



Thurston

W. D. C. 1873

"YOU ARE NOT DEAF-LOOK THE BUNCH ON YOUR NECK HAS FALLEN OFF."

See page 326.



W. D. C. 1873

N. ORR. S. N.Y.

THE

NEWSBOY.

Elizabeth Oak. 1854

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I.

A Revelation.

"AND so your name is Bob, that means Robert," I said to the Newsboy one morning as I bought a daily paper at my window.

"There ain't no Robert about it, nothing but Bob," he replied, and I saw he was vexed at my attempt to christen him. I saw he was proud of being only Bob, and I couldn't but feel it was a great thing to be conscious of so much in ourselves, that we could afford to contemn birth, country, station and fortune. Then I began to reverence the Newsboy and to study his history, as I shall record it in these pages.

But I am a great way ahead of my story, and I must go back and begin at the beginning, and tell my reasons for book-making. It was in this wise :

All my friends and neighbors were writing books, some were making money by writing them, others were not, yet each, I saw, was made happier for having something to do. It gave a purpose to life. There is nothing without its uses. The little flower of Innocence scattered all up and down our New England hills and fields isn't much to look at, it doesn't compare with the towering and gorgeous Dahlia, the woman-soul'd rose, the virgin lily, or the sweet passion-freighted blue violet, loving the shadow because of its full heart; and yet this star-eyed flower of Innocence is very winsome—it dots any little cleft and corner that will give it a foothold; down in the meadow, where the brook gurgles around the roots of the old elms, and the speckled trout hides himself beneath, the flower of Innocence (*Houstonia Cerulea*) glows like a shimmering robe on the shoulders of beauty—by the farm yard it nestles, hoping to displace the great ugly burdocks; in the shadows of old boulders, rounded by the deluge; by the dusty roadside, where the children with blankets over their heads, feel its velvet touch upon their bare feet as they go by to school; everywhere this unpretending blossom comes, like the homely virtues, strong and

healthful, and unthought of because of their abundance.

So in book-making—the world is so full of them that thousands are unnoticed, and it may be the best are of this class. But that does n't matter; this would be a dull, mischief-making, wicked world without the poorest of them; but when the great “burdocks” of literature shall have been put aside by more healthful emanations, it will be well. I thought of these things, thinking to write a book, and so I looked to the uplands and the valleys and the wayside, amid noisome weeds and fair blossoms, by the mossy rock and the damp unsightly fungus, and everywhere I saw this flower of Innocence grew, pure in itself and dispensing purity, and so I said I will write of common things—of the great wayfarings of the city just as it is. I will “nothing extenuate,” but I will not be like the wasp gathering poison from sweets, but rather like the bee, which distils pure honey alike from the poisonous hellebore and the sweet clover.

For this purpose I visited the city, I went from place to place, taking my eyes with me, and my heart also. I saw how the dragon-fly loves the city, but the butterfly avoids it; and I could see a reason why

it should be so. As I sat by my window with a lovely Geranium blooming upon my table, a humming bird entered and inserted his tube-like bill into the flowers one by one—his gossamer wings fluttering in a continuous low buzz. It was not long that he staid, but I had afforded him a banquet; here in the midst of dust and noise and evil and pollution, his delicate sense had detected a spot fresh and lovely as an Eden, and hither he had come giving and receiving joy.

Shall it not be so with us, dear reader? We may not be many, but if we shall by any means entertain angels unaware, will it not be a blessedness? I was thinking of such possibilities, and so I looked out in the morning, (I am sure it was in the morning, for that is the time for pleasant thoughts,) when under my window I saw a little Newsboy calling in a lusty voice the names of several of the morning papers. He was a skin of a boy, little, and old before his time. I should as soon have thought of taking Tom Thumb, or the Aztecs for a hero as this newsboy. Wasn't he poor, and ragged, and ignorant, and wouldn't everybody laugh at the idea! Little by little, Bob (I afterward learned his name was Bob)

grew into my mind, not as a poor, forsaken, ignorant, neglected child, who ought to be taken up and sent to the Orphan Asylum, or asylum for vagrants, but as a great-soul'd boy, whose nobleness I dared not fathom, but which I could appreciate, the latchet of whose old, dilapidated shoes I was not worthy to unloose. He had walked through fiery furnaces unscathed, and sat amid lions, and their savageness had been rebuked before him.

I learned to await the coming of the Newsboy with solemn expectancy, and the shuffling of his weary feet grew to have a majesty about them; his ragged habiliments were right royal robes over his great heart, and the brimless hat became him like a regal crown, for Bob had that innate dignity of soul which neither crown nor sceptre could augment.

Little by little I learned his story—little by little, for I was not great enough to take in all the greatness of the Newsboy. I with my conventional life, and years of training, and ancestors of forecast—how could I comprehend a being who had stood up naked from the hands of nature, and said "come behold a man!" Who had owed nothing to the schools, the preacher, the tailor, and little to the cook; who was

a philosopher in his way, seeing things through his own eyes, and drawing his own conclusions unaided of any man.

The image of the Newsboy haunted me, and at length I felt I must write his history. I saw that the race would soon be so modified by the genialities of some benevolent souls, that the newsboy of our time would pass away and be only a tradition, and even the nobleness of Bob come to be regarded as a fable. I looked into the newsboy lodging rooms, and saw how these benevolent souls (God comfort them in every hour of need, and do them good even as they have done good) were making this wilderness life of the newsboy to blossom as the rose, and soon the newsboy of Bob's time, sleeping by the wayside, in areas, under steps, about the Parks, in old crates and hogsheads, in the markets, and everywhere that a shelter could be found, would be forgotten; and then it was that the Ishmael-like wanderings of Bob, fatherless and motherless, friendless and forsaken, going up and down the great city, grew to have a genuine pathos about them, and I put myself to the study of his character, and learned he was a hero.

II.

The Break-In.

Bob never knew he was a hero. He had come up, he hardly knew how, amid creatures as forlorn as himself. He had known hunger, and cold, and misery, in every shape. He had been the companion of the outcast from the first dawning of his existence. One guardian after another of the forlorn boy had died or grown weary of the charge, so that only an indistinct memory of hunger and cold, and achings of the limbs, and pains of the head, remained to him. A creeping child he had been kicked over the threshold, not in absolute cruelty, but because he was in the way, and the inmates lacked bread and elbow room, for when did ever hunger make the heart loving, or cold make it warm, or nakedness make it tender and protective? The laborer toils and grows into a great

loving manhood by the sweat of the brow, which brings him at nightfall competence and repose; but the unskilled poor, who lack the faculty of steady work, live but from hand to mouth, doubling and flying like the hunted hare, with the hungry hounds of famine ever at their back, and they sink down at nightfall, not with the hearty thanksgiving of the laborer, but with the exhaustion of the hard-beset beast, and sleep because sleep will claim them—pitying sleep will cradle them in her tender embraces, that thus they may forget their wretchedness.

But Bob was a sturdy child, and knew better than to creep long. While he paddled about upon all fours he presented a broad mark for the idle foot, a tempting mark for the careless or cruel foot, so with lusty sinews the boy sculled away to one side when footsteps approached; and soon by dint of aid from walls and broken chairs his little head was up and his feet planted—yes, planted, for there was that about Bob, that once fixed with his head uppermost in the world, you might kill him outright, but you could never make him bite the dust again. He knew better than to *tattle* long. Oh the rich child may creep, and crawl, and totter through a long helpless

infancy, may “mule and puke in its nurses arms” for years, but the poor have no chance for this; nature prompts them greatly; she tugs at the muscle and pulls at the tendon till each is glad to do its office. The rich baby may scream, and cry, and *drule* out its imbecility, a torment to itself or others, but the beggar’s brat dares not cry—teething or no teething, it dare not raise a clamor. It never cries; its poor little blackened feet are covered with bruises—at which it has “put up the lip,” as mothers say, but dared not make audible its complaint; it peers at the old knot holes in the worn floor, and the dust comes up from beneath to blind its eyes, but it rubs them and sputters and crawls away—it never had pity and does not look for it now. Next, its fingers are poking at the hinge of the leaning door, and the passer-by gives it a push; oh sharp is the agony, and deathly sharp and fierce the pang from the crushed and bruised hand, but it only sinks back faint; no sound, no word after the first brief animal outcry. It attempts to mount the rickety stairs but slips between the boards; you hear it bump once, and all is hushed, you think surely the child is dead—no, it is only black in the face; a sharp slap upon the back, a blow

of the breath into the mouth, a dash of water at the pump, and it gasps, gives a suppressed scream, and then commences to lap the water as it runs down its cheeks; twists its fingers uneasily, and now and then touches them with its tongue, but you hear nothing more. For hours it looks blue and pale, and its tangled hair drips with the sweat that bursts from its pores, but it creeps away to the door where the bright sun lingers upon the step, and there it sleeps—sleeps for hours, and the passer-by does not kick, nor push, nor molest the sleeping child, for it is hallowed even to the rudest heart.

Thus had Bob come up—he never knew how. His first memories were of thrift. He had sought for old pins and rusty nails, and bits of cloth in the gutter, when he could hardly walk; next he had picked up chips, which he carried in a basket upon his head. Then there was an interregnum; he did not know what had happened—he might have been sick. Many who had looked after him were gone, he couldn't tell how nor why. He had an indistinct memory of long white boxes—very many of them—coming and going. He had rides upon a cart sometimes; and altogether, he didn't seem to have done

anything, and yet had slept and eaten. The cholera had decimated the miserable locality. At length he found himself in the street—he did n't know where to go. He was but a little fellow, and he stood looking at the people as they went along, and wondering where they came from and whither they were going. He began to feel hungry; and a terrible fear came upon him. Everybody seemed to have some other body who cared for them, who exchanged a word, a smile, or even a blow, showing they stood in relation to some other body in the world; but there he stood, a poor, little, unlovely child, and nobody cared for him. He was dirty, very dirty—he had nothing but rags, and scanty of these.

It was a pitiful sight, the poor thing looking so eagerly into the faces of people, and wondering in his little heart where he came from and where he should go. He put out his hand and grasped the robes of a rich lady, for she was so beautiful that the child's poor heart was lured from his bosom towards her; but she shook him off with a frown that marred all her beauty. Next a smooth, solemn-looking man went by, and little Bob clung to him. "Let me go, my little boy," he said in an oily voice, and went on. At

this moment a loud clear voice sung out, "Morning papers—latest news by the steamer—have a paper, Sir?" dropping the voice suddenly at the last clause.

The gentleman appealed to stopped, paid for the paper and went on; and the newsboy would have done the same, but he was habited in a long coat, a world too wide and long for his make, and when he had gone the length of his coat tail, he found himself brought up square, for poor Bob had fastened himself thereon in a sort of despair.

"Let go, you little rascal, you," said Sam, in an under tone, for his pride was wounded at being seized upon in this way. But Bob didn't let go; on the contrary he held on only the tighter. Sam turned round sharply, and gave him a smart box upon the ear. Bob didn't scream nor flinch, but looked into the newsboy's face with such a keen, sharp look of agony, that he was compelled, as it were, to stop and see what he wanted. He wasn't used to comfortings of any kind himself, and so he didn't know how to apply them. He put his hand up under his ragged greasy cap, and gave a great stretch and yawn, a luxury he had not before found time to indulge in for the day. This seemed to call in his wandering ideas.

"Hungry, Bub?" he asked.

"Yes," said Bob.

"Well, come along. Didn't hurt you nor nothing, did I?" asked Sam, referring to the blow.

"No."

"Did n't I though? your face is red as a beet where my pickers went. Tough as a pitch-knot!"

By this time they had reached the corner of Nassau and Fulton streets, where an old woman sat knitting under an umbrella, fastened by strings to the wall to do service as an awning. On the board before her were candies, and sugar plums, and russet apples piled in the shape of pyramids, and plump yellow cakes of molasses, and Bob was soon swallowing one of these with avidity.

"Hungry as the deuce," ejaculated Sam, eyeing him with a satisfied air. "Where's your house, Bub?"

"Havn't got none."

"Well, your bunk, then?"

"None o' that 'either."

"Well, where's your Mum?"

"Got none."

"Well, your Dad, then?"

"Got none."

"Whew! Who owns you?"

"Nobody."

Sam brought out a whistle so prolonged that you would have wondered how he ever got his breath again. Next he brought down his old boot hard upon the pavement, and then doubled up his body into what was his expression for a great laugh. Then he cut this short, huddled his papers up quickly under his arms, cocked his cap defiantly to one side, and looking at little Bob out of the corner of his eye, and speaking out of one corner of his mouth, he said,

"You don't come it over this child; no you don't, Bubby, go, get out!" And he shambled along till he found himself brought too again by the long coat tail. This time Sam turned sharply round, and stuck out his chin, and made as if he would walk right over the child; but Bob stood his ground. Again Sam had recourse to a scratch of his head, and then he seized poor Bob and gave him some pretty telling blows upon his half naked back. Bob was used to this, and never once dreamed of an outcry.

"Jordan's a hard road to travel, I believe," whis-

tled Sam, eyeing Bob again in what might be called a slantindicular way.

"You darn'd young spooney, what do you mean by holdin' on to my coat tail? Touch it again and I'll knock you into next week!" and again he gathered up his papers, shouting, "Morning news by the steamer—late arrival—terrible shipwreck—two hundred lives"—he cut short by feeling again the same tug at his long coat. Bob had found somebody to look at him, and he dreaded desertion more than rough words and hard blows. Poor Sam threw down his whole stock in trade in utter disgust; he pushed back his old cap, but didn't scratch his head—he was too far gone for that; he stuck both hands into his pockets, and leaned up against the brick walls of the Herald office, his boots far out upon the side-walk, submitting to the jeers of his companions without a word.

"I ain't equal to the occasion, that's a fact," he muttered. "Here, Bub, take my hat, I give up. Youngster, be you a little Beelzebub?"

"No."

"One o' his imps?"

"No."

"Be you the ghost of a *defunct* newsboy?"

"Don't know."

"What do you know?"

"Nothing."

"Will you go away?"

"No."

"Look here—I'll kill you, I will. I'll beat you to jelly. Gorry! he does n't move no more than the steeple of Trinity. Look here, I'm goin'—be you goin' to hang on to my out-flyer agin, draggin' on in this way? You are? Lord! I'm caught, maties!" And Sam gave out a peculiar whistle which had the effect to bring a score of newsboys to his aid.

Sam recounted his grievances with a round of oaths. "There won't be a thread left of my go-to-metins—hold him by the ears while I run—but mind, he'll hold on to some on ye—so be lively." There was a great shout, and much laughing, and much poking at poor Bob, who persisted in keeping close to the side of Sam. "Look here, Bub," continued the latter, "I'm goin' to give you such a lickin' as will take all the paper off o' that form o' yourn, I'll knock every peg down that red lane o' yourn," and he was about to suit the action to the word, when

Bob, who had got over his terror, all at once gave a leap to the neck of Sam, whom he commenced to pound and pull in a manner that showed he knew the use of a beggar's fist.

The shouts of the newsboys now became so loud and so general that the police came running down Fulton street, where they had been smoking in Broadway; but the boys made a cordon round Sam and Bob, and warned them, "better keep off, newsboys never bother the Stars—newsboys never make riots—newsboys 'spect the laws—newsboys keep out the way of prisons and police courts—newsboys know a thing or two—only breaking-in a newsboy—tough as thunder—go it Sam—go it short-legs—Lord! ain't he a wild cat? Drop the blinker, Sam—drop the blinker—play's over, give us your fist, small 'un—you're game, you'll do—now for the stock in trade; lets hear you scream—Herald—Tribune—come out with you." And Bob did scream, for he had a stout pair of lungs, and no sooner did he feel their use than he screamed equal to the best. And now pockets were searched, and odd pennies were freely imparted by the rough but good-hearted boys, till Bob had a capital upon which to start.

"As handsome a break-in as ever was," ejaculated one of the boys as he turned away.

"A first-rate small 'un," cried another.

"Gorry, didn't his little digits fly? Sam's got him."

"Oh! Sam's got a 'prentice," shouted the group as they turned off into their several "beats" for the sale of papers.

III.

Favorite Fawns.

AND so Bob was duly installed Newsboy. He had fought his way to the dignity bravely as the best, and now he was fully entitled to all the good offices of the craft. Sam undertook his instruction, taught him how to put his hand to one cheek or the other in order to send his voice far into the distance, and keep it above the wind—helped him to a suit of clothes in the most approved Newsboy fashion—himself rolled up his long trousers, and saw that his old coat had the right "hang," and when Bob proved himself not only tough and smart, but trust-worthy, he became a great favorite. If his capital waxed low at any time, for Bob always found somebody that needed his good offices, not a Newsboy would refuse a loan to good honest Bob. Like the rest of his companions,

he soon became "posted up" in all the doings of the great metropolis. He saw much, and knew how to keep "a stiff upper lip." He heard much, and "mum" was the word. The Newsboy is no gossip, no intermeddler—he has a horror of "lock ups," he respects the police, but isn't loth to put them upon a wrong scent. He never dreams of fellowship out of his own ranks. All the rest of the people in the world are an enigma to him, and he sees the crowd go by with as little interest in the individuals which compose it as if they each and all belonged to another race. The fine dresses of the women, the nice fixtures of the men, scarcely arrest his eye. He doesn't see their use. He can't comprehend the pleasure of dressing the body for any purpose other than for decency and warmth. He understands fully the value of gold, but can't see the use of it in any shape but money; and his highest ambition after the support of mother or sister is to have money in the bank. When a Newsboy has reached this point of success, he begins to assume that certain dignity, better felt than described, which always pervades the air of the "moneyed man." Then his companions learn to treat him with a kind of respect unknown before; citing

him as a Newsboy model, and squaring their own movements by what they had observed in him.

Sam was one of the few who had reached this enviable position. He had supported an invalid mother for years, and only the Supreme God of love knew the sufferings he had endured that he might do this—the hungry days he had passed that she might eat—the toil and cold that had searched every fibre of his frame to lodge in each its peculiar pang, that the poor distressed, dying mother might not want.

Indeed, to the Newsboy a woman is always associated with pain. His first memories are of a hard face frowning with discontent and suffering, a tongue loud and vindictive, and a hand more ready with a blow than any womanly office of kindness. As he grows older, one or more is looking to him for support—not always a blood relation, not always one from whom he has received good offices, but more often one whose only claim is that she is miserable, starving, and cast off by all the rest of the world.

The theatre is the one great attraction to the Newsboy. A fondness for dramatic display is the one passion with him. He will endure any amount of privation that he may indulge this passion. Regu-

larly in his calculations of expenditure the shilling which is to admit him into the Bowery Theatre is reckoned as a part not to be omitted. Here he may be seen night after night, totally unconscious of anything but the play and his companions in the pit of the theatre. His entire absence of self-consciousness is one of the most striking features as he sits thus absorbed in the strange and exciting world before him. The passions exhibited by the actors, the style of conversation and dress, are to him far more real than the people whom he sees in the boxes. He rarely ever glances at the latter in any theatre (for a fine spectacle will sometimes induce the Newsboy to visit even the Broadway); and if by chance something arrests his eye there, he turns it away suddenly as if conscious of an impropriety. When he is used to the play he disposes himself for a nap, with the understanding that a fellow Newsboy will give him a nudge in time for him to be wide awake when they begin "to pile up the agony," or as Bob once expressed it, "wake me up when Kirby dies," and then his loud, hearty hi—hi, is enough to do the poor collapsed heart of an author good. That hi—hi—hi of the pit comes from the bottom of the Newsboy's heart; and were I

the author of the play, mine would rebel when it is cut short by the rat-tat-tat of the policeman's rattan.

When a new piece is brought out the Newsboy is wide awake, and then woe to any sham—the Newsboy's laugh, the Newsboy's jeer, are things not to be despised. He is all real himself, nature down to his heels, and he won't bear anything else; but when a word or a scene is in accordance therewith, the great generous soul of the Newsboy comes out as fresh and flowing as a newly-printed sheet, and he utters his hi—hi—hi, shouts, screams, applauds, till the rafters ring. No matter for the policeman, he may rat-tat till his arm drops off, the boys are in full tide, and they shout to their hearts' content. I would rather stand the ordeal of the Newsboys, were I to write a play, than any other audience in the world.

So when a favorite actress appears, the heroine of the play, with her full, mature charms, and superb robes—the Newsboys never think of a queen, or a beauty, or a grand woman of any kind, without reviving the image of her. Nothing in the shape of a fine lady has any reality to them except the fine lady of the theatre; accordingly, when an actress has once won their sympathies, they are never weary with ap-

plauding her. It is a study for a poet, a mine of wealth for an artist, to sit where he can look into the Bowery or Chatham pit and watch the crowds collected nightly to witness the representation.

Group after group shamle in, (for the Newsboy is eminently social,) and dispose themselves along the stiff, hard benches. If early, they sit and eat pea nuts, often the substitute for a supper; one who can read gives out the substance of the bill for his companions in a voice so low that a Broadway dandy might take a hint in good breeding from the Newsboy. Others stretch themselves out for a brief nap, and the exhaustion visible in the faces of such as they sink almost upon the instant to forgetfulness, tells a sad story of deprivation and endurance. As the pit fills up, care is taken not to disturb the sleepers, the boys often taking the heads of such into their laps, supporting a stray arm, or lifting up a leg and placing it across their knees to make more room. It is pitiful the tired expression of these sleepers. You look at them, so thin, so like little old men, sharp, eager, self-reliant when awake, and then when sleep comes and the muscles relax, and the over-taxed nerve yields to inaction, they grow children again, weary, suffering,

hard-wrought children they look, and you gaze at their emaciated forms, the angular shoulders peeping from the ragged shirt, the hollow temple and thin nostril, with an indescribable pang. You feel how pitiful is the childhood of the poor. You think how afar off in some green country slope, the lambs are sporting by the hill side, the blossoms are looking out from where the rock casts a great shadow at noon-tide, and where the tree spreads out his kindly arms inviting the weary cattle to shelter; and away down in the valley where the brook gurgles around the "fantastic roots" of the old elm, and violets cluster amid, and then you think these should be with them, free and joyous as the lamb—careless as the blossoms, for did not the good Saviour bless such? did he not say let them come unto me? and did he not take them in his arms and bless them? and was not a benediction from his holy lips an injunction, as it were, to all who have pure, loving hearts, to do likewise?

Anon the orchestra strikes a prelude, and up come the Newsboys at a dash, and they give out a hearty cry of delight. The Newsboys are a "fast" set, and don't like to wait. They have champed apples,

they have cracked pea-nuts till they are tired. Indeed, if you close your eyes and peer out by stealth and look where the policeman leans his back against the ballustrade of the orchestra, his two elbows over the rails and his rattan sticking out over the boys' heads in front, he makes you think of a cat intent upon an army of mice, and the champ of apples, the crack, crack of the pea-nuts, and the constant dropping of shells, seem like the suppressed gnawing of these little animals. But the first crash of the orchestra dispels the illusion, for such a shout comes only from living, beating hearts; away go the pea-nuts, off go the caps, and every boy sits erect. So nerved up do they become, so intense in their attention, that they look like the regular ranks of a field of corn, and as they sway to the passions of the piece it is as if the wind moved over the grain.

As the play goes on, and their interest increases, their shouts are deafening, and only the dread of being turned out by the police induces them to abate their enthusiasm. Between the acts they ply the pea-nuts again, go out and bring in eggs ready boiled to eat, or they play at fisticuffs, rolling each other about like young cubs. One has ambitiously inserted an

apology for a pocket-handkerchief into his jacket. "Wipes," shouts out his next neighbor, and out comes the obnoxious appendage, and its owner is seized about the neck every few minutes for the next half hour, and a brisk play of the handkerchief about the nose warns him to avoid in future any superfluous appendage. The little ones now lean on the backs of the larger boys, hold on to their shoulders, lie down, and continue in various ways to rest themselves a bit before the action of the play again claims their interest. Very little ill-humor is evolved; there is a general sentiment of good-fellowship amongst them, though rude jostlings, bluff salutes, and good-natured jeerings are not wanting. There are mock imitations of the playing also, and woe to the youth who shrinks from being the victim of the occasion—he generally sits stolid as a block while his companions use him for the recipient of their heroics; but his invention is silently on the alert, and he is sure to return the annoyance with a goodly interest also.

Sometimes there will be a slight stir and commotion in the pit. A little Newsboy giggles and kicks and struggles, but he is in the clutches of the big Newsboy, and all at once up in the air goes a pair of

ricketty shoes, and a scrubby head dangles right and left, and a helpless little fellow is borne on the palms of his companions, held high above the head, the whole circuit of the pit; another and another pops up in the same way, till a half dozen are carried around in this style amid shouts of applause from the boxes. After circling the area each is thrust down as by a sort of hocus pocus, and another takes his place, and so the game is kept up till the play goes on again.

Funny names come up from the pit sometimes, to which their owners gravely respond. "Carrots, give us a William," and a yellow-headed boy hands over a bill for the evening. "Yoppy, none of that, or I'll pitch into you," and you cannot but see that Yoppy's mouth is of most ample size. "Squinty," "Lopleg," "One eye," &c., are as readily recognized cognomens as John or James.

The boys love fun and their laughter is most uproarious, but they have a decided turn for tragedy. They like an intense, terrible catastrophe, scenes in which dirks, and pistols, and rifles are freely used, and a sparring episode takes them by storm. Heated with excitement and the crowd, they rise up and strip off their outer garments, eyeing the play all the

while; and what is more strange, each boy carefully folds his coat or jacket, so as best to preserve the collar before he takes it for a cushion. He stays the whole entertainment out, however long it may be, applauding tragedy, ballet, contortionist, a stray rat that may happen to cross the stage, a supernumerary who comes to lay down a carpet, or a farce, all with equal zest.

As you look at the Newsboys, one thing will strike your attention. There is no appearance of vice amongst them. Nothing skulking, nothing mean, nothing vicious lurks in the aspect of the true Newsboy. No redness of the eyes, no bloated face, no pallid debauchery. His eyes are open and candid, and his air as free from the braggart as the coward. Honor to the self-reliant, self-maintained, honest Newsboy.

IV.

Getting Ahead.

SAM took our little Bob at once under his own wing. At the theatre if there could be a choice in the hard side of a pine-board bench, Bob would have had the soft side. His pockets were crammed with pea-nuts and apples, and being an observing, excitable child, the "hi! hi!" and shouts of little Bob soon became the delight of the pit. He was the youngest boy there, and consequently Sam was much aided in his guardianship by the sympathy of his companions, who were greatly amused at the bold air and round ready oaths of the young Newsboy. Truth to say, Bob outstripped his teachers in this line—his finely cut mouth and teeth, like a young alligator, enabled him to give a peculiar sonorousness to this kind of

vocabulary; and hardly a sentence escaped his mouth that was n't sharpened up, and rendered intense by an oath. Bob knew no better at this period of his experience. He heard inflammatory words in the pulpit and by the way-side. He was of an earnest make, and common language would not suffice him at this time when his emotions were quite beyond his utterance, and his aspirations were all vague, but yet significant of the future. I doubt not that Bob, as we go on, will learn better. When he has something real to do—a great, earnest achievement before him, he will not expend his energies in unmeaning expletives. The Newsboy, however, unlettered as he is, and unused to any moral analysis, never associates any idea, either good or bad, with this species of rhetoric, but regards it only as a mode of heightening the figures of speech.

It was Bob, hardy little Bob, of whom the story is told—I think it got into the newspapers, for I have often repeated the story as proof of the sturdy individualism, and unapproachable self-reliance of Bob. He was crying papers at the foot of Broadway, just where it dips round the Battery, and where the poor weary denizen of the city is greeted with a touch of

woodland, of river and ocean, and sky enough to set his heart astir with the soul of beauty. Here stood Bob in front of the Atlantic Hotel, just as the steamers arrived from the east. It was a frosty morning, and a light fall of snow rendered the stone pavement intensely cold, and Bob rested first one bare foot and then the other upon a chip while he sung out lustily, "Tribune, Times, Herald," flinging up also a paper into the faces of the passengers as they doubled the corner from the steamer. A nice, good Puritan, fresh from down east, rested his carpet-bag and umbrella, (for your Yankee always carries an umbrella,) against his well-polished boot while he bought a Tribune, and observed, at the same time, the bit of comfort in which Bob had indulged his naked feet.

"Aren't your feet cold, my little lad?" he asked in a friendly voice.

Bob dropped his pennies into his long pocket, tucked up his papers under his arm, and answered indignantly, "What in h—l is that to you?" for he thought the question an impertinence.

"What a terrible young reprobate!" ejaculated the gentleman, as he buttoned up his wrapper and went on.

Bob looked after him wondering what he *could* mean, when he was accosted by another—

"Can you tell me, my lad, the way to Broadway?"

"Another insult, by gorry," thought Bob, and quick as thought he touched his thumb to the tip of his nose, and wheeling his fingers in the air, answered, "no you don't, you don't come it over this child," and he looked back and relieved himself of a great laugh, while the questioner remained standing and looking after him in utter amazement. "Just as if he didn't know he was in Broadway," thought Bob, and he gave an extra key to the compass of his voice to show his contempt for all fooling.

At night Sam slept under the City Hall portico, and he gave little Bob the warmest corner, and soothed his excited nerves by some droning talk, with a tenderness and wisdom worthy of a woman. At length it was observed that Bob had very nearly usurped the "beat" of Sam, and that the latter was less frequently in the usual rendezvous of the Newsboys. He had been an eager, untiring boy in all Newsboy sports; nobody had pitched a copper equal to Sam (for the Newsboy is fond of small games of chance); nobody tossed a ball, or reeled off a story

equal to him. He was the impersonation of Newsboy good fellowship and thrift—his voice the loudest, and his laugh the merriest of the craft, while he swore with a freedom and grace worthy of a better accomplishment. But now Sam had become strange to the craft. He was rarely seen in the pit of the theatre, and his time was much of it passed away from his companions. The boys began to question as to the matter, but Sam, who did not aim at concealment, soon explained all.

V.

Our Gal.

SOME two or three years before our story, an emigrant ship landed upon the dock a young woman, with a girl of perhaps a dozen years, led by the hand. The vessel had been decimated by the ship-fever, and poor Catharine with her child had escaped after seeing all her relatives consigned to the deep. She had neither money nor friends; she was pretty and timid, and dreaded to have her condition known. She wandered up and down the city selling one article after another from her scanty wardrobe, till decency forbade further sacrifice. If her thoughts wandered back to the home of her childhood, they brought back only images of suffering, for the landlord's extortion and the famine had left her husband and all her family bankrupt in everything but warm,

generous hearts. She had no pleasant memories of old Ireland, the once gem of the sea, the green isle of beauty and of song, for oppression had torn away her beautiful robes and left her desolate. Here was Catharine, a stranger in a strange land; and after wandering up and down in utter despair, she crawled under the shelter of a pile of boards, weak and sick, and expecting to die.

Fever and exhaustion had benumbed her faculties, and even the tears and carressings of her child failed to arouse her. Mary saw the gray shadows flit over her mother's face, and her instincts told her it was the passage of the angel death, whose wing played upon the thin features. Filled with terror she rushed out and seized the arm of the first passer.

