army of writing and painting and singing martyrs."

"You always talked of things you knew nothing about," Miss Haughton said, hurriedly. "We used always to say, Miss Glynn, 'Everybody knows Amy Denny,' when she said things we would not have put up with from anybody else."

"What a humiliating immunity to gain!" I could not help saying, rather contemptuously, for Mrs. Morley's al-

most undisguised sneers at my brother and artists generally had nettled me. The blue-and-white beauty turned her great azure orbs slowly upon me, and then raised her glass.

"Haven't I seen you somewhere?" she asked.

"I really cannot say," I replied.

"Not with your brother. I used to see your brother sometimes," she went on.

"So Miss Haughton tells me. I never heard Bertie mention you," I answered; and then the lady blushed a deeper wild-rose tint than before, and tossed her elegantly decorated head ever so slightly.

"I must be off home," she said, presently: "country distances are so dreadful, and we dine with you to-night. Good-bye till then, Flo."

"Good-bye," Florence Haughton replied; and then, as her friend drove away with a scarcely perceptible inclination of the head toward me, Miss Haughton said:

"You don't judge people by their friends, do you, Miss Glynn?"

"Indeed I don't; but why?"

"I'm glad of that," the girl said, heartily; "otherwise Mrs. Morley would have lowered me considerably in your estimation. She always was overbearing, but she is worse than ever now."

Lady Haughton, leaning on my brother's arm, came up to us at this moment. "I have had some trouble in persuading Mr. Glynn not to neglect some work he confessed this morning he had to do," she said. "However, he has consented to go home and do it now."

"And you, mamma?" Florence asked, suddenly lifting her eyes and leveling them at her mother.

"I am going home also," Lady Haughton replied. "You wait here for a little time, child. Luncheon at two, Miss Glynn." Then she nodded to us and walked away, and again I saw an angry, indignant, bewildered expression flit over my companion's face.

"What can it all mean?" I could not help speculating about it, idle and vain as I knew all speculations to be in such



matters. At last I solved the difficulty to my own satisfaction. Lady Haughton, though she liked the society of literary men, deemed the union of one with her daughter an evil which it was her duty to avert. Consequently, she took the surest means of keeping Bertie from Florence by monopolizing him herself. Well: Bertie had no other fortune than his brains to endow a wife with; but I thought Lady Haughton might have done worse with her child than give her to my brother.

We loitered by the frozen lake for some time, and then we walked briskly home. Miss Haughton recovered her spirits to the extent of joking and laughing, and surmising about the forthcoming interview between Mrs. Morley and Bertie. "I wonder if mamma will make him take Amy in to dinner?" she said. "Amy, till lately, insisted on a monopoly of his friendship: she can't stand seeing him domiciled here."

"What was her charm for him, I wonder?" I said.

"Her beauty, to be sure. Like all men, Mr. Glynn is won by beauty."

"My brother thinks more of brains."

"No, he doesn't," the girl said, quickly; "he's caught by beauty far more. Whether it's fragile or whether it's voluptuous, it's all one to him, so long as it's beauty."

"She's jealous of him," I thought; "but about whom?" Then I ran over in my mind the list of those who were staying at Haughton, and decided that not one of them outshone this daughter of the house. I knew Bertie's taste so well. Brilliancy and refinement had greater charms for him than the most dazzling of non-intellectual loveliness.

"Come straight to mamma's morning-room, Miss Glynn," Florence said, when we reached the house: "we're always allowed there before luncheon and before dinner. Come on."

I followed her, and she led the way up the wide old stairway, and along one of the corridors, till she reached a door before which a heavy curtain of crimson velvet fell in massive folds. This she pushed on one side, opened the door,

and then stood back for me to enter Lady Haughton's morning-room.

A faint, sweet odor of pastille floated up to meet us, and this mingled presently with some fresher, colder perfume with which Lady Haughton was bathing her own forehead. It was broad, bright daylight outside that room, but in it almost a twilight darkness reigned by reason of the crimson silk blinds being down, and the crimson curtains half drawn over the two windows in the side of the room.

It was a temple in every way characteristic of the gorgeous goddess who presided in it. Splendor of coloring, warmth and luxurious softness were what struck upon the senses first. Presently you discovered that the room was perfect in each detail, and that this effect of lavish carelessness had been most carefully studied.

She sat at the end of the room by the fireplace on an antique crimson velvet couch, whose shield-shaped back rose regally behind her; and when I came upon her in this softened light, I could not help feeling that she was a magnificent specimen of a matured Venus. She had taken off her ermine wrappings, and now she sat in royal purple velvet, with some point-lace thrown over her handsome, backward-thrown head—sat steeped in such an atmosphere of sensuous beauty and warmth as I had never breathed before; and by her side sat Bertie, my brother.

"I have had such a treat while you girls have been chilling yourselves to death!" she said, holding out her hand graciously, grandly toward me, but never disturbing the regal repose of her body or the imperial pose of her head. "Mr. Glynn has been reading *Chastelard* to me."

"Then you have not been chilled," Florence replied. "Can't you continue the reading, Mr. Glynn?"

Bertie looked down at the open page for a moment before he replied. Then he looked up and said:

"No: it would be impossible to begin reading that passage where *Chastelard's* contempt for her culminates so

gloriously. I was coming upon it gradually, but I could not begin upon it."

"I am sorry we interrupted you," she said.

"I am not sorry, believe me," he said, in such a low tone that Lady Haughton actually started out of her position in order to catch it.

"Go and get ready for luncheon, Florence," she said, sharply. Then she added, more softly, "We must all do that now. My guests must not be kept waiting;" so Bertie and I left the room together.

He leaned his arm over my shoulder and walked along toward my room with me.

"Well," I said at last, "have you done your work?"

He shook his head.

"No, Maggie, I have done nothing."

"That's rather a pity: you'll have to work at night—my abomination."

"I shall get away from the dining-room early, and not show my face in the drawing-room to-night."

"Can you do that? How will it look? Mrs. Morley, an old friend of yours, I hear, is coming."

"Is she?" he said, carelessly. "Did she tell you Mrs. Morley was an old friend of mine?"

"Who is 'she,' Bertie?"

"Miss Haughton."

"Yes, she did. Do you care for what she thinks and says and feels?"

"Her mother's conduct puzzles me," he went on. "If she disapproved of my evident liking for Florence, why on earth did she ask me here? Yet, now that I am here, she never gives me a moment with Florence."

"It is very strange."

"Strange, Maggie! It's maddening. Lady Haughton is a very nice woman, but what I felt when she put me on escort duty to herself this morning is not easily expressed. How well you're looking, little lady!" he added, suddenly. "If you look like this to-night when you sing, every good *parti* in the neighborhood will be at your feet. How do you get on with Florence?"

"In gratitude for your compliment, I

will tell you the truth and say very well," I replied. "But that counts for nothing as far as you go, you know: the daughter's courtesy to me may mean no more than the mother's courtesy to you."

"Well, I'll not go out to meet sorrow, and I'll not fear my fate too much," he said, as he turned away; and when I met him again at luncheon he certainly did not give me the impression of fearing his fate or anything else "too much," or indeed at all. The gay, debonair press-man, with columns of work that must be done hanging over his head, and plenty of temptation not to do it in his path, was the blithest of the party, apparently.

Christmas-day was approaching, and while we were at luncheon the conversation turned upon the extreme scarcity of holly-berries and flowers. "We shall be obliged to rob the conservatories to deck the rooms with on Christmas-day," Lady Haughton said: "the dinner-table and the ball-room will take every flower I have."

"And I shall not have my darling Christmas roses to wear," Florence said, very dolefully. "At every Christmas-day party ever since I was a little child I have worn Christmas roses: this year I shall not have any."

"You prefer them to any other flower for that day?" Bertie asked.

"Yes, I do for that day: I love them for themselves and from association."

"If Florence knew what suited her dusky face best," Lady Haughton said, laughing, "she would wear holly or mountain-ash berries, would she not, Miss Glynn?"

"I think it is more artistic to make her effects without resorting to violent contrasts," I replied, and Bertie agreed with me.

After luncheon we all disposed of ourselves as seemed good to us until the dinner-bell brought us together again. Bertie and I were writing an operetta together, so this afternoon I attempted to score a portion of his libretto, in order that before I left I might let Lady Haughton hear what my brother could do in other fields than that of press-

writing. I was in the library alone for a time, but I was not working with a will, and I was not sorry when Miss Haughton came in and asked if she might stay with me.

"Not but what it makes me very miserable to see you working away at something of worth, while I have been and am as idle as a peacock," she said, as she sat herself down in a chair by the fire.

"You have a book, I see. If you have been reading, you have not been idle," I replied.

"But I have been reading idly. I know this by heart almost," she said, holding up her book as she spoke, and I saw that it was *The Story of Elizabeth*.

"It's no waste of time to read that subtle exposition of character again and again. I was right: you have not been idle."

She let the book fall into her lap, as she gazed thoughtfully into the fire:

"The story that is told here could never be so delicate and tender, and so little painful to look back upon, if it were enacted in real life, could it?"

"I don't know. That story is as real to me as any bit of real life I have ever known."

"So it is to me—painfully real. What are you doing, or what were you doing when I came in?"

"Composing some words of my brother's."

"Read them to me."

I obeyed her, and read some of his best—some of those which seemed to prove him the possessor of a pure and chastened taste. She listened attentively, and when I had finished, she said:

"Men and what they write are so different, are they not? They write yards of evidence in support of the superiority of well-directed mind over well-favored matter, and then they fall in love with the fairest face they can find, no matter whether it belongs to a fool or not."

"Your strictures apply to some men, certainly."

"To all nearly—to one whom we both know, undoubtedly." Then she paused,

and I did not like to speak. Presently she asked:

"Do you think my mother a great beauty?"

"Lady Haughton has been very handsome."

"She has been very beautiful—she is very handsome still: her second summer is much finer than my first," the girl said, sadly. Then she went away from me without farther word, and I knew what it all meant, and why she was so fond of reading *The Story of Elizabeth*.

The dinner-party was large that night. Still, Bertie, though he was not ordered to do himself the honor of taking in our hostess, sat on her left hand, and I remarked that Florence sedulously abstained from looking toward that end of the table. In the evening she kept near to me and away from Mrs. Morley, who kept perfectly quiet, with her eyes shut, until the gentlemen came into the room. On their entrance she roused up and came over to the piano, at which I was about to sing.

When I had finished my first song, and had acknowledged the well-modulated applause which is bestowed upon artists in drawing-rooms where art is at a discount, Mrs. Morley stepped forward and exclaimed:

"I know now where I have seen you, Miss Glynn. Do you remember singing that song in July?" She asked it with a brilliant, malicious little smile, and I answered at once:

"I remember it perfectly well: I sang it at a concert at St. James' Hall," and when I said that I saw some of the county people, who had never moved off their own domains since the hour of their birth, exchange as intelligent glances as they were capable of giving, and felt rather than heard them murmur, "Professional." "On this hint I spake;" and as my subject was dear to me and highly honorable in the estimation of all those whose opinions have any weight in the world of culture in which I had lived, I certainly spoke without halting. I laughed at that rapturous sense of art which permits the mediocre, moneyed many to run rabid after a fine painting,

a piece of writing or music, provided their taste for it has been endorsed by some accepted mysterious critical authority, or by the autocratic judgment of that "many-headed monster thing," the public. I laughed at the insincerity and feebleness of taste which permits this, at the same time that they either affect to, or do in reality, look down upon the creators of picture or poem or powerful prose. I told them how I, in my professional capacity, had passed through several strata of fashionable life; and that in one or two, which, for all the cultivation they displayed, might be termed the gray granite and old red sandstone of society, it seemed to be regarded rather as a degradation than an honor if one did anything with the brains God had given one. When I said this, Mrs. Morley gave a pretty little shudder, and said the "culmination of the defence of art was quite sensational." "And we like sensation in real life, though we don't like it in novels," she added. And then the fair critic fell fiercely upon current literature, and exposed her own folly and weakness as fully as any one to whom she had been insolent could desire.

But it was not of my own puerile enemies and petty annoyances I thought that night when I was alone in my room. It was of my brother, and of the girl he loved, and of the woman who loved him; for now I felt sure that it was love, and not prudence, which caused Lady Haughton so sedulously to keep her guest away from her child. And Bertie was unconscious of it! There was the danger. Bertie was unconscious of this fell foe to his love for the daughter which he had to deal with in the love of the mother.

I was powerless, perfectly powerless, for I dared not attempt to open his eyes. Lady Haughton was still, as Florence said, very handsome; and if Bertie found that her admiration for him was open and undisguised to the extent of my finding it out, what harm might not ensue, for men are very vain! I pitied Florence, but I could not help her. My brother Bertie must rectify Lady Haughton's mistake respecting him (if it was a mistake) unassisted.

But though I could not openly help Florence or explain to Bertie, it occurred to me that I might covertly aid them.

Miss Haughton had expressed a wish to sing one of my songs. I determined that I would teach her one thoroughly by Christmas-day. I would teach her how to give out the full power of that wonderful voice of hers in such a way as should surprise Bertie into a speedy surrender of that butterfly bachelor liberty of his which men may come to prize too highly.

Accordingly the following day, being alone with Miss Haughton, I offered to commence my instructions at once. She eagerly assented, and practised the song I gave her so assiduously that by Christmas-day she could sing it like a siren.

"Leave it on the piano and sing it at night: it will be a treat to my brother," I said to her on the morning of that day. "He wrote the words, but he does not know I have composed them;" and Florence agreed to do this gladly.

I must mention that on Christmas-eve Bertie had declared that urgent business demanded his presence in London. He came back to Haughton House late at night; and Lady Haughton, in an apparently unpremeditated burst of frank friendliness, proposed that we should all go into the hall to greet the traveler. When we went out, I saw that Bertie held in his hand one of those long tin boxes that speak of Covent Garden, and then I knew that his "urgent business" had been to procure flowers for—whom? It was impossible to say. That Lady Haughton thought so too I felt quite sure, for her handsome face glowed with a pleased consciousness, that had the effect of making poor Florence feel heart-sick and sore disquieted.

My little plot—my harmless, well-meaning little plot for Bertie being surprised by sweet strains from Florence—was marred the following day. We all chanced to be in the drawing-room just before the hour of dressing for dinner arrived. It was getting too dark for work or reading: it was not worth while

to have lamps lighted. Somebody suggested my singing, and I sang a couple of verses, and then rose up hastily, begging some one—Miss Haughton?—to succeed me. Before Florence could refuse or comply, her mother had seated herself at the piano, and was saying, "Mr. Glynn, make the fire-blaze fall on this," placing an open song before her as she spoke. He obeyed her, and then she looked around and beckoned him nearer with an inclination of her head. When he came up, I heard her say:

"I hope, whatever the others think, that you will not think me very foolish for singing this;" and then she sang the following words, with a great deal too much feeling and no inconsiderable execution; and I listened to her with hardly subdued wrath, for it was the song I had taught to Miss Haughton. The mother had stolen a march on her daughter:

"Can we bear it? Tell me, dearest—  
Can we parted still live on—  
You to whom my heart is nearest,  
Even though your love is gone?  
Lord of all the love I cherish,  
Reigning on through life and youth,  
Such affection ne'er can perish:  
Love is lord of all in truth.

"Still, while roses bloom on gayly,  
Each bright summer day in June—  
Still, while song-birds sing on daily  
To the everlasting tune—  
Still on you my love will centre,  
Careless that, whate'er befall;  
Lighter thoughts can never enter:  
With me Love is lord of all."

She wound up amidst a burst of applause, and Bertie's voice was the loudest in the hymn of praise. He declared that he hardly recognized his own words, they were so well set and so exquisitely sung, and he looked pleadingly at Florence to endorse his opinion. But Florence would not return his look. "It is time to dress," she said shortly to us, going out of the room. Soon after this Lady Haughton rose to go, but paused to utter a few regrets to Bertie and me about not having provided herself with

a bouquet for the ball that night. "I could not refuse a request made to me by any one who gave me flowers to-night," she said, looking amorously at Bertie; and I called her an "odious, intriguing old woman" in my heart, and "wondered if she knew that a man might not marry his grandmother;" while as for Bertie, I had no longer any patience with him, and I felt that when he gave the contents of the tin box to Lady Haughton I should tell him I was tired of the hospitalities of Haughton House.

However, I was not constrained to deal such hard measure to myself; for when Miss Haughton and I came wafting down stairs in the midst of our tulle dresses, in the wake of gorgeously-bedight Lady Haughton, Bertie was standing in the hall with a bouquet of Christmas roses in his hand. Lady Haughton extended her jeweled fingers for them, but he told her, "No—one but himself must give them to her daughter."

There is very little more to be said. Miss Haughton wore her flowers, and looked so pleased with them that Bertie "went over" utterly, as he called it, that night. The next day Lady Haughton was called upon to experience what she angrily declared to be the severest pang a parent can feel—namely, having her consent to her daughter's marriage asked. Her consent she was obliged to give, but the ceremony which took place a few months later lacked the saving grace of her presence. She says that she cannot bear to meet Bertie, because he has induced her daughter to marry beneath her. And though we know this statement to be transparently false to everybody, still we all (Florence included) are glad to accept it as a reason why Lady Haughton thought more hardly than she had done before of Bertie from the moment he gave her daughter the Christmas roses.

## TO PLEASE AUNT MARTHA.

By [Margaret Loomer]

MY story is about the dearest and best of women, and a little adventure that grew out of my love for her. I am not used to the art of narration, and shall perhaps wander a little in gathering all my points together; but I'll try to begin at once and waste no words beyond letting you understand the good reason I had to prize and value her. My poor, dear mother was an only child, and my grandfather was a widower from the hour of her birth: had it not been for my precious Aunt Martha, the best and kindest of all friends, my mother would have been without a loving hand to check or eye to guide her, for her father was deeply immersed in business interests, with but little time or thought for the baby at home.

She was very beautiful, and a little willful, I am afraid, for when she grew up to womanhood she made a runaway-match, to which my grandfather was so desperately opposed that he never forgave her. My father was a gay and handsome gentleman, fond of fine living and fast company; and the marriage brought no good to either, for the little money my mother had of her own being gone, and her father remaining deaf to her prayers for forgiveness, she gave herself up to sorrow and regret, and he fled from threatening poverty to the excitement of folly and dissipation. It was a short story with a sad, sad close, for my father was killed in a duel, and my poor, dear mother soon followed him to the grave, leaving me, a tiny little creature, with a faint remembrance of her fading beauty. Aunt Martha had followed her from her old home, where she had held the place of housekeeper so many years, and shared her sorrows and lightened her troubles. When my dear mother's eyes closed on earth for ever, their last look was fixed on that kind face, and her heart was cheered by the promise that I should be to her old nurse what she had been in days gone by.

Dear Aunt Martha! how often she and I have cried our hearts full over that last sad scene! for she was never weary telling me of my beautiful girlish mother, whose life had closed when others are scarce begun; but about my father's memory she evinced a strange reluctance, and never named him of her own free will.

Now, I should tell you that she was not my aunt by relationship, being only a distant connexion of my grandfather, whose good-will she had forfeited when she left his handsome home to link her fortunes with his poor, forsaken child's. She was not young, even in those days, but she was always lovely to me, and looking at her sweet, earnest face with its good, hopeful eyes and cheery smile, I often wondered why no one had ever tried to win her for his own; for Aunt Martha was an old maid, and I never heard her allude to her youth or the fancies that belong to it. She was naturally the busiest of all living people: she never seemed to tire or need repose like the rest of the world; and it was such a matter of course to see her fingers flying from morning till night that I am afraid I did not always consider that it was the care of me that made her ceaseless industry necessary.

One day, when I was still a little child and had just begun to read and spell in a little school that was next door to our lodgings, I came in with my primer to tell all I had achieved of its wonderful contents that day, and found Aunt Martha with an open letter in her hand, weeping very bitterly. As soon as she saw me she checked her sorrow, and, becoming calm as usual, in answer to my sympathetic questions told me that she had just heard of the death of an old friend who was once very dear to her. Then she grew quiet, and I had never before known her so silent or abstracted as she appeared all the evening. Once or twice she laid her head down

on the little sewing table, and when she raised it again, her face looked pale and was wet with tears. At last she said:

"Bessie, should you like to have a brother?"

"But I couldn't, you know," I responded promptly.

"Oh yes, you could," she said hastily; "and you are going to have one come here and live with us; and we must love him and try to make him happy."

I never was so astonished before. I gazed at her with wide open eyes, and found no explanation in her rather flushed face and averted glance.

Indeed, it seemed to give her pain to say any more than could be helped on the subject, and she replied reluctantly to my unsparing questions. She said he was to be the same as a real brother to me, and his name was Roy Fielding. His father was the old friend who had once been very dear to her, and now he was dead and the poor boy all alone in the world, which must seem very empty and desolate without his father's love. We must endeavor to make him forget his sorrow; and here she grew very earnest and tender as she reminded me of my own sad little heart, and said it must teach me how to cheer his.

It was not on the next day, but nearly a fortnight afterward, that he came, but I had talked or thought of nothing else for all the time, and I greeted him eagerly as an expected playfellow. But when I saw what a great boy he was, with such a manly, grown-up manner, I hung back disappointed, and even cried.

In the midst of my pettish feeling, and in spite of my childish years, I was impressed with my Aunt Martha's face as she looked for the first time on the new-comer. I had never seen it show so much or such a kind of feeling before, and from that time I felt assured that some strange, strong emotion was awakened when she met him, and that she loved him for the sake of some one who was gone, as well as for his own.

It was not long till I learned to love him too, and forget that he was so tall and manly. He was the kindest of

brothers to me and the best of sons to Aunt Martha; and her heart seemed filled with pride and love from the first hour of his coming.

In the beginning he was sad and quiet, being impressed by the memory of his loss; but as its freshness wore away, his native energy and strong unselfishness of character were asserted and he began to take his place at Aunt Martha's side and help her in everything.

He had brought to our city a letter to some man of influence from a friend of his father's, and it soon gained him a suitable employment that lessened Aunt Martha's cares. He had school-books which he studied or read from at night, and he helped me over the hard places in my little primer with a ready good-humor and interest that made the task light.

And so we lived together just as happily as people in a fairy tale, or at least it seemed so to me; and brother Roy grew to be such a splendid man, rising steadily in business and giving every thought of his heart to dear Aunt Martha and her comfort!

Already our little home began to look so pretty and cheerful, and he never tired filling it with contrivances for her pleasure. Nothing seemed to distress him so much as to see her look weary through working, and yet she was so busy naturally, and had been so long accustomed to the necessity of labor, that it seemed impossible for her to be contented without it. I hope I was always grateful, or rather that I was able to express my gratitude by my efforts to please dear Aunt Martha, for I knew no stronger ambition than the desire to make her happy, until one dreadful night, when I discovered how utterly selfish I was at heart, and how ill I could bear my own happiness to be interfered with.

It was late in the autumn, and we had been making our plans for winter nights: Aunt Martha and I had stores of embroidery and transfer-work to do for the shops, and brother Roy had promised to read to us while we sewed. All day long I studied, being determined to pre-

pare myself for teaching, so as to take my share of the work and charge of our little household. I was almost a woman in years, and full of hope as to assuming my responsibilities.

Brother Roy looked serious and shook his head when I spoke of my eagerness to gain a position, and I had once overheard him saying to Aunt Martha that I was too slender and delicate for such a life.

But I did not mind this: I felt strong and hopeful, and was sure that I should convince him of my ability when I was sufficiently learned in the text-books to go through with the preparatory examination. Thus things stood that startling and long-to-be-remembered night when he came home rather late with a flushed face and excited manner, and broke at once into the awful announcement:

"Mr. Watson, my employer, has found an opening for me in a house in San Francisco, and I'm going out to make a fortune for us all. No more needlework for you, Aunt Martha, or school-teaching for Bessie. I shall come back rich enough to buy a house of our own, where we can live together in comfort, without this endless striving against want."

Aunt Martha looked up quickly and her face changed color. I could not speak, although I saw that his eyes were fixed on me with an asking earnestness that said:

"Do not take away my courage, but help me to do what I know must be for the best."

At length Aunt Martha said, slowly, looking at him steadily as she spoke:

"We are very happy here, Roy, and our labor is lightened by love; but you shall decide for yourself. I never believed in going against a strong impulse, and if yours deepens into resolution, it must be right for you to follow it."

For the first time in my life I felt an angry feeling dawn in my breast against dear Aunt Martha. Was she not wild to further such a plan as this? California seemed a burial-ground to every hope, instead of a field wherein to win

a fortune. I could not account for the bitter prejudice with which its name inspired me. I had never known any one who went there except a fellow-clerk of brother Roy; and of him I only knew through Roy's indignant mention of his faithlessness to a poor girl who loved him dearly, and whom he was to have returned to marry as soon as fortune favored him. They were bound by the tenderest vows, and she relied on him solely, living in the fond hope of his claiming her as his wife; but he, shallow wretch that he was! found a fresher beauty—the daughter of his business partner—and, sending his deserted love a letter of weak excuses for his want of truth, enclosed a handsome draft to make amends for her broken heart.

This little episode was all the personal knowledge I had of California, and somehow it made the whole place seem tainted with faithlessness to me.

Brother Roy's eyes were still watching me with that odd look, though his face was turned toward Aunt Martha and he spoke to her.

"Thank you again and again," he said, warmly. "I knew you would see it in the right light: in fact, it is the only path open to a man without capital, and I have known that for years. See here, Bessie—and this is as good a reason as I can offer for my determination—I have known for five years that California was the place on which I must fix any hope I had beyond slow drudgery, and I have worked for it steadily, and denied you many things you should have possessed, in saving for this end. Well, I have barely accomplished it: I have enough to secure you from trouble till I am able to send more, and the price of my passage and outfit beside."

Still I could not speak. I saw in anticipation his empty place, and felt the sense of desolation that his absence made: then I grew sick at heart and still more unreasonably angry at my quiet aunt, who sat thoughtful and silent, still looking steadily at Roy, as if to read his inmost soul.

"Then I may tell you that I have made arrangements to go at once," he

said, accepting her words as conclusive, and suddenly ceasing to regard me. "I think the time that elapses between decision and action is lost."

"Well," thought I, "he does not care for what I think or feel;" and a pang of offended pride swelled in my soul and kept me silent from that time forward.

True to his word, he lost no time, but worked at a flying rate for the few days that intervened till the sailing of the steamer, and allowed us no opportunity to regret his decision or anticipate our loneliness until it came upon us in the mournful word, Good-bye! and we saw his face turned from us, and went back again into our empty rooms. Then Aunt Martha sat down and cried as I had never seen her do since the night we received the letter that announced his coming.

I could not shed a tear, but I felt that the world was darkened and charmless, and that somehow it was a dreary thing to try to live in it.

It was in October he sailed away, and we should have to wait until December before we should get a letter from him, unless he was fortunate enough to be able to write from the Isthmus, which we scarcely dared to hope for.

As soon as we began our lonely life together, Aunt Martha recovered her cheerfulness, and spoke hopefully of the promising future that she was sure must await him. And so we went on, I being very quiet, for I could not think that all was bright in the future, and I dare not trust myself to say what was in my heart; but dear Aunt Martha either could not or would not see that I was changed toward her, but treated me with redoubled tenderness and love.

All at once two most unlooked-for things occurred, and, strangely enough, they happened on the same day.

The time for receiving the Isthmus letter passed and none came: we had not fully expected to get one, so we could bear that; but when it drew on to the date when the one from San Francisco should be due, and Christmas came and went with not a word of our

wanderer, I could see shadowed in Aunt Martha's face the agony that throbbed in my own heart.

The day I speak of was the first of the New Year, and we were unspeakably sad, as if a heavy foreboding hung over us. Aunt Martha was never idle, not even in trouble, and I worked mechanically in setting our little parlor to rights, whilst she busied herself with her endless lace-work.

Suddenly, in the midst of a long silence, a tap came to the door, and an unknown voice asked without if Miss Martha Watts and Miss Elizabeth Barton lived there.

I hastened to answer, with my heart in my mouth, for I felt instinctively that there was news of Roy. I was right, for opening the door, I found a smartly-dressed but rather confused-looking young man standing there, who told me he was a friend of my brother's, and had brought us messages from him.

Aunt Martha sprang forward, and, crying out that it was three long months since we had seen his dear face or heard a word of his welfare, implored him to tell us everything and lose no time in ceremony. The new-comer stammered a little; but that was because we were strangers to him and so excited, no doubt. His name was John Havens, he said, and he had known Roy since his first landing in California: indeed, he had helped to carry him ashore, for the poor, dear fellow had taken the fever at the Isthmus, and was too weak to stand or walk.

My aunt's cry of distress at this intelligence seemed to disconcert our visitor, for he almost contradicted his first assertion by endeavoring to make light of the disease, and finally assured us that there was not the slightest danger or trouble of any kind, except that it cost so much to be sick in San Francisco that we must try to send him money enough to cover his expenses until he gained strength. Instantly our eyes wandered over the furniture of our little parlor, and I could see Aunt Martha's mind, like my own, was busy calculating what sum might be realized by its

sale; for we had but little ready money beside.

The stranger, who was more observing than he appeared, seemed to divine our thoughts, for he hastily interposed something about personal sacrifices being unnecessary, and hinted that we were not without rich relatives. I did not take his meaning, but Aunt Martha shook her head despondingly, and answered:

"There is no source from which we have any right to expect help, but we will leave no stone unturned to secure Roy's comfort. What will be our best way to transmit what we can to him?"

"I go back on the next steamer: it is only a flying visit I am making to the East: in fact, I intend sailing for San Francisco by the day after to-morrow. I'll call to-morrow night. Will that suit?"

Aunt Martha said, "Yes." And he took his leave, stopping to assure us, again and again, that there was no trouble about Roy's getting well if he only had the money.

As soon as he left us his efforts to calm our fears seemed forced, and we gave way to the most distracting forebodings about our poor wanderer.

Oh, how can I ever forgive myself when I remember my own selfish excitement, and how, in my dread for Roy, I reproached that dear, patient, loving friend for encouraging his plan, and overlooking its mad sacrifice of home and happiness for the unreal promise of future wealth?

I pictured his suffering and desolation as the reward of the fine scheme she had believed in; but before I had uttered ten foolish words, I saw their sting had struck home to that gentle heart, and remorse seized upon my own for the wrong I had done her; so that I fell at her feet and clung to them, praying for forgiveness.

A stranger, whose knock at the door had not been regarded, found me there as he opened it, and looked in with a glance of inquiry on his grave face.

At first I could hardly realize the meaning of the words he began to

speak with cautious precision, and I repeated them to myself without catching their wonderful import. But by and by it dawned on me. My grandfather was dead, and I was an heiress! A feeling of exultant joy shot through me like a flame, and the knowledge of possessing wealth, that would sweep away care like a black cloud from our lives, filled my heart with triumphant hope. The next moment I remembered that he who had periled his life to enrich us might be beyond its influence, and I shuddered as I thought of a desolate grave by the shore of the far Pacific. Then I fell weeping upon the bosom of dear Aunt Martha, and forgot all and everything in a headlong, passionate outburst of feeling.

After that everything seemed like a dream. I could hear the lawyer's voice, talking so calmly of the strange idiosyncrasy that prevented my grandfather from ever seeing me during his life-time, or making a will whereby to testify his sorrow for his harshness to my poor mother. I could follow Aunt Martha's loving expressions of congratulation, and, left alone together, I could join with her in thanking the merciful and beneficent Father of all, who had bestowed so much upon one so little worthy, and exploring His guidance and care in the disposal of it; but nothing appeared real or tangible, even California; and brother Roy partook of the nature of the rest, and seemed to float in a sort of mist through my mind. But this passed off with that first day, and the next I woke to a strong resolve with morning light.

"I am going to San Francisco for my poor sick brother, Aunt Martha," I said, when we sat side by side at our little breakfast-table. "Letters may reach him, but I shall be sure to do so if I live. Heaven, in its mercy, has given us this blessed fortune to save him and bring him once more into our happy home. You stay and attend to all that long business that Mr. Derrick, the lawyer, talked of, and let me go and bring him back."

I can remember now that a bright-red flush, that deepened into scarlet, covered



Aunt Martha's face as I spoke, and she threw her arms around me and held me close within them without speaking for a little time. Then she said, softly:

"You cannot go alone, my darling."

"Why not?" I cried, in surprise. "There is no possible danger in these days. Mr. Havens said the fever was the only thing, and I can take quantities of quinine."

Dear Aunt Martha had another visitation of that mysterious, flushing color, and then she said, still very softly and gently:

"You know what I told your brother Roy about never thwarting strong impulses; and I say the same to you. If your heart guides you in this, I shall not interfere."

"Interfere?" I repeated her words in astonishment. "Do you not desire to see him as much as I?"

"Oh, yes, Bess, my darling: I long for the sight of his face."

"I know it, dear, dear Aunt Martha; and it is because I was so wicked and sinful as to reproach you in that silly way last evening that I want to prove my love and penitence now."

She smiled such a faint but loving smile, so full of something I could not understand, that I felt bewildered for a moment, and sat looking at her, with my state of mind, no doubt, expressed in my face, for she threw her arms about me once more and held me close in the same silent kind of embrace as she had done before.

Well, at last it was settled, and I was to go out in the next steamer with Mr. Havens; and I do not know why it was, but the moment I made up my mind to do so, that moment all fear left my heart, and I lived in an atmosphere of hopefulness and joy.

Mr. Havens came back, with his business transacted, ready to start, and asked for his message, being much astounded and (I thought) annoyed at my prayer for his kindly escort on that long journey.

Mr. Derrick gave us bank notes, and I took but little luggage for my voyage, for I fear I had slight practical

knowledge of what was before me. Then we started, and, standing on the deck of the steamer and looking off at my aunt's yearning face, as it faded away among the crowd on the shore, I saw the same inexplicable flush lighting it up that had puzzled me so before.

It was in January, 1856, that I saw the snow-clad shores of Governor's Island sink into the wintry sea, and coming, after ten days' sailing, to the town of Aspinwall, crossed over the Isthmus to Panama in a glorious summer verdure that was a feast to my unaccustomed eyes. The whole journey was like a dream to me, and I cannot remember anything that seems like a reality until we entered the "Golden Gate," and I saw a city rising on irregular sand-hills, like a picture I had seen of some ancient place in the Old World. When we drew nearer and it became more clearly defined, I saw that some of the buildings that were perched, like eagles' eyries, on the hills were pretty Swiss or Gothic cottages, with vines and ornamental bushes tastefully arranged around them.

All in an instant a terrible dread took possession of me. I had come out in full hope, and been sustained by the un-failing belief that Roy would greet me as our vessel neared the shore; but when I looked at the crowd of strange and eager faces that clustered round ready to spring up the lowered gangway, and saw he was not there, my soul sickened, and I turned away in miserable fear.

Mr. Havens, who had been very distant but quite respectful in his behavior all the way, came to my side, saying that it would have been impossible for Roy to have divined my coming, and that he would take me to a hotel and go out and find my brother. But nothing that he could say would lift the heavy weight that pressed my heart down.

It was a large and quite comfortable building, not very far from the wharf at which we landed, where Mr. Havens left me, after ordering tea to be sent to my room, and went out to look for Roy.

What weary hours they were and how

they dragged until nearly midnight, when he came back dejectedly, and said he could not find any trace of him without going inland and prosecuting a personal inquiry!

He had last seen him at the house of a respectable couple, who, he learned, had left the city for the mines.

"Where are the mines?" I asked, instantly.

"Oh," he said, "there are so many diggings now that it is difficult to tell in which direction to go: I cannot discover, without time and money, whether he went north or south."

"Oh, Mr. Havens!" I cried, "let us go in both directions. I think, if you love my brother as you say, you will give him so much of your time as may be necessary for the journey, and I am sure there will be money enough, too."

He blushed and stammered, and said it would be easier to go alone; but I do not know why I seemed to have lost all sense of delicacy, and declared I would not be left behind; so, rather reluctantly, he took our tickets for Stockton, to go from thence to a place called McGuffey's Camp, where it was said such a party as Roy's had been heard of.

I do not think my courage forsook me, but I felt strangely confused and excited by my new surroundings, and I had to keep in view the dear, trembling watcher at home, and the timely riches I was able to share with those I loved, to keep my fluttering heart from sinking at the strange position in which I found myself.

The best thing to do was to start at once and go forward by the first mule-train leaving Stockton, a small inland city. I wrote to my aunt the evening before starting, and tried to make as light as possible of my missing brother Roy, and speak with as much hope as I could of the surety of meeting him at McGuffey's Camp.

We took the boat for Stockton late in the afternoon, and arrived there at day-break the next morning. It was a flat-lying little place, very muddy and wet, for it was still the middle of the rainy season. It was nearly twenty miles

northward—a journey accomplished on mule-back—before we reached the Calaveras, and, crossing at a ford, followed the river to McGuffey's Camp.

It was my first glimpse of mining life, and the busy enthusiasm of hopeful diggers struck me in contrast with the hard life and terrible privations the workers were forced to encounter. It was not a large settlement, and the miners looked all alike in their long beards, gay shirts and tremendous boots; but Roy's face was not there. Oh how my heart sank within me as I heard Mr. Havens inquire without success for the name of Roy Fielding! The men who gathered round us repeated the name without recognizing it, and then began to ask if we meant "Caledonia" or "Tall York," or was it any of "Spinky Sam's" party? Then Mr. Havens explained to me that it was the custom of the country to give sobriquets of this kind to new-comers, who lose sight of their own proper titles under them.

Then he repeated my elaborate description of my brother, and gathered from contradictory sources that such a gentleman might have been there, but did not "locate," and had gone no one could tell where.

Dejectedly we took our way to Stockton again, and there, Mr. Havens said, he learned from an old friend that my brother had gone down to San Francisco, and set sail homeward on a steamer that had gone out a few hours before ours came in.

This was mortifying, but still good news. Dear Roy's face was turned homeward; and although I would not be the first to tell him of our good fortune, Aunt Martha would have the pleasure, and I felt a joyous thrill of anticipative delight. But, by and by, Mr. Havens dropped hints that my poor brother was too ill to remain in California, and that he could scarcely crawl down to San Francisco to reach the home-bound steamer; and then hope forsook me, and I wanted wings to fly over the sea and be in Aunt Martha's little parlor to greet and welcome our poor, broken-down knight, who had gone

out so valiantly to battle with fortune for our sakes.

By traveling without rest, I reached San Francisco many days before the steamer would sail, and there I chafed as I waited, praying and trembling lest that dreadful fever might be pitiless enough to blight all future joy and hope for dear Aunt Martha.

Then Mr. Havens left me suddenly, and I found, to my unspeakable amazement, that all my funds were gone too, for I had given him my purse to buy my ticket, and I was left alone, in a strange city, without a single dollar in the world, and a long, expensive journey between me and home. Some people learn the lessons of life in a single instant; and mine was all *made* plain to me that night as I looked back upon my intercourse with Mr. Havens, in whom I had placed implicit confidence, and recalled the vagueness of every interview we had had since his first appearance in our little parlor with the story of my brother's illness. I had never suspected him for a moment before; but now I saw my own blindness and the rash indiscretion of trusting myself to the guidance of a complete stranger. I remembered his avoidance of Mr. Derrick, our lawyer, and was convinced now that I had accompanied him on his *first* voyage to San Francisco, the story of his life there and friendship for my brother being entirely invented to have himself made the bearer of funds to him, which he knew would follow the knowledge of his illness. How he knew of our good fortune and acted upon it so maliciously I could not guess: he was not a bold villain, or he might have had my purse at the out-start, instead of tramping over the country with me until I offered it to him to buy me a return ticket.

These were not very cheering thoughts; but then the story of Roy's illness was not *true*: that consoled me for a moment; and the next, a fear that he might be dead, since he had never written to us, came upon me like a blighting wind, and I trembled in loneliness and dread.

What should I do?

Wait till morning, at any rate: it was

late now, and I must try to collect my scattered and startled thoughts. I sat down, wrapping a shawl about me, for it seemed impossible to lie down and sleep in such a state of mind as I was in.

I thought and thought till everything became misty and confused about me, and I fell into a troubled sleep.

I dreamed of traveling—such an endless journey over the roughest and meanest road: my feet were blistered and aching, and my limbs refused to bear my weight; suddenly a great, lumbering carriage came rumbling along toward me, with a loud, roaring noise in its wheels, greater than I had ever heard a carriage make before. I started to my feet, awakened by the sound, and heard it still. I rubbed my eyes and gazed around me with astonished fear, when suddenly the great building in which I stood began to shake and sway beneath my feet, and the walls cracked and jarred, and the casements rattled with a sound that froze my blood in my veins. An earthquake! I had never felt and scarcely ever thought of such a thing before; but I knew the fearful sensation at its first shock, and stood horrified and spellbound in the awful lull that followed, till another and greater throe shook the great mass of masonry about me, and the awful rumbling sound, followed by the indescribable rocking and jarring, came again with increased force, and then died away.

Then the whole house became alive with cries and shrieks of terror, and the crashing of opening doors and flying feet. Unable to endure my isolation, I struggled with my own jarred lock, and, with all my strength, turning it, dashed out with the rest of the frightened people into the wide hall, and fell against a gentleman, who was quieting a startled child with assurances of safety. He turned as I struck unwittingly against him and almost fell into his arms, and, with a cry of delight, I recognized my darling brother Roy! Oh, what a blessed moment! There were many wild scenes that night of terror; but none could have exceeded the perfectly reckless way in which I laughed and

cried and hung about my long-sought brother.

I cannot tell even now which feeling reigned supreme in his face—consternation or joy; and after I had explained it all over and over again, he seemed to understand it all as little as at first.

But when he heard how wickedly I had been deceived, and how sadly we had suffered in not getting the letters that had been lost on a wrecked steamer, his good, tender heart was full of self-reproach. He had just succeeded in establishing himself favorably in business, as he had written to us at length; and, becoming a partner in a forwarding house, was that next day to have sailed to China, to attend to business there connected with the firm.

So the terrible earthquake of 1856 threw me right into his arms; or we should have been parted for long, long months—perhaps for ever.

Did I take him back to Aunt Martha?

Well, there is really something rather odd about it, and as truly as I loved her, I never thought of it till he and I stood side by side as the day dawned on us that morning in San Francisco. It

really seemed a far less womanly and devoted thing than I had meant it to be, and when I thought it over I was covered with shame and confusion; particularly as Roy proposed to me—as the only terms on which he would neglect his promising business for two or three months to go and see dear Aunt Martha—that he should take me with him as his wife.

"For it was for your sake, my darling Bess," he said, "that I left our dear little home to try and make a fortune. Now, I should hardly dare to seek or claim you, but since you came after me"—and here he looked so knowing that it was dreadfully confusing—"why, you must take me. Besides, my dearest, it is the wish of our dear Aunt Martha's heart."

Then that was what her blushing and mysterious looks meant. "Oh," I said, "I will be dreadfully angry when we meet, for I never can forgive such mean scheming." But Roy laughed, and I had to consent. What could I do, having *gone so far*? But this I will say and declare: it was all done to please my dear old Aunt Martha.

Bq J.T. M. 1854

# RANLOCK BRANCH.

RANLOCK was in an uproar. The navvies had struck work on the Branch. They had had no money for a month and more; the weather was severe, the nights almost unbearable in the wretched shanties along the line. The snow and wind came in through the missing boards so freely that the men had their ears frozen lying asleep; and, rising in the dark mornings, stepped into drifts knee-deep by their bedside.

Roscommin, the contractor, had put them off from time to time with promises of pay, till, destitute, in debt and out of credit, some of the bolder spirits, on the Carroll Extension five miles east, organized and, at a preconcerted signal, threw down their tools and demanded payment of their hard-earned wages.

The money not being forthcoming, they armed themselves with shovels, spades, crowbars and picks, and marched



down the line, driving every man from the grade. The next day, Roscommin came up from the city with all the money he could raise, and paid off the bolder portion of the men, thinking that they would go to work again and the others follow suit. But he was mistaken: all those who were paid immediately left and came into Ranlock to take the stage for the three o'clock train at Beeline Junction.

Ranlock was in an uproar, and no wonder. Fifty wild Irishmen, with their pockets full of money, let loose in a quiet country village, made a rush, of course, for the taverns, and, wild before, were soon fired up with bad whisky to the fighting point, and ripe for any deviltry that might turn up. The half-dozen bar-rooms supplied them without stint with their villainous compounds, and the men were in a short time engaged in a number of quarrels and fights, that, however, passed off without bloodshed.

A number of the villagers collected casually at the "Norfolk Hotel," intending to take the stage for the Junction. The horses were harnessed, but the drivers, fearing that the navvies would fill the stages as soon as they were brought out, got out a farm-wagon, and after some trouble persuaded a dozen or more of the navvies to get in. All was ready now, and Sam Laddering got up in front and was in the act of starting the horses, when, suddenly, the powder-magazine behind him exploded. One minute they were hooraying and shouting good-byes to Pat and Teddy—the next the wagon was one confused mass of heads, feet, arms, legs and bodies—all fighting desperately, cursing, yelling, struggling, rolling over and under. Among the oaths and cries could be heard, many times repeated in various forms:

"Kill the heretic! Give him another, Con! Here's for a pickpocket! Where's the damned haythen? Kill him! Kill him!"

The confusion cleared itself a little presently, and it became evident that it was a one-sided affair of a dozen against one; and that that one was getting

enough of it very speedily. He hung partly out of the wagon, and the rest, with the "vitriol madness" in their brains, and more mad devils than men, beat him about the head and face with clubs and fists, and with heavy brogans kicked and trampled upon his legs and body as one might trample a snake, and only as one Irishman can trample another. It was plain enough that the poor fellow would not need much more of that treatment; and half a dozen men stood by and saw it done, as you, reader, would doubtless have stood by also. It was sure death to interfere. Would you take a man from a tiger's paws, think you?

Down the village street comes a tall, slight man, with a quick, light run. Never stops, but goes right at the swaying crowd where murder is being done—right at it and into it with a bound.

"Back, men!" he shouts. "You cowards! Is this the way you fight—a dozen to one?"

And those wild fellows, drunk with whisky and the sight of blood, shrink away from him ashamed. For they know him—know him for a brave, just man! It is Clamp, the foreman of the tracklayers, and most of these men have worked under him and learned to respect him and to like him thoroughly. They have found him a master who would have no shirking and no disorder, and yet thought of them and used them as men and not as animals or machines, out of whom it was his business only to get as much work as might be. And so, even in their drunken madness, they know his familiar voice and obey it instinctively. But there is one ugly-looking fellow, who has only been on the Branch a short time and has not worked under Clamp, who only answers him with a curse, and lifts his club to strike another blow. But Clamp catches him by the collar and flings him heavily among the crowd.

"Keep him away, boys! I guess you've had enough of this," he says sternly, between his teeth.

They hustle him away, and Clamp, with some help, lifts the bloody face and

form, in a swoon now and terribly cut about the head, and carry him away to a butcher's shop over the way, where he is cared for by rough, but kindly hands, and comes to life again presently, to find his body a very sore and uncomfortable dwelling-place indeed.

The Norfolk is all ablaze with light.

There is a ball to-night, and the dancing population of Ranlock and the country about have come out in their strength. The sound of scraping fiddles and clattering feet, the ring of laughter and hum of many voices, come out clearly on the keen air of the winter night. It is past midnight, and the revel is at its highest. Fiercely scrape the fiddles—swiftly clatter the dancing feet.

A door opens and two men come out. The light of a window flashes full upon them. As they turn their flushed faces and glare fiercely at one another, we recognize that one to the right, tall and slight. It is Clamp, the tracklayer. The other, shorter than Clamp, stouter and handsomer, is Charles Coffin, foreman of the grading gangs on the Carroll Extension. They are both honest, brave fellows, and have been good friends till to-night. And now, flushed with wine and excitement, they are going to quarrel and hate each other for the sake of a silly girl with a doll's face and an empty, giddy head. They exchange a few hot, taunting words, and then Coffin goes in and mingles again in the gay throng inside. Clamp takes his horse from the stables, mounts and rides away through the still December night. And though both are very good fellows, as men go, and incapable of a base or underhand action, each of those two goes his way, thinking only evil of the other and laying up wrath against him.

The more turbulent element of the navvies having departed, the rest went to work again, and the Branch grew steadily toward completion. A long thaw had followed the great snow-storm, and the contractors were very anxious to finish the road to Ranlock before another came. The men were induced by increased pay to work harder and longer.