"Come," she cried, "for the love of mercy, come; my mother dies."

It was Sam whom she addressed, and the boy knelt with Mary, hardly conscious of what he did. The dying woman lifted herself up:

"Oh! sweet Mary, dear Jesus, is there no pity?" she cried. And she spoke no more, not even to her child; but there, houseless and homeless, went forth to our "Father's house where are many mansions."

The shrieks of the child were frightful, and soon a crowd was collected, and the dead was removed to a patch of earth, and the child left utterly alone. She was cared for by the Sisters of Charity, those angels of ministry for the desolate, but Mary refused to go with them till Sam had promised to accompany her, for his was the first face that had looked kindly upon them; and Sam did go to the Asylum, and permission was granted him to come again and again.

Here was a new element in the life of Sam. It did not alter him much, it may be, for a long period, but the bit of leaven was there, waiting the fitting time to leaven the whole man. Sometimes he did not go to the Asylum for many months, and then an irresistible desire to see the little orphan would compel him to the portal; but not till he had scrubbed long at the hydrant, and put himself into his best trim, and then a plant, a flower, a ribbon,—something must be found for a gift to Mary. And thus years passed away, and at night when Sam laid his head upon his arm, and that upon the cold stone, his heart grew warm in thinking of a sweet face, and a little shape growing every day more lovely; and then it was all so nice,

so warm and comfortable about the orphan, that this made up a part of the delight in thinking of her.

When Sam took Bob under his protection, he often spoke mysteriously of "Our Gal," and little Bob learned that there was something upon Sam's mind which he did n't comprehend. Sometimes he would say, "Our Gal grows, Bob; she grows every day, Bob;" and then he would rub his hands as he sat on the bench in the City Hall Park, fronting where the water was made to come, but does n't, slowly rubbing his hands over his slender legs, and looking into the face of little Bob now and then, in a very solemn manner. Then he would be gone many hours, and when he next rested after the labors of the day, Sam would be deeply absorbed.

"Our Gal is goin' to be a scholar," he would say; and sometimes, in the love scenes of the play, poor Sam in the pit would be greatly agitated, and would whisper to Bob,

"That's like our Gal, blame me if it is n't."

Often when Sam laid himself to sleep visions came and went, strange but beautiful, for love is no respecter of persons, and where he makes his ad-

vent, whether it be with prince or beggar, he showers his roses as freely over the ragged gabardine as over the jewelled robe. So it was with Sam year by year, and the little orphan became his teacher, and learned to wait his coming, and to greet him with a welcome that many an aching, defrauded heart might have envied.

"Our Gal is pious," ejaculated Sam one day. "Bob, I wishes you could see our Gal, and hear her talk so small," and Sam felt a tear roll down his face, which he took upon the end of his thumb and eyed suspiciously, but it prevented him from saying more at that time.

One day Sam helped Bob to an extra ablution at the hydrant, the pockets of each were filled with boiled eggs, crackers, &c., and they took the steamer for Staten Island. Neither talked as they went down the noble bay, the most beautiful in the world, for Sam was deeply absorbed in his own thoughts, and our Bob being naturally taciturn, unless deeply excited, kept close to his arm in silence. The two boys wandered about in the same manner, now gathering a wild blossom, and now stopping to look at the sumptuous houses of the rich Staten Islanders. Passing

one of these they looked through a gate where a miniature lake was hedged about with shrubbery, and a fairy-like boat with silken streamers floated by the marge. A pair of stately swans sailed out of their covert, curving their long slender necks with queenly pride. The boys looked on with amazement, totally ignorant of what they were. At length two young girls appeared and tossed bits of bread to the birds, and scattered crumbs at their feet till a brood of doves came to gather them up. It was a sweet picture of innocence and wealth, nature and art, and the two houseless boys looked on with an interest in which no self commingled. To Bob it was no more than a show picture upon the curtains of a theatre. To Sam it brought up the image of Mary.

"Our Gal is handsomer nor them, she's gallus, I tell you," said Sam, turning to go; and Bob looked into his face, for the first time comprehending that "Our Gal" meant a living creature.

They wandered on till they came to a secluded nook at the lower end of the island, where the broad sea stretches far as the eye can reach, and a grove of trees rendered it a most sheltered and beautiful retreat. The sight of the ocean to a boy is always a

prompting for a swim, and here Sam gave Bob his first lesson in the art. He was an apt scholar, and needed little teaching, being, as he said, "Sea-born."

As the sun began to shoot his golden arrows athwart the branches of the trees they were admonished to return.

"Wouldn't it be nice to have our Gal come with us, Bob," asked Sam, with unwonted animation.

"Fust rate," cried Bob, without knowing anything about the matter.

And Sam and Mary, with the sanction of the good Sisters, did go, but Bob was n't asked. On their way to the steamer, Sam in a new suit encountered many of his companions, who after nodding at him familiarly as they went by, stopped looking after them till they doubled the next corner, and then having relieved themselves by a prolonged whistle, went on to sell their papers and tell what they had seen.

From that time Sam became invested with awe both in the eyes of Bob and his companions. He appeared more rarely in the pit of the theatre, and when he did so, his manner was more quiet than in former times. He and Bob might often be seen lean-

ing over the rails of the Battery looking down into the water for hours. Bob looked there because Sam did, and Sam was thinking of a soft touch of a dear hand, or a low voice, and his vision was of a world hidden to other eyes.

After one of these long intervals of silence, Sam one night took the hand of little Bob in his, and laying it on his old coat over his heart, the child felt its great beats with a shudder.

"It's cause of our Gal," said Sam solemnly. Bob could only look at his companion, he didn't know what to say. "They want her for a Nun," continued Sam, "and they tells her she'll be crowned with the stars, and have a white robe, and such flummery."

Bob did n't laugh, why should he? Sam did n't mean irreverence, he talked as best he knew.

Sam said no more at this time, but shortly after as the boys in the pit looked up to the second tier they saw Sam sitting, very pale, beside a fair, modest girl, who wept more than the pathos of the play would seem to justify. The Newsboys felt instinctively that Sam was hard beset with some trial, and they did not tease him.

"That's our Gal," thought Bob, looking at Sam with a very commiserating countenance.

"Sam's taken in and done for," whispered another to his companions.

"It's all up with Sam," ejaculated a third.

Rollocking, flashy Jack, half sailor, half Newsboy, one of those magnetic characters which attract and repel as does the serpent, rolled out a big oath, and darted for the second tier of boxes. "Blast my eyes, I do believe he's got spliced," he cried on his way out, and the Newsboys, with supreme disgust, looked up from the pit and saw him leaning over and gazing familiarly into Mary's face. Sam's face grew red, but the boys gave way to a low hiss. The audience thought the actors were hissed, but Jack knew better, and he doubled up his fist and shook it defiantly below. The boys hissed again and shouted, "Turn him out, turn him out," but as the police saw nothing they only struck their rattans sharply, and peace was restored.

VI.

The Last Round.

It was true Mary had left the Asylum notwithstanding the vigilance of the good Sisters, and a priest had pronounced them "one in the holy bonds of matrimony." Soon a small room in a third story in Anthony street received sundry little furnishings, and when Sam and Mary went to the Sisters and implored their forgiveness, and begged them sometimes to come and see them and guide them, they relented and helped them in many ways. The Newsboys also were very proud of "Our Gal," as they all called Mary, and not one of them that didn't venture at some time to call upon her, and to present her with some pretty testimonial of regard.

Mary was so gentle, so sweet and loving, and withal so orderly, that the little third story room

seemed to the unsophisticated Newsboys no other than a heaven. When they went there they prepared themselves as if for a sacrament, and what "Our Gal" said, and how "Our Gal" looked, was long the theme of talk amongst them. Some thought it had been the ruin of Sam, who was too happy to be boisterous, and flashy Jack declared "Our Gal had made a spooney out of him," yet upon the whole there was a general sentiment of approval amongst the boys.

Bob was the favorite guest, nothing more. He was now amply able to look after himself; and unless a woman is concerned, a Newsboy is apt to think a roof altogether a superfluity. Indeed, many of the boys as they leaned against a stack of bricks in the twilight, or sat upon the benches in the Battery, were apt to commiserate the condition of Sam as being little less than an imprisonment.

One morning Bob, in the course of his duty, found opportunity to go in the vicinity of Sam's room. The latter recognized him with a hearty shake of the hand, and a face in which you couldn't hardly say which wanted most to show itself, a smile or a tear. Seizing Bob by the hand and stooping

half down and pointing as if the object were small like a bird, he cried,

"There she goes—see her, our Gal; look at her feet, pat, pat, tat, pat, tat, just like a pigeon—see her go so nippent—and that are shawl hugged into her little back—blast me, Bob, if I don't believe she's one of the angels come down out of a picter I saw once up in the Apollo."

Then Sam took Bob up the three pair of stairs and showed him bits of comfort that looked like luxuries to his untutored eyes. There was a loaf of bread of Mary's make, nicely covered with a napkin; there were pretty garments hanging to the wall, but the grand triumph seemed to be a nicely-starched and ironed shirt, upon which Mary had just sewed a button.

"She did it, Bob; them small pickers of her'n went into the suds, I tell ye; and look here—there's her little basket, a sticker for pins and needles, them scissors, that strawberry, all no bigger than your fist; and there's her d—d little thimble—" At this climax Sam dissolved into a flow of tears, in which he was aided and abetted by Bob.

Nearly a year passed away, and Sam, and Bob,

and all the Newsboys were learning to love and reverence Mary as something super-humanly good and lovely—one to whom they went for numberless little womanly offices; for "was n't Our Gal one of them? Was n't it natural that she should tell them not to swear? and was n't it natural that she should sew a rent for one, and make a cap for another? and was n't it natural that they should carry everything that was pretty to her? and was n't it natural that they should buy books, and they should all sit round and hear her read them? and if one of them got sick, was n't it natural that Our Gal should make some warm tea, and keep them all night in her little room, for did n't they all love her? and was n't it natural that Sam should be the proudest boy alive, loved as he was by Our Gal?"

But a change came, as change will come to high and low. It was rumored that poor "Sam was struck right down—knocked clean over like a butcher's ox," the boy said. Bob hastened to the side of his friend. He was met at the door by Sister Agnace, whose pale sweet face wore a heavenly calm always, and the tear upon it now made it only the more lovely.

"Our little lamb has gone to the fold of the Good

Shepherd," she said, and drew aside a sheet that screened the bed. There was Mary, pale but beautiful, sleeping the sleep that knows no waking in this world; and on her bosom, sleeping the same sleep, lay a little babe, hardly divided from its mother. The long dark lashes that always seemed to brood lovingly over her eyes, scarcely more than shaded them now, the blue outline being painted upon the transparent lid. Time had not yet matured her girlish beauty, and the sweet mouth and round cheek were soft and smiling as in life.

Sam was stretched upon the floor by the bedside; at the movement of the door he started up and recognized Bob.

"Our Gal," he ejaculated—he could say no more, for the gushing tears which now for the first time came to his relief. The good Sister brought him food and put back the damp hair from his forehead, all the time repeating her prayers in a low voice, which had the effect to soothe the sufferer.

Bob looked at poor little Mary and her child; he, child as he was, and his great heart could not hold back its grief—he wept aloud; and it seemed to him that a thousand times he had seen men and women

lying just so cold and stiff, and a thousand times he had wept in agony, but never before had he seen death beautiful. Always before he had worn a ghastly aspect, as full of terror as of awe; but now all was peaceful, and fair, and gentle, as if a dear one had gone home suddenly, or as if the angels had looked in and carried away one of their kind; and the tears he shed came from the holiest and tenderest chamber of his heart. It did n't seem strange to him that Sam could n't swallow even a drop of water; and when Sister Agnace bathed his cold white temples, and repeated, "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest. I will send the Comforter, and all tears shall be wiped from their eyes," little Bob did not wonder that Sam lifted up his eyes, and kept them fixed so long upward. He did n't wonder that he said, "Oh, the night is so dark—Mary—Mary, darling, Sam's a dying, he is." And when Sister Agnace laid his head back, and loosened his throat, and sprinkled water in his face, Bob grasped his poor, cold, hard hand in both of his, and called him loudly by name,

"Sam, Sam, good, kind Sam, open your eyes."

And Sam did open them, and whispered smilingly,

"Sam's got through—he's goin' on a long beat—Sam's cried his last paper, Bob. Our Gal 's a callin' of him—she's a callin' of me, Bob," and the Newsboy's "latest arrival," was to an unseen world. Life went out with him, when Mary died. His enjoyments were few, his hopes and his desires limited to the being of the fair child who had been the one star in his dim sky. When that set, there was in this world no light of the sun, or moon, or any star to him. All was blank—he could only die. And so the only love that came to his great heart, broke it also.

Sister Agnace held the cross to his lips, and the dying boy kissed it reverently. He smiled when she repeated the prayers for the dying; and when she laid her thin, pale hand over his heart, she felt its pulse beat an Amen as the Amen fell from her own lips.

VII.

Baptism of the Newsboy.

THE death of Sam and Mary produced a great shock amongst their companions. They had been greatly beloved—the circumstances of their death were whispered amongst them with suppressed voices. As they entered the little room where the three were lying in their early death—they so young, who had known so much of suffering—they with neither father nor mother, nor kindred of any kind to mourn them—they who had known the only heaven this side the unseen heaven, a one pure, all-absorbing, all-devoted love for each other—they, the young pair, loving with a love for which kings would barter their thrones, and wise men and poets lay aside their fame—they so honored, so ennobled by this love, lowly though they were, unlettered though they were, de-

spised though they were by the rich and the powerful, but wept over by hearts who could not estimate the value of the tribute they bestowed, it seems to me that the lot of Sam and Mary was one of peculiar and especial blessedness.

When it was told that Sam died piously with prayers, and low-chanted hymns, and his lips upon the cross, the Newsboys felt there was something holy and appropriate therein, but whether Sam was Catholic or Protestant they did n't know nor ask. They felt somehow—they could not define how—it was well with him; they felt somehow, he and Mary must live together somewhere. And often as a Newsboy whistled along the Battery, or stood where some building was being removed, the passer-by might have thought him attracted by the sudden array of placards which had sprung up there in the night; the Jonas' gourds of a metropolis, but his eyes saw nothing of the notices for Theatres, Concerts, Fat Boys, Menageries, and Dwarfs, or Mass Meetings to be held in the Park, Lectures at Hope Chapel—he saw nothing of all this, although the letters were a foot in length, and staring him full in the face. No, he thought of Sam, the dead Newsboy, and "Our Gal," and a wee babe,

and he was trying to think where they might be now, and wondering how they might be employed, for he had loved the little Newsboy family deeply; and were it not for the deep love in our hearts, we should never seek to know of the life everlasting, but those who love most deeply and truly are the ones whose faith is most assured that the good Father would n't give us to hunger and thirst for everlasting life, if that life did not await us.

Sister Agnace watched all night with the dead, and as hour after hour she knelt in the dim room, still and nearly as pale as the dead, her hands meekly crossed upon her bosom, and her lips in prayer, the cold light of the stars trembled upon her head, and left a star upon her brow; and another gleamed upon the brows of the children, and you would have said that Sam was as beautiful as Mary, for now the holy love that had so leavened his heart came out and showed itself upon his face, where was no longer the look of care and suffering which had marked it in life.

As the night wore on, Bob, who had sat for hours with his face buried between his knees, laid his head upon the side of the bed and slept, and the good Sis-

ter laid her hand gently upon his brow, and felt how damp and cold it was; then she arose from her knees and bathed it gently, and once as she parted the hair, a tear fell upon it. I do not know but I have thought the tear of that Sister of Charity might have been the baptism of Bob. It glistened there in the pale gray light as the morning came, and when the sun looked in it was still there, and he softly carried it to heaven, where it became a gem to be set in the immortal coronal of the good Sister. Perhaps an angel descended to see from whence it came, for it was the first pitying tear that had ever fallen upon the child's head, it was the first prayer that had ever entered heaven in his behalf; and now that tear and that prayer had made an entrance for him there, and Bob was no longer a stranger in celestial spheres.

One by one as the day dawned the Newsboys came in with their bundles of papers and stood and looked at the group; some stood long and wept; others brushed away a tear with the ragged sleeve and then went out, but all that day the voices of the boys, as they cried their papers, were husky and hoarse. The Sisters of Charity set bread and water for those who would eat. A meeting of the craft

was held in the Park, when it was decided to bury the bodies in Greenwood, and the Newsboys would walk in procession. As they arranged their plans the enthusiasm increased, and Flashy Jack declared they would "do the thing up brown," there should be no "scrimping." It was decided to provide carriages for the occasion, and eventually a monument should be built.

Accordingly, upon the third day the little third story room was vacant of its occupants. A string of carriages moved slowly along Broadway, and a long array of boys, quaintly habited, but all hushed and orderly, followed in procession. They went down Broadway, keeping to the right, and reverently the stages, drays, innumerable vehicles and foot passengers, left a pathway for them. There is jostling in Broadway, loud oaths, and fierce cracking of whips—but the hearse is never jostled—the black wheels of the hearse are not interlocked—there are no execrations and no whips discharged upon the hearse-man; drive faster is never shouted in the ears of the carrier of the dead. Slowly he moves onward, slowly the procession follows, silent and causing silence wherever they come.

The ferry-boat to Brooklyn is crowded, nurses are there with children—pale, sickly children, crossing back and forth for a breath of the sweet air coming over the sea. Men of traffic, of toil, and of profession, artists with pen or pencil, laborers with spade, and hod, and tin pail in which they had carried their dinner. Fair women of fashion or pleasure; sewing women, bent and sickly; laundresses with baskets of linen; school boys and girls—there is a motley mass of all ages and conditions, and the murmur of many voices is heard in a low continuous hum. Slowly the hearse rolls over the bridge, it casts its dark shadow over the gay group, and stands a black spot in the midst. Instantly all is hushed, and the boat moves on with its dead and living freight, all equally silent.

And so the Newsboys' procession moved along the streets of Brooklyn, around the pretty Bay of Gowanus, and entered the silent city, the city so reverent and beautiful for the resting of the dead, and so attractive to the living—where the wild bird may build its nest and sing secure; the squirrel leap from tree to tree, nor dread the hunter; and the fish leap in the sunlight untempted by bait, and ignorant of hook

and line. And there they disposed decently the remains of the Newsboy and the young mother, and not long after a neat stone arose bearing the simple inscription of "The Newsboy and Mary."

VIII.

Flashy Jack.

AND now Bob was once more alone in the world with no one to whom he could look for those words of kindness and looks of sympathy which brighten the waste places of earth. The Newsboys each returned to their usual round, and he was left to himself. Flashy Jack, more than any others, sought him out, and seemed bent upon establishing a relationship between them; and Bob with his big heart and social instincts was little likely to repel him. Jack could read and write, he was handsome, gay and off-hand, and these qualities always pass for more than they are worth. Jack had an air that no other Newsboy could emulate, he sold papers as much for the love of it as for any desire of gain. He often went down the bay with the pilots of the port; for, being a ready

sailor, and a light-hearted youth, from whose tongue rolled off the jest, or oath, or negro song, all with equal ease, he had become a general favorite.

It is well known that the New York pilot boats are the finest afloat, the best adapted to speed as well as to the rough service they are often called to perform. It isn't the taking a ship out of the harbor down by the headlands, and reefs, and shoals, that render navigation dangerous; or the bringing her in with gallant canvas spread, and cordage in sailor-like trim, her very scuppers kissing the water's edge with her heavy freightage, that constitutes the arduous duties of the pilot. Far from this. I know of nothing so welcome as the cheerful hail of the pilot as you approach soundings. Hundreds of miles at sea, the waves lashed to fury, the sleet and rain chilling to the bone, you see a light, graceful boat, so trim, so diminutive, that it seems a miracle how she weathers the rough encounter of wind and wave, making down upon you. Down she sinks behind a mountain wave, and you think she is gone; up she comes, a crest upon the next billow, riding it as if she laughed at the tempest and loved the conflict, "like a thing of life"—onward she sweeps, her white sails set, and the

number painted in great black letters to show that she is only one of many such. Now she sends out a very egg-shell of a boat; now the pilot climbs the deck, shakes himself, buried as he is in his shaggy coat, his hair dripping, and his cheeks red from the blast. He stamps heavily, shakes out his coat, gives the officers of your vessel a gruff, hearty greeting, distributes newspapers; tells of the great fire, or terrible riot, which are always coming off in New York; takes the quarter deck, and you perceive at once that "our Captain," who, a moment before, was the greatest autocrat alive, has doused his colors, and yielded all into the hands of the pilot.

Away goes the pilot boat, careering over the waves, and soon it is only a speck upon the water; and now it is gone, and you give it a God-speed, for you know that the sight of the pilot boat is a glad one to the mariner nearing his destination, and you know it has gone to perform a like office for another wayfarer.

Flashy Jack would be gone for days upon these excursions, for his adventurous, half-vagrant character, delighted in the brief period of peril, and nobody roared out with a greater zest the "Bay of Biscay,"

or gave more point to the ballad of Captain Kidd. Then his whistle of Nelly Blye, and Lucy Neal, was a perfect master-piece in kind, and enough, the sailors said, to call up a wind in the worst of calms.

Sometimes Flashy Jack would work for days on board of the lighters, jesting, whistling and singing, the admiration of sailor as well as "land lubber;" and when weary of this, his fine rich voice would sound the length of the street crying the morning papers. The Newsboys were right glad to have Jack amongst them, for he always seemed to give a start to the business, and showed them so many ways in which a penny could be turned, that one would think nothing could equal his invention.

A new arrival, and the issue of extras, is a God-send to the Newsboy. Then they scramble, and scream, and crowd to get the first supply. Then they hang like a black cloud around the door of the printing offices, reminding you of a hive of bees in swarming time, when the new colony cling in a great bunch at the mouth of the hive, rolling over and over, crawling about, flying and returning till the queen bee gives the signal of readiness.

A disaster by flood or fire gives opportunity for

pithy and sometimes terrible announcements. They contrive to twist the most unmanageable words into a sort of rhythm, and scream out the catastrophe in a cadence that might shame the puny sing-song of the pulpit.

The days of cheap literature were great days for the Newsboys. Upon the announcement of a new work, there was jostling and screaming; lungs did good service in that day, and woe to the author whose book did n't sell all off in three days; not a Newsboy would touch it on the fourth. Inquire for it, they thought you behind the age, looked at you as if you must have just come from Noah's Ark; thought you a flat, a spooney, and they ejaculated, "that, Sir, that—why that book is three days old," and it was evident they felt disgust at the question.

Three days! well, that is the modern immortality, and in this "fast" age, who shall say that any one of us has a right to monopolize public interest any longer than this? The sunshine comes new every day, the blossoms are content to bloom as the ephemera lives; the bird sings many of its kind, and the sea casts her shells and pearls to the shore—trifles all, but beautiful.

For some time after the death of Sam, the society of the careless, good-natured Flashy Jack, relieved Bob from his own too oppressive thoughts, and suggested a free and easy joyousness quite seductive to one of his easy temperament. Jack had a fund of anecdote about him, great stories of murders and robberies, of shipwrecks and disasters, of hair-breadth escapes, and terrible fights, that enchained the attention of his companions for hours. He had confused moral ideas, but there was something generous, frank, and joyous about him, that made his bright crimson waistcoat, and striped pantaloons and jaunty cap look appropriate; and whether he slung a black silk handkerchief over his neck in sailor style, or went with his throat all open, in the Newsboys' eyes Jack could n't help looking handsome, for his hair had a saucy curl, and his black eyes went well with the dimples in his cheeks and chin. People bought papers of Flashy Jack just for the sake of taking a second look at his bright face, and to hear him say in his sonorous voice some old jest that seemed new by the way in which it was told.

Jack knew everybody and everything. There was n't an alley nor nook in the great city into which

he had not penetrated. He had a keen observation, and many a time the police had got a clue to some outrage they were trying to trace home to its source, by some old memory suddenly revived in the mind of Flashy Jack. He knew all the women who kept apple-stands at the corners of the streets, and there wasn't one of them that would n't toss him an apple or a cake in return for his good-natured impudence, and all the soda women in Fulton street refused his coppers when he took a glass at their tables. Many's the time Jack had cried "hot corn" for the little girls at night, and sent them home with empty pails. He'd turn match vender any time, if the child looked weary or disheartened—he was ready for a fight, always in aid of the weak party. In truth, the generous instincts of Flashy Jack were better than other people's virtues.

Of a rainy day he would help the little girls who swept the crossings—laugh at their dirty faces, till they learned to "spruce up," because of "that little devil, Flashy Jack." He knew them all, and tossed them coppers, "just by way of *model* to them poor sneaks what go up and down Broadway, shined up to kill, and all too deuced mean to give a penny to a

slip of a gal, that had n't a second rag to her back." Flashy Jack said this, and things of the like, in a manner as if it hurt him to not be allowed "to pitch at once into such folks."

Cold winter mornings Flashy Jack "turned to" and helped the miserable, shivering women and children who searched over the coal ash heaps in vacant lots, and in barrels and tin kettles left for the dustman to take away, that they might get something to supply a little heat. Oh! Jack had funny things to say, and kind things to say, and ten to one they found pennies in the coal, and then there was a time indeed, and nobody looked more strange about it than Jack did; and when the women and children went away to cook their scanty breakfast, they carried home something like a smile, and the cold morning wasn't half so cold as they had thought it, and the old hood was warmer than it had ever been before, and the old brown shawl, crossed over the breast and tied in a knot behind, had grown wondrously in comfort. Oh! they all knew Flashy Jack, "the darling rascal that he was."

Jack knew all the "sporting men about town." In his ignorance more than one was quite a hero in

his eyes. Jack, open-hearted and generous himself, saw something handsome, and strong, and brave in this rude aspect of life; and to be generous, kind, and courageous, was the sum of Flashy Jack's moral creed. My readers must decide whether it was a broad or a narrow creed.

Then there were various games in which Jack excelled. He was fond of a boat, and fond of a dog, not as a companion merely, but as gratifying this proclivity of his to the sporting line. "I ought to be happy," he would say, "for I have the smartest and smallest black and tan terrier in the city." This animal's ears were cut to the very acme of terrier point, making her look as keen as a needle, and pert as a fox; and Jack said, "as to her narrative, it is bit off till it is n't a circumstance of a narrative." This dog, named Vic, was the pride and glory of Flashy Jack's life. He would pinch and pull her, and make her fly at him and bark a perfect fury, he all the time laughing like mad; and when he was tired of the sport, he would open his bosom and the little creature would crawl in, and lie buttoned up close to Jack's heart for hours. He made heavy bets upon Vic, sure to win, for "she was death on rats," as he said; his triumph

always being wound up with, "Oh! she's game I tell ye, she'll fight like blazes—come here Vic," and he stowed her away in his bosom, bloody as she was from her encounter with the rats.

IX.

A Short Chapter.

So, what with Flashy Jack and his little Vic, and the perpetual casings and comfortings of time, Bob began to hold up his head stronger than ever. He was never carried out of himself, magnetic as Flashy Jack always was, and all-powerful as his influence was over others. Jack would punch him in the sides and call him old man, and "take him about," but Bob was not the less himself. "Blast me if Bob isn't Bob, and nothing but Bob," Jack would exclaim in a sort of vexed mirth, after making sundry attempts to indoctrinate him into some of his own modes of life. Bob had a code of morals, very old, very safe, and very respectable. This code was written upon the heart in the first creation of a man, and a little voice like the faintest ticking of a watch, was placed beside

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it, that kept repeating all the time "do right," "do right;" you could n't tell it from the beating of your own heart if you had always obeyed its monition; but sometimes when the man gets old and respectable, the tick becomes loud and strong, like the clock behind the door, or upon the broad landing of the stair-case; it is a long swing, as though it swept over the black columns of the ledger, along the brief of the lawyer, and over the leaves of the minister's sermon, do right, do right, slow and solemn. There is a shade of severity in the voice, something bordering upon judicial condemnation; and if you can look into the man's face you will observe him wince, and glance at the clock as if it might tell something.

Then again this little monitor is put to hard duty. The blood boils, it is red, and green, and black, and thunders through the heart as if it would burst its walls. Oh! the little monitor then has to scream, and cry, and shout, if it would be heard, and even then her loudest shriek prolonged till she is nearly dead, DO RIGHT, is hardly heard for the tumult of that Moscow bell of human passions; and the little monitor is buried under the ruins of the crash, and scarcely again does she recover her voice.

But Bob had this consciousness; he heard a small, still voice repeating always "do right," and he listened and obeyed; he wondered whence it came, the meaning he did n't pretend to understand, but he obeyed its monitions as best he could. His code might not pass current in law, theology, or popular morals, but it answered a good purpose to Bob. When Jack stopped at the porter house for a glass of lager beer and offered Bob "a treat," he always declined.

"It's agin my nater, Jack," he would say as a sort of apology for not being "agreeable to it;" and as Jack, growing older and loving excitement, craved year after year a stronger stimulant, he could never prevail upon the Newsboy to join him.

"It's agin my nater, Jack," he would go on to say, "and I've observed them what likes these inside heaters al'ays comes out wrong. It's my opinion they ain't of no use. So as to a plug of tobaccy, I does n't incline to it. My nater isn't that way. A chaw makes me sick as the deuce, and a smoke goes agin me. I'se better without 'em, Jack."

Then Jack gave him a great thump on the back, stuck out one leg and gave a whirl round on the other, crying out, "You'll do, you little rascal—you'll

do, when poor Jack has had his last drop—drop! did I say? Bob, that's an ugly word," and he shuddered all over.

Bob knew little of the private history of Flashy Jack, for the Newsboys do not care much for the antecedents of their companions; but he knew that Jack sometimes went down to Blackwell's Island, where the prisoners move about like monsters more than men, in their light gray, particolored, uncouth garments, reminding you of an army of Calibans. Then, too, he seemed familiar with all the officers and turnkeys of the Tombs, who nodded him familiarly, and sometimes said to him,

"Look out, Jack, or you'll be coming here too."

When there was to be an execution in the yard of the Tombs, Flashy Jack was admitted to witness the awful ceremony, by the connivance of the officers, because he told Bob in a sort of confidential undertone,

"The old man swung there."

Bob knew he meant his father, but as he had no very definite ideas as to what was comprised in that relationship, he wasn't much shocked at the announcement, nor surprised that the circumstance should entitle Flashy Jack to peculiar favor.

X.

A Rainy Day.

I BEGIN a new chapter here, because what I have to record in this and subsequent pages, was a sort of turning point in the history of the Newsboy, and we all know there are eras in our own destiny to which we look back and put as it were a finger upon the spot and say, "then had I done thus and so it had been better for me always;" or it may be we say, "I know not how it was, but I chose exactly right then; had I chosen otherwise, my whole life had suffered blame." Blind and faithless creatures that we are! In the one case we are wilfully blind and deaf, and though a thousand voices cried "forbear," we would not listen. In the other, your good angel, made strong by your own prayers, or it may be the prayers of a mother, (in the whole universe God himself

holds nothing more omnipotent than a mother's prayers in behalf of her child,) wafted and sustained by these, turned the heaven of her face upon you, and you could not choose do other than you did. She made the voice of the little monitor within sweet and appealing in her whispered "do right, do right," till you saw your mother's eyes and heard your mother's voice through her, and you grew twice, yea ten times a man from the brief conflict.

Bob had grown exceedingly fond of Flashy Jack. His careless, rollicking life, sometimes on sea and sometimes on land, "keeled up" on a bench in the Battery, sleeping on board of a canal boat, or an old Hudson river sloop, and now under an awning or a stoop, betting, swearing, working or fighting, the one with as much zest as the other, so attractive that Bob was gradually falling into the same way. Now Flashy Jack had nerves of the cast iron stamp—they were hardy, though excitable; the black tinge in them made them tough and enduring; while Bob, born of more delicate clay, with but little of the black in his veins, naturally sympathetic and meditative, was likely to suffer the most terrible exhaustion from what barely gave Flashy Jack an agreeable exhilaration.

Bob and Flashy Jack had once joined the police in hunting for a miserable wretch who had committed a robbery. Both the boys gave a loud shout as they confronted him just plunging into Bedford woods on the Brooklyn side. Flashy Jack screamed and shouted, and followed on with the instinct of a bloodhound, but Bob caught sight of the hunted man, and one glance was enough. He saw the broad chest bared to the wind, heaving with superhuman struggles, the veins of the throat red and distended, the perspiration falling in floods from the bare and exhausted temples, and nothing could induce him to track further the miserable, hard-beset offender; and when he at length doubled and passed in the neighborhood of Bob, he could not forbear to point to a clump of bushes into which he crawled, and the pursuers passed on in another direction. Bob carelessly approached the spot, and it was natural that he should relieve his pockets of their small amount of coin. He didn't know whether he did right or wrong. "The rich houses have so many things they don't need," he thought to himself. The man said in a low voice,

"Youngster, I swear to God I'll lead an honest life after this, because of what you've done."

And then Bob felt relieved in his mind as to the course he had taken. He never confessed the circumstance to Flashy Jack, and as the man was not arrested, it is to be hoped he kept his promise. But the scene wrought powerfully upon the mind of the Newsboy.

"I wish I was posted up on the meaning of things," he would say again and again to Jack, but as the latter's moral science was not well defined, he could afford little aid to Bob.

"I guess if we see all that's a goin' on, and al'ays pitch in to help the weak side, we'll come out about right in the long run," Jack would say, at the same time giving his bushy curls a smarter turn, and poisoning his cigar between his second and third fingers, while he cocked back his head, and watched the smoke issue slowly from his red lips, that were just shaded by a soft moustache, and a dot of an imperial.

Little Bob gazed at him all the time, and though his aid in a moral point of view was rather questionable, the beauty of Jack did not fail of its effect. "Blame me, Jack," he would say, "if you ain't as handsome as the wax figures in the windows," and Jack could n't fail to be proud of the praise.

It was a cold rainy morning. Flashy Jack had told Bob he had an engagement for him at the Tombs, and he had gone with him over his beat in order to facilitate the sale of his papers, that he might be ready in time. The weather had been very fair, for it was the season of roses, and all along the upper part of the city the air had been filled with their perfume. But now a cold storm of rain had set in, and you would have thought it November rather than June. The wind swept along the awnings, and shook them as if bent to tear away the fastenings. The great signs, lashed by iron rods to the roofs of the houses along the Bowery, gave out solemn groanings by starts, as if all at once they thought to wrench themselves away, and then they settled down into a hoarse creak, determined to wait till the irons were rusty, and then down they would come upon the head of some passer-by. The little square signs, hung out like banerets, jerked, and swung, and twisted themselves in the wind, but the bolts were too strong for them.

The second-hand clothes' men in Chatham Street stood cross-legged in their doors, despairing of custom. Women with frouzly heads lolled over the counters, and gossipped with their neighbors. Chil-

dren were sailing paper boats and hickory nut-shells in the gutters, shouting with delight as the little barques weathered the eddying current of the filthy stream. Poor things! born to fish in muddy waters; the first freightage of life consigned to an impure channel; but they boded nothing, and laughed and shouted, happy as the child whose dainty fingers touch only the filtered bath, and the delicate finger-glass.

The stage drivers, coated in India-rubber, had a brisk time of it, for nobody would walk in such a storm who had a sixpence to spend. The railway-cars were crowded to suffocation, but the people were silent, as they are apt to be in cities in all cases of discomfort. It is only in the country, where there are broad acres, and open skies, and but few inhabitants, that people are privileged to vent their ill humor and spleen under petty annoyances to the ears of others. Then, too, it was Friday, and Friday has got to being called "hangman's day" in the Bowery, in Broadway "executioner's day," in our churches "Good Friday," as indicating the benign efficiency of the atonement, when Jesus is said to have died on Friday. It is regarded as an unlucky day by high and low, and

sailors do not like to go to sea on a Friday, and brides will not go to the altar on a Friday.

It was, as I have said, Friday, and a dismal storm it was. And as the two boys, Flashy Jack and Bob, came down the Bowery drenched with the rain, and kept onward to Centre street, they saw that all the buildings in the neighborhood of the Tombs were covered with a dense mass of people, a good proportion of them women, with all eyes turned in that direction. Now this massive granite building, built upon an Egyptian model, has of itself something grand as well as forbidding about it. Its original name was the "Hall of Justice," but whether people doubted as to the propriety of the name coupled with the proceedings there, or whether its mausoleum aspect suggested a readier, more appropriate, and shorter cognomen, I know not, but the term Hall of Justice sounds now cockneyish and affected, as the universal designation of this great prison is the Tombs.

It faces Centre street, one of the great thoroughfares of New York, nearly as broad and commodious as Broadway, with which it is parallel. A stranger would be apt to think that in a democratic city, two streets, separated only by two or three hundred feet,

would contain a population much akin; but if he should visit the Bowery, or Centre street even, with this expectation, he would be greatly astonished at the result of his observation; for the denizens of Broadway and the Bowery are as unlike as the population of France and Germany. It isn't mere wealth that makes the distinction, but habits and culture also. Ladies and gentlemen (heaven spare the mark!) are supposed to frequent Broadway, while the "b'hoys" and "g'hals" frequent the Bowery. A Bowery dog, even, never encroaches upon Broadway any more than the women and men do so; and two young ladies having crossed from Broadway to the Bowery in girlish curiosity, were accosted in a sort of side-speech by the "Bowery Gals" with, "What are them Broadway Gals in the Bowery for?" as though their coming might be a misdemeanor.

The Bowery gals and boys are handsome, impudent, and free-spoken. They dress in a dashing style, love bright colors, sharp terriers, and fast horses. Out on the avenues even the children learn to detect them, and when some red-cheeked "Lize" and daring "Mose" come out in their smart riding gear, with a troop of their friends, all in fancy buggies with cant-

ering horses, the children shout, and set on the dogs, "Tray, Blanche, Sweetheart, and all the little dogs," screaming, "there go the Bowery gals and boys."

XI.

The Tombs.

"THE TOMBS" are built, as I said, to face Centre street, and near the converging focus of a number of streets of ill repute, comprising the noted Five Points, the St. Antoine and St. Giles of New York. It was a bright thought, that of locating a prison in the midst of evil doers, to admonish them perpetually that "the way of transgressors is hard."

The site of the building was formerly a pond, known as the "Collet," and tradition preserves many wonderful stories of strange monsters inhabiting the Collet. It was a deep black pool, overflowed at high tides, the borders fringed with low bushes and trees of various kinds. At one time it was rumored to be the resort of an enormous serpent, that came out from the centre and was seen to move towards the sea.

While New York was in possession of the British, a Hessian soldier one night alarmed the whole garrison by his cries of alarm, at the approach of this monster. On examination of the ground there was the appearance as if a heavy log had been drawn over the sedges and grass from the side of the pond to the East river.

It is further related that once upon a time some young boys were amusing themselves about the Collet, when one of them cried out "come here, come here." They all gathered to the spot, and there found up near a large branch, but clinging to the body of a tree, a creature so nearly of the appearance of the bark itself, that it was scarcely distinguishable therefrom; a creature that gave them full time to examine him. He was more than a foot in length, of a lizard shape, his long hands clinging fast to the tree, and his tail curved partially round a twig. His eyes were red and fiery, and the boys declared they emitted sparks like old Nick himself. But the strangest part was a pair of filmy bat-like wings, which he kept moving up and down, producing a rapid current of air. The boys stayed around him for several hours, and called on others to see the strange beast, but forebore to mo-

lest him. They never saw him but this once. Turtles, lizards, and snakes of all sizes were numerous in the pond. So you will see that from the first the spot was black and marshy, and evil in its significance, being a prophecy of its moral destiny.

In the olden time, a beautiful brook occupied what is at present called Canal street, the bed of which, now covered with an arch, and paved over for the street, constitutes one of the great sewers of the city; one of those subterranean viaducts infested by rats, and reeking with all that is revolting to the senses. This beautiful brook was one of the outlets of the Collet, where the Tombs now stand.

In the first history of the city, the poor and the miserable, as well as those of evil tendencies, congregated about the low marshy grounds of the Collet, and thus the crooked streets were always damp and uninviting, till the place became morally as well as naturally pestiferous. The city enlarged itself—she spread forth her arms to the breezy heights of Harlem—she embraced the farm houses of Chelsea, the old thoroughfare of Great Jones street, even the estate of old Governor Petrus Stuyvesant, the redoubtable Dutch Governor, whose gallant spirit refused

submission to British authority, who turned his back upon "New Amsterdam," and went out into the country that he might never be witness of the degradation of his favorite colony ; even his fine old homestead was taken in. The banks of the North and the East rivers were occupied to the water's brim, a forest of masts, and a wilderness of brick and mortar, and yet there still remained this leprous spot in the heart of the city.

If you would bring up images to curdle the blood and redden the cheek with shame, you had but to name the Five Points. Thank God ! our people are coming to see that missionaries have a work to do at home, and they are stirring this dead-sea pool with a divine healing. Hungry people, too lazy to work, will rob and steal. The miserable outcast, famishing for lack of bread, stung with remorse, lost to himself and the world, will drown his misery in heavy potations—cursing God and man because of his degradation.

XII.

Symbols.

FROM the first, this locality was, as I have said, evil-haunted. There did not seem room for an angel's footfall, so fully was every nook and cranny occupied by spirits of darkness. It seems as it were a great basin whose sides are brick and mortar, into which is poured all the nauseous drainage of the higher thoroughfares. Its inhabitants were filthy, drunken, and apparently beyond all hope, and the children appalled you with their preternatural viciousness.

The scene is altered now, though much is yet to be done. I have been there and seen the change ; seen these children sitting in their right mind, with holy hymns upon lips but lately given to obscenity and blasphemy. The first thought was, "How old they look !" They were keen, sharp-looking chil-

dren, *as if they were all born old*. They were precociously intellectual—few of them were brutal looking, but all had a strong intellectual expression, that might easily cover a cold cruel nature. Some had great wild eyes, others sly alert ones. Some had a look of profound melancholy, and all were more or less diseased.

The old Brewery has disappeared, and it is one of the things for which we should bless God fervently. Time had long worked at the old timbers and creaking stairs, as if to say to men, "come, help me in this work;" and the pestilence had cried, "take away these reeking floors, these walls saturated with moral malaria, or I shall walk forth from these precincts to tread the halls of the palace."

Is there no other place akin in this great city of New York, from whence a like cry may go forth?

Overlooking all this region, itself vast, lofty and forbidding, the windows immense, and the heavy granite columns massive and tall, the whole an echoless quarry of cold, un pitying stone, so great and yet looking small, stand the Tombs. The building is a Sphinx, and looks low, and yet is high. The heavy entablature with its sunken lights; the deep recesses

and projecting cornices; the walls broad based and receding inward pyramid-like; the square gateways, with mysterious Egyptian emblems, all conspire to carry you back to the dim, mystery-periods of the race when man was in the infancy of his moral culture. The great stone walls frown huge and remorseless upon the spectator—the long stone galleries give back no echo, and within is a spot adown which the stars only look, a patch of blue sky inviting the soul thitherward, for the stone jaws of the prison will yield up never more the body of its inmates. But to-day, this Friday, the sunlight came not down a little round of glory, a sheaf from the full harvesting of sunshine, but instead the clouds wept downward, drop by drop, sounding upon the unyielding stone, pouring along the spouts and creating a deep inward sound, dreadful to the lonely prisoner, like far-off muffled drums and bells dumb in space, and he turned himself in his cell and put his hands to his ears to deaden the sound.

These aspects of the building render it a fit shape for a prison. It is as if the stone would say, I look small, and yet am vast—I look simple as the granite ledge dappled with moss in the shadows of old woods,

and yet my touch is death. Like me, the first evil deed seems a small thing, but it is mighty in shutting out the light of heavenly truth from the mind.

But, as I said, the boys neared the Tombs through the dismal rain, coming on a Friday, and saw the crowds of people upon the roofs and looking from the windows. The streets, also, were full of people, upon whom the rain beat, and yet they did not stir. There they stood, hour after hour, looking at this heavy stone building invested with so many elements of the terrible. It was well known to the people that the ground upon which it stood was so marshy that the builders found it nearly impossible to render the foundation arches firm. The frog, the lizard, and the serpent, which had infested the old Collet, had given place to the symbol of traffic—the rat, which swarmed in its gloomy corridors, fattened in its damp arches, and, following the lead pipes, often penetrated to the cell of the miserable culprit, hunting him from side to side in his narrow, dark room, till the rat anticipated the dues of justice.

Then, too, noisome vapors crept insidiously through its gloomy passages, and the wretches consigned to its walls perished, sometimes many in a night, from

these unwholesome exhalations. Had such a catastrophe transpired at the Tombs? Were the people up, indignant that even felons should be maltreated in this way? What is there to be seen by all that mass of up-turned faces? There is a small angle of heavy timbers rising from out the hollow square within—nothing more. A priest with black robes, officers with insignia of grade, enter the walls in silence. All is so still, so naked, so barren of show and excitement, that it is horrible. Some few professional men, a doctor, and old —, who trades in Water street, and has witnessed every execution in the city for the last twenty or thirty years, presents his burly shape, and bullet head, and is instantly admitted—his penchant for hanging scenes is known and indulged. Flashy Jack and Bob, sidling close to each other, enter just as the great bell of the cupola sends out a long ominous toll, that causes a collapse in every heart in that great multitude. And thus a being full of health and strength, a youth but on the vestibule of life, went out, was forced unwillingly out, upon the great unknown ocean of the unseen world. It was horrible, most horrible. If our legislators insist upon the literal interpretation of the Mosaic code, let us have

maiming if you will, sparing us the shocking details, but remember the gallows is a Christian dispensation.

The laws should humanize; if severe, should still lean to the side of mercy; wherever these are in favor of capital punishment they but serve to harden and brutalize the mind. When we find men refuse to act as jurors upon offences where the punishment is death; when we find men refuse to take the office of High Sheriff, or if they take it, compelled to do the duties of the office, and forbidden by law to bribe another to the act of murder, while the duty is their own; when we find ministers of the Gospel in a body declaring that *they will not officiate at the gallows*; when the whole subject is stripped naked, deprived of all its accessories of official pomp and pious parade, then will these legal crimes disappear, and not till then.

XIII.

The Cry for Right.

SILENT, and pale as death, came forth officer, and priest, and lawyer, and doctor. Old ——'s face had acquired another shade of brutality; he had another "case" to record in his tablets. As the people silently dispersed, they knew that within the Tombs lay a stiff, ghastly object, revolting and terrible to the thought.

Flashy Jack had never been so moved. When he reached the street, he did n't see how poor Bob staggered, pale as death, his limbs too weak to carry him, for he rushed away, down through the splashing rain, as if trying to banish some dreadful image from his brain.

Bob soon found himself surrounded by his companions, whose inquiries he answered as best he

could. When he had told how the poor wretch had his arms pinioned, how he appeared when the cap was drawn over his face, how everybody gasped as the platform rolled aside, the deathly stillness—all, all that had been burned into his brain by that terrible scene, he went on to say,

"I'm free to declare, that I don't believe in these things. It's agin the nater of a man to see a human critter strung up like a dog. It's two murders instead of one."

Whether it was accident or design on the part of the managers, I do not know, but the evening subsequent to the execution witnessed by Bob in the hollow square of the prison, the play at the Bowery theatre was Jack Shepherd. Thither Bob went, more by habit than design, for the rain continued to fall, the streets were deserted, and the creaking of the signs sounded like the dreadful creak of the platform as it slid aside. As the rain came down through the dim atmosphere, and the lamps seemed to commingle, and then divide in the distance, and now and then a dark mass moved along, it did n't matter that it was a passer-by beneath an umbrella, for it had an unearthly and mysterious look to the poor Newsboy, drenched

as he was to the skin, and his brain seething with confused and terrible images.

"If I could only know what it all means," he ejaculated. "Now, there goes a 'kiverer,' slow, slow—it looks awful—but the lamps show 'tis handsome Molly underneath, not drunk yet, but she will be afore morning; but I get no light on these things, so I should know why some on us gets nabbed, and some don't; some is hung, and some looks up so sleek, and honorable like. It's the nater of creators to do as well as they can, they does n't tumble into the gutter when they can keep out; they does n't nab, and gouge, and sneak; when they's got something better to do. I wishes I had some light on it all."

Poor Bob was n't the first that had longed for a clearer light. From the time of the burly Ajax, who cut and slashed in the darkness, not knowing that he contended with the Gods, down to the poorest seeker after knowledge, whether material or moral, "light, light" has been the great cry of the human. It cries for light more than for mercy. Oh for light to penetrate into the dim, terrible recesses of the moral world, that we might enter in and sweep and garnish, and winnow as the husbandman winnows the grain,

and thus plant the good seed which shall spring up to bear fruit an hundred fold.

While Bob thought of these things he bought some pea-nuts of the old woman who sits at the head of Chambers street, on the Centre street side, for the Newsboys were her only patrons. She had sat there for years, nodding and shaking her head from side to side, and working her loose lips, one large tooth projecting beyond, as if she had a sort of warning for everybody. Her hands, with their long hard nails, were gray; her skin in all its folds and wrinkles was gray; her eyes were gray, with a slight shade of pink surrounding them, and the thin hair coming out from the gray old handkerchief that bound it, was gray also. When the boys said, "Give us some pea-nuts, Granny," screaming so loud that everybody looked round and got the old woman's warning, she tried to smile, but it was n't a smile by any means, but only a faster working of the head and lips, and she did not stir her hands to help them, for she could n't do it; so the boys helped themselves, and put their money into her lap, and went on. Oh the old woman saw the gold in her lap you may be sure, and she nodded from side to side, and shook and bowed faster than

ever, and when another and another did the same thing, she laughed aloud, and rocked herself, and by-and-by, so great was her love for the gold, it overcame her paralysis, and she clutched it in her skinny hands, and thrust it into her bosom; and then sat mumbling to herself, and nodding and shaking her head as if she warned people to beware of something.

Bob had gone by Burton's theatre at the left of the Park, where he knew there was a good deal of fun in Burton, but it was not of a kind to interest the Newsboys, who covet something more intense and graphic in character. The Newsboy looks to the theatre to acquire ideas, and hence he goes to the one that best meets his requirements, without the ability to judge as to its moral import. Loving excitement, he goes where he can best find it. So Bob doubled the corner of Chambers street on his way up through Chatham street to the Bowery. There was a long heavy strike of the City Hall bell, and presently a fire company came thundering over the pavements, the foreman shouting through his trumpet, and the men rushing and pulling, and dashing the mud around them in torrents.

It is a favorite game with the Newsboys "to run with the machine," and the cry of fire, however appalling to the merchant, whose warehouses groan with merchandise, or to the wealthy householder, with his gold and silver, fine linen and damask, with his tender wife and fair children, is altogether another affair to the helpless night wanderer, whose only covering is the broad sky, who, like the snail, carries his whole wealth upon his back. To such it is a chance for plunder, for excitement, for anything that shall break the stagnant dulness of life.

Now, however, Bob was "not in the vein," and though the slippery areas, and blind alleys, and narrow streets poured out their thousands of haggard inmates, ready for any work, and helping the tumult, he stepped into the shelter of a closed doorway, and waited for the crowd, with their deafening shouts, to pass on.

"I declares I feel as if I'd been doin' of something bad," he said to himself; "I's as weak as a rag."

At this moment, and as the fire companies and the crowd in their wake went on up the street, and the sound of the rain pattering upon the tin roofs and rushing from the spouts became again audible, Bob

came forth from his retreat. Now a band playing a march fell soothingly upon his ear. He knew they played "Love Not," for the Newsboys learn to distinguish the tunes.

"Love Not," he repeated, "Love Not! I wonder what it means. Something dreadful. Sam and Mary loved, and there they are both on 'em out in Greenwood. Molly said she loved once, a villain, she said he was, and there she goes, night arter night, ravin' and howlin', and a cryin'." Poor Sam! and Bob mingled a tear with the rain that dashed in his face.

By this time the music had approached, and Bob saw that it was a torch-light procession. The steady tramp of feet, the fading away of the music, and the flare of torches through the darkness, had something impish to the eye, something solemn and mysterious, which did not fail of their effect upon his already excited mind.

By this time he had entered the theatre. He looked about for Flashy Jack, called out to him, put his thumb and finger into his cheek, and gave a well-known signal. There was no response, and as the curtain arose, his attention became riveted upon the play to the exclusion of everything else.

XIV.

A Discovery.

JACK SHEPPARD is a mere youth, handsome, gay, and witty—the admiration of his compeers. At the first appearance of the character, Bob started up, exclaiming,

“By gorry, 'tis Flashy Jack.”

The Newsboys heard him. A new light broke upon their minds, and they gave way to tumultuous shouts of applause. They rose *en masse* in the pit. They screamed and shouted, and threw up their caps till the tumult became deafening. The police tried in vain to establish order. The boys were so astonished, so delighted at the appearance of one of their number in such a fine costume, and uttering language unfamiliar to themselves, “all so nat’ral,” and looking as they said, “handsome as the devil,” that order was

quite out of the question. But when Flashy Jack came forward to the foot-lights, and waving his hand, asked them in a sort of patronizing way, as if he had suddenly become a great man, to be quiet, they gave one final shout and then settled down into silence.

The play went on. Jack Sheppard is so young, so gay, so fascinating. Then he drinks, and swears, and gambles—becomes at length lewd and finally guilty, and perishes miserably at Tyburn, dies the death of the felon,—you follow him step by step, with a pitying interest. And the bad tendency of the play consists in this very pity for a bold, reckless youth, whose dashing traits lend a dangerous fascination to crime. You forget his guiltiness and overlook his vices in your extorted sympathy.

Flashy Jack had often appeared as a “supe” at the theatre; and his ready tact, fine figure, handsome gladiator face and head, and deep sonorous voice, had long attracted the attention of the managers, and his services began to be in requisition. To Bob all this was perplexing and trying to the last degree. He felt as if left alone again, as he had been so often before in life; Sam and Mary gone, and now Flashy Jack suddenly become a great man.

The early history of Jack which he had known only in parts, his character so showy, so like that of Jack Sheppard, that to play it was no acting, only putting himself into words, that altogether a heavy, mysterious foreboding came upon him.

"I feel as if I saw Jack living as Sheppard did, just so handsome, women a lovin' of him, and men a trustin' of him, and he doin' just as Jack Sheppard, and dyin' in the same way."

As he said this he had spread down a heap of papers for his head and disposed himself to sleep. Bob did n't pray before he slept, why should he? how should he? but that steady listening of his to the little monitor that whispered, "do right, do right," that desire of his to learn the way to do it, was not unobserved in the great economy of the universe. Had not the sainted Sister Agnace dropped a tear upon his brow when she prayed for him so long ago? and had he not tried, in his imperfect way, to learn the aim and end of his creation? That night as poor Bob, alone once more, laid down his head to sleep, where the rain drops pattered about him, you might have seen, had you been there, and "spiritually discerned" a soft, smiling angel leaning over the poor

Newsboy, shielding him from the rain, and touching his poor thin temples with her wings, and you would have been surprised at the beautiful vision of the Newsboy—you would have wondered to see how he went away off into a "faire countrie," where the birds sang lovingly from overhanging branches, and blossoms unfolded themselves in perennial bloom, and where there were no shadows, nor tears, nor sin, but a serene, ever-growing delight.

I think the angel with whom the poor, friendless ragged Bob went was his mother, and the place heaven; and I do not wonder that when he awoke the mystery of life looked less dark and oppressive to him.

XV.

The Vision.

NEXT came the Sabbath, and as Bob went out to the hydrant, preparing himself for the day, I had a vision, and I believe it was the sight of Bob that produced it; the sight of his weird, pale face and forlorn aspect; he scarcely more than a child, with not a hand in the wide world stretched out to help him.

One clear Sabbath morning—I know it was the Sabbath, for the beautiful Sabbath idea is carried out into the whole universe, and it is one of joy, of peace, and of beauty, wherever it goes. It is the serene divine repose, coming direct from the good Father into the soul of all created things, and therefore it must be well with the recipient. It was the Sabbath, as I said, and the birds were singing jubilant; the flowers had unfolded themselves little by little, till a bud was

a rose, you couldn't tell how, for it is always Sabbath to them; the blue and golden sky leaned upon the boles of the great trees—a dome it was with columns and arches, and fair tracery of intervening branches, through which the winds sounded a solemn anthem.

Then I saw a city in which the bells were ringing lightly, sending clear voices into lanes, and alleys, and by-places, calling men to prayer. Many a time had the Sabbath opened as serenely as this. Many a time the bird, and blossom, and bell had said, "Come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us utterly rejoice in the God of our salvation," but the call had fallen upon deaf ears. Now it was otherwise. A new thought had been born to the world. Something had gone from heart to heart at that time, which had caused every man to look into his neighbor's face, and he whom he had supposed a foe, an outcast, the off-scouring of the earth, was found to be a brother; and when men saw this they as naturally looked up, and with one voice they chanted, "*Our Father.*"

So the poor, the lowly, the outcast, and oppressed, arose at once, and began to throng to the churches at the call of the Christian Sabbath bell. The Five

Points gave forth its lazar multitude. The docks, basements, garrets, slimy alleys, where in sub-cellars the half-stagnant waters disputed possession with the rats, sent forth their cadaverous and bloated occupants. Narrow streets and courts, areas, hogsheds, crates, old bakery ovens, heaps of ashes, all are yielding up their miserable, cheerless inhabitants in obedience to this life-giving call, "Come, let us sing unto the Lord." -

The church bells were ringing, and onward came these children of the night, half naked, ragged, and squalid; disease and hunger, vice and crime, and poverty and wretchedness, looking out, haggard, defiant, and wolfish, from their midst. They did n't know it, poor things; they did n't know how horrible they looked, for they had lived and slept amid reptiles and reptile vices, and did n't know how like they had become. So now they hurried on. Some found their way into Trinity, some into Grace, some into the Church of the Messiah, some into Pilgrim Church; and there, amid sighs of misery, and the sharp pangs of hunger, and the squalidness of vice, they cast themselves upon the pavements, and a great cry, "Be pitiful, oh God!" went up from every heart.

Oh! there was great rustling of velvet, and stiffening of brocade, and flutter of fans, and shiver of lace, but the people, God's children, had been suddenly touched to Sabbath-day issues, and their *Te laudamus* went up as a sweet odor to the Divine sense, and therefore these ignorant children did not know the meaning of all this rustle of respectable piety.

They had been treated as dogs in the highways; they had been cast forth and reviled—they had been used to scorn and contempt, and hatred and cruelty; they had faced the pitiless storm of the elements, and the more pitiless storm of human obloquy, and therefore they did not heed this new manifestation; indeed, they thought the angels of the sanctuary had all congregated over their poor bruised and broken hearts, and joined in their song, and pointed to a lovely image in the distance, toiling amid a reviling crowd, bearing upon his tender shoulders a cross, and whose lips cried, "Father, forgive them," at which sight sobs burst from their lips, and they repeated the words, "forgive, forgive!"

The vision passed, and only one poor, half-naked little shape was seen to enter Grace Church amid all the well-dressed men and women who carry out their

finery there for Sabbath-day exhibition. How the people did stare! some giggled, as though it was a funny thing to see poverty enter *that* church. Some frowned, as if it was an impertinent thing for poverty to enter *that* church. Some looked savage, as if it was a crime for poverty to enter *that* church. But most of all, the sexton was amazed, and just as poor Bob, not in the least knowing the state of things, but bent to learn something of the terrible mystery of life, had instinctively fallen upon his knees, his ragged garments actually touching the fine carpets of the aisle, the indignant sexton, fearing blame might fall upon himself because human limbs poorly covered had presumed to enter those sacred precincts, laid his hand rather strongly upon his shoulder. Bob would have been ejected—of course he would have been ejected. Now Bob had n't the least idea that he was committing an impropriety. He knew money was not to be paid at the door; he knew that much about a church; and further, he knew that the "little bunks" so daintily furnished with cushions and carpets, and golden-clasped books of prayer, and gilded Bibles, were private property—he had not presumed to invade these; but the thoroughfares, the vestibules,

he had supposed in his simplicity were open to all who might desire to worship. Moreover, so far as he personally was concerned he did not once dream himself anything the least out of the way, anything in the least an object of scorn or disgust. His labor supplied all his necessities, and it would require two or three generations of Bob's offspring to refine them down to callous-heartedness. Perhaps they could n't be refined down to this, for one great, true, pure, loving human heart goes on to leaven a great many of a race.

Look at Jesus of Nazareth! it is almost two thousand years since he stood amid the selfish, rich, respectable Jews, and said "a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another," and now all that wealthy Jewish piety which rose up in scorn, and contempt, and persecution against this one great, loving soul, has passed away into what is worse than oblivion, *remembered odium*; but the words, and the soul that breathed through the words, of the dear Jesus come, after the lapse of so many centuries, fresh as the song of the bird, or the dew of the morning, into your heart and mine, and we are serenely joyful to recall them.

XVI.

Light.

BUT I have left poor Bob all this time in the aisle of the church, where so many gorgeously dressed people pass by him, each gathering up their robes for fear of defilement, and there he is with the sexton's hand upon his shoulder. He would have been ejected, as I said, but just then a gentleman and lady had to enter the pew before which Bob had knelt, and the sexton gave him an extra jerk because he was in the way. Bob saw it, and supposing that to be the only difficulty, moved aside, and then bent his head reverently once more. Oh, the sexton was red in the face, you may be sure, and he helped Bob to his feet quick, and would have helped him out of the door also, but a little hand took hold of Bob's arm and drew him within the pew,

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and a low voice said, "Come in here and kneel down," and Bob did as he was desired, seeing nothing strange, nothing at all peculiar in the act. That child was a candlestick giving forth light in the Lord's temple.