From daylight to dark, Sunday and Saturday, the shovels rattled steadily and the great spike-hammers rang out clearly on the frosty air.

The Christmas-time came on, and, of course, no Irishmen could be got for money to work on *that* day. They celebrated the day in their usual manner, and all but a very few continued to celebrate it for a day or two afterward. It was the third day after before the men could be fairly got together again, and that day they worked with a will. The engine came down from the Junction with two or three flats loaded with iron, threw it off at the end of the rails already laid, and then set at its day's work of hauling sand from the cut two or three miles back.

Clamp was there, of course, regulating the whole work, each gang of a dozen or so having its foreman under him. He kept mostly with the tracklayers proper, ten picked and practised men. They load a dozen rails on a truck and run it along by hand. Five on each side of the line lift two of the long rails, weighing six or seven hundred a-piece, and run them forward clear of the truck, fit the ends into the clamps on the ends of the last-laid rails, and a Celtic voice shouts "Right!" The men at the other ends put them down, one at each rail seizes a heavy hammer with a three-foot handle, and drives the rail back with quick, clanging blows, till the same voice again shouts "Right!"

The gauge is placed between the of the two rails, the clamps fitted on, and two stalwart fellows, with their long, pick-like hammers, stand, one on each side of either rail, and with swinging, alternate blows, one striking left-handed and the other right, they drive the spikes straight home, until their flat heads bind firmly on either side the rail's broad base. Flinging the hammers forward the length of a rail, they bring the heavy truck forward with a strong swing, and quick! forward comes another pair, and the same work over and over again. And so they go, every man on the strain, all day long. Only at noon the engine comes down and runs back again, black

with men, whom it drops here and there at the shanties along the line, and in a little while comes back and picks them up. Then at it again like mad till dark.

One of the spike-drivers, Bally Mike, as they call him, is a remarkable man. Large and well made, very strong and active, quick as a flash. There is something wild in his composition—some undeveloped element of madness, perhaps, inherited from forgotten ancestors. He is a privileged character, and does pretty much as he pleases, for Clamp has a strange liking for the man and his wild ways, and knows, besides, that he will get through more work than any man on the line, and infuse some of his own spirit into the others. This press of work is no strain for him: he glories in it. The rush and swing of the regular and oft-repeated motions harmonize with his wild nature and bring him out strongly. He works left-handed, and drives his spikes with a swift, powerful stroke, that you can tell, after a while, from all the rest. He comes forward now and then with a quick bound from the last stroke, swings his hammer above his head, and shouts his favorite, familiar cry—

"Come on, b'ys! Bally-dugan and the sky over us! Fire away, me darlins, fire away!"

The afternoon wears away and the dusk comes on slowly. Still the shovels crash in the gravel and the hammers clang on the spikes. The engine comes on from the Junction with more iron, and part of the men are set to throw it off. Clamp stands by the engine talking to the driver, and weary of the long, hard day. A stranger comes along the line from the east, speaks to no one, but keeps his face carefully averted, as, closely muffled, he threads his way through the busy crowd. It is the brutal fellow whom Clamp handled rather roughly the day of the fight in Ranlock. He, at least, remembers that fact quite distinctly!

"Yuh see, boss," the driver is saying to Clamp, "ther's another haul o' iron comin' up to the Junction that th' Ole Man wanted me t' run down here t'-night, so 's th' boys kin chuck it off fust thing

in th' mornin'. It's loaded onto three flats that Colyer's goin' to fetch up along of th' 9.30 Ex. I kin jist run these off onto th' switch an' fetch th' others right along when they come. Time I git that done, an' the Spitfire put up an' raked out, it 'll make a pooty good day. So I don't think I kin git her fired up an' down here to th' gravel to-morrer much 'fore nine 'clock."

"Well, anyhow, Ryder," says Clamp, "get down as early as you can. We'll do the best we can till we see you."

The iron is all off now, and the men are free for to-night. Bally Mike steps up to Clamp, and, with his exceptional license, addresses him:

"Arrah, Misther Clamp, an' I'm dom fond o' ye. Wid ye gim me a cigarre?"

Clamp smiles good-naturedly at the man's strange ways, and draws from his pocket the desired article, with which Mike turns away, and, with a very pronounced wink to his fellows, proceeds to light it. Meanwhile the stranger has been lurking about unseen, and steps up now to the edge of the shallow cut, just above where Clamp is standing, and behind him; draws a heavy club quickly from under his coat, and, with a strong swing, aims a swift, powerful blow right down upon Clamp's head. But all this while Bally Mike's sharp eyes, with all his apparent carelessness, have followed the ill-looking stranger.

And just as the murderous bludgeon poises for its fall, Mike utters a wild yell that makes Clamp jump, and sends a spike that he holds in his hand with such a sure aim and such force that it strikes the miscreant's arm from underneath, and breaks the weight of the stroke which must otherwise have killed on the spot. But the blow is hard enough as it is, and Clamp staggers heavily and falls with a sensation of burning sparks in his brain and eyes. But he rises almost instantly, with the warm blood trickling down his face, and is rather uncertain for a minute whether he is awake or dreaming. But the sharp pain clears away his giddiness presently, and he understands what has happened. He sees the villainous stranger struggling

vainly in Mike's strong grasp, but does not recognize him in the dim light.

He does not remember having had trouble with any of the men, and is much perplexed to understand the fellow's motives for wishing to harm him. Suddenly he remembers his quarrel with Coffin, and the thought flashes upon him that he has employed this infamous and cowardly means of taking revenge for a fancied insult by the hand of a hired assassin. And yet Coffin would sooner have suffered death than been guilty of so dastardly an action. The workmen crowd in upon the two men who lie on the bank grappled together, and would soon make an end of the "murtherin' villain," but Clamp steps between and waves them back.

"Stand back, men!" he commands. "If I thought this fellow came of himself, I'd let you have your will. But I believe he was sent. I never knowingly wronged one of you, and I don't know a man but one who has cause of grudge against me. So, as I said, I believe this sneaking coward is only another man's tool, and unworthy of an honest Irishman's blow. Take away his club, Mike, and see that he has no arms about him, and then let him up."

"Sure, thin, Misther Clamp," answers Mike, "that's aisy done, all but littin' him up. Sure I tuk away his bloodgeon win he wouldn't lie still, an' gave him joost a delicate tap on the skull o' him, that was as good as soothin' surrup. He's slep' as swate as a blissid babe since he got it, intirely."

Mike loosened his grasp, and the fellow got up slowly and stupidly and looked about him vacantly. Clamp took him by the shoulders and shook him roughly, until, from the scared look that came into his ugly face, swart and brutal in the glare of the engine's light, it was plain that he had come to himself.

"Look here, you villain!" speaks Clamp. "It isn't your fault that you're not a murderer to-night. If I didn't believe that you was sent on this business, I'd let these men have their way, and they'd show you what honest, open-handed Irishmen think of a coward who

sneaks in the dusk and strikes a man behind his back. But I let you go this time. I never struck a man in my life, but you may tell the one that sent you that if any man tries this again I'll put a bullet through his heart."

The man shrank away, scared and abashed before the freely-expressed contempt of his countrymen, and was soon lost to view. Clamp sat down faint with loss of blood, and a minute after fell back in a swoon. And there, in the dreary winter woods and the chilly evening gloom, those rough fellows lifted him up with womanly gentleness, bound his wounded head as they could, and laid him gently on a bed, hastily improvised of spare garments, in the driver's room of the locomotive. Clamp had lodgings at a farm-house some distance back on the line, and Ryder, the driver, promised to see him well home. He put the engine in motion and moved off slowly amid a general cheer.

The Spitfire had hurtled away out of sight, and the men began to pick up their coats and prepare for scattering to their shanties, when O'Mara, the overseer of one of the gangs, climbed upon the pile of iron beside the track and addressed his fellow-workmen. He was a rough, thick-set Irishman, who had been advanced from the shovel and pick for punctuality and industry.

"Gintlemin," he began, "I want to say a few words to ye. I want to ax ye one quistion: Ain't ye iver found Misther Clamp act loike a gintlemin, and ain't he iver trated ye loike gintlemin intirely?"

Here the orator was interrupted by shouts of "Shure we have," and "Hooray for Misther Clamp."

"Gintlemin," he continued, in imitation of the last disinterested friend of humanity who had asked their free and intelligent suffrages for the only party that could save the country from inevitable ruin—"Gintlemin, I belave ye. Ye know a man win ye see one. Ye ain't to be desaved wid make-belave. And wot I want to ax ye to-night is joost this: Win a man is been thrue to ye, and frindly to ye, an' koind to ye, an'

stood by ye, ain't ye a goin' to stan' by him?"

Here he was again drowned in a storm of "Who says we ain't?" "Here's for a fight! Where's the haythin?" "Who's to be smashed?" And Bally Mike's voice clear above the rest: "Give us another, O'Mara! Fire away, me darlint, fire away! Bally-dugan an' the sky over us!"

Then O'Mara went on again:

"Gintlemin, ye saw that domned scoundhrel to-night, an' ye hurd wot Clamp said by that same. Me frinds, do ye know who he mint that sint the murtherin' villain to sthrike him behind his back? I know, me frinds, an' I'm immagitly agoin' to pursade to tell ye his name. His name, me frinds, is Charles Coffin, an' he's foreman of the gradin' gangs on the Carroll Ixtinsion."

This announcement caused a great sensation in the audience. Some believed it and cursed Coffin very heartily. Others doubted, knowing the two had been on very good terms. But O'Mara recounted to them an exaggerated story of the quarrel at the Norfolk the night of the hop; taking pains to make Coffin's side of the affair as black as well might be, and exciting his hearers to a high pitch of excitement and indignation. O'Mara had previously worked under Coffin, and got into some trouble, in which he had been pretty roughly treated; although more from a hasty spirit on Coffin's part than cruelty or malice. But the injury was not forgotten, and now O'Mara used all his skill to rouse these wild, impulsive, riot-loving sons of Erin to the highest pitch of animosity against an innocent and unsuspecting man. And he succeeded so well, by appealing to their liking for Clamp, their jealousy—as one set or clique—of the graders of another set, their love of excitement and adventure, and also of whisky by promise of a general "trate," that when they separated they had almost unanimously acceded to his proposition to go out that night and give Coffin the punishment he deserved.

Before making the matter public,

O'Mara had sent off a few of the roughest fellows whom he could trust to keep guard over Coffin's house, and let no one pass in who might inform the inmates of the danger impending. Coffin lived in the old homestead, a mile from the Junction, with his three sisters and his father—a bent, white-haired but active old farmer of near seventy. Bally Mike had formerly been in their service, and they had all liked the fellow's wild ways and his faithful attention to his duties. He, on his part, had taken a great fancy for Coffin, and had a very friendly feeling for the whole family. And when he heard the accusation against his old master, and the purpose of O'Mara to set these wild men on to wreak their savage fury upon him, he knew that Coffin was incapable of such infamy, and was sorely perplexed how he might aid him in his deadly peril and the innocent household that would be involved. He shuddered when he thought of the women that had shown him kindness when he was a stranger in a strange land, and oh, so green! He knew the men who were keeping guard were desperate fellows, and there was no hope of getting through. He came to the conclusion very soon that there was but one way in which he could hope to save them, and he proceeded to act on that conclusion.

He lodged with an Irish family close by Ranlock, and after eating a hasty supper went down into the village to see what was going on. A number of the navvies had already collected there, and more were fast coming in. They took to the whisky of course, and went from one saloon or bar-room to another, working up very speedily to the fighting point. O'Mara was everywhere, treating freely and watching his time. He waited till he saw that they had taken enough, and then gave the word "March!" It was passed quietly from one to another and spread very speedily through the whole body. In a few minutes they had all left the village and were marching in a disorderly crowd, with O'Mara at their head, hooting, yelling, cursing, fighting now and then; but always rush-

ing on again over the lonely country road that led to Coffin's house, four miles away.

By this time Mike was making his way through the darkness back to the point on the Branch where they had quit work that night. Arrived there, he sat down and waited impatiently for Ryder and the Spitfire. The time dragged very slowly in his hot impatience, but before long he heard the far-off vibration that grew steadily till he could plainly hear the engine's quick clatter. Then the bell clanged clearly at some highway, the long whistle sounded shrill and wild over the sleeping woods and hills, and a minute after the flats, piled with iron, came backing down, slowing as they came, and stopped opposite Mike. He hailed Ryder, who was astonished to see the strange fellow there at such a time.

"I'm goin' up t' th' Joonction wid ye, Misther Ryder, if ye've no objections."

And so he got up on the engine as the boy Pat, who acted as stoker, loosed the coupling. Ryder started the locomotive and they went slowly at first, and then swiftly through the cuts and over the embankments of the new road. As they rushed along, Mike told Ryder how the household at the Coffin homestead were so sorely beset, and asked his aid in a plan to get them efficient help.

He proposed that Ryder should run the Spitfire to Farmley, a large town where a police force was kept up, and have a'squad of men detailed to come down to the Junction.

"It's but fourtane mile, they say, an' shure the Spitfire can make six-an'-twenty mile in an hour. It can't be tin yit, an' they ain't half-way from Ranlock. Think o' the women, Misther Ryder, an' ye can't refuse!"

But Ryder did refuse. He had a grudge against Coffin of long standing. But he tried to persuade himself and Mike that he had other sufficient reasons. It was worth his place, he said, to drive the Spitfire to Farmley without orders. He had women depending on him for support, and had no right to deprive them of it. They might not get the police if they went; and they might be too late

if they did get them. While they talked, the uncanny Irishman urging the course of mercy and self-forgetfulness, the sober, intelligent driver retiring behind defences of plausible prudence and selfishness, they neared the Junction and went slowly through it and beyond, Pat leaping down and changing the switch to run the locomotive into the engine-house.

Just at that moment a girl stepped out of a house opposite and stood on the piazza, waiting. It was Fanny Ryder, who had been waiting here at a friend's to go home with her father. A quiet-faced girl of eighteen, perhaps; not beautiful truly, but not ill-favored, in any sense, and with the nameless charm and grace of thoughtful, kindly character. Standing there, warmly muffled against the keen winter night, her face turned toward the Spitfire, and the broad light of the windows full upon it, you can see the bright glow of health and cheeriness in her brown cheeks, that tells of long tramps over stubble-fields and hilly country roads. A bright, true-hearted girl, who takes a womanly interest in little children—in gores, tucks; ribbons, feathers, tatting, braiding, flouncing, crocheting and all the innumerable mysteries of needlework; but likes a good book, too, and would rather go plainly clad and have time to read and walk, than weary herself, day after day, and week after week, with ceaseless sewing and embroidering, and pay, for the occasional doubtful pleasure of being seen in her finery and comparing with her neighbors, the costly price of health, of true profit and enjoyment—a girl who can talk without giggling, and laugh too, on occasion, very merrily.

Meanwhile the locomotive has started slowly back toward the engine-house, and Mike is eagerly making a last appeal to Ryder, who stands silent and gloomy, with his hand on the lever, and the locomotive running slowly and steadily back on the switch. All this while that mad, brutal mob of a hundred raging men is pushing on steadily over the desolate country roads, yelling, hustling, fighting, cursing, hurrying on!

As the engine comes running down the track, the girl sees her father standing silent and inexorable with his hand on the lever. She sees and recognizes Bally Mike also, who is known all about that vicinity; and presently she hears his eager words, and can distinguish a phrase occasionally. A name catches her ear that makes her start and flush: she steps forward now and listens intently. She and Charles Coffin have long been fast friends, and a month ago she promised him that when her father's stern opposition should relent, or when she could see her way clearer than now, she would be his wife. So now, when she hears this wild fellow talking so eagerly, and her father listening sullenly and evidently opposing—when she sees this, and then hears Coffin's name more than once eagerly repeated—it is no wonder she starts and flushes and listens intently. Running across, she stands in the deep shadow of the ticket-office, and before the engine stops before the closed doors, her quick woman's wit has gathered enough to know that Coffin is in danger of some terrible evil, which might be averted if her father would run the engine to Farmley, and that her father refused to take the responsibility.

"Pat," says Ryder, roughly, "go over to the tavern an' git the key from Rankin; an' be quick about it too, d'yuh hear?"

A minute after, remembering some message he had for Rankin, the station-master, he stepped down and followed Pat. Mike leaned against the building in despair. He could think of no other plan of carrying sufficient help to the family so sorely beset. As the door of the tavern banged behind Ryder, Fanny stepped up to Mike with a pale, firm face. She knew Mike of old—knew that the Coffins had found him trustworthy in every way. He had even carried notes and messages for the lovers when Ryder had forbidden any communication between them. Mike gave a surprised start when he saw her.

"Hillo!" he exclaimed. "Shure if it ain't Miss Fanny!"

But she stopped him sharply.

"Hush!" she said. "They will hear. I know why you're here. I can drive the Spitfire as well as father. Will you go with me to Farmley? Quick! There's no time to lose."

"Bliss yer heart, Miss Fanny!" he answers, fervently, "I will."

He helps her up without another word, and follows himself. Fanny takes the starting-lever in her skillful hands and moves it quickly. The throttle opens in the dome; like light the steam rushes through passages and valves into the cylinder; the piston moves; the wheels revolve. The eccentrics communicate their wonderful motion to the steam-chest valves, and the piston goes back and forth, whirling the drivers round and round. The waste steam puffs out through the blast-tubes—chook, chook, chook, chook. Ryder hears the sound and comes rushing out, raging and shouting vainly.

Fanny stands quite still, her face clear white and her teeth firmly set, her hand on the lever and her eyes steadily forward on the track, where the great white light goes rushing on into the darkness far ahead. The Spitfire is at her speed now, and goes thundering on like a demon gone mad, his great eye glaring straight before, and the great smoke-dragon pursuing silently, trailing out far on the night. There is something terrible in the ponderous, flying rush of a locomotive, and very many people would get down from their first engine-ride with a feeling of relief and a very pleasant sensation of being well out of it. But Fanny has had experience of the wild flight before, having been about engines from a child and taken by her father now and then. And as for Mike, the fierce rush harmonized with his wild nature and his hot impatience, and he only longed for a swifter flight.

The familiar Beeline hills and fields are all behind now, and they rush through hills and woods all strange. On they roar, with a great clatter and ponderous rush, through fertile fields and barren plains, over trestles and high embankments, through deep cuts and roaring culverts.

Fanny held the lever, and drove on till the first station swung into view and went sweeping behind. All the while she had not spoken nor looked round once. She spoke now, as they rushed on, without turning:

"Tell me all about it, Mike."

Then he told her the story in few, respectful words; and her cheek turned a whiter hue and her lips set more firmly as she heard.

"Put in coal!" was all she said.

And she showed him how to make the fire burn more fiercely. She said no more, but drove the engine to its utmost speed.

Through Holcombe they rush like a breath: half the way is passed and the speed is terrible!

"What time would they arrive?" she asks, suddenly.

"They left Ranlock," Mike answers, "I sh'd think, about half-after nine. What toime d'ye make it now, Miss Fanny?"

She did not turn her head, but drew her watch from her belt and said: "Ten o'clock."

"Thin Hivin hilp thim!" says Mike. "The mad devils may be on thim in half an hour."

On they go, hurling through the night with a fearful velocity. The Spitfire never made such speed before. The gauge goes up and up, and the engine's fiery pulse throbs terribly hot and hard. And now Fennerty Station leaps suddenly into view, comes swimming down the path of light ahead, and runs away back into the gloom. It is only four miles to Farmley now, and they are making four miles every five minutes! No word is spoken now, but they go thundering on through the darkness with an awful clatter and roar. Still Fanny stands and drives the engine on, firm and white of face, mouth firmly set, eyes steadily ahead and turning now and then to this or that. Now and then she tries the gauge-cocks, to make sure that the water-level is above the fire-tubes in the boiler; or puts her deft and ready hand to the lever that governs the pump attachment. The head-light glows and

flies, the smoke trails out behind on the rushing wind, and the speed is terrible!

Fences trail dimly by; trees, rocks, telegraph poles, cross-roads, houses here and there, go whirling past. The houses thicken, the suburbs of the town appear; the whistle screams, the bell clangs steadily, the speed slackens, and slowly the engine rolls on through the paved streets and stops at the station opposite the tank. Coming those last four miles, Fanny had given Mike a few plain instructions, and she now left him in charge of the engine, and, leaping down, addressed an astonished policeman, who had come up and was staring in open-mouthed amazement.

"Wot in thunder!" he ejaculated. "Where yuh frum? An' wot the dooce yuh doin' heah this time night?"

"We're from Beeline Junction," answered Fanny, "and we want help from the police. Show me the way to the nearest station-house, and I'll tell you as we go."

Roundsman Trumbull was a soft-hearted fellow, though rough on the surface, and was not ill-pleased to have the care of the bright, fair-spoken girl. So he sat off briskly to show the way, and she told him the errand on which she came as they went along. He watched her askance with increasing wonder as she told her simple story clearly and modestly. When she had finished, he suddenly stopped, pulled off his cap, scratched his head with a doubtful air, and then said, coaxingly:

"I say, young ooman, jest take that 'ere club, will yuh? an' poke me a good un' with it till I jes' see if I'm wake or dream'."

She saw that the man was in earnest, and so, although half smiling at the grotesque situation there in the lonely street, she took the club from his hand and punched him sharply in the side. It was a comical scene enough; and yet, often and often in every-day life, tragedy shrieks and curses in one house, while comedy and farce dance madly and laugh their wild laugh next door.

"Oh!" he ejaculated and shrank away a little. "Wal, I am awake, an' that's a

fac! So yuh drove the loco y'rself, did yuh? My gizzard! I never hearn such a yarn. But we must git help fur them poor critters. Come on! come on! An' three women in the house too, eh? I never hearn—cuss the brutes! Come on! come on!"

Round the corner now, up the steps of this ugly old building and in at the door. There, at a desk, sat Captain Thorn, in the uniform of a captain of police—a little man, wiry and rather fierce-looking, writing in a big book. Trumbull saluted the captain respectfully, wisely leaving Fanny to plead her own cause, and only introducing her as a young person who had desired to be brought to the captain.

"Well, young woman, what's the row now?" the captain asked, rather sharply. And Fanny, nothing-daunted, told her tale simply and clearly, with such earnestness of appeal, and such a rush of red blood to her cheek when she mentioned Coffin's name, that Captain Thorn heard her with increasing wonder and admiration; and by the time she came to the end of her brief narrative, so thoroughly was he imbued with the girl's own fervent spirit, that he leaped up from his desk, swore roundly at the mad navvies, gave a few sharp orders to Trumbull, and in a very short space had a squad of trained and resolute men marching rapidly toward the station, himself escorting Fanny at their head.

Tramp, tramp, along the lonely streets—tramp, tramp, tramp. Now they turn a corner with a swing, and there is the hissing Spitfire a block away. But she must have water and oil before she can start on her fiery homeward run. Trumbull has often watched the drivers taking water from the tank, and now, with a hasty word of instruction from Fanny and a little help, he fills the tender-tank, while she, with her own hands, takes the can and pours the oil into the heated bearings. The switch is luckily open toward the engine-house as the locomotive of the 7.15 Eastern train had used and left it. So Fanny mounted, let on the steam and ran the Spitfire forward upon the turn-table. Captain Thorn

ordered the men into the pit; they leaped down, and with a strong heave sent the engine swinging round.

Fanny ran the Spitfire forward a little now, clear of the table; the men climb up on the tender, and with Fanny driving as before, the captain standing by watching her, and Mike acting as stoker, they roll away through the paved streets of the town. The moon had come up unnoticed a while ago. It is at the full, and sheds its white glimmer over the still night scene that had been dark: the suburbs swim slowly back in mingled masses of light and shade. The quarter of shanties, vacant lots, goats and dogs is behind now. The speed increases momentarily. You can feel the great heave of the fiery-hearted monster hurling you on. The speed increases still—faster, faster. The gauge goes up, up, up.

The captain (brave man as he is, who will go into any garret or cellar in the great town at any time of night or day) blanches just a little at the awful flight; and the men, in the open tender outside, would remonstrate if they could, but the hurricane their fierce rush makes hurtles the words from their lips and whistles through their hair like a wild sea-storm. They can only cling for their lives, and feel the engine's terrible power hurling them on like a thunderbolt of heaven. The captain has his eye upon the gauge, and sees it rise, rise terribly high, but somehow, when he looks at Fanny, he cannot interfere, for her perfect confidence, her quiet, unceasing watchfulness, inspire him with confidence too, and he trusts her thoroughly, though he trembles just a little. And she too, is watching the gauge, and sees that it can safely go no higher now. So she governs the pressure by a movement, and the speed is regular now, but the pace is terrible; and on they go, roaring, devouring space and time, fifty miles an hour, on their mad race to help and to save!

Fennerty suddenly looms up away ahead, comes flying on dreamily in the moonlight, sweeps past and is gone. On they go, rushing, roaring. The captain takes out his watch, opens it and says:

"Half-past ten!"

He sees a shiver pass through the girl from head to foot: her white face pales a shade, but she speaks no word; only drives on, firm and watchful as ever. The gauge rises a little higher and the Spitfire rushes on a little faster than before. Mike mutters to himself, as he freshens the fire and makes it burn like the fiery furnace:

"Divil sit 'um foightin' boy the way, till niver a mother's son o' 'um's widout a broken hid!"

On they rush; through fields and orchards, gaunt, naked woods and barren plains; over high embankments and trestle-bridges, through roaring culverts and down deep cuts,—on, on, on! Holcombe comes swimming on now far ahead, passes with a quick sweep and rushes away behind. Swiftly the telegraph poles fly by like bars of a whirling cage. The white head-light glows far ahead—the long smoke-snake trails far behind. And the Spitfire still whirls on, with a terrible clatter and roar, like an avenging Nemesis. Here and there a rough cottage by the track, or weather-worn farm-house on cross-country road, shows a solitary light where some weary one lies in pain; and a wondering face gazes out blankly from a lifted sash at the little company flying so wildly through the lonely night. But though they fly never so madly, they cannot reach their destination much before eleven; and Heaven grant that that wild Irish blood be delayed on its murderous march!

But on they go with the same terrible pace—no break, no halt! It is a rocky country between Holcombe and Preston, and hilly. They roar along now, one minute the rocks twenty feet sheer above them on the right—the next, an embankment of fifty feet down on the left. But the awful flight slows not—still on, on, on, with the same wild, hurling speed. And there is Preston now: it passes by like a flash. Only four miles now! And every man holds his breath, impatient even of that fearful flight.

Fences and trees whirl past like mad; corn-fields with their lines of last year's stumps, a belt of woods, the trees like gaunt skeletons in the weird light, snow-

banks under the fences, spared by the thaw. Fanny begins to recognize the hills and woods and houses scattered here and there. The Junction is only a mile away; the whistle sounds long and loud over the hills, the bell clangs out, the speed slackens, and a minute after the engine runs up to the platform and stops.

Ryder stands there waiting, black with wrath.

"Is that your father, Miss Ryder?" asks the captain.

"It is," she says. "But for Heaven's sake don't mind me!"

"Trust me," he answers. "If they can hold out till my boys get over, we'll give the villains all they want and more. But I *must* have a word with your father first."

And leaping down, he takes Ryder by the button, leads him a little aside, and speaks to him in a low tone. Reuben Ryder possessed, in common with very many more, an instinctive awe of constituted authority; and whether the captain appealed to this instinct by threats or to his pride by praising Fanny, certain it is that Ryder never uttered one word of reproach to his daughter for her behavior that night. The police, with Thorn at their head and Mike showing the way, filed in at a farm-gate and went away at the double-quick across the fields. Ryder put up his engine, raked out the fire and made all right; and then Fanny, with a very anxious heart, accompanied her father home, neither speaking a word.

That same evening the little family at the Coffin homestead were all gathered in the "south room," quietly employed in reading or sewing, and occasionally laying aside their books or papers to discuss some topic of local interest. The house was an old-fashioned frame building, two stories high and very strongly built. The "south room," where the family always sat, was a very pleasant one on the south-east corner of the ground floor. The house did not face directly south, but a little west, so that on bright days this room had the sunshine in it from the earliest gleam



above the eastern hills till the mellow rays were sinking in the west.

The evening wore away quietly but pleasantly. The father, weary of his work about the barns, went off early to bed; and a little after ten the girls—three pleasant-looking young women, the youngest about eighteen and the oldest eight-and-twenty—put away their books and work and followed their father's example. Their brother, interested in the book he was reading, stirred the fire, drew the light nearer and settled himself for a pleasant hour.

He had sat thus perhaps half an hour when he was startled by a sound he had heard faintly several times before. It was a wild shout, far off and rising out of a confused and continuous murmur. He had heard the same sound dimly before, but given little heed and gone on with his reading. He got up now, went to the window and looked out. The road past the house fell away to the west, and then curved round to the south through the open pasture-lands, so that he could see the line of the highway winding away white in the moonlight. Half a mile away he saw in the winding road a dark moving mass coming slowly nearer, nearer. He threw up the sash and listened. The murmur came clearer now through the frosty air. He could distinguish the tramp of many feet on the frozen ground, the mingling of a hundred rough voices, with a wild shout or a wilder laugh rising now and then above it all.

The leaders of that mad throng had vainly endeavored to enforce order and silence as they approached the end of their tramp. The fire they had kindled had blazed up fiercely and got beyond all control, and roared on, now subject only to its own wild will. Coffin easily saw that a crowd of excited men was pressing up the road; but what could be their object or destination of course he had no means of conjecturing. But he thought of the helpless ones under his care, and knew it could do no harm to be on the safe side; so he went about and saw that the doors and windows were all made fast. The doors were of heavy oak and fastened by a strong bar across

the middle, and each window was provided with heavy outside shutters. He carefully closed all on the ground floor, and then went up to his own room and looked out. They were close at hand now, coming along the level beyond the foot of the hill. He looked at his watch, wondering: it wanted fifteen minutes of eleven. But his wonder did not last long. Up the hill came the mad swarm with a rush, yelling, cursing, laughing wildly. The men who had been on guard, hidden behind fences or out-buildings, received their comrades with a wild shout, which was answered by a mad yell from a hundred hoarse voices, that sounded far on the lonely night like the terrible roar of savage beasts. The father and sisters, waked by the fearful sound, rose and looked out, to see that mad mob rushing up the hill to their very door. Charles hastily closed the shutters on the second floor, and by that time a number of the foremost had reached the house and waited for the rest, calling to them to come on. As he watched them cautiously from a south window, he recognized several of those already arrived, and among them O'Mara. It was plain enough now that this house was their destination, and by the frequent use of Coffin's name it was evident that they had no friendly intentions toward him. But, determined to know their object, and unable to understand their motives for this strange proceeding, he threw open the window, and, boldly showing himself, demanded to know what they wanted and why they disturbed honest people at that time of night. But at sight of him there rose one angry shout that drowned his voice, and a shower of stones hailed round his head like rain. He closed the shutter and turned away. There was blood on his face: he had been struck and slightly wounded by a stone.

"Father," he said, "these devils are drunk and half mad. They have been set upon us, and will show as much mercy as so many tigers. We must fight them to the death."

He ran down quickly, and came back a minute after with two double-barreled

fowling-pieces. He loaded them both with heavy bullets, and his father watched from the window. Properly disciplined and armed, the navvies might have easily broken into the house; but wild with drink and excitement, they could not be got to act in concert, but rushed about trying doors and windows and effecting very little. They had been pretty well provided with spike-hammers and crow-bars at the start, but had lost most of them on the way in their wild hustling and larking.

Charles and his father watched them sharply, and whenever half a dozen would gather at a door or window and begin pounding upon it, a shutter would open a little over head, a gun bang sharply, and one of the rioters would cry out and be carried off by his fellows, with a bullet in his arm or leg. This same procedure was repeated several times, and O'Mara saw plainly that nothing could be done in that way. So he got together a few of the less excited fellows and talked to them earnestly. Coffin saw the group and fired at them, but missed, and the whistling bullet only excited the men to fiercer eagerness.

"Come on, O'Mara!" they shouted. "We're wid ye."

They hunted out a long and heavy rail, and forming on each side of it, so as to use it as a battering-ram, marched to within a few rods of the hall-door, and then, with a quick run, brought the log against the heavy door with such force as made the whole house tremble. But the stout old door stood firm, the heavy rail rebounding from it like a ball. Coffin and his father watched them sharply, and the two guns rang out above the tumult. Still the clearest heads of the navvies saw that this was their surest plan, and they gathered most of the men about it. So when the beam came back, though one fellow limped away and another was carried into the barn, a dozen more seized the pole, and it went up again with a rush—a wild shout and a heavier stroke than before.

It was a wild scene—the mad mob rushing this way and that, yelling and cursing each other, the battering party

going up regularly now with a wild shout, the guns banging steadily at regular intervals, the fierce cries of the wounded, the resounding strokes on the stout old door, all mingled in a horrible din and confusion. And still the tumult roared on. The rush and stroke of the beam were kept up steadily, though the guns banged steadily too, and seldom missed their mark. The great door became sensibly weaker, and it was soon evident that it could not stand against many more such blows.

"At her agin, b'ys!" shouts O'Mara. "At her wid a will! We'll have the door down in five minutes. At her loike mad!"

And forward again they go with a shout and a terrible crash. A minute after there is another crash, and the door gapes wide at the top.

"Once more!" shouts O'Mara. "One more 'll do it. At her agin wid your moight!"

And with a wilder shout and a fiercer rush, up again they go with a swing. The heavy stroke crashes right through the panel; the splinters crackle and fly. The upper hinge flies out, and the door yawns widely at the top, but still hangs and holds. But one good stroke will certainly finish the breach. Back they go again and prepare for another rush. But just as they start for the final charge, Bally Mike leaps into the road, the police following in close order, and comes on with a shout: "Bally-dugan an' the sky over us! Fire away, me darlints, fire away!"

He swings a great club over his head, and, with the police at his heels, follows straight in the wake of the party charging at the door. The beam goes up with a great rush, strikes with a loud crash, and the door goes down before it. With a yell of triumph they drop the beam and leap forward to rush into the house. But just at that moment Mike comes among them with a great bound, goes right through the doorway beyond them, turns and beats them back with his might. And before they know what has happened the police leap in upon them with their clubs and lay about

them thick and thin. The wild, undisciplined crowd melts away before them and gathers again at a safe distance. Captain Thorn leaves a few men to guard the door with their clubs and pistols, and with the rest charges the rioters wherever they are thickest; and though the navvies are reckless fellows and make a bold stand, they are no match for the discipline and trained skill of the police, who know that their strength consists in mutual support, and keep well together, while the rioters fight in-

discriminately, and are easily scattered when the clubs come thumping about their heads. In fifteen minutes the besiegers are entirely routed, and the police have time to take breath and congratulate the beleaguered family on their rescue from great and imminent peril.

And but for Fanny Ryder's ready resolution and brave achievement, who knows what wild work might have been done in that old farm-house that lonely winter night?

*By Gustav zu Putlitz*

#### THE FORGET-ME-NOT: A CHRISTMAS STORY.\*

ON a moss-covered stone, by the bank of a fresh meadow brook, sat two tiny sprites looking down into the waters that shimmered and glanced and rippled at their feet. The one was a comical-looking little man, broad-shouldered and rather short-necked, and of a stooping form that ill-natured people might have called humpbacked. His little thin legs, which he drew up cautiously—for he feared the water that wantonly danced up toward him—gave him a very singular appearance. His dress was brown, and by no means elegant. Upon his head he wore a brown leathern hood or cap slouched oddly over his pale, homely, but thoroughly good-natured countenance. The other figure was that of a lovely, slender female Elf. Her hair fell in curls on her shoulders and arms: her sweet but somewhat mischievous face was reflected on the shining water in which played her naked feet, throwing up from time to time a few drops into the face of her companion, when he chanced to look another way.

\* Translated from the German of GUSTAV ZU PUTLITZ.

She wore a dress of flower petals, and had set an Auricula blossom on her clustering curls by way of hat.

"Ah, Brownie," said the willful little beauty, "art thou still afraid of water?"

"Oh, I have shoes on," he replied. This was not strictly a falsehood, but it was not the reason of his avoidance of the water. "But," continued he, in order to turn the conversation, "do not call me Brownie. That comprehensive, wide-spreading family name sounds so formal. Call me Käppchen, or Little-hood, as people do when they love me."

"Very well," said the Elf, for such indeed was his companion; "and thou must call me Lilli. So now we are friends." And friends they were, however dissimilar they might be. Perhaps this very difference bound them the more closely together. At first, theirs had been but a bathing-place acquaintance; ripening into a bathing-place friendship, but this, at last, had become a real and sincere affection, that had lasted long, although they never saw each other but during the bathing season, and never wrote letters in the intervals of separation. But per-

haps this was the very reason that they thought the more frequently of each other. This evening they met at a spring which had been their rendezvous for several years past—Käppchen to carry on a rigorous course of bathing at the springs, in order to refresh himself after all the dusty work in which he had passed the previous year; Lilli for pleasure, for the sake of the society gathered at the spring, to greet the flowers, which she found here to be peculiarly beautiful, though Käppchen assured her that the same species and genera were to be found in a thousand other places.

Käppchen had made a toilsome journey thither on foot. Lilli had driven four-in-hand through the air, with her team of butterflies, dragonflies or grasshoppers; which of these, at precisely this season, was considered the most elegant. I cannot say. They arrived almost at the same moment. Each morning Käppchen bathed, and drank his prescribed dew-drop, which he gathered from the petals of a famous healing plant. Lilli made visits, gossiped, chatted and studied the new and fantastic modes of making garments out of flower petals.

In the evening the friends met and told each other of the small events of day, their experience in the past, their dreams for the future. And now let us listen to them.

"Thou lookest pale, Käppchen!" said the Elf after a pause, and her roguish countenance assumed, for the moment, a sympathetic expression. "Without doubt thou hast been overworking thyself in those close, dusty chambers."

"I have certainly had much to do," said the little man. "Here and there, among the books and proof-sheets and the confounded political pamphlets that really threaten to overwhelm us, appear, occasionally, some fresh poetical pictures, some fine, thick, learned folios. I, thou must understand, am one of the printers' genii, and this year I had much to do. A chest of types which had long lain unused suddenly came to light; much dust was raised thereby; this settled on my chest, and rendered the baths very necessary to me this year."

Lilli laughed aloud. "I know not whether to pity thee or not. Why shouldst thou trouble thyself with books, or pamphlets, or letters, or mankind at all?"

"Thou dost not understand all this, my fair young friend. Every one must work in the place designed for him by nature. The wasp must build her cells, the ant must raise her hills; and wert thou to destroy their work, they would recommence it from the beginning. I must toil and work as they, and it is my happiness to do so. Dost thou never work, thyself, in any way?"

"No! I dance in the moonbeams; I chat with the flowers; I watch the glow-worms; I live and enjoy."

"Thou art like a butterfly. It is thy nature. Enjoyment is the business of thy life. Dost thou not know that among mankind, with whom I have much intercourse, I find very different natures also? Some are hard-working people like myself—people who are always busy. There are others, again, who live for enjoyment, as thou dost; these feed upon nature; they learn and listen to her alone. These are the poetical dispositions. Their work is idleness, and idleness is the business of life with them. They are laughed at as dreamers, because they live in a world which they create for themselves, and into which others cannot enter. To some of them it is given, through sweet sound, or color, or words, to show to their fellow-men something of this ideal world. Such men are called poets or artists, but neither they nor their works are really any greater or purer for this acknowledgment. Thy disposition is also thus to enter into the poetry of nature, and to rehearse again, in thy own heart and being, the great poem of creation. Be contented with thy lot, but, at the same time, do not look with contempt upon mine."

Did the Elf understand all this? At any rate she felt flattered by his words. "It may be," she said; "I suppose it is natural to thee to work; but, poor fellow! it must be a hard and wearisome life that thou leadest!"

"Not in the least," said Käppchen,



and drew himself up a little proudly. "Thou canst not believe how satisfactory my work is. There lie the black letters arranged in their cells according to their various kinds; it is my duty to watch over them, and prevent them from jumping in the wrong places. At night, when I am seated on the chest, I hear sometimes a low murmur that shows that there is some disorder somewhere; some unfortunate letter complains softly that it has got among strangers. Sometimes it is a little *a* that is being laughed at and ridiculed by the great *A's*. Sometimes it is a vowel who is exposed to the taunts of the consonants, among whom it has wandered, or vice versa. For each of the letters considers himself better and more distinguished than the rest, and as there are always several of a kind together, they foster this conceit by continual applause. All this I set in order; and when the type-setter comes in a morning, he has no suspicion as to the person who has been at work during the night. The compositor picks out the type, one here and one there, and pushes the letters together; and to watch him, you would suppose he was making the most cruel confusion; but he does all this directed by the thought of other men; and when the letters stand fairly printed on paper, they tell much that is wise and beautiful, and cause the truest pleasure. I read over the proof-sheets as a recreation."

"A delightful recreation!" said Lilli, mockingly. Käppchen grew more serious; he cleared his throat, as if he had made up his mind about something, and said, "We are friends, Lilli, and this gives me the right to be straightforward towards thee. Thou art clever, and thou hast mother-wit—"

"I grant it," broke in Lilli.

"Do not interrupt me; but thou lackest cultivation; thou despisest literature and the sciences, because thou art so ignorant about them; and this is a great pity."

"Brownie," cried Lilli, turning away as if offended, "thou art becoming ungallant."

"Forgive me," said the little man,

rubbing his hands together nervously. "Thou knowest very well that I mean no harm, thou art so spirituelle. I only mourn when I consider how much thou mightest accomplish if thou wouldst but read a little. And in winter thou hast so much leisure."

"In winter!" cried Lilli, still somewhat nettled. "Winter is precisely the time when I have least leisure. Then I visit my beloved flowers in the bosom of the earth, where they lie in their little hard, brown seed-beds. I seat myself beside them and tell them stories of spring breezes and the joy of sunshine, that they may be all the more ready to awake and spread themselves in new beauty and sweetness. And then I listen to the souls of the faded flowers that float about them, teaching them how to bud, and bloom, and glow."

"The souls of flowers!" cried the skeptical Brownie.

"Is it possible that you have not heard of them? Oh, you book-worms!" cried Lilli. "How, without souls, should the flowers know what they must do when they find themselves, for the first time, in the world?"

"No! Thou must really tell me about that," said Käppchen, who was beginning to show more confidence. "In early times, it is true, a good deal was written about the souls of the departed, but of late years one hears little on the subject. But pray tell me what thou knowest."

"When the flowers die," continued Lilli, "their souls rise, in the form of perfume, from the fading cup or bell, for the scent of a flower is the soul, as thought is the soul of man. For a long time they hover over the dead body, and then float away. You can perceive them if you observe carefully; for sometimes floating through the air you may feel the perfume of flowers or herbs that you know nothing of, or that grow at a great distance. The dead petals fall off, the seed is formed, reaches maturity, and falls to the earth. The flower-spirits watch all this, and, like faithful nurses, gather round the cradle of their future sister. And all that they have experienced during their own fleeting life on

earth, all that they have learned in their intercourse with nature or mankind, they weave into loveliest cradle-songs, and sing and breathe into the heart of the slumbering germ. Thus grows and springs the coming life in the bosom of the silent earth. Thus does the flower presage of her coming life upon earth, whether she will be beloved or despised by men, what meaning they will see in her form and color; and according to this meaning she grows."

"Thou art talking poetry," observed Käppchen.

"Wilt thou have proof of this?" asked Lilli, leaning back and gathering a Forget-me-not from the flowery thicket that shaded her seat. "Look at this flower. Thou knowest the meaning that men give to it; it is the Forget-me-not."

"*Myosotis pratensis*, or mouse-ear," said Käppchen.

"What do I care for thy learned terms?" exclaimed Lilli. "We, and fond human hearts, alike give it the name, Forget-me-not. For is it not the flower of friendship and constancy? She knows this well enough, as she springs up on her slender green stem, though she is still inexperienced, and her feelings change as she grows. The bud at first glows rosy red, the color and badge of love; but again she bethinks herself of what the spirit-flowers sang to her in her cradle, and spreads her petals of blue round the deep yellow heart, a pledge of fidelity, a tender greeting for the hour of parting. Could she do all this if she knew not the meaning of her name?" Käppchen, who had studied the entire botanical literature of the world, could find, in spite of all his learning, nothing with which to meet this question.

"And thou reproachest me for not reading!" continued Lilli. "Dost thou suppose there are no books but such as are printed from thy black type? Poor Käppchen, to whom a dingy printer's garret seems greater than the world! Are there not thousands upon thousands of hieroglyphics in the universe, but which you have not the skill to decipher? I, however, understand something of this

art. Look at this Forget-me-not. See the soft velvet of its petals, and, as I hold it against the light, the delicate veins as they cross and recross each other, part and again unite! Dost thou indeed believe that these are but the result of chance, when the flower itself springs up so perfect, so complete? Dost thou think nature pursues her work less cleverly than the hand of thy type-setter, who fumbles among the letters which thou keepest in order? Every atom has intelligence, every fibre its law, every breath its corresponding thought. Every leaf bears upon it a meaning written in clearest characters. I can read this, and wert thou a poet, instead of a printer, thou mightest also."

The Brownie wavered between curiosity and a suspicion that the Fay was befooling him. He could not exactly beg her to commence her reading, because in so doing he would appear to admit that she had convinced him of her theory; at the same time he would have been only too glad to know what was written on the leaf. He fancied it was probably a new mode of classification, a sort of catalogue that each flower carried about with it. His eye twinkled slyly, as if he had a very good answer if he only chose to produce it.

"But I suppose there is much the same written on each leaf?"

"By no means," said Lilli. "The inexhaustible forces of the universe do not repeat themselves; and because thou hast so much learning and cultivation," continued she, not without a shade of irony, "I will explain to thee the reason. I have already told thee how the spirit-flowers tell their own histories to the seeds. Now, as the plants grow up, one of these histories is written upon each leaflet, and for those who can read it that flower is a book of many pages. These I study in my leisure, and thou reproachest me with not seeking to improve my mind by reading! How should I otherwise have known anything about mankind, with whom I have no intercourse, if the flowers had not instructed me about them?"

"Ah, read me aloud what is written on the Forget-me-not," cried Käppchen.

"It will be but a simple story," said Lilli; "for what can a Forget-me-not have to relate by way of experience?"

"Oh, just read on the five leaves of the one thou holdest in thy hand! Pray, pray, my beautiful, my accomplished friend."

Lilli gazed long and silently into the flower, and Käppchen began already to hope that she would not be able to decipher anything.

"I do not begin at the beginning, as thou dost in thy books," said Lilli; "in this you are obliged to find the thread, and then gradually you unravel the whole story."

"Somewhat in the way in which the fortune-tellers read the lines of destiny on the human hand," said he.

"Somewhat so," she replied; "but my art is much more reliable than theirs. Now listen. Upon this first leaf is the history of the genius of a Forget-me-not." She relates thus:

#### IN THE MEADOW.

In the meadow in which I bloomed, two beautiful children were running at play—a girl with floating, yellow curls, and a brown-haired boy a few years older. They were chasing butterflies, at least the little girl was; the boy's eyes followed her much more eagerly than they did the gorgeous-colored prey. They were children of near neighbors.

"Oh, dear," cried the little girl, "it is quite damp here, and here is a deep ditch! Oh, there it flies, the beautiful peacock-eye, and I cannot get over!" And there she stood dolefully at the edge of the water-course, as if some vision of happiness had suddenly vanished from her gaze before she had tasted its sweetness. Who could tell whether she would ever be able to reach it?

"Go no farther," said the boy; "I will carry thee over the stream."

"No, no, thou wilt let me fall," she cried. But at that moment the peacock-eye again fluttered close on the brink of the water-course, so that she could al-

most reach it with her net. The boy turned away as if offended, but the fair-haired girl, still gazing after the butterfly, beckoned him to return. "Quick, quick!" she cried. "There he is again." The boy took her in his arms and stepped into the stream, and there he stood still, holding his precious and beautiful burden.

"What wilt thou give me for this service?"

"Nothing! But be quick, be quick! for I am too heavy for thee."

"Nothing? Very well, then I shall remain here!"

"Rude, bad boy! Thou art sinking deeper and deeper. What wouldst thou have?"

"A kiss."

"Foolish fellow," she said, looking down and turning away her head. "Oh the lovely Forget-me-nots!" she cried, forgetting the danger, and the unreasonable demands of her captor. "Thou must get some of them," and she sprang lightly from his arms to the opposite side of the water. The boy still stood in the middle of the stream.

"The Forget-me-nots?" asked he.