So little self-consciousness had our Newsboy, that he never once thought of his poor robes as contrasted with all the finery about him; he did n't look at the people in the pew; if he had done so it would have cost him some wonderment to know why there were tears in their eyes, and why the little hand that had been laid upon his arm had been ever since wiping the tears from the eyes of the owner. Then the same little hand held out a prayer book, just as the minister began,

"The Lord is in his holy temple," and all the people rose to their feet, (but Bob continued to kneel, the child knew no better), and when the little hand reached him the prayer book, he did n't look up, but only whispered,

"I does n't read, I don't."

Then the hand went to the eyes again. When in the course of the service, the minister read the story of those who were called to appear in judg-

ment, and those who had visited the prisoner and given bread to the hungry, and clothed the naked, were rewarded even for the least good done to their kind, done in the true spirit of love, poor ignorant Bob wept plentifully, and wiped his tears on the sleeve of his jacket, knowing nothing better. Bob understood it all, all about "doing good as ye have opportunity;" and when it was repeated in the service, "Love one another, do good as ye have opportunity," Bob understood it all, a great light had shone into his mind—he grew so large with the thoughts that came to him, so filled and enlarged and elevated, that he turned to the little one who knelt beside him, and said,

"I does n't think I can bear any more," and he went out very softly.

Now Bob's body was n't half large enough for his great thoughts. "I sees it all now," he said, "it's all plain. It's love does it all; if I loves I finds a chance to do good."

Bob felt as if he must go away out of the range of brick and mortar, and closely-paved streets, to carry his new revelation.

"It's an airing that it wants," he said. "Gorry!

I does n't see how people sets there and hears it all through!"

Bob did n't know that out of all that multitude kneeling there, with prayers upon their lips, and divine truths in their ears, his was the only heart that had received the good word into a good soil; he did n't know that the angel that came down, longing to fill the house of God with his great glory, ready to touch a thousand hearts with a coal from God's altar, found only one prepared for the heavenly gift, and that one was a poor, unlettered boy, nearly ejected from the threshold.

XVII.

Twilight.

BOB saw Flashy Jack with little Vic trotting along beside him, but somehow he felt as if he could n't talk with him just now. Jack had helped him the best way he could—he had established it as an axiom that the true course "was al'ays to pitch into the strongest party, and that would help the weak," but as this rule was indefinite in application, and admitted of many modifications, it had n't helped him much. Then the story of Jack Sheppard, just one of the Flashy Jack stamp, ending life so mirerably, was, as Bob more than once said, "A stunner."

Bob felt now he had something tangible by which

he could shape his course. "I sees it—it's love does it all." By this time he had reached the South Ferry. People were coming and going, and the Newsboys were collected round the gates selling papers, poking their little bony, black hands through the bars and crying out, "Sunday Dispatch, Courier, Herald, Mercury, Atlas, Times," till you could n't help laughing at the clatter they made; and they, seeing you laugh, laughed themselves, and of course you bought a paper, for a free, natural laugh is worth more than all the money in the pockets of either you or me; though as to that, money does n't like my pockets.

"Here's Bob, here's our Bob," shouted the little Newsboys, for 'tis the little ones not old enough or strong enough to go greater distances that hold the monopoly of the South Ferry.

Bob tossed the boys a few coppers, paid his penny, and crossed over. Alone he took his way to Greenwood. Sam and Mary had illustrated love in one beautiful aspect, and now they grew suddenly very dear and lovely in the eyes of Bob, and he felt as if he must carry his new revelation to the grave of the lovers. He showed his ticket at the entrance with, it may be, a little pride. I think he

might be justified in the feeling. And when he reached the corner where a pretty stone, inscribed

THE
NEWSBOY
AND
MARY,

stood up so solemn, Bob felt another glow of pride, for it was partly his own doings. He had helped to save the memory of Sam and Mary from oblivion. When we remember that Fannie Osgood sleeps without a stone, and Maria del Occidente is hardly remembered, and Mellen and Poe, and a host of the children of genius, have no commemorative tablet, although thousands sunned their vanity in the light of their fame while they lived; when we remember this, we can pardon the honest pride of poor untutored Bob, as he stood admiring the simple monument marking the ashes of his friends. Here he seated himself upon the grass, and as he marked how it had grown around the graves, and how the rosebush the boys had paid for the planting, was full of blossoms, and the ivy vine already festooning the stone, he felt a deeper solitude as these changes indicated the lapse of time since their separation.

"You's good to me, Sam, when I's nothing but a plague and a bother, I was; and Mary's more nor kind. I's thinkin' she can't be more of an angel now nor she was then. I's kept her thimble, Sam, I has; it's here, close to Bob's heart;" and he unrolled fold after fold of paper till he came to a little silver thimble, which he looked at with the tears running down his cheeks.

"It's teeny, just like her," and he folded it away next to his great heart.

When you and I are gone, I wonder if there'll be anybody to shed such tears for us! Ah me!

The sun sent his golden beams adown the west, and the full white moon gleamed in the east, making almost a double day. The silver rays of the moon kissed the golden beams of the sun, struggling through the dense foliage that they might thus commingle. The rays of each shot across grave-stone and monument, lighting up now an Egyptian mausoleum, and now a slender obelisk, and then lingered softly where a little, weather-beaten chair marked the grave of a child. Bob saw a small shape, with long golden hair, and naked shoulders, seated in the little chair,

but when the sun went down it was gone. It had passed to

"Suns that have elsewhere their setting."

The birds did not stop their singing so early that night as is their wont, for the light beguiled them into a prolonged concert. The small striped squirrel came out behind a grave, peered around with its lustrous eyes, mounted the marble, whisked itself about and chattered, and then its mate came out also, and they began a race over the stones. A great fish-hawk that had perched upon one of the tall trees, poised itself seaward with a loud cry. An eagle sailed solemnly athwart the clear blue, and then was lost in the distance. The birds began to nestle in their snug domicils, and a soft haze arose from Silver Lake, where the fountain fell in a dreamy spray. The tree-toad trilled in the branches, and the frog and the turtle began their twilight movements. At length an owl screamed loudly from the arches of one of the tombs, and a rat crept stealthily along the gravel walk.

"Just like the live city," said Bob. "These night critters come out jest so all about New York. There's the rat and the cat scrambling here and there,

and men and women that's jist like 'em, goin' up and down. And these tombs a'n't no worse nor the Tombs in the city, where things is goin' on, no better to think on than the worms that's crawlin' under here. I sees it all clear now. The drinkin', and liein', and stealin', and robbin', brings 'em to the dreadful ends—but lovin' leads out of these things. You knew it, Sam, you did, and now I've larned it all."

At this Bob knelt down for a long time, but he did n't speak. Poor Bob hadn't a word to express the big needs of his poor young heart. The shadows of the graves chilled him to the bone, and the cold, unearthly light of the moon struck a thrill of dread through his heart. It was very late, past midnight, when Bob reached the Bowling Green. He drank from the pump that faces Broadway, and then stretched himself upon the bench, with only a paper thrown over his face, and slept soundly to the stirring of the trees and the murmur of the fountain.

XVIII.

The Last Toll at the Ferry.

BOB had been so used all his life to the waking up of the city, that he slept on although the ferry boats in the vicinity were ringing their bells at intervals, and the artisans from Brooklyn were already astir. The ice-men rattled along with a cool stream of water dripping from their carts, where the blocks of ice piled in heaps, shone like diamonds in the early light. The milkmen, in their jaunty red wagons, darted by, giving out at intervals their peculiar yell, like the whoop of a wild Indian. The steam was surging and roaring from the valves of newly-arrived steamers. The bloated debauchee was creeping home to bury himself from the light, just as the bird sprang from his nest in the Bowling Green to hail it with a song. At this moment Bob felt a sharp pull of his hair and

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a cry so into his ear, that he started to his feet. Looking down he saw a heap of little bones which he had upset in rising, and two eyes, large, dark, and mournful, were looking through tears into his.

"This is a pretty kettle of fish, by gorry," he exclaimed. He looked up Broadway, there was nothing unusual to be seen there. He looked to the right and to the left, not like Hardicanute, when

"Stately stepped he east the wa',
And stately stepped he west;"

for Bob, though a hero, our hero, reader, was by no means of the warlike or stalwart order. He saw no one who might be supposed to own the little waif at his feet. Looking through the iron railings, just to the left of the platters piled up by our city fathers for a fountain, between one of the geese (that "seems to be working," Bob says, "like death to give a spit into a spittoon") and the platters, he saw two eyes peering from a hollow, cadaverous face, watching the fate of the poor little abandoned imp.

Quick as thought Bob caught up the child (its weight was nothing), and started round to the left of the Bowling Green, intending to give her back the

child. The woman divined his purpose, for she darted away in the direction of the South Ferry. She seemed to have little or no covering except a calico gown much worn, and a small gray shawl, while her masses of tangled hair, set in motion by the wind, floated back like a black veil or banner. When she reached the ferry house she did not stop for toll—ah! she had other toll to pay, at another gate closing forever the wayfaring of life. Bob did not slack his pace, he also darted without pay past the toll keeper. The poor young creature threw up her hands as she neared the black gulf below, she cast back one look, wild and unearthly, at Bob and her child, and the waters closed over her just as the ferry boat was entering the slip.

Of course the pilot backed his boat and the good-natured ferry-man, whose clear black eyes and rosy face have been for so many years like a morning benediction to the passer from Brooklyn, left his little stand to do all he could to save the forlorn woman. Bob sat upon the verge of the timbers, still grasping the child while the people raked about with long poles and hooks for the body. It was never found; she who had thus been wrecked upon the quicksands

of life had floated out into the unknown ocean. Her last toll was paid.

Sights of misery were too frequent to the senses of the Newsboy to excite any great degree of feeling, and Bob arose, still bearing the child. He stood it upon the ground, and even he was shocked at its paleness and littleness; more than this, its back was hunched or broken. The child might be five years old, it had clasped its bits of hands more like the claws of a bird, and with its white, pale forehead sharply contracted over large, unearthly eyes, looked steadily into Bob's face.

"Don't look in that fix," he muttered; "don't, you clip me through and through, monkey. What's your name, Sis?"

"Minnie," it replied in a weak, thin voice. Its lips quivered, the blue veins of the forehead swelled, a slight redness grew upon the face, it sobbed, quivering all over, as if trying to keep back its tears, and then it gave out a low, shrill sound, growing more and more intense, till it was like the sharp cry of a wounded panther.

Bob's great heart was touched at the misery of the poor thing. He took it up and began to go up

Whitehall street. Here he bought a drink of milk for himself and the child, and remembering his duty for the day, he prevailed upon an old woman who keeps a stand at the corner of the Battery, to keep Minnie till nightfall, and so the good creature stowed her away in a basket, just as she would dispose of a kitten.

All day the image of Minnie kept itself in the eyes of Bob. Sometimes he thought to carry her to the Alms House; but when he thus thought, he seemed to see the imploring eyes of the poor mother just as she looked when she sunk down into the black waters, and the look, said "keep her, for the love of God."

Then he thought of the good, kind, motherly woman who had stowed her into her work basket while she mended linen for a large brood at home. "No, she can't in the nater of things do such a thing; it's another mouth to be filled, and I'll fill it."

So thought Bob, and then he began to think where he could put her. "The Sisters of Charity would take her in, but she's broken back, poor thing; and nobody'd love her unless her mother, and she's gone, and so I'll do what I can."

XIX.

Maggie.

As he came down Broadway, he looked at the beggars keenly as he passed them, to see if any one had a face as if she might help him. The young girls, with their long, flat, dirty ankles coming far below their flapping calico gowns, sent back his glances with a laugh and a stare; he saw they wouldn't do. As he neared Anthony street he thought him of Maggie at the Five Points, and he turned in that direction to see if he could discern anything motherly and protective in her character. Maggie was a stout, smart girl of ten or more, a perfect imp of mischief, a she "renegade," a creature ready to scream with laughter, and pour out a volley of oaths in the same breath. Quick of wit, fluent of tongue, and agile as a kitten was Maggie. She

swung her limbs about in a startling manner, like a young gypsy, and lolled upon the window sill, in a state of glorious laziness, the type of vagrant, idle girl-dom. Her ready scoff, and ready laugh, and alert legs, were the admiration of the whole wicked neighborhood, and yet there was a depth and passionate-ness in her eye, an undercurrent of still life foreshadowing a sad stormy future, as we shall see in the sequel.

In the time of our story, Maggie was, as we have said, an imp of mischief, nothing else; yet her loud, cheery laugh had a magnetic sound not unpleasant to the ear. Bob, as he came out opposite the Old Brewery, and saw her lolling cross-legged against a pump, did not for a moment think that the girl was over tall for her years, and was really remarkable in her looks. She leaned back, one hand holding up her dark curly hair from her great eyes, in which the sensual nature contended with the mournful spirit of the purer sense; lustrous eyes, melancholy and glowing also under their heavy lids. Her full lips were half parted with a smile, showing the white teeth like pearls. She was watching a group of dirty children, who quarrelled fiercely at one moment, and then burst into shouts of

laughter the next. Young as Maggie was, she didn't join them, but looked on pleased with the sport, just as well pleased when they rushed upon each other with cries of rage, tearing the hair from each other's heads, biting, pinching, and striking, as when they bent their mischief upon a poor stray young rat which they had caught in the gutter.

Bob, in the angle of the building, watched the scene with unwonted disgust. All at once Maggie looked up and encountered his eyes with a start. Something like a blush, the common blush of gratified vanity, gave her brown cheek a handsome glow, and then she flung out her legs, whirled round the pump, laughing and snapping her fingers at the Newsboy.

"She won't do—that's flat," said Bob to himself, reddening he could n't tell for what reason. "'Cause why?—she'd make Minnie like them brats. Maybe she'd like to see poor little broken-back yellin' just like 'em. I'll see her begorried fust." And Bob turned toward Broadway again, without even glancing toward Maggie, whose curly hair was blowing round the side of the pump, and its owner expecting the Newsboy to join her, which he had no disposition to do, and therefore continued on his way.

XX.

The Dove and the Snake.

Bob continued down Broadway, thinking what in the world he should do with poor little Minnie, and it may be thinking it pleasant to have something to look after. Indeed, the more Bob thought of the child, and the more that last look of the wretched mother settled itself around his great heart, the more did Minnie seem to creep in, to nestle as it were in the sunshine of that warm heart, just as a good or beautiful thought plumes itself like a bird in yours or mine.

He was near the princely bazaar of Stewart by this time, when an itinerant organist loosened the strap from his back, and drawing the barrel of the organ round in front of him began to turn the crank with

great pertinacity. He was a handsome Italian boy, and that was the reason all the ladies looked from their carriage windows to hear the music, and tossed him money also, and one fair child, whose foot was on the step of the carriage into which her mother had gone, clapped her hands merrily, and actually gave a few turns in the waltz which the man was playing.

Bob thought her scarcely human, but his attention was called away from observing her, by a voice close to his ear, that hissed out "Sacre" from between his teeth. He looked up and saw a tall, dark man, carefully and fashionably dressed, eyeing the child with an utterly expressionless face, except that in the depth of the eye there was a burning, snake-like look of delight. It made one think of Coleridge's poem of the dove clasped in the folds of the snake, as he gazed upon the child.

"Imogen," called a soft voice from the carriage; the child turned, and her eyes encountered the face of Bob, at which she laid her little hand, with its pretty laces falling about it, (Bob knew the hand and arm at once, although he had not known that he should do so till he met it again,) she laid the same little hand of Grace Church upon his arm, and said

in a small lady-like way, "You must come right into our pew next time," and then she obeyed the summons to the carriage, for by this time a large number of persons had filled the sidewalk, as they always will in Broadway if the least thing happens out of the ordinary channel. No matter what it is, a woman with a long silken train sweeping up the dust and filth of the street about her ankles, a bloomer costume, a country girl with red cheeks and outré dress, or a Spanish beauty with high comb and veil, the prettiest head-gear in the world; a Greek, a Chinese, a handsome dog, or a monkey,—one and all will attract the gaze of the multitude.

The carriage moved away; it was one of the few plain, elegant carriages, unmarked by livery, and thus gave an unmistakable sign that its owner was entitled to position on other grounds than the vulgar ground of wealth. Bob gave a penny to the street musician, and hurried away just as he began to play "Love not."

"No, by Gorry, I'll not mind the tune, I knows better," Bob muttered. He was wiser than the gifted woman who wrote the words, and did so in bitterness and anguish of spirit, knowing that love is to the soul what light is to the eye.

Bob felt something like this, for he was a philosopher in his way. He had crossed the Park about half way, keeping the street pavement, the iron fence upon one side, and a long string of hackney coaches upon the other, when he observed, inside of the Park, near to the fence, the tall, dark man he had before encountered. This time he was talking familiarly with Flashy Jack; and Bob saw, that as the latter turned in the direction of the Bowery, he touched his hat quite in the style of the gentleman. "Flashy Jack's gallus, and no mistake," thought Bob, continuing his way without accosting his old companion. Bob gave a look at Barnum's Museum, covered with beast, and bird, and reptile, and then was obliged to pause in front because of the blockade of vehicles.

XXI.

A Jam in Broadway.

THERE is no getting up nor down the street. There is a dead calm. The stage drivers compose themselves upon their boxes, assured of ten minutes of leisure. They crack jokes and whips at each other. Draymen plant themselves bolt upright, and relieve themselves by swearing. Porters change their burdens from side to side, but needing all their strength to carry them, do not swear. Handcarts are jammed up between drays and stages, and their holders now take the strap which they carry across their foreheads to help the draft, from its place, and hold up their heads to look about them. Boys are in ecstasies, running pell-mell in all directions, mounting upon stages, lamp-posts, and old awnings, everywhere that a boy can fix himself, (and where is the place

upon which a boy cannot hang), and they shout and roar, and crack pea-nuts, and toss the shells upon the heads below, and think a Broadway jam the best fun in in the world. One perfect little yahoo mounted upon a railing, spits upon the hats below with utter contempt for all decencies.

Passengers thread in and out amid this Babel with wondrous dexterity, now seizing the tongue of a stage, now ducking under the teeth of a horse, mounting a cart, doubling a wheel, zigzagging amid vehicles of every kind, composedly nonchalant of all the uproar. At length far down, a mile off, somewhere at the Bowling Green, the jam breaks, and the whole mass gives way. Presto! all is in motion, helter skelter—boys scamper like mad, drivers spur up, drays rattle and thump, newsboys begin to scream, cartmen buckle the belt to the brow and drop their heads like beasts of burden—whip, swear, whip, crack, scream, laugh, hurra—and all is in motion again.

I have seen the mountain stream emerging from its narrow pass, leaping from rock to rock, laughing itself to pearly foam, struggling and writhing to escape the pressure of overhanging cliffs, and to me it is a young, joyous Undine, spurning at the yoke. I

have seen the winter stream pouring itself onward in a mass of contorted and broken ice—onward, onward rushed the whirl of spray and ice, eager to reach the narrow pass, and find rest in the expanse below. Volume upon volume piles the crystal weight, lifting itself up into fantastic shapes, aping tower and dome, and casting itself upon the shore hundreds of feet. Miles above, the river pours on unconscious of the impediment. People start from their beds at the tumult of rising waters; the banks are submerged; whole villages stand like Venice amid the seas; tall trees look like lonely sentinels; the church spire points sadly from its watery bed; all is terror and confusion. Hark! there is a far-off rumbling, a tremendous vibration, as of an earthquake; the ice begins to grind and topple; louder grows the roar, and anon the whole scene is in motion.

The village seems to loom in the distance; trees sway here and there, wildly rocking to and fro, and disappear; the church is moving onward—the bridge flings itself high in the air and is gone—far as the eye can reach is a whirl of ice, and a roar of blackened waters. The *jam of ice* has given way, and gradually the river renews her ancient bounds.

I have seen a human multitude enthused by some great thought, and swayed back and forth at the will of the speaker; but nature and man are always majestic, when put into action by a great force. There is something thrillingly grand in the "tumult of the people," as in the "roaring of the sea;" but for noise without dignity; tumult without suggestiveness; for dead, revolting supremacy, where there is a sense as of some potent, destructive element, ready at any time to explode; where men appear half imp and half brute, commend me to a jam in Broadway.

As the mass gave way, Bob, still at a loss in his mind what to do in regard to Minnie, and thinking sometimes of the little hand that had been laid more than once upon his arm, crossed over to the other side of Broadway, and stood looking through the bars at the graves in Trinity church-yard, just as you and I have done, Reader, many a time, and trying to distinguish the grave of poor Charlotte Temple, who lies there under a white stone with a broken rose carved upon it. Ah! the grave-yards, and the deep seas, and the flowing rivers, hold many, many such, poor, deluded, broken-hearted girls, who "loved not wisely, but too well."

Bob did n't know how faint and weary he had grown, for his great heart was thinking all the time with sad perplexity. For the first time his eyes were looking into a dim, uncertain future, and he was not alone there. A hand had been laid upon his arm, and somehow that touch had seemed to say, "Protect me." And all the time that Bob stood there looking at the graves, he felt the touch and heard the voice. It wasn't very distinct, but it was there nevertheless.

XXII.

The Hand upon the Arm.

WHILE Bob stood as we have seen, he became conscious of a group beside him, who also had turned their faces from the stirring life in Broadway to the "place of graves," where its perturbations had long since ceased. The genuine Newsboy never shows an ill-bred curiosity; but somehow Bob felt as if the little hand pressed hard upon his arm, and a voice said very distinctly, "Protect me," while these stood by. This time "Sacre" was muttered in a low, fierce tone; but the utterer was gone before Bob could be quite sure to whom the ejaculation was addressed. Three men were grouped by the fence; and though neither of them even turned his head when the stranger parted, Bob was certain the dark gentleman had been talking with them.

Reader, do you believe in a devil? I should have said Satan; but he is a unity. I would have used Lucifer, son of the morning; but there is a glowing beauty about the term that makes us forget him as "shorn of his beams," and fallen. Mephistophiles is an intellect, an *un-human* wit. Imp is spriteish, diminutive. "That old Serpent" is not what I want. I am talking of a common, vulgar, atrocious creature of evil, which, if you don't believe in, I pity you. There will be rough sledding over your moral road; hard spots to get over.

I have been in the same way. I have refined down the obnoxious powers into a great evil abstract, the antagonist of good, the shadow to the light, the bitter to the sweet, the pain to pleasure, making it after all but a brightener of the good. It was all bad. Go back with me to the time when in our childhood he brandished his pitchfork tail, and clattered his hoofs in a corner when we "played on Sundays;" when his big horns loomed redly through the darkness, and strange whisperings at the elbow made us turn suddenly, dubious whether we did not smell brimstone. Ah! those were days of salutary terror, making us decorous in 'havior, careful for the truth,

and mindful of clean aprons. We must believe in him. It is of no use to dodge the faith, and our clergy do well to preach him up in the pulpit, and preach *at the children of the devil*, for there are such, and I have seen them.

These devils sometimes take human shapes, and "go up and down, and to and fro in the earth," as described in the book of Job. Oh! then they look to the ways of good men, and find out the tender spot where sin may enter the garrison; they find out the love of gold or the love of life stronger than the love of the good, and they cry, "skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Look to yourself; ten to one he is at your elbow in some unsuspected shape.

Others again show the open, manifest devil, like the three leaning over Trinity Church iron fence. One of them was small, wiry, with little red eyes and a quick jerking voice; another was a burly fellow, one thumb and two fingers gone from one hand; his eyes were peculiar in having a white rim entirely round the ball, or pupil, like what is called a wall-eyed horse. The third man, or devil, was a brown, low-browed fellow, with wiry hair, and brawny arms, naked to

the elbow and covered with tattooing. Their language was a jargon of French, German, Spanish and English, with the peculiar dialect native to the Infernals.

As the splendid equipages of the Upper Ten swept by with elegant trappings and livery, they would thrust out their arms and utter "rich," "rich," with oaths that would have been terrible from human lips, but coming from these, afforded great insight. Their mirth became hideous. A poor lame beggar was near being thrown down by a horse. "Go it," they shouted, as if suffering and danger afforded only fun. They were alert in observation; the rich were met with imprecations, the poor with jests. Life was to them a debasing farce. There was not a vestige of what properly belongs to a human being left. Low-browed, animal, and cruel, it required a strong imagination to believe that these were once innocent children. And when one tried to imagine angels as their guardians, it would not do at all, and one came to the solemn conclusion that they had never been babies—never been bathed in blessed water—never been fondled with the tears and prayers of a mother, but were escaped Incarnates, who wandered to and fro in the earth, and had made New York their rendezvous.

Bob did n't like the proximity of these wretches, and he felt admonished, likewise, that it was time to look after Minnie, who had been all day in the charge of the woman at the corner of the Battery. As he neared the spot, the child was seated on the good woman's lap, nibbling a biscuit, but evidently looking out for somebody else. The woman had washed her nicely, and brushed her soft wavy hair, so that her appearance was far from uninteresting. She knew Bob upon the instant, and reached up her arms; and when he lifted her from the ground, she laid her head over his shoulder in a confiding way, that was quite touching.

"What you goin' to do with her, Bub?" asked the woman, who never stopped her needle for a moment unless to supply a customer. It was well she did n't; for she had a round family of children at home, and a poorish man for a husband, who did little else than take care of them, being better adapted to in-door work than the more airy avocation of his good thrifty wife. To the woman's question, Bob replied after a pause, for the arms of little Minnie, over his shoulder, were pulling kindly threads about his heart, and warming up nice little chambers there, that

Bob didn't know till this blessed moment he possessed.

"I's thinkin', Granny, I'll keep her. You see she's broken-back, and that's a checker to most people's feelin's."

"Well, Bubby, she'll be wantin' a gown and an apron made sometimes; you jist come here, where I shall be sittin' the Lord knows how long, but most likely till I'm carried to my grave—longer'n she, poor thing, will trouble anybody; you come here, Bub, and I'll be doin' little things for her."

The woman said this in a choky sort of a voice, a little red about the eyes also; and while she put some pea-nuts, and cake, and apples, and candy, into a large paper bag, which Bob was to take away with him, she felt some twinges of remorse at not taking the child herself, for she had learned the story of the mother's death, and therefore she said by way of apology,

"You see, Bubby, my house is run over with my own brats, God help 'em; my old man ain't much, and I do what I can, but you come here and I'll help you, Bubby, now mind," and she gave both a motherly pat upon the shoulders, as they turned to go.

Bob, though genial in his nature, had not really

the elements of the "mix up" "bird of feather" character. There was a certain self-respect which never deserted him. If his career seems a vagrant one hitherto, it was because circumstances had rendered it unavoidable. His attachments were ready and deep, and even the spot in which he had slept two or three nights in succession became dear to him. The Newsboys had always loved him, had relied upon him for a certain native wisdom, which had induced them to consult him upon periods of "stress and strain." His habits, without being solitary, were less easy and companionable than the majority of them, and now he instinctively took a route to avoid them. A stage carried him away out to Greenwich, on the Eighth avenue. Here had been built, now and then, a princely dwelling, leaving vacant lots, in which sometimes a flock of sheep were pastured for a few days; sometimes these lots were fenced in and cultivated; sometimes, and most frequently, they were left unclosed, and became the receptacle for various decayed and useless articles, thrust into them for convenience sake. Lumber yards were all about in the vicinity, with immense piles of boards, stacked up so high that you would have wondered how they ever could get

them down again. Sometimes the wind swept suddenly down the river, and then these boards might be seen lifted one by one from their lofty place, and pitched over upon the ground with a regularity as if two invisible beings had seized them at either end and turned them over. These boards were a favorite place for children and vagrants; for scarcely ever was there a storm in which they could not find somewhere amongst them, a dry, cosey corner. Old stages, rickety and worn railway cars, were pitched into the lots, and there remained year by year, till little by little they dropped away into the baskets of children gathering chips. Ashes made little billows all over them, where the housemaids threw them in of mornings.

These lots are famous places for the rag-pickers, who may be seen at any time in their brown gowns, with a bag tied to the back and a long narrow basket in hand, stirring up the ground with their iron rods in pursuit of their filthy trade. Even they grow rich at their toil, as everybody can who will. They find bits of iron, spoons, knives, half-worn garments cast away by slatternly housekeepers and careless maids, and the rag-picker has a keen thrifty eye for these things.

XXIII.

The First Kiss.

BOB moved about warily, for the little orphan had been long sleeping upon his shoulder, and he, to whom life was such a mystery, felt an inward shrinking from observation as if he were committing a wrong. He pictured to himself some of the miserable denizens always haunting the outskirts of a great city, peering in upon his retreat, and watching his movements with curiosity or suspicion. He knew that the Ginger-bread man sometimes came up as far as this to mumble his cake, drink at the pump, and then crawl away to sleep. The Lime-kiln man passed out that way, but the Lime-kiln man troubled nobody, or if he spoke it was to say a good word of caution to some poor, tempted wretch who but for him would have fallen deeper into misery. Oh! there is preach-

ing, great preaching, carried on amongst the poor, given freely as God's free air, given lovingly as God is love.

Bob seated himself in the shadow of an old stage, and watched the comers in. There was an old woman with a lame child upon her back. He was a poor idiot, but her blood was in his veins, and he had a clinging, helpless love for her, to which she responded despite of disease and misery. She placed him upon some old tinning, the rusty remains of a roofing, a part of which she had leaned against the fence for a shelter. She groaned heavily from age and exhaustion, but sleep soon came to her aid.

Bob waited till he saw that the locality was too far removed from the centres of business and population to be much frequented, and then he lifted Minnie into the stage and laid himself down to sleep.

That night Bob thought he saw a very sweet face looking down upon him with a smile. His dream changed, and he saw the two intense, agonized eyes peering through the rails of the Bowling Green, and then they looked back over a thin shoulder, and then the sea covered them; slowly they arose again from the water—they were soft, and heavenly in their

look; a white robe floated out, and she laid one hand upon the head of little Minnie, and the other upon that of Bob. The touch awakened him, but only Minnie was there, her bits of fingers clasped, and her eyes fixed upon Bob's face.

She smiled when he opened his eyes, and then she leaned forward and kissed his cheek. It was the first kiss poor Bob had ever received; it was a thing so new and unexpected, that his great heart stopped its beating, and the tears gushed to his eyes. Minnie saw it, and she put her cheek close to his, and hugged her two little sticks of arms about his neck.

"Gorry, gorry, little Broken-back, you'll kill Bob, you will," he-at length said, never once returning the caress of the child.

Minnie had not as yet spoken to her protector, but now she lifted up her head, and in a small voice said,

"I'll be good—I'll be very good."

"What do you know about *that*, monkey?" returned Bob.

"Oh! I can wash my face, and I can keep still all day long."

"You call that bein' good, Sis?"

Minnie opened her eyes, and was silent; but when Bob produced the bag to give her some cakes, and moved as if he were going away, she held fast hold of his ragged coat, afraid of losing him. Bob remembered how he had held in the same way upon Sam, when he was but little larger, and he knew exactly how to pity poor Minnie.

"Look here," said he, "I does n't want you a hangin' on behind while I goes about hollerin' papers. Cause why? the boys would be a laughin' at me, and you could n't do no good. Gorry, now, shut up—I can't stand that water dripping out of them hydrants of yourn. Look here, I'll come back, I will, monkey."

Minnie curled herself up, and laid down without a word, and Bob went out. But somehow there was something tugging at his heart, and he went back to find little Minnie peeping through a crack in the stage, and large tears slowly and silently falling from her eyes. The boy was touched; he went in, and took her in his arms—he smoothed down her hair, and actually kissed the poor little cheek.

"Gorry! I did n't know I could do it," he muttered, holding the bit of little bones close to his great, brave heart.

"Oh! it's the lovin' that makes the heart ache," he ejaculated; "but I does n't care. Monkey, I'll come back, I will. Don't be a cryin'—don't, it takes all the grit out of Bob."

Minnie laughed now, and she kissed Bob again and again, and she took up his large, dark hand and kissed that; and when, as he went out, a flap of his coat caught in a splinter of the old stage, Minnie kissed that also. But Bob ran away without daring to look back.

All day, if you could have looked in, you would have seen little Minnie, hardly daring to stir, peering through the cracks, longing for the return of her only friend. All day, if you could have looked into Bob's face, you would have seen how noble the thought of Minnie had made it look. You would have seen that there was something lying deep in his heart, so near akin to God's heart of love, that the poor ragged Newsboy had that about him that gave him good fellowship. All up and down the street as he went, there was a hallowed pathway. People who came near to Bob saw a gleam of beauty, heard a chord of music, and felt a thrill of joy, they could n't tell how nor why, but it was because of the good angels

that went up and down with him, the good angels that look after forsaken orphans—of whom it is said, "when father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up."

Bob's voice had acquired a new tone, and it went into the hearts of people, and they bought his books and his papers at once, so that he was able to return to little Minnie long before dark. You may be sure that there was rejoicing in that poor little heart, when the eyes saw Bob coming up from behind the heaps of ashes and rubbish, and nearing the old stage. And Bob, too, who had all day imagined a thousand perils that might beset his protégé, you may be sure he rejoiced also, and felt how sweet it is to have a dear heart looking, waiting lovingly our return.

Bob needn't have been anxious for poor little Minnie. People don't covet orphans. People don't go out of their way to befriend broken-back children. People don't steal little ugly deformed children, for they are not apt to be serviceable unless they are hideous like Hervio Nano.

So the two children sat together, and talked, and laughed, and Bob didn't go to the theatre any more.

He was somehow so content that he didn't care to go anywhere, but only to stay with Minnie and hear her talk, and see her little wan face light up with smiles at his coming, and have her kiss him again and again, and say "good bye, good bye, dear, good Bob," when he went away of a morning, and "dear, good Bob," when he returned at night. And then the walks they took, and the sights they saw, would exceed the limits of my book to tell.

They didn't need to cry, "Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness," for they had a wilderness ready made in the heart of the great stirring city; a wilderness more solitary than the wild country region can furnish forth—where people seem to each other dim and shadowy like trees walking, for no one sees his neighbor face to face, only a moving mass of tailoring and dress-making, placed upon machines, with cold, hard eyes looking out from painted faces. You wouldn't think there was ever a heart amongst them all. You thread in and out amongst them, as you would amidst the boles of trees, only sometimes you see as it were the eyes of a fiend gleam out from amid curls or whiskers.

Bob and Minnie did not, could not fully appreciate

the blessedness of their poverty, which left them to be so much to each other. The beggars all knew them by sight, but Bob feeling a supreme disgust for their habits, never affiliated with them. The Newsboys respected Bob, and were loth to lose him from their haunts, but as he was the same good, wise Bob, they didn't interfere. He had changed his quarters from the old stage to a dilapidated car, which he had patched up to quite a look of comfort, and really little Minnie had learned to keep house nobody could tell how, and she kept herself and Bob looking nice in quite an astonishing manner.

I wish I could follow Bob now for three or four years, and tell how much he did, and how he was not quite happy, because he wished to learn so much and had no means of learning, because he had more than one or two to support, and felt that his labor was needed. The story of all this would quite tire my readers, and so I will go back now only to the period when I first spoke to Bob, premising that I am often ashamed of my dumbness by which I lose the opportunity of saying the timely word. It was a good miracle that in which Jesus cast out the dumb devil.

XXIV.

Poor Children.

I HAD often seen Bob and Minnie in my walks. I had often felt as if I would like to speak to them, but I had not the right, and could not well find a motive. Besides they seemed quite enough for each other, and I did not feel that I was essential to them. At length after a summer absence in the country I encountered Bob, looking so changed that I stopped instinctively, for I saw that he had not forgotten me. After some talk I said, as I have recorded in the opening of my book,

"And so your name is Bob; that means Robert. Robert what?"

"There ain't no Robert about it. My name is Bob."

"Well, what is your father's name?"

"I never had any father; I was sea-born."

I tried not to smile—I think, indeed I am confident I did not smile outwardly, for I did not see the little, quaint, old image of a man before me, but a soul full of dim intimations, over-written with strange, incomprehensible characters, which perplexed and oppressed poor Bob mightily.

"And where is your mother?"

"I never had any mother; I tell you I was sea-born. The folks took me ashore, and I've been a comin' up ever since. But what I want to find out is, about meetin's and prayin's. I don't know nothin'. And she's a dyin' you see. I know it. I feel it. There's a little blue vein across her nose, and it grows bluer and bluer; and this here ring is too big for any one of her fingers now—and I got a rose tree, and named one little bud Minnie, and I said if that bud blows out into a rose, Minnie will get well; if it doesn't, Minnie will die. Last night the bud dropped off dead."

And here poor Bob wiped his streaked face with the sleeve of his ragged coat.

"Let me go and see Minnie; it may be I can cure her."

"No you don't. I want to learn about the prayin', and then I can do it all myself. Which is the best meetin', the Trinity or the Broadway?"

"I do not understand you."

"I mean the Trinity Church, or the Broadway Theatre. I've been to both of 'em, and to the Cathedral, and Bowery, and Chatham, and all them places; and I like the Bowery best."

"Why, Bob! they are not the least alike; the Broadway is for amusement, and the Trinity is a place for prayer."

"They over do it there. Makes a fellow feel all of a gloom."

Bob did not clearly understand the difference between a theatre and a church. What he wanted was aid for the spirit, and he did not know to which he should apply. Besides his habits of life had been such as to engender a natural distrust, and his love for Minnie led him to suppose that if anybody was admitted into his confidence, somehow she would be lured away from him. The boy over estimated human fellowship. "I'm heavy here, heavy here," and poor Bob laid his dirty hand upon a rag of a shirt that hardly hid his little bony casement for a big heart.

"Bob, let me go and pray with Minnie, and, perhaps, I can ease her; and I will help you, and teach you both."

"I tell you, ye don't come it. Don't I know how the folks do? I'm a little feller, but I tell ye what, they do n't take me, and Minnie, and Dady off to the Island while I'm Bob."

There was a family, indeed. "Who is Minnie and Dady?" I asked.

"Why, they's my children, to be sure," said the boy, drawing up his little bones, and planting a pair of over-grown feet firmly, said feet slipping here and there in an old pair of shoes, a world too large.

"Your children! how came they yours? Where are their parents?"

"Never had any—never wanted any. Minnie had a mother, but she's drowned. Them that's got no mothers, is jist as well. What with the drinkin' and the sinnin', they does n't do much for children, only to beat 'em, and make 'em beg and steal. I takes two on 'em, I does."

"You are a noble boy, a great-hearted boy, Bob."

"That's it. I feel it a beatin', and a beatin', when I hear the great whips crack upon the poor horses;

and when I hear poor children, what wants bread, cryin', and cryin', it beats harder, harder. And when I heard Dady a screaming in the lot, and the wind blowin' cold, and the folks all goin' by, I ran too, but my heart went thump, thump, I knew I ought to go back; and so I did, and fetched her along, and me and Broken-back took care of her—Minnie's Broken-back, you know. Sometimes I could n't get the bread, for I does n't always make the money; and once I went to a man what lives in one of the big houses. They'd got a baby 'bout as large as Dady, and so I went and told him I'd got a baby outside in the old car, and I wanted something for it to eat. But he didn't give nothing. So I rung to a good many doors; and at last I didn't ring, but I walked right in, and I took some bread right out of the kitchen afore their eyes, and then they cried thief, thief! and the stars were seen shinin' here and all about after Bob; but they did n't cotch him. But, good bye; Minnie's dying, and all the prayer I knows is, "'Oh Lord, Lord, thy kingdom come.'"

Now, this prayer of poor Bob's was far more significant than he conceived. It is the great prayer for the poor; for when the kingdom of the Lord shall

come, men will no more turn a deaf ear to human wants. As I thought this, Bob disappeared down a dark alley, and I lost sight of him. But I could not banish him from my mind. "Do good as ye have opportunity," is a simple injunction, which this great-hearted Newsboy had obeyed literally, while you and I have hardly thought of its import.

"Here's the New York Daily Tribune, Herald, Times, Express."

A party was emerging from Taylor's princely saloon, when the cry of the Newsboy reached my ear. There was no mistaking the rich, flowing, magnetic tones of Bob, the boy with the heart too big for his jacket, that kept up its great human beat in spite of rags and poverty; that worked harder and harder at the sight of wrong and misery, till Bob had become all heart and bone.

What had he to do there amid gold and marble, and fruits and flowers, and jewels and silks—he with his ragged gaberdine, and worse than shoeless feet! Bob knew his destiny, and aimed for the best; there were dens of wickedness and sinks of corruption where orphans, and outcasts seek to hide themselves and their misery from human eye, but Bob did not

belong with such. There was a something in that great heart of his that reached for the good, the beautiful; and this he sought. Bob never saw himself as a skin-of-a-little-old-boy, thin and ragged, despised and poor, but he saw only the soul of goodness and human kindness, and manly courage, waiting to emerge from his rags and poverty into a true beautiful life. So when the people stared as he elbowed amongst them, and foolish men frowned, and gay women tittered, and the menials ordered him out, Bob did not take this disdain to himself, but stood manfully at the marble counter, and presented his little yellow bowl for a shilling ice, and did not even see nor hear the suppressed laughter at his expense.

Bob put down his shilling with an air; he had a right to the air, had it been ten times more elaborate than it was, for he had *earned* it bravely.

"Tell me if Minnie is better, Bob."

"No, she is worser, a great deal worser."

"And you here buying ice cream!"

"Ah, its for Minnie, poor dear Minnie," and the boy turned the corner at a run, to hide the tears that streaked his face like a zebra. Down, down to near the water's edge, beyond piles of lumber, across old

desolate looking lots, which their owners would not sell, till every inch of ground was worth a surface of gold; through crooked alleys, from whence issued sounds of terrible revelry, passed the boy; children cowered upon door-sills, or nodded upon curb-stones, for there was no bed for them, while the elders revelled within. Weary little things, they had no childish ways, no winning love-ways, no talks with each other, for the night was upon them and yet they could not rest.

Charles Lamb has affectingly said, that "the children of the poor never prattle." Alas! alas! that this should be the fact, that the simple needs of food and warmth should be so hardly earned; that all the sweet gushings out of the young hearts should be turned to stone ere they leap from the fountain. Look at the children, who sweep the crossings of our streets—sallow, and pinched, with little care-worn faces and thin lips, eager, importunate, and filthy. My God! I have felt my very soul recoil at seeing childhood, nay girlhood so embittered and degraded; creatures who should chase the butterfly, who should wait, playing with the blossom; whose April tears should mix with the sunshine, thus driven to the outskirts of human

sympathy, haggling, prematurely old, cold, calculating and severe. Verily we need patience, and we need faith to wait and hope for the good which is to redeem humanity from its many wrongs, its many burdens; but thanks be to God, who, when he gave man the material world to be subjected to his will, reserved the gifts of the spirit to himself, and though men may withhold aid and comfort, the hard to be earned bread, he sendeth "visions in the night season," giveth his love, the bounty of thought, and the affluence of the things "unseen." He poureth into the soul of the poor squalid child of poverty, dreams as fair, it may be fairer than those which come to the daintiest cared-for child of wealth.

I love children, for in truth I am little less than a child myself. I don't mind it. Children are nearest heaven, you may be sure of that. Bad men and women, whose crimes make them afraid in the night time, have no fears if they can have an innocent child to sleep with them, for the angels come wherever the child is, and they keep evil spirits at a distance, holding ward and watch over the pure in heart. Did not the good Saviour love little children, declaring the heavenly to be such?

XXV.

The Little Dreamer.

As Bob approached the old car, he moved more slowly; indeed it seemed as if he dreaded its proximity; for once he neared it, and then he went back a space, and talked to himself in an under tone:

"I wishes I did n't love her—I wishes I had given her the bread and clothes, and then let her go."

At length Bob put his ear down to the little door, listened, and then entered hastily, closing it after him. "Dear, good Bob," was uttered in a small, weak voice, then the crowing of the baby, Dady, showed how fondly the great-hearted boy was expected home.

Presently the door opened again, and was as gently closed, and then Bob rushed round the corner of the little dwelling, and throwing himself upon his back, brought his feet up into the air, resting against

the house, and all the time groaning bitterly, and the big heart working as if it were not only too big for the jacket, but for its casement of bones also.

"Oh Lord, Lord, thy kingdom come," burst from his lips; "Oh Minnie, Minnie, dear little broken-back, poor little broken-back, Bob's heart's a-breaking."

Bob had been heart-sore a thousand times—he had been foot-sore all his life—it seemed as if all his pain and suffering must have a seat somewhere in the region of those dilapidated shoes; and now that his great heart ached beyond endurance, and his poor head, that had never ached before—never worked before—was all bursting with pain and grief, sick with plans to save poor Minnie, Bob instinctively brought his feet, now free from pain, up where his head should be; and so his aching head lay upon the ground in place of his feet, and the great heart beat, beat, between them both, saying, "Poor head, maddened by ignorance, wrung with questioning, working in blindness and neglect, God help you. Poor feet, that have trod the burning plough-share, and the heavy wine-press, God lead ye."

At length Bob arose, and wiped his eyes, and

smote his hands upon his head, and shook himself all over, as if by dint of shaking and stamping he might rid himself of his grief.

"Oh! gorry, gorry, how she looks. Oh gorry, her arms are like a pipe-stem, and her eyes like coals o' fire. Minnie, Minnie, don't you die," and a flood of tears again burst from his eyes.

At this moment Bob looked up to the sky. "Them stars pepper the sky all over, and keep a winkin' and a winkin', just as if they didn't want to cry. And Minnie will go amongst 'em, and poor Bob will never be loved any more!" After brave efforts to look cheerful, Bob went in again.

Minnie lifted her head from her little straw pillow, and stretched out her hands to Bob, who took her into his arms, and leaned her head on his shoulder. And there they sat, Minnie so content, for she did not see the tears arising from the eyes of Bob—and Dady was too busy in lapping out the yellow bowl that had contained the ice, to heed either.

"Was the ice good, Minnie? Was the ice good, little broken-back?" asked Bob, making great faces to look cheerful, and speaking very loud lest his voice should tremble.

"Oh, so good, Bob," said an alert little voice. "And, look here, brother, I'm getting well, I am."

"I know it—you don't cough now. Oh, the ice'll cure you, I knew it would. It'll cure you, Minnie—'cause why, it's coolin' like. Oh, little broken-back, we'll have good times yet, we will. We'll go on the top of the Reservoir; we'll cross to Brooklyn, and we'll hear the birds a singin', and see the grass a growin'."

"Yes, Bob, and we'll go and find that beautiful house, I dream about. Oh, the pretty house, all white, white! Last night I thought a white dove come in and sat upon my bosom, and when I opened my eyes the room was all light, and then I heard such beautiful music. Oh, Bob, we'll go out again and stand in the area of some great house, and hear the ladies sing inside, won't we, Bob?"

"That we will, Minnie; and you shall have roses every day, and nice fruit, and a new gown, all pink, and a ribbon in your hair, Minnie."

Minnie clapped her little hands, and put a great loud kiss on Bob's cheek, and chirruped to Dady, and looked almost beautiful with her burning eyes and cheeks.

"Now, Bob," she said, "I'm going to sleep, I'm so tired. Oh, it is so beautiful to sleep, and see the waters going, going, and the fields all green, and *such* music, Bob; *put your head close to mine, and you'll get my dream.* Hark, darling Bob, don't you hear the music?"

Minnie's breath was very low, and her little shoulders and breast began to heave, but she smiled sweetly. Once she opened her eyes and said, "Bob, don't you get my dream? Don't you see all the beautiful faces?" Then she opened them again very slowly. "Oh, Bob, we will go—no more hunger, no more cryin' for bread, no more cold, no more cruelty; we will go brother. They call Minnie, Minnie; they don't call Bob. Oh, they don't call Bob," and the little thin, bony arms clung closer and closer about the neck of the boy, as if she could not, would not go that dark, mysterious way alone; and then the clasp relaxed, the head slipped aside, and poor Minnie's brief candle went out so softly, that she seemed but to sleep.

XXVI.

The Three Sleepers.

It was late in the night when Bob lighted his little lamp, and ventured to look into the face of Minnie. Dady had fallen asleep with the yellow bowl between her knees, and the boy took her gently in his arms and laid her beside the dead child. Was there nothing, no spirit, think you, in the great universe, to smile approval upon the forsaken boy, without home or friends, who struggled thus bravely to live, who followed thus untaught the promptings of the divine within us?—who built up his tabernacle unaided, and sheltered the outcasts of human society like himself? Bob thought not.

"Why did I save her? why did I love her? I wish I didn't do it. I wish I'd left 'em both to die, and then I shouldn't be here cryin' my heart out. I'll never love nothin' again; never, I won't."

Little Dady in her sleep had turned and seized the hand of Bob, just at this moment, and the boy put his cheek to hers, and kissed the sleeper who would waken with the sun to new life; and kissed also the other sleeper who would awake no more here, but who should awake with the Son of Righteousness to a new and unending life; and just at this moment a clear voice rang out, loud and beautiful,

"Come, ye disconsolate, where'er you languish,
Come, at the shrine of God fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish."

Poor Bob now had found some words expressive of his grief, and he repeated over and over, with great tears, "Here bring your wounded hearts—O Lord, O Lord, thy kingdom come—here bring your wounded hearts," till his head fell upon the pillow beside poor Minnie, and he slept.

I know not who sang the words, but it is a lovely thing to waken the still voices of night with holy hymns, for the great family of man holds many who need the "word fitly spoken," and the response of something better and sweeter than lives in their own hearts.

The great city was gradually sinking into quiet.

Already the heavy rumble of the stages and railway cars had died away, and only those who revelled late were out, or those who waken like the night bird and beast of prey to evil deeds.

When the sun came up from over Long Island and kissed goldenly the waters of the Sound, he pressed genially the great domes of the Custom House and the Merchants' Exchange, till they looked like a shield burnished for the battle, the great, evil battle of Traffic, which goes on daily beneath them; he tipped the spires of Grace and Trinity, each with a touch as of a heart glowing with ecstatic prayer; he stole slowly over gloomy ranges of brick blocks, fainter and colder in his beams as he penetrated the heart of the great city, till he peered into the little window of the old railway-car, where he looked softly upon the sleepers. He gave a ruby tinge to the lips of Dady—he circled the head of Minnie with bright light, gleaming amid her dark, damp hair, and lighting the pure, still brow with a holy lustre. He seemed fearful of waking poor Bob, for he only pressed the hard, rough hand as it lay over the head of Minnie; but he seemed to know the honest hand lovingly; loved its hard, serviceable make, all em-

browned as it was; and then he stole softly out of the window, leaving the Three Sleepers.

The next day Bob had a heavy task to perform, and he was glad to go out leaving Dady fast asleep, cuddled though she was close to the cold, hard cheek of poor Minnie. Bob shuddered to see this, but he had n't strength to move the sleepers. The rigid, marble breast of Minnie heaved no more, and the thin arms no more encircled the plump, robust form of Dady, whose passionate nature induced her to cling closely to her protectors.

Bob closed the door softly on his way out, and observed even then what he had observed many times before, and which he remembered long years after with a pang. As he crossed the lot into the street, he saw the tall dark man we have before described, who uttered the oath, and looked so intently upon the child Imogen, as she waltzed on the pavement in front of Stewart's. He had been walking up and down in front of an elegant mansion, whose inmates as yet gave little evidence of stir. The tidy waiting-maid, in short sleeves and smart bodice, came out with a stone pitcher to receive the milkman's morning deposit, and expend a word and not

a little coquetry at the same time. As she turned to enter the house, the ruffianly man with the maimed hand, of whom we have before spoken, slid around the trunk of one of the large elms that sheltered the area, and as he passed the stranger, exchanged with him a scarcely perceptible sign.

Bob remembered this afterwards as something that had been graved into his mind, rather than as a thing of which he had been cognizant. So little had he observed the surroundings of his locality, that the great stone house, with its stately portico and carriage-way, looked all at once new and strange to him. He had hardly known before that it was there, and yet he had an indefinite idea that it had been there for two or three years, though his mind had not taken in the fact till the present time. Now that he was so desolate within, that he began to look abroad for something to stay him, he was aware that for two or three years that splendid house had been evil haunted. In the night time could the inmates have thought of looking out, they would have seen sometimes one, two, or three low, ruffianly creatures lurking about the precincts. They seemed to be mere loiterers, idle vagrants, who leered at the maids, drank at the pump,

rested a brief space upon the step, or descended the area, begging in the character of a poor sailor shipwrecked and ruined. The people gave in their abundant pity, but had they known more of the sailor, they would have recognized an impostor, for the genuine sailor never begs.

Sometimes it was a poor refugee who had been maimed in the wars for freedom, and they gave him for the love of God. Sometimes it was a bold, careless loafer, who whistled to the girls at night as they stood by the window, (the light in the room shining behind them,) and loosened the strings of their bodices. But whatever was the shape, it was still the same three. They didn't seem to care for plunder—they had money, all that sufficed their gross natures, but they watched all the orderings of the household. They knew at what time its inmates went and came, and their number and habits. It seemed an idle surveillance, such as people sometimes carry on from sheer lack of something else to do.

The dark man of whom we have spoken also might be seen, night after night, leaning against a tree opposite, silent and motionless as the trunk that supported him, looking up to the elegantly-draped

windows. If the child Imogen crossed the window, or came out under the portico, his eyes lightened with a keen glance. He watched her every movement as the snake eyes the dove; and when she went, he went also.

He was, as we have shown, tall, dark, and elegant in appearance. His head was well shaped—there was a slight preponderance of the passions, but not enough to mar the fineness of proportion. The eyes were deep set, large, black, and melancholy; the mouth firmly cut, and shaded by a moustache, while an imperial gave a haughty and yet handsome ornamental look to the face. With all this, the impression he produced was a painful one. You felt an instinctive shrinking from the man, handsome as he certainly was, and you referred it all to a peculiarity of the nose, which seemed to indicate a sinister quality. It was Greek in form, yet higher than the Greek outline would justify, without being Roman. It came down with well-defined nostrils, and then all at once the latter were notched in as it were near the point of the nose, thus breaking and somewhat marring the beauty of outline.

This morning Bob instinctively followed his eyes

to a curtained window, where one might suppose was a chair in front. A hand put by the curtains, and there might be seen a small shape sitting with her back to the window, while a waiting-maid combed out and brushed, one by one, locks of long rich brown hair that shaded the little head.

Bob thought of Minnie, and he thought if she could have been thus delicately cared for, she too might sit in the golden light, the sunshine in her heart, and upon her head. The mystery was coming back to the mind of the Newsboy. He did n't know that death and misery are always bed-fellows.

There was one who had slept and was arisen. How should poor Bob know that Minnie also slept and had arisen.

XXVII.

The Hand on the Heart.

"I MUST do it; yes, I must do it. I shan't love her none. Gorry, no! I shall hate her; so I'll take her in. She 'll die afore long, poor thing!"

Bob was leaning against a lamp-post at the corner of Broadway and Chambers street, where sat an old woman as near as she dared sit to the fashionable bazaar of Tiffany, Young & Ellis.

It was the little old hunch-back, who used to sit with her basket of trifles, which nobody bought, upon the steps of the Astor House, and afterwards at Stewart's; she had been voted a nuisance by the upper tens, and had crept a little further up town. She dared not sit by the door, because the men turned her away; but she held out her thin hand as the fine ladies and gentlemen went in to squander their thou-

sands upon gewgaws, in the hope that as they came out the sweet promptings of our humanity might induce them to impart a trifle for a creature lacking bread. Now and then, a pure-hearted woman or an unselfish child gave her something, but oftener she went to her miserable cellar with scarcely enough to pay for the straw upon which she was allowed for a nightly stipend to sleep. There was good reason for her thin hands and pale face, for hunger is a great foe to beauty.

"Look here, Rack-o'-bones, don't you want a house to live in?" asked Bob, stooping over the forlorn object.

"Now the Lord forgive you for mocking a poor miserable outcast," answered the old woman, in a tone so solemn that it thrilled to the heart of Bob.

"Do you know about the Lord?" said Bob.

The woman looked up inquiringly.

"I say, Rack-o'-bones, do you know about the Lord?—because if you do, and about kingdom-come, and prayin', I'm the man for you, I am; cause why? I don't know nothin'—I'm a heathen, I am, and an offscouring, and a hooting; them's what I am, and I want to learn and teach Dady—cause why? poor

little Broken-back's dead, and I doesn't know what to do."

The woman struggled to her feet. I am not sure but a tear was in her old eyes, as she followed Bob, telling him she was a poor outcast, that she had no friends, &c. Then it would seem, as Bob went on with his little history, telling all about his two children, forgotten memories awoke in the mind of the old woman, and she laid her hand trembling, upon the shoulder of Bob, and ejaculated,

"Now the Lord God bless the child, for surely the very spirit of the Lord is upon him."

Her tone and manner were superior, and Bob felt it, and rejoiced in it.

"Now I shall learn—now I shall read; but gorry, I shall love her, I'm afraid," he added with a start, as if to love were the most distressful thing in the world.

"This way, mother; stoop your rack-o'-bones," and they disappeared within the little dwelling, the old railway-car.

Shortly after the old woman came to the door, and lifted up her hands, weeping; then she dried her eyes with her apron and went back. Then Bob came out

with the little yellow bowl and a small basket—he was going to the baker's; he tried to whistle, but the lips were vibrating with the big, aching heart, and would take no shape for a whistle, and so he gave it up. Many times did Bob go back and forth, but the old woman staid within—she had solemn work in hand.

Bob sat outside with Dady upon his lap looking up into the great sky, so vast, so silent, and it seemed to him that it was too fair, too tender looking for a world like this. He didn't know how it is the out-looking smile of benign love, stealing into our hearts, and making them glad, when no one cries "lo! here," and "lo! there," for the cause.

Dady, like all poor children, watched the face of her young protector, and seeing only a serious look there, she was not justified in any mirth, so she did not attempt it, but kept her arm over his neck in silence.

Late in the afternoon a boy was seen walking slowly down Broadway, with a small coffin under his arm. He kept "to the right," and walked very slowly. The people all started away from him, for few are willing to brush, even by accident, this last

human receptacle. A superstitious dread is associated with such contact. So the boy went on unmolested. "Some child is dead," one ejaculated; another said, "I wish they would keep such things out of sight." "A coffin going home," said another, and this one spake true, for earth is the home always for such receptacles; and Bob it was, going home with poor Minnie—Minnie, the unknown, unclaimed child, whose pure spirit was known only to the Father of spirits, and to Bob, the Newsboy—Minnie, who came and went, and left no record.

Bob was unmolested aboard the Staten Island ferry-boat.

"Whose child is dead?" asked a fatherly-looking man.

"It is Minnie," answered Bob, with a start of tears he could not suppress.

The gentleman respected his grief, and said no more, thinking all the time of some fair, petted creature of wealth, for who could suppose that a poor, broken-backed foundling would find a mourner? So Bob was always supposed to be carrying the "coffin home," for none knew that beside the great heart of

Bob—carefully, piously, held close to the heart—was all that was left of little Minnie.

Bob had thought once of going to the Sisters of Charity to beg a grave, but in that case he remembered that the enclosure would be locked up, and he would find it difficult to gain access to it. He felt as if this grave of all others must be free as the airs of heaven, and free for him to visit in his own way. He must go sometimes and ease his great heart where Minnie slept. He went down to the South Ferry, where the good woman who had so often befriended him and Minnie still kept her stall; but now she had sat in the hot sun, and her face was swollen with erysipelas, so she couldn't see in the least, and though tears were in the good soul's heart, none could find egress from her swollen eyes. Bob detailed his plan, and she approved of it, and added,

"We poor bodies, Bob, 'll soon be forgotten; but I thinks, Bob, there's an angel in heaven writing your name in a book, higher up than any king's."

"It's the love that does it, mother," responded the Newsboy. "I does n't mind nothing now. I sings all day in my heart till Minnie died, and now my heart swings, swings like the great bell a-tolling. I

sings no more, mother," and he turned away. He thought of Greenwood, but a grave costs something there, and now that Bob's family had been somewhat expensive, he could not pay for a slip of earth in which to bury his dead. More than all this, Minnie had been nothing to anybody in the whole world but to Bob, and he was jealous even of her ashes. The world had looked so coldly upon them, they had owed it so little, that Bob felt as if he wished now to receive nothing from it.

"I wishes we could all step out," he said, "and not trouble folks to bury us. We's no right in the world; 'cause why? we've nothing in it. No house, nor land, nor larnin', nor wit. Minnie's mother stepped out. Many's the poor wretch what steps out in the same way. I shouldn't do it; 'cause why? it's agin my nater. I thinks it wrong. We's put here, and we must wait till the one what puts us here gives us a call."

All this passed through Bob's brain while he planned for a bit of earth in which to hide the ashes of little Minnie, whose lot was not a forlorn one, since God sent her his best boon, a friend. Alas! how often have you and I looked abroad, and longed for

such a boon! Lovers we can have, but love is selfish. It likes not the sigh and the tear—it shrinks from toil, and sickness, and death—it covets roses and lilies, perfume and luxury. “Ye are my friends,” said the blessed Saviour, and we feel refreshed and holy as we draw near to the divine image of our Friend. Take all the lovers of either sex—take all the wealth of the world—take away fame, health, and beauty—give us but a Friend, and we have all. Serene, heavenly love, the true Friend gives. “What is mine is thine,” saith the true Friend. Treachery and slander may rob us of our good name, but the true Friend loves the more, the more needy we become. He or she, the true Friend, is by us in sickness or in death, and we go from the earthly to the divine Friend, for the one is but a prototype of the other.

Bob had a right to even more selfishness in the matter of Minnie. Had he not toiled up and down the great wicked city, weary of foot, though strong of heart, to get her bread? Had he not expended his little all to keep the wee thing looking as a “gai should look,” neat, and sweet, and as pretty as a little broken-back could look? Had he not sat in silence while Minnie pointed her bit of a finger upward, and

said “Our Father;” for the child had been taught something, somehow before she came to live with Bob? And when they all went out to look at the stars, and Minnie felt the silver chain falling from heaven, always nearer and nearer about her heart, did she not always say to him,

“Bob, dear, good Bob, I will not go away. No Bob, I will stay, and when you feel Minnie’s hand on your heart, you will not be unhappy. But if they do call me home, dear Bob, I’ll come again, and you’ll still feel Minnie’s hand on your heart.”