"Yes, yes, yes, the Forget-me-nots!"

He stooped to gather them, and she clapped her hands in triumph.

"What wilt thou do with the flowers?"

"I shall arrange them in a saucer of water; then they will all spring upwards and bloom around a stone that I shall place in the middle."

In a little while they both sat down on the bank of the stream. The little girl sorted over the flowers he had brought her, and collected into her apron enough for a nosegay.

The boy watched very contentedly, and had already forgotten that she had denied him the kiss. "Give me a flower as keepsake!" he begged.

"No, indeed! Why didst thou try to force me to kiss thee?"

She caught up the corners of her apron and ran off towards her home. The boy frowned, and shook his fist threateningly at her as she ran, and then he went on his own way, as if nothing were the matter.

Our fate was just what the girl had said it would be. In a few days the little rattlecap had forgotten her butterfly chase in the meadow, the kiss, and the Forget-me-not which she had denied to her companion. We, however, had sprung up, unfolded new buds, and stretched our heads over the stone that parted us, and chatted together, and asked each about the boy whom we had not seen for so long. Suddenly he appeared; he had come on an errand from his mother to the mother of his little play-fellow, and, as he delivered his message, his eye fell on the bundle of Forget-me-nots. The color rose to his cheek, and as the lady turned away for a moment, he drew near, broke the stem on which I grew, and placed it in his button-hole. "What art thou doing?" said the lady.

"Nothing," he said, blushing more deeply and holding his cap over the stolen flower in his breast. Soon afterward I withered between the leaves of his Latin grammar. There I lay until the winter came and the snow lay on the ground. One day the boys played at snow-balling in the play-ground; their books were thrown hastily on the wood-stack, as they bounded off to their play. I slipped from between the pages where I had lain, and was carried in with the wood and burnt in the school-room stove, just at the moment when the same boy received a reprimand for turning over the leaves of his grammar, and refusing to say what he was looking for. I never understood why he stole me from the saucer or why he blushed in doing so.

"That is the story of the first petal," said Lilli, plucking it off, and letting it fall into the stream, that bore it swiftly away. Four more leaves yet remained.

The Brownie, who had sat all this time in somewhat painful impatience, did not exactly know what to say to this narrative; he tried to find the point of the story, and to criticise the whole in a way least likely to wound his friend.

"Very pretty," he said, "but thou must really read some of my books; they are more satisfactory. In them you would be told what was the upshot of all this,

and how the children, after experiencing a host of marvelous adventures, were finally united and became a happy pair. I have been waiting for this all along."

"I know as little about that as does my Forget-me-not," said the Elf. "This is not a book; it is merely a page of one, and the flower-sprite who related the history could only tell what it had been her fate to see and hear. Shall I read more?"

"It will be all the same throughout, I fear," said Käppchen, "for this is just what would naturally happen to a Forget-me-not."

"Let us see." She held the second leaf up to the light, studied it for a few moments, and then read on, uninterruptedly, as follows:

#### AMONG THE STUDENTS.

I lived on the bank of a very pleasant river. And although from the plot of meadow-land where I and my sisters grew we could scarce catch a glimpse of its waters, yet the grass was kept green by the spray that rose from its rushing waves, and our roots were nourished by the secret rills that crept through rocks and beds of sand to our bed. Although from my tender size I could not reach it with my eyes, I could still hear the murmur of the river, and could gaze on the other side up to the great mountain wall that bounded the valley, and watch the light of my first sunset bathing in its glory the ruins of three ancient castles that hung on its crest. The sun has just set, and I awaited the quiet beauty of evening, when, all at once, a confused sound of voices, the tramping of horses' hoofs, and now and then the plash of moving oars upon the river broke the stillness. I put forth all my strength, and turned my gaze to the shore. My curiosity grew stronger, and I thrust my head forward among my sisters and looked to see what was going on.

A long train of young men, some on horseback and some in carriages, swept joyously along. First came three riders, in high dragoon boots, knee-breeches, and swords at their sides; gay-colored sashes crossed their breasts, and gayly-

colored caps sat lightly on their waving hair. Carriages followed, some with six horses, some with four, some with two, the horsemen dispersed between. Suddenly the command to halt was given. The young men alighted, and the carriages and horses were dismissed, and returned with noise and confusion toward the town. A boat, garlanded with wreaths and oak boughs, and bearing on its pennon the colors worn by the students on their caps and sashes, lay moored at the river's edge. Most of the company embarked, while the rest wandered gayly along the river's brink. The boat pushed off, and the music of a students' song broke on the stillness of the evening, swelled by the host of youthful voices:

"On the shady banks of Neckar  
Stand the castles old and hoar,"

the oars moving in measure with the song. I turned my gaze involuntarily toward the mountain, that, in the glow of the sunset light, seemed to look down solemnly on the joyous band, as if conscious of the homage paid it in their song. Suddenly I was startled out of my reverie. The students who wandered along the river side had each of them gathered a nosegay or a green sprig to adorn his cap. One among them, whose hat was still without a spray, stooped, and seizing a large bunch of us, stuck them in his cap. I was delighted at the thought that I should see and help to adorn the *commers* festival of the students. When they left the boat once more, the students strolled off in larger or smaller companies up the mountain paths or along the river side, as accident or the fancy of the moment dictated. I nodded over the brow of my wearer as he climbed the heights leading to the castle, towards which I had cast such wondering glances from below. Through tangled masses of ivy and bramble we pressed upward to the highest battlements of the ruined fastness. The wide, wide world lay before us, and scornfully I looked down—with shame I confess it—on the humble place of my birth. The other students who had followed us went on their way. My

friend began to clamber up to the top-most edge of the ruined tower. I grew dizzy. A yellow House-leek, that I brushed in passing, whispered, "What art thou doing up here, Valley-flower?" I looked at her, smiling proudly, but before I could answer her we had reached the top. The student seated himself on the ruined wall, and, throwing his arm round the trunk of a tree which had wound its roots among the damp stones, gazed down upon the fair earth below. He was heated with climbing, and took off his cap, laying it on a large stone at his side. The first astonishment over, I fell into vague and melancholy thought; and was in such a poetic frame of mind that I felt tempted to write a poem, which should describe the scene in the midst of which I found myself. The student seemed to have shared my thoughts. He drew out his pocket-book, and pushing aside his cap, laid it on the stone beside him and began to write. I wanted very much to see what he wrote, for I felt convinced that he had stolen the poem I was going to write, and about which I prided myself already. But I and the cap were both pushed aside. The sunlight shone on the paper, and the young man turned himself to escape it, but in vain. He thought a moment, and then seized his cap and shaded his paper with it, and I read all he wrote. But it was not the poem I should have written. No tear here for the Past? No hope for the Future? Satisfied to the full, asking nothing beyond the joy of the Present? Oh, certainly he who wrote this was a student! A student! There was the answer.

"What art thou about up there?" shouted voices from below.

"Nothing," said the student; and closing his note-book with a blush, he snatched up his cap and swung himself lightly over the battlements, scattering a shower of earth and loosened stones as he descended.

And then they all hastened down to the little inn, in one large room of which all the merry company was assembled. A long table was already spread, and at

either end lay two naked swords crossed. At one end of the room was the orchestra, and at the other were set bright-colored transparencies bearing the arms of the *corps* to which the students belonged. Garlands decorated both the hall and table. Coats were thrown aside, the tricolored sashes slipped from the shoulders, the clash of the sword gave the summons for each one to take his place, and the supper began. All was jollity, overflowing merriment, the gaiety, the abandonment, the joy of youth! Glasses were filled, emptied, and again refilled. Suddenly the music broke into the melody of a song, the swords struck the table.

"*Silentium!*" shouted the President, and the talking was hushed, as every voice joined in the song—

"Every breast is filled with pleasure,  
Every beaker filled with wine;  
But 'tis Friendship's boundless measure—  
Friendship makes the joy divine."

It was the song of Friendship, and I, the flower of Friendship, was rocked on the waves of its melody, and looked round on the other flowers that decorated the walls, the tables, and the caps of the students, feeling as if this was a homage paid to me. And as the song ended and all rose—when the glasses clinked joyously together, and each man grasped the hand of his friend and looked into his eyes—I felt ready to melt into tears of pleasant sadness and sympathy. I am somewhat of a sentimental turn, I believe. Thus it continued till late into the night; but though the jollity grew loud and the mirth high, many a frank and earnest word was spoken. My student threw his arm over the shoulder of his friend, and both walked out upon the balcony. Over our heads was the starlit sky in its eternal silence; at our feet was the rushing river, with its mountain wall, black in the darkness of the night, and behind us the ringing of glasses, the confusion of excited voices. My student clasped the hand of his friend. I understood him. I had read his poem.

Again the sound of the clashing sword and the mandate of *Silentium*.

The voices were hushed, coats were resumed, and each man took his place. The most solemn silence followed the late riot.

"Our King and Country!" and out burst that most wonderful old melody. The first verse was sung somewhat more slowly than the previous songs. The corps captains, mounted on their chairs, two at either end of the table, clashed their swords together in time to the air—

"As it clashes how it flashes,  
This good sword of temper rare;  
I pierce thy cap—thy oath prepare!"

And as the oath was taken the hand was laid upon the crossed swords that had pierced the cap, and they sang again—

"True to this jovial Brotherhood  
To live, to die—I swear."

Then the swords were passed on and the verse repeated. One cap after another was strung upon the blade till all heads were uncovered, and the swords met in the middle of the long table. It went hardly with us poor flowers during this ceremony, and as the cap which I graced was rudely pressed by a neighbor's, I felt the stem on which I grew snap and loosen from the other blossoms. The melody suddenly changed, and I could see, as I leaned forward, that the captains exchanged the swords as they sang—

"Now take thy cap; I set it on thy brow,  
And over thee I wave this good blade now;  
Three cheers for this our brother! Hip, hurrah!"

And at this they handed the caps in order across the table, laying the naked blade upon the head of each in turn, as if in consecration of his vow. All heads were now covered. The captains resumed each his own cap from the hands of his fellow, and the swords clashed once more. *Exest commercium, initium fidelitatis!* and the noisy and joyous clamor, so long restrained by the solemn initiatory hymn, broke forth once more. And we poor flowers! How was it with us in the mean time?

When the stranger cap that had been pressed upon us so rudely was snatched away, we Forget-me-nots were torn from

each other, and fell scattered upon the table, and he who had gathered us heeded it not. One of my sister flowers fell upon the rim of his glass, and hung there till, as he raised it to his mouth, she kissed him on the lips, and then, slipping down under the table, died at his feet. I envied her fate. But crushed, scattered as we lay, we did not remain entirely unnoticed. The student sitting next to my friend looked down upon me, and then, as if surprised by a sudden memory, he caught me up.

"A Forget-me-not," he murmured. "A Forget-me-not—just like to the one she once denied me! She has grown tall and beautiful since then! Would she refuse to give it to me now? Thus," he said, laying me between the pages of his *comers* book, "I place this as if she had given it to me!" and he laid me on the page where were these words.

"Him love ever follows and leads by the hand,  
And gives him a home in the stranger's land."

And upon these words I breathed my last. When the student, after long years have gone by, again opens his book of songs, what will be the vision that the poor, dried Forget-me-not will recall to his mind? Will it be the face of his first love in his old home, or the joyous *comers* night at Neckarsteinach.

Käppchen had listened very quietly to all this; whether from interest in the story, in a spirit of resignation, or simply out of gallantry, it is hard to say.

"How singular," observed he, "are human festivities, especially among students!"

"Our Forget-me-not seems to have been mightily taken with it all," answered Lilli. "The spectacle moved her to tears."

"What would not a Forget-me-not cry over?" said he.

"But the whole thing appeared to her imposing, and not without its earnest meaning."

"Poor thing!" replied Käppchen. "And it was, after all, the most pure absurdity. The crowd of carriages, the drinking, and, beyond all, the boring of their caps!"

"It may be so," said Lilli. "It is not

my business to defend my stories," and she let the second leaf fall into the stream. Perhaps in order to cover the pause in the talk, Käppchen leaned forward as if to regain it, but the stream had already carried it away.

"What a pity!" said he. "I should like to have copied that student's poem."

"What for?" asked Lilli; "there are a thousand poems, and more beautiful than that, on other petals."

"I could have made use of it to fill up a blank space in my proof-sheets," said Käppchen. "It would have done well enough for that; for as to the real worth it matters very little. We have our poems handsomely and tastefully bound, gilt-edged and gilt-lettered; for books have quite taken the place of all other trifles that people use as ornaments: the outside is pretty, and you can amuse yourself in turning over the leaves, though you may not care to know anything of the contents of the book."

"Strange creatures, these human beings!" said Lilli, mockingly. "And this is what thou callest a taste for literature!"

The sun had by this time set; twilight lay over the land; the mist rose from the marshy hollow that stretched out beyond the nook where our elfin pair sat. The heavy veil of vapor spread itself farther and farther, moved by the evening breezes. Käppchen pulled his cap closer over his eyes, and Lilli gathered some heads of the white Cottonweed that grew in the meadow, and spread it on the ground beneath her. After which she prepared to read from the third leaf of her flower.

"Thou wilt ruin thy eyes," said Käppchen, and sought to take the flower from her hand. Lilli laughed, and starting up, she called over the meadows in clear tones,

"Wake up, ye Fire-flies, trim your lights and shine!"

And over all the meadow the dewy grass began to sparkle with lights. The twinkling sparks rose into the gray mist slowly at first, and then more rapidly, brighter and brighter, till they glanced and gleamed in an endless entanglement.

"Come hither," commanded the Elf again, "and those who can remain still,

and shine steadily, may listen to what I am about to read."

At this the Fire-flies settled themselves upon the moss that covered the stone, or hung among the flowers that overshadowed it, so that the two friends sat in the full light. The stream also gave back a thousand reflected stars as the flowers swayed or the waters rippled. Käppchen exclaimed with delight,

"What a blaze of light! It is just like a ball-room!"

"And into a ball room I am about to lead thee," said Lilli, who had now found the thread of the history of the third leaf; and she read:

#### IN THE BALL-ROOM.

Not in the free, fresh air, but in a large hall with glass walls did I first see the light; and delightful as it was there, I always missed the merry breezes and the freedom of the open sky. We were a large company of flowers, gathered from the four winds of heaven. Here rose the tall Palm, and the wonderful butterfly-like blossoms of the orchidaceous plants hung from the roof, and filled the air with perfume. The coquettish Camellia spread her blossoms against the shining background of her leaves; the Pomegranate burned in sullen grandeur. Who may repeat or give a name to all the plaints of the homesick flowers? It is true I had not been torn from my native climate, but they had deceived me in the course of the seasons, and cajoled me out of spring and summer. I was told this by the sunbeams, who visited us when the matting was withdrawn from the windows, and we looked out upon a world of dazzling ice and snow.

"Why should they take us?" I cried, complainingly to a company of Violets that grew near. "Why should we, who are of humble origin, be brought here among all these great and brilliant foreigners?" But there was no time to think upon the answer, for the gardener, who tended and watered us, came one day, clipped off a quantity of his sprays and blossoms, and carried us all off with him. Tasteful hands bound us into little nose-gays, and arrayed us in a crystal chal-

ice, and then, well protected and secured from the cold, we were sent forth. I felt almost frozen in the icy chill that penetrated our cover, and yet it filled me with yearning towards the free, fresh air. Thus absorbed in my own feelings, I paid little attention to the cold, tone of resignation with which the wintry winds sought to console a dark Camellia near me, or to the whimpering of the Orange-blossom, that shuddered painfully and sheltered itself beneath the leaves, and whom a more robust Erica tried in vain to comfort. All at once a change came; we breathed a warm and scented atmosphere, bright light flashed through the crystal vase in which we were set, the cover was removed, and, bewildered, I gazed upon the unimagined wonders of a ball-room. A stream of light fell from the great corona; lights blazed on the walls; a gay and gayly-dressed crowd thronged the room. The orchestra poured its music through the hall, and the dancers, inspired by its sounds, floated away under its magical influence. We must have come as the ball was drawing to a close. A Myrtle sprig which had fallen from a lady's bouquet, and had been carelessly thrown among us, described to me wonders of the past evening that really bewildered my senses. We had been placed in a quiet corner, where we were entirely out of notice, but from the embrasure of the window where we stood, half hidden by a swaying curtain, we could still view all that went on. At first I was bewildered and dazed by the glare of the lights that trembled in measure to the music of the dance, the splendor of the dresses, and the beauty of the forms that moved to and fro. But in a while I regained sufficient composure to observe what was passing, and the friendly Myrtle spray was always ready to give me information. What a strange scene! With what grave composure the dancers approached their fair partners! with what solemnity he bowed and she took the proffered hand. A few moments, and the same pair whirled past us with brightened eyes and quickening pulses; the slender form of the girl swayed within the arm that held it. But when they



once more reached the seat, again the same calm bow, the same formal acknowledgment. It was like a flame that started up for a moment, and then was suddenly extinguished. Then came a long pause. In the orchestra the instruments were tuned afresh, and below the dancers promenaded to and fro. Chairs were brought in, and each dancer led his lady to a place. The music burst forth, and the first pair opened the dance. The lady was of the most resplendent beauty, the belle of the night. She was of a tall and slender figure. Fair curls, among which drooped the crimson bells of the Fuchsia, clustered round her imperial head and fell on her shoulders. Her eyes, more brilliant than the diamonds on her fair bosom, flashed conscious and certain of conquest. Her beautiful jeweled arm lay lightly upon that of her partner. The Myrtle spray noticed at once the object of all my attention.

"That," said she, "is the daughter of the house, whose betrothal is celebrated to night. She dances now with her fiancé. I know this, because it was from her bouquet that I fell, and both the bouquet and the parure she wears were given her by him before the ball."

"How happy she must be!" I sighed. Near me sat a middle-aged lady with her daughters, who, apparently, had not found partners. She whispered to a gentleman who stood by her, "The mamma has caught him finely; no difficult matter, however, for he is not very bright!"

"And La Fiancée, who is an old school-fellow and intimate friend of mine," said the daughter, "told me in confidence, only a week ago, that she found him immensely tiresome. She is such a flirt, and—"

"It is certainly a brilliant party," said the gentleman.

Two young officers were led by the dance into my neighborhood.

"She is certainly very handsome," said one. "But she has no heart," answered the other. Just opposite to me, standing within a doorway, was a young man dressed in black. He did not dance and spoke little, but his dark

eyes rested unremittingly on the brilliant young creature, upon whom all the attention and remark of the evening turned. I felt a secret sympathy with him, I knew not why. Just as I was beginning to think that we poor flowers had been forgotten, the chalice in which we were set was carried away and put upon a little table in the middle of the room. The gentlemen came up, one by one; each chose a nosegay and presented it to a lady, and was repaid by a smile and the promise of a dance. The vase was nearly empty; the last among the dancers approached; the nosegay in which I was bound lay still unappropriated. I saw the young man whose eyes had so constantly followed the beautiful betrothed suddenly start and cross the room with hasty strides. "A Forget-me-not," he whispered, and seized the bouquet in which I lay. He approached her, and as he bowed before her his dark eyes were fixed inquiringly upon her face. She could not meet his glance. She dropped her eyes and looked down upon the flowers he had given her, and, almost as if to hide some sudden emotion, she said, "A Forget-me-not? Do you remember when we were children and gathered Forget-me-nots in the meadow?"

"And later—" he said; "but no retrospects to-night." She took his arm, and they danced together. A few minutes afterward I looked up. He had not again returned to his place. He had gone. The dance was ended. The guests had departed, the ball-room was deserted. The beautiful fiancée had thrown aside all her flowers, all but my nosegay; that was still pressed tightly in her hand. She left the ball-room, passed through the gayly-lighted hall, heedlessly treading beneath her feet the withering flowers that strewed the floor. Her step was firm, her eye clear, her head erect as ever. She took a silver lamp in her hand, and entered her chamber, where her maid awaited her coming. The wreath was unbound from her hair, the diamonds unclasped, the bracelet taken from her arms. She threw them on the table without vouchsafing them a glance. When she was undressed and had dis-

missed her maid, she stood thoughtfully in the middle of the room. She went towards her bed; she returned again to the table, where lay all her jewels. Was it that she might delight her eyes in looking again upon the costly gems in which she herself had shone that night? She took up the flowers. Her fingers trembled; she searched among the buds and leaves—I felt it—for me! She opened a little drawer of her dressing-case; as she did so a costly brooch that lay in the way rolled to the floor, but she heeded it not. She took her scissors from a case, cut the ribbon that bound us together, drew me from among the other flowers. My petals were already beginning to droop when she bent over me, and I felt a hot tear fall upon my face as I looked up. What a change had come over that cold, proud face! The head was bowed, the whole body shook, tears streamed from the beautiful eyes and rolled over the cheeks. Could she be happy? I asked myself. Was she heartless? She sank into a chair, and dropped her head upon her hands. How long she sat there I know not. The lights burned out, and the day broke behind the curtains. Was it fancy only, or did a dark shadow pass the window? She started, took from her dressing-case a little locket, and pressed the spring; a lock of dark hair fell from it. She laid me, whom she had held in her hand all this time, upon the curl. I felt her lips touch me, and I died in that kiss.

Lilli was silent. "Finished already?" said Käppchen. "Thy stories end just when one thinks they are about to begin." Without any answer, the Elf dropped the third leaf into the stream. Fortunately the stars were all out now, or they could not have read further, for the Fire-flies were all asleep.

"Lazy things," said Lilli, and shook the grass till the sleepy Fire-flies started and danced like sparks on every side. "What is the use of reading anything to you?" said the Elf. "Away with you!" and she drove them off. Poor little meadow-stars! what had they to do with

tales of a ball-room? Käppchen himself did not know what to say to it all.

"Dost thou know why it is that the Fire-flies shine?"

"That we elves may see o' nights when the moon does not shine, and the stars have hidden themselves behind the clouds," was the ready answer. Käppchen smiled slyly. He was going to say something about elfin egotism, which saw its own convenience as a primary object in the working of the universe, but he swallowed his remark, and decided to give a scientific explanation instead.

"I do not ask what is the *motive*, but what is the *cause*?" he began.

"I understand," said Lilli. Käppchen was amazed, and somewhat annoyed also, thus to be cut short in the commencement of his treatise on phosphorescent and electric light, for Lilli went on chattering without giving him a chance to interrupt her:

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE FIRE-FLIES.

The Lady-birds were going to have a wedding, and all the Beetle family were invited. Many of them had a long journey to make, and decided to go in company. They went by night, for that is the time when Beetles travel, just as in sunshine only the Butterflies venture abroad. The travelers had almost reached their journey's end, where they proposed to arrive by dawn, when their road was suddenly intercepted by a wide morass, over which the wild Jack-o'-Lantern was playing his mad pranks. The Beetles came to a dead halt, folded their wings, and took counsel how to proceed.

"We cannot cross," said the prudent Cockchafers. "These hopping fellows will run after us, and set fire to our wings."

"Then we shall have to fly round the morass," said the Stag-beetle. To this the smaller Beetles would not agree, for they were already tired, and dreaded the long way round.

"It is all very fine for Stag-beetle, with his great wings, to talk of going round," said one of them, "but it won't do for us: we should probably get lost on the new road, too."

"Suppose we take a Dragon-fly—they know all about the roads over the swamp—as guide?" proposed the Rosechafer. But the small Beetles would hear nothing about going round at all, and after a long debate, the great Beetles went on their way, leaving their little companions disconsolate behind, full of fears that they should entirely miss the gay wedding feast. Time was passing, and a malicious Jack-o'-Lantern danced scoffingly before the terrified crew, and almost drove them to despair.

At last the Fire-flies, who at that time were mere insignificant gray flies, said,

"We have courage—we will fly on before, and try whether the flames will destroy us. Wait you here, and watch the result of our enterprise."

And they went forward. The little gray fellows approached the mad, fiery Jack at first very cautiously. The first time that he sprang at them they fell back, and the spectators on the bank were all ready to triumph in their overthrow. But this only spurred them on to fresh acts of daring. They had already encircled the enemy, and as he endeavored to create confusion and terror among them by dashing through their ranks, they found, after the first dazzling flash was over, that they were in no way injured by the flame, and cheered lustily as they pressed forward to the attack. With obstinate valor they pursued him, till at last, surrounded, seized, hemmed in on every side, there was nothing left for him to do but to yield himself their prisoner, and suffer himself to be dragged by his victors in triumph to the bank. The other Beetles were now, of course, very willing to join in the triumph and share the booty with their friends, but the Fire-flies knew how to maintain the pre-eminence which they had fairly won. Jack-o'-Lantern was laid upon an old tree-trunk, and with a blade of sword-grass was cut in pieces, and each of the little heroes received his share of the flaming prize and hid it beneath his wing. And now they proceeded untroubled on their way across the marsh, for the other Will-o'-the-Wisps, terror-

struck by the fate of their brother, slunk shyly out of their way.

And then was it not a delightful satisfaction, when they arrived at the house of the bride, and had paid their compliments and congratulations, to see the big Beetles as they arrived, tired and exhausted after their long journey, scolding away in high ill-humor over the shameful conduct of the Dragon-fly, who had first spitefully led them wrong and then deserted them! When the big Beetles inquired of their smaller companions how they had got over the flaming morass, they only hummed and hawed under their moustaches and waved their feelers knowingly, for the Fire-flies had begged them to say nothing of their adventure. They were quite ready to do this, as by telling the story they would only have exposed their own cowardice; and besides, Beetles, like some others, are sometimes more willing to keep silence over the triumphs than the failures of their neighbors. The day went by, and the high ceremonial of the wedding evening commenced. All were busy over their toilettes, except the Fire-flies: they sat modestly apart in their gray dresses. A gold Beetle who had spent an unusually long time over his dressing, stalked proudly past them in his green and gold mantle, and said, scornfully, "Poor souls, you and your dusty jackets will cut but a sorry figure to-night. No dressing would do you any good, or I would offer you some of my superfluous gold dust, that you might find on yonder blade of grass, by the dew-drop that I used as a looking-glass."

"Thank you," said a pert, young Fire-fly; "but if we have no gold brocade, we have pure diamonds, which thou hast not."

With these words they unfurled their wings and let the bright light stream forth, and as they flitted to and fro there was no end to the astonishment and wonder of the wedding guests. The Fire-flies remained the heroes of the festival, and as it drew to a close the fair bride chose a band of them to attend her on her homeward way. This all happened long ago, but the Fire-flies still

retain their lights, and when these begin to fail they make an expedition after a Will-o'-the-Wisp and divide him as before.

"Absurd!" exclaimed Käppchen, whose patience was quite spent; "all this is downright absurdity!"

"No," cried Lilli, very earnestly; "it is all perfectly true, and just exactly as I have told thee; and if thou goest through the woods at night thou canst convince thyself about it. There stand here and there in the damp grass old tree-trunks that glimmer and shine in the darkness. Some have thought that treasure lies hidden in such places, but they will find their mistake if they seek it there. Upon those old trunks the Fire-flies divided their Jack-o'-Lantern, and the place shines for a long time afterwards; and neither rain nor dew can extinguish the light, for it has its birthplace in the wet earth, and does not fear water."

"There lies a chip of such a tree-bole, and I will lay it here, that it may light me while I read the story of the fourth Forget-me-not leaf. The stars also lend their light, and we shall do very well."

Before Käppchen could in any way object, Lilli had begun. Thus ran the history of the fourth petal.

#### ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

I was the scion of a large family. Many of my sisters, with whom I should have bloomed in company, had already reached maturity; many had spread their last blossoms; and the bare green stem, stripped of its fair crown of blue, stood up bald and graceless in the chilly air. My companions could tell of spring and summer. I knew only of cold, misty autumn days, of pale and shrouded sunshine that fell through the branches of the alders and willows enclosing the pool near which I grew. As far as my eye could reach over the damp and marshy ground I saw nothing but withered flowers, that the sighing wind bowed toward the earth. These, the last children of spring and summer who retained scent or color, seemed faint and weary of life, and to be longing for rest. I wept as I gazed and felt my own loneliness, though

I understood it not. The sun had set, the blazing ball had sunk down blood-red, blurred and vague in outline, through the heavy mist that hung over the meadow and crept up over the trees, which in vain shook their leafless branches, as if endeavoring to free themselves from its clammy touch. I awaited the desolate and lonely night, when I suddenly became aware of a menacing sound in the distance, as of the measured tread of many feet, the regular clank of steel, broken by the short word of command. Nearer and nearer came the muffled sound over the turf, plainer and plainer the flash of arms through the twilight. The close disciplined lines of a regiment of infantry moved like a solid wall toward the place where I grew, and I pressed myself behind a stone, round the end of which I had been peeping, to escape the heavy tread that threatened to crush me. "Halt!" shouted the captain, and the troop stood as if rooted to the ground. A few words that passed down the lines were borne away on the wind from me. A small detachment stepped out, turned, wheeled, and vanished quickly from my sight. The sound of their retreating steps was lost in the noise and bustle among those who remained. A portion of these retired to a short distance, where I could scarce make out the outlines of their forms against the gray background of approaching night; the rest stacked their muskets and laid aside their knapsacks and accoutrements. After the almost unbroken silence of the march followed an unrestrained tumult of voices and busy passing to and fro. Some of the men cleared a space not far from my corner, surrounding it with stones; others dispersed themselves in the alder thicket and picked fagots, while others unrolled their cloaks or rummaged in their haversacks. The officers formed a circle by themselves a little apart, and I could not discover whether they were issuing orders or whether they were holding counsel among themselves. Farther off still, a sergeant with his tablet stood noting down the whispered words of one of his corporals. Silence at last fell over us,

but it had not lasted long when it was broken by the clang of sabres and the tramp of approaching horses. A squadron of hussars rode up at full trot. They halted, dismounted, drove stakes into the ground to which they might tie their horses, and then each man busied himself with the needs of himself and his horse. I could not observe more, for the night was deepening fast, and the movements of those nearer to me engrossed my attention. The soldiers who had been gathering fagots from the neighboring alder copse now brought them and kindled a fire within the enclosure of stones they had made. Under the shelter of the bank the fire soon kindled. The damp brushwood sent up thick clouds of smoke and then burst into flame, and the crackling sparks flew up into the darkness. The night was damp and cold. The rain fell, and the wind whistled keen and strong as it drove the smoke of the bivouac fire. The men gathered round the blaze, and talk went on, interrupted now and then by a coarse jest, applauded by a chorus of loud laughter; the canteen passed from hand to hand; from time to time rose a verse of a soldier's song, followed by fresh outbursts of merriment. The trumpeter stood at a little distance and whistled an air. Some of the officers sat by the fire and joked and talked with the men, while others had strolled off to a little distance and sat on the upturned drumheads. It was a strange picture, full of life and color—the gay, motley uniforms of the men, the gleaming stacks of arms, the horses stolidly emptying their fodder-bags in the background, and all lit up by the flickering firelight or veiled in the smoke or the darkness of the night. Gradually it grew quieter about the fire. One by one each man had chosen himself a resting-place under the sheltering bole of a tree or against the hedge-bank, and, rolled in his mantle, had given himself to sleep. The rain had abated; the fire, now nearly deserted, burnt low. The footfall of the outposts, and farther off the voices of the patrol as they gave the password, alone broke the stillness of the night. Near to me sat a lieutenant

of infantry and the surgeon of the regiment of hussars in close and friendly talk. They had met over the fire a while before, and recognized and greeted each other as old and long-parted friends, and now they had withdrawn together and seated themselves close to the place where I grew. The lieutenant sat on the stone behind which I was hidden; the doctor lay on his soldier's blanket at his feet, and I could observe both faces from my corner. The young doctor seemed to look gayly and contentedly on all the world; but the face of the officer, brightened as it was at the moment with pleasure at meeting an old friend, bore traces of inward pain and disappointment. Old associations had recalled the time when they were both students together in Heidelberg. They talked over the happy hours of the past, joyous *commers* nights that they had taken part in; and many a name was recalled and question asked about the merry companions whom fate had scattered since that time. They spoke also of this their strange meeting under such unforeseen circumstances on the eve of battle. Their present grave profession of arms recalled their old sword-fights, and they laughingly went over the defeats and victories of their student-days. The surgeon asked his friend how he had come to take up the military service. At this question the expression of pain deepened on the countenance of the lieutenant; he avoided an answer, and both friends looked down in silence.

A confused noise of voices suddenly startled them. A stack of arms had fallen, and the crash of the fall and the flash of the steel in the fire-light had terrified a horse, who, in breaking loose, had severely injured the trooper who tried to check him. There was a cry for the doctor, who was thus hurried from his friend. The lieutenant remained alone and gazed still into the embers, lost in his own thoughts. I fancied I could read his heart. The pleasant memories of those youthful days, so powerfully conjured up by the presence of his old friend, had run on till they brought him to a later, bitter experience.

He started from his reverie, shook back his brown curling hair from his brow, as if he could in like manner scare away the haunting grief that pressed upon him. He tore open his coat, and drew out his watch as if to wind it up. As he did so, something glittering fell clinking on the stone, and then rolled off into the grass. His watch-chain had broken. He stooped, and by the glimmering light of his cigar searched among the grass and flowers. The lost ring had caught upon me as it fell, and clung so tightly that on drawing it off he broke my stem and took us both up together.

"A Forget-me-not," he cried, "that chance has thrown into my hands! Strange! Again and again a Forget-me-not! I will take it as an omen for the approaching engagement." He placed me in his button-hole, wrapped himself in his mantle, and sank on the ground to sleep. Thus I lay on the beating human heart, and felt how it heaved and throbbed. What lay hidden therein? I listened at the entrance of that secret chamber, and marked every movement of that beating heart as it rose and fell, swifter or slower, loud or peaceful, with the dreams of the sleeping man.

The morning dawned. A cold wind parted the white layers of vapor and showed the sun—the sun of a fatal day. The roll of the drums awakened the sleepers. The bugle called the hussars to horse. Soon all were clad and armed, and all ordered and disciplined as on the previous evening. "March!" sounded down the lines, and the troops moved forward over the meadow, and I with them, for I still clung to the breast of my wearer. Soon we came to a better road, and moved forward at a quick march till we reached some rising ground, where the command to halt again sounded. A wide plain lay before us. Separated from us by a wooded hollow, stretched a high embankment, flanked by a village, and which was farther on commanded by a wooded eminence. Both the village and the high land were in the possession of the enemy. At the farther side of the hollow they were already drawn out in lines of battle.

The troop with whom I went took the right wing. "Company A of the Third Regiment—forward!" cried the general. A company of sharpshooters were drawn out to the front, and the officer in whose button-hole I hung received the command. So we stood in silent expectation. The left wing had already engaged the enemy. From the opposite height thundered the enemy's cannon, and twice had an attacking force been driven back dismayed from an attempt to take them. At last our summons sounded. Forward moved the sharpshooters, and I at the head upon the breast of their officer. We crossed the hollow and pressed on with one aim to drive the enemy from his rampart. Steady and calm were the eyes of my lieutenant as he looked at his little company; firm was his tread, strong and clear rung out his voice in command. Did nothing betray the tumult within? I, and I alone, who felt those heart-throbs, could guess it. Was it the wild lust of battle? Was it the foreboding of a coming doom; a mortal pang in the triumph over the strong love of life? I knew not. Scarcely had we crossed the hollow when the enemy's fire opened upon us. Here and there a man fell from our ranks, but forward they still pressed, animated by the eye and the word of their leader. The attack commenced on the earth-works; they were gained, but our lines were thinning fast. Our leader rallied his men once more and pressed on. How his heart bounded! Not in the fear of death; nay, rather that he sought it. The attack was repulsed and again hazarded. Death called hoarsely to us from the gaping mouths of the cannon, and I trembled before them for myself and for him who wore me. A ball sped—struck—and carried me deep to the heart of my gallant bearer. He fell. One weary sigh escaped his breast. The faint heart fluttered and then was still, never to beat more in joy or sorrow. I died in his life's blood.

The fourth leaf followed its sister petals. It clung for a moment to a stone,



and then a dewdrop rolled from the moss and carried it to the stream.

Lilli pressed her fingers to her eyes, and when Käppchen good-naturedly inquired what ailed her, she declared it was the stars that shone too dimly, and added something about its being imprudent thus to try to read in the dark. As that was precisely what he had before told her, Käppchen reminded her of the fact, and tried to convince her that he had been right. But then she denied it all, and stoutly maintained, that though the stars might be to blame, her reading had not hurt her in the least; and in proof of the truth of her assertion, she made ready for the perusal of the fifth leaf of the Forget-me-not that she held in her hand. Käppchen saw at once that any arguments on the ground of prudence would be thrown away, and yielded to the humor of his friend, and listened to her story with as good a grace as he could assume.

But this time Lilli looked somewhat perplexed as she perused her leaflet, while, across the countenance of her friend flitted a slight expression of malicious pleasure at her discomfiture, as she began:

"Something must have got into my eye and blinded me for a moment, for with the fourth leaf I have torn away a part of the yellow heart of the flower, and with it some of the inmost fibres of this petal, and half of the story is gone."

"Ah, then, let us make an end of the reading," said Käppchen, and was about to get up.

"By no means," said Lilli, holding him back. "I always make it a rule to read my books to the end. And thou, who art so clever and hast so much learning, and hast had so much experience of the world, wilt be able to make out the drift and to guess the rest of the history. We seem to be just in the middle, and from here on to the end it is all clear; and thou must now listen." She read:

#### CONCLUSION.

The young girl stood in the window and held me in her hand. She pressed her hand to her brow, and drew it across

her eyes, and then gazed into the distance. I followed her eyes. Along the road through the valley, a horseman was riding fast. It was he.

"Lilli," cried Käppchen, impatiently, "What is the use of going on with this? Who is the girl? how did she come to have a Forget-me-not in her hand? who is *he*? We know nothing about all this."

But the willful little Lilli had taken it into her head that she would decipher her flower to the end.

"My dear," she said, "do not interrupt me. It is easy enough to comprehend. A young man has just given a Forget-me-not to a young girl. He rides away. She watches him from the window. That is all clear enough. The rest of the story will show if I am right or not."

When he was out of sight she turned from the window. She had held back her tears, lest they should for a moment have veiled him from her sight. And now she stood alone in the room, and a stream of tears flowed over her cheeks. She smiled in the midst of her weeping, and pressed me to her lips.

"Is it true, really true, that he loves me?"

She paced through the room with a light, quick step; the flood of a new and wonderful happiness carried her on its rushing tide. She stood before the mirror, and looked as if she would read her own soul in her face, that had grown dearer to her since she knew that he loved her. She almost started at the traces of tears on her cheeks.

"Tears!" she said. "Tears, and I never was so happy in all my life before!"

She smiled, and dashed them away, but the diamond drops still fell like showers in April. She walked to and fro till she became calmer; and the thoughts which had lately been swept aside by a great emotion returned to their natural channel, and the circumstances of her life rose before her. She stood suddenly still.

"My grandmother!" she cried, "my grandmother! I dare not confess this

to her! She will never, never listen to this!"

The blood seemed to have left her cheek, and the fountain of her tears to be suddenly sealed, so pale did she grow and so tearless was her eye. Her lips trembled and her heart beat aloud. A footstep became audible; she started, she moved hastily to her work-table, and catching up a piece of needlework, bent over it. I fell from her hands on to the table before her. The door opened, and a stately and venerable figure entered the room—a lady of firm step and majestic bearing. Her curved, handsome lips, her piercing eyes, shaded by gray hair, but undimmed by age, spoke of a resolute will and intrepid spirit. Her countenance was a book in which Life had written with a firm and hard pencil. I looked up timidly into those dark eyes that had so long since ceased to weep, as she looked down silently at her granddaughter, who felt her steady gaze, and, trembling, dared not raise her head. The features of the lady did not change, as with a searching glance she read the sweet, downcast face of the girl as the page of an open book.

"Thou hast been weeping," she said. "He is gone. Thou lovest him."

The poor child would never have dared to confess this sacred and new-born treasure of her young heart, but neither could she deny it, and her tears and silence were an eloquent confession. The grandmother went on in a gentler tone:

"This is, perhaps, the first struggle of thy life; but he who would live in this world, must learn to combat it and his own heart. Thou must learn to forget him."

The girl's heart rebelled. "Forget him!" she murmured. "Forget him! never, never!"

"Child," said her grandmother, "how much must we not learn to forget! Life is stern, and subdues us all."

The girl shook her head. The strength of a newly-risen hope defied the gray experience of life.

"Has he said anything to thee? What were his parting words?" asked the elder lady.

"Nothing," answered the young girl, "nothing; but I read it in his eyes, in the clasp of his hand as we parted, in the few trembling words of farewell, when he gave me this flower."

She dropped the work from her hand and took me up. Meekly proud in her new happiness, she held me up as if I were the visible sign of her love.

"A Forget-me-not," cried the old lady, "a Forget-me-not!"

She took a few hasty steps, and then sank into a chair. She sat long silent and absorbed in her own thoughts. Her features worked; something was deeply stirring the long-dead thoughts of the past. The girl had risen, and stood astonished and trembling before her grandmother; never had she seen her thus moved, and she waited fearfully for the sentence that should issue from those trembling lips.

"Go to my secretaire," she said at last, and the girl tremblingly obeyed. "Open the lowest drawer; not that—the one to the left. Under the letters. Dost thou see a small gold locket? That is it. Bring it hither, child." She obeyed. The grandmother took the locket into her pale, thin hands. She pressed the spring, the locket flew open, and within lay—dry and yellow with age—a Forget-me-not! "Thou lovest," she said. "Oh thou art happy!"

Tears fell slowly upon the faded flower in her hand. Never before had the girl seen her grandmother weep. It was as if the hard armor encircling the aged heart had melted, and the barrier between the two was broken down. The girl sank on her knees beside her, overcome by the discovery of a tie of sympathy that bound them together, and which she never dreamed of before.

"Thou hast loved, grandmother?" she cried; "thou too hast loved?"

Her grandmother drew her close to her heart, and kissed her brow.

"Thou shalt be his, my child. Thou shalt be happy."

The girl wound her arms closer and closer round the neck of her companion; and in this long and silent embrace I fell from her hand. At length the

grandmother rose, laid the dried Forget-me-not in the locket, that still remained in her hand, and replaced them in the drawer whence they had been taken. I was forgotten, and faded on the floor; for happy love needs no remembrancer.

The last leaf sank into the stream, and Lilli rose to go. The dawn already fringed the eastern horizon with its rosy hues. The grass and flowers were raising their heads, and shaking off the drops of dew.

"Thou must go and take thy morning draught," said the Elf. "And I, who

have spent all the night here gossiping with thee, must go and see what the other elves have been about all this time. Come, let us go."

Käppchen had also risen, and held out his hand to his friend to assist her down from the stone and across the meadow.

"Take care," he said, "and do not trample on the Forget-me-nots at thy feet."

Lilli laughed and vanished, without so much as bidding him farewell. Käppchen, gently bending aside the stems of the Forget-me-nots, as if in fear that he might injure them, went slowly on his way.

By L. Clark Davis

### A WRECK UPON THE SHORE.

THERE is a curious fascination for me in the houses that line our regular Quaker streets. When I pass them at night, coming home belated from my down-town office, I think the feeling is strongest on me. The awful mystery of night deepens and darkens their mystery: they retire into their own shadows, holding their secrets close. But either by night or by day they turn their implacable faces toward me, dumb and unanswering as the Sphinx. Yet I know that within each of them the play is always being played—that even sleep does not bring surcease to the actors; that withinside there the curtain never falls. They may turn never such vacant faces to my questioning gaze, yet I know

that the tragedy, comedy or farce is always going on. In one I see the "extra light, flaming, flickering over the night," and I know that the innocent Sultan has gone to the city Ispahan, and that Rose-in-Bloom has prepared the feast and sits with her lover in the favorite room; or it may be Bluebeard's chamber, out of which leans Fatima, waving her silken signal to the princes rapidly approaching, but sometimes the princes do not come in time, and poor Fatima has waved in vain; or I see Clytemnestra hidden behind the purple curtain, and I know that her fingers hold the fatal knife, though it is concealed from me; or I see young lovers dreaming their beautiful dream of home; or a

grand old Joe and Joan going serenely down life's hill together; or I see a wonderful feast, at which a noble company sit, and, looking in at the pictured walls and the gilded rows of books, and hearing the wit and merriment, the poetry and wisdom, I know that there life leads on to gracious ends, full of a noble culture and adornment.

There is a house on one of these monotonous streets, directly opposite a noble mansion that is shaded in summer and guarded from the winds of winter by elms so old and venerable as to seem the growths of centuries. Only two or three years ago that house was my house; and I think that, in all the long time I lived in it, I never looked out of my window in the early dawning without silently thanking the owner of the grand old dwelling opposite for the pleasure I had in the sight of his generous garden and flowers and trees. I had only to raise my window in the fresh summer morning to inhale the sweet odors of roses, hear the songs of the birds and see the dew glistening on the delicate green of the grass. I was right in the city's brick-and-marble heart, and yet my neighbor's bounty enabled me daily to shake hands with Nature.

I was looking out at those old trees one late autumn day, when I saw a woman, "divinely tall and most divinely fair," stoop to kiss my little children, and when she had done that she put into the hands of each a gold coin, which was a surprising thing to see any lady do in those days, for even then the green-backed monster had swallowed all our golden eagles or driven them from the land. What she did made me observe very attentively this tall and beautiful lady, and the longer I looked at her great black eyes and the snaky coils of her purple black hair, and her tawny, orient skin, the more I did not like her. I remembered, just then, having somewhere read that Lady Macbeth had hair which was golden as the hair of Berenice, that her eyes had the blue of the sea in them, and that she was slight and fair. Only that I recalled this, I might have fancied that I saw the

lady of Glamis caressing my little ones, so like she was to my own dark fancy of that terrible woman. I saw that her hand was ungloved, that it shone with rare gems, and that nature had made it white as milk, and not a blood-spot stained it; yet I asked, How did Clytemnestra look? Was she of this fashion, dark, tall and beautiful as a Levantine queen? It was only a moment that the lady stood caressing the children: when she was gone I forgot her entirely until night, with its shadows, drove them in-doors, and their stream of talk began to run. They had but one subject that evening, the beautiful lady; and another, her golden coins. I listened, amused at first, then grew interested.

"Had they seen her often before?"

"Oh yes! often."

"Where?"

"By the fountain, in the Park, at Fairmount. Always just by the fountain."

"Had she ever given them money before?"

"Oh yes! often and often."

"She must be a very rich lady, my dears?"

"Oh no; she's not very rich."

"Not rich, eh? But she is very fond of you?"

"Oh, yes; very fond, and she wants us to go live with her in a beautiful house."

"Indeed! Did she mention where her beautiful house was?"

"But it isn't *her* house: it is her friend's, and he is going to give it to her, and we are to go live there with her."

"Do you know her name?"

"Yes; she told us that. It is Mrs. Margaret Dale, and she lives with Mr. Wagner, just down the avenue."

Having no more questions to ask, I kissed them good night and they went off to their beds.

Directly I called their nurse.

"Do you sleep in the children's room?" I asked.

"No, sir."

"Sleep there to-night—and every night. Tell your mistress I desire it."

"Yes, sir."

She went out, turning at the door to

look back at me, her face an epitome of wonder. The beautiful lady puzzled me, and filled my mind with harassing suspicions, which were so slightly founded that I was ashamed to communicate them to even my wife. They lacked substance, and were as chimerical as the shadow of a dream. But they troubled me none the less.

The little ones were not my children absolutely, only mine in trust; yet I think my wife and I loved them dearly as if they had been of our own flesh and blood. I had had in my experience at the bar a number of trusts of various kinds imposed on me, but never another so agreeable as these little children were. We never had one of our own, and they came into our dull old house like sunshine and music: after a while they grew into our hearts, and were very precious to us, for the autumn-time of the year had fallen upon our lives, and somehow they made us young again, and brought us back to the full, free warmth and glow of the summer.

I do not think that I exaggerate when I say that their father was probably the greatest scoundrel I ever knew. These children he had treated with such diabolical inhumanity that I was not only enabled, on account of it, to rescue them from him, but I compelled him, to save himself from the exposure and contempt of a public trial, to execute a certain bond transferring to their use during all the term of their natural lives the sum of forty thousand dollars. This same bond made me their guardian and my house their home during their minority or my pleasure. I was quite certain that my pleasure would last during my lifetime.

It was a fact, suspected by a few people and well known to that man, that I was criminally careless of the custody of valuable papers—that they were generally thrust into the first drawer or box I touched after receiving them. He had seen me take that bond and toss it indifferently into my library desk when it was executed.

It was curious, but as I heard the merry voices of the children echoing

from the stairs, I thought of the bond lying carelessly in the desk, and at the same instant I thought of the beautiful lady. I cannot tell by what far-off suspicion or association they were brought together in my mind. The bond had lain there for two years unthought of, and the lady I had never seen before that day. Her name was vacant of meaning as falling water: it suggested nothing, recalled no one. Yet if I closed my eyes for an instant, as I sat there in the dim, fire-lighted room, I saw her rising up before me in her superb and dangerous beauty, saw her sinuous form, her snaky coils of hair, her deep black eyes, plainly as I had seen them only a while before; and I knew then by some mysterious teaching, well as I know to-day, after our struggle for that paper and my children is over, that she meant to rob me of them.

After a while I got up and went in to look at the bond. It was there quite safe, and lying where I had last seen it. But the next morning I carried it down to my office, and I believe I had never used the secret drawer of my safe until I closed its spring on that bond. I locked and double locked the iron doors, walked into the front room, came back again, took it from its hiding-place, placed it in a parchment envelope, sealed it with my great seal, and carried it into my next-door neighbor's, requesting that he would lock it up, and then stood by watching him as he did it.

"Will you remember," I asked, "that I will send no one for it—that you are to deliver it into no hands but mine?"

"Yes; I will remember," he said.

I went home early to my dinner that day, expecting to hear more of the beautiful lady from my children, but their golden dollars were spent, and they were silent about her. My dear, simple-hearted old wife, though, had seen her: the two ladies had met opposite my door. Mrs. Dale had stopped her to ask after the lovely children, and the gracious words of the inquirer had sent a thrill of pleasure throbbing through the pure breast of the dear wife, so that she felt as if she spoke to a friend in-

stead of a stranger; and straightway she told how they were her's only by adoption, that she had never had one of her own, that these little ones the Lord had given her to comfort and bless her old age, and that it gave her great happiness to hear their praises from a stranger's lips.

And I sat there over the walnuts and wine, rubbing my hands with intense satisfaction and a keen enjoyment of it all, just as I would have clapped them together at the theatre, seeing a favorite actor make a good hit; for I saw that the curtain had risen in my house, that the play had begun, and that my simple old darling had a part in it already, but knew nothing of it. I had my part, too, and the beautiful lady had her's. But a moment after I found less enjoyment in it, for I did not know then whether it might not be a real tragedy, instead of a comedy, on which the curtain had been raised in my quiet home; yet I knew that before it would fall again the beautiful woman and I would have a desperate struggle together for those little children, and I hoped I might win as I never had hoped for anything before.

I did not have to go back to my copy-books to know that patience was a virtue. I had learned that lesson a thousand times since leaving school, and I had learned something besides, which my copy-books had altogether ignored—that patience was its own reward, quite as much as all the cardinal virtues combined. So I bided my time after this, waiting for the stranger to give me my cue, knowing very well that sooner or later she would do it. But she was wary and patient too, and it was many days before she again appeared on the scene. When she did, it was to astonish the nurse by asking her if my wife did not require the services of a seamstress? Said the nurse, in her open-mouthed, Milesian wonder, "I thought you were a real lady: why should the likes of you want to be a seamstress?"

And the answer was, that she was not as rich as she seemed; yet it was not the money she so much wanted as a home among quiet gentlefolk, and to be

allowed to be near our children, whom she had grown to love as if they were her own; but her own were dead, and they would lie in her bosom no more. "And," said Annie, "as she spoke them words, the big drops coursed down her cheeks, and my heart was hurt for her."

I looked from the sympathetic Irish girl to the good wife, and I saw that "the big drops" were falling fast upon the bit of sewing in her hands.

"Tell her, Annie, that I have so little to do now that I could not keep a seamstress constantly engaged. It is a pity," she added, turning to me, "that we cannot offer her a home."

"But," I said, "you can. It is a little thing to do. Of course you will do it." And I meant that she should.

She was very happy in the opportunity, and the next time the lady paid a visit to my nurse she was asked to step into the library. My wife saw her there, offered her the situation, and very gently and delicately proffered the proper compensation, which was with equal delicacy declined.

"It is not money I want, but a home such as yours, where peace, religion and refinement abide; but, more than all, I wish to be near your lovely children. I am quite alone now—a widow, childless, craving a little love and sympathy," and there she quite broke down, while great sobs shook her breast, and she sank down at the good wife's feet, clasping her knees, but in the next moment her head was lying on the pure old bosom, just as a real daughter's might have lain, had we been blessed with one.

But it was all settled at last between them, and the next day the beautiful lady was to become seamstress in ordinary and friend in distress to my wife.

In the evening the old darling told me all about their interview, and was rather hurt, I think, that she found no tears in my eyes, and heard me cruelly repeating a verse of the old legend of the Spider and the Fly.

The next day the lovely woman walked into my parlor.

Then I stepped over to the corner of Fifth and Chestnut streets, where I saw

a stoutish gentleman in very pronounced pantaloons and waistcoat, and who wore diamonds and had a cable chain, to which was attached a watch large enough, possibly, to anchor a ship, but unfitted for that purpose only because of its offering no projecting prongs or flukes. I said to him, "There is a lovely woman stopping at my house, and to prevent her finding it dull there, will you be good enough to give her a little of your company?"

He said he would; and although he looked far over my head and over the Philadelphia Library building; and although he never looked at any one object with both eyes at once for a single instant in all his life; and though, without turning either eye toward it, his watch-chain seemed to absorb him utterly and absolutely, until it appeared simply impossible that he ever could attend to or give his society to anything else in all the world,—I knew that he meant to be particularly attentive to the beautiful lady; for this stoutish gentleman was, and is, a famous member of the Detective Corps, and no rogue ever yet saw those two eyes looking over his head, while their owner was deeply intent on the watch-chain, without knowing that he was very near the end of his tether, and that for him St. Bartholomew's Day had already dawned.

He came to my house that very evening, carrying a well-filled carpet sack and looking altogether like a respectable country gentleman. I introduced him to my wife and to the lovely woman as my friend; and we gave him our best room, the one with the lace curtains about the windows and the bed, and he seemed to enjoy it all very much; but he early horrified my wife by filling the house with the strongest fumigations from the vilest cigars. He was not a great talker, and was the very deafest person I ever saw, but he was complimentary to the ladies, tender and frolicsome with the children, and apart from the smoke was a favorite. I said he was not a great talker, yet there was one theme on which he was always loquacious, sometimes even eloquent, viz.:

that of his late wife. "No doubt he was very tenderly attached to her," said my wife, "but he is quite ready to be equally attached to dear Mrs. Dale."

Indeed, it did seem as if my wife had guessed rightly; and if Perker had not been so very deaf and such a desperate smoker, I think the beautiful widow would have been as tenderly attached to him. But it was simply impossible that she could ever have accepted him, in the event of a proposal, without informing the whole neighborhood of the fact. The children fell from the back of his chair, cracking their crowns and rattling the china and glass in the third story with the reverberations of their screams, yet he never heard them unless his trumpet was at his ear. It was the atmosphere of my home, I suppose, which affected his hearing, for when he took long walks and dropped into my office, as he sometimes did during the day, it was curious to remark that his deafness had quite left him.

When he had settled himself comfortably in one of my easy-chairs, we would discuss dear Mrs. Dale; but that lady had devoted herself so exclusively to her duties of seamstress that after a while she almost fell out of our talk. I grew a little impatient, and, what was worse, began to think I had made a mistake.

"No, you have not," Perker said. "You wait: that lovely woman is resting, filling her lungs, before she takes the plunge. It is good to be quiet and innocent, if only for an hour, and she is enjoying that luxury for the first time in a long while, I fancy."

I was tying up some papers the following afternoon, getting ready to go home, when Perker entered the office, grim, imperturbable, with his hands deep in his pockets, his eyes wandering wider than ever from any single object. His manner told me he had something to say, even before he made the very extraordinary request that I would put him into the box.

"Into what?" I asked.

"The witness-box. The lovely woman has made that plunge. Put me

into the box. It is a curious thing to say, but I am so used to being put into the box by this fellow and that who want my evidence, that I never can tell the simplest story without being put there."

As he concluded, he took a chair on the opposite side of the table to where I sat.

"Do you feel as if you were in the box now?"

"Yes."

"Am I to examine and cross-examine my witness?"

"Exactly," he said; and it seemed to afford him the most intense satisfaction to be considered "in the box." I altogether yielded to his humor, and asked:

"What did Mrs. Dale do to-day?"

"She had the children in and their nurse out: she told them about her beautiful home."

"What did she say it was like?"

"There were woods and fields, and a river with a boat on it; there were stables filled with horses and ponies; there were no schools, no cross teachers, but plenty of little children, who did nothing all day long but ride the ponies, sail in the painted boat, gather flowers in the fields and play in the woods. In short, everybody did just as they pleased; and wouldn't they like to go there? But they must not tell any one she asked them that, and if they did she would be sure to find it out, in which case it would be very bad for them."

"What did she do then?"

"She put on her hat and went out."

"And you put on *your* hat and went out?"

"Exactly."

"Where did she go?"

"She went up one street and down another for half an hour, and then into the drug store just below your house."

"What did she do there?"

"She bought a pound of chloroform."

"With a view to deepen our sleep on occasion?"

"Doubtless."

"What then?"

"She bought a postage stamp and posted a letter: at least, she left it to be posted."

"Do I know the person to whom that letter was addressed?"

"You do. It was addressed to J. Clarendon Cook, Washington, D. C."

"Did you see the contents of it?"

"Well, *y-e-e-s*, I did."

"What did Mrs. Dale write to J. Clarendon Cook?"

"That she had effected an entrance into your house; that she had not yet had an opportunity to search for the bond; that the children are looking well; that she is making progress with them; and that you are a good-natured old simpleton."

"Complimentary; but the play is not played yet. What else does she say?"

"She wants more money sent to her."

"Perker," I said, "I am afraid I shall not wait to see the play out—that I shall most likely strangle that lovely woman long before the third act. When will it be time?"

And he answered me, as Morgiana answered the thieves, "Not yet."

An hour or two later that respectable country gentleman sat in my library by the side of the beautiful lady, to whom he was more than usually tender and devoted, though his eyes looked far over and beyond her, and his deafness became a matter of serious alarm and trouble to my wife, who, after a while, quite gave up the idea of making herself heard by any one, much less by him, for in her previous efforts to entertain him with the gossip of the day she first grew hoarse, and finally lost her voice altogether.

Dear Mrs. Dale was complaisant, brilliant, yet evidently a little nervous. Occasionally she threw a word into the depths of Perker's trumpet, which brought back an echo from him in the shape of a clumsy compliment or a feeble witticism. I think that on this particular evening Perker was even more generous than usual in his expressions of regret for the late Mrs. Perker, and, similarly, rather more tender toward the lovely woman.

It was about nine o'clock, I believe, when a servant came to the door with a letter for Mrs. Dale. She asked per-



mission to read it. She read it, and if I had not known at that moment that she had expected it, her look of annoyance might have seemed genuine.

"Your letter seems hardly a pleasant one, Mrs. Dale?"

"It is annoying," she replied, "for it compels me to deprive myself of the pleasure of your society, and it may detain me away from my duties here until a late hour in the morning. A sick friend asks me to sit up with her. If I might be permitted, I would like to go."

"Without a doubt," I said, "you will be permitted."

She smiled good-night to each of us, and directly afterward went off with the bearer of the note. But the door had scarcely closed upon her when Perker, greatly to my wife's relief, also went out.

Both Mrs. Dale and Perker appeared at breakfast; the lady in great spirits, faultless in toilette, never so brilliant or triumphantly charming, showing, too, an inclination to be kind to Perker, who, only a little more deaf than usual, and apparently determined to concentrate both eyes upon the coffee-urn, was heavily polite to my wife and tenderly devoted in his manner to dear Mrs. Dale.

While for a moment she turned to utter some pleasant morning fancy to my wife, who was very fond of that charming woman, I had an opportunity to look closely at her, to see her crowned with her dusky, orient beauty, endowed with all the graces and blandishments of a most gracious womanhood—intellectual, learned, possessed of a dazzling wit, fitted by Nature for noble aims; and yet I saw that in her Nature had somewhere blundered, for I knew that morning, just as I know it now, that it was part of her plan, should occasion make it necessary, to sweep my life aside in her determination to succeed. I only had so much faith in her and so much hope for her as to believe that she wished it might not be necessary.

Perker was early at the office that morning, and before I had my coat fairly off requested to be put into the box.

"You followed the lady last night, Perker?"

"I did."

"Where did she go?"

"She went to Loudon's Hotel."

"Who was with her?"

"A gentleman joined her on the steps, the servant then left them, and they went into the hotel together."

"What name did the gentleman register?"

"J. Clarendon Cook."

"Is it almost time, Perker?"

"Not yet," he said; and that gentleman went home to the bosom of his family to comfort Mrs. Perker, and I have no doubt he told her all about the little play that was being played at my house, and of the capital part he had in it; but I doubt if he told her of his devotion to the beautiful lady.

He was sitting in the library when I returned home, and had one of the children on either knee, who, as he changed his trumpet from ear to ear, alternately yelled dreadful noises into it. He seemed to enjoy it even more keenly than the children, or than even Mrs. Dale, who sat at the window laughing and playing with my ivory paper-knife, which, from having a grotesque gorgon's head carved on its handle, the little folk had christened Blunderbore, the stealer of children. Her smile of welcome was warm and bright as the sunshine when I sat down near her.

"Is it not very tiresome in those dull old courts down there?" she asked.

"A little," I said, "but home is pleasanter afterward."

"It has been a lonely day for me. Your dear wife went out early and has only just now returned. Mr. Perker has been sleeping in his room since he came in, and the children have been out all the morning for their exercise. But I finished my sewing early, and I have amused myself turning over your books."

Then, as she concluded, I knew that the lovely woman had commenced her search for the bond, and I sincerely but secretly hoped she enjoyed it. In fact, I had, on my part, found occasion to have my wife spend the morning

abroad, to have the children absent; and that respectable country gentleman, Perker, had, on *his* part, found opportunity to keep her in sight every moment of the day without giving her the faintest suspicion that she was watched. He had seen her unlock drawer after drawer, unseal package after package, pick the lock of my miniature library safe, critically examine every paper that her eyes saw or her hands touched—saw her refold and replace them, relock and refasten, without so much as leaving a solitary trace of her presence behind.

She had begun her search, and it was my fancy that it should be a long one—that she should continue it indefinitely day by day, yet meaning always to keep in reserve one room, viz.: my wife's chamber, which should be so guarded, without her suspecting the fact, that she should never enter there until Perker had said, "It is time." I intended that she should exhaust, not days, but weeks, in futile efforts to penetrate that room; and I also intended that when she did enter there, she should find the bond, and then—why then Perker should appear in the character of retributive justice, and the curtain would fall upon the actors in our little play.

Perker was accustomed to success. Indeed it spoiled him, for he had never learned the bitterness of defeat. He was ungrateful to Fortune; for, however kind she was to him, he never thanked her, not even by so much as the betrayal of a gleam of triumph. His nerves were equable as the needle: he made no man's quarrel or love or hate or interest his own: he played Lear and Bottom with different masks and changes of costume, but always with the same imperturbable feeling. If he succeeded, it was only what he expected to do—in fact, only what he had agreed to do. He had agreed to hunt this woman down, to discover and defeat all her plans and to turn her tragedy into farce, and he meant to do it.

When he next came to my office he laid a letter on the table: it was addressed to J. Clarendon Cook, and I regretted to

see, I told him, that it had been opened.

He desired that I would read it.

I declined, as it was not addressed to me.

He offered to read it to me.

I declined to hear it.

He then said he would read it himself.

That, I told him, would be his business, not mine.

Curiously enough, he came and stood over me while he read aloud:

"DEAR CLARENDON:

*"I have begun the search. I finished the library to-day. It was the most likely place, but the bond is not there. You said that the question of one old man's life should not deter me. It shall not—but oh remember your promise to me: I am to be your wife if I succeed."*

*"Your own always,*

*"MARGARET."*

"P. S.—There is a rich old country gentleman visiting at the house, who is so devoted to me that I am in hourly dread of a proposal from him: should he be so foolish as to venture upon this, and continue in the house after receiving my refusal, it would render my position a very annoying one. I cannot therefore secure the children and the bond too soon. M. D."

"Perker," I asked, "how did you get that letter?"

"From our beautiful lady: she gave it to me to post for her."

"And you betray her trust by opening it?"

"You state the facts lucidly and exactly; and now I am going to post it for our lovely woman, because I promised her I would." While he spoke he was resealing the letter, but it was noticeable that, whatever he did or said, he maintained the same immovable countenance. "I have the honor," he continued, "to be postman in ordinary to Mrs. Dale, who is a charming woman, but one who, I regret to say, holds mistaken views regarding the respective merits of mucilage and sealing-wax. Mucilage opens well, but often the sublimest art will fail



to prevent a smear in reclosing, whereas sealing-wax opens readily and reunites without a sign. Mrs. Dale uses sealing-wax, which is—closed; and now, Mr. J. Clarendon Cook, there is your letter, and I hope you will enjoy it—I did.” He slowly took off his hat, put the letter into it and went out. In a moment he was back again, standing opposite my chair, and evidently thinking he was looking at me.

“Had I called him back?” he asked.

No, I had not; indeed I had grown a little tired of Perker and of the whole business. It seemed slow work to me. I was no nearer its end than when the play began; and where and what was the end to be? It might be all very dramatic to have Perker entrap this poor, misguided woman into the commission of a crime upon which she had already determined; but, so far as she was concerned, I had long ago lost all interest. In fact, I had quite resolved, after hearing that letter read and seeing the temptation offered, that not a hair of her head should be harmed. She could not now take either the children or the bond without my consent.

“Perker,” I said, “after consideration, I have concluded to drop this affair and to let this poor wretch go. It is hardly manly in us to contend against a woman. I will tell my wife to-day to say she has no further need of her.”

“Indeed?” saying which, Perker looked over my head and over the tops of the trees in the Square beyond, trying to compel both eyes to rest for only a moment on the statue of Franklin opposite; but, having signally failed in doing it, he sat down by me and laid his hand on my arm.

“Now,” he said, “you are impatient; that is what you are—impatient. You will not give that charming woman time—you will not give me time—”

“Time for what, Perker?”

He took my wrists in his hands, and held them so close that I had an uncomfortable sensation of the pressure of steel bands about them.

“Time,” he replied, “to put my hands

on Mr. Clarendon Cook as I have them on you—time to let him spin the rope with which I will bind him hand and foot—time to let him write her letters, each one of which will be a link in a chain of evidence to convict him of this conspiracy to steal and defraud, or even to do a murder, if the success of his scheme should finally depend upon that alone. Don’t I know that he writes her such a letter every day? don’t I know where she keeps them? and couldn’t I put my hands on them within the next hour if I wanted to do it? But I don’t want to do it. I am patient; I can wait till he has written enough of them; and when he has, I will give you the cue, and you may drop the curtain. Don’t think that I wish to harm that lovely woman, any more than you do; but I tell you I never so wanted to put my hands on any one as I want to put them on Mr. Clarendon Cook; and I mean to do it.”

That was the very longest speech Perker had probably ever made, and before he had concluded it I saw an advantage in waiting which he did not see, so that it was easy for me to say to him—

“Perker, I agree to wait.”

“That is decided like a reasonable man; and now I’ll go home and see what I can do for Mrs. Perker.”

My wife was never a suspicious woman, and she believed implicitly in dear Mrs. Dale: she enjoyed fully that brilliant lady’s society, and gave to her very lavishly out of the abundance of her affection and sympathy. When it was not a grand search-day on the part of Mrs. Dale—for on such occasions my wife was absent from home—the two ladies sat together in the nursery, sewing, gossiping and making it pleasant for one another. Perker often kept them company, showing great attention to the beautiful lady, yet always too deaf to be a very interesting companion. When domestic affairs called my wife to other portions of the house, Mrs. Dale had the children in, and told them the story of the beautiful house where there were no lessons to be learned, no teachers to

scold, but only boats and ponies and unlimited play all the day long.

They grew very fond of the beautiful lady, and sometimes took long walks with her, from which they returned laden with toys or sweetmeats.

“It was curious,” my wife observed, “that Mrs. Dale never went out that Perker was not also obliged to go out too. And, my dear, how did it happen that I never heard you mention your friend until he came here? and how long does he mean to stay?”

“Firstly, then, it *was* curious about Perker’s goings out; secondly, I never mentioned him to you, my dear, because I seldom thought of him until this visit; and, thirdly, I think he will stay until he captures the beautiful lady.”

“Do you mean that his intentions to secure her are serious?”

“Well, he informed me this morning, in the most decided and emphatic manner, they were; and I have great faith in Perker.”

“And I have no faith in any one. Night after night has that deaf old man sat by your fire bemoaning his poor, dead wife, and yet he is determined to entrap dear Mrs. Dale.”

“It is atrocious, I know; but still I am afraid Perker means to do it. He is that sort of a man.”

I hinted to Perker the following morning that I suspected the lovely woman had grown tired of her search and abandoned it.

“Why, no,” he said, “she has not. She was very busy yesterday in the parlors. I found traces of her there in every drawer or hiding-place. She had dived to the bottom of your vases, unlocked your cabinets, tapped their secret recesses, got into the French clock, examined the wrong side of the pictures, probed the upholstery, and, in fact, made very thorough work of it.”

“She’s a brilliant woman, Perker.”

He made an effort—Houdon-like—to read the titles on all my books at once, and succeeded, before he replied:

“You do that incomparable lady injustice: she is more than brilliant—she is sublime; she is soft-footed as a cat,

brave as a lion, skillful as a college of clock-makers, and possesses the wit of Satan and the cunning of a lunatic. Now, I call myself a successful man at my business; but she could beat me at it ordinarily. Just now she is at a disadvantage: she played for such a tremendous stake, and was so eager to begin, that she showed her hand from the start. But given a fair chance, with moderate stakes, she would hold all the honors. If she were only a man, what a business we could do together!” and here Perker’s speech was lost in his silent admiration of the lovely woman who even matched his great skill. “This is not her first little game, though,” he continued. “She has played high before, but never for a rich husband. It is almost a pity that she is going to lose; but what were those other little games, I wonder, and where did she play them? Now, if I did not know that she was from Boston, I would say a rebel spy. But they don’t make rebel spies in Boston: they make abolitionists, and battle-hymns, and all sorts of possible and impossible isms, but they don’t make rebel spies there: so it couldn’t be *that*; but I would like to know what it was.”

“Her search is almost done, Perker?”

“Yes. She has been through every room in the house now—all but your wife’s. There is not, from your roof to your cellar, excepting in that one room, a safe, case, drawer, box or receptacle for papers which she has not coolly and thoroughly examined. And your wife has never suspected her! But it would not have made the least difference; for if that excellent lady had caught her in the act of turning your safe inside out, she would have satisfied her it was altogether a proper place for her to be, and given her an excellent reason for not telling you she was seen there. It is not impudence: it is genius and ambition mixed. You see, the lovely woman has had to get her bread and butter by many an ugly, crooked way, and she is getting tired of it. Everybody does get tired of it. No one ever stuck to dirty work yet who could get away from it; but the trouble in taking up that sort of

work is, that it sticks to them—they can't shake it off. Now she is tired of it. She wants a husband and home, and a chance to do some clean work before she dies, and this is her chance—if she succeeds; but she won't. No, she won't. As you say, our little play is nearly played."

It was the fatality in this man's character to believe always in his own success—to believe in the defeat of every one else who contended against him.

When I sat down to dinner with dear Mrs. Dale, I could not but regard her with a feeling akin to the profoundest respect and admiration, knowing, as I did, of her long and arduous search—of her patience, energy and determination; seeing, too, how calmly and bravely she bore defeat, for success grew less probable each day the bond was undiscovered. She sat before me superb in her dusky beauty and dazzling wit and brilliance. She poured out the treasures of her mind with the profusion of a prodigal: art, science, literature and society were her commonplace themes of thought and expression. She was in wonderful spirits that day, and her dash and brilliance had a glow of daring in them that rendered me rather uncomfortable. It had been agreed between Perker and I that we would never discuss the matter of her business outside of my office, and by no possibility under the same roof with her. But when the ladies retired I broke our compact, and asked him the meaning of her dash and bravado of manner.

"Only," said Perker, "that Mr. Clarendon Cook has been putting another link in that chain I spoke of—in short, has been writing her another letter, reiterating his promise."

"But she has searched the house and has not found the bond. The fulfillment of his promise depends on her success."

"No, she has not searched everywhere. By this time she has convinced herself that the bond is in your wife's chamber. So far, she has had no opportunity to search there. She means to do it to-night."

"To-night?"

"Exactly. And my advice to you is

not to sleep too soundly, unless you particularly enjoy the effects of chloroform. I have known people who did."

"Perker, try to look right into my eyes for one moment. Do you mean to say she will administer chloroform to me while I sleep, and then search the room?"

"That is precisely what the lovely woman means to do. She was preparing for it during all dinner by drinking glass after glass of your fine old sherry."

"Perker, should that wretched woman attempt it, I will be rough with her. I will, truly as I live."

"No, you won't. You are not the sort of man to do that. What you *will* do is simply to knock the bottle out of her hand, and give her plenty of time to get safely back to her room before you raise any alarm. Now that is exactly what you mean to do."

"Oh, I do?"

"Yes, you do," said the implacable Perker. "Because, you see, your little play is getting interesting, and I want to see the climax, which properly belongs to the third act, and this is only the second."

I agreed to do as he advised.

That night my wife and I retired at the usual hour. The beautiful lady kissed my wife a very tender good-night and swept me a grand courtesy. At the top of the stairs I looked back and saw her framed in the massive walnut of the library door—a sentient picture of immortal beauty, to which I waved my hand good-night, and she, kissing the rosy tips of her fingers to me, stood unmoved, watching me slowly ascending the stairs.

I knew that my wife had been sleeping some hours, that I had not slept at all, and that there was no noise made by creaking stairs, or loose floor-boards, or of opening doors, or of rustling gowns, or treading feet or human breath; and yet I knew that I was in mortal danger—that the mouth of a bottle was being held to my nostrils, that I was inhaling chloroform, that it was pleasant to be lying there, that something or somebody cried out to me that I was in peril;

and in the next instant I was alert, ready, with all my faculties under absolute control. I did not cry out, I did not open my eyes, but with a fierce blow I hurled the bottle to the opposite wall and sprang out of the bed. As I did so, I heard a man's heavy step descending the stairs, and as it passed rapidly down I remembered that her room was above. I first awoke my wife, who, I hope, screamed sufficiently loud to be heard in the next square; and after a bungling search for the matches, I lighted the gas and dressed myself and went over to Perker's room, who slowly lighted his gas and dressed himself, making a horrible noise the while, when together we went down the front stairs; but on our way we heard no sound of retreating steps on the back stairs, either above or below us.

We stopped directly before a dining-room window. Its insufficient bolt had been pried off with an iron bar from the outside, and on the sill there were the marks of a man's muddy boots.

"She is cleverer than I thought," said Perker; "but the lovely woman has made one mistake: now, a man in getting in would have put only one foot on the sill, and you see there are two boot-marks there, both pointing inward."

We carefully closed the window and went into the library, where we found the entire household assembled. Among them was the beautiful woman, in the most coquettish of hastily-adjusted morning-wrappers. She was charmingly pale, warmly sympathetic, yet not obtrusive in her sympathy—a trifle alarmed and nervous, as a woman should be, and tenderly solicitous about my dear wife.

Perker, who was aggravatingly inquisitive to them all, considering his deafness, was especially marked in his admiration for dear Mrs. Dale and her airy costume.

I described for their benefit, a dozen times over, how I had been aroused by a man's hand on my throat, how I threw him off, how the ruffian leaped from the top of the stairs to the hall below, how I could not find the matches in time to dress and alarm Perker, and how in this

way the scoundrel had escaped by the way he entered, through the dining-room window.

Perker requested Mrs. Dale to repeat to him, a little louder, if she pleased, what I had said, and she very graciously complied.

We again all retired for the night, which was far spent; and I have no doubt that Mrs. Dale, Perker and I were the only persons in the house who slept soundly until summoned to breakfast.

"Because," said Perker, afterwards, "we three were the only ones who knew that the ruffians would not come again that night."

That gentleman was at the office at an early hour in the morning, waiting for me.

When he was comfortably established in the box, I asked, "Now, Perker, will you be good enough to explain last night's proceedings, for I confess to you that I don't understand them."

"And yet," said he, "it was the simplest thing in the world. The lady waited until she thought you were all asleep, then went into the yard, carefully pried open the shutter with the large furnace-poker, made the impressions of the boots on the sill, went back to her own room, got the chloroform and visited you, as you possibly recollect. When you dashed the bottle from her hand she ran heavily down stairs, at the bottom removed her coarse shoes, and, while you were floundering about for the matches, quietly returned by the back stairs to her own room, and down again to the library; and a very clever performance I call it."

"You are a wonderful pair, Perker."

"You compliment me in mentioning me in connection with that lovely woman; yet I think it is almost a pity that she is not Mrs. John Perker. What a magnificent business we could do together! But where is that bond?"

"In the safe, next door."

"Will you bring it home with you to-day?"

"Yes, I will. Is it time?"

"It is time," said Perker. "I learned

it from this letter, which I kindly consented to post for the lovely woman. It is addressed to Mr. J. Clarendon Cook: its contents inform him that she will return to Washington to-night, with the bond, she believes: the children, she says, can be carried off at any time, and it would only throw suspicion on him and her if they were to disappear at the same time the bond was lost. Mrs. Dale has given your wife notice that she intends seeking the protection of her late husband's family to-day. She has announced her design to start for Washington in the five o'clock train, but she means the later one. And now, what you have got to do is to give her an opportunity to find that paper, to let her get out of the house with it, and to be sure of seeing me and it again before midnight. What I am going to do is to see Mrs. Perker, and then to witness the end of your play."

I went home early, taking the bond with me. I took it up stairs, and laid it carefully at the bottom of a drawer in my wife's room. That afternoon was the first time, I think, that I had seen the beautiful lady at all nervous or discomposed, but during the dull pause between the laying of the cloth and the setting of the last covered dish, there was a curious hurry and excitement about her: there was a tremor of the hands which made her diamonds flash with unusual brilliance, and the whole figure was full of unrest and eagerness. Dinner was announced at last, when I had the pleasure of taking dear Mrs. Dale in and seating her next to me, but I noticed that the round white hand resting on my arm shook till all the brilliants on it flashed out trembling, evanescent lights. We still lingered over the first course, when she begged to be permitted to retire to her own room for a few moments: her head was dizzy—she feared she was not quite well.

I opened the door for her, stood by it for an instant, watching her languidly ascending the stairs, magnificent in her beauty, matchless in her daring.

My wife rose to follow her, to give some assistance. I motioned her back

to her seat, and without a question she quietly obeyed my gesture. When the door up stairs had safely closed upon the lovely woman, I said to my wife, "Wait: go to her after a little while; for the present she would prefer to be alone."

She waited for twenty minutes, with great anxiety expressed on her face, when she asked, "May I go now?"

There was the sound of no footsteps in the room, the sound of no opening door, yet Mrs. Dale stood in the room and took her seat at my side: her face shone with triumph and her smile was jubilant as running water.

I turned to my wife and answered her request: "You see it is not necessary now—Mrs. Dale is better."

"Yes, I am better, thank you," and the beautiful head was bent very low, gratefully acknowledging our timely sympathy; and as it so bent and the bosom rose and fell in triumphant undulations, I heard the peculiar crackling sound that parchment gives out, and I knew that she had succeeded, that she had found the bond, that it lay on the tawny breast, and had been stirred by her graceful motion.

Looking back now, after two or three years, upon the little play we played together in that house on the quiet street, it seems a good deal like a game of make-believe, such as children might amuse themselves with on a long winter's night. Yet our little play of tragedy or comedy, call it as you will, lasted for seven long weeks. It did not seem a bit like a child's game then, for you will not forget that the second letter captured by Perker openly suggested possible murder. For seven long weeks that woman was mistress of my house, held duplicates of every key in it, whether fitting lock of room, safe, closet, trunk, drawer, chest or hidden recess: she was secret as darkness, as cunning as the serpent, merciless as Time, and ambitious as a woman. She went there to secure that paper, and, rather than fail in doing so, she would have swept me from her path as coolly as if I had been a fly that annoyed her.

I think we all played our parts as best

we could. Perker and Mrs. Dale were both old and experienced hands at the business; and when I saw those two, the real antagonists in this combat of wit and cunning, meeting each other, day after day, with their by-play of love-making, their suavity of manner, their deference and forms of respect, and as I marked her yielding graciousness and his seeming devotion, I could not withhold my admiration from either of them, nor help the wish that some nobler way of escape had been opened to her. She was like a grand ship, with a fiend at the helm, driven desperately on its course to where the breakers roared and flashed their muddy foam. I have seen in my life many wrecks upon the shore, but never another that it so pained me to see there as her. I think that there were no noble possibilities in life that she might not have aspired to or won. I think there was no place in life that she might not have adorned. Only that in her, or in our beautiful social system, somewhere, there was a mistake.

She left my house that day at sundown. A carriage called for her, in which she drove away, and the direction it took was that of the Baltimore depot. It contained, beside her, the bond. When the carriage had disappeared, a great terror fell upon me, and I would have gone after and stopped it if I could.

She had left an hour earlier than she or Perker had mentioned, and yet she had ordered the carriage that morning. In an instant the truth flashed upon me that the astute detective and the clever lawyer had both been tricked, duped and robbed by a more astute, cleverer woman, who had, doubtless, seized the first moment of her freedom to reduce the paper to ashes.

I sent a note to Perker's house, inquiring for him, and an answer came back that he had not been there since noon.

I waited for him, hour after hour, in a fever of fear and humiliation: a hundred times I went to the door and looked out into the streets, hoping to see him there; and so the night dragged on with unutterable heaviness, bringing with it, as the hours went by, no sign of him

or her. Perker had failed, and all was lost.

But while the clock was striking twelve in the engine-house tower, there came a savage ring at the bell. I met the servant in the hall, sent her back to her room, opened the inner door of the vestibule, and there, leaning upon the arm of Perker, I saw the beautiful woman. On his other arm he carried a mass of papers, tied up in a silk handkerchief. We all three walked quietly into the library, and in silence we stood there for a moment, looking into each other's faces. There was no sign of triumph on Perker's, and I hope there was none on mine; but over her's there was an awful despair, so deep, bitter and terrible in its expression that I would rather suffer it in my own heart than see it ever again on another's face.

She broke the silence at the moment when my wife entered the room:

"I would not like to go to prison to-night. I throw myself upon your mercy. I will tell you what I know. I will do anything you may require of me, but I would not like to go to prison. I have a son, and he might know of it. I have never been there."

Her two hands were laid on the table as if for support: they did not tremble, there were no tears in her eyes, no cowardly flinching at the heavy blow that fortune had dealt her: the voice was low and quiet, rising only above a whisper; and yet I think that all the pathos and misery of this woman's life found their echo in it. Her career had been full of perils, but all her dangers past were as nothing to the terrors that lurked in the words, "I have a son, and he might know of it." As it found utterance on her lips, my wife went up to her and took her hand in her own.

"You shall not go to prison to-night," I said.

"I have some papers here," remarked Perker, "which we will go over together in Mrs. Dale's presence, if she will permit."

The thief-taker was as deferential to his captive as if their positions had been changed, for even in his eyes there was

a dignity in her defeat which rose high above our puny triumph.

We turned the papers over one by one: the first Perker handed me was the bond. He had *not* failed! That was followed by some letters of mine connected with it, and then came the results for which we had waited for seven miserable weeks—the implicating letters of Mr. J. Clarendon Cook. There was not one missing, though at the end of each were the same words: "*P. S. Burn this at once.*"

"You are," said Perker to Mrs. Dale, "only half a Mephistophelian philosopher."

"In what manner?" she asked.

"He, you will remember, said it was the height of human wisdom never to write a letter and never to burn one. It was only the latter part of his maxim that you followed, consequently the links of the chain are all here; and within twenty-four hours I will wind them about your friend, Mr. J. Clarendon Cook."

She did not answer him again, but stood quietly looking from him to me, as if it were from me she hoped for safety.

Among the rest there were numberless long slips of paper—innumerable letters in cipher. As I took up one of them, she reached out her hand to take it from me.

"It has nothing to do with this business," she said. "It can only hurt me and do you no good. I ask that, out of your triumph, you will do me the poor favor to spare me all that you can—that you will give that and all similar papers to me unread."

As I pushed it toward her, Perker took it from under my hand.

"Pardon me, madam," he said, "but you can have no secrets from me. I have played to win in this game, and I do not mean to lose a single trick."

He took up the paper, and, holding it to the light, read aloud:

*"Telegraph at once the number of men and guns at Harper's Ferry—their movements and disposition."*

"JAMES A. SEDDON,  
"Sec'y of War."

My wife, who, until this moment, had

held the poor creature's hand in her own, thus conveying to her a sense of sympathy and protection, let it fall, moved a step away from her, only saying, with infinite pity and wonder, "A rebel spy!"

"Were you ever that?" I asked.

"If it concerns you to know it—yes; I was a rebel spy."

"And worse," said Perker, holding up for me to read, but concealing it from my wife, another letter.

She gave a single glance at its contents, and, reading therein her own shame, sank down upon the floor at our feet, and in the massed coils of her hair she hid from our eyes the wonderful beauty and dreadful agony of her face.

Somewhere in the world there is now a son of this woman's in the first flush and glow of his manhood. For him had she first soiled and finally wrecked the beautiful image that God had set up in her in His own likeness. He was at college on this night of which I write, and if there came to him then any shape or impression of his mother, it was one that she had taught him to believe was a true one. If his waking fancies or his dreams showed her to him that night, he saw her as a beautiful woman, rich, cultured, brilliant, courted, moving in the noblest society of the Nation's Capital, an honored, honorable guest, worthy his best love and reverence.

But if he had seen her as she was, while he lived his luxurious college-life, as he moved onward and upward toward a scholar's honorable goal, he would have seen her playing the abject part of a thief, a spy, a reckless adventurer; sacrificing honor, fame and liberty, that she might thereby supply him with those large sums necessary to the pursuit of his career: he would have seen his beautiful mother bartering away her very soul for the price of his advancement. And if she had been so shown to him, it is my fancy to believe that the young scholar, recognizing in her degradation only a sublimer love for himself, would have given her such devotion and affection as he gave to nothing else this side of heaven.

We raised her up, my wife and I, when she said to Perker: "In the pres-

ence of the one woman who was merciful to me, you might have spared me this shame. It was outside of my wrong here."

That night Mrs. Dale remained in my house, and, till the morning dawned, a woman, great-hearted and loving, sat at her bedside, waving away with the words of her Lord the shadows that darkened the soul of that other woman in whose bosom a son had lain.

It is against the dignity and good conscience of the law to compound a felony, yet Perker and I were guilty of doing it.

Perker wrote to Mr. Cook, inviting him to Philadelphia, giving him a good business reason for doing so. Mr. Cook considered the brilliant prospect of the speculation held out to him, accepted it, came here, met Mr. Perker as per agreement, and found that that very astute gentleman held him a prisoner. Whereupon Mr. Cook became violent. Perker was cool, pointed calmly to the letters, the solid links in his chain of

evidence, and modestly insisted that a new bond for double the amount of the old one should be executed for the benefit of my little wards.

As far as Mr. Cook was concerned, Perker had reduced the whole affair to the simple question as to whether he preferred to part with his money—which he could easily spare, for his contracts with the government had been large and remunerative—or to go to prison.

Wisely, I think, he parted with his money and doubled the bond.

I wish that I could say, before the curtain falls, that my little play was like other plays, a work of fancy, having no better foundation than the writer's imagination; but it is unfortunately true.

The beautiful wreck that was drifted to my door by the early winter tides was washed away again on their ebb, and has drifted since to and from other doors, but never yet finding the haven that pure souls and true lives ever find.

By Harriet Prescott Spofford

## THE STRANGE PASSENGERS.

"And heard the ghosts on Haley's Isle complain,  
Speak him off shore, and beg a passage to old Spain!"

THE schooner Unadilla, refitted and newly named, had shaken all her linen to the gale, and was flying down the river's mouth, a fruiter on her way to Malta for a cargo of red-hearted oranges. Captain Deverard himself had named her after a twenty-dollar bank-bill that once, in a critical moment of his finances, came into his possession, and which in its clear blue and white expanse had seemed to him the loveliest thing he had yet beheld. It had been the most elastic piece of paper, too, that ever was—what

a quantity it covered! In the first place, a barrel of flour—for wicked men did not just at that time make their millions out of the flesh and blood of the poor, and flour was cheap; there was enough of the bill remaining then for a pig—a little one, to be sure—for a cloak for Em, and a pair of shoes for Em's mother; and lastly, there was still a corner left that just tucked over a steel-shod sled to delight the heart of little Jack. Captain Deverard could see the boy now, in his great boots and his cap tied down about such a rosy face, making plunges, with his sled mounting and falling behind him,



through the snowdrifts that lined the yard that day like fortifications. There had been another lastly, too, which it would seem like a breach of confidence to mention, if it were not that Captain Deverard held the remembrance of the night he spent with that bottle of brandy—juicy old Cognac, he called it: it could never have been anything in the world but Catawba,—if it were not, I say, that the captain held the remembrance of that night, in spite of his wife's tears, Em's dismay and Jack's fright, as one of the very brightest ones of his experience. "Reg'lar blow-out," said the captain with a chuckle. "Never was so happy in my life. By George! I wouldn't lose the having had it for all the parsons betwixt here and Georgy!"

He had prospered since then better than he deserved, perhaps. And now he had bought a dismantled and nearly worthless old schooner—"On her last legs," said the captain; "sea-legs"—had mortgaged her for new rigging and repairs, had named her for his friend in need, and having hugged his wife and kissed the children till they were red in the face indeed, was scorning a pilot and running before the wind across the bar and out to sea. Em was shaking her handkerchief in the front door when he ran down. "I'll have a house of my own when I come back," grumbled the captain, "and be beholden to nobody!" He took his glass and made out his wife standing behind the child and wiping her eyes with her apron, as one tear oozed after another so fast that she could not catch a glimpse of the Unadilla. He dipped his flag three times to salute them, fired his swivel, and when its echo had died out across the marshes and silver streams, heard Jack's little cannon give a puff of reply: then put sentiment and home behind him and turned to the business of the hour.

It was a November afternoon, but belonging to one of those delicious days that, bewildered in the order of their going, fall among us in doubt whether they are a part of spring or fall. Resinous odors from the pine forests swept over them on the fresh wind, soft

blue hazes shrouded the horizon behind all the red and russet distances of shorn meadows and low hills; but when the Unadilla was once over the bar and rocking on the broad swells, the air thickened with a warm and pleasant vapor, into which the sudden twilight of that season fell with a cooling shock.

"Guess we'll give the shoals a little wider berth," said Captain Deverard to his mate. "There's that old Spanish craft that laid her bones there, they used to tell about, and the ten or eleven graves among the rocks: well, I don't care to make the twelfth. Shouldn't wonder if 'twas thickening up for foul weather. I'm afraid it's one of those false winds. If it holds, we'll get out into blue water and let it blow!"

The wind, however, not having that regard for persons which a well-conditioned wind should have, refused to hold, began to fall and began to veer, played various pranks of its own, and threatened to give him the lie in his teeth by turning about altogether, as if, now it had Captain Deverard out of reach of shore, it would just show him that there were two of them. The shoals were rising, on one hand, like faint purple phantoms in the less purple twilight as the captain spoke: the white light-house loomed like a ghost, with the air trembling all around it: suddenly its spark of fire struck out upon the gathering dimness, fluttered there on the fixed stone pinnacle a moment, and went wheeling on its way, laying long beams of light athwart the dark and purple sea. A trifling, baffling land-breeze blew out from the islands, and delayed them in the region of waters that Captain Deverard scarcely liked: there was something half supernatural in all the gloaming and glimmer and the long rise and fall of the dark wave with its white lips on the edges of the low islands not a mile away. "Hark, will ye?" said Captain Deverard. "What may that be?"

It was only a voice—a low, plaintive voice—to which one must listen ere distinguishing it from the murmur of the breeze through the cordage—a sound half complaining, half entreating, and as

if spoken through the palms of hollowed hands that it might reach the farther.

"Well," said the captain, "if ever I heard the lingua Franca, that's it!—the identical gibberish they chatter round the ports where this Unadilla's bound. Shouldn't wonder—what'll you bet? It's those old Spanish ghosts I told you of! Always heard the place was haunted."

"Shouldn't wonder," said the mate, strengthening himself with some fresh tobacco.

"Here, you devil-too-whits," shouted the captain through his trumpet, "what do you want?"

If ever a mortal or immortal voice were heard, all hands on board the Unadilla heard the answer come: once in lingua Franca, again in broken Spanish speech, the third time in good English—

"A passage to old Spain!"

"Well, that's more'n I can give you," answered back the captain. "We didn't put up no bunks for ghosts, and we ain't laid in any glowworms or that sort of provisions. To be sure, though, there's tie dead-lights," added the captain.

Came back the cry again, forlorn and sad, as if with the wringing of hands—

"A passage to old Spain!"

"Well, it's sort of too bad," said Captain Deverard then. "They're buried up there in a foreign country, you see, just where the storm tossed them; while, if they'd been left to themselves in the furrer of the seas that drowned them, they'd have made a shift—who knows?—to get back to their own shore. I should myself, I know, if the case'd been mine. Come now! Dessay, they've left their sweethearts and wives, and a heap of little Marias and Jesuses, in that blasphemous country of theirs. I'll tell them. What do you want a passage home for?" shouted Captain Deverard, raising his trumpet again. "Don't you know your sweethearts are dead, or married to other men? Your wives have played you false long ago. Your children—" But here the captain dropped his trumpet. "I d'no," said the captain. "It's kinder hard on 'em. I s'pose they were little red-cheeked rogues like Jack, them chaps of theirs,

when they come away with the elt-locks hanging round their faces, just as you see 'em now swarming about the wharves like rats, and their eyes as black and bright. I reckon, now, if they could go back and see them children's grandchildren, they'd take 'em for their onty-donty. But there! I wouldn't have a ghost aboard o' me for all—the oranges in Seville!"

"Do' no' what harm they'd do?" said the mate, in a superior way.

"D—this wind!" said the captain, then at that. "Here we are creeping along like that old ivy-plant, when we should have put just twice our distance between us and Old Town hills. We'll have that wailing in our ears all night at this rate!"

"A passage to old Spain!" the cry told out again like a funeral bell.

"Blowed if they sha'n't have it!" exclaimed Captain Deverard, turning on the mate in good fighting trim, having been an atom nettled by that dignitary's latest remark. "What d'ye say?"

"Well, I don't mind, if the men don't," answered the other. "Fact is, I don't believe in 'em much."

"You ain't superstitious, be ye?" said the good captain, sneering as well as he knew how to do. "Some isn't. Maybe it's only the air singing through two rocks: I've heard say as much. But if you'll take the yawl and Turner and Janvrin, Mr. Coffin, we'll just make believe giving these Spanishers a lift. George! a man with your name's just the fellow to send for ghosts!" The captain chuckled with satisfaction, in spite of a certain creepiness that he experienced.

It is very likely that Mr. Coffin would have preferred another man to stand in his boots just at that minute of time, even if it hung a calf-skin on his recreant legs; but bravado goes a great way, and before Captain Deverard could make up his mind to countermand the imprudent order, he saw Mr. Coffin and his two subordinates already distant a half-dozen oars' lengths on their errand. They were Newburyport boys, brought up in the schools of that old town side by side



with rich men's sons, possessing little awe and less fear, entirely disbelieving in the preternatural, and full enough of dash and daring to humor Captain Deverard's whim for the sake of the adventure. There was that absence of discipline on board the Unadilla, where crew and officers all messed together, which would have made it quite safe for them in the general free-and-easiness to have refused to stir an inch.

The mate did not exactly tell them what was the business in hand, and whether they divined it or overheard it, nobody knows.

"New branch of the business," said Janvrin, spitting in his palms and shipping his oars. "Hope it pays—doubloons, I s'pose."

"No you don't," said Turner. "Nothing but old Continental paper—spectralist kind."

"Better shut up!" growled the mate. "Them Spanish ghosts ain't none of your common cut. Run you through with their moustaches. Don't stand any joking. Wear sombreros and carry stilettos. Hope I may die if they don't strike you dead first time you see 'em!"