Many was the time they had talked in this way. Many was the time Minnie, as she saw the tears in Bob’s eyes, would say, putting her poor arm about his neck,

“Sometime we will learn about the beautiful country I see when we sleep, dear Bob; and if I go there, I will come back again and comfort poor Bob, who will need Minnie’s hand on his heart.”

So all the way that Bob went, down to the place by the sea, where he and Sam had gone so many years before, when Sam was learning to think of Mary more than anything else in the world, he felt the little soft hand of Minnie upon his heart. This

spot was always a sunshine spot in the memory of the Newsboy, and here in a little grave, away down by the sea-shore, he laid the precious burden. He found means, unquestioned, to dig the grave with his own hands, saying to himself, "Oh, I could not have her go to Potter's Field. Oh, I could not leave Minnie there; but here will the sunshine and the flowers come, and nobody know that it is because Minnie's underneath."

XXVIII.

The Night Coming.

BOB had returned slowly from his task, and the sights and sounds of Broadway fell upon ears deaf, and eyes blind to the world without. He turned neither to the right nor the left; mechanically he saw a child, it was a dirty, ill-looking child, with crooked legs, and skinny arms; its face was marked with long lines of tears—canals with borderings of dust for embankments, down which the opening of the flood-gates sent a clean, smooth line of pure water. People heard the sobs, looked at the filthy little creature and passed on. There is a crossing crowded with vehicles and horses—surely the child will be crushed; it grows terrified and opens a chasm of a mouth. Oh! beauty, beauty, type of the Eternal! in-felt harmony to which the dullest natures respond! had the child

been thine, had one touch of thy exquisite mouldings fallen upon it, how readily succor had been awarded! but there was something more touching in that squalid, neglected child of poverty; something that appealed to an internal sense, lying deeper and nearer to the well-spring of unchanging beauty; it was the mute appeal of wronged humanity—the tear, sacred in all eyes, and terribly significant in the eye of want, disease and neglect.

Bob saw all this, and his great heart could do no less than respond to the misery before him. Minnie's little hand pressed his heart.

"No, Minnie, Bob can't do any more, Bob's heart's a-breakin'."

And then the little hand pressed more softly in its comfortings; but it seemed to him he saw the eyes of Minnie's mother once more, and he seized the hand of the lost child. A laborer passed along, and Bob accosted him:

"It ain't my nater to see any creater suffer, but I's jist from the funeral, you see. Take the poor thing to the station-house, won't you?"

The man's heart was right, but he had a house full at home waiting the bread he carried under his arm.

He, one of the people, a struggler for bread not luxury, looked pitiful, and that was all he could do. Bob appealed to a gentleman; he shrugged his shoulders, stared, and passed on. What could be done? At length a school-boy, a fine young fellow, too true, and too young for unmanly pride, and too generous and impulsive for hesitation, volunteered to put the poor thing under proper care at the station-house.

Bob relinquished his hold with some twinges of remorse—he knew the child was deserted. He knew all the misery done up in that little moving mass of skin and bones. As he gave the thin, pale, flaccid hand into that of its new protector, the child turned a last imploring look upon him, a look half soul, half animal, but it conveyed the whole nature, the concentration of the entire feeling of the child. He passed on. Children beautiful, well-cared for, precociously vain, precociously intellectual, passed by—dainty children, unsoiled and unexceptionable—but a certain hardness of look, a common-place content, an externalness of life removed them from interest and sympathy. The squalid child had eyes looking out from the soul, searching into the recesses thereof.

Yes, beauty is power—its more obvious shapes ap-

peal instantly to the observer, while the more hidden and mysterious touch a deeper cord of deeper natures, and find a response less frequent, but not the less adapted to its needs.

Next he leaned against the railing in front of the City Hospital, for his limbs were weak and the stirring of the noble old trees brought the image of Minnie's grave to his mind.

"Key to lock," cried the old lock man with a short, curt voice, jingling his keys, and looking right and left.

"Glass, glass to mend;" the glazier's voice is always the same, he does n't seem to wait for anybody, yet his little box, which he carries on his back, is always full of broken glass.

"Scissors to grind, old knives to grind," drawled out the grinder, jingling his little bell as if vexed at your tardiness.

"Express, Tribune, Herald, Times."

"Bob, my boy, how are you?" and Flashy Jack gave our Newsboy a great slap on the back. "Why, what'n the deuce ails you, Bob? got the mully-grubs? How's Hunch-back? come, hurry up the cakes, Bob, can't wait—audience 'll storm like mad."

"I thought you wouldn't sell any more papers, Jack," replied Bob.

"Lent a hand to Squinty while he carried his mother to Potter's Fields, that's all."

Bob shuddered; "I's jist been to bury up Minnie," he said in a low voice.

Jack, wild as he was, laid his hand on Bob's shoulder with a look of real grief.

"I'll come an' see you, Bob;" and he turned away, just as Sister Agnace came down the street attended by a barefooted Irish girl, she intent upon some errand of mercy. She knew Bob, and whispered, "Benedicite, my son," as she went by. The tears gathered to his eyes, for he knew what was the meaning more by the tone than the words.

An elderly woman who sold flowers, took a rose-bud from her basket, and handed it to Bob, as she turned to sell a bunch to a young man, who doubtless carried it to eyes brighter for his coming.

The old woman gave the rose-bud to the tear in Bob's eyes more than to him, for to the poor misery is the rule, not the exception, and they have few words by which to relieve it, therefore are they ready with numberless small human offices.

The old beggars were creeping up town, or down to the Five Points. The merchants of Wall Street had long ago gone home to dinner. The wealthy, ostentatious parvenus, with their liveried carriages, had ceased the exhibition of their vulgar, dull lives.

"Minnie's hand 'll al'ays be on Bob's heart," he murmured, starting again on his way home, for it was growing late. The blind black man who sits on the curb of the iron fence in front of the Hospital, had long since crept along the wall, and sunk into total eclipse. The boy with one leg who sits on the steps of Delmonico's, was hobbling by, pale and hungry.

The clouds had been gathering in the north-west for many hours, but Bob had not seen it. He had seen nothing but a little heap of earth, with a sweet, pale face underneath; heard nothing but the beating of his own great heart, very slow and heavy, as if weary of its work.

Patter, patter, came the rain down upon the head of the Newsboy, yet he had not felt its falling. Hundreds had eyed him with curious glance, yet he saw them not. He saw not how the darkness was more than the overhanging clouds, for the night had come.

XXIX.

The Baptism of the Rain.

THE street-lamps had been long lighted, but they gleamed faintly through the mist, and showed the gutters carrying their torrents of filth away into secret channels—off, till the great sea swallowed up all. There was a din of stages, loud calls of passengers, and drivers, and porters; umbrellas were poked into people's faces, and the clatter of feet kept turbulent time with the pouring rain. Girls hurried along from their day of protracted toil, looking pale and meagre; elderly matrons, with dark, short gowns, close hoods and stout shoes, locked their arms under their bosoms and moved on slowly—they could not afford the price of an umbrella, because their families needed all. What matter? they had survived youth, and beauty, and hope, and a few drops of rain, more or less, was

of little moment ; and so they moved on, at a funeral pace, for to them life had become one vast procession to the grave.

Policemen ensconced themselves under awnings and stoops, now and then coming out all of a breeze when the occasion for them had gone by. Beggars groped here and there, and sturdy loafers, with hands in their pockets, stubbed along defiantly. Bob saw nothing of all this. Little girls, with long thin arms and legs, and old shawls tied over their high shoulders, darted here and there, begging "a penny," and Bob did not give them a look of scorn and his bluff "go to work," as he had done a thousand times before.

That great rain, coming away from the pure waters of the North, over beautiful rivers and fair fields, sought in vain its office of beauty in the great, evil city ; it failed now, as it had done often before, even although Bob walked in the midst adding to its fall the flow of his own tears. It seemed even bent upon singling him out from among all others upon whom to pelt, and drive and drench, till he was all rain from head to foot. His ragged cap lopped over his ears, letting down the water in perfect rills. His

old jacket received the rain upon one side and let it out of the other ; his shoes seemed to be in an ecstasy of pleasure, that inside and outside were no longer disputed territory. Bob felt none of this. He went on, holding no relation with all that passed around him, a poor little skin-of-a-boy, to whom life was one great, blind mystery, as it is to us all, and on whom the elements were bent upon doing all the harm they could—it might not be that it was harm, but only nature giving out her great sobs and tears in pity for her child.

We bless God for the sunshine, never for the storm, and yet the great wind and the rushing rain are needful to our moods. The stormy passions of to-day rejoice in the tempest. Lear must have rushed out into the storm or his poor head would have burst just as it became crazed. The dim, sorrowful past needs the storm for reminiscence' sake. Our by-gones are always best revived when the rain is coming down ; our great trials, our Gethsemanes, as it were, have assumed angelic shapes ; our lesser griefs are tender cherubs, which we now fondle lovingly, and our few joys grow radiantly beautiful to our eyes, become the Jura heights which first crown them.

selves with the morning, and resign the halo latest in the gloaming. If strong and wise we fix our eyes upon these till the whole valley of the past grows into sunshine—we see how the dark days are few, compared with the many out of which a genial spirit can always furnish forth a softened light, for we learn that “the dark spot upon our sunshine is the shadow of ourselves.”

The boy went on till he neared the head of Canal street, where the street was being repaired, and buildings going up. Here were great stacks of bricks ready to topple upon the heads of people beneath, piles of loose lumber, which the wind now raised and now let fall with a continuous clatter. As he passed this material for building his hand was grasped forcibly.

“For the love of God, stop,” cried a feeble voice.

“Is it you, Mollie?” said Bob, very faintly also.

“I’m dying, Bob—I feel it; dying of the sin, and shame, and hunger.”

“You must n’t lie side o’ Minnie,” answered the boy, in a sort of dizzy, bewildered manner.

A cry, terrible in the midst of that storm of darkness and rain, burst from the lips of Mollie, as if to

show how the soul can give force to the body, even when death has put his checks all along the track of the veins, and has clogged the glib working of the heart by thick, buffy particles, that stay the motion of its wheels.

“Don’t scream, Mollie, ’cause why?—the Stars ’ll be a-comin’,” answered the boy, now partially aroused from his lethargy. “But what is the matter? tell us now, Mollie,” he continued, with real pity, for the great heart would do its office.

The girl sobbed and moaned, but made no reply, and Bob who had relapsed again into his own grief, was silent also.

At length the girl began to talk incoherently. “She gave me the new ribbon, but she said, ‘Oh, Mollie, Mollie, you love your ease, and that in the poor will lead to ruin—you love finery, and that will lead to shame;’ and here I am, dying here in the rain—dying, dying. Hark! how the great bells toll, toll, as they will never toll for me—toll, toll. ’Tis almost midnight—midnight. They buried her in the little churchyard, and the bells tolled, and the prayers were said, and now I remember they cast sharp looks

at me, and said, 'The Lord took her from the evil to come.'³

"And did you know about the Lord, and prayin', and be what you are?" asked Bob.

The girl made no reply, but her head fell upon the shoulder of Bob, and the two sat in the darkness, and the shutters clattered, and the people went by, but none saw them, only the rain singled them out as if it would baptize them with healing waters.

"I am almost gone," at length continued poor Mollie. "The people beat me and turned me out of doors, because I am dying, and they would not bury me. But, oh Bob, if I could go home—if I could go home!" and now the tears came to her relief.

"I've carried Minnie home, Mollie, but you must n't go there."

"No, no, back to where the sun shone along the orchard trees, and the little brook smiled all the day through; and the wild rose grew along the fence, and the buttercups and daisies laughed in the sun, and the birds were never weary with their songs—back to my mother's knee, my mother's prayer."

Bob had felt the need of all these appliances, had felt the need of such memories, and now he longed to

hear more, and said, "Go on, Mollie, it'll do you good; 'cause why?—it may be we'll work together, and you'll be a blessin' to me and Dady, and Rack-o'-bones."

"I dreamed last night, Bob, such a dream, and now I think of it, it was a vision. Oh, can I take heart from it—can I trust in the Lord?"

"That's it," answered Bob quickly; "I feel it, I feel there's a somethin' to be trusted to, and Rack-o'-bones will help us."

The girl did not heed him, but went on: "I was dead—yes, dead, as I shall be when the sun comes up—and I joined a great crowd of people who were all hurrying one way. I saw before me a lovely country, and in the midst a marble throne, upon which sat Jesus, the Friend of sinners. I saw beautiful women and great men approach the throne—I saw the judge look at them sternly, and send them away: 'Unprofitable servants, evil stewards,' I heard him say; and these went away with bitter anguish in their hearts. At length the crowd pushed me forward, and I found myself before the throne. I dared not look up, but I trembled, and in my heart seemed to say, 'Be pitiful, for my sins are great.' And he lifted me

up and he whispered, 'Poor lamb, pierced by a thousand wounds—poor lamb—be pitiful—poor lamb.'

"Broken-back and Mollie's both gone," at length Bob uttered, as he laid the head of the poor girl upon the boards, where the pitiless rain fell upon it, and the street-lamp peered in to see how pale and haggard it was.

The sun was just struggling through the mist as Bob re-entered his railway-car dwelling. And at the same time the sun discovered poor Mollie. Some charitable people called the proper officers, and in the daily papers it was said, "A miserable girl, long known as an abandoned character, was this morning found dead near Canal street. Her body was taken to Potter's Field."

The mountain rill springing amid the pure vapors of heaven, may pour itself through dusty by-ways, over sterile plains, turbid and restless; through the great city—onward, till its waters are again rendered pure in the "multitudinous seas," and thus it may be with life. Poor Mollie had her vision.

XXX.

Bob Discusses Moral Points.

"RACK-O'-BONES," said Bob, as he sat down on the little bench, and stooped over Dady, who lay sleeping, "Rack-o'-bones, I'm a thinkin' Minnie's best off, 'Cause why? she does n't ache any more;" and poor Bob shook from head to foot. "I aint afeared, mother, not a mite afeared; but my teeth keep up such a clicket-te-clack, that it seems as though I's afeard o' somethin'."

"You are sick, my poor boy; you are very sick;" and the woman lifted up Bob's cap, and in doing so let fall a shower of rain from his matted hair. She drew her fingers through it, and with her apron wiped his face tenderly. Bob never in his life had encountered anything like this; never had he been thus addressed, and he burst out into uncontrollable sobs.

"Gorry, gorry—it'll break my heart. I can't bear it, Rack-o'-bones. It piles up the agony jest as though I's in a theatre. Give me a kick and a punch, but don't speak tender-like."

The woman had seated herself and taken Bob's head in her lap, and she combed his hair with her thin fingers, and patted his shoulders softly, crooning an old pious hymn all the time, as if the memory of other days was pulling at her heart; and so Bob slept with a vague sense of peace and comfort, half listening to the words that made him think of a chorus he might have heard at the theatre:

"I'm bound for the kingdom,
Will you go to glory with me?
Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord."

I have heard the story of a poor servant girl, loved and trusted in the family in which she lived, who lost her best self in love of a youth belonging to the household, and who became a mother and no wife. She dared not confess her fault, but kept the child in an old loft for three years. *She never spoke, nor smiled, in its presence*, lest the child should learn the trick and betray her. For three years the little creature bore this mute existence, till one day Nature

asserted herself, and the child gave an audible laugh at the sight of its mother at her toil, as he peeped through a crevice of his prison. Search was made, and her secret discovered.

So it was with little Dady. Unused to the many attentions commonly bestowed upon children, she learned to take care of herself, to tottle about quite in a way of her own. She never cried—was never obtrusive or troublesome. As Minnie had found herself less able to move about, she had taught Dady to fetch and carry articles, and had taught her also many pretty ways of washing her face, and combing her long golden hair. Dady gave promise of great personal attractions, a fact that seemed rather to annoy than please Bob, who regarded her affluent beauty as a sort of defrauding of little Broken-back.

"She isn't half so handsome as you are; not half so handsome, Minnie," he would say; "'cause why? I looked at all the picters in the Art Union rooms, and none of 'em looked like you but a nun—they said it was a nun—who had on a white gown, and her eyes lifted up, like yours is now, Minnie."

And so it was; Minnie was content, and Bob also, for he saw the soul of the child, speaking from her

pure body, just as the soul of the water is expressed in the lily.

It was twilight when Bob awoke, just as Dady crawled to his side and put a soft arm over his neck, for the little creature nestled away at nightfall, hungry but uncomplaining, like a young lamb.

Bob opened his eyes and called for Rack-o'-bones. "Mother"—but the car was silent and deserted.

"Now I'll bet Rack-o'-bones is gone off. She's doubled all up in a heap down there at the corner o' Chambers, lookin' more like a machine than a human critter. She'll never come back, never—'cause why? she thinks I'll want her beggin's, but I'll see her be-gorried fust."

What was the infliction thus hinted at, we do not know, but the woman entered, while he was yet speaking, with a loaf of bread, a candle, and a small pail containing milk. She had an alert smile, a cheerful, good, motherly air, totally unlike anything she had before exhibited. Bob watched her motions in silence. She boiled a wee bit of a kettle, and made some tea. She put a portion of the milk into the yellow bowl, and took Dady into her lap and fed her with bread and milk, while the child lifted her eyes

up to the old woman's face, at each spoonful, with a wondering kind of joy. Then she brushed and washed Dady, and folded her little hands and taught her to say, "Our Father, bless a little child," and laid her down upon the straw.

Dady went through all like a little automaton, her large eyes peering amid her curls, as if ready to learn, and to be whatever a plastic hand might make her. But as for Bob, he could only exclaim,

"Oh gorry, gorry, is n't that like a Nun? Is n't kingdom-come here, now? Don't that make the old car segatiate? Pious, by gorry!"

Dady was asleep, and now the woman removed Minnie's rose-tree from a chair without a back, and spreading a towel, which she took from her pocket, across it, she placed thereon the homely supper, and called upon Bob to join her.

"Eat away, mother; I can't go it. It's o' no use; I could n't swallow that are sops and bread."

The woman looked disappointed, and in a motherly way remonstrated: "'T was the best I could get, my son."

"The best! Now shut up—do you think I'm inferiorizing the things you've got there? By no man-

ner o' means. They's too good, too good, considerin' the way they was got."

"They were honestly procured, Bob; now the Lord forbid that I should steal."

"Now, the Lord forbid that you should beg," returned the boy, scornfully. "Granny, beggin's a sight worse than stealin', it is. 'Cause why? stealin's above board, and honest-like. When I steals, I says, you've got more'n your share, and I'll have some. When I begs, I does the same game sneakin'-like. I gives nothin', not my breath, nor my strength, nor the chink, n'ither in one case nor t'other. Both's alike, only beggin's the meanest. Tell me you stole them fixin's, and I'll eat 'em. If you begged 'em, I can't."

"Thou shalt not steal, was one of the laws proclaimed from the top of Sinai, Bob, and it is very sinful."

"I don't know that, n'ither. I don't know what top 'twas proclaimed from, but I know that thou shalt not steal's jest the same as thou shalt not beg. 'Cause why? both is gettin' what aint oun, and givin' nothin' for what we get. You've disgraced the family, mother."

How much longer Bob might have dilated on his moral code is uncertain, had not the two been roused by a quick, light knock at the door, which being close to the hand of Bob, was as instantly opened. The suddenness of this movement seemed to astonish the applicant, for the light revealed what to poor Bob was an apparition of perfect beauty.

Years had passed away since that little hand had been placed upon his arm at Grace Church, and again in front of Stewart's. The child had grown much, yet her sweet face had often looked in upon his mind's eye, while he ministered to the hunch-back child. Bob had got to associating her, he could n't tell how, with the tall dark gentleman of whom we have spoken, and whenever he saw the latter the hand of Imogen pressed upon his arm, as if it would say, "protect me."

Ah! Bob had need of the little hand of Minnie on his heart, for the hand upon the arm seemed ready to claim its office.

Imogen was now a girl of perhaps a dozen summers. Her flowing hair (it was the same little head Bob had seen at the window) was wreathed with flowers, and she looked a fair young May Queen.

All at once it flashed upon Bob's mind that she lived in the great stone house, the other side of the way, and other painful thoughts rushed in also.

What a revelation was this child, Imogen, to the senses of the Newsboy, as she stood in her short frock, beneath which were seen peeping tips of embroidery, barely covering her knees, while the silk stocking left the pretty round leg all exposed down to a small slipper of pink kid, laced over the instep. Her embarrassment was but momentary, and she lightly entered the room, glancing about in all directions, with a sweet, girlish delight. Approaching Bob, once more he felt that remembered touch upon his arm.

"Upon my word, I did n't think I should ever see you again," she said.

Bob, by this time, had become self-possessed, and now assumed a certain air of dignity, that arose in part from the moral problem he had but just solved, and in part from the consciousness of being the chief stay and support of a family.

"It wan't nat'ral to expect we should meet, but I's glad, very glad," answered Bob.

"Upon my word, this beats the Arabian Nights," said little Miss, in such silvery tones as seemed to

please the air that floated them. "This is lovely. This is such a darling place. A baby, too. What a love of a baby! Papa will never believe it—never. Please take my kitten; it's a real Maltese. There's the kettle, too! How nice! Don't you want some prettier chairs? You shall have them. I'll tell papa all about it. Would n't it be nice?"

Bob, nor the child herself, did n't seem to comprehend what would be nice; but there was a tacit understanding between them, for the girl approached him again and said, "Would n't it be nice?"

"I'm bound to b'lieve 't would be nice, very nice," answered the boy, coloring to the eyes and smiling; "but 't is n't nat'ral, and so we won't think on it. We's poor, we is; 'cause why? the Lord seems to 've forgot about us; but he'll remember, he will. 'Cause why? I'm makin' a place in the world, so he'll see me," and Bob felt a conscious pride, quite beyond anything about him to justify the emotion. But our destiny is not measured by outward promise, but by that internal consciousness that sends forth desires commensurate thereto, be they great or little. Bob had a great heart, and he felt the promise of the future.

The little girl looked at him with a face of utter astonishment, and then darted out into the night, leaving a trail of light in her pathway, just as the comet, looking to the sun, leaves golden threads behind him.

"I does n't understand it," said Bob, when she was gone, "but I suppose it is O K. Mother, you don't think anything in the world would harm a thing like that, more like an angel than a human critter? Minnie would a looked like that all but the hunger and the sickness."

The old woman did not reply, but kept trotting upon the floor, while something like a groan escaped her.

XXXI.

*Bob Philosophises after the manner
of Plato.*

THE little household was silent for awhile, and then Rack-o'-bones and Bob renewed the conversation which had been interrupted by the entrance of Imogen.

"And so it's who made me, that you want to know," said Bob. "Well, that's nat'ral-like, seein' it's a question that I've ask'd a thousand times myself. Rack-o'-bones, when I look along the street, and see such a mighty heap o' people, all goin' on like mad; all with two eyes, and one nose, and one mouth, and a pair o' hands, thumpers; and a pair o' pegs, stumpers; and all lookin' as if they was n't no relation, I feel as if there's somethin' to learn, somethin' to tell the meanin' of it all. Then it's nat'ral that I should look up into the stars, and there 't is all the same—all

still, silent-like, and my heart beats harder and harder; and then I've laid away under a crate, or down an *arey*, and cried all night, till in the mornin' I had n't any voice to cry my papers."

Bob all this time sat forward on the little bench, looking into the woman's face, his two hands grasping his two knees, and the blood going and coming over his thin cheek, as if the pulsations of his great heart kept its tally there. After a momentary silence, he went on.

"One day I saw a man, what had a white handkercher round his neck, and I stopped him and asked him to tell me who made me. 'God, my son,' he answered mild-like. 'And who made you?' I asked. 'God, my son,' he said, rubbing his hands, and lookin' as though he ached. Now, this was n't no answer. He gin me a *word*, and I was n't no wiser for it. And I did n't believe we was both made by the same bein'; 'cause why? in that case, he would n't have the ugly goin's on that I see every day. If he made 'em all—the same one—why, they'd have a feller feelin'-like for one another, and we should n't have the fightin's, *and* killin's, *and* hangin's, *and* cruelties, *and* hunger-

in's, *and* sufferin's. No, no, Rack-o'-bones; this don't stand to reason, no way we can fix it.

"I are n't accomplished—nowise accomplished. 'Cause why? I does n't drink, nor chaw, nor smoke—they all goes agin my natur; n'ither can I read, but seein' that are is n't my callin', I doesn't mind it. But there's some things that I *can* tell, layin' aside accomplishments."

Here Bob arose, and took the Maltese kitten from the woman's lap, where she had held it ever since the little girl had put it into her arms.

"Now, Rack-o'-bones, suppose we's all made by the same bein'—why then he keeps a fancy stock to make some out of. 'Cause why? you and me's made out o' coarser stuff than it took to make pretty Silver-tongue, what brought that kitten here."

Here there was a great knock at the door, and then it was thrust suddenly open by a crowd of people.

"What have we here?" cried a loud voice—"we've stumbled upon a den of thieves;" and the man attempted to force his way, but was prevented by Bob, whose little, thin body nearly filled up the aperture. The boy's face did not lose its native ex-

pression of quiet force, and he said firmly, grasping both sides of the door—

“You’ll find no thieves inside o’ this house. If them’s the kind o’ folks your arter, you won’t find them here.”

Here a stout boy peeped over the man’s shoulder—

“Let alone—clear out, I say, it’s Bob. Bless your soul, Bob would n’t rob a pigeon, letting alone anybody else.”

By that time the man drew back, and persons, one after another, poked their heads in. Some laughed, some brought out a long whistle, and some amused themselves by drumming upon the top of the car. At length they, one by one, disappeared, and left the little family to themselves.

For awhile they were silent; the woman sat trotting one foot uneasily upon the floor, and then began to crone, in a low voice—

“Hark! from the tombs a mournful sound,
Mine ears attend the cry.”

She was interrupted by Bob.

“To my thinkin’, that’s a mighty doleful tune of yourn, Rack-o’-bones.”

“So it is, Bob; but I’ve been thinking. I wish I was in my grave, so I should never think any more.”

“To speak my mind plainly,” said Bob, “I don’t see what should stop your thinkin’ anywhere. ‘Cause why? we thinks when we’s asleep; and to my mind, sleep ain’t onlike death. I’ve made up my mind that when we begins to think we’ve got to think, and no stoppin’ of it. Dady there’s a thinkin’ in her sleep; and poor little Broken-back’s a thinkin’ somewhere—didn’t she hear callin’s, and didn’t she see lights, when nothin’ was to be seen by my eyes? and don’t I see her, and hear her, and love her, just the same?”

And Bob’s voice became choked by the sobs.

“No, Rack-o’-bones, we has n’t any choice; we’s got to think, and never stop. Now we’s in the world, howsomever we got here, it does n’t stand to reason that we’s only put here to eat like the animals does—sleep like the animals does—and suffer more’n the animals does; and then sleep so sound, we does n’t wake; ‘cause why? we thinks about greater things—all the times we thinks about greater things—and, Rack-o’-bones, we must *awake somewhere*; we must—I feel we must—I knows we must; and I wants to

die, so to try it. Dying isn't nothin'; I'm sure on it; 'cause why? them stars up there tells us there's more light than we's got; and we aint to be shut up in an oven, as it might be, and never let out, when we wants to get out. When we wants a thing, we has it."

Bob had arisen to his feet. His form seemed to swell and enlarge under the great thoughts that filled him; and as he gave his untutored theory—nature only speaking in and through him—his voice assumed a beauty of tone, at once touching and eloquent. His eyes, kindled from within, had a holy look; and his deepening color made Bob for the moment so handsome, that you forgot his naked feet—his thin, nearly naked figure, which his garments, worn and tattered as they were, could not vulgarize. The great heart of the boy made him noble in aspect, and eloquent of tongue, despite the solecisms of language.

When he closed, he seated himself again; and in playing with the kitten, unconscious that he did so, his fingers encountered a little silver collar upon its neck, upon which he saw at once that characters were engraved.

"You're accomplished now, Rack-o'-bones; tell us what it says."

"Imogen," the woman read.

"Imogen," repeated Bob; "Rack-o'-bones, when I thinks how many things little Minnie could have loved, how very happy she might a' bin, and was n't," here Bob gave a great hem to swallow down a lump in his throat, and he put his hand over his heart, for he felt dear Minnie's there. "I feel as if she ought n't to have been put in this ere world, 't was cruel and wicked in somebody. I feels, Rack-o'-bones, I feels as if I wished I could come down upon the people that did the wrong, like a hundred thousand bricks, for doin' it. Somebody driv Minnie's mother into the sea, and Molly into the grave, and who did it ort to be dam'd, and will be dam'd. I does n't jist know what that means, but it means something orful, and it will come upon 'em. I sees men wearin' their gold and their nice fixin's, and I sees a critter like a little worm, gnawin' and gnawin' at their hearts, and I sees the pain in their eyes, and I knows that they never can sleep softly, as Bob sleeps, a feelin' Minnie's hand on his heart."

Bob had stood on his feet as he warmed in his dis-

course, his arm thrown out and his head raised, but the thought of Minnie brought a gush of tears to his eyes, and he sank down with his hands over his face.

We say that the ancient prophets and patriarchs received heavenly revelations; but think you there was no revelation to this untutored child, who cast aside right and left, whatever impeded the voice uttering "do right, do right," and who opened his great heart free to the free heavens, allowing all its hidden chambers to be winnowed clearly, that the new law of "perfect love" might find a fitting lodgment there?

Bob stroked the back of the kitten purring upon his knee, and went on.

"Once, Rack-o'-bones, Minnie found a kitten that had been dropped here in the lot, and 't was, I'm bound to say, a sort of comfort to us all. We gin it all we could get, but it wouldn't grow, no how. 'Cause why? we couldn't buy the milk and the meat; its nater called for 'em, and we could n't buy 'em; so I says to Minnie, everything ort to be kept according to its nater, its cruel-like to keep the poor critter a youlin' for food sich as its nater calls for, and we not able to get it; so Minnie and I went out to-

gether and we put it down an arey, and Minnie did n't cry, but she held my hand tight-like, and then when we stopped under the window and heard 'em sing something like

"You must wake and call me early, call me early,
Mother dear,"

then 't was nat'ral that Minnie should burst out a-cry-in', and I should stoop down and let her poor, dear head be where she could know Bob's heart was all right."

For a few minutes Bob was silent; and then he started up suddenly at hearing "Imogen" called in a low, mournful tone, and he rushed out of the car, exclaiming,

"Silver-tongue is lost!—I'm sure of it."

XXXII.

The American Merchant.