"Jes' so," said Turner—"first time."

"You be dashed," remarked Janvrin.

The boat had reached a distance of twice its length from the innumerable low rocks of the shore, when the captain, from the schooner's deck, signaled the rowers to pause just where the shallow water had not more than a foot's depth. "Come now," cried Captain Deverard to his shipwrecked Spaniards; "here's your chance, unless you're too 'feard of salt water to wet your feet!"

The three men afterward averred to the captain that at that moment there was a rush and scurry in the air behind them, a sound like the skipping of stones over smooth water: looking down where their shadow was thrown on the brown, weed-imbedded bottom, that in the golden sunlight of day was always transmuted into such a wrought-work of splendor, but at this hour seemed only a place of darkness and mystery, they fancied that they saw it lessen and

lessen, as a boat's shadow would be apt to do while the boat settled more deeply with fresh freight. When, at the word of return, they had measured half the way back to the schooner, Captain Deverard heard the familiar cry again—"A passage to old Spain!"—but coming from the boat itself, and in such a different intonation, such a cry of hope and of surprise and joy, that he hardly believed his ears. The men heard it too, for it rose from among them: a cold chill shivered up their backs; and whether they pulled against an adverse current or they carried a weight no boat had ever borne before, the three men climbed their vessel's side, at length, with aching ribs and beaded brows, tired with toil and drenched to the skin, but not by sea-water.

"Guess he'll get his come-uppance," muttered Mr. Coffin, striding by the little captain, and discharging some double-barreled oaths on his underlings, who recognized them as mere safety-valves. As for the little captain, he declared, somewhat later, that he felt himself growing white about the gills, though, nevertheless, he kept a stiff upper lip. "Now my hearties," said he to his guests, addressing them, as one would say, by a slightly inappropriate term—"Now my hearties, you're passengers aboard this schooner, the Unadilla, bound for Malta. Behave yourselves respectably, and you're welcome; that is to say—well—no matter! But go to kicking up a bobbery and I'll pitch you every one overboard again, just as true as Jonah swallowed the whale!"

"Don't think they'll stand much of that," said the mate surlily. "Papishers, you know. Their Bible's different sort of talk; all the stories there run t'other way. S'pose 'twould be as easy for Jonah as the whale, though."

"None o' yer lip!" said the captain.

There was a sound upon the deck—one of those sounds that set your teeth on edge and make the flesh crawl, as the sound of a slate-pencil does in grating down a slate sometimes—as if every ghost of them all had scraped a foot and pulled a forelock: then there was nothing

to be heard but the lapping of the water and the swelling of the wind.

"Now, Mr. Coffin," said the captain, "I'll leave the deck to you. We'll keep her as she is, I think. There's quite a little air of wind: shouldn't wonder if we made a run before the storm, after all."

So Captain Deverard, in his new dignity, went below for forty winks, while the mate took in his royals, the ship held on her course, and the "air of wind" went frolicking with the waves and whipping their caps white.

When the captain came on deck, as he did with the change of watch, every soul in sight was sound asleep. Who struck the bell then? who, indeed? Captain Deverard went aft as quickly as he could step: it was not a swift business, for the crank little Unadilla, leaning far over, carried one side almost under water. He seized the mate by the shoulder, shaking him till his teeth rattled. "What's this mean?" said he, as soon as the bewildered man had his blinking eyes open. "If ever I see a Yankee schooner turned into a Spanish brigantine, here she is! Where'd all this square rig come from?"

"Square rig be blowed!" exclaimed Mr. Coffin. "Nobody's touched a rope since you went below, except to shorten sail some when the wind got round into the north."

The captain rubbed his eyes, to the full as bewildered as the mate had been. He looked up the dim height of the great sail rising far and faint in the darkness: very true, there was nothing but the usual gear of a foreign-going topsail schooner above him. "That beats all!" cried he: then falling back upon a more defensible position, "Well," said he, wetting his finger and holding it up for a weathercock, "I s'pose you see where the wind is now? As dead an east as ever whistled, and the Unadilla flying on it fluking. If 'twasn't too thick to see a star, I should say we'd been taken up in the air and set down the other way. What's that light on the bows? When I turned in I left one on the quarter—White Island light, or you

may have my head for an orange! White Island light, as I'm a sinner! Hark a minute, will ye?" as a dull, low roar fell upon his ear—the awful sound of a breaker. "We're driving straight on destruction! We're, turned completely round! That ought to be the spot where we took them fellers aboard. By George, sir!" as if an idea had struck him so that he staggered, "they're working their passage!"

"About ship!" thundered the mate into the instant's silence, while the captain's brain yet reeled. In a moment the mate had leaped into the ratlines and was trumpeting his orders to the hands, who, thoroughly awakened, sprang to the ropes like cats.

"Hard a-lee!" cried the captain, and threw his whole weight on the wheel as he spoke.

A momentary shudder, a throbbing of the hard waves beneath, and the Unadilla, minding her helm and helped by the men who worked the head-sails, moved about slowly and came up in the wind, gathered headway and left the white danger astern.

"Good for her!" said the captain then, wiping his forehead, something well pleased with his craft's first tussle. "She'll ride it out. Butts at the sea like a little piece of cattle. I think we'll reduce the rag, though, Mr. Coffin—less muslin for this kind of tornadoes."

"Let go the flying jib!" cried the mate, the vessel careening under him with the force of the gale. "Let go fore and main sails! Stand by to lower the t'gallant halyards and clew them up!"

In a moment more, as it seemed, darkness had swallowed the sails: the schooner lay-to under her jib and a close-reefed topsail, and the tempest howled over her harmless.

"All's well that ends well!" said Captain Deverard. "Call the watch, Mr. Coffin!"

When everything was quiet again on board the Unadilla, her little skipper kept the helm still in his own hands, and seized the opportunity for reflecting on the situation, that he might discover, if possible, how all this rout came about.

But, do what he would, Captain Deverard could collect neither thought nor argument: there was as much confusion in his mind as there had been in the last ten minutes. He could not rid himself of the idea that not his own crew obeyed his commands, but a dozen swarming shadows. By what earthly or unearthly instrumentality they were here, when they ought to be thirty miles away, straight sailing; how, when he left the Unadilla putting down her nose and running for the high seas, he had found her back again on these winter-curst shores, with her head toward her old wharf; who it could be on board, the mate and his watch asleep, that, in such a growing gale, knew how to wind a ship till her prow was in the place where her stern had been; through what kind of atmosphere, in what kind of glimmer, neither darkness nor light, he had seen his schooner spreading the sail of another sort of vessel, as if she had been the phantom of that other vessel long since wrecked and rotten,—as easily as those propositions he could have answered what material or immaterial souls were made of! It caused the captain to shiver from his crown to his heel. Had a decree gone out against the Unadilla? Was she never to make port again? Were they all imprisoned on a spectral ship for daring to make light of death and doom in trying to give respite to those sentenced souls? What had cast such a sleep upon the watch? Was it real, thickness, real storm, or was it all some wild hallucination of the night—the night conjured up again in which that Spanish ship went down?

While he mused and marveled, and kept his place at the wheel, and the schooner drifted and still drifted, ever so slightly, in from sea, a singular effect of music stole toward him, whether rising over the halloo of the heavens and the piping of the cordage, or heard only in a hull of the boisterous wind—a soft, singing murmur, in spite of its power, swelling gently, till it seemed a chorus of voices far, far away—rough, male voices, it may be, but clarified and attuned by distance into a sweetness that

was unutterable, a sadness that was unbearable, and yet nothing, as it were, but a hollow shell of sound. Captain Deverard was not skilled in foreign tongues, yet he heard the burden of these dead men's song as distinctly as ever it had been heard when, two hundred years ago, it was transferred from Calderon's old theatres to the streets, and descended thence in the hearts of that people whose religions and superstitions went with them to their play and sat down with them to their meat. The strain vibrated now round Captain Deverard's ears as if breathed from some æolian lyre:

"Pecador soy, tus favores  
Pido por justicia yo,  
Pues Dios en ti poderío  
Solo por los pecadores,  
A mí me debes tus loores,  
Qui por mí solo muriera  
Dios, si mas mundo no hubiera."

Though he could by no means give the words their literal meaning, Captain Deverard knew as well what they signified as if they had been his own speech: there was something in them, words or voice, that belonged to the general language which all men utter. Their melody seemed to come to him from every side—from the forecask, from the cross-tree, from the hold: it was full of woe, and, with all its sweetness, seemed to emit horror as a flame does smoke. He felt himself growing colder and colder as he listened. From every side: they were all about him then. The captain shouted to his men. A hoarse and dismal voice replied—a Spanish hail. His own men slept—that he understood—as those before them did, and, in their turn, once more the ghosts held the watch. From farther and farther away the sound at length was floating, while it left dullness in his ears and dimness in his eyes. By the broad daylight, with all his powers in play, he had defied the might of any apparition: now darkness robbed him and oppressed him: even his flesh forgot any longer to creep, and the spell of slumber was closing over him. No! not while such a blast as that almost tore him from the wheel—a good, real blast—a stinging, roaring buffet. Then, all at once, a rending noise

that the captain knew too well—a sharp report, as of an exploding gun, and the topsail had torn from its bolt-ropes and had whirled away through the night like a flying ghost itself. A lifting of the Unadilla, as though she would pierce heaven with her topmast—a sinking, a swooping: she had broached-to and lay in the trough of the seas, billow on billow beating her bows, a wall of waves rising on either side, and one that, climbing over them in a towering cat-act and illumined for a moment by the rays of some light-house lantern, in a great, blinding suffusion of spray and glory, leaned, with all its vastness and weight and suffocating darkness, down, down, and plunged and weltered and washed away; and the Unadilla rose like a cork, but with her bulwarks stove, her water-casks afloat and her deck-load swept from sight.

The wild cry of a drowning man cleft even the scream of the wave and overwhelmed all other terrors in its own. He might find a water-cask: there was no time nor place to help him—they might all be with him in a moment. For while Captain Deverard had questioned himself, and trusted his topsail, minding his helm the while, in order to escape the assault of such a sea, had listened and felt the glamour stealing over him, the gale had gathered and swelled and burst in its fury—a hurricane of snow and sleet, the air full of the driving flakes, stinging like needles and icing plank and rope as they fell—no light but the binnacle's, the blackness of death throughout the crippled little schooner.

"Hoist the mainsail!" roared the captain, putting the strength of ten men upon the wheel, and in a despair lest none were left on deck to hear him. "Hoist the mainsail and we'll work her out of this!" He could not see his hand before him. Whether it were his own men, or the shades and apparitions of the last hour, that slowly bent the great sail till it caught the wind, the captain dared not say; but it caught the wind, bellied forth, soared with them out of the abyss where they had been plunged, up, up, up, and suddenly bel-

lowed and split from end to end, and with a shock, as of the meeting of the firmaments, the Unadilla was thrown on her beam-ends, the sea making a complete breach over her, while furious surge after surge rushed and raked her in a havoc of ruin.

"Cut away the weather lanyards!" cried out the captain, in tones firmer and clearer than a well-blown clarion, his courage rising with his need. He heard the men's familiar voices as they yelled, reply, and a single stroke separated the ropes that were stretched as tense as harp-strings, and sent the whole quivering pile of rigging by the board. It hung there for one dreadful moment, hammering against the schooner's sides with mighty blows, that threatened in each fall to batter her to fragments. "Clear it away, for God's sake!" cried the captain.

The mate came dashing up the companion-way, echoing his superior's words; and then, as if remembering with Homer that "examples make excitements strong and sweeten a command," he himself clambered, axe in hand, swiftly along into the thick of the peril: the ponderous mass parted and fell astern. What was left of the Unadilla righted again, but Mr. Coffin was seen no more: he had gone with his work. And the schooner, rolling like a log, pounded by every sea, refused her helm and drifted toward the treacherous breakwater of Bar Island, a helpless wreck.

"Heaven save us!" groaned the captain; and he called out to them to lash themselves to what they could find.

The water piled itself in great polished masses of blackness: they could see it, colder than ice, yet outlined in fire, as it rose and swayed and shattered over them in a wild fierce way that had lost all semblance of frolic or play, and raged with a kind of malignity, as if the gaping jaws of every awful wave hungered for them. The light of the shoals wheeled upon its way on the one side: its flash shot up through the midnight every minute in a wide sheet that made only a visible horror: the Ipswich light shone steadily upon the other, while the fainter

ray of the Plum Island light lit up the tumbling waste of roaring shadow behind them. "Wrecked in sight of three light-houses!" groaned the captain again, as he bound himself fast to his broken wheel. And he thought of his wife watching the storm through the darkened pane that night; of Jack leaving his restless bed to slip a hard little hand in hers for comfort; of Em's deep unconscious sleep, with the white ruffled nightcap that was the pride of her heart, making her pretty face look like a blushing flower. It was little likely he would ever see the three again—his clothes freezing on his back as fast as the last wave left him, his hands and feet mere lumps of grave-cold clay, save when they tingled with sharp hot pains as if they were on fire. The air was all one fluff of heavy snow, that made mere breathing a labor: now and then it parted, and he caught glimpses of those things, those strange passengers, now no longer shades, but moving flames, that would only leave him when the Unadilla quenched them by settling underneath the flood with her ungodly freight.

The hull of the little schooner could scarcely endure much more of this: these seas that brayed her in their mortar would soon finish her. She had sprung aleak, he fancied, already: it was impossible to man the pumps—a great plank came ripping off her side—she would go to pieces as she went down. Still, she drifted constantly to leeward. The waters on either hand were milk-white about her now: they spread themselves in broad and changing flourishes of silver on the black field of the night. It might be that the running sea had carried them faster than any wind could have done: this might be the bar at the river's mouth—it might be the white and spouting shafts of the North and South breaker that shot up here, it seemed to him, mast-high, as the Unadilla rolled in the depths. Now and then he hallooed to his men: now and then they called to one another. Drifting, drifting, they had left that tract of churned sea behind them: could he have clearly distinguished the first thing to mark his course, Captain Deverard would have thought him-

self on the way back to his own door-stone. "I know every drop of the river," said he to himself, "just let me get into still water: too black to see a b'y. Bump! Shouldn't wonder if 'twas the Gangway rocks—it's your last bump if it is. Off again? I'll be blest if 'twasn't the North flat. She's nothing but a log! a log! There's a sea for you! What's this? Bump—bump—the South flat? No? The Half-tide rocks then? Steady, you jade, and your own wharf two rods to looard! No, again? What? Great Heavens!" shouted the captain, "we are going to pieces in the middle of Bar Island breaker!"

It was entirely true. The Unadilla would never see wharf or river-mouth, neither Gangway rocks, nor buoys, nor flats again: miles and miles away from them all, she was fixed fast and buried in the quicksand, and the waves had leaped on board and were tearing her apart with a thousand strokes and shocks and shivers. It seemed to Captain Deverard as if he saw them at their work in the shape of vast and awful spirits, as if he heard the hoarse and hollow shibboleth of their cries, as if he felt their icy breath blown full upon his forehead. Their great hands were upon him, were over him and under him: they lifted him, floated him, tore him free, tossed him on from one to another. Far and far away he heard them singing—

"Pecador soy, tus favores  
Pido por justicia yo,  
Pues Dios en ti poderió  
Solo por los pecadores,  
A mí me debes tus loores,  
Qui por mí solo muriera  
Dios, si mas mundo no hubiera."

Faintly and more faintly it came: then a blow as if from a thunderbolt, a blaze of light upon his brain, in which the rosy face of Em flashed forth and burst in a myriad sparks—the solid earth rose to meet him, and he fell in blackness and oblivion.

Little Captain Deverard, made of iron and muscle, was the kind of man that dies hard.

When, by and by, he opened his eyes, it was all at once as wide and clear as

he woke up every morning in his bed at home.

The wind had fallen a little, he fancied—had fallen very perceptibly: the roar of the waves on the beach was duller, the dark was being undershot with gray: he judged that the night had long since turned toward morning. He had been thrown in the hollow of two sand-hills: he was on a sort of dry land, if all the shifting ledges of Bar Island have any actual claim to land at all: he was alive and whole—so much was certain. Could it be possible that no others shared his safety?

"Halloo!" cried Captain Deverard, at the top of his voice.

"Halloo!" came back an answer from just below.

"That you, Mr. Coffin?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Whereabouts?" cried the bewildered captain.

"Here—just come ashore on a water-cask I found as I went over. Lend a hand, I say, before the next big wave comes!"

The little captain sprang by instinct to the spot where the mate lay face downward and clutching the sand, and drew him up beside himself and out of the way of his howling pack of pursuers, but nearly spent with weariness and pain. If he did not perform a dervish's dance around this piece of real flesh and blood, which, at first, he had half doubted to be flesh and blood at all, so hollow and so muffled was the voice, it was because he was in no condition to do so. He did the next best thing.

"Had some mountain-dew in my pocket-flask," said he. "S'pose it's smashed? 'Tain't glass, though. Shouldn't wonder if 'twas all mixed with sea-water. Here it is, by all that's good! Sweet as a nut. That's a blessing I didn't look for. Here, Coffin, have a sip: now a swallow—another—drink it off: leave a drop and I'm blest if you sha'n't be tried for mutinying against superior orders!" The mate was never tried for mutiny.

"There's no more of us?" asked he.

"No more," answered the captain.

"By George!" said Mr. Coffin, in a

tone that no words could have strengthened.

"Make out where we be?" he added, by and by.

"Well, as near as I can reckon—I've been looking about since it began to gray—the Unadilla's made her grave in the sand-bar yonder, and the currents, or something else, have tossed us here. If we can cross these hills, I've an idea we should find ourselves on the old Bluff road, nine miles from home. It'll be a tough pull. What do you say—find your legs?"

"Good as yourn," said the mate. And they started on their way without more ado. They wasted no words, nor uttered any regrets, but bent all their energies upon their travel, stumbling, falling, lying down to rest, dropping asleep, swearing out their groans, their feet frost-bitten, half dead at last, when the stars, that had one by one stolen out, melted into a warmer light, and the spires of the old town tipped themselves in sunshine and sparkled in the morning rays.

"It's surprisin'," said Captain Deverard then, "that there's no one hurrying to the beach this morning. There's more'n one wreck there by this time, I'll dare swear!"

"There's the tavern at last," said his companion, feebly, not being of the same indomitable stuff as his superior, and feeling utterly unequal to conjecture or remark upon conjecture.

"Guess we'll go in and rest a spell," replied the worthy captain. "'Morning, Remick! Little blow last night"—as if his news were so great that he must lead up to it by degrees, lest, if broken suddenly, it might prove too much for the hearer.

"Little," said Mr. Remick, casually, in response.

"Little?" repeated the insulted captain, with a rising voice. "You call a tempest that tears the Unadilla to chips a little blow?"

"You said it was, yourself," retorted the innkeeper. "As for me, I never opened an eye all night. How was it, Charlie?—much wind last night?"

"None that I heard," said the hostler; "sea was smooth as a mill-pond."

"Well, that beats all!" exclaimed the captain and the mate together—the captain stentorian with indignation; the mate as if it certainly beat him.

"Have anything?" asked Mr. Remick.

It was of no use talking to such dun-derheads as they. "Don't care if we do," answered Captain Deverard. "Got a team to set us home?" In ten minutes they were spinning up the turnpike, up the Water street, and had stopped before the cottage, where Jack was just filling the tea-kettle at the pump.

"What's that?" exclaimed the mate, suddenly.

"What's what?" answered the captain.

"The Unadilla, or I'll be ——!"

"You've lost your wits!" cried Captain Deverard, seizing his arm and looking in his face.

It was something to look at, assuredly, that face of Mr. Coffin's: the jaw had fallen, the eyes were fixed and staring: it was as white and ghastly as a galvanized corpse; he shook as if struck by palsy.

"Don't look at me, man!" he continued to stammer between his chattering teeth. "Look at there!"

Captain Deverard followed then the mate's gaze with his own, alarmed for him and full of condescending pity; and there—beside the wharf—there she lay, the blue and white streamer at her mast-head, the signal for her captain flying—the Unadilla!

"Is she real?" gasped the mate.

"You may break her up for firewood!" cried the captain; "you may sell her for old iron. I'll never set my foot upon her waist again!"

"She's the devil's own darling," whispered the mate, below his breath.

But there lay the Unadilla, to all appearance as solid reality as she had ever been. There sat Turner on the side; there was Janvrin strolling down to meet him. Captain Deverard surveyed them with a long and leisurely survey, and his amazement crystallized into a scorn beyond expression. Turner and Janvrin! whom he had seen rolled into their rest-

less graves! That these appearances were those men in the flesh, not all the power of all the gods could force him to believe: evil spirits in their guise it might be. He went into his own house and shut the door behind him, and, though it was broad daylight, went to bed. If his head ached for the next twenty-four hours as though it would roll together like a scroll, it was no more than might be expected, he said, after all he had gone through on the previous night. But from that day to this he has never exchanged a syllable with either of those unsubstantial beings—Spanish ghosts, it may be—who have stolen, to the best or worst of his belief, the bodies of other men to become visible in—beings never to have dealings with, never to be in any way countenanced by this honest captain, who absolutely looks through them and ignores their existence.

As for the Unadilla,—which lay there taut and trim, and positively inviting you with all her blue and white beauty,—set foot upon her planks again he had said he would not: to sell her would be like being in the receipt of blood-money. If anybody wanted her—if anybody dared be so foolhardy—let him take her!

When, then, a couple of weeks had rubbed away the sharp edge of the remembrances of that fearful night, Mr. Coffin, a trifle braver or more unbelieving, perhaps, than his superior officer, began to consider the matter of having a schooner for little more than the asking. It ended by his calling up all the reserved forces of his courage; and when he had obtained permission of the party holding her mortgage, he took the Unadilla down to Thomaston for lime, burnt her up and sunk her, and himself with her, on the homeward trip.

"Just as I expected!" said the captain. "The devil's own darling he said she was; and now she's proved it by fire and brimstone. Don't tell me!" he used to add, in reciting his adventures, at the time when, for a commission of five cents, he was in the habit of carrying to the dwellings of various purchasers their baskets from the fish-mar-

ket—"Don't tell me! I might have been upon a spree, but how'd it happen that Mr. Coffin was on a spree too? Nothing so remarkable in that? What? When it was the same sort of a spree, with the same identical visions and accidents and experiences to a tittle?" said the captain, warming himself with his wrath. "How'd it happen we both thought we took in the strange passengers off the shoals—both thought they worked the ship after their old ways to their old wreck, and both thought we were cast away together on Bar Island

for flying in the face of Providence? How'd it happen I heard them singing that '*Pecador soy, tus favores*,' when I don't know a word more Spanish than I do Japanese, if I *didn't* hear them? How'd it happen I got this crick in my back—that isn't moonshine, I can tell you—and he that scar on his hand, if we warn't cast away on board the Unadilla? How'd it happen we both brought up at Plum Island tavern in the morning, if we hadn't been cast away on board the Unadilla in the night?"

Ah! how, indeed, Captain Deverard?

By P. B. Dorsey.

## LOVE AND GHOSTS.

MANY persons will doubtless remember to have seen the following paragraph in the newspapers in 1858:

"MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.—Jacob Wisner, a respectable farmer, residing in the Valley of Middle Creek, Pa., suddenly disappeared on the night of May 17, and not even a trace of him can be found. He visited a neighbor in the evening, but left for home about nine o'clock. It is feared that he has been murdered."

As there never was any other public statement in regard to the case, very few persons are aware that the mysterious disappearance was intimately connected with a piece of romance, "with a woman in it." I propose to relate the circumstances.

Middle Valley is really an elevated fertile plain, two or three miles wide and six or eight long, bordered on the east and west by low ridges or hills, and

separated from the main Allegheny range by the deep valley of Eagle Creek, which lies westward of it. Middle Creek is a small tributary of the Juniata; Eagle Creek empties into a branch of the Susquehanna. The two valleys have a sort of indefinite intercommunication by means of several rough mountain-roads which occupy the passes of the intervening ridge, called Mancey Ridge. Such communication seems very appropriate, on account of the wide difference in the character of the people and in the aspect of the country on either side of the ridge. Eagle Valley is a pent-up workshop of the Cyclops: it is occupied at intervals of three to five miles with the black paraphernalia of iron-furnaces, and is inhabited mainly by the rough, uncultured people employed by such establishments. Middle Valley is an open expanse of cultivated fields, thickly dotted with tasteful houses and barns, and beautified by groves and gardens. Its inhabitants, being chiefly descend-

ants of the early Dutch settlers, are hereditarily steady and orderly. To a considerable extent, they have embraced the advantages of the common-school system and have adopted modern social usages; and some of them have even given their children the benefit of the higher forms of mental and social culture, by sending them from home to be educated. Of course, however, the old Dutch prejudices and superstitions still linger in the valley, and have, indeed, strong hold upon some of the older inhabitants. A well-dressed gentleman is a "fop;" a well-dressed lady is a "tippy." Invisible beings go about the earth, especially at night; and the ghosts of the departed return, in visible form, to warn or torment the living.

Mr. Wisner was one of the few who sent their children to college or seminary; and yet, strange to say, he was one upon whom old hereditary prejudices and superstitions had strongest hold. Indeed, there is a bit of gossip involved in the affair, which may as well be told. The Frau Wisner was a strong-minded woman, formerly a Yankee school-mistress, who had somehow entangled the quiet Dutchman's heart when he was young, and, it was whispered, had ever afterward controlled his affairs. To her it was attributed that their only child, Ella, was sent to boarding-school when advanced beyond the common-school curriculum.

And now, since so much has been revealed, it should be honestly stated that the whole affair was conducted in the face of Mr. Wisner's most emphatic protest. He said that Nell, as he called her, would get her head full of nonsense and flummery—ribbons and laces and flounces, music and dancing, and all that; and very probably crown the list of her follies by falling in love with some of those city fops, and thus get everything into confusion and irremediable difficulty. For he vowed that, if this last event should happen, nothing could ever reconcile him to it, nor secure his consent to have a city fop about him in any relation, whether on a social visit or on a courting expedition. This promise

he repeated more than once—an evidence that all his stubborn nature meant it. We shall see how pertinaciously he remembered it; for, it must be said, in such matters no woman could control him.

He remembered his vow; because, in sooth, the very thing he predicted was literally fulfilled, as he counted fulfillment.

Ella was, of course, attractive. I say, *of course*; for how could she be otherwise, with the mingling of Yankee and Pennsylvania Dutch blood in her veins? She possessed the highly vitalized Yankee brain, with its impress of "faculty" upon every lineament of face and form; and she had the Dutch face and form, instinct with health and vigor, and their concomitants, beauty and serenity. And think of the temperament, the facility, the power which such a combination implies! She won prizes and hearts alike. It was natural and inevitable that she should do so. And she did it with a self-unconsciousness so imperial that she scarcely excited envy.

Among other hearts—of matrons, preceptors, classmates, miscellaneous acquaintances—that she won, was that of the predicted "city fop"—a student in the college at the opposite side of town from the seminary. But, winning his, she lost her own; for a subtle, long-headed, potent fellow he was; the same in place and power in the college that she was in the seminary—the overshadowing spirit, the leading mind among the students. It is hardly wonderful that they gravitated toward each other. These affinities of love are inexorable things.

Ah! all unknown to Mr. Wisner, during those few years of Ella's school-life, the cruel Fates were brewing a bitter cup for his lips. It yet remained to be seen whether they could administer it, or whether there might not be a stubbornness stronger than even the Fates.

With many a profound though silent pang, Mr. Wisner endured the visitations of fashionable girls from the boarding-school during the perpetually-recurring vacations. With profounder pangs he

saw first a guitar and afterward a piano, with their dreadful accompaniments of black-leaved note-books and sheets of music, enter his once plain and quiet home. Under all this accumulating calamity, however, he bore up with uncomplaining fortitude. Doubtless his good frau—if a Yankee woman may receive that appellation—helped to prop his spirit with words of encouragement, or at least to calm it with incentives to resignation. But when Ella had finished her studies at school, and Mr. Burnett, the young Philadelphia law-student, formerly the collegiate acquaintance, came to visit her at her own home, neither Dutch patience nor uxorial influences could restrain him any longer.

Mr. Wisner did not swear—he was a Methodist—but he flew into a violent rage; he stormed through the house like a madman, denouncing boarding-schools, silly girls and city fops; he even ventured to insinuate something about proud, aristocratic women, who want to rub against the city gentry; he rehearsed his vow and renewed it; and, finally, wrought up to the very pitch of frenzy, he went into the parlor and peremptorily ordered the young man out of the house, at the same time warning him never to return.

Singularly enough, Mr. Burnett took the matter in the utmost good nature, picked up his hat with an air of perfect composure, and, with a pleasant, conciliatory remark, politely bowed himself out of the house. No doubt Ella, the shrewd puss, had prepared him for the storm. And what other information or suggestions she gave him, who can tell?

He did not retire to Stahmstown, the little village of the valley, two miles distant from the Wisner farm, to work strategy from that convenient base of operations. He, strangely, took quite a different course. Crossing over into Eagle Valley, he went to Vesuvius Furnace, to visit an old college chum, the son of the manager who resided in "the mansion," that singular oasis in the social desert of a "furnace bank." And he was still there when the mys-

terious disappearance of Mr. Wisner occurred, about a week afterward.

Mysterious disappearance, indeed! Only a few friends of the family ever knew the real facts in the case; and those few friends differed in their mode of telling them. I give the narrative which I got, in under tones, from Mr. Fiesler. I give it as I got it; except that I append a brief key of interpretation.

Mr. Wisner was very systematic in his habits. What he did one week he did the next, with almost invariable regularity. Among his long-established habits was that of visiting his friend and neighbor, Johann Fiesler, on a certain evening each week, to smoke and talk with him till bedtime. On the evening of May 17, mentioned in the newspaper paragraph, he made his accustomed visit, smoked his smoke and talked his talk, and then started for home, which was about a mile distant.

Now, there were two ways of going home: one, by the lane to the main road and then up the road; the other, across the fields. Mr. Wisner usually chose the latter, because—to state the whole case—the mouth of the lane had somehow become a suspicious place. Strange, hissing noises and wonderful, lugubrious groans had been heard there on dismal nights; and, more than once, unearthly sights had been seen. In fact, a nephew of Mr. Wisner, a sturdy, strong-nerved fellow, had one night encountered a great seething furnace at that point; and he gave an appalling account of the fierce fires that burned in it, and of the intensely-glowing sparks that issued from it, as it swung from side to side across the dark and narrow lane.

All this Mr. Wisner knew, and had thought over a thousand times. But on that eventful night of May 17, dark and dolesome though it was, he utterly forgot it; and so he mechanically turned his steps up the lane, pondering some theme that he and his friend Mr. Fiesler had been canvassing. When, however, he approached within two or three rods of the mouth of the lane, the whole matter literally flashed upon him; for, looking



up from the ground, upon which his eyes had been bent in meditation, he saw a small, glimmering light slowly oscillating back and forth and momentarily increasing in magnitude and intenseness. He stopped, appalled, and stood a brief space, gazing in mute horror, his scalp cold, his tongue warm to the roots, and the whole surface of his body breaking out in clammy perspiration. But the instinct of self-preservation presently rose and suggested escape. The first thought turned to the old safe path across the fields, which was really not far distant; and, involuntarily, he directed his eyes toward it; when lo! there swung another light, larger, more glaring, intenser than the one before him. With growing terror he turned about to flee back to his friend Fiesler's. But, behold! right in the middle of the lane where he had just trod, there glowed the very cope of hell—a circle of fuming fire, white as burnished silver, vivid as the lightning. In his now consummate horror, he uttered a groan as of a man in the death-agony, and said: "My God, oh save me!" The sounds had scarcely passed his lips before he deeply repented their utterance. Had he not heard many a time that silence should be observed if one wants to be safe in the presence of the ghosts, and that they will not tolerate any groanings, or complaints, or prayers? Even while these regrets and self-reproaches were rising within him, the three lights, glaring more fiercely, and blown now by audible hissing breaths of spirits, moved toward him; and, presently, an odor from the nearest one began to pour into his nostrils and down his throat—a subtle, suffocating, stupefying odor; no doubt the smell of that foreign brimstone, he thought. It came like a vapor, almost like a stream, right into his face, whichever way he turned. Strangely enough, it presently calmed his tumult, and he felt like lying down to sleep, or at least to rest. Just as he was in the act of doing so the three fires combined themselves into one huge locomotive (he had seen locomotives at Altoona), upon which three great spooks lifted him; and then,

mounting it themselves, away it thundered like a storm, up the slope of Mancey, over the rough ridge, sheer through the air across Eagle Valley to the Allegheny bluffs; and then, fast hurrying from bluff to bluff, leaping chasms and skimming forest-tops, it drove right to the summit of the main Allegheny, and deposited him upon a high, wild crag, precipitous on all sides, and jagged everywhere from the smittings of thunderbolts.

There, through measures of time that seemed to him like slowly revolving eternities, he suffered torments which no words can describe. The spooks burned him in their locomotive furnace, then froze him between cakes of ice and salt, then wrenched his limbs out of the joint-sockets, and jolted them back again to their place, then fiercely fumbled and tore at his abdomen as if attempting to embowel him; and thus, passing from torture to torture, they crowded the myriad moments with agony. But at last he emerged from these long cycles of anguish, and became pleasantly conscious that he was lying down in comfortable posture, with the soft breath of early summer pensively sighing about him; and he heard, as he thought, human voices near by, and felt a grateful dash of cool water upon his brow and over the region of his heart.

"Thank God, boys! he's reviving," said a strange though pleasant voice. "What a relief! I began to be dreadfully alarmed."

"He's a mighty tough old Dutchman," said another voice, which seemed very much like that of Ben Gilp, a rough work-hand at Vesuvius Furnace. "He's too stingy to die. I wasn't a bit afraid."

"There! Didn't he try to open his eyes?" said a third voice, which reminded him of Jim Starkey, another of the Vesuvius work-hands.

"Yes; quiet now, boys!" said the first voice. Then, after a pause, either another voice, or else the same one changed to hollow tones, said slowly and solemnly:

"Jacob Wisner! Jacob Wisner! Jacob Wisner!"

Mr. Wisner opened his eyes and could see only a tall, white form—immensely tall—standing before him, holding a small, lambent light. All else around was simply one mass of ebon darkness. And how still! The poor man began once more to tremble with alarm; but, upon a second solemn call from the pleasant voice, he said, meekly:

"Here am I, Lord."

"Do you know, Jacob Wisner," said the voice, "why you have been thus transported by the invisible spirits away from your home and friends?"

"Indeed I don't," replied Mr. Wisner, promptly, his fear giving way to a feeling of indignation at the injustice of his treatment.

"Have you not lately violated the laws of hospitality in your house?" inquired the voice, in measured, impressive tones.

"Why—why—how?" returned Mr. Wisner, falteringly, evasively.

"Did you not," said the voice, "insult a stranger in your own house without any just cause? Think candidly and honestly, and answer fairly. Remember your situation!" This exhortation was uttered in the most solemn and searching manner.

It had its intended effect upon Mr. Wisner. He, of course, at once recalled the case of Mr. Burnett; and, beginning with the unjustifiable rudeness of calling him a city fop, he mentally retraced his whole course of impropriety, inhospitality and injustice toward the injured man. There can be no question that, even apart from his fears, he deeply regretted the affair and was ashamed of it from beginning to end. It was, therefore, thorough honesty that caused him to frankly reply:

"Well, I confess it wasn't right. I didn't treat the young man fair."

"There was a case of the kind, then?" inquired the voice.

"Yes," said Mr. Wisner, promptly—"the young man from Philadelphia. I forget his name. I'm sure I'm sorry I treated him so. He may be a very nice young man. I'm *very* sorry, I'm sure."

"Well, that is a proper spirit," re-

turned the voice. "And now, Mr. Wisner, if you should be returned to your home in safety, do you think you would feel like making some amends for your injustice and unkindness in that case?"

"What kind of 'mends?" inquired the cautious Dutchman.

"That must be left to your own sense of honor and of right," responded the voice.

There was a pause. The matter began to look to Mr. Wisner very much like a contract; and he was not in the habit of hastily making contracts, since it was always his purpose to fulfill his part of them. In this one, too, there seemed to be some very hard terms for his obstinate nature and long-settled prejudices. It was many minutes before he replied; and it is doubtful whether anything but superstitious fear could have made him decide as he did. At length, however, he said, cautiously, and as if feeling his way toward a compromise:

"Well, if I can get back safe, I'll do what's right about it."

"That is all that should be asked," responded the voice, very promptly. "The matter is left entirely to your Christian honor. You will now return as you came. Spirits, attend!"

Mr. Wisner was about to remonstrate, when that same odor, or vapor, or whatever it was, which had suffocated and stupefied him in Mr. Fiesler's lane, poured again into his nostrils and mouth and stopped his speech. Then he grew calm, as before; and presently the spooks came, gently this time and with a chariot of cloud, and conveyed him back to Middle Valley. They laid him softly down in one of his own fields, up on the slope of Mancey Ridge, and left him there to quiet slumbers. It was late in the afternoon of May 19 when he woke from that deep and dreamless sleep.

Rising to his feet and rousing himself thoroughly, he narrowly scanned the familiar objects about him, and elaborately scrutinized the whole valley from his elevated position, as if to assure himself that he was actually awake and

in the midst of material things. Then he climbed up on the fence near which he had slept, and, seating himself upon the topmost rail, he fell into a long and profound meditation. He was reviewing the events through which he had passed, arranging in his mind what account he should give of himself, and—to tell the whole truth—boggling over the rash promise he had made in regard to Mr. Burnett. It was not until dusky shadows began to creep over the valley that he started homeward; and even then he went slowly and with a strange, vague hesitancy of pace.

Meantime, in the interval of his absence, the people of the valley—at least of his part of it—had been passing through a scene of excitement never known to them before. By noon of May 18 the news of his disappearance had extended fully two miles along the main road and down the lane to Mr. Fiesler's. By evening of that day several small squads of excited neighbors had met here and there to smoke over the wonderful event, and suggest lines of opinion concerning it. Some spoke about the nearness of the mountains and talked of bears and panthers. Others vaguely hinted that Mr. Wisner's home affairs were none too attractive, and intimated that men had been known to abandon less unpleasant surroundings. But, really, the silent thought of the majority recurred to the strange stories that had been told concerning the mouth of Mr. Fiesler's lane; and a vague, indefinable terror was upon almost every heart. By noon of May 19 a proposal had got abroad to search for the missing man; and by evening several of the most probable conjectures concerning his whereabouts had been investigated and found erroneous. This served to heighten the superstitious alarm and dread which now prevailed everywhere except in Mr. Wisner's own home; for his wife and daughter had somehow managed to keep at least comparatively composed. When night came on, and the investigation was postponed until the next morning, a few of the nearest neighbors assembled at the house, as if to

condole with the family, but really to ward off supernatural visitations by the presence of an assemblage; for it is generally the custom with spooks to avoid places of concourse.

The neighbors were sitting in the large front room in perfect silence, amid clouds of tobacco smoke, while Frau Wisner and Ella composedly stitched by the lamp on the stand, when, tramp! tramp! tramp! footsteps sounded upon the front porch—hasty, excited footsteps for that neighborhood: then the outer door opened without ceremony, a step or two was heard in the hall, the room door opened, and, behold! the usually phlegmatic, imperturbable Hans Shutzer stood in the doorway, his fat face livid with excitement and his eyes dilated and strained with terror.

"Oh, mine Gott!" said he, with arms awkwardly extended and fingers stretched wide apart. "I seen 'im. It was his shpirit wat I seen. And I seen te blut on his west and on his short-pussum. It was Shacob Wisner—sure!"

After a few moments of silent consternation among most of the inmates of the room, Ella called upon Mr. Shutzer to explain himself. Upon a little persuasion he was induced to take a seat; and he then proceeded to state that as he came by the barn he saw Mr. Wisner in the barnyard, moving about among the stock, as if engaged in feeding them; that at first he thought himself mistaken, but he had gone quite up to the fence, and presently the form came so near that he saw the features in the twilight, and distinctly saw blood on the vest and shirt-bosom; that the spirit did not speak a word, however, and he himself was "too skeered to shpeak."

When he had completed his narrative, another deep silence followed, which was broken presently by the sound of foot-falls at the back door of the dining-room, followed presently by the sharp click of the latch, the opening and shutting of the door, heavy walking across the dining-room floor, and directly the opening of the door leading into the front room; and then there stood Jacob Wisner, right in the doorway; looking a

little haggard, indeed, and with the bosom of his shirt much more soiled than was ever usual with him, but otherwise rather natural in his appearance. He did not speak a word—his face gave forth no special expression: he merely stepped upon the door-sill and stood there.

Dutch as the company was, several audible utterances of terror from different parts of the room greeted his sudden appearance; and there is no telling what sort of a scene would have ensued, had not Ella bounded to her father with exclamations of joyous welcome, and, throwing her arms about his neck, kissed and embraced him, giving utterance all the while to tenderest words of affectionate greeting, and full, copious expressions of joy. Mr. Wisner's eyes suffused with tears, and he touchingly returned his daughter's caresses. This was a scene too human to excite or maintain superstitious fears. Eyes grew moist that had long been strangers to tears.

Of course, Frau Wisner's welcome followed Ella's, and then each neighbor in turn gave an honest though not very demonstrative greeting. Explanations should have followed next in order; and, indeed, there was enough demand made for them; but Mr. Wisner had deliberately settled his policy upon this point, and his answer to all inquiries was simply the half-playful statement, "I suppose I got lost a little," uttered with a very vague and artificial smile.

In fact, during the remainder of the evening he wore an air so unusual to him, and occasionally gave such strange, irrelevant answers to inquiries and remarks, that the neighbors, as they returned homeward, shook their heads mournfully and hinted that he was "not right in his head." Nor, indeed, were they to be alone in their suspicions. After several days, even his wife began to fear that his mind had received a strain, he seemed so abstracted during the day and was so restless at night, often getting up out of his bed and walking about the room, moaning dolefully and muttering unintelligibly. At length, however, about a week after his return, the whole matter was explained to her

in a most satisfactory and agreeable manner.

After retiring to their room at the close of a day in which he had been unusually abstracted, she said to him:

"Jacob, I see that you have something on your mind which is destroying your comfort. Can I do anything to relieve you of it?"

She said this so gently and kindly that he could not treat it even with inattentive silence. Your quiet, taciturn people generally have a very tender place somewhere in their hearts, if you only have skill enough to find it.

"Well, Abby," he replied, "there is something on my mind that troubles me some. But I'm really ashamed to talk about it."

"Why, if it troubles you, Jacob," she said, in a very sympathetic tone, "I am sure you need not feel ashamed to talk about it, especially to me. For that matter, you know, it need go no further; though I don't seek to know it, unless it will give you relief to tell it."

"Well, Abby," returned he, after a brief pause, "I believe I'll tell you all about it. That's the best way, I guess."

So he gave her the version of his recent experiences which I have presented in this little narrative, and concluded by complaining that he could not see how to redeem his pledge in reference to Mr. Burnett. He had tried his utmost, but could not devise any way that seemed to him proper and right.

"I can relieve you of that matter, Jacob," said his wife, promptly. "I will send for Mr. Burnett, who is still at Vesuvius, and apologize to him for you, if you say so."

"And will that do, Abby?" he asked, in a tone that indicated hopefulness.

"Certainly: why not?" returned she.

"Very well," said he, quite cheerfully. "Now, thank God! I can sleep once more." And he did.

Early next morning a messenger was despatched to Vesuvius Furnace with a note to Mr. Burnett, and preparations were entered upon for the very marked entertainment of a special guest.

I do not pretend to know the myste-

ries which make a Pennsylvania farmhouse so sweet, so cozy, so like a visible romance, and which give to its table such an air of purity and luxury that it seems like the realization of fairy tales to gather around it and partake of its delicious and abundant provisions. I only know that there are such mysteries; and Ella and her mother understood them entirely. Besides, all the circumstances conspired to put Mr. Burnett into a romantic mood. When, therefore, he went over to Mr. Wisner's in response to the note he received, he entered a place of enchantment; and the few days he spent there before his return to Philadelphia more than repaid him for all the mortification and disappointment he had recently endured.

Three years afterward, Mr. Burnett, sitting alone with his wife in that very parlor from which he had once been rudely ordered, said to her, in a sort of quizzical way:

"Ella, do you know how much you and I are indebted to chloroform for our present happiness?"

"To chloroform, Edward?—to chloroform?" returned Mrs. Burnett: "what do you mean?"

"Yes; to chloroform, Ben Gilp and Jim Starkey," he answered.

"Oh, I understand you now," said the wife. "I suspected that something of the kind had been used. But, to tell you the truth, Edward, I have always felt so much ashamed and so condemned on account of even my tacit consent to that matter that I have avoided thinking about it ever since. There is one thing concerning it that I never understood; and that is, the three furnaces."

"Why, you unphilosophic creature!" returned Mr. Burnett. "Don't you know that excited imagination can readily magnify a mole-hill to a mountain—a lantern to a furnace?"

"Ah, I see," said she. "You all three had lanterns. But let us not talk about it, I feel so condemned. Poor old father! he is so kind and good; and his superstitions are only misfortunes, not faults. We ought to have contrived some more humane plan to accomplish the purpose."

"Well," said Mr. Burnett, in a dry, quiet way, "I, at least, shall never find any fault with ghosts. I am indebted to them, in a large measure, for the best wife in the world."

By Kate P. Kereven

### "LOYAL EN TOUT."

"SO you think Ross Vaughan a good dancer?"

Raymond Blythe spoke the words carelessly, but there was something of eagerness in his manner of scanning the fair face of the woman before him, and that something betrayed a hidden meaning in his question.

"I do not remember saying so," Miss Dacres answered, quietly.

"You danced with him two, three, four times; that is a very fair expression of your appreciation of his talent."

"Talent!" she repeated, lightly. "Talent in a dancing line is a strange talent, if talent you will have it."

"Then he talks well. I noticed how interested you were in the pauses of the 'German.'"

"Very likely, inasmuch as I do not

dance the 'German,' and it was a matter of taste, upon my part, to find something interesting."

"Ross Vaughan is always interesting, then?"

"How suddenly you make application of my remarks. I am duly grateful, Mr. Blythe, for the concern manifested upon my account."

Raymond, who had been leaning against the corner of the mantel—Miss Dacres was sitting before the fire in the spacious room—drew himself up somewhat haughtily, and bowed very low in acknowledgment of the satirical expression of gratitude. He was not used to this kind of thing: he had been lionized at home and abroad; mammas had manoeuvred, and daughters had flattered, until there was imminent danger of our hero's head being turned—his head only, however: his heart was stone, so far as any susceptibility made itself apparent. Fêted and indulged and caressed to an extent that threatened satiety, Raymond Blythe had, unconsciously, nourished the sentiment that there was no such thing as baffling him; yet here sat Helen Dacres, with her fair face and words maiden-sweet, smiling upon him, it is true, but with a covert sarcasm in her voice and smile that drove him mad.

There was silence for a few minutes. Raymond Blythe stooped down and stroked the dainty little spaniel curled up in a corner of the sofa by which he stood. The pampered creature snapped and showed its teeth at the caress, unusual from that hand, for Raymond, as a rule, cared little for such useless objects of the brute creation as ladies love to fondle.

"Beau does not like strangers," Miss Dacres commented.

"By intuition or tuition?"

"I cannot tell. You must look to my cousin Rosa for an answer: she sent me the tiny specimen of sagacity. You remember Rosa Dacres, who married the Honorable Mansfield Douglas, at that time Secretary to the British Legation?"

"It would be hard to forget her," Raymond Blythe returned, with a smile

that in itself was a whole chapter of commentaries. "She reigned supreme in Washington during her brief stay there. The Honorable Mansfield Douglas was accounted a lucky man."

"Yes; Rosa turned more than one steady head. She might have chosen from among men wealthier than Mr. Douglas; but the social position that was his by right charmed her far more than any amount of moneyed allurements. She was more aristocratic than mercenary."

"So she sent you this canine morsel?" Raymond said, recurring to the original subject. "She does not forget you."

"I suppose she does not entirely ignore her republican cousins: she may not wish to forget us."

"Perhaps it would be hard to do so," was the significant remark.

"Perhaps," Miss Dacres answered, somewhat coldly, turning away from the keen eyes fixed upon her. "This is her latest token of remembrance," she continued, drawing toward her a curiously-carved box that lay upon a table near. "Mr. Vaughan brought this with him about a month ago. He paid her a visit at the time of his last pilgrimage through England."

Raymond Blythe took the box and examined the rare workmanship. A golden shield sunk in the lid bore the name of Helen Dacres, and, in addition, a cross and other heraldic signs, in red enamel, and the motto, "Loyal en tout."

"It is quite a treasure," Raymond observed. "Mrs. Douglas has exquisite taste, and is quite fanciful, likewise."

"If you refer to the heraldic emblems as fanciful, it is well that Rosa does not hear you," was the smiling answer. "She takes especial pride in the fact that our family have well-attested en-signs armorial."

"A pride strangely at variance with the republican principles supposed to be inherent in all born Americans."

"Only 'supposed,' however. Mrs. Newman has her crest on her carriage; Mrs. Levain has grotesque silver engraved with more grotesque figures, supposed to be 'our coat of arms,' Mr.

Lambel talks of his 'good Huguenot blood;' and Mr. Pleader, whose talent should be his greatest glory, prates about the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock whenever and wherever opportunity presents itself: so on, *ad infinitum*, this, that and the other of our republican celebrities luxuriating, or seeming to luxuriate, in vicarious dignity, after a fashion that belies their watchword, 'All men are born free and equal.' My cousin Rosa shared in the fever, as you may infer."

"How about yourself, Miss Dacres? Have you no love at all for historical associations? You are terribly radical."

"Oh, no! I have no desire to be called 'radical,' but I do desire that I may continue true to my principles."

"'Loyal en tout.' You would honor your motto, then, rather than seek to make it honor you?"

The bright blood surged to her fair face as she answered, turning the conversation again to Rosa's souvenir, "You did not examine the contents of the box, Mr. Blythe. You are not so curious as my lady friends would be under the circumstances."

"Quite as curious, Miss Dacres," he answered; pointedly, "but in the enjoyment of no immunities, as your lady friends are."

"Touch that spring," she said, affecting to disregard his meaning, "and you have the 'open sesame' to the vanities within."

"The vanities within," he replied, "are not to be approached by irreverent fingers. Laces like mist, gloves for Titania and perfumed whispers from 'Araby the Blest.'" As he spoke, he daintily held up for inspection the articles enumerated.

"Rosa's box seems to inspire you. You are quite poetical."

"The motto prevails even here," Raymond continued, examining an embroidered handkerchief, upon which a cross in scarlet and the words "Loyal en tout" were deftly wrought. "Surely fairy fingers have been at work here: these letters in gold thread almost come under the head of invisible."

"Yes; Rosa is an adept in the line.

You see she inflicts her aristocratic proclivities in every possible form. It is all very well to know that stalwart Guy d'Acre—the head of the house with which Rosa is proud to claim connection—wore the Red Cross honorably, and fairly earned from royal lips the commendation, 'Loyal en tout:' it is all very well to know this, but I think my handkerchief should not suffer for that knowledge, and be compelled to cross the water with all that blazonry of scarlet and gold. I'll have to read Rosa a lecture one of these days."

"You will carry it to-night, nevertheless."

"How do you know?"

"I merely think so. Mr. Vaughan will see then that you appreciate his fidelity as a messenger by thus honoring his message, even though you may therein forego your own inclinations."

"You are pleased to be interested in Mr. Vaughan," was the haughty reply; and Helen Dacres looked calmly into the dark eyes of Raymond Blythe.

"Are you not?" The question escaped the man's lips so suddenly that there was no staying it, although in the next moment he would have sacrificed anything to recall it.

Miss Dacres did not answer: she turned away from Raymond Blythe's scrutiny, and seemed to grow every minute colder and haughtier.

"Pardon me, Miss Dacres," the offender said, while his dark cheek flushed and his fine eyes gleamed strangely. "I forgot myself, indeed, when I presumed to ask such a question—I," he added, scornfully, "who have no right to question you."

"Right!" she echoed, raising her eyebrows in wonderment. "Mr. Blythe is an enigma to-day."

"Then let me remain one. Shall it be so?"

"If you wish it. I will say nothing to turn you from your mysterious fancy."

"You are very gracious," he ironically reflected.

"Oh, no! Only very—"

"Only very indifferent, I suppose you would say," he hastily interrupted.

Again she looked into his eyes with that provokingly calm gaze of hers, and again her look sent the blood into his dark cheek.

"You are disposed to be satirical, Mr. Blythe; or perhaps the enigma that you enact is beyond all possibility of solving."

"I am an annoyance," he said, affecting a levity that he did not feel. "These sunny days in winter bring out the crooked points in my character, I believe."

"So you let the poor day shoulder your failings?"

"Exactly so, Miss Dacres. I know it is a cowardly thing to do, yet in many a strait I am the veriest coward that ever breathed. Have you not found it out?"

"No."

"You have not made my character a study, I know; but I fancied that glaring errors were for the discovery of any one and every one, interested or indifferent."

"What a disagreeable word that last is!" she said, leaning back in her chair and toying with the rings upon her fingers. "Will you be at Mrs. Lawson's to-night?" she asked, abruptly changing the subject, which was fast becoming personal.

"No; I have half forsworn this form of the vanities of life. I rarely dance; all the rest do, and I cannot be a 'mere looker-on in'—in any place," he concluded, laughing at the mutilated quotation. "Whether it be a failing or not, I confess to such an ownership of *amour propre* as would prevent my taking rank among the undistinguished 'many.'"

"Mrs. Lawson will be disappointed."

"Will she? Ah! then I dare not be cruel. I *might* be persuaded to attend."

Helen Dacres would not see his meaning: she would not advance a single step to let this man know that he was not "indifferent" to her, because—because, woman, and keen-sighted woman as she was, she could not tell how much he loved her. He was the very model of gallantry, and that was the most that could be said of his attentions to woman-kind, generally or individually regarded. His dark cheek told no secrets in flush or paling; his eyes smiled steadily

through all, and his matchless composure abated not a whit under the fire of soft glances or words surpassing sweet. truly, Raymond Blythe was hard to conquer; and yet, if there be secrets under the rose, our hero had his, although his outward seeming gave neither sign nor token. Ah, Helen Dacres! your woman's heart, too proud to trust itself to impulse, knew not what eagerness lay deep hidden under all that superb composure that made Raymond Blythe fit match even for your haughty self.

"Mrs. Lawson would no doubt be delighted to try her powers of persuasion, should you give her the opportunity."

"Yes; Mrs. Lawson is a charming woman, yet I fear that I must deprive myself of the pleasure of seeing her to-night: I have made other arrangements."

A little further conversation, a nearer approach than ever to positive misunderstanding, and Raymond Blythe bade a formal adieu.

After all his assertions to the contrary, he made his appearance that evening at Mrs. Lawson's. As he entered the room in which those of the assembly who took active part in the dancing were congregated, his eyes fell first upon Helen Dacres. She was quite near to him—so near, that he heard her say to Ross Vaughan, who was her partner: "Some men do not dance, lest it should derogate from their dignity." The remark had no personal application, so far as any intention on the speaker's part was concerned; yet Helen Dacres colored perceptibly, as, looking up accidentally, she saw Raymond Blythe standing there in the doorway, an attentive and interested auditor. She returned his ceremonious greeting and floated on, the sweeping clouds of lace that hung about her brushing against him as she passed. His quick eye caught one thing: he had sent her a bouquet that afternoon, and this was what he saw—rare blossoms, detached from the array of floral beauty, gleamed in her hair and upon her breast: truly, that compensated for the game of cross-purposes played so miserably that morning. When the dance was finished, he made his way through the crowd to her side.

"So you were persuaded to come?" she said, gayly.

"I persuaded myself; that is, myself persuasive, against myself dissuasive, gained the suit. There were able arguments on both sides: I had a pressing engagement elsewhere, and that gave one client strong hope of winning; I could not stay away, and the inevitable overruled the accidental: hence the decision in favor of myself persuasive."

"Could not stay away," Blythe?" said Ross Vaughan, laughing significantly. "Ah, I see! Miss Lawson is looking her best to-night. It is well that you came."

"Yes, it is well. I like to see pretty women looking their best. Mere gallantry forbids my affecting a different sentiment."

"Mr. Vaughan," said Miss Dacres, directing Ross Vaughan's attention to a lady who stood at some distance, nodding and smiling, and vainly endeavoring to join Helen Dacres and her friends, "Miss Lawson wishes to come here. Go and give her an opportunity to dismiss, graciously, that odious Mr. Sayle. She will not come while he is with her."

Ross Vaughan hastened to do the bidding of the "ladye faire," and Helen was left alone with Raymond Blythe.

"Your taste is exquisite, Mr. Blythe," she said, endeavoring to draw him from the sudden silence that possessed him.

"Why do you say *my* taste, Miss Dacres? Did you know so well what my favorites among flowers were?"

"No, I was not so discerning. 'Loyal en tout' upon the card accompanying the bouquet was a safer guide than my own fancy."

"You know, then, my favorite motto, if you do not know my favorite flowers."

"I know that few besides you know anything about the motto referred to."

"Few?" Not Mr. Vaughan, even?"

"Not Mr. Vaughan, even," she repeated, "unless Rosa enlightened him."

Ross Vaughan returned with Flora Lawson, and the conversation drifted into another channel. A spray of heliotrope that had fallen from Helen's bou-

quet was eagerly seized upon by Mr. Vaughan.

"By reason of the rescue," he said, gallantly excusing his appropriation of the flower, and at the same time fastening the heliotrope in his button-hole.

"No, Mr. Vaughan," Helen pleaded; "indeed, you must return it."

"It would have been trampled under foot but for me, and, as I saved it from degradation, I claim it as my own."

"But, Mr. Vaughan—" She stopped suddenly, and her lovely face changed from crimson to white so rapidly that Flora Lawson called out, "Return it upon this condition, Mr. Vaughan: that she tell you whose gift the flowers are; then we can tell why they are so precious."

"They are not so precious," was the haughty answer. Raymond Blythe's eager gaze stirred all the womanly pride in Helen Dacres: she would not have him think his gift "so precious" in her eyes.

"Too precious for me, nevertheless," said Ross Vaughan, while his eyes gleamed balefully. "What I win, I wear, however," he added, defiantly: recovering himself, he concluded, "That is, if Miss Dacres be gracious enough to accord this favor to the most devoted of her subjects."

Miss Dacres made no reply, and for the rest of the evening, Raymond Blythe saw his heliotrope worn triumphantly upon Ross Vaughan's breast.

"It is for us to wear the heliotrope," further commented Mr. Vaughan, "and not for you. *We* turn to the sun." He bowed very low, and his strange eye glittered with the fierce light kindled by strong emotion. That he loved Helen Dacres with all the strength of a man's passionate love was no secret to those who cared to read the chapter so legibly written.

An hour later, Raymond Blythe, upon whose hands the time hung heavily while the whirl of dancing claimed the attention of the one woman who had power to charm away his weariness, strolled into the conservatory, and seated himself upon a low rustic bench far out of sight,

of the dancers and their giddy maze. He had not been long there when the sound of voices arrested his wandering thought: one of the voices, low yet distinct, particularly had power to fix his attention. Not far away, half hidden by the foliage and the elaborate framework upon which rare vines were trained, Raymond Blythe saw the gleam of white robes, and by that he knew that a woman was one of the two so absorbed in that whispered conversation that they seemed unconscious of the proximity of a third party. He would have left the spot and the whispering pair, but the utterance of his own name aroused his curiosity.

"It is the fashion to be in love with Raymond Blythe, that is all," said a man's voice, in tones unguardedly loud. "However, if you say so, I will believe you." An answer so low that Raymond could not catch even the sound of the voice, seemed to satisfy the doubting lover. "Never aspired to the honor of being loved by Mr. Blythe." Is that what you say? How complimentary to me! What? he continued, bending lower and lower that he might not lose a word of that which was so dear to him. "You think my love honor enough. Ah! I see that you can flatter when you wish it." The rest of the talk was so low that the words were inaudible to any save the two most interested.

"That man is Ross Vaughan," said Raymond to himself, as the sound of retreating footsteps told him that he was alone in the conservatory; "but who is the woman? Not—" He did not pursue the questioning in that manner: he rose and walked on until an opening between two rows of gorgeous exotics permitted him to pass to the spot in which the two, whose conversation so harshly rang in his mind, had been standing.

The question was then and there answered: lying at his feet was a woman's handkerchief; he picked it up, and saw upon its snowy surface the scarlet cross and motto, "Loyal en tout." "And that woman," he said bitterly, sitting down, and burying his face in his hands—"that woman who listened to *his*

love, was Helen Dacres!" How long he sat there, he could not tell; it seemed to him as if in that moment he had grown suddenly old—old with age, told not in years, but in cruel pain. When he looked up again, there were hard-set lines about his mouth and his dark face wore a gloom that gave it deeper darkness. He could not reproach Helen Dacres for the blow: she had not distinguished him from other men by any marked encouragement; he had, again and again, thought of her as one approaching the picture so rarely drawn, "Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek?" Yet he had loved her as a man loves but once in his life, and he—the thought was madness!—he had loved her in vain. He walked home under the starlight, scarce knowing or caring whither his footsteps tended, with but one thought in his heart, and that despair—the despair that is born of emotions crushed, yet rebellious still, although rebellion like this were worse than death itself.

The next morning found him again with Helen Dacres.

"I have come to say 'good-bye,'" he said, as he advanced to meet her upon her entrance into the room in which he had awaited her.

"To say good-bye?" she repeated questioningly, and, in spite of her attempt at control, her lip trembled. "Where are you going?"

"I leave for New York to-night, and sail for Europe in the morning. Have you any message for Mrs. Douglas? I will see her before I leave England for the Continent."

And he had come for this! Only to know if she had "any message for Mrs. Douglas!" Helen Dacres knew that her face was pale, and she could not help herself in that moment—only in that moment, however: then her pride rose up in arms, and again she was her haughty self.

"I have no message," she answered, very calmly: "my letter goes out in the next mail, and that will give her the latest item of information."

"The very latest?" he inquired, in-



tending to elicit some remark in reference to Ross Vaughan, but, to his discomfiture, failing signally.

"Yes—I wrote it yesterday morning. Nothing of importance has transpired since. Do you know of anything?"

"I think that I do—perhaps, however, it is nothing new: Mrs. Douglas may have foreseen where others, I among them, were blind."

"You affect the enigmatical, Mr. Blythe," she said, staring at him in sheer bewilderment. "Permit me to remind you that I have no skill in solving riddles. Give my love to Rosa," she continued, "and tell her that her last messages were faithfully delivered."

"That Mr. Vaughan was the very model of messengers. It may be," said Raymond Blythe, fixing his keen gaze upon her, "that this will be a mere work of supererogation on my part: perhaps she knows—"

"Knows what, Mr. Blythe?" Helen asked, as Raymond broke off abruptly.

"What you have long known—what I found out so lately. Good-bye," he concluded, advancing toward her and holding out his hand for that last farewell. "If ever we meet again, I hope that you will be as happy as you are now, and I—but what matter?" he added, bitterly, "what matter about me or my fate?"

She laid her hand quietly in his, saying as she did so, "When will you return, Mr. Blythe? Do not let too long an absence alienate you from home and its associations."

"Home!" he echoed, and his eyes were gloomier than ever. "I have no home. The world is for me and those like me that have neither home nor wife to stay their wandering feet. I have no home."

She looked at him so earnestly, with true womanly pity in her eyes, that his fierceness was disarmed. "Good-bye," he cried, passionately. "May your home be blessed with all that can bless life. I go to forget, and if there be no such thing as forgetfulness, so let it be: I must bide my time. Good-bye." He wrung her hand, and was gone before she could find words to reply, leaving

her still standing there, with her eyes fixed upon the spot which he had occupied, and her fair face ghastly in its paleness. Her heart ached wearily because of his inexplicable words. What did it all mean? Raymond Blythe had been accounted a man of stern honor among honorable men: he had borne a fair, unblemished name in all his career; yet, had he treated her fairly—her, the one woman who loved him so?—yes, who loved him so, although her woman's pride kept her woman's heart from betraying the secret of that love.

"Is she a coquette, after all?" Raymond Blythe reflected, as he recalled the earnest eyes that wove their spell about his heart. "What did she mean when she looked at me so pityingly? Did she know the story that I came too late to tell? She—Ross Vaughan's wife! He will never make her happy. I hate his sinister eyes and his measured voice! Curse him, every hour of his life! For what?" he went on, more coolly, despising himself for his weakness. "What is Ross Vaughan to me, that even his name should make me forget myself?"

He reached his home, and made the final preparations for his voyage: he bade no other adieu than that one so painful to him, gave no warning of his sudden departure; and before twenty-four hours had elapsed he was outward bound, seeking among strangers and under a strange sky to bury his anguish deep, past all resurrection. Such oblivion, easy as it was to seek, was hard to find.

For years he wandered restlessly from place to place, making few friends and avoiding companionship. At times, news from his own country came to him, and again and again he met with friends who might have given him a fair history of what had passed since he had deserted that social world of which he was at one time the idol; but he asked no questions, and his strange reserve repelled advances. There came at last, to banish the demon of unrest, a sort of dulless or apathy that was almost peace, and, by degrees, that terrible gloom wore away from his brow, and from his heart: not that he was happy—far from it—but he had cher-

ished his sorrow so long that it seemed a part of his life, and therefore a burden with which there was no dispensing.

He had thought himself devoid of all sentimentality respecting "his own country;" he had almost wondered when he heard other men counting eagerly the days that must pass before they could see home again; there had seemed to him a childishness, a weakness in that kind of attachment; and, one day, to prove how weak he was, in spite of all his vaunted strength, to let him know that no armor is proof against all manner of assault, there came to him that strange yearning for what had been home to him in other and happier days. The spirit Heimweh possessed him—genuine "home-woe"—that longing and craving for something dearer and more sacred than the stranger-land, for a glimpse of the blue sky that smiled upon him when life itself had smiles, and smiles only, for him. He could not conquer it: he tried to convince himself that other lands were fairer than that land beyond the sea, but his trying was in vain; and, to give his heart rest he turned his footsteps homeward.

There were none waiting to receive him; none knew that he was coming. He was glad to find himself again in Philadelphia, his native city, but he wanted no scenes, and he walked into the house which he had left more than seven years before as unconcerned as if he had left it yesterday. His old housekeeper shrieked at his sudden appearance, and began a series of wailings peculiar to her sympathetic self: he shook hands with her quietly, asked how she had been all the while, and left her to execute the grand finale to her marvelous discord in the presence of a more numerous audience—to wit, the assembled household.

An hour later he walked into his club, unrecognized at first by those sitting about, reading or talking together. He took his place in his old corner and busied himself with a newspaper, caring very little, however, for the details in the closely-printed columns. Looking up at length, he saw that a man opposite to

him was watching him intently: he knew that his bronzed face and heavy beard were equal to any disguise, but he further knew that this man opposite found something familiar in the face so scrutinized.

"If Raymond Blythe be a living man, you are he," said the curious gazer, rising at length, and bringing his hand down heavily upon Raymond's shoulder. "Why, man, when did you come home? We thought you dead and buried years ago."

"Did you? Well, are you satisfied of my abiding still in the flesh?"

They shook hands cordially, and that was the signal for the rest in the room to crowd around and give their word of welcome. Every man of them had known Raymond Blythe years before, but, as Dick Lawson had said, they had thought him "dead and buried years ago," and they would no more have dreamed of seeing him among them again than of expecting a disembodied spirit to give them the hand of fellowship. To say that they were glad to see him is but a faint expression of their feeling: men are rarely exuberant in the sentimental line; they leave that kind of thing to its lawful proprietaries, tender-hearted womankind; but, even among practical, commonplace men, there are occasions that elicit a divine spark of enthusiasm, and this return of Raymond Blythe after so long an exile, and from the dead as it were, was occasion enough for a man to forswear his ancient stoicism and be almost woman-hearted for the time. Question after question was poured out by eager lips, and Raymond, yielding to the influence of the moment, answered any and every inquiry.

"Mother will be delighted to see you. She 'holds out' to-night," said irreverent Dick Lawson; "some sort of crowd or other—I never can keep the run of all the distractions that afflict her. There will be a 'lion' there, a genuine Oriental, with a beard like—like your own, man alive!" Dick laughed aloud at his own comparison, and rattled on: "But you come, old fellow, and the Oriental may return to his pristine insignificance: you will out-lionize the lion himself."

"I hope not."

"That matters little. Raymond Blythe comes, and sees, and conquers—the Caesar of his day."

"A carpet Caesar, forsooth," said Raymond, smiling at the conceit.

"Won't there be a grand old row when you stalk in among them to-night?" Dick exclaimed, anticipating the sensation that Raymond Blythe's unexpected advent could not fail to create. "There will be any amount of flutterings among the gentler sex, who have never ceased to regret your absence: there will be chirpings and chattering innumerable, and I will be there to see! Dick Lawson, you are a genius in your way; you have such a happy faculty of preparing little surprises for your mamma and her fair friends."

"Perhaps you will be disappointed. I may decline taking part in the proposed surprise."

"Not if I know it, my man."

"A stranger, mother," said Dick Lawson that night, as, after having threaded his way through the crowd that lined stairway and hall and spacious rooms, he reached his mother's side and presented Raymond Blythe. "He is anxious to make your acquaintance."

Mrs. Lawson bowed ceremoniously, and gave a second look at the dark face that wore so familiar a smile in that moment.

"Dick," she said, hesitatingly, but Dick was far away, having left his mother to ravel the web of mystery for herself. "I am sure," she said, addressing the "stranger"—who had said nothing beyond the mere murmuring of his appreciation of the "honor vouchsafed in being permitted to make Mrs. Lawson's acquaintance"—"that Dick has in contemplation some surprise for me. Are you a party thereto? Have I not seen you before? 'Strangers' do not wear smiles so familiar."

"Mrs. Lawson is pleased, then, to remember me?"

"Oh, Raymond Blythe!" she called out, recognizing instantly the voice that spoke in its natural tones. "Why did you let Dick impose upon me?" She

held out both hands and let her glowing face give her welcome additional warmth. In a moment she recalled the rumors that had prevailed respecting his death abroad, and she said, eagerly, "How did it happen that news came home that you were dead? Tell me that, Raymond Blythe."

"I cannot tell. I am not responsible for the rumor. We will dismiss that, and remember only that I am here again, and that you are glad to see me, after all."

Introductions upon all sides were solicited by those eager to know Raymond Blythe, the fame of whose former reign still lived in the memory of old and young.

"Now, you know everybody," Mrs. Lawson said, laughingly, when the round was completed—"that is, everybody worth knowing. Oh, there is Helen Dacres!" she exclaimed, suddenly. "You remember her? Yes? Ah! now I recollect that you admired her at one time. She has faded somewhat—seven years make changes in pretty women."

"Not in all pretty women," complimented Raymond.

"You have not forgotten how to flatter, I see. You need not try your art upon Helen Dacres, let me tell you: she is the proudest, coldest woman that ever I knew."

"She has not changed in that, then," Raymond returned, and all the fire of the old passion gleamed in his deep eyes. "But why do you say 'Helen Dacres?'"

"What should I say? She is Helen Dacres still. Did you not know that? There has been talk enough about her strange aversion to matrimony. She has had suitors in abundance, but she treats them all alike; that is, she says 'No' to all of them. She is not very young, now," was the conclusion, with a spice of womanly malice in it, "and she may live to regret her want of wisdom."

"Rather," said Raymond, "she may live to learn that her wisdom was not as the wisdom of the world."

"Well, that may be. She can treasure up, in lieu of more substantial treasure, the memory of the conquests that

were hers in her day of power, and that may be solace sufficient in her state of single blessedness. Her proud, calm manner had a peculiar fascination in it, that made heads, not over-steady, reel, and hearts, that seemed unconquerable, yield unconditionally. Ah! Helen Dacres, few women wielded such power as you!"

Every word was pain to Raymond Blythe, and he had to stand and listen and suffer in silence, while Mrs. Lawson kept up her gossip.

"Ross Vaughan went mad about her: he haunted her, pursuing her from place to place, and refusing to take her rejection as final, until, mad as he was, he realized his madness, and disappeared one day, almost as mysteriously as you did in that last running away of yours."

Raymond Blythe's face flushed, but Mrs. Lawson had spoken at random, and she read no secrets in the changing color.

"Yes," he returned, mechanically, "I am a man of sudden impulses, and I scarce know to-day what freak may rule to-morrow. I thought," he said, mustering all his composure, "that Ross Vaughan was the favored suitor. At the time of my leaving, his star seemed to be in the ascendant."

"No one else ever thought so, then," was the contemptuous answer. "How could you have been so blind? She never liked him; and as for her family—her brother, George Dacres, said he would rather see her dead than married to Ross Vaughan: that was strong language for a model member of the *poco-curante* order. Ross Vaughan was a strange, passionate man, entirely different in character from his brother, who was generally a favorite."

"Do you mean Adolph Vaughan—'handsome Dolly,' as we called him? What became of him?"

"I have the honor to be mother-in-law to 'handsome Dolly,'" was the smiling answer. "Did you not know that? Flora was married about three months after your flight: she is quite a steady matron, now."

"I hope that it is not too late to congratulate you," Raymond returned. "Dolly Vaughan was a superior man."

"Thanks, in Dolly's name, for your eulogy. Yes, Flora is very happy."

"The brothers were alike in personal appearance."

"Strikingly so, but there was something in Ross' face that gave a clue to the fierce disposition within. Did you not think so?"

"Yes, it detracted from the perfection of his face."

Later in the evening, Raymond, finding the crowded rooms warm almost to the point of suffocation, made his way to the piazza which ran along one side of the house, giving a full view of the brilliantly-lighted rooms, and at the same time affording a pleasant retreat for those who, like Raymond Blythe, took no part in the dancing. Two or three gentlemen were there before him, and one of them hailed him as he emerged from the shadow of the massive pillar by which he had at first stationed himself.

"Not tired already?"

"By no means—only anxious for a draught of oxygen and a minute's quietness," Raymond replied. "What brought you out? You used to be indefatigable among dancers."

"Yes," Archie Stuart said, "I used to be a great many things that I am not; indeed, I contemplate asceticism."

"Likely!" his companion scornfully commented. "Asceticism is a pleasant fiction so far as your contemplation of it goes."

"Never mind: these hard times make men think seriously—yes, men that never thought before. I heard some bad news to-night."

"What is it?" Blythe asked.

"As it does not concern you, I will tell you. It will not spoil your enjoyment—your funds are safe. My father suffers terribly; it was from him I gained the information: he came in very late to-night, and I knew at once that something was the matter, so I plied him with questions, and he could not shake me off. I am a poor man to-night, that is all." Archie Stuart laughed lightly,

but his voice was none of the steadiest, and his manner was constrained.

"A poor man, Archie? How so?" Raymond asked, interested in Archie Stuart's welfare.

"Well, that gentleman of fashion, Augustus Lloyd, Esq., has proved himself a common swindler. He decamped this morning, leaving little else than debts behind him, and, worse than all, involving another man in ruin and disgrace."

"And that other man?" said Raymond, anxiously, while he moved into the shadow to hide his face, in which strong emotion betrayed itself.

"One who will never survive a stain upon his good name, proud old gentleman that he is—George Dacres."

A hollow moan and a heavy fall, near to the three standing upon the piazza, suddenly interrupted their conversation. They had not noticed that a window close beside them was wide open, or that, hidden by the heavy drapery, one within that window was drinking in every word of the news communicated by Archie Stuart. Raymond Blythe passed in through the open window, and saw, in the gloom made by the curtains, a figure prostrate and helpless—the figure of an old man, whose white hair made his helplessness seem still more pitiful. The deep bay window, forming as it did a miniature apartment, opened into the library, and thither Raymond Blythe bore the stricken "proud old gentleman," George Dacres. There was no need for Raymond to wait until the light revealed the face of the sufferer: he knew too well for whom Archie Stuart's words bore their greatest bitterness, and that hollow moan and heavy fall had at once smitten his heart with their full significance.

"Dr. Moorhead is here," said Archie Stuart, who had followed Raymond into the library. "Shall I summon him?"

"Yes. I need not tell you to create no alarm."

"Dr. Moorhead," said Archie, approaching that gentleman, who was doing his very best to entertain a frightful old dowager in purple and gold, "will Mrs. Newman excuse you for a while?"

Mrs. Newman was graciousness itself, making Dr. Moorhead promise, however, to return very soon—she was "tired of sitting alone."

Archie prepared Dr. Moorhead for the work before him by relating the cause of the sudden seizure of Mr. Dacres—a relation which made the doctor frown ominously.

"We must get him home at once. I will go with him; and who else?" the doctor said, after a careful examination of the state of the sufferer.

"I," said Raymond Blythe; and so it was settled that Mr. Dacres should be taken home immediately, without further alarming the assembled company.

Before he was removed he recovered consciousness, and said, in broken, uncertain accents, "Who is here? Where is Helen? My good name, my good name! Where is Helen?" And Helen was sent for, that the patient's restlessness might thereby be abated.

She was standing talking to Mrs. Lawson when Raymond made his way to her. She knew him instantly, although for more than seven years she had not seen his face. Had not seen his face?—did it ever fade from her inward vision? Ah! she had not even tried to forget.

He shook hands with her, and then, before she had time to recover from the shock of that meeting—for shock it was, although her pale, proud face scarce changed its color—he said, "Miss Dacres, your father is going home. I have been commissioned to take you to him."

She expressed no surprise: it seemed fair enough that Raymond Blythe, always a gallant man, should cling to his old-time gallantry. She laid her hand upon his arm, and walked away with him, and not until they reached the library door did he give her warning of what she must expect to see. He held her hand firmly, for her trembling fingers would have given up their hold upon his arm, and he said to her, in tender, passionate tones, that quieted her terror, "For your father's sake, Miss Dacres, you will compose yourself. We trust implicitly in you."

She raised her eyes, swimming in tears, and said, sadly yet calmly withal, "I think I can trust myself."

"Loyal en tout," Raymond whispered, so low that Helen Dacres did not at first comprehend: then his meaning flashed upon her, and remembrances of what had been, and visions of what might have been, stirred her heart until every throb was pain.

Mr. Dacres was sitting up when his daughter entered: he heard the door open, and looked around to see who came.

"Helen," he said, and his voice was changed and shaken, "I thought you had left me. Did they tell you—do you know—"

"Know what, father?" she interrupted, going up to him, and kneeling at his side, letting her head rest against his shoulder. "That I love you? I have known that all my life." She affected a cheerfulness that she did not feel, repressing her own anguish that she might comfort one dearer than herself.

"My darling! my darling!" said the old man, passing his hand feebly over the dark hair that lay close to his snowy locks. "I have not felt well this evening," he endeavored to explain; "I came here to be away from the noise and the glare, and I heard— Do you know what I heard, Helen?" he asked, so suddenly and fiercely that Helen was startled at the change in his manner.

"Do not tell me anything, papa," she answered, unconsciously using the name familiar to her in her days of childhood. "We will go home now, and all will be well. I am with you," she added, proudly.

"Yes, yes," he said, hesitatingly, "you are with me." Then his mind wandered, and he cried out, piteously, "But my good name, Helen! my good name!"

"Shall be our good name," was her firm reply.

"But they have talked of it, Helen—they will talk of it," and the proud old man gazed distractedly about him.

"Not while I am here to silence them." All the pride of a proud race rang out in

her voice, and told its tale upon her flushing cheek.

"Has your carriage come, Miss Dacres?" asked Dr. Moorhead, wishing to have Mr. Dacres removed as speedily as possible.

"Not yet."

"You need not wait for that," Raymond Blythe remarked. "There is a carriage in waiting, and I think we can have that for the time required."

Mr. Stuart, Archie's father, was leaving Mrs. Lawson's at that moment: Raymond Blythe saw him pass out, and followed him, reaching him in time to effect the purpose desired.

"Mr. Stuart," he called out, as that gentleman put his foot upon the step of the carriage awaiting him.

"What is it? Is that you, Blythe? I am going home. It is early, I know, but I want to get out of this place," Mr. Stuart returned, still lingering at the door of the carriage, that he might hear what Raymond had to say.

"We want your carriage for a while, to take Mr. Dacres home."

"George Dacres! Why, what is the matter with him?"

Raymond hastily explained, adding, as an apology for his detaining Mr. Stuart, who was really anxious to reach his home, "We do not wish to have any know that he is ill, beyond those already aware of it; that is, we do not wish to have it spread about to-night: hence my reason for requesting the use of your carriage. We cannot wait until his own comes, and mine may be later still."

"And George Dacres is broken down at last! God help him! I can say this with all my heart, although you may think me embittered against him. If I am wronged, George Dacres had no hand in it." Mr. Stuart came up the steps slowly, and stood in the shadow of the doorway, while Raymond Blythe returned to the library to assist in taking Mr. Dacres to the carriage.

"Helen must come," said the old man, when he was seated in the carriage, with Dr. Moorhead beside him. "I cannot leave Helen."

"We do not wish you to leave her," said the doctor, quieting the anxiety of his patient. "Mr. Blythe will bring her in a moment."

Helen came out upon Raymond Blythe's arm, and then Mr. Dacres was satisfied and willing to be driven home. Blythe stood at the door of the carriage after he had assisted Helen in, and seemed uncertain whether to offer his services further or to withdraw.

"Mr. Blythe," said Dr. Moorhead, putting the question beyond dispute, "you may be of use to us. If Miss Dacres agree with me, I would like to have you come with us."

"I did not ask Mr. Blythe," said Helen, frankly, "because I thought he was coming with us. He knows how great a kindness he would confer upon us by accompanying us now." And so the doubt was settled.

The doctor remained all night with Mr. Dacres, who was in a most critical condition, unconscious, at times, or, if conscious, dwelling piteously upon the one theme, "My good name, Helen! my good name!" Helen, whose unnatural calmness had been succeeded by a terrible reaction, was persuaded to leave her father's room and seek rest elsewhere; but before morning she stole in again, and sat with a face like the dead, and hollow eyes that burned unnaturally, making the paleness of the features more ghastly. Raymond Blythe did not leave until the first gray gleam of morning came in through the half-closed shutter. All the next day Mr. Dacres lay in that helpless state, and those that watched thought death very near. George Dacres, Helen's brother, who had been absent for some days, was telegraphed for, and arrived late in the afternoon, shocked beyond measure at the melancholy state of affairs in his home. He went at once to his father's room, and there found Helen, who kept unbroken watch beside that bed of pain: he kissed her fondly,—he had always made an idol of her—and then went up to the bedside to see his father. Mr. Dacres was lying, with eyes closed, apparently sleeping, but the sound of George's step, light as it was,

aroused him: he looked up and saw his son beside him; he would have raised his hand, but the power was denied him. George clasped the poor, helpless fingers in his strong grasp, and said, bending low that his father might not lose a word, "Father, all will be well. Trust us yet a while."

"But my good name, boy! my good name!" was the wailing cry.

"Is it not my name too? I am George Dacres." The fair, handsome face of George Dacres was slightly flushed, and that was all the evidence of his earnest feeling. He was, by nature and habit, a careless, idling sort of man, who hitherto had had no special aim in life to make him stir himself in the world or give his dormant energies fair play. That day became the turning-point in his life, and the reverses that had come upon the head of his family were to be, indeed, the "stepping-stones to higher things" for gay, pleasure-loving George Dacres.

"You do not know all, George," said Mr. Dacres.

"Yes, all—all that concerns you or me."

"And you say that 'all will be well.' How can that be, George? Helen said so, too, last night. How can it be?"

"It will be," was the emphatic answer, "God helping me."

"But how, George, how?" asked the old man, impatiently.

"Leave that to me—trust me, for my name's sake," and George Dacres smiled at his own enthusiasm.

The evil news spread rapidly that the great banking-house of "George Dacres & Co." had gone down in the financial storm. There had been heavy failures among men of high commercial standing, but none like this, and it became the town-talk before the day was over. Augustus Lloyd had brought the dire day upon George Dacres, and had, coward-like and criminal as he was, fled to save himself. Other firms were involved, and curses, loud and deep, came even from the lips of cool, calm men—curses upon the head of the man who had so shamelessly betrayed the trust reposed in him; and all the while old George Dacres

lay, bewailing not his own loss, but the loss of others and the stain upon a fair good name.

The day after his return home found George Dacres the younger very busy. He was closeted with his father's legal adviser the greater part of the morning, and came out from the interview almost himself again—indifferent, little-caring George Dacres. When he went home he found Helen waiting anxiously for him.

"What is it, Nellie? Is father worse?"

"No, George, not that." She hesitated a while, then she continued: "George, you have not dealt fairly by me. Have I not guessed your purpose?"

"What, Helen?" He intended the question to be very careless.

"You propose to surrender your own private fortune to aid in liquidating our father's debts?"

"Yes. How did you find it out?"

"Because I wish to be with you in this."

"You, Helen! What do you know about business?" he exclaimed, affecting to regard her woman's ignorance of money-matters with contempt.

"I know this," she answered firmly—"that my money will pay debts as well as yours, and I intend to prove it to you."

"You shall not do it," he said, sternly.

"I am my own mistress," was the cool reply. "You cannot say no to me."

"The worse for you, Nelly!" he commented.

"I know all that, George," she answered, calmly, although the blood flushed painfully in her face. "I know what you mean—that I have let my best chances go by—that I am no longer young, and therefore I should look out prudently for the future."

"Now, now, Nelly!" George said, taking her in his arms, and holding her closely. "What is all this to me, that you should think me base enough to taunt you with it? Say what you please to me, now: I will not make a single objection even to your wildest schemes."

"Tell me, then, George, how far your

fortune will go toward the object we contemplate."

"About half-way. I will take the business in my own hands, then; and in the course of years the other half of the indebtedness will be discharged, I hope, unless some malign influence prevent the consummation of my plans."

"George," Helen said, sadly, "our father will not live for 'years': then he will never know that 'his good name is again redeemed before the world. You will let me help you, George?" she pleaded.

"If you will have it so," he said, gloomily. "Let the responsibility be your own, however: do not say that I gave willing consent to your strange sacrifice."

"No stranger than your own, George. You shall not talk this way to me. My money has been accumulating for many years: I have not drawn upon my resources as you have, and it may be that I have more than you. How about that, George Dacres?" she said, almost playfully. "They used to say that one day I would be one of the richest women in Philadelphia; and I know that to retain my riches would be but misery to me, if I believed that their surrender would contribute even one happy moment to a father whose life was devoted to his children and their welfare."

There was no turning her from her purpose: her father's solicitor attempted to reason with her upon the madness of her sacrifice, but her haughty manner cut his argument short, and he left her, convinced, as he expressed it, "that the whole family shared in the mental prostration of Mr. Dacres."

"May Mr. Stuart come in, father?" said Helen, one day, half dreading the effect of her question.

"What for, Helen? To curse me? What else can Robert Stuart want with me?" asked the old man, with a wild gleam in his sunken eyes.

"He has not seen you for a long time," Helen went on, taking no notice of her father's gloomy questions, "and you were great friends once."

"Once, Helen—ay, once—but not now—not now."

"Yes, now," said Robert Stuart, entering at the moment. He had overheard their talk; and he went up to Mr. Dacres and caught his hand, holding it for a while in silence: then he said, "As you would not send for me, George Dacres, I came in uninvited."

"To curse me, Robert?" Mr. Dacres half drew back at the thought,

"God forbid!" was the earnest reply. "I make no claims to extraordinary goodness, but I am not a fiend, George Dacres; and no one but a fiend would intrude upon you now for any purpose but that of friendship."

"Do they talk of me as dishonored, Robert? Nelly will not let me talk about it, and George evades all my questions."

"No man living can couple dishonor with your name. Your son George knows the story far better than I: let him tell you what a Dacres is worth in an hour of difficulty."

"And they that suffered?—you, Robert Stuart, will you call me your friend still?" The old man was childish in his dread of disgrace.

"I did not suffer. You owe me nothing," was the strange reply.

"I owe you nothing?" In his astonishment, George Dacres endeavored to rise, feeble as he was, but Robert Stuart held him down. "Am I going mad?" the old man continued, looking helplessly about him. "Did I hear what you said, Robert?"

"I think you did. Let me repeat it, with a word of explanation. They sent me to tell you, because it is the right of an old friend to bring good news, if indeed this be good news for you. You owe me nothing."

"Helen," said Mr. Dacres, groping feebly about him, as if he did not trust his eyesight—"come to me, Helen, and do not let them deceive me with tales to comfort me. My good name! my good name!" he moaned, as Helen drew the aged head close to her breast, and kissed the poor white face that looked up into hers, while all the time the blinding tears fell from her eyes. "Why do you cry, Helen?" he asked, passing his hand over

her face. "For the loss of our good name? Darling, I have no power to comfort you."

"Let me be the comforter," she answered, in a voice choked with tears. "All is well—they are not deceiving you—Mr. Stuart will tell you."

She did not leave her father's side: she stood with her arm about his neck, and one hand clasping his, to keep the restless fingers still.

"It is soon told," said Mr. Stuart, speaking very rapidly. "Helen has given up her fortune, and George his, and that is the whole story. Think of it at your leisure: it will give you a good night's rest, I venture to predict."

"But, Helen—" said Mr. Dacres, wondering.

"Are you sorry, father?" Helen asked, bending and pressing her face close to her father's. "We would give you peace, if we could. Are you sorry?"

"And my good name, Helen?" Again his mind was wandering.

"Will you not believe me, father? I have never deceived you. All is well, and our good name does not know what stain or blemish is."

Mr. Dacres looked at his daughter, and scarce seemed to comprehend all that she said. He gathered in, from her words, that George and she had done their best to purchase consolation for him in his sore trial.

"Helen," he said, at length, "you are a good child, and George too: God has blessed me in my children."

"Then you are not sorry?" she asked, anxiously. "You are glad that we did this without waiting for your permission?"

"Glad, Helen? How could I say anything else to you? God bless my children!" He sat quiet for a moment: then, relapsing again into that dreamy, wandering state, he went on, "And my good name is a good name still! Thank God! I can go to my grave in peace: it will soon be over, but it will be rest at last—rest, rest—and not in a dishonored grave! Thank God!"

Raymond Blythe heard the story of Helen Dacres' "sentimental madness,"

as sympathizing friends termed it, from her brother's lips. He made no comment, but in his mind the grand old motto rang, "Loyal en tout," and he thought how well it became her, the proud daughter of a proud, honorable race. The old love in his heart was stronger than ever, if indeed that might be—if there was any possibility of his loving her more than he had done through all those years of silence. He visited her frequently, making her father's illness a fair apology for his constant attendance: he spoke not a word of his love, for the remembrance of that night, eight years before, kept him silent; he treasured still the snowy handkerchief that had been such condemning evidence to him against any supposed preference, upon her part, for any man save Ross Vaughan only; and day after day he would have told himself that he was learning to think of Helen Dacres coolly and calmly as he might of a sister dear to him; but it would not do, and the time came when the secret, kept so well, was his secret no longer, for Helen Dacres discovered at last—and, as she thought, discovered too late—how much this man had loved her, in the years before—years remembered only with pain.

"Are you busy?" he asked, one morning as he walked into the drawing-room, to which he had been directed. "I did not wish to disturb you, so I chose to intrude upon you here, in preference to letting them call you from your occupation."

"Gathering up relics," she answered, looking up, but quickly averting her eyes, that were dim with tears. "I want to get ready by degrees. You know we leave this house very soon."

"Do you?" he asked, abstractedly.

"Rosa's casket," she said, holding up the curiously carved box that he remembered so well. "Do you remember the handkerchiefs she sent me? I showed them to you."

"How often did you appear with them? You did not express any special affection for their style, I recollect."

"There was some misfortune attending them. I carried one to Mrs. Lawson's

one evening—do you remember that evening?"

"Very well. What misfortune happened to your handkerchief?"

"I laid it down to play for Mr. Stuart, who ran away from the supper-room to have one good song, as he said, and that was the last that I saw of it."

"Spirited away, probably?"

"No: about a week after, Flora Lawson informed me that she had picked it up by mistake, leaving her own in its place—she had been playing before I began—and she was so impatient to have a quiet talk with Dolly Vaughan that she took possession of the first at hand, and made her escape with it."

"Why did she not tell you that night?"

"She was too much occupied with things of a deeper interest to her: Dolly Vaughan proposed to her that night in the conservatory, and she had little remembrance of anything else," said Helen, smiling at the reminiscence. "She lost my handkerchief in the conservatory, and when she went back to look for it, it was gone: that was the most mysterious part of the affair. My handkerchief had my name on it, and it was rather strange that the finder did not bring it to its owner."

The hot blood was in Raymond Blythe's dark cheek as he listened. It was all clear now: the man, whose voice and general bearing were so like Ross Vaughan's, was Ross Vaughan's brother, and the woman who listened that night to the story of an ardent love was—not Helen Dacres. "Fool! fool! and blind!" thought Raymond Blythe. "One word might have saved me years of agony, and I was not brave enough to ask it."

"The other handkerchiefs I never used—they lie ingloriously in the casket," Helen said, finding that Raymond Blythe made no attempt to break the silence. "The fate of the first gave me no encouragement."

"Do you recognize this?" at length Raymond asked, taking from his breast a small golden case, and opening it for Helen's inspection.

She looked at him wonderingly: she



saw him unfold something—a snowy handkerchief with a cross in scarlet, and a motto, "Loyal en tout," wrought upon its spotless surface: she saw this, and could say nothing; she clasped her hands, and stared at him, unable to avert her eyes or summon up her proud composure.

"Do you recognize it?" again he asked. "Do you know why the finder did not return the handkerchief to its owner? Because he wanted some remembrance of the woman whom he thought lost to him."

And then he told her all: he watched her closely; he saw that her fair face had deep lines to mar its smoothness; he read in the shadowy eyes a history of passing youth, and in his inmost heart he knew that she was dearer to him than then ever. He loved her, and he told his love as one whom years of misunderstanding had cruelly silenced.

"Is it too late?" he asked, when the story was done. "Tell me, Helen, can you forgive me now for being a coward, or do you not care to know this? did you never care for me or my love?"

"Do you know—" she began, and broke off abruptly. "We leave this house to-morrow—" she resumed; and here Raymond Blythe interrupted her:

"And I come to take possession."

"You!" she exclaimed, in wonderment.

"That is, if you will stay with me, Helen," he pleaded passionately. "Let me find home and wife at last."

She spoke not a word; she looked steadfastly into his eager eyes, and let him read his answer in her silence; and he drew her close to him, and bent his face over the graceful head that lay against his breast. That moment redeemed all the years that had been doomed in pain.

"Raymond," she said, looking up after a long silence, "does papa know?"

"That I would make you my wife? Yes—and George: I scarcely dared to come without some authority," he said, smiling. After a brief pause, he continued, "And I came to find my Helen what her motto proudly declares her, 'Loyal en tout.'"

## THE LEGEND OF BALL'S LAKE.

By Rev. R. Wilson.

IN all human probability, the reader has never heard of Ball's Lake. It is by no means a favorite resort of tourists, owing, in part, to certain physical difficulties which Nature has kindly placed as a protection to its approach, and partly to the fact that its shady margins are the *habitat* of vast multitudes of an insect peculiar, I believe, to that locality, and known to the natives as the "muskeeter," whose inimitable and unconquerable efforts at topical blood-letting are yet insufficient to reduce the system of a stranger to its genial climate below the point which is noted on medical thermometers as "fever heat." Its banks afford no site which would have been suitable for the palace which Pauline Deschappelles did not live in, nor would the Muse of Wordsworth ever have drunk in inspiration from its azure

waves, the clayey hue of its waters being more suggestive of the "yellow Tiber" than the dancing ripples of Windermere. And yet, kind reader, there is much to make us who know it love the little lake. But, before attempting to describe its peculiar charms, I had better pause to let you know what and where it is.

Perhaps you have glanced nervously from the window of your comfortable car as the train, with scarcely diminished speed, whirled over the fine bridge that spans the sluggish Santee, and have not been fully reassured as it cautiously crept over the long, slender trestle high above the tops of the waving canes, but far below the strong arms of the moss-hung cypresses. You have felt a strange sense of depression as you then dashed through the tall, shadowy pines, looking, from the broad white scars of the

turpentine boxes, like a vast graveyard.

"Down brakes!" shrieked the whistle, and you were at "St. Stephen's." Well, if you had there got down, turned your back upon the old brick church (of which I may tell you something when we become better acquainted), and followed the broad, sandy road for some four miles, you would have reached the Horse-Pen Bridge. Turning short to your right, and proceeding about six miles farther, you would have found yourself at Sandy Pond, and in the classic vicinage of Murray's Ferry. Then a tramp through the oozy mud of a dense cane-brake for a mile or two farther, and you would have reached Ball's Lake.