Yes, Imogen did live in the great stone house before mentioned, just as Bob had supposed—a little Paradise within, but evil-haunted without, like Eden environed by Satan and his angels. Mr. Dinsmoor was a merchant, and we all know there is a something grand and princely about an American, and especially a New York Merchant. He was too thoroughly well-bred to fear encroachments from the “lower classes,” as our conceited democrats are fond of calling the hardy working-men and women of the country; and he was too well accustomed to wealth and culture, he and his progenitors, to need any ostentatious display of them. He was a merchant in the true sense of the term; his ships moved amid the icebergs of the north, worth incalculable gold, and the spice islands of

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the tropics filled the white sails of his richly-freighted barques with their perfumed airs.

Our merchants are the best missionaries of a country. The hardy, adventurous mariner, wherever he goes, leaves the impress of his country behind him; and thank God there is a wake of broad, generous, manly, and Christian principles following the pathway of an American ship. The nations have learned to hail the flag bearing the stars and stripes with an enthusiasm which no other flag can challenge. It floats out cheery as the hearts that bear it; freely as the institutions which it represents—nothing less than the blue baldrick of the heavens, and the everlasting stars of the firmament are worthy to represent that new out-speaking of man’s onward and untrammelled career; and the nations watch its progress with tears and benedictions, for silently the stars and stripes are working out the redemption of man. The poor savage hails it as an unknown good, and hides himself amid its folds; the patriot, the philanthropist, the statesman all look to it as the forlorn hope of the race, and only tyrants tremble at its coming.

No longer does the genius of the merchant look to the sanction of government, and the wealth of govern-

ment, to carry out its noble conceptions. The merchant of to-day is happier than was Columbus, or Drake, or Vespuceius, or Raleigh, or Gilbert, in that he waits no tardy movements of jealous and rapacious princes; for he holds in his own good "iron safe" the wealth of a principality. Quietly in his cool counting-room, with its sofas, and stuffed chairs, and carpets, and reverently ornamented with a bust of Webster and Clay, while from the tall desk looks down Shakspeare and Milton, sits the American merchant, and plans an expedition to the farthest Ind, or the frozen north, to the Arctic or Antarctic, the one with equal ease as the other. He hears of famine, and oppression, and suffering, and he waits no tardy movements of government, but a ship is freighted with the surplus products of an overflowing soil, and away goes the American ship, wafted by the benedictions of thousands, to carry bread to the hungry. Ireland, Madeira, and islands of lesser note, have blessed the coming of the American flag with shouts of joy, while that of their own country was suffered to come and go in silence.

A noble-minded wife of a sailor, God bless her true, hopeful, wife-like, woman heart, trembles for the

safety of her husband, long entangled amid the Polar Seas, and she appeals to sympathetic hearts, and the American merchant is the first to respond. He turns to his iron safe, and takes therefrom wealth that might dazzle a poor king's eyes, who waits like a beggar the supplies of a Parliament, and soon a gallant ship, manned by gallant hearts, is ploughing and exploring those unknown seas, in search of the lost sailor. Bravely and cheerily they go, to seek the "missing fleet," with manly hearts, each enthused by the soul of that true woman, whose prayers go with them. The chivalry of the olden time, the soul of a Bayard and a Raleigh, have been reproduced in the American merchant, and the American sailor, and in America it is that woman is nobly beloved and nobly honored of her brother.

Earth holds no impediment to the American merchant. His brain is large and active, and his heart generous and true. The oceans are charted into pathways for him, and continents zoned and belted by his railways and warehouses. Where kings once extended hospitalities, the merchant does now. He entertains a province of patriots, and founds whole colonies of exiles. America may say what was said of the

Tyrians of old: "her merchants are princes." We look to them now to carry on great works rather than to the government. The merchant knows his weapons, and he selects the best, unbribed by office or power. He builds up associations, and individuals become the great national carriers, and men learn to trust to the rapid, effective movements of the Express, rather than to the cumbrous mails. Where public measures fail, the merchant remonstrates and protests, as he is bound as the representative of a good faith to do, but he goes on steadily to work out a remedy. Look to it, the politician at the White House, sent to Washington by demagogues who want a tool, not a man, is not our ruler. The true ruler is the American merchant.

Such as we have described was Mr. Dinsmoor. He was yet young—the American merchant is always young, for he who knows no impediment cannot be old. If you visited his office, you would have to pass a broad area filled with merchandise, where the stout Irishman laboriously shoves aside huge boxes and bags, and coils of rope, and the heavy cable of the fall swings back and forth as weight after weight comes from regions below and ascends to unknown

heights. At one side the trim clerk stands "taking account," tablets in hand, his handsome hair, youthful smile, and fine person all forgotten, while with staid manner, and curt speech, he directs the movements of the porters. Here may be seen the early training of the future merchant. At the door is a cart, one or more coming and going all the time, the well-fed, sleek-looking dray-horse, his face within the warehouse as if he understood all the doings there, while the fine-looking black, who owns the beast, now and then pats him upon the head, and gives at the same time a wipe of his bandana to his own clear ebony face. Your negro is always an appendage to the merchant. He likes him as well for his alert activity as the looks of the thing, for the American merchant has a fine eye for contrasts.

Penetrating to the interior you encounter a large, airy room, floored with manilla matting, around which are ranged desks, and not many high stools, for the smart, handsome clerk prefers to stand, and his faultless tights have no "stick out" at the knees where he has been perched like a pigeon, midway in the air. These desks are all of mahogany or black-walnut, free from ink-stains, and dust. There is nothing

musty, nothing mean-looking, or unsightly about the room ; on the contrary it is cleanly, and even tasteful in appearance. The young men are all well-dressed, with white pocket-handkerchiefs, perhaps with an embroidered corner, the work of a favorite sister, peeping from the side-pocket, and the younger ones have a rose or sprig of geranium in the button-hole. This is the room of the book-keeper and clerks.

Still onward is the sanctum of the merchant himself, faultless in furniture, clean, tasteful and comfortable. Here sits the great man, plainly dressed, but yet carefully and appropriately, for the American merchants, as a class, are the best-dressed men in the community. In our day the merchant is a little more reserved than is essential to his position ; he does not treat his dependents with quite the fatherly care which his situation would justify ; but time and culture will amend this. To this inner office none are admitted whose business can be managed in the outer rooms ; but here merchants are seen to come and go, men of science and enterprise bring their knowledge and views hither. Explorers, speculators of the honorable and higher grades, bankers, bluff sea-captains, and younger merchants who need the counte-

nance of their elders in the field. Even women, with their heavenly missions, penetrate to this sanctum, when at once a chair is proffered, and if by chance a stray hat is upon the brows, instantly it is removed, for your merchant is eminently a gentleman. The lady observes that conversation is hushed or carried on in a side voice while she is present. Some leave quietly, and the merchant assumes the air of a listener. She details her plan in a few brief words ; it is one of beneficence, but it may be of doubtful utility, warming pans to India, flannels to Japan in kind—no matter, it is a woman's plea, and the merchant is never known to reject it, and he gives as a matter of course, while she places the sum carefully upon her tablets, encloses the money in her nice green and ivory porte-monaie, drops her veil and a sidling curtesy at the same time, and takes her leave.

The rag-pickers come in the morning around the warehouses of the merchant to gather up fragments of paper and iron ; old women and children look for coffee spilled from the bags, and now and then a box of sugar, or tea, or a barrel of flour gives way, and then they have a harvesting. They are careful, however, not to encroach too far, else they will be driven

off; otherwise, by a discreet use of their privileges, they may be allowed to come day by day and become the acknowledged beneficiaries of the "Firm;" then they have a proud time of it. Then all others are frowned into distance, and they are allowed to pick up stray fruit, and boxes, and barrels, to eke out home comforts. Gradually they pass from begging into working, and are employed to do sundry small jobs, and perhaps be taken into the service of the family. Every profession has its preaching.

XXXIII.

The Merchant at Home.

MR. DINSMOOR was seated in his handsome breakfast room, his wife at the table in her fresh morning muslin, waiting the stroke of the clock which should usher in the hot rolls and coffee. She had made some remark which arrested the attention of her husband from the morning news.

"Do you say that Imogen is twelve to-day, Fannie. Upon my word, I thought she was a baby yet. Twelve? She'll soon be a hateful little belle. Why you were but a few years older when we were married, Fannie;" and Mr. Dinsmoor laid aside his paper, and actually took the bride of thirteen years upon his knee. He was a tall, handsome man, ten years it may be older than his wife; and as they thus sat in the shaded room, it was a quiet, pretty conjugal picture as need be seen.

Fannie had put her delicate arm over the shoulder

of her husband, and a soft, girlish smile met his open, candid eyes, as he went on reviewing the past.

"Twelve years! Fannie, and yet it seems but a few days, and I have felt all along as if time had stood still. You are as handsome now as you were then, dear Fannie, and a great deal dearer to me. I've been so used to seeing you always nice and pretty, and we so happy, that I forgot change could ever come;" and he kissed in a fatherly manner her pure, smooth brow.

Fannie's dear lip trembled, as she laid her cheek softly against that of her husband, for she loved him with all her always young heart, and a word of praise from his manly lips was to her the dearest thing in the world. At this moment a tear stole from under her lids, and fell upon his face.

"Why, we are both weeping, dear Fannie," said Mr. Dinsmoor, wiping his own eyes, and kissing those of Fannie. "It seems odd that I have never thought over our happiness till now. I have been so used to it, that I never once considered the matter. Fannie, we'll be religious from this day forward, won't we, dear, and first we'll have Imogen christened, and we'll look about and do good in the world."

Fannie now clung both arms about the neck of the noble speaker, and answered only with her tears and kisses. Then the door opened, and Imogen,

stood for a moment upon the threshold, and then bounded forward to encircle both in her little arms; and thus they sat, the happiest group this side heaven. Purely happy were they, for Mr. Dinsmoor was manly and protective, as well as sympathetic in heart.

He was an orderly, systematic man abroad, and liked the same things at home. He returned plumply at stroke of clock, to find a sumptuous dinner, and a friend to share it, and his fair, girlish wife ready at the threshold, in some fresh, pretty costume, to give and receive the kiss of united hearts. Imogen had grown like a sweet bud, in the sunshine of love only. It did n't seem strange, therefore, that she was gentle, and fair, and good, for the hearth-stone is the true altar upon which to wing angels.

Here let me say, that the household is heaven or hell in its incipency. Where congenial creations meet here in a true holy relation, the children thus born are the flowerings of Eden, as John Neal has said "the cryptogamia of the skies." Lovingly the heavens brood over the roof-tree. Earliest in the morning, Hesperus beams in golden bright through the lattice, and aslant his rays glide down the fingers of angels, each sliding with lute-like melody to bless the morning dream. More gladsome and more powerful angels use the sharp, warm rays of the sun, courser-like, and they enter in and move here and

there with a great joy, making glad everything within the precincts, magnetizing all within into happiness, so that the discords and turmoils of the world without are forgotten or unknown.

All day they come and go—they move in what men call sunshine athwart the carpet, they dance like a golden ball through a crevice in the cornice, and adown the garden walk they march in bright battalions. They stir at the curtain, they press the bud and it blooms, they kiss the fountain and it is a rainbow, they even touch the strings of the harp and it gives out one note so heavenly sweet that you turn round and look and wonder whence it came; then the pendants of the chandelier click, and the birds give out melody, and the baby smiles in its cradle all because of the loving angels who come to the household, just as they go to any heaven where Love is.

Ah! the garments wax not old there—the moth and rust of discontent mar no line of beauty there—birds and blossoms cluster there—white doves coo from the eave-tops, and the trees lean away from the roof lest their great branches shut out the sunshine and the blue sky, and the loving stars that brood over it. Fair children creep to the threshold; creeping children look out wondering, yet gladsome, as if they looked first out into the great world from the heaven of home—they shrink inward

again, but at length they bound over the door-sill away, leaving the sunlight upon the door, and stealing inward, inward, to where lies the Bible upon the table, and a mother's pure brow lifted in prayer.

Onward, onward, casting but few and transient glances backward, they go; but at length sickness comes, and they long for the dear old home; sorrow comes, and they see the sunshine streaming as of old through the open door, and falling upon the sacred word. But the mother is an angel now, and they long to return to the dear old good home. Then passion, and change, and tumult, shake the man mightily, and he rests not day nor night till he too sets up the altar of home, and calls the angels to enter the tabernacle he has built. Woman, thou art the angel of home. Go, look not into thy gilded glass, but look down into the clear, bright fountain which gave back thy face in childhood. Art thou an angel of light, causing sunshine over the sill; or of darkness, brooding like a raven wing over the family altar?

Hatred has his home also. The morning-star sends down his angels into the abode, but it is already filled. Discord is knotting the cruel nerve, and making deep the harsh wrinkle. Wiry, mischief-loving spirits prompt the blow-loving hand, and whisper and gibber malicious, envious, and jealous dreams into the sleeping ear. The sun glides jubilant into the win-

dow, but he is repelled by damp, noisome images lurking within. Snake-like creatures keep ward and watch. Moles, and bats, and moths, and reptiles silently destroy. Dark vines darken the lattice. The raven and the night-owl have usurped the roof. Obscure rappings and mysterious movements fill the space more with terror than with awe. The child in the cradle cries sharply, for his holy guardian contends with a black spirit which would force him away. Children creep to the threshold, and look out into the great unknown world, but it looks less terrible than home, and they creep forth, willing to encounter the worst. They look backward, but there is no sunshine on the sill, no brooding love-angel there. Sickness comes, and the cold charity of the stranger is welcome. Sorrow comes, and the "silver cord" which binds together the great human family, draws him into the circle, and owns him brother. Passion and crime pluck at the miserable man, and there are no memories of holy wisdom to say "remember;" no prayer rising like a cool incense between the scorched heart and heaven, and he battles the world alone, weak and unaided, for home was no home for the spirit. Woman, look to it. This is thy work—this blood is upon thy skirts.

While we have talked, the breakfast-bell has been rung, and our happy family talked and partook of it,

happy in themselves and in each other. It was decided that Imogen should give a little fête to her young friends upon this all-important occasion of a birthday; and soon the ordinarily quiet household gave unwonted evidence of action. Mr. Dinsmore promised to dance a waltz with Fannie and Imogen; the neighbors should be invited, especially the Gardners, who had always been so friendly, and were so simple-hearted and cultivated, and yet far from rich. Charles Gardner, the son, though rather old for the little folks, should come, because Imogen said he "danced so splendidly." It's true, she added, "he is a tease and a plague, and uses big words to laugh at me, but then he is so handsome, and *such* a gentleman, isn't he mamma?"

Fannie laughed. "He is all that, darling, but he is too old, and will not care to come with such little children, I fear, Imogen."

The child's face fell sensibly. Charles had tossed her bouquets over the wall, and bunches of grapes, and brought her baskets of cherries, ever since she could remember anything. She had no memory of a time when she and Charles had not talked over the arbor, and through the blinds, and across the piazza—and they used to kiss each other at the end of the balcony always. True, Charles had learned to tease her a good deal of late, had mimicked her singing, and

when she came out with any new coquetry he had practiced it over till she grew ashamed of it; and then it was her turn to punish him, and she would shut herself up for a whole day, and pass nearly all of it in peeping through the blinds to enjoy his disappointment as he went from place to place, through the garden, behind the arbor, over the balcony, and whistled, and sung, and called her name softly; and when she came out upon the piazza, just by accident, was n't it a sight to see the glad smile of the handsome boy, and was n't there something dearer than ever in the tone of his voice?

Imogen thought all this in her heart as she went about arranging flowers in some vases for the table, and at length she replied:

"Not have Charles Gardner here to-night mamma? I never heard of anything so strange in all my life. I should n't feel as if I had any party at all without Charles. There's Tommy C. will be asking every minute when we'll have supper. Julian does nothing but look at the books, and papers, and prints. Henry is too fat for any living creature, and so stupid at that, and William mopes about half asleep. Upon my word, mamma, all the girls will have a nice time but just me. They all want to eat, and dance, and whisper with the boys, and there is n't one of them but Charles that I can talk at all with; and its my

birth-day too," and Imogen was as much distressed as many a belle of twice her years condemned to the companionship of bores.

"Charles is in college now, Imogen, and studies very hard, and such a little girl as my daughter might not interest him. But here he is, and shall decide for himself."

Charles declared he should have been greatly disappointed not to come, in a way that quite reassured Imogen; indeed, he said he must claim her as his partner in the dance, whereat the young beauty tossed back her curls and muttered something about not being "his partner as a matter of course," whereat Charles laughed gaily, and replied:

"Oh! by no means, Miss Imogen; I shall come like a knight of the olden time, kneeling upon one knee and imploring the inestimable privilege."

"Well, and why should n't you come in that way?" laughed the child, in a manner that showed she would like to queen it well.

"Oh! I will do so; let me go through my paces now, to be sure all is right;" and he sank upon one knee, and in a mock heroic voice exclaimed:

"Most august and noble lady, wilt thou vouchsafe to your adoring slave the inestimable privilege of touching the tips of your dainty fingers, while we thread the intricate mazes of a dance?"

"Knowing thee not unworthy, I grant thy request," replied the child, coloring and laughing while she extended her hand to raise the youth.

It was evident Imogen liked to see Charles at her feet, young as she was; and when Charles attempted to take a kiss she drew back in a little queen-like way, and offered the tips of her fingers. Of course Charles kissed them, but he looked grave when he went out with books in hand to his daily studies. It was quite natural that Imogen should go out upon the piazza after him, and that Charles should look back as he went down the steps, and, seeing Imogen there, most natural that he should return and kiss her in the dear old way; and then as he neared the corner it was natural that he should look back and kiss his fingers to Imogen; and then he went on his way more joyful for that innocent caress, and the book had new charms in thinking of it, and the old stained desk and ricketty chairs of the scholars' room had a rose tinge all that day seen through its atmosphere. Long years it was thought of and treasured in the memory as something chaste and heavenly. Long years the lips of the beautiful boy were hallowed by the touch, and none others came to efface it, and the heart and the life was held virginal because of that kiss. Blessed is the youth who holds in his pure heart such memories.

XXXIV.

The Night Come.

IMOGEN's party was quite perfect in kind. At first the little men and women crowded about, intent upon aping the manners of the elders upon such occasions, but eventually the child-nature triumphed, and they were content to enjoy as children will. This was a great relief to Imogen, who was too spontaneous to be held long in the bondage of mere conventionalism, and when they settled down into little games adapted to their years, she was quite happy, notwithstanding for awhile a few apish little dullards held themselves aloof, in a sort of obstinate, monkeyfied, old-folks gentility, till finding themselves unnoticed of their companions, they thought better of it, and joined in the sports.

It was a pretty sight, those little ones, happy in themselves, in their youth, and health, and innocence; happy also in their pretty gear, for every cul-

tivated child, as well as grown child, is best content when his or her garments are in accordance with the sentiments of taste and beauty. All were not alike lovely, children though they were. The stamp of the parent was upon them, for better or for worse. There were thin, pale children; helpless, innocent victims to by-gone sins, aching in their little bones, fevered with evil dreams, and turbulent passions, because some one or more of their ancestors took the bond of the covenant of marriage, when the tight bond of the hangman's rope were more befitting. Ah! what to these the brodered robe, the delicate lace, the graceful shape, when disease crept silently within, and the sweet breath and delicate aromas of childhood were laden with incipient corruption.

There were harsh, passionate children, whose rude tones betrayed their recent origin; whom neither gorgeous draping, nor training, nor wealth, could transform into the higher harmonies of fair breeding. There were plump young Hebe's and stately Dians, chaste from infancy; and premature Venuses, and girls of wit, and grace, and loveliness, but none so individual, so ideal, as the beautiful, wayward, dainty Imogen.

They were redeeming forfeits, and the little judge sat with bandaged eyes dispensing penalties with in-

stinctive appropriateness. One was to stand in the midst of the floor and repeat,

"Here I stand all stiff and still,
Come and kiss me if you will;"

and nothing loth were the young boys to redeem this forfeit. Another repeated,

"Whirl to the left, and whirl to the right,
Come kiss me ere I take my flight;"

and great was the running, and the tossing of curls, and glittering of bright eyes, as the little ones darted here and there.

Then there was "kneel to the wittiest, bow to the prettiest, and kiss the one you love best," which was sure to give rise to a world of infantile rivalries, coquetries, and poutings. At length the heedless ones doomed Imogen to "go across the street, and knock on the old railway car in the vacant lot."

Quick as thought the child, with her favorite kitten in her arms, darted from the house. The black night received her. There was no moon in the heavens—there were no stars except as you looked directly above your head, there was a circle of clear blue gemmed with stars, which the exhalations from the great wicked city could not hide. The lamps winked stealthily here and there through the misty

night, and gleamed upon her white shoulders and flowing hair. The star Lyra in the zenith touched a sad wailing note to call up in the dark night those who hold ward and watch over the steps of beauty.

Onward went the child, and her quick rap was answered by the Newsboy, as we have seen. She looked brightly around the humble dwelling, uttering her comments in honeyed words, and then she was gone, gone into the black night once more.

Years came and went, and yet it was night—night—dark, impenetrable night. It came down upon the home of luxury thick and black—upon the pure, conjugal home like the shadow of death. It came down upon the household in the old car, where hitherto the light had come bravely down, because brave was the great heart of the Newsboy, and a shadow fell, never more to be lifted therefrom.

Bob sat, as we have shown, talking with Rack-o'-bones, when the plaintive cry of "Imogen" came through the night silence, and he went out to learn what it could mean. Three times had that little hand been laid upon his arm, and it had become mingled with something which appealed to him, how or why he could not tell. He now moved rapidly across the ash-heaps, and neared the street. In the angle of the wall he encountered a man who seemed to be laughing alone to himself, but as he went on in silence, Bob

did not accost him, but only muttered, "There's no good in a laugh like that."

Again was the name of Imogen repeated, but this time in a voice low, clear but tremulous, and Bob saw in front of the great stone house before named, a lady with head bent and eyes searching wildly out into the black night, while ever and anon she cried, "Imogen! Imogen!"

All was confusion about the mansion. The police were already on guard, carriages were conveying the little ones from a place so suddenly converted to one of calamity, and friends were hastening with good hearts to proffer aid or consolation.

For awhile Bob watched all this in silence, but as he saw the lady still looking out into the black night, unwilling to leave the door notwithstanding the entreaties of those about her, he ascended the steps, and confronted the sufferer with a look so full of grief and pity, that the lady instinctively laid her white hand upon his head, and held it there, perhaps unconscious she did so, till Bob sank down overcome with his own sad memories. Once in the night time he had felt the hand of Minnie's mother upon his head, but the touch was unlike this, which was so cold, so deathly cold, that it seemed little less than ice.

At length Bob looked up and said,

"Silver-tongue laid her hand on my arm, she did,

and I feel it there now. You call her Imogen, but she's a silver-tongue to Bob."

Somehow the Newsboy with his heart full of the thought of Minnie, felt that he could say something to delude that deepening woe of the poor mother, and he took her hand in his and led her inward unresisting, just as the wretched Edgar led the more wretched King Lear, because of the sorrow that made them equal.

Placing the mother, tearless and marble white in her agony in one of the large chairs, Bob knelt upon one knee before her. He did not see the weeping friends, the trembling menials, the large gorgeous room; he saw only a stricken, bleeding heart, and his own bled with it.

"You is Imogen's mother, ma'am?" he asked.

The lady's eyes were fixed on his, but she did n't speak.

"I knows how mothers feels ever since I had Minnie," continued Bob. "Yesterday I carried her way down to the sea-shore, and laid her away, and ever since I feels her hand on my heart, I does, just as she used to say, Bob'll need Minnie's hand on his heart to comfort him."

The boy's head leaned forward upon the arm of the chair a moment. When he looked up the lady's eye had not moved. She looked so statue-like, with her

cold jeweled hand, and her white face turned towards him, that Bob shuddered, and said,

"That's the way Minnie's mother looked. Ah! ma'am, many's the face I's seen lookin' pale for the hunger and the misery. Silver-tongue, Imogen, I'll come back, I knows it, I feels it. 'Cause why? her hand's been on Bob's arm so many years, he never'll give her up. Does n't you pray, ma'am?"

The woman did not move, her cold hands lay helplessly upon her lap, her brow was not contracted even, but her eyes were fixed and dilated.

"Does n't you never pray, ma'am?" asked Bob again. "I does as well as I can, and I has al'ays felt as if I could bring everything good by prayin'. I have called for blessin's on the head of Imogen, and it will come, yes it will come," continued Bob, rising; "I feels a something telling me to do, and when I does it, everything works round right. I puts Minnie's rose tree in the sun and the buds come out. I takes a poor broken back little critter, whose mother's been driv' into the sea, and I makes more money, I doesn't know how, but it comes; I takes a baby scream-in' out o' the gutter, and its jist the same blessin's fol-lers. Love one another, do good as ye have opportunity, and God (I does n't know much about him), but God sees it all, and he sends a little hand to lie on the heart when we needs it, and another is put on the

head, and when a little hand has been laid for a good many years on the arm, it means "help me," and it means we can help, and it means we will help, and Bob will do it, or he will die in tryin' to do it."

The lady lifted up her hand slow and heavy and laid it upon Bob's arm just where Imogen laid hers years before, and Bob went on :

"Yes, lay your poor, cold hand on Bob's arm; its a rough hand, ma'am," and he laid his palm over the snow-flake one, "but it never did a thing to be ashamed on. It never did a cruel thing, and it never minded the work. I remembers the time, ma'am, when I knelt down in Grace; the folks was all goin' by, and I was in the way, I was, but I wanted to learn about the prayin', and lovin', and about the Lord, for I was a heathen, I was, and God sent me there. I know it now, for Imogen laid her hand on my arm and took me in, and we knelt down there. I learned what I never forgot, ma'am, that day. Does n't you thinks you knows me, ma'am?"

A deep sob escaped the lips of the lady, and her head leaned upon the Newsboy's shoulder. Mr. Dinsmoor came in now, and he lifted up the head and placed it against his own heart. Fannie tried to speak, but no words came, and she could only point to Bob, and lay her hand upon his head.

"It's a blessin' of me, she does," said he, "for I

saw Imogen; she came to the old car and looked in;" and he went on to tell in brief words how he had seen the child more than once, and believed himself called to be her protector, but the Merchant looked his incredulity; he had sent the police in all directions and offered large sums of money, and men are apt to think that money is more omnipotent than prayer, more omnipotent than trust in God.

XXXV.

Letter from Flashy Jack.

ALL night the Newsboy kept awake, threading together, link by link, circumstances which coupled the tall, dark gentleman, with the disappearance of Imogen. When the light began to dawn he looked out, but the dark man was nowhere to be seen, and yet he was now convinced that he had daily watched the windows of Imogen's room, as she sat in the morning light. In the rounds of his daily toil he went from place to place where he had recollected to have seen him. At length he saw the man in front of Florence's, and the Newsboy stopped and fixed his eyes upon his face—an honest, penetrating look, before which the man quailed. It was evident he recollected Bob, but he accosted him carelessly, with "Here, give us a paper, Bub," and then turned into the saloon.

Bob walked on thoughtfully, and yet determined to watch the movements of the man. He waited at one

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of the corners till he came out and took a stage up town. Bob seated himself with the driver unobserved, and watched the exit of the several passengers. The stranger left the stage at Abingdon square. He looked about him, and then entered a house with a night-key. Bob made some inquiries at the grocer's in the corner, for the grocer is as good as a directory for a neighborhood.

"Oh! that is the Spanish gentlemen lives there. Does n't speak a word of English, has an old deaf, half blind housekeeper, with a wen on her neck. Good people, peaceable, pay well, Catholics; some say they belong to the Jesuits. Never bother about people that pay up well," added the grocer, as if ashamed of his communicativeness, and he put up a quarter of a pound of tea, and seven pounds of flour for a barefooted girl, with a squint eye, who did all-work for a neighboring dame. Then he weighed out a half-pound of butter for another, and patted it down with his wooden spoon and covered it with a bit of paper.

At this moment the woman of the wen entered the shop while the man's back was turned. Bob saw that her black eyes glanced keenly round the shop, and he saw that she eyed him from head to foot. Bob's instincts told him that her employer had seen him upon the stage, and had sent her out to watch his movements.

She priced several articles.

"Here's a chap been inquiring about your folks," said the grocer.

"Hay"—said the woman, making a trumpet of her hand, and listening intently.

"I say, here's a chap asking about your folks," screamed the man.

"What does he want of our folks?" asked the woman, turning sharply upon the Newsboy; but he was gone, and gone, too, with the conviction that she was one of the guilty party. The woman stood on the threshold of the grocery under pretence of arranging the articles in her basket, but she looked in all directions, and as she did not see Bob looking out from between the box for shutters and a large crate of a neighboring shop, she went on; but as Bob was thus ensconced, a ragged fellow, with his two hands thrust down into his pockets, stubbed along by him, and he remembered him at once as one of the three whom he had more than once seen about the premises of Mr. Dinsmoor. The fellow tapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Give us a light, Bub;" but the boy knew it was only a pretext.

"I does n't smoke," he replied, passing onward. The fellow followed him in the distance, till conscious that the Newsboy understood and watched his movements, he desisted. At length Bob neared

his own dwelling: he saw the side of an old boot just visible under the car, and he knew the boot contained a living foot, so he passed along behind some heaps of rubbish and watched its movements.

He saw Rack-o'-bones come to the door holding Dady in her arms, and evidently wondering at his long absence; then she came out again after Dady was put to sleep, and started back to find a man close to the threshold. Bob saw him also by the light from within, more than by the light of the moon, as the door was hidden in the shadow, and he was glad the old woman had thus unconsciously aided him. At length another man walked carelessly across the lot, whistling an idle tune to which the man in the shadow of the car responded. There was nothing extraordinary in this to a common observer, but Bob was convinced that there was a system of concert between the parties about his domicil and the occupants of the house in Abingdon square.

The two men began to walk up and down the lot as if searching for something, and Bob took the opportunity while they were at the far side, to glide quietly into the street and ascend the steps of Mr. Dinsmoor's house. He had just given a strong pull at the bell when a blow from a third party felled him to the earth.

The door was opened by Mr. Dinsmoor himself, who called for aid, and poor Bob was carried within totally insensible and bleeding, but not till Rack-o'-bones had caught sight of the body as she came out into the street in the hope of finding him. Bob had suffered so much of late that the good creature feared he might be stricken down by some sudden illness. She followed those who conveyed Bob into the house, and, though taciturn and solitary, she gave way to a loud cry as she witnessed the blood flowing from his head.

"Oh, Bob, I feared as much, and I wanted to give you this paper; had you got it, this would n't have been."

"Let me see the paper," said Mr. Dinsmoor, thinking of Imogen, of whom no tidings had as yet been obtained. The woman handed him a dirty piece of crumpled paper, from which he read the following:

"DEAR BOB,—

"There's the deuce to pay somewhere, but what it means, blow me if I can tell. A girl's been carried off, and they say they mean to nab you about it. Perhaps you have seen the girl, but I know, Bob, you would never have anything to do with such a devilish trick. I never mind much when a man's concerned; he ought to have wit and strength to take care of

himself; but a woman, letting alone a little girl, is another matter. I don't know what on earth it all means. I don't understand a word about it, only Maggie (she's a gallus I tell you, Bob) told me you was in danger, and so I write this to warn you. Don't go home, Bob, yet awhile; go and sleep about as you used to do, before you took to fatherin' them brats. I'm sorry for the little hunchback, somehow she made me think about things pleasanter than we boys was brought up to, and so did Sam and Mary as to that. My time'll come, Bob; I mean to cut every scamp of them by-and-bye, for their slang makes me sick. Jack's got a clean spot inside, if he could only clean out the rest of him. Don't go home, Bob, don't. I aint in their confidence, or I'd peach, blast me, if I would n't. Maggie'll throw this into your door, in case I should n't find you.