The Santee river, like the Wateree and Edisto, flows through a winding channel, the character of its banks varying from bluff to swamp according to the bend of the stream. The swamp, from two to four miles in depth, is thus found sometimes on one side of the river and sometimes on the other. Shaded by the foliage of thousands of immense cypresses, covered by a dense growth of briars and the evergreen cane, and intersected by hundreds of sinuous creeks, the soil is never dry; and whenever, after heavy and protracted rains, the sluggish river swells into a fierce and turbulent torrent, the water spreads with appalling rapidity over the entire low surface, submerging the country for miles, so that one may paddle a canoe over the highest ridges, where the deer were pasturing in security but a few hours before. When the "fresh" subsides, the flats remain covered for some time, swarming with ducks of various species; but even when they have been drained off, the beds of various creeks which have been washed together, and the former channel of the river, afford permanent reservoirs for large bodies of water, varying in size, depth and conformation, which are known as the Santee lakes. Abounding in fish of all sorts and sizes and of delicious flavor, the resort of bears, deer, turkeys and other choice game, these lakes have always afforded a most attractive field for those whose knowledge

of woodcraft and keen love of sport could laugh at the difficulties and discomforts which might deter the "gentleman gunner" or the contemplative angler of a tamer region. Ball's Lake is the largest of these bodies of water, being some two miles long (in the summer) and from fifty yards to a half mile in width. I shall not stop now to tell you how Marion the "Swamp Fox" used to ply his boyish line in its waters, or how in after years its tangled fastnesses formed a secure harborage for his gallant little band of partisans; nor can I linger on those memories which still fill my ear with the merry chorus of the hounds as they pressed some noble buck to his final leap. But I am going to tell you the legend of the lake as it was told to me, and this was the way I came to hear it:

A fish-dinner in the swamp had been for some weeks on the *tapis*, and, as it was to be a grand affair in its way, great were the preparations to be made. Such feasts, as a matter of course, are to be enjoyed *al fresco*, and as nothing *edible* is carried to the ground except the concomitants, it follows that the gastronomic prospects of the occasion depend entirely upon the piscatorial skill of those engaged. There is not a gamier fish in the waters of this continent, and few more acceptable on the table, than the copper-headed or bald-faced bream (don't be alarmed at the name, kind reader; politics have never intruded themselves into the solitudes of the Santee lakes). Those who ought to know will tell you that the fish must "go into the pan jumping," and loses its racy flavor a mile from the banks of the lake; but there is a tradition current in Pineville of an old connoisseur who, at a club-dinner on one occasion, had his plate changed by an officious waiter *eleven* times, and ate a fat bream at every turn! Nor is it tyro's work to catch them. Your jointed rods and store-tackle may as well be left at home; and if you trust to many seasons' experience in bobbing for pickerel, trolling for blue fish or whipping for mountain trout, you will eat but few bream of your own catching, and those all

"yearlings." A well-seasoned Santee cane (I have cut them thirty-five feet in length), long, light, supple and pointed like a needle, an eight-strand horsehair line, with a small Limerick goose-quill float, and *no* lead, are indispensable. If crickets are scarce, you must dig your earth-worms from the rich black loam of the swamp, for the bream turn up their noses (but *not* their mouths) at bait which smacks of the pine-land soil. Then step into the light dug-out, which you can manage with the off-paddle without a ripple or a swell—for the fish are as shy as wood-ibises—and keep as far from the bank as you can throw your tackle. Take the bow seat if you can get it, but ten to one the old hand in the stern will make his cast over your head every time, and land the bream while your bait is still in the air.

Well, you may be sure we had all lined too many fish in our day to need any of these instructive hints. Every white horse in the village had contributed his quota of tail to rig us out in new tackle; the canes had been weighted and hanging by their tips for a week, to take out the warps; the "full moon in May," when the fish bite best from their beds, was to light us home that night; and altogether we set out for Ball's that morning with as bright prospects for sport as ever raised the hopes of a similar expedition. There was "the old captain," who had caught more bream in his seventy years' experience than all the rest of us together had ever heard of; the doctor, whose "tenaculum" had never hooked as many arteries as his line had fish; Ned Poole, the school-master, who handled a long or a short *rod* with equal effect, and who infinitely preferred the wetting of a bream-line to scanning one of Horace; Tom Spry, who could thread the most intricate mazes of the swamp on a cloudy night, and almost tell you the number of knots on each cypress from Big Camp to Murray's Ferry. These, with your humble servant, kind reader, made up the party. We must not, however, forget Ephraim and old July, who took charge of the *impedimenta* in a light wagon. There

were several, too, who had no taste for the art of honest Izaak, but whose good noses, we felt well assured, would bring them down on a hot trail when the pans were on the fire.

By eight o'clock we were all at the little cove on the margin of the lake. The canoes were bailed dry, abundance of bait had been dug, the tackle was rigged, and the guns laid securely in the sterns. The latter were carried for the benefit of the alligators which were generally found basking in the sunshine, and the huge gar-fish, those singular representatives of the pre-Adamite waters, which so often annoyed us by cutting the lines with their razor-like bills or snapping off a fine bream as he was lifted toward the gunwales. Besides, one never knows in the swamp when a fine buck may jump from his bed before the sportsman, or a flock of turkeys take to the trees overhead. There were but two canoes for the use of the party, and the captain had an old fisherman's antipathy to three in a boat, so the doctor and himself pushed off together in the smaller craft. Ned Poole had a very unsportsmanlike fancy for poking about the old logs to catch maw-mouth, a dull fish, affording about as much sport as pulling out crabs from a wharf-head with a string and a bit of pork; but as this propensity left Tom and myself in undisputed possession of the other boat, we allowed him to indulge it without remonstrance. Ephraim, however, was a good fisherman, and withal such good company that we gave him the stern seat and the heaviest paddle, leaving old July to act as *chef de cuisine*. This fellow, Ephraim, was a perfect study, and his acquaintance was worth any man's while to cultivate. His proudest boast was his lineal descent from General Marion's body-servant; and on one occasion he came in with a beaming countenance and a little scrap of paper in his hand, saying, "Maussa, dis the pictcher o' me granfader!" He had got hold of a little wood-cut which used to grace the columns of the *Daily Courier*, representing White's picture of "Marion Inviting the British Officer to Dinner," the

darkey who is serving the potatoes being the honored ancestor alluded to; and he was as proud of this "family portrait" as if it had been a Rembrandt or a Holbein. My friend Tom, too, was an original of a different but no less decided stamp, and it was rare fun to play them off against each other. "But what of the legend?" I hear you ask, indulgent reader. Patience is a Christian virtue; and, besides, you have the privilege of *skipping*, which I had not, otherwise you must hear it as I did.

The fish bit beautifully, and if Dean Swift had sat in our canoe that day, his celebrated but somewhat crusty definition of angling would never have been penned, "A stick and a string; a worm at one end and a fool at the other." I am constrained to own, however, that if we "generalize," like Moses Marble, there is more truth than poetry in the idea. On every side could be heard among the bonnets the singular "popping" of the bream: they almost leaped from the water to catch the bait as it was skillfully shot among the willows into some promising hole not larger than your hat: the canes were buckled at every cast, and the lines whizzed through the water in a thousand zig-zags, as the strong and active fish darted from right to left in vain efforts to dislodge the hook. In an hour and a half some fifty fine fellows were flapping about our feet, in company with a few plebeian 'perch and goggle-eyes, which suffered, like some scaly terrestrials, for venturing to keep company with their betters. But the sport began to slacken, and in a little while the fish had ceased to bite. A huge alligator splashed from the mud into the lake, and then popped up his prominent eyes, like an enormous bull-frog, to see what was the matter; but he went down before the gun could be used on him.

"Mass' Tom," remarked Ephraim, "you ebber see a 'gator nest?"

"Never; but I've seen a good many of the eggs. I believe they bury them in a mat of sticks and mud about three feet high, and leave them for the sun to hatch."

"Dat's so; an' right on de top is always a egg dat 'll ring like a bell ef you tetch um, so de ole one kin know someting's wrong."

"Did *you* ever see one, Ephraim?"

"Not azactly; but I always hear dat was so."

The eloquence of a Webster could not have shaken Ephraim's faith in this *fact* of natural history; and as I know few higher authorities on all matters connected with the swamp, I would request Prof. Agassiz, when he reads this article (as of course he will), to make a note for future investigation.

"Did you ever see an alligator with wings?" I asked.

"No, sah," with dignity; "nor no udder man."

"Probably not; but their *bones* have been seen, and we call them the *Pterodactylus*."

"I dunno nuttin' 'bout terry-duck-tails," was the grum rejoinder. Ephraim never jested, and was offended at this attempt upon his credulity, so far outsailing a bell-metal egg! He was all the less likely, however, to raise the question as to whether the *Pterodactylus* belonged of right to the Saurian or Ophidian family, or was, after all, only a sort of pre-Adamite sea-bat.

We had by this time shipped our canes and got in the tackle, and having about a mile and a half to paddle on our way back, began to think of returning.

"Make a circuit round that old snag, Ephraim," said I, "and let's get back to the landing before the fish get stale."

"How kin any body make circus in de water?" asked Ephraim, suspiciously; "an' ain't got no hoss noder?"

"By the by, Eph," put in Tom, "you went to the circus last month: how did you like it?"

"Well, sah, I ain't tell you no lie, but I nebber see sich a ting in *my* life! Dare's a man dare, sah, dat jist turn sebenteen back somersets at a time, and nebber tetch de groun' onct!"

"And were there many people there?" I asked.

"'Bout two tousand head, sah, I b'lieve."

Ephraim was an old "stock-minder," and calculated everything as he did his cattle and hogs.

A swamp-dinner is an early dinner, and two hours after this instructive dialogue we were stretched on the grass, or seated *à la Turque*, discussing the last savory morsels of the bream, which July had cooked to perfection. Four or five of the keen noses which we had left at the village had reached the lake in good time, and the whole party were soon enjoying their Cabañas—meerschaums not having then come into general use, briar-roots being unknown, and the Stamp Act being only a memory of the Revolution.

Now, just opposite the landing, on the other side of the lake, and in full view of the party, stood a huge old tree, which formed the most conspicuous feature in the landscape, and a very striking feature it was. It was a cypress of enormous girth, and fully one hundred and fifty feet in height, perfectly dead, and free from every vestige of bark, but sound and solid, and exhibiting no symptom of decay. Shooting its straight, white trunk into the air, it stood unchanged in the remembrance of the oldest inhabitant, the enduring record of its own death and monument to its own memory. Rising from the summit of a little knoll, there was no other tree of any height within fifty yards, while a deep yellow stain extending fifteen feet from its base marked the highest rise of the freshets. At the very top of the trunk, which appeared to have been broken off by some storm, a long, stout limb stretched almost horizontally toward the east, while some twenty feet lower another rose at an angle of about forty degrees, meeting the first midway, and seeming from a distance to be mortised in at the junction. Only a few short stumps of other branches were visible, met by a number of notches cut in the trunk a few feet apart, the whole presenting the appearance of a gigantic gibbet, and from this fact being known far and wide as the "Gallows-tree."

"There's a wild old story told about that tree," said Poole, suddenly, pointing

across the lake: "did any of you ever hear it?"

Nobody present had been so fortunate, except the old captain, and he very considerably held his peace, while the whole party voted forthwith that Ned should tell it as a fitting conclusion to the amusements of the day. As Ned was not a smoker, and was famous withal for spinning a good yarn, he did not require much pressing; and as soon as we had settled ourselves comfortably upon the soft grass, he leaned back against a broad old oak, stretched out his legs before him, and began

#### THE LEGEND OF BALL'S LAKE.

It was early in the year 1780, when the whole State was overrun by the British, and the Tories were burning and plundering in every direction, with no organized force in the field to keep them in check. Marion's winter-camp was on Gaillard's Island, but he had not over fifty men fit for duty in the whole brigade, and these were badly armed. The few horses which he could muster were recruiting their strength on the short cane pasturage of the swamp, and most of the men were scattered about the country, stealthily looking after the safety of their families or shaking out the last of their summer agues. Harry, with a party of picked scouts, was reconnoitering between Monck's Corner and Charleston, while Major Rutledge was in the High Hills along the Wateree, to learn something about Sumter's movements and get news of Cornwallis.

The general himself often spent the night at Belle Isle; and one evening, while he was drying his wet clothes over the fire after a hard ride from camp, he heard a horse coming rapidly up the avenue, and soon after Bob Edie rode into the yard and dismounted. Bob was a good scout and a trusty soldier, and he had a message from Harry that a company of Tarleton's troopers, with about twenty Tory raiders under Ball, were making for Murray's Ferry, and would be at Pineville by the next afternoon.

The general's clothes were not dried

that night. In ten minutes he was again in the saddle. Bob was fresh mounted, and sent round with orders to every man within reach to be at Ball's Lake by ten o'clock next morning, with the best weapon he could find; and the general's body-servant Brutus—[here Ephraim's countenance opened into a broad grin as he put in, "Dat me gran'fader!"]—was despatched round the neighborhood to give notice that all the families might bury or secrete their valuables. It happened that Captain Keating Bonneau was on furlough at that time, and was visiting his mother in the village. Bonneau was esteemed a good soldier, but the most reckless daredevil in the Legion. Kind and generous among his friends, he was a man of hot blood, strong hatreds and implacable feelings toward everything *Tory*. On duty he recked nothing of human life, whether his own or any other man's, and his creed in reference to every *native* enemy to his cause was, "A short shrift and a swinging limb."

Edie's news was to his mind the very best piece of intelligence he could have received, for nothing pleased him better than a prospect of a brush with the red-coats, and he had sworn that if he ever crossed swords with the Tory Ball, only one of them should leave the field alive. Having seen his horse well fed and groomed, Bonneau sent off the servant on a message about some trifle to the plantation; he then took his sabre to the grindstone and gave it a keen edge, and loaded his pistols carefully, oiling the locks and putting in new flints. About three o'clock in the morning he mounted his horse, armed with a spade and having a sack, containing the family plate and some specie, thrown across the saddle, and rode out alone to bury it. This task was accomplished to his satisfaction, and in a spot which he deemed perfectly secure; and by daylight he was several miles on his way toward the lake. I don't know how the events of that day escaped the investigations of Weems, Simms and other historians; certainly none of them have alluded to what tradition makes one of the most

brilliant *coups* of the war. Marion was there in person, with forty picked men, and had managed to let despatches fall into the hands of the enemy which convinced them that he was fifty miles off, down the Santee, foraging among the rice plantations.

The troopers did not visit the village, however, but came up along the State road toward the ferry, riding carelessly and thinking no pickets necessary. They were just seventy-three, including officers, but Ball was not in the party. At Sandy Pond they stopped to water their horses, and many of the men had dismounted to drink, when the hoot of an owl was heard from the canebrake in their rear. An answering yell came from the thicket in front, and as it rang upon the air a deadly volley was poured right into their faces from an unseen foe, while another enfiladed them from the canes in the rear, emptying twenty saddles at once and disabling a dozen horses. Close quarters and a cool aim from men who could "bark" a squirrel had made every shot tell, and the panic was complete. A few random shots were fired in return, and the whole party dashed pell-mell down the road. As the rout scurried past the road to Billings' Lake, Bonneau struck their flank with ten well-mounted men, sabring a trooper at every stroke; and would doubtless have followed them till they rallied, had not the distant bugle, sounding the recall, given him a signal which he dared not disobey. They did not draw rein short of Monck's Corner.

Three Tories and two red-coats were killed outright, and twenty-six prisoners were taken, all British, and eighteen of them wounded. The Partisans lost but one man; and the general, giving a few brief orders concerning the captured men and horses, rode off to the village, leaving Bonneau in command. They were leisurely making arrangements for the transportation of the wounded and the burial of the dead, when one of the men came out of the thicket, dragging after him a prisoner who was limping from a flesh-wound in the leg. The fellow was not in uniform, and was immediately recog-

nized as a French-and-Indian half-breed, named Jacques Spérat, well known about the country as "Jack Sprat," and bearing a very bad character. Bonneau had seen him in the village selling fish on the previous morning, and was no less surprised than enraged at this development. The programme in such cases was but too well understood, and while two of the men were binding the prisoner's arms with a girth, another had brought a halter and was already looking about for a suitable tree. Just then, however, the captain recognized among the dead horses a favorite mare of his own, which he had left at home with a foal, and which he at once knew Spérat must have stolen. He ordered a guard to take special charge of the thief, and bring him, with the rest of the prisoners, to the rendezvous at Ball's. "And mind," he added, in a tone all could hear, "he is not to be lost on the way."

The necessary arrangements were then made, and the whole party took up their march for the lake. The freshets, which were not unknown at that period, when houses were built and indigo was cultivated in security upon tracts now liable to frequent inundations, have made great changes in the roads through the swamp, and that which led to the lake at that time came in just opposite to us, near the old tree. The rendezvous was at that spot, and when the party reached it, the captain immediately convened a "drum-head" court-martial to try Spérat. It was so called by courtesy only, since Marion had not a drum in his brigade, and would not have used it if he had, the crack of the rifle being usually the first sound which announced his proximity to the enemy, and the cow-horn bugle serving to give all the signals which he used.

The prisoner was stolid and defiant, true to his Indian blood. He would answer no questions, and seemed to regard his fate as a matter of course. A bag of guineas and some silver spoons, however, were found upon him, which belonged to the treasure buried by Bonneau on the previous night; and it was afterward discovered that he had seen

and followed the captain, watched him from a blackberry thicket, and rifled the *cache* as soon as he left. He had then gone to the plantation and stolen the mare, upon which he had joined the raiders. A list was found in his pocket of the wealthiest Whig families, and a memorandum of the number and whereabouts of the men who were then with Marion. He had either refrained from giving this information to the enemy for fear of losing his rich plunder, or they had preferred trusting to their own sources of knowledge. Such a case was soon settled by such a court, and the aggravated treachery of the guilty wretch quenched even the slight sparks of pity which might have granted him an easy death. That section of country, which even in our day could produce the notorious David Hines, was never wanting in suspicious characters, and Bonneau determined to make an example which would long be remembered. That cypress was then in its glory. One of the men, who had formerly been at sea, took a long, stout rope, and with a hatchet notched his way up to the lowest branch. He then ascended to that straight limb, and, with a skill and daring worthy a better cause, made fast to it the end of the rope. He then trimmed off the boughs as you see, leaving the noose hanging to one within reach of a less accomplished climber, and descended to the ground. Spérat was then ordered, under pain of being burnt alive, to go up and *hang himself*! The wretch knew well the character of the men with whom he had to deal, and with Indian stoicism proceeded in silence to obey. Bonneau afterward declared that he never intended the threat to be executed, desigging, if the prisoner proved refractory, to have him executed in the usual way. The fear of death is a strange thing, leading men into amazing inconsistencies. Twice the miserable creature paused in his ascent and looked down. Ten rifles were leveled at him with a deadly aim, and the thought of crashing down from that fearful height, like the bear he had so often shot from his leafy refuge, impelled him upward. With a

steady hand he fixed the cord about his neck, and then his resolution seemed to fail him, for his whole frame appeared to relax, and he fell, with a terrible and fatal jerk, into eternity! Of course it was impossible to cut him down, and the horrible fruit remained for months swinging from the "Gallows Tree," until the rope was skillfully severed by a rifle-ball and the Tory's body consigned to a prayerless grave. There are those now living who remember seeing the fragment of rope which long dangled from the limb.

"Is that all?"

"Yes, and it's horrible enough to sat-

isfy any one's taste for such tales," replied the narrator, rising to stretch his legs.

"But there should have been a ghost," said the doctor, "to make it a real legend."

"There'll be ghosts enough tacked on to it soon," I remarked, "or Ephraim's not the man I take him to be."

"Talk 'bout me?" exclaimed that worthy individual, as nearly *pale* as stood within the bounds of physical possibility. "I sway I nebber come to Ball Lake again fishin' ob a night as long as I lib!"

And we rode toward home.

# VOX HUMANA.

By Anne Brewster

A NIGHT-LAMP burned dimly in a room of the Hotel Féder, at Genoa. The apartment had been formerly one of the gay halls of the Palace of the Admiralty, and the faint rays of light that flickered around hardly disclosed how tarnished were the gildings and faded the fresco ornaments of the ceiling and walls.

A Sister of Charity, who had been summoned to perform the office of nurse to a sick person, sat some distance from the bed, but near the shaded night-lamp. While her eyes glanced from time to time towards the couch, they returned unfaithfully to the book of devotion which she held in her hands, over whose leaves spread the little gleams that came from under the lamp-shade, and made the words distinct to the eyes of the pious woman. She recited in a low voice the prayers for the dying, for the last sacred rites had been administered and death was near at hand.

A rustle in the bed made the Sister draw near to it. Gretchen Koenig, the great woman-organist, lay there dying. With the strength of the death-struggle the once powerful body of the musician lifted itself half-way up on the pillows.

She sat erect, and her large, dark eyes, whose brightness almost shed a glare around her, gazed eagerly upon the self-possessed Sister, who stood beside the couch with a silent but kind expression of inquiry upon her face. The two women looked at each other as strangers might, meeting on a lonely heath.

"Have you ever loved?" asked Gretchen, in a hoarse voice.

"Yes," answered the Sister, calmly.

"Whom?"

"Christ."

"And I loved man!" groaned the dying Gretchen. "Close your book, good woman. The prayers almost drive me mad; for I only love Franz, and cannot think of heaven, or God, or Christ, or anything but him!"

"I always knew he was unworthy of the deep feelings I gave him—that he was selfish, unfaithful and without principle; but I loved him passionately. When we were both young he married me, for he thought then that he loved me; but he did not: it was my music that infatuated him."

"Franz became a poet and an artist under the influence of my tone-tongue: for although I was only a humble teacher,

I was a clever executant, and my husband drew inspiration from me, through which his genius soared off into the tone-realm where he was a creator; while I, alas! remained the mere instrument.

"I can feel now the thrill that would pass through me when he buried his beautiful head in the folds of my robe while listening to my organ-playing. The touch of the passionate carresses which he never gave me at any other time tingle on my lips and brow still, although so many years have dragged wearily over them, and on them lay the heavy snows of winters upon winters of neglect and absence.

"At that touch, chords, harmonies and the divinest melodies rolled off from my fingers like sparks and glowing lights. Memory in those happy days had a marvelous power. Without trouble I could recall difficult studies of Bach, and I executed them with a taste that sometimes startled me; while he, my lover—no, my husband—for he was never my lover—drew music-life and material for fame from me, as I drew the harmonies and sounds from the keys and stops of the instrument. Why should he, with his untrue nature, have had greater gifts than I, while my glowing, earnest spirit lay mute within me?

"You know, Sister, how superb his voice was. He has sung at your great festivals, and people said the pathos of a mortal and the glory of an angel were blended in his songs.

"He took the flat outlines of characters in operas, whose written notes lay over them as mere hieroglyphics, and gave them form and shape—nay, more—life and breath. Masters crowded around him with their compositions, for they needed not only his voice, but his comprehension, to make their visions clear and palpable to the public.

"Then it was that he met Selma Paz, who was—O God!—not only my rival, but his equal: she was what I should have been, loving Franz as I did.

"I tried to bear it all patiently. After vespers I used to stay during the darkening twilight in the old church alone.

I strove to silence my gnawing grief by studying out grand modulations, during the hot, black hours when I knew they were giving passionate, throbbing life to some music-poet's vision, swaying the crowd with their voluptuous love-melodies, their rich, full-throated voices floating off upon the air like disembodied spirits, melting and pulsating together.

"Imploring chords, sobbing, broken tone-chains lay spread out by my hands in wild confusion on the still, solemn atmosphere of the holy place as this knowledge coursed like maddening venom through me. Blessed incense from the evening consecration, faint as the memory of a good act, crept up soothingly; shadows gathered in close, as thick folds of drapery about and above the lonely organ-loft. Silent as death was the place, and into this cold, dark ocean of stillness I poured my hot flood of passionate harmonies and vexed, questioning modulations.

"Once in a while, as the waves of rich-freighted sounds, blending with the surrounding stillness, died off, and became one with it, and my weary fingers, dropping from the keys, fell with helpless weight beside me, I would hear the soft, retiring footfall of some holy priest, who had been reciting his prayers or performing a pious duty at the altar.

"On these lonely evening hours memory would grow very cruel and bitter, as it recalled to me the twilights that Franz and I had spent there together the first days of my love and our marriage—the time when his unfolding genius drank inspiration at my fountain. His very words would be repeated in my ears, as if said by some mocking demon—

"Play on, my beloved! Your music gives me life."

"Let me talk, Sister. Do not check me. If I tell my grief aloud, the heavy weight may pass off and I may find peace. To whom have I ever spoken before? But those prayers of yours seemed to break the heavy bars of silence and pride.

"Then I would leave the organ-loft, and prostrate myself on the altar-steps

—not in prayer—but in rebellious remonstrance with God!

"Why should this be?" I would ask. "Why should I, the pure and the true, serve only as an instrument of use, in the hands of another, for my own misery?"

"But as the light of the never-darkened lamp that hung before the altar stole down in cool, pale rays over me, it seemed to recall the words of the stern Saint Paul:

"Nay, but who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?"

"One Sunday—it was Easter—we had a grand musical display in my organ-loft. A cardinal from Rome was to be present at the sacrifice, and I sent for the singers at the opera house to help me. The mass sung was the D Minor of Haydn—that sublime one in which the trumpet-notes seem as if they should be sounded by the silver trumpets of the ancient synagogue.

"Selma took the soprano solos. I forgot that she was my rival while listening to her singing. After executing the rippling passages of the *Kyrie Eleison* with unerring exactitude, her superb voice, entirely unaided by the organ or other instruments, attacked the high G of the major key of the *Gloria in Excelsis*.

"Full, round and rich-colored as a bursting pomegranate that *Gloria* floated off from her beautiful throat, filling the whole building with its splendor. I forgot mortal love and jealousy, and all the angel arose within me.

"When the violins played the soft melody which precedes the *Et in terra pax*, the notes sounded as if proceeding from angels of peace and love. Franz sang the invocation with a tenderness that gave an impetus to my new-born hopes, and when Selma responded the *Pax hominibus*, my whole soul felt emancipated from all the past torturing doubts.

"At the *Offertory*, Franz sang Stradella's hymn *Pieta Signore*, and I alone accompanied him. Voice and instrument united as they had never done before. My fingers drew out from the keys the solemn responses to this divine composition, whose melody is a successive harmony, and the prompt speech and light traveling tone of the Stopped Diapason, to which I added the Dulcinea, gave the organ part a character of great beauty and delicacy.

"My organ was a beautiful little instrument—it was Müller's—the one at Breslau, you know. It had only twelve registers, but it was large enough for the church, and moreover it was as docile as an obedient child.

"I threw all my strength of feeling into the music, and it seemed that Selma and Franz were drawn close to me by unseen hands. Their eyes were full of tears, and they looked tenderly at me: at least so I thought.

"How flute-like was the *Benedicite*! Even the holy priests at the altar paused to listen, as did the crowd, to Selma's crystal tones, that rose undimmed above the *tutti* of the whole choir and orchestra.

"After the joyful *Hosanna* came the *Agnus Dei*. Selma stood beside me, and appeared to be struggling with uncontrollable feelings; her voice sobbed out, rather than sung, the responses to the contr' alto solo, and a murmur of wonder and sympathy rose from the crowd when they noticed the tenderness and pathos in her voice.

"Franz sat near us, his beautiful face hidden in his hands, but I saw the tears trickling between his fingers, and his whole form trembled with emotion. At the close of the service I played one of Bach's organ passages, filled with multiplied melody, through which I desired to express not only the overflowing happiness of my heart, but a solemn thankfulness for the new life of faith and truth that seemed to be dawning for me.

"That night Selma and Franz fled together! I never saw them again. Those who pitied me said I was too noble and gifted to grieve for such an



unworthy husband. What did they know of the passionate strength of a woman's love? My heart was a deep ocean, still as a lake on its surface, but holding a tragedy of ruin beneath, and no one could know how I mourned and suffered.

"I remained at Breslau, following my weary profession of teaching; but at nightfall, after the day's work was over, I pined for Franz; and then, too, came the music-thirst. After vesper service I always remained—as in the spring days of love and the sad ones of jealousy—to find help in my instrument. I studied all the fine works of various masters, and my musical powers developed rapidly under the spurring influences of loneliness and anguish.

"Before I knew it, my fame spread wide abroad, and crowds of people came from far and near to hear the woman-organist: at last the little church was found too small to hold them all. Thus I was pressed out into the world, and I traveled through many countries. The music-thirst grew stronger, the love of my fame was great, but nothing silenced for one instant the ever-aching yearning for Franz.

"At last the news came to me that he and Selma were dead! Both were lost at sea on a voyage to America. Then I thought that, if I could die, we might all meet, as on that blessed Easter Day, and be one in love with each other; for in heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage: you know that, Sister."

"This is Easter Eve," said the Sister.

"Yes, but it is near day dawn, is it not? Open the shutters. Let me breathe the morning air, for oh, I am stifling!" and the dying woman struggled to catch the quick-ebbing breath.

The Sister pushed the blinds of the nearest window aside, and though the faint rays of the approaching day could hardly reach the room through the narrow space of the street, the air that poured in was fresh with the spring morning's breath; but sweeter even than its fresh-

ness were the lovely sounds it carried on its warm waves. From a neighboring church came the faint but clear notes of an organ and choir. A solemn High Mass service was closing, and the beautiful strains of Haydn's *Agnus Dei*, in the D Minor Mass, could be heard distinctly by the nurse and the poor dying woman.

The Sister of Charity knelt down and took Gretchen's cold hands in hers, while she repeated in a low whisper the last prayers. Gretchen sank slowly back on the pillows.

"Yes!" she murmured. "He is there—waiting for me! Hush!—I come—Franz!"

The music pealed out louder and louder. The angelic flight of voices in the *Dona nobis pacem* chased each other on the transparent, glittering atmosphere made for them by the silvery notes of the trumpets. When the trumpets ceased, the voices and instruments rose in full chords, and moved along in heavenly bands, harmoniously together.

Shorter and more eager grew Gretchen's breath, and broken words fell from her lips that told of impatient longings to reach that which her imagination presented. The Sister's prayer welled up pure and cool, as a little woodland spring, beside the hot sands of mortal love and yearning.

The gradually failing eyes of the dying woman gazed forward on that which was invisible to mortal sight, and her spirit grew more and more restless to be released from the leaden weight of the poor body that was slowly detaching itself from her, each life-long link falling heavily off one by one, as rusted chains in a dungeon.

Day-dawn became brighter; the dusky shadows of the room struggled at first faintly with the fast-entering rays of light, and then passed off; at last the pure beams of Easter morn hung over the death-bed, like long, tapering angel's wings, and all was stillness and peace!

By Rosamond Dale Owen

### WILLIE'S WIFE.

A BLUSTERING evening! I am all alone. An old maid, with no husband to destroy her peace, nor any dreadful annoyances in the shape of children, with money enough at interest to keep the wolf from the door, and a house of her own overhead, might surely expect, after the tea-things were washed and put away, the fire made, the table drawn close to it, the lamp close to her elbow, and a book close to her nose,—an old maid thus happily situated might, I say, in all reason, expect a comfortable time. Alas! far from it! The wind whistles around the house with more than ordinary defiance, and I tremble inwardly; for well do I know, and well does it know, also, the cracks and holes in my dilapidated dwelling. Here it comes whistling and roaring! With a whisk it turns my new wig askew: with another, the leaves of my book are fluttering and flapping, as if they were in league with the boisterous thing. I adjust my wig and refind my place in vain! There it comes, again and again! A rough blast down the chimney sends the smoke pouring into the room, scattering a shower of ashes over my clean white curtains.

I slam my book with a petulant jerk, take up my lamp, and start on an indignant march up to bed. Creak, creak go the boards, as if they were possessed. The door refuses to open; I jerk and pull spasmodically; another blast of wind; my lamp goes out; still I tug at the door: it opens suddenly, and down I go. Miss Jemima Bloor picks herself up, minus dignity, temper and a wig. I grope my way up stairs, stepping lightly on certain shaking steps, and running a splinter into my hand from the broken bannister. I reach my room at last; must leave the door unlocked because the lock is out of order; undress, creep into bed, and cannot close my eyes, because there is a piece of loose plaster gaping just above my head—more terrible to me than the sword of Damocles.

During the long hours of that sleepless night I worked myself up to a desperate resolution. The case, you see, was grave and urgent: I ran imminent risk of losing that bland, amiable disposition which (as I know from the concurrent testimony of my most discriminating friends) is natural to me. The house shall be thoroughly repaired! Not another night will I sleep in it till it is!

I arose at peep of day, and noon found me domesticated at Mrs. Robinson's, just over the way. I am to sleep on the lounge in her parlor, for the little woman possesses only two rooms and a kitchen.

I immediately assemble all the carpenters, glaziers, tinnerns, bricklayers, painters and paper-hangers with whom our village is blessed. My house is being repaired and renewed outside and in. I contemplate the changes thus going on with—well, let the truth be told—with somewhat mixed emotions. I am slowly coming to the conclusion that there is no such thing as perfect happiness in this sublunary sphere. Men are so intensely aggravating, especially carpenters, glaziers, tinnerns, bricklayers, painters and paper-hangers.

One afternoon we sat—my hostess and I—in her little parlor; I at the front window, looking across the street and watching that rascally John Stocker, the carpenter. Good heavens! There he sat in my best-room window, swinging his heels and smoking a pipe—not a thought of my work in his head! Now, the odious creature knows—no one better—what a hurry I am in and how I detest a pipe. Yet here I may be, for all he cares, sleeping on Mrs. Robinson's lounge for a month or two, and all the time my parlor—Miss Jemima Bloor's best room—scented with tobacco! I wonder if the man expects to go to heaven when he dies? I wonder if he expects me to pay him three dollars a day for smoking his pipe and swinging his heels?

Ah! there comes Joseph Baldwin just back from dinner, and—let me see—it's twenty-five minutes past two. If I had my way about women's rights, I'd put the men out of this world altogether: *that* would settle the question. What are they, after all, but an aggravation, a marplot and a general nuisance?

Now, there goes Will Wiley, tramping right over my verberna-bed! Has the man no eyes in his head? or did his mother never succeed in beating it into his dull brain that a verberna-bed is *not* to be walked on, and that a garden-path is?

And, now I think of it, it was only yesterday I found five broken panes in my up-stairs window. Yet that faithless, good-for-nothing glazier had sworn to me that very morning that he had taken every sash out, from garret to cellar, and left all in perfect order. Lords of creation, indeed! Lords of fiddlestick! Wonderful example of superior intellect—was it not?—to take a window-sash out for repairs, and put it back in perfect order with five broken panes in it! If Miss Jemima Bloor were to sit in a maiden lady's best-room window and smoke a pipe and swing her heels—if she were to come from dinner to her work at twenty-five minutes after two—if she were to go tramping about on people's verberna-beds—if she were to declare a window-sash with five broken panes in it to be completely repaired—would she call herself a lady of creation and a superior intellect? I ask the world, Would she call herself a lord or a lady of creation and a su—

At this point my indignant reflections were interrupted by a soft splish-splash and a subdued little flutter of sobs.

My hostess had been knitting, with her comfortable fat hands, a baby's hood for Mrs. Peters, next door.

As I looked up I saw the tears trickle down on her knitting needles till they shone and winked at me in an impish manner.

This little woman is my mental cushion—my social rest. Mild, round and rosy in body and mind, crying is the only luxury she seems thoroughly to enjoy. The

tears roll over her plump cheeks as if they were used to it, and leave them plumper than before. The round, light blue eyes are always ready for a shower, and look all the rounder and bluer after it is over. I never knew her to have an original idea: indeed, I think she never had but one very clear idea of any description. The thought of her whole life had been "her Willie." Mrs. Robinson, although a weak little woman enough, has had a curious history of her own.

She was an orphan: had married, at twenty, William Robinson, a sailor of the town, and had moved into her present home, with her husband and an old uncle with whom she had lived before her marriage. Two months afterward young William sailed for India. The appointed time for his return had passed: month by month went by, and still his wife looked for him who never came. After two years the old uncle was laid at rest, and the little woman was left quite alone.

How she waited and watched—watched all through youth, all through middle age—waited and watched in vain through twenty long, long years!

In all that time her one thought when she rose in the morning was of "Willie:" her last thought as she laid down at night was of her lost husband. Nightly, long after we had gone to bed and she thought me asleep, her little figure would steal from the bed-room and kneel in a spot she had often shown me, where Willie had said his good-bye, and there she would pray, in a low, soft voice, the words always the same: "My God, take me home to my Willie: oh, come and take me! Willie, my husband, come back and take me!" And then she would creep away to her room as quietly as she came.

By the fireplace stood Willie's arm-chair: out in the pantry was Willie's cup and saucer, carefully, tenderly washed every day. Over the mantelpiece hung Willie's picture—to her, that of a beautiful hero; to me, that of a rather commonplace young man with blue eyes, light curling hair, large features and a

turned-up nose. I have seen love, devotion, infatuation, all manner of mischief brought on through men; but never, in all my experience, had I encountered such complete merging of one life into another. To her, Willie seemed to be not all this world only, but all she dreamed of in the world to come. She did not think of him as on earth, but as in heaven.

The little woman's mind and heart were a study to me. I was sitting, with my hands in my lap, thinking her over, she still knitting, and the click of the needles diversified by the splash, just audible, of the large, comfortable tears on her neat black silk, when we were both startled by a vigorous swing of the gate and a heavy step on the gravel. A moment more and the door was flung open, and suddenly, without word or gesture, a large, weatherbeaten, rough-looking man stood, like an apparition, before us. A long, purple scar, crossing his forehead and cheek, gave a sinister expression to one eye. He stared at us, then gazed about the room for some time without speaking: at last he fastened his eyes on Mrs. Robinson. She crept behind me and whispered, "Please send him away, Miss Jemima; see how he stares! Dear, dear! what a dreadful man!"

"What do you wish, sir?" I inquired, boldly enough, I think, although quaking internally, for he had now transferred his eyes to me.

"Does Mrs. Mary Jane Robinson live here?" The harsh voice made us both start.

"Yes; I am Mrs. Robinson," said the little woman, retreating further behind me. Suddenly I was seized, chair and all, and deposited in the middle of the room: the next moment the stranger lifted Mrs. Robinson and gave her a bear-like hug, the little woman struggling and screaming with all her might. I ran to the door, intending to call for help; but the words "Mary, my wife, don't you know me?" struck me dumb. I turned in amazement. He still held her in his arms. She had ceased struggling, and was looking at him with

strange, wild, shining eyes. Was her mind shaken? Had the shock been too much for her?

"Let her go; you will kill her!" I cried, scarcely knowing what I said.

He put her down gently, still holding her hand. She stood quite still and passive, as if frozen, the two fixed, bright eyes staring from her death-white face. The man looked from one to the other in a frightened way.

"Do you think I've frightened her out of her wits?" he asked, in an uneasy whisper, as she stood with her eyes riveted on his face.

"I dare say you have," I blurted out, curtly, as I turned to Mrs. Robinson. "Mary, my dear, what is it?" taking her passive hands in mine. She made no motion, not even shifting her eyes. "Won't you speak to me, Mary?" The eyes turned on me, and, slipping her hands from mine, she groped in the air like a blind person. It was terrible to see! "Mary," I said, desperately, "it is your husband come back to you"—anything, I thought, to rouse her; "won't you speak to him?"

"Yes," said Mr. Robinson, eagerly, "I am your husband: don't you know me, Mary? Ain't you glad to see me, my dear?" The tears stood in his eyes, and although they could not soften the look of the scarred one, still I could see a dim—a very dim—likeness to the picture over the mantelpiece, and could no longer doubt his identity. Deep lines seemed to grow in the little woman's face as he spoke to her: the very roundness appeared to fall into sharp angles, such as long years of sorrow had failed to produce.

"Send him away; tell the man to go away. Cannot he go away?" she said, piteously.

"No, my dear," said her husband: "I have come to stay, and I thought you'd be glad to see me." His rough voice trembled a little. "See, I've carried your picture with me through thick and thin. When we was shipwrecked I thought about it, and tied it up waterproof, so I should have that, any way; and all them long years, when Tom

Bright and George Griffith and me used to sit in our hut o'nights and talk over our wives and homes, your picture used to look so hopeful-like—just like you used to look them first two months—I a'most forgot I was a shipwrecked sailor, thousands of miles away. Oh, Mary, the long days and the dreary nights, and the weeks and the months and the years all stretchin' out, one after the other! Yes, child, it was awful dreary-like, and your picture got dim and blurred, and I grew old and gray afore my time; and George, poor fellow!—he died of a queer kind of a fever, and we buried him, decent as we could, under the big palm just above the hut. Then Tom and I led a rough kind of life: we got savage-like, and didn't seem to care much about anything."

There he paused and looked at Mary, sitting motionless: "I thought, sometimes, if ever I did get back, it would be kind o' hard for you to get used to me and my ways, and I'd feel awkward with decent folks. It was nigh on twenty years, I think, before we was found; but I thought, maybe you'd be kind o' glad to see me, any way." And the poor fellow broke down, and looked wistfully at his wife.

But the little woman's mind seemed quite gone. She did not answer him a word, and had again fallen into that fixed, unnatural stare. I thought I might rouse her by calling her thoughts back to daily things. "Mary, dear," I said, "Mr. Robinson must be hungry after his journey: won't you get him some supper?"

She left the room without a word, moving mechanically, like one in a dream. Half an hour passed, during which Robinson had given me a sketch of his shipwreck. It was the old story—the same, with variations, that De Foe and Tennyson and Adelaide Proctor have told. He and his two companions had been washed on an island, rich in beautiful vegetation, but infinitely dreary in its solitude through the long, long years of watching to which the castaways were doomed. He told me how hope had almost died out, when one morning, at sunrise, they saw a ship steering for the

island, signaled her, and were taken on board. She was "The Zephyr," bound for New York; and in little more than two months she brought them home.

When Robinson had finished his story, I went out to see what had become of his wife. She was in the pantry, standing before Willie's cup, and the blessed tears were streaming down her face. As soon as she saw me she fell on my neck, sobbing convulsively:

"Must I give him Willie's cup? No lips have touched it since he went away. How can I give it to that man?" I let her cry until she was exhausted: then I raised her gently and carried her to bed.

"Lie there fifteen minutes, dear: by that time I shall have supper ready."

She obeyed as a little child might. When I went to her, she was white and still, her lids closed. Alarmed, I called her hastily by name, and she raised her eyes to mine. There was still the same fixed glitter in them. I lifted her from the bed and arranged her dress: she was quite passive under my hands.

It was a dreary supper, and a more dreary evening. But at last it came to an end.

I lay half the night turning restlessly on my lounge. The moonlight poured across the room in a broad stream. Willie's picture looked down at me with an unearthly expression: Willie's arm-chair took weird forms in the dim light. I thought over the rapid succession of events, until my head grew dizzy with thinking. Then the reproachful eyes of the young Willie seemed staring at me from the dark corners of the room; and, mingled with his youthful traits, came the rough features and sinister eye of the adult Robinson. Through this chaos of faces Mary's, too, came up, just as I had seen her when she stood at the door of her room, bidding me good-night, her eyes large with terror, and her hands stretched out to me for help—for help, alas! which how could I give her? For was he not her husband? And is it not to her husband that a woman must cleave?

Suddenly my heart stood still. The little woman herself crept noiselessly

from the bedroom—her face looking horribly wan in the moonlight—crossed the parlor and knelt in the accustomed spot. Her hands were raised above her head: her upturned face was convulsed with an agony of appeal; but for a time no words came from her lips: she sank prostrate on the floor. "Oh, my God!" at last she moaned; "Willie has gone from heaven—gone from heaven! I have lost him! Oh, where is he?" Then she glided back as silently as she had come, but the bitter moan sounded in my ears the long night through.

The next morning she wore the same stony face. I stayed with her three weeks, and then returned to my own home, which had, meanwhile, been thoroughly renovated. I could sit in peace before my fire-place now, without fear of storms or risk of draughts. I could sit in peace, outwardly, but my mind had little rest. At intervals of two or three days I went over to see the little woman. Month by month her face grew smaller and her eyes larger and brighter. Their glitter haunted me.

More than a year passed. One cheerful morning, in early spring I was ironing in my kitchen: a pleasant breeze came through the window: the blithe birds without made the orchard vocal with their lively twitterings, and a bed of strawberries in the garden delighted my eyes with its white blossoms. Life seemed pleasant to me this bright morning, and my hands moved briskly at my work.

A shadow fell across the ironing-board and caused me to look up. There was Mr. Robinson, standing in the doorway. The weatherbeaten face had changed much in the year—an unhappy year it had been to him—but its events had stirred the gentler parts of his nature. He looked even sadder than usual this morning, and his voice was low and subdued:

"Miss Jemima, my Mary seems lower than common: she's clean given out and gone to bed. My rough hands and

ways ain't no account in a sick-room: wouldn't you just step over and see, if you could help her any? I wouldn't ask it if I could get along without."

"Instantly," I replied, putting on my bonnet. "I will lock up the house and go back with you."

I found Mrs. Robinson lying on her bed, the room darkened. She looked up at me and smiled—a sweet, dim smile—then, closing her eyes, she lay quite still. Hour after hour, that I sat by her bedside, she never moved nor spoke. In the evening I sent for the village doctor—a quiet, meek little man—who shook his head, looked doubtful, and left some powders.

And so she lay for five days and four nights. Sometimes she was feverish, and would turn and mutter; but usually she lay quite still, her small, thin hands folded, and that wonderful smile on her face. The evening of the fifth day the room was intensely still: Mr. Robinson and I sat watching the calm face, white as the pillow beneath it. Suddenly a light broke over her features. She flung her arms upward with a murmur of joy: "Willie, I am coming!"—sank back, her breathing growing shorter and feebler—a gentle, scarce perceptible struggle, and the little woman was gone from her pain, from her longing, from her fond delusion—gone to a world of light and of peace, where all delusions vanish—gone to a world where, ere long, there will be another meeting; and then Willie will be recognized and welcomed by that faithful heart and loved for ever!

Meanwhile, a bent old man still lives in the house over the way. He, too, is going fast. His hair is white—a softened light shines in his eyes: his mouth falls easily into a tender smile when you speak to him of Mary, his wife, in heaven. Perhaps—who can tell?—she is watching him thence: her Willie, becoming gentler, more spiritualized, through his loving heart, his lonely life, and the guardian influence exerted over him from another world than ours.

By Maria L. Pool

MADE WHOLE.

I WAS not a summer child. The light that greeted the dim eyes of my babyhood was the sombre grayness of a winter gloaming.

I believe that then my groping soul must have felt that love for cold and snow which has clung to me and grown with all my after years.

There are those who say I am not like other women—that I can know nothing of the tender, human fondness that is such a constant guest in most feminine hearts. It may be so. And yet the intense, the exultant, the beseeching longing that throbs through my being as I stand on the lonely shore, betrays a vague love within me that I cannot expend on a thousand insignificant objects. And yet I never can believe that I am unwomanly.

At twenty-five I am in love only with this world of ours that has been kind as a mother to me. Warm within me is an inexhaustible kindness toward humanity, and yet I do not realize that I am perpetually dependent upon that humanity.

Some influence of the years of my childhood may have stamped upon me that characteristic, for I was always a lonely child, with father and mother—all who would have fused me to the world of human beings—dead before I knew them. A lonely child, tended with the promptness money can buy, not with the unspeakable softness of love. But I regret nothing. Womanhood, my art, have brought a sweetness my early years never knew. With these foaming waters of wintry gray at my feet, with the sheeny sands stretched far down the bay, I clasp to my soul a tenderness others cannot interpret.

I am happy;—life, hope, the future, bound within me, and divine love itself sweeps with every frosty wind over my glowing cheeks.

So I stood that winter day on the bleak beach of Hull, recalling, without

regret, the past of my life—looking forward with gladness to my future. I had achieved a beginning in art. Colors had already become my loyal servants, and obeyed me with fleet feet than of yore. Though my work was far below my ideal, it was not so crude as in my first impetuous assaults upon the battlements of art. Critics had said my brush had “facile turns—for a woman!” But I was abashed and angry at that, and felt that I could some day prove my pencil was worthy an artist, ignoring sex. So in my pride I thought.

Gathering my cloak tightly about me, for the wind blew with fury, and on its wings had suddenly come fine, thick flakes of snow, I turned from the beach and ascended the ridge with slow steps, taking to me the wild beauty of that solitary time.

It was a place for summer butterflies, but they knew not its grandeur, for the ledges of reddish-brown rock kept their tragedies safe for those who should faithfully stay throughout the winter solstice.

The incoming tide was lashing the beach behind me, but I was looking across the marsh, whose half-frozen slush gave no sign of its rank June greenery. The snow came thickly, and I could see only dimly as I plodded on over the beach to the bit of a cottage securely fastened on a ledge of rock just beyond high-tide mark. That was my home and my studio through half the year. Half-way home, and I paused with that quickly-withheld step which is the effect of a sudden, unexpected call. But I had heard no call. No sound save the ocean roaring had penetrated my ears, yet I stood listening with alert senses. No human sound came. The snow increased every instant, and had now shut in around me like some white, mysterious wall. I turned and pressed on, retracing my steps with breathless toil. I have no name for that which I

felt then, save that it was an impression which I could not disobey—a something which urged me back. I did not know what I went for, and I peered with dilating eyes as I pushed on past the place where I had been standing.

I chose the sands near the water, for there the path was unimpeded by snow. A few rods more, and I knew I should come to the P—House, a building now deserted, which stood on a high ledge—a rough, precipitous road, barely passable for horses, winding from it to the beach.

“I will go to that road,” I said to myself; “but no farther will I follow the inaudible voice.”

The last step was taken, and I leaned for a moment on the gate that shut off this private way, waiting for the return of the breath which had partially left me. Some untranslatable whispering of a future destiny mingled in the whirling whiteness. Was it for happiness or sorrow? That book of my dim future seemed half unclosed before my conscious eyes. What leaf was I to turn now? Had I not decided my fate? Was not the unfinished picture on my easel at home a symbol of my future life? I removed my hands from the rail and stood upright, giving one glance at the house just visible above me.

But that glance was arrested half-way to its destination. Just at the point of a curve in the road beyond the gate I saw some unrecognizable body, thickly whitened with snow, making unwieldy efforts to rise.

In that first instant not an idea of what that body might be illuminated my brain. In the next I saw it was a horse, which had slipped and fallen, and was slipping again now he was trying to rise. I swung open the gate and went forward. A wind from the ledge drove me back, as if with a warning that this way I must not tread. But I heeded not the wail. The next moment I half stumbled over a human body, lying close to the horse. With a whitening of lips, with a sudden pressing together of hands under my cloak, I turned with a wild, supplicating face oceanward, as if beseeching

my tried friend to help me bear this horror, for I thought the man dead.

I shrank shudderingly, but I knew that over this unknown man I must bend, and render to him what offices of humanity were in my power.

In that hour I felt as if I were alone in all the world of gray whiteness—I and the dumb object that lay still at my feet. I stooped and lifted his cap, which was pressed down over his face.

Though that face was still as the rocks above me, an unerring instinct told me that it was not dead, and that it was consequently my duty to save this man. As one turns back to a fair past, and shrinks from the unknown future—skeptical concerning that gloom which he cannot read—so I stood with hesitating and trembling above this stranger that lay at my mercy. I knew that I should do all that I could to assist him, but in that knowledge was an inexplicable shrinking.

The horse had risen at last, and stood with head drooped above his master, a low, imploring whinny breaking the monotonous rush of wind and wave.

Again I stooped, and now I took the thickly-gloved hand in mine. I drew off the glove and chafed the hand with snow, wondering if it were not better to leave him and go to the village; but that was a long walk round the marsh, and I dared not go, though trembling and longing to flee, with the curious dread as of a new destiny upon me. I could do nothing to revive him: I had no stimulants with me, and I dropped his hand, still hardly able to decide if I should leave him and send aid. The horse raised his head and looked at me, something more than animal pleading in the subdued fire of his large eyes. In that moment the horse seemed more human to me than anything else in that snowy dreariness.

With a quick impulse I reached up and touched the soft, warm face, and I was foolish enough to think the touch gave me a sensation of invigoration: it was the contact of bounding, warm life, while around and about me was the chill of ice.

"Do not leave us, even for a moment," that pleading voice said to me.

A faint stir of the snow-covered breast of the man, a tremble of the pale lips, and I waited with hurrying pulses for those lids to be raised, when I should see what manner of man I had found in the snow.

The feeble eyelids lifted; a ray of light came to me from eyes whose color I could not then see—whose expression was only one of bewilderment and weakness.

I waited for his mental powers to return to him; then I bent down and said:

"If it is possible, I will assist you on your horse. The storm increases."

I did not fancy that he was hurt, but that some temporary physical weakness had overtaken him.

I spoke coldly. From childhood I had disliked innovations upon my regular routine of life, and I was never romantic: therefore this adventure was very disagreeable to me.

Besides, I foresaw that if the man was helpless in any way, it would be to my house he must come, for in this storm he could not possibly get round the marsh.

He looked up at me as I spoke, with an instant's flashing glance; then he said, just audibly:

"I will try to mount."

I saw that I must help him, and I extended both my hands.

He held fast and pulled hard, but I was strong, and the next moment he stood on his feet, one arm over his horse's neck, as he leaned heavily against him. That action, though natural, seemed to my self-accusing sense as a reproach for my cold assistance, and I resented with a flushing cheek my own thought. It was but a moment, and he had seated himself upon his horse, and with a weak movement his head sank down to the animal's neck, and through the snow I saw the dull glow of a crimson stream from his temple.

The sight gave me a tremor of terror. I moved a step nearer him and exclaimed:

"You are wounded, sir!"

Then I shrank back, as fearing the words that should confirm my cry.

"Yes, by the rocks," he said. "Is it far to shelter?"

"Half a mile."

I pushed against the heavy gate that had closed again. The horse and his drooping rider passed slowly through.

I hurried on and walked just in front, over the snow-covered ridge of the beach, the mild-eyed horse following every step like a great, sagacious dog.

Every glance backward revealed the dim, bent figure, that sat as if it drew life and power only sufficient to keep its seat. That figure demanded nothing of me: it was weak and helpless, and yet I rebelled in a blind, imbecile way as I struggled on, the swift wind from the sea pressing against me and wailing in my ear the records of my past days.

I had been happy. I repelled every sign that whispered of change. Let no new vista of unknown joys or sorrows open before me. Let me tread my own way. I could have remorselessly struck down the hand that should unbar to my life a path different from that in which my imagination had trodden.

Thus gloomily, with eyes fixed unseeing upon the snow at my feet, I wended my way homeward, followed by my unbidden guests.

A wild sweep of wind rushed upon us as we turned to mount the steep, narrow path that led to my cottage. It thrust aside the cloak of the man, and whisked his cap far out of sight. The horse half paused and bent his head to sustain the shock.

I turned, casting one look at the gleaming white face turned toward me; then I seized the bridle and led the horse into the little stony yard—now soft and pathless with snow—and up to my door, where was never a guest welcomed so strangely by host or hostess. I threw open the door and extended my hands to assist him. He slid from his horse to the step, and I led him through the tiny hall into my parlor, which was also my studio. What glamour came over my eyes? Upon those pictures, pregnant with my heart itself, was a halo of some

other life, whose characters I could not read. So strongly did I feel that presence in my work-room.

The stranger sank upon the lounge, leaned back his long-haired head, and the faint life which had been in his face went out, leaving a calm blank—a marble of chiseled beauty.

I hurried into the kitchen, where sat my only servant, who was housekeeper also.

"Go to my studio," I said, with the abruptness of alarm. "There is a stranger there who has met with an accident. Do for him what needs to be done."

She obeyed me with wondering face, and I went out, and, because there was no one else to do it, I led the horse into the shed where our wood and coal were stored.

"I will shelter you," I said, standing for a moment at his head, my hand on his mane, my eyes absorbing eagerly the soft and beautiful gaze he directed to me. To the animal I offered a true Arab hospitality: to his master I accorded a roof, because I was by duty bound to do so. I sat half an hour by the kitchen fire, thinking, not so much of the unknown man as of the break in the golden harmony of my days.

The storm had just begun: it bid fair to last several days, and I could not see a sick man depart from my door. I wished him unmitigated good, but that it might bless him elsewhere.

Mary appeared, treading softly.

"He's come to, and wishes to see you," were her words.

I felt that she followed me with curious gaze as I left the room.

He lay upon the sofa: his head was bound with a handkerchief, and, looking at him, for the first time I really saw him. His eyes, now looking unnaturally large, were gray, with a varying sea-green for the lowest depths, and they looked gravely at me, holding my gaze as a child's will do.

He motioned me to a seat near him, and I sat down, a sense of shame for my inhospitable thoughts coming over me.

"Even a sick man is hardly to be

pardoned an intrusion into such a place as this," he said, in a low, melodious voice; "and I do not wonder that I trouble you greatly. Is there a hotel near?"

"They are all closed at this season."

"I am sorry."

He shaded his eyes with his hand and looked from the window.

"And if they were not," I went on, rapidly, "I should never forgive myself if I allowed you to leave here while the storm continues. It is very evident that you are ill."

For the first time I spoke with heartfelt emphasis, and some indescribable illumination burned across his face as he heard me, then fled, leaving the pallid refinement, the patrician curves, in a weary quiet.

"I thank you," he said, in his subdued, still manner. "It is true that I cannot well leave in such a storm until I am stronger. Until then I must crave your kindness. I was fearfully ill a short time ago; therefore the slight accident which has befallen me has had the effect you see."

He ceased speaking, and I, who had nothing to say, sat silent, with eyes drooped to my lap, where my hands lay in listless position.

"My horse?" he asked.

"He is taken care of," I replied.

"I have in my thoughts done you injustice," he said. "You had a right to consider your house your castle."

"On the contrary, I had no right," I said, humbly. "I was not even as hospitable as a barbarian."

"I do not wonder. If I fled from the world to such an industry as this, I should impatiently refuse entrance to all."

He was looking at the large picture on my easel—the pet worship of my winter thus far, for it embodied the wild and wintry marine idea which was the ideal of my artist life.

He did not speak in compliment, but in almost the same manner in which he had just half censured me. He lay silent a while, then said:

"I ought to present myself to you, for you are already known to me."



His fleeting and unusual smile impressed me like the sudden appearing and withdrawing of a beautiful spirit.

"Your canvas is your card of introduction. I cannot be mistaken. As one knows an author sometimes by the books he has written, so I know you. You are —;" and he spoke my name.

I inclined my head without speaking. This praise, that seemed implied, not expressed, was very sweet to me. And whether he had ever wielded a pencil, I knew not, but that his soul belonged to that small and glorious vanguard of true artists, I knew. All of the real painter there was within me trembled with delight at his words; for they were not addressed to the woman, but to the artist.

"Do you paint?" I asked, eagerly, for the first time really alive to his presence.

"Only in dreams," he replied, with a look that seemed a sorrowful smile.

"But you might," I said, positively; "you surely have the head of an artist."

"But no mechanical skill," he responded.

"I am allowing you to talk," I said, bethinking myself of my thoughtlessness, and inwardly reproving myself for my subdued impatience to hear from his lips some of the art-treasures that I knew were stored in his mind, for one who paints pictures can never be mistaken in one glance which is sometimes directed to them.

There was about this man the least appearance of gallantry of any man I had ever met. I knew that his clear, soft tones—that held in them such a concealed power—were not modulated because he talked to a woman; that over his manner was spread no veil of sweetness that was not a part of him; that beneath that habitual bearing was a fire burning clear and sweet as the flame of some rare and perfumed oil.

In that first half hour there was revealed to me the translation of the syllables in which his temperament and character were written. I did not fully realize it then, but I knew it afterward. I rose from my seat, saying: "At any time you wish my servant will show you your room."

An apology for the smallness and rudeness of that room trembled on my lips, but, happily, I knew better than to utter it to such a person.

I saw too well that his nature was of that exquisite refinement that depends little upon the outward—that nothing was coarse to him.

"Is that a signal of dismissal?" he asked, rising with slowness and difficulty. "I shall not forgive myself if I intrude longer than is necessary upon your work."

"It was not a signal," I hastened to say. "I feared that your fatigue would make your own room very acceptable."

He stood beside me as I leaned against the door. The wavering emerald of his eyes seemed to have conquered the gray, and to glow in a soft and penetrating lustre. The thin scarlet of his beardless lips burned vividly, and was curved in that slow, unconscious smile which is so strangely attractive. His face was turned full toward me, and it appeared to glow with a radiance as unusual as it was pure. I felt, as I glanced at that face—as once before in my life I had done when blessed by the hand-clasp of one noblest and best—as if into my life had suddenly flowed the electric current of a divine goodness. His eye softened with every instant, shining with a clear good-will which is rare and which cannot be mistaken. He suddenly extended his hand, saying: "I do not feel afraid to offer you my friendship. I am not conceited—though the words may sound so—when I say that there are many characters in your life which I can interpret, as I know that your eyes can read the pages of my soul. Do not refuse me your acquaintance, though I am only a grateful stranger—a self-intruded suppliant."

I put my hand in his without saying a word. Silence best befitted me then. If, indeed, he understood me as he had said, he needed no word.

"Take my thanks," he said. "Let me tell you my name before I bid you good-night. It is Edward Starbuck."

He bowed over my hand and then followed the servant up stairs.

The name was unknown to me: no acquaintance had ever borne it.

I went back into the parlor, sitting down before the picture upon which I was this winter at work. That miniature snowy shore, with its wave-lashed sands, had never inspired me as now. With face flushed with enthusiasm for my work, with fingers that obeyed me right loyally, I worked on until the deep and settled darkness made me throw down my brush.

Then, walking slowly back and forth in the glimmering light of the fire, I thought with hazy, indistinct musings of the day that was closing.

Some spirit of the future murmured vaguely that this day was a link that should connect my past with my future—a bond of light to burn plainly in my sight through years to come. For do we not sometimes meet those who change our life for us, even though we never see them again?

Had my thoughts that night been distinct, they would have resolved themselves into the simplest words that could have said that I had met one whose pure and sympathetic soul raised my aspirations.

When lights were brought in, my eyes fell upon a letter that arrived the day before—a letter of airy nothings, tinged with a sort of kindness.

Mrs. Vanstone was my only relative—a far-away cousin—who fluttered her gay feathers through a fashionable life, but kept over me a smiling surveillance, fearing in her heart that I might marry a boot-black, or some one equally depressed in the social scale. I was thus somewhat of a nightmare to her.

Impelled by I know not what, I sat down to my desk and wrote gayly to her, some bubbling persiflage taking possession of me.

But I said no word of the day's adventure, nor hinted of the stranger's presence.

The boy came struggling through the storm next morning for the mail, and bore the letter off.

"I sha'n't be able to come to-morrow," he said. "I would not have started to-day if I'd known how bad it was;" and he went fighting his way out of sight in the storm.

I turned from the open door, the fierce cold and the driving storm, and found my guest in the little hall with me, but looking much more fit for a bed of illness. His eyes, transparently gray, glanced like rays of light. They dispelled the gloom of the morning—they permeated like the joy of a glorious day. And yet this did not seem the effect of himself personally, or I did not consider it so, as we do not often realize that it is the sun which sheds such ineffable light upon us.

I was conscious of an attraction, but totally unembarrassed, for it appeared as if I were experiencing one of those inexplicably bright days which come to persons of moods.

"The boy did not know what good news he brought," he said, holding open the parlor door for me to enter. "You are too humane to send me away, and I am weak enough to believe that I could not well battle with this."

"You do not look it," I responded, more than half alarmed as I saw the utter pallor of his face, from which his glance gleamed like a sword of light that could not wound.

He leaned against the back of a chair, and I saw that that support was necessary to him.

A strip of plaster covered the wound on his temple, but near it the skin showed bruised and purple.

His whole appearance was that of a union of power and weakness, and very fascinating. Was he that which I had always despised—a ladies' man?

I do not know why I thought of that then, but something, as he stood there—delicate, weak, yet strong, beautiful and careless of his beauty, apparently—made me sure that he must be a favorite with women; and that idea gave a seemingly imperceptible coldness to my voice when I spoke again, for every man whose praises had been sung to me had appeared to me most insipid.

As my voice left my lips in some commonplace observation, he looked with that peculiar glance of his, which saw and knew everything.

That look told me that he had de-

tected some change in my thought that was unpleasant. That change had brought for the first time the consciousness that he had interested me more than any other had done; that I did not know him; that he was a man, and consequently conceited and vain.

Ah, I would not be too kind; and I had been prompted to kindness precisely as if he had been a woman. After that first shrinking from change and unknown disagreeables, I had appeared to him, I knew, as I should have done had it been a woman I had found in the snow.

But that week of storm upon the New England coast was filled with an essence of change and pleasure which even now I cannot analyze or describe. The air held a draught which I unconsciously drank, not knowing whence came that delicate inebriation, that champagne of the intellect and of the refined senses. Never had I so loved my work, and in those days of outward gloom the storm upon my canvas grew toward completion with a strength and naturalness that thrilled me with an art-ecstasy. At last a morning dawned in a cold and clear splendor. The dark water sparkled like liquid ice; and the air that rushed over me as I leaned from my chamber window gave its oxygen bound to my pulses. My soul rose joyfully to meet the sun.

Down stairs I found my guest standing by the fire. Over the chair near him lay his heavy cloak. He came forward and took my hand, saying:

"My good-morning and good-bye must follow close upon each other. I must go within the hour."

I murmured some polite words of regret. The sight of his face as he looked at me then gave me the utmost self-possession.

A hidden current of fire coursed through me, ignited by the lingering, commanding touch of his hand. That face was colorless, yet glowing with light. His light, flossy hair was flung backward, and seemed in some way to be affected by the excitement which controlled him.

He stood near me, his crimson lips reposing in a line suggestive of the deep-

est, most delicate emotion. I thought I actually felt the warmth of those flaming, intense eyes that held me before him, but which, at the same time, gave me the fullest self-command, for I knew that his own control trembled insecurely.

"Give this hour to me," he said, at last. "Let my soul speak to yours, for it will be understood; and never before has it wished to break the silence in which it slumbered."

His voice, full of passionate melody, besought an inexpressible happiness. My hand, still held in his, thrilled silently in response to that tone.

"These days of storm," he went on, "have been the most blessed of my life. They brought me to the woman I love."

He suddenly dropped my hand and folded his arms as if folding in something most precious.

"I will keep this love," he said. "It is my crown of life. It was one day prophesied to me that only in love could I be assured of a safe life—that love only could exorcise the demon that haunts and threatens me."

Could any demon threaten eyes of such triumphant splendor? At that instant I could almost have fancied it was the love, not the object, which he demanded, and an unacknowledged jealousy flashed through me, for in that same moment I knew that I loved him.

"Something in your face blesses me," he exclaimed; "and yet I dare not touch you. I could not touch your hand again and not claim you as mine for ever. If you do not love me freely, utterly, conqueringly, as I love you, I cannot see you again. I could not! There is that in me which makes me powerless to resist you. To feel a mutual love would be all of happiness I could ask. To know a love to which you did not respond would compel me never to see you again, for I shall always love you."

His intense words poured over my soul a glorious wine, an immortal elixir. I loved him; I had known him not a week, but years: my soul had always known him—asleep until he should come. I stood with hands hanging clasped, with

drooped head, with eyes filled with the light that flooded me.

"You do not speak to me," he said, softly. "Do you accept what I offer—all that I am?"

I looked up. The fullness of happiness which had lain latent all my life leapt up at his call.

"I accept," I said, hardly audibly.

He bent and gently took my hands in his, holding them for an instant in silence; then saying: "But I have not a pleasant life to tell you. I dare not claim you irrevocably until you have listened to words hard to tell you."

I heard him incredulously. No story he could tell would change him.

Remembering then that we had been standing, he led me to a seat; and, still standing before me, said:

"I am of a race over which hangs a curse. The blood of insanity is in my veins. At this moment I cannot conceal anything from you. My father died a suicide, an insane horror guiding his knife. For generations back, here and there upon our genealogy, has been the black mark that seemed set there by some angry deity. And most fatally have we loved. Those whom my fathers loved returned treachery for devotion, and suffering developed the horrible thing lurking within them.

"My father, fearful, above all things, that I had inherited the darkness that struggled for mastery within him, endeavored with the efforts of despair to guard me from every trouble. From childhood to manhood my path was hedged in by a watchful kindness. I was warned never to love, never to give my happiness into the keeping of a woman, for a woman had wrecked his life. Futile advice, you will say, and indeed it was. I followed it until now, because I have known no temptation to depart from it. Five years ago my father died. Shall I tell you that that shock, though it developed no insanity, yet made me, in my inmost heart, a man of gloom? From my earliest youth I have been taught that woman cursed our family. Yet now I laugh at the possibility of my life being thus cursed.

"A noted physician for the insane said to me: 'A woman who shall indeed be your counterpart, who shall fulfill your whole existence for you—such an one shall save you. Then would you find joy to recompense life.' I did not think upon his words, but now I realize them. You are mine, as I am yours. My love is like a revelation. My life opens in joy."

He sank on his knees by me and hid his face in my hands. Upon us in that supreme moment descended the chrism of entire and mutual love.

I have now only to tell the infiction that awaited me. A week later I sat alone at my work, a bright sunshine warming the room and silently prophesying the brightness of the days to come; for in my exultant heart was no place for fear or despondency. Could I not, with the power of love, conquer a beautiful future? No cloud should linger above the head of him I loved.

A sudden jingle of bells along the lonely road in front of my door, and looking through the window I saw the flutter of crimson, the heavy folds of velvet, and with a sigh of wonder, I knew my cousin, Mrs. Vanstone, had come.

"Where is he?" she asked, giving me a peck on the cheek.

Then I knew wherefore she had come, but what instinct, what rumor had sent her here? Meanwhile she had settled like a feather upon my lounging-chair, and was looking keenly at me from under faintly curled eyelashes.

"Who?" I asked, looking coolly at her.

"Oh, the man, the chevalier, the Sir Philip. You've had one here or seen one, I know. 'Bring him for'ard and let me pitch him out o' winder;' for I feel like Mr. F.'s aunt. Come, don't evade."

I was angry. Why did she always supervise me?

"You mean Mr. Starbuck?" I said. "He has gone."

She dropped her gay, debonair manner, and looked with swift sharpness at me.

"He has not been here?" she said.  
"Yes."

She laughed satirically.

"The flirt, the breaker of women's hearts! But of course you were safe. Ah!" The last with an indescribable inflection.

In spite of myself, I felt my face pale slightly. My ready suspicion and jealousy sprang up fiercely, and yet I knew better. But she should not know what I thought.

"Relate to me," she said, "what sent him here."

I told her the bare facts of the case, and then waited her speech.

"Of course he made love to you?" with soft, taunting smile.

"Certainly," I said, icily.

She looked at me with blank face.

"What are you saying?" she asked.

"I am replying to you."

"Did he offer himself?" in a low tone, as if awed by the celerity of affairs.

"Yes."

"And you?"

"I accepted him."

A few moments of silence. Then a gay, cold voice:

"But it is not six months since he was engaged to Olivia Hunt, and is now, for aught I know."

"You speak falsely," I said, suddenly sitting down, my hands growing cold.

"Did he tell you so?"

"No."

She nodded her head: "He hasn't an income of a thousand a year."

Now I was relieved. That was the trouble, after all.

"I don't care," I said.

She saw she had made a false move, and went back to the subject of his previous engagement. I listened in silence. At last she said, with polite anger:

"You have waited long enough, and I have had trouble enough about you, for you to make a good marriage. What do you want with a poor man—the son of a man who thought fit to cut his own throat?"

At this I said, imperiously:

"I will marry whomsoever I please—provided he gives me the opportunity."

"But his engagement?"

My fingers closed tightly.

"If he is, or has been, engaged to Olivia Hunt—a simpering simpleton—I will never marry him!" I cried, with impetuous rashness.

With a quick rising of spirits I saw that she did not look as relieved as she ought to have done.

"It was the talk, at any rate."

"It was also the talk that you were in love with the music-teacher your husband procured for you," I retorted.

She looked furious, but said, softly:

"I hope you'll do as you choose. Meanwhile, remember your promise."

When she rose to go, I said: "How did you ever think any one had been here?"

"I knew by the tone of your letter that something had happened, and I'm always worried for fear of a misalliance for you; so I hurried down—to find my fears realized. You were always odd," was her parting salutation.

"But you never were," was my farewell, remembering she had married a man of sixty for his money. But that was not a misalliance.

On the second day from her departure I received a note from her, saying:

"You are so original and enterprising a young person that I'll forestall your explorations. I have learned beyond a doubt that he never was engaged to Olivia. I wish you joy, and suppose you'll paint to eke out a living. How fortunate that you are a genius! Let me select your trousseau."

I only smile as I look back now, through the five happy years that have blessed us, upon those days.

Love has made me work more successfully. Love has crowned my husband with an assurance of peace and hope. Over our home spread the brooding wings of an utter contentment—that contentment which smiles at its lot while yet it reaches forward to a better.

By D. B. Dorsey

## LOVE ON THE OHIO.

MR. GEORGE THORN had just graduated at Jefferson College, and was on his way from Canonsburg to his home in Iowa. He had registered his name and paid his fare to St. Louis on the steamer Brilliant, lying at Wheeling wharf, and for twenty-four hours had been waiting for the boat to complete her loading and start upon the trip. Under such circumstances, every diversion is made available as a prop to patience and a means of whiling away the otherwise tedious hours. Not the least interesting of such diversions are those afforded by the arrival and departure of other boats; and especially the study of the forms and faces of the passengers who throng the guards of the boats, engaged, it may be, in similar occupation.

While Mr. Thorn was sitting forward on the boiler-deck of the Brilliant, thus scanning the passengers on the steamer Clipper, which had just arrived, his eye fell upon a young lady whose countenance and form at once affected him as with a spell of witchery. She was standing upon the guards of the Clipper to the rear of the wheelhouse, and conversing with another lady beside her, while they both looked out upon the busy scene which the other steamers and the wharf presented.

What a peerless woman!" mentally exclaimed Mr. Thorn, as he gazed and gazed, in enchantment which every moment deepened upon him. After a few moments more of intensest scrutiny, he

indulged in more enthusiastic mental exclamations. "Hebe, what a face! O Terpsichore, what a form!" said he, his late college-studies following him into his bewilderment and mingling with his emotions. Then he gazed again, minutely studying the lady's hair, her eye, her mouth, her attitude, her manner; and this time mere classical allusions seemed too tame for his purpose. He quoted one of Horace's most glowing amatory passages. He had in those few minutes become a votary of Venus. Cupid had shot a quiver-full of arrows into his heart.

It matters very little what were the real facts in regard to the lady's personal attractions. Titania, when the spell was upon her, fondled Bottom the weaver, although he wore the shaggy head on his shoulders; and, by-the-way, he told her the truth in return, that "love and reason keep little company together now-a-days." It happened, however, in Mr. Thorn's case, that the fascination was of a somewhat reasonable nature. The lady was young and handsome, elegant and graceful. She had been the centre of attraction on the Clipper during the entire trip. Mr. Thorn was not alone, therefore, in his admiration.

By the tacit common law of steam-boat travel, upon the Western waters at least, personal inspection of those around you is admissible, if it be not specially obtrusive or markedly impertinent. It seems to be necessary as an antidote to ennui and insipidity; as in Mr. Thorn's

case, for instance. By allowance of this law, the young lady who had so magically attracted his attention slowly passed her eye back and forth along the line of passengers upon the guards of the *Brilliant*. Each time it encountered Mr. Thorn's, fixed upon her with such intent and eager gaze that she could not help observing it; and, attention once being drawn to him, he was not likely to be disparaged by it, for he was a manly fellow—large, well-made, self-possessed, with a general air of good sense and good nature.

It is not worth while to repeat here the trite old disquisition about the language of the eye. Everybody knows that eyes can say some things better than tongues can; and, in fact, can say some things that tongues cannot say. Besides, eyes are rather unconventional in their talk. They speak, too, at such distances and so freely, without exciting the least thought of impropriety. Right over broad and deep gulfs set by conventionality they speak clearly and distinctly; and not unfrequently reveal in a twinkling secrets which the more politic or less facile tongue would boggle at for days, and probably stumble over in the end. Not, indeed, that the eye is without its own prudences and proprieties; but it is prudent and proper as judged by a more generous code of social laws and a more liberal system of social ethics than would be appropriate to that grosser, more sensuous organ, the tongue.

By this subtle language of the eye Mr. Thorn, whether intentionally or not, told the strange young lady that he was captivated; and she, in return, at least modestly intimated a little complaisant sentimentalism. And for half an hour or more they kept up the running talk, at intervals as propriety allowed, until quite a special acquaintance of that kind was formed.

But what of all that? Such acquaintanceships have a very slender tenure, and are usually of the most evanescent kind. Besides, the circumstances were rather unfavorable to its cultivation. The steamer *Clipper* was making only

a transient stop, and would presently shove off and proceed upon her trip; and that would end the whole matter. The strangers, who had never seen each other before, would probably never see each other again.

When that thought first occurred to Mr. Thorn, it "struck all the blood into his face like a strong buffet;" for during the last half hour he had been building some very seemly castles in the air, and such a consideration flecked them with mist, if it did not hide them in thick clouds. But love is a hopeful as well as an unreasoning thing; and another glance of the lady's eye revived Mr. Thorn's cheer for the moment.

Yet only for the moment. When the glance was turned away, back came that thought upon him with unwonted force. So abrupt, so violent was its assault, that it jerked him from his seat and hurried him off into the cabin. He went there to consult philosophy, he said to himself; and, pacing back and forth, he consulted philosophy in such a soliloquy as this:

"What a fool I am, to be thus bewitched by a woman whom I have never met before and shall never meet again! True, she has the loveliest face and the grandest form I ever saw. And such an eye! Oh, Juno! never such an eye dawned upon me before! And such rich, melting summer-full lips! whole swarms of smiles lingering about them, like bees about fruit that is mellow and sweet with ripeness. And then that gentle, kindly expression of face, through which intelligence and culture beam like the sun through the soft, hazy air of Indian summer! Ah! that is where her power of enchantment lies. And how benignantly she has been recognizing my glances! Yet how modestly, too! And with what a queenly regard to proprieties! I am satisfied that she is favorably disposed, if— But there it is! Oh, my heart! how can I bear the idea of our thus drifting apart upon life's wide ocean, to be separated for ever!"

Here his soliloquy became incoherent, turbulent, tumultuous. Fragments of hopes, of fears, of poetic apostrophes to

lips, to eyes, to form, went floating by upon that troublous tide of thought and emotion. Meantime he paced the floor of the empty cabin back and forth, back and forth, with constantly increasing nervousness of gait, until, just as he was saying to himself, "Eternal separation! How can I endure it, when it has been a pain to me to withdraw for only a few moments from her presence?" the bell of the *Clipper* rang for starting. That brought Mr. Thorn to a decision. He sprang to his state-room, seized his trunk and dragged it to the front door of the cabin, where he happened to meet a porter, whom he ordered to put it on board of the *Clipper*. Meanwhile he remembered his valise, and ran back to get it. By the time he returned an adventure awaited him. His trunk had been transferred, and the *Clipper* was unloosed and was swinging off; but the porter remained unpaid. Be sure that his coin to the porter was broad (it was in 1858, when coins were extant), and his leap was superb; for he had a shrewd suspicion that a pair of bright black eyes might be watching him from some lookout above.

The old adage about marriage in haste and repentance at leisure may be fitly applied to other acts besides marriage. Think of Mr. Thorn's case, for instance. He had lost his passage-money paid on the *Brilliant*. He had got on board of a boat which was going up the river instead of down. This was acting the prodigal with time as well as money. He had thrown himself into a flurry of excitement by a madcap adventure which cost him his self-respect, and might have cost him his life. And all this for what?

There, indeed, was the rub. After paying his fare to Pittsburg and retiring to his room, Mr. Thorn asked that question over and over with a very practical air, but somehow managed to answer it each time with rapturous interjections about starry eyes and pearly teeth. After a time, however, when his fluttering had somewhat subsided, and he had taken his fill of pooh-poohing at money as compared with the unspeakable treasure he was seeking; he condescended to con-

sider the matter rather practically by inquiring in what way—by what special methods—he proposed to secure this priceless treasure.

Then, for the first time, some of the difficulties of the case occurred to him. He remembered that, whatever freedom there might be for eyes, the rigid social rules which governed ladies while traveling on steamboats were more exclusive of strangers than the social rules governing anywhere else. He reflected, too, that he was an utter stranger to all on board, and could not, therefore, hope for an introduction, even at third or fourth hand.

When these suggestions arose, his first impulse was to smother them with romance; and he even began to cast about for instances in which worse obstacles had been removed by the occurrence of some happy event. But let us do Mr. Thorn the justice to say that he was a man of sense—when not in love; and that, even in love, all his good sense did not forsake him. He rigidly checked fancy and snubbed the romantic tendency; and then, looking the whole affair over in the light of common sense, he concluded that he had made himself ridiculous, in his own eyes at least; and for the moment it seemed to him, too, that the throngs of passengers on both boats had been witnesses of his folly. This last notion, however, he presently detected as a mere suggestion of mortified pride; for he was now coming to his senses. But there was still enough discouragement and reproach left to bear his mental reaction down to the depression of shame, mortification and chagrin; and for the time, therefore, his infatuation was forgotten.

By-and-bye another reaction ensued. Pondering upon his reckless, prodigal waste of money and time, his frantic inconsiderateness in changing boats, and his present ridiculous position, he grew excited, exasperated, maddened at himself. At such times men need diversion from themselves. Happy are they who, like Mr. Thorn, have the instinct which spontaneously prompts them to seek it. He rose hastily, lit a cigar, and went up

to the hurricane-deck to smoke and look about him, and cease thinking of his folly.

He noticed nobody on the way. Self was too distinctly before him yet. Passing through the crowd of passengers on the boiler-deck, and ascending the stairway leading above, he walked back the whole length of the hurricane-deck to the stern of the boat, and looked down into the rushing, foaming water swirling away in the wake. At any other time it would have made him dizzy to do so, but now it seemed to have just the opposite effect. It steadied him, by recalling his attention to the outside world. Then he turned to traverse the deck in the opposite direction, when, behold! his strange lady met his view. She was promenading there with another lady, in a leisurely, sauntering way. He had not noticed them before, because they were on the opposite side of the pilot-house from him when he came up on deck.

His eyes met hers, just near, not more than two steps distant. Their first mutual glance was a sort of recognizing one. Then each searchingly scanned the other for a brief but intense moment. That was a look of investigation, of scrutiny. The proprieties forbade going beyond that, although he felt very much inclined to telegraph the message, "I am seeking opportunity." Instead of that, however, he acceded to her message of "stranger," and said "stranger" in return. Then he passed on.

But something, Mr. Thorn thought, had been gained. They had seen each other nearer than before; and were both satisfied upon closer scrutiny. Some persons look best at a distance, because they are coarse, or bear upon their persons some blemish of proportion which only close inspection can detect. This was not the case with either of them. Real beauty, symmetry and grace will bear the narrowest scrutiny of competent eyes; and this nearer approach evidently impressed both of them. Besides, there was in it a fresh prop to Mr. Thorn's hope. Who could tell what might not occur? he said to himself; and again the

spell of enchantment took possession of him in full force.

As he walked forward after passing her, all kinds of schemes for accomplishing his aim suggested themselves to his now newly-heated brain. But amid the multitude there was not one that seemed practical. They each required some condition precedent to success; and the condition was in every instance wanting. He kept canvassing them, however, in hope that they would suggest something available; and, as he passed back and forth—meeting the lady, of course, at every turn—he became less and less fastidious in regard to the artistic symmetry and consistency of a plan. He was willing, in fact, to strain propriety a little for the sake of securing success. He even meditated the desperate expedient of attempting to pick up an acquaintance, by speaking to her incidentally at some favorable opportunity; but that thought was repressed as unworthy of himself and of her.

The truth is, that his infatuation was growing upon him; and, indeed, there seemed to be cause for its growth. As they passed and repassed in walking to and fro, their mutual glances, although not such as would have attracted the attention of others, were nevertheless full of meaning. Mr. Thorn was not obtrusive, indeed; not impertinent, not at all impolite; nor was the lady in the least degree forgetful of propriety; but still the eyes continued to talk—perhaps involuntarily. Presently, too, Mr. Thorn caught the tones of the lady's voice in conversation with her companion. Then Calypso became to him a very shabby myth. Sylvan reeds and mellow flutes were mere dinner-horns and canal-trumpets in comparison. He stood, in fact, at the roseate gates of Paradise and heard the music from within. In a word, as before intimated, his infatuation was becoming, if possible, more permeant and universal. He was drunk with love.

After some time, a staid, serene-looking old gentleman came up on the deck and addressed the young lady in such a manner that Mr. Thorn readily recognized him as her father.

"Mary," said he, in a half-chiding, half-caressing tone, "I see Mr. Selburne apparently looking for you below. Had you not better go down?"

"I should prefer continuing our promenade now," she replied. "Mr. Selburne will probably be up after a while."

"Very well," returned the old gentleman. "I only wanted you to know that he seemed to be seeking you. I need a little recreation myself." So the promenade continued, the old gentleman joining it.

Mr. Thorn, in passing, happened to hear this brief conversation, and it cast all his fine sentimentalism down into nether bathos. The whole air of the little colloquy seemed to indicate that the Mr. Selburne whom he had heard mentioned was the lady's husband.

"And," said he, in mental soliloquy, "here have I been running like a dolt and an idiot after a married woman; flinging away my money and risking my neck just to look at her. Stupid block-head! Headlong, precipitate, thoughtless fool! Ah, if I were only back upon the Brilliant, how content I should be!"

After a few moments of reflection in this strain, however, he turned to consider the other side of the question. What did those glances mean? he asked. Could he have been mistaken in his interpretation of them? Had he been so bemazed as that? He decided not. If he had any senses at all, he was sure that the lady had at least exchanged complaisant glances with him. But might she not have been quizzing him? He turned his eye to observe whether she wore the general air of a quiz, when a new development of the case met his view.

A man of elegant exterior, and apparently about thirty-five years of age, had joined the little company, and was now walking with the rest. He was evidently easy and bland in manner, but he wore that air of intense self-consciousness which was one of the unfavorable fruits of Southern social culture in those days. As the company passed Mr. Thorn the following colloquy occurred:

"Have you decided yet, Mr. Matteson,

when you will return?" the young man asked of the elder.

"Not fully," the latter replied. "But probably not until fall, or at least until quite late in the summer."

"You will not return by the Lakes, then?" asked the younger man.

"No; we shall go that way," the old gentleman answered. "I am very sorry, Mr. Selburne, that you cannot accompany us."

"Thank you. I am sorry too," returned the other.

A journey on hand; bad enough! thought Mr. Thorn, who, among his other projects, had meditated the idea of tracking the young lady and securing an acquaintance at Pittsburg, where he had a number of influential friends. But still there was some relief in the case. Mr. Selburne was not the lady's husband, at least; and, besides, he would soon quit her company.

While Mr. Thorn was thus cogitating upon the new aspect of affairs, the first bell rang, and all went below to prepare for dinner. He repaired to his stateroom, and looked after his toilet with rather more than usual care. As he emerged from it in response to the second bell, an incident occurred which he regarded as exceedingly tantalizing, because it appeared to mean so much, without really meaning anything practical. His room was toward the rear of the main cabin, and the ladies had to pass it in going from their cabin to the table. It happened that, as he opened his door, Miss Matteson was just passing; and, strangely enough, the old-time, happy accident known to our grandfathers and grandmothers in their young, romantic days, opportunely occurred. Miss Matteson dropped her handkerchief. He picked it up, of course; and, as he handed it to her, remarked, with special significance of manner:

"I am happy to have even so slight an opportunity of serving you. Hope I may yet have a greater."

The lady's "Thank you" was not the mere formal one of everyday courtesy. Its tone was special. The expression of countenance accompanying it was full



of meaning. She evidently appreciated Mr. Thorn's remark and manner, and was not indifferent to his intention. But if either of them could have divined the future, that remark must have seemed intensely cruel.

However, let us not anticipate.

During the afternoon, the ladies, accompanied by Mr. Matteson and Mr. Selburne, went up again to the hurricane-deck to promenade and view the scenery. Mr. Thorn, deeming it impolitic to go up, and also desiring to have a little seclusion for collecting his thoughts, seated himself on the guards just outside of his room, to smoke and meditate. As he sat there, he now and then caught little snatches of Miss Matteson's voice, chatting and laughing in the company on the deck above.

After some time spent in leisurely sauntering back and forth, the company stopped almost immediately over his head, and seemed to him to be engaged in rollicksome wit and raillery, when suddenly the form of a woman was precipitated past him and plunged in the water beneath.

The event was peculiarly suited to his mood. Quick as a flash, he threw off his hat and coat, seized the two pairs of life-preservers hanging just inside of his door, and leaped into the water so as to alight a few feet from where the woman had fallen.

Then followed an intensely exciting scene. There was, as usual in such cases, an instantaneous rush of the passengers to the side of the boat, causing her to "kreel" considerably. Then a moment's stupor seemed to ensue, during which every faculty of observation appeared to be on the stretch; but, as soon as the whole situation became apparent, everybody found something to do or to say. The boat was stopped; the yawl was manned and sent off; show-ers of life-preservers, with which the boat was well supplied, fell around the imperiled woman and the heroic adventurer who had undertaken to save her life; and above, on the hurricane-deck, several strangers had to assist Mr. Selburne in preventing Mr. Matteson from plung-

ing headlong into the river; for it was his daughter that was in peril.

Meantime, Mr. Thorn, rising to the surface after his deep plunge, had glanced rapidly about him and discovered the form he sought a few feet from him, but evidently in the act of sinking again. As he pushed toward her with strong arm, the clamorous cries of direction and encouragement, which had greeted his first rising, ceased entirely, and breathless stillness reigned while he made a few vigorous strokes, caught the senseless, sinking form, turned up the beautiful face from the water which had covered it, and, buoyed by the life-preservers, held it there until the yawl came rapidly up and took his charge and himself on board. Then, when it was seen that the lady was alive and safe, there burst from a hundred lips a loud, thrilling, prolonged shout of mingled joy and acclamation, that thundered over the water and reverberated among the Ohio and Virginia hills.

It was a moment of unspeakable pride and exultation to Mr. Thorn. He felt that he had met with an event which amply repaid him for all the depressing and mortifying experiences of the day. He had saved the life of Miss Matteson; and, however ungenerous and selfish the thought might be, he could not help reflecting that this solved the problem over which he had been puzzling ever since he got on board of the Clipper.

Miss Matteson was borne to her stateroom and received every needed attention from the lady passengers, besides the medical counsel of a physician who happened to be on board of the boat. It was found that she had not been hurt by the accident; and even the nervous shock did not seem to be greater than that which her father had suffered. In an hour or so both were recruited so much as to engage with some cheer in conversation; and by evening they scarcely noticed the effect of the day's unusual event.

Meantime, Mr. Thorn had retired to his own room immediately after the adventure; and, after changing his clothes, had sat down in seclusion until all par-

ties, himself included, should recover from the excitement, and until the merits of his adventure, and the facts connected with it, should have been canvassed by the commentators.

The canvass disclosed all the important facts in the case. Miss Matteson, in suddenly turning to catch her handkerchief, which was being blown from her hand, had struck her foot against some iron fixtures beside her, and had thus been thrown over the low railing of the deck. The river at the place where she fell was very deep, so that the plunge did not dash her upon the bottom; and, besides, the buoyancy of her clothing prevented her from going down as deep as she would otherwise have gone in falling from such a height.

As for the hero of the occasion, it was ascertained that nobody on board of the boat knew anything about him: even his name had to be obtained from the register. But the modesty and good sense he had evinced by his seclusion were duly appreciated and extolled. The quidnuncs, in their eulogistic ardor, even raised the question whether his after conduct was not as admirable as the strength, skill and daring shown in the adventure itself.

In the evening, however, Mr. Thorn was to be subjected to a still severer test. He was to show whether he had that higher quality, the power of self-possession under calm special scrutiny. The clerk of the boat called upon him in his room. He had come, by request of the formal but grateful Mr. Matteson and his daughter, to ascertain whether Mr. Thorn would allow them an interview, that they might express to him personally their gratitude for his brave and generous act. The clerk's task was not a difficult one: Mr. Thorn was easily persuaded. He would not put the lady nor the old gentleman to any trouble: he did not expect from them the formality of calling upon him. He would see them in the ladies' cabin, and he would be obliged to the clerk for a formal introduction.

By some means all the passengers

learned what was going on, and the event became one of general interest. Perhaps the fact that Mr. Thorn and Miss Matteson "both were young, and one was beautiful," gave special zest to the occasion; for even your prosiest men are fond of a little romance when it comes to them in a natural sort of way. At any rate, all the passengers thronged to witness the meeting of the hero of the day and the young lady whom he had rescued from death.

When Mr. Thorn was introduced to Mr. Matteson, the old gentleman took him by the hand with peculiar emphasis of manner and lavished his thanks profusely; adding in significant tone that he would be happy at any time to render Mr. Thorn any service in his power as a slight expression of his gratitude. To this remark the courteous Mr. Selburne, who, by-the-way, was not at all a rival, added the comment—

"You are probably aware, sir, that Mr. Matteson is a man of large means and extensive influence, so that his proffer is not at all an empty one?"

"Ah, well," interposed Mr. Matteson, modestly, "I do not imagine that I can recompense Mr. Thorn in any way for his generous act. That cannot be done. However, we can feel truly grateful, Mr. Thorn; which I assure you we do."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Thorn. "I am overpaid by your excessive appreciation of my services. I cannot refrain from saying, however, that I was already sufficiently rewarded by the consciousness of having tried to do my duty as a gentleman and a Christian."

"Well, that is a devout as well as chivalrous view of the matter," Mr. Matteson said, thoughtfully. Then, after a moment's pause, he added, abruptly and in another tone of voice, "But excuse me, Mr. Thorn. I am depriving you of the thanks of the young lady you saved. Allow me."

So saying, he took Mr. Thorn by the arm, and, in the old formal but cordial and easy style, he led him to the sofa where Miss Matteson was sitting, and introduced him:

"Mary, this is your deliverer, Mr.

Thorn;—my daughter, Miss Matteson, sir."

Miss Matteson received him with easy grace, restrained a little, however, by a remembrance of the whole day's events. She thanked him very feelingly and without any theatrical affectation for her deliverance from a watery grave; and then, as if to give emphasis to her utterances, she proffered him a seat beside her on the sofa and freely entered into conversation with him; during which, however, the demure rogues never once alluded to the romance of the morning.

I promise you that Mr. Thorn lost no caste in that conversation, although conducted under such trying circumstances: portions of the crowd which gathered to witness the introduction lingering for a time at first, and those more courteous, but not less curious, turning afterwards upon the two many a glance of critical observation. They both bore well the crucial test of that eager inspection. Unconsciousness of self, real or apparent, is the surest sign, if not the best result, of true culture.

It is not necessary to detail events which followed. It will answer every purpose to present a scene which occurred the next spring at Mr. Matteson's residence, near Memphis.

Mr. Thorn and Miss Matteson were alone in the parlor. She sat in a luxurious arm-chair, with flushed cheek and downcast eye, and yet with a faint gleam of humor shining through her blushes. He stood beside her, bending slightly

toward her, one hand resting lightly upon her shoulder, the other grasping one of hers, while with ardent eagerness he looked into her face. In response to a question he had just asked, she said,

"I suppose I must say yes, or else be charged with ingratitude;" and she barely glanced up at his face in roguish demureness.

"Well, yes," he responded, catching her half-playful humor, and feeling the freer for it. "I had as lief put it upon that ground as upon any other." And as he said this, he knelt beside her that he might look into her eyes, and that his face might be nearer hers.

"You can never claim anything more than gratitude, then, remember!" she said, as she smoothed back his hair with her unoccupied hand, and looked into his face whole volumes of contradiction to the words she had uttered.

"That is all I shall claim," he replied; but the deceitful varlet at that very moment bent his head forward and took more.

And, so far as words went, there was an end to his question and to its answer. Many a time afterwards, when Miss Matteson had become Mrs. Thorn, she insisted that she had never accepted his proposal. The spirit of his usual response was, that women never say what they mean in love-affairs, except only as they talk with their eyes; and his instances were the scene at Wheeling wharf and the scene in her father's parlor.