"JACK, *alias* FLASHY JACK."

Mr. Dinsmoor read this characteristic note of Flashy Jack half aloud; and as he did so, he was not surprised that a police officer half looked over his shoulder, for he had offered strong inducements for them to be on the alert. The Mayor also had issued a proclamation setting forth the disappearance of the child, and calling upon all to aid in the search; and offering large rewards for any clue that might lead to the

detection of the guilty perpetrators of the crime. But had Mr. Dinsmoor followed the man suspiciously, he would have seen that he had hardly descended from the steps, and turned a corner at an easy pace, before the star of office disappeared; the man took a jointed stick from his bosom, which a slight movement converted into an ordinary gentleman's cane; the unreal whiskers disappeared from either cheek, and he was one of those common, every-day looking men, whom we encounter by thousands, and whose features and looks we no more remember than if we had never met them.

The man was not in the least excited at what he had seen and heard read. He knew the police were not in the vicinity at the moment, for he had cast about warily before he exhibited signs of office. He knew also, that in times of excitement your man of steady nerves wins the day, so that in case of the worst he could trust to his own address.

As he left the Dinsmoor house behind him, he grew more and more assured. He tucked his cane under his arm, and drew on a pair of tan-colored gloves, and then seeing a stage in the distance, he waited in an easy, unrestrained attitude for its approach; held up a finger carelessly for the driver to stop, and proceeded down Broadway. Opposite Thompson's saloon he got out, and walked up the

long room to the raised portion at the head, ascended the two or three steps, exhibiting garments of a fashionable cut, and Spanish boots. Here he drew a chair to the table, and joined the dark gentleman before named, and whom the grocer had called the Spaniard. There was nothing peculiar in his movements, except that he turned somewhat from the light; and at the approach of the waiter you might have thought his attitude of both hands supporting his chin, which thus distorted the whole face, by pressing the muscles upward, and concealing the mouth, rather an ungainly one. The two nodded familiarly to each other, and then each seemed bent upon reading the papers, while the attendant placed a mint julep and refreshments before them.

XXXVI.

The Rendezvous.

"COSMELLO," said the man who last entered, addressing the Spaniard, "I'll drink your heart's blood if you don't pay me well for this business. I'm tired of the game;" and he put down his lips to the stick of straw in the tumbler, and continued to suck away at the liquor, as if that was all in which he felt the least interest for the time being.

The person addressed did not move a muscle, nor reply at once, and then not at all to the remark of the other.

"Is the last issue disposed of?" he asked, without scarcely moving his lips.

His companion chuckled audibly: "Been his last round, I reckon. I never knocked out a nigger flatter than him." It was evident the man had been a slave-driver.

"How did you contrive it?" asked the other. "I knew by his looks he had a suspicion of us."

"I saw him going up the steps, and just as he had his hand on the knob, I let drive, out with my star, and helped to carry him in; the d—d fools thought I was the one to ring;" and the man left off sucking at the straw, tipped back his chair, and gave way to a loud laugh, while at the same time he thrust both hands into the pockets of his pantaloons.

The people in the vicinity looked up, and thought the gentleman wondrous merry, for the next moment he brought his chair forward with a crash, slapped the side of his leg with his gloved palm, and burst out into another laugh. The man at the lower part of the saloon, a sort of private policeman, looked that way, but the two resumed their liquor, and he took no more notice of them, for everybody likes to hear a good hearty laugh.

Then the man tipped his chair forward, shook his head from side to side, slapped his leg again, and tickled out again into suppressed laughter.

"Zounds, 't was the finest thing I ever done. I liked to a gone mad over it, only I had to keep all smooth and square-looking."

"I wish you would command yourself still further," said the Spaniard. "I see nothing to laugh at—the fools are all looking this way—suck away and be d——d to you."

So reprimanded, the other abated his mirth, and

turned once more to the tumbler; "but," he added, "the best is to come yet," and he was about to burst into another laugh, when the Spaniard, irritated beyond endurance, brought out his accustomed "Sacre," under his breath, and grew absolutely black with rage. The man seemed to understand that he must suppress further trifling, for he went on,

"Flashy Jack warned the rascal—I saw the letter."

This time Cosmello lifted up his brows in amazement. "You? where? how?"

"Oh, in my character of policeman, I looked over Dinsmoor's shoulder, and read the whole. Flashy Jack's no fool of a writer. He told all he knew, and it's well he knew nothing more—he'd out with it. He's a white-livered sneak, after all that's said and done. I'll wring his neck yet for him," and his face passed from a look of easy mirth into an expression of deadly hostility.

"Hold your murderous tongue, will you," answered the Spaniard, eyeing him with disgust; "you've done enough now to raise a hurlebulloo. Let the boy alone—he knows nothing, and can tell nothing; and as for that Maggie, you see how it is, you'd better keep out of that girl's way. You and the rest of you get steeped in your d—d cups, and then you let out fast as an old sieve. Keep out of sight all of you, and

ship for Europe, Australia, California, anywhere, and that quick too, or I'll help you to a worse place. Mind, I mean it;" and he knocked on the table for a waiter, and ordered more refreshments, while his companion looked him steadily in the face, evidently intimidated by the threat; but his head was leaned on his hand, his elbow on the table, so that the expression of his face was hidden.

"Cosmello, I know your money, and your position as a gentleman, protects you. I know we are all in your power,—we have been the tools, have borne the brunt, and faced the law, while you have kept your hands untouched; but move a step to give us up, one of us, and your life is n't worth that," and he snapped his thumb and finger.

Cosmello did not change countenance; he retained the simple, dignified gravity of the Spaniard, while his companion uttered this threat, and then, passing a package across the table, he went on:—

"There are five thousand dollars, the sum I promised upon the consummation of our enterprise. You have all served me faithfully. I have never scrupled to advance you money, whenever Satan forgot his own. We are now quit."

The man turned sharply round, and whispered, "May I ask what you design to do with that girl?"

Cosmello's face grew black with suppressed rage.

He made no answer to the question, but asked in turn where he proposed to go.

"I remain in New York. I know of no safer place, where a man may play the rascal, and yet be accepted as a distinguished foreigner. I shall don a Spanish cloak, and play the hidalgo;" so saying, he poised his hat daintily upon his head, uttered "Adios," and went down the saloon.

This time he crossed directly to the lobby of the Broadway Theatre, looked around carelessly, and then making his egress by a different door from the one he entered, he came out with a group that always leave the house at the termination of the first piece. He turned the corner, and went rapidly down Anthony street, applied a night-key to a door, and went up stairs. A man was lying on the bed wrapped in a sheet, apparently waiting for him, for the new comer began to disrobe himself, while the other put on the garments thus taken off.

"He's waiting for you at Thompson's—best be quick. Here's mine (showing the package). I'll say that for him, he's toe'd the line like a gentleman. I do believe that Spaniard is the very Satan himself. He never laughs, never hurries, has no more feeling than that stove, and I believe he'd wait the day of judgment but he'd have his revenge. Dinsmoor crossed him years ago, and he's kept a watch ever since for a

chance at him. Blast me if I had n't a mind to take off the girl on my own hook."

"How did you do it, Skillings?" asked the other, giving the cravat a jaunty touch at the bit of cracked dirty looking-glass stuck against the wall.

"Hurry up the cakes," shouted the other; "we've no time for long yarns. That Spaniard's like a big boa-constrictor, such as I've seen out in South America, viewing a deer he's got under his eye, and the poor thing shivering, and bleating, and sobbing, but can't get away. I tell you I looked right into them black eyes of his, and I saw h—l there, or there never was one. You'd better get your money, and keep out of his fangs."

"Au revoir," lisped the other, drawing on gloves, and projecting his hips right and left like a fashionable woman. He left the room, and Skillings locked and bolted the door after him.

Shortly after Cosmello, who sat reading the papers as we have seen, nodded to apparently the same individual, who had gone out for some purpose and returned; but a close observer would have seen that the fit of the garments was much closer than a half an hour previous, and now the man carried the right hand in his bosom, and the cane in the left. The Spaniard made no comments at the change, although the hand now laid upon the table had lost several of its fingers.

"Advise Skillings to leave the country," he at length said, at the same time stretching a leg over an unoccupied chair; "and you too, Van Dam, the sooner you leave the better for you."

The man lifted up his head from the straw in his mouth, and answered by asking, "You mean to keep here then?"

The other deigned no reply, but pushed two packages across the table this time.

"One for Pete?" asked Van Dam, clutching at the rolls with an eager manner that contrasted strangely with the easy, nonchalant air of the former occupant of the tailor's fit.

"We have no further need of one another," replied Cosmello; "my work is done."

"And you can finish up your own deviltry," muttered the other between his teeth.

The Spaniard's eyes rested upon the speaker with a steady, snake-like gaze that made him think of Skillings' figure of a boa-constrictor, and his eyes fell under the look. He knew the master-look, as we all do when we meet it, the good and the bad.

Presently the two men walked slowly down the saloon. Cosmello stopped at the clerk's desk and paid for the bits of ivory called "checks," showing the price of his entertainment, lighted a segar by the door and went out. At the threshold, he nodded to

his companion, and was about to pass on when he observed the other still kept at his side.

"Well?" he asked.

"I'm thinking its hard parting company after so long an acquaintance," answered Van Dam.

The Spaniard replied, "You have been two too many for me. Had I trusted Skillings alone, it had been better."

"Skillings could n't a done it," muttered the other, "and you know it. Skillings is flighty and needed somebody black, and hard as a rock, to keep him up to the mark; and that you've had in Pete and me."

A police officer walked slowly past them as if trying to listen to their conversation, and the Spaniard now took out a cigar from his case, touched it to the tip of the one he had lighted at Thompson's saloon, and presented it to his companion.

"This is the last then!" ejaculated Van Dam, crossing over to Anthony street. "Blast the fellow, he holds me with a sort of liking after all, and he pays like a prince. I'll lay off awhile, Pete and I, on the strength of this—jine the Fillibusters, or go slave-catching. New York's a growin' too hot for the likes of us."

Had the police officer heard all that passed between Cosmello and his companion distinctly, he would have followed them; but as it was, he had no such

pretext; or had Pete with the distorted eye been of the party, he would have done so, for somehow the instincts of man, based originally upon the sentiment of the beautiful, and still preserving something of their pristine insight, will associate moral obliquity with physical distortion. Even Shakspeare, true to what is in man as man, painted the cruel, evil-passioned Richard as deformed in person from his birth, while the coldly-intellectual Iago, unimpressed by ambition of the higher kind, brooding with Satanic malice over imaginary or real wrongs, is left to the imagination of the reader to paint as thin of lip, meagre in person, full in the forehead, and sallow of blood. In this way Shakspeare shows his superiority to the whole brood of romance writers who go counter to our instincts. These persons try to overcome the repugnance of the child to a reptile, by mawkishly telling him, "God made it, and he must n't hate it." So he did make it, to correspond to what is vile, and revolting, and hateful in depraved man; and the child who can be brought to endure the toad, the spider, or the viper, will love the vices which they represent. Faugh! let them hate the toads, and the spiders, and vipers of every kind.

XXXVII.

The Spaniard in New York.

MEN who have an evil work to do never seek its perpetration amid the solemn haunts of nature. True, crimes are committed there, but only by the brutally depraved, or those whom a necessity for evil has left them no choice of locality. Nature has her calm, holy look of rebuke, deterring crime. She has her ancient Pans, and Satyrs, and Fawns, peering amid the boles of stately trees, and gliding along cool valleys and leafy glades. Great, echoing voices break her awful silence; the rustling of her leaves have a solemn import, the swaying of her branches are tokens of warning, the stately tread of the wild beast mocks the beast-like aspect of the intruder, and the upspringing bird is a messenger flying heavenward with the tale, while the hooting night-owl screams forth in detestation, and with horrible cries of a retribution. No, no, God is in the woods, and go not there with the work

of demons; go to the city, where every face is marked with forbidden longings for deadly knowledge, and the brow is stamped with the seal of Cain; go there where man is, and not God, where the idea is preserved only by stately churches, closed six days in seven, because men do not like to retain God in their hearts, but all through the six days the incarnate Satan goes up and down unrebuked.

Society is a stagnant, pestilential pool, thinly coated with reeds and tall, rank weeds, upon which man treads warily. He does n't like to sink his foot within lest he expose his own rottenness and that of his neighbor, and so all tread softly, knowing that while he hides his neighbor's weak spot he covers his own also. At some time, however, one less cautious than the rest, exposes his part of the pool, and then there is a hue and cry. Then respectability is up in arms; then men denounce, and condemn, and tell of the good of society, and the necessity of an example to deter others from a like exposure. Then editors publish the fall from Dan to Beersheba, airing their dull pens with virtuous maxims, and wise old saws and warnings. In their sudden religion they talk of the Bible, and the church, and the rising generation. Oh this paper piety, this tonguey virtue, is a thing to make the fiends laugh, for it sets every sinner, man and woman, black and white, to multiplying guards and cautions,

so that the pool may be better bridged, and they with their secret vices and smoothly-covered sins may pass it over with an easy, decorous footing. Then the profligate oils his tongue and gives forth psalms, and straightens his cravat, and rents his pew; then the defaulter multiplies his checks and balances, and keeps a sharp look out, so that only suspicion looks him in the face, but not fact; then the false husband looks well to his night-key, and grows munificent to the wife, wheedles her with shows, and tickles her with finery; then the treacherous wife walks haughtily, and studies conventionalities, and lolls in her carriage, and scatters her malaria, but does not violate the *rules*. Ah! society is a nicely-adjusted balance, and it is very well that the holder of the scales is blind of sight.

Juan Cosmello, the Spaniard of whom we have before spoken, was elegant and accomplished; his wealth entitled him to the highest rank, and our republicans were not slow in their estimate of merits based upon such a foundation. His box at the Post Office showed a vast number of letters penned by dainty dames, inviting him to interviews, and lauding his attractions; but Cosmello was not gallant. He had no vices. He was passionately fond of books, fond of the ideal in woman, and artistic in all his tastes and pleasures. He had no penchant for low amours, or

exciting intrigues. The wealthy parvenue women who ride up and down Broadway, their wantonness shielded by the respectability and wealth of their pliant husbands, filled him with disgust. New York has its ten thousands of educated foreigners, admitted freely into the houses of our rich citizens. These have no ostensible means of support; and could certain items, expended by wives and daughters, be named openly in the exchequer of husbands and fathers, they would carry a strange import with them. But that is nothing to you or me, dear reader; these things are a part of the dead pool of what is called "good society," "upper tendom," and we wont put our foot into it.

Cosmello of course was Catholic, and devout also. The Spaniard always is. Indeed, he paid the priest so well that he spared him confession, or allowed the penitent to enumerate numberless peccadillos that might shame a green girl, but are unknown to the kind of man represented in Don Cosmello. While he confessed to these things, he paid for masses that would exonerate him from the most atrocious crimes. He was a Cuban by birth, where he still held vast estates, and owned more than a thousand negroes. He was an only child, and upon the death of his father he had chosen, from reasons of his own in part, which the sequel will illustrate, as well as for the gratification of

his taste, to live in New York, and entrust the management of his plantations to an agent, whose accounts, and whose movements he watched with that cupidity and jealousy which the blood of the Spaniard only can fully exhibit.

He had lived some five or six years in Abingdon Square, the front windows of his house looking out upon the paved, broad, dusty thoroughfare, relieved by a little triangle of green, ornamented with flowers and made attractive with shrubbery kept scrupulously neat, and vigorous in growth. The rear was shut in by green blinds hung from the top in the Venetian manner. Here, stretched at length on bamboo chairs and lounges, surrounded by vines and tropical plants brought, frequently, from Cuba, Cosmello literally smoked away the summer months. Habited in white linens, such as the planters use in the tropics, over which was thrown dressing gowns of brocade, his feet cased in Spanish slippers, ornamented with gold and silver, a cigar in his mouth, his eyes bent upon a book, or idly watching the leaves of the vine flickering tremulous in the sunshine, you could conceive nothing in the universe offering a more striking contrast in character to the Yankee than the one thus afforded. You would have thought the Señor a model of piety and all the cardinal virtues, to say nothing of the filial duty that induced him to go every Sunday

morning to mass with his saint-like mother, the Doña Isabella.

Doña Isabella was evidently the original after whom was modelled the son, Juan. Under the lace veil of the former looked out the same black, cruel eyes, and time had evidently sharpened up and exaggerated the peculiarity of nose to which we have before alluded. The Doña's face was colorless but clear, for she scorned to paint; her hair was without a shade of white, long, black and abundant, so much so that it seemed to be always ready to fall about her stately neck, as if its proud meshes disliked a formal fixture. She was always habited in black, with ornaments of jet, except a diamond cross of inestimable value, which slept upon her bosom. Her arms were plump, but the little hand looked shrivelled and old, and that told the whole story of age, quite as much as the quietude of her high Spanish blood. Whatever might have been her former life, however numerous the sins registered or effaced upon the book of memory, her many prayers and abundant gifts to the church one would think might fairly entitle her to an entire obliteration, for she was now a devotee of the most approved kind.

The Spanish woman does not affiliate at all with those of Yankee-land. She treats the latter with a haughty reserve which at once precludes all approach

to that familiar good-will, or ill-will, so uppermost in our Americans of the sex. Madam Cosmello, as she was called in the neighborhood, did not like America in the least, and so she lived from year to year, in the vain hope that Juan would return to his estates in Cuba. For this reason the whole upper part of the house was filled with innumerable boxes, and packages never opened, but kept ready for re-shipment when the welcome time of return should have arrived. She never penetrated at all to this region. She knew little and cared little for the vast wealth supposed to be contained there. She had an old black woman, who was her especial attendant, who passed whole hours daily in combing and brushing the Doña's hair, in bracing and unbracing jewellery, folds, clasps, and all the paraphernalia of an indolent, luxurious woman's attire. She always ushered in the priest to confess Madam, and sat with her back to the door till he came out, and did n't think it strange that the priest was young, and staid long to shrive so holy a dame.

The rest of the household consisted of an old man, the counterpart of the old black woman, who likewise was a mere machine in the hands of his master. The neighbors knew that these negroes were slaves, and did not hesitate to inform them that they might be free in this country, where everything is acknowledged to be free but public opinion, which is an arrant

slave to popular whim. The old black man and his wife grinned, listened with a quick, monkey kind of glee, and repeated with a short, quick laugh—

“Free? what am him?” and then went on to cook, and wash, and laid down to sleep utterly unconscious that they lacked man’s best earthly boon, the right to himself.

We have spoken of one other member of the household. The woman with the wen, whose position in the family it might be difficult to divine. Madam Cosmello saw no company, unless it might be upon the occasion of an emigration of one of their old neighbors to the country, when a stately Spanish hospitality might be extended for a few weeks only. The house was richly furnished—that is, the halls, dining-rooms, parlors, and the rooms of the mother and son. Thus far Doña Isabella superintended herself, and of course everything was rich, massive, and luxurious, yet withal there was an obscure, gloomy look, inseparable from the Spaniard. The rest of the house, what was in it, either in garret or cellar, who or what came and went, she neither knew nor cared. They kept a carriage and horses, but as there was no stable attached to the premises, these were boarded out at the livery stable, and brought to the house at certain hours daily for the Doña to take an airing, and at other times as Cosmello required.

Whatever might have been the habits of the son, none of the men whom we have seen were ever admitted under the roof, and they in fact knew little or nothing of their employer, if we except the one called Skillings, who had been serviceable to him in a variety of ways. It will be seen that he gave them a stipulated task to perform; that he trained them years to the task; that he kept them in his pay year by year, that they might be ready to perform it, and yet he kept himself utterly, and entirely apart from them, and that to such a degree that they could not expose him without criminating themselves in the deadliest manner; indeed, they were never quite certain that a crime had been committed, except as they coupled the surveillance they had established about Mr. Dinsmoor’s house with the disappearance of his child, as set forth in the papers of the day.

It was true Skillings had met Cosmello carrying an object in his arms, enveloped in a cloak, which he had delivered into his own, with directions at the same time to proceed onward, down an unfrequented street in the direction of the North River. Here a carriage had stopped and he laid the burden in the bottom of the carriage. He knew nothing more, and the two brothers Van Dam knew less except by surmise, as they were only appointed to watch night after night in case they should be called upon. Peter,

the driver, knew nothing at all. He had often taken mysterious journeys, and conveyed mysterious packages, but as the Spaniard paid him liberally on these and all other occasions, he did n't feel called upon to spoil his own trade by saying the package on this particular night was by no means a quiet one; that it struggled as if convulsed, though it gave out no audible sound. It was quite still, however, when the woman with the wen came out and took it into the basement door, and proceeded with it to one of the arches of the cellar; he saw she went down cellar with it, for the light came up through the gratings of the sidewalk. He heard nothing, however.

I wonder that poets, and philosophers, and philanthropists, (I like this alliteration,) do not try more to accumulate money. They lack but this to enable them to rule the world. Gold is the god of it; only put gold into good hands, and good work can be done with it, aye, and it can be shown how filthy lucre is in filthy hands. The man who has an ill work to do need n't look far for his tools. Let him watch the shambling wretch who frequents the pave, his open hands dangling beside him, and these hands will clasp readily over the bribe, and do the work. Why not induce him by gold to a good rather than an evil work?

XXXVIII.

Cast out of Eden.

THE thread of our story must now retrograde awhile to the early years of the parties. Juan Marcou had been educated at one of the academies in Maine, at which place he met Mr. Dinsmoor, a student at the same institution. It is well known that thirty or forty years before our story, the State of Maine carried on an extensive commerce with the island of Cuba. The intelligent ship-masters of that maritime State were admitted on terms of easy familiarity with the planters of the island, and hence their sons were often sent over to this country for the purposes of education. Young Marcou was one of the number. He went through his academic course there, and was thence admitted to the higher privileges of the college. In each, young Dinsmoor was his rival. The Spaniard, brilliant as he really was, found himself thrown into the back-ground by the clear, penetrat-

ing, active intellect of his compeer. Besides this, Dinsmoor had a frank joyousness, a ready repartee, and confidence in his own abilities that made him indifferent to mere success, and rendered him not only a favorite in his class, but a favorite also wherever he appeared. He was one of those children of the light upon whom the kindly stars beam benignly, and who from the first are designed to achieve the utmost of their desires. He was not wealthy—indeed his resources were so limited in kind that he “taught school” in the periods of vacation to eke out the expenses of education. It had been the dear wish of his mother’s heart to see him a “Preacher of the Gospel,” as she termed it, by which she meant one duly authenticated to declaim from the pulpit; but the good sense of the young man taught him that there is broad, manly, far-reaching preaching to be done from the desk of the merchant, as well as from the pulpit of the church, and hence he had served his time as clerk, briefly as book-keeper, and finally found himself one of the most enterprising and successful of our wealthy New York merchants.

Marcou, as we have seen, was altogether the reverse of this. It is well known that the Yankee character contains all the solidity of the English, combined with the vivacity of the French. It is persevering and reliable like the German, solid and

penetrating like the English, vivacious like the French. The Spaniard, on the contrary, uncrossed by any blood save that of the Moors for so many centuries, has become stereotyped in a few leading traits which seem to give a coloring to all others. The old Spanish chivalry which once induced him to shed his blood for “his God, his country, and his ladye fair,” has degenerated into a callous, obtuse, jealous pride, as selfish as it is irreligious and ungallant. This pride makes him imagine that all that goes on around him has some reference to him personally, and thus he magnifies himself a thousand-fold. He is morose, jealous, egotistic, unscrupulous, and vindictive. He is a Catholic, because that and the Inquisition harmonize best with his own exaggerated self-love, and gratify best his own spirit of revenge at the presence of real or imaginary wrongs.

To these national traits of character, most likely to engender antagonism between the young men, was finally added another cause, deeper and more inveterate in kind. Marcou was, as we have shown, handsome in person, intellectual, grave, and unblemished in reputation; the well-known heir also of vast estates, while young Dinsmoor had his fortune to carve with his own hands.

At the house where the two young men boarded in their college days, was a girl, just merging into

womanhood, of such rare and feminine loveliness, that each found himself her admirer, deeply and fervently, before he was aware of more than a common interest. But to see Fannie Lyndsey was to love her, just as it is impossible to refrain from loving what is in itself all loveliness. We must love angels, and allow angels to follow their own willing, strive to gain-say as we choose. The whole nature of Fannie was so exquisitely toned, from the low rich flow of her voice to the soft wave of her yellow hair, that she seemed a fair instrument giving out pure harmonies. She was devoid of every species of affectation, for where all truth is embodied in a womanly shape, these little fibbings of vanity are out of place. Where a woman is in herself lovely she needs no pretences, and she may well leave *seeming* for those who lack the *real*.

If you saw Fannie, with her grave, earnest face bent over a book, her pale brown hair, so golden in the light, done up in any simple knot, the clear sweep of her eyebrows defined by a line of black, and long black lashes brooding over her eyes, you would be puzzled to guess the color of them; for the hair intimated blue, and the eyebrows black. But speak to her, and the face so lately grave, "brightened all over" with smiles, not dimples, for she did not belong to the coquette class, but clear, rippling, child-like smiles, and her candid eyes turned upward to

your face, were neither black, nor blue, but a soft, tender brown; and as you could not help looking admiration, the blue veins of her softly-shaded temples, and the bluer ones that threaded her neck and rounded shoulders, were veiled by a faint tinge of rose, deepening more and more if you continued to gaze, till her eyes, but not her head, lowered upon the book, and she touched her red lips slightly with her tongue, and put on a sort of resigned expression.

It was so sweet, so girlish a look, that the young men were willing to bring her books to read, and then steal upon her unawares for the sake of receiving it; and as Fannie never suspected the motive, her pure blood came and went, with the breathings of her pure soul, in total unconsciousness. Fannie was no scholar. She read what pleased her, and talked naively, and pleasantly about it, careless whether she talked wisely or well. She did not affect the critic, but somehow the womanly instincts of Fannie always reached something clearer, and better, than her more profound masculine friends had thought. So her opinions and judgments were waited for with interest always, for it was plain to see that all she thus uttered sprang from her own consciousness, underived either from books or observation.

To Marcou, accustomed to the large, black eyes, and swimming movements of the Spanish beauties,

with their fiery passions and vindictive jealousies, Fannie was a perpetual revelation of pure, heavenly beauty. She calmed his excitable nature, soothed his dark, unbridled passions, and lured him like a pleasant harmony out into ideal paths. He loved her deeply and reverently—far more deeply, far more reverently than Dinsmoor loved. She was to him the bright particular star of his destiny. Other stars had gleamed upon his horizon, for the warmer temperament of his people had given him experiences unknown to the American youth; but these had failed to fix his wayward, haughty heart, and now they all waned before the pure lustre of this young star of the east. At night he stood beneath her window, the moon upon his upturned brow, and sang in a clear, manly voice the songs of his country to the sound of his guitar. Soft impassioned melodies he sang from the depths of his own heart, and Fannie listened and wept, and wept and listened. Beautiful flowers were laid upon her table, rare fruits, and a bird, so trained that he whistled clearly a Troubadour song, the very utterance of the divine passion of love, hung at her window, the gift of Marcou. Alas! the fair child did n't know the usages of a more cultivated people—she did n't know that to accept the gift was to justify the love by which it was prompted.

Did Fannie love the youth? Let woman answer,

woman whose wayward heart holds so many tenants—woman to whom love is an easy fancy, not a deep, absorbing passion. When Marcou knelt at her feet, in all the fervor of his poetic nature, he seemed to her like something far off and imaginary—like something visionary and ideal, such as she read of in books. He lifted her out of herself, and she became an honored Spanish lady, leaning from her balcony, worshipped of a gallant knight, who laid poetry, passion, wealth, worship at her feet. Dreams—fervent, beautiful dreams lapped her in fairy Elysium, and she was no longer the simple Yankee girl, with her domestic instincts, and little round of every-day duties. With her hand clasped in that of her lover, she wandered along the beautiful waters of the Androscoggin, listening to the legendary tales of the Moorish conquerors of Spain, (for Marcou boasted of the old Moorish and Castilian blood in his veins,) joining her sweet voice to his and the music of his guitar, till the tears gushed to her eyes, and her whole soul responded to something she knew not what of happiness. Marcou, chivalric and generous, worshipped her as he would the impersonation of Mary the Virgin, for this was to him his paradisaical era, one to which he looked back as the first pair looked back upon their lost Eden.

Blame not poor Fannie. The Yankee girl in those days knew so little of the pure sentiment of love, so

little of the acknowledged rules of courtly acceptance. Perhaps the next evening she walked with George Dinsmoor, who loved her so purely, in such a straightforward, manly way, that she understood him at once. He did not talk romance, and little Fannie was not really romantic, young as she was. He sang songs, but they were simple, affectionate ones, illustrative of every-day feelings, and Fannie felt no oppression, no wild, vague imaginings, but hand in hand with her American lover, she wandered up and down, now tossing a pebble into the water, now leaping over the hillocks, and now binding her head with wild crimson berries, and tufts of the arbor-vitæ. Her gay laugh softened as they sauntered under the tall branches of the pines, swaying, and whispering in the twilight.

Had the lovers looked around, they might have seen the young Spaniard, leaning deathly pale against a tree, his lip parted, with a streak of foam covering the small white teeth, and the perspiration standing in cold drops upon his brow. That fair, innocent girl was the angel to shut the gates of Eden against the youth, and forever. Once he drew a poignard from his bosom and shook it in threatening-wise at the lovers, and then he hid it again, and watched their movements.

That night he encountered Dinsmoor, and whispered fiercely,

"You have breathed upon the lily—wear it if you

will. But remember the vengeance of a Spaniard never sleeps. Death cannot, will not come till I have my revenge. Look to it."

To poor Fannie he wrote, "I loved you with the concentrated love of ages of loving hearts, and those Spanish hearts. I hate you now in the same proportion. Go, miserable coquette! Go, poor, weak trifler! I could not love you again if I would."

And poor Fannie read the words with a thrill of horror. She dared not meet him—and was glad to learn he had left Brunswick abruptly. One thing was observable, the beautiful bird that had been taught to whistle its love-song, lay dead in the bottom of the cage. It had sang its last love-note. So had Marcou. And it may be that Fannie also felt as if a bright, beautiful chamber of her heart, wherein were sounding glad old anthems and sweet madrigals, had been suddenly sealed up; for she wept long, and even Dinsmoor, happy and joyous as was his nature, could not fail to weep with her. Which would the masculine reader choose, the deep, heart-tear of little Fannie, or the sweet confiding smile with which she laid her hand in that of her American lover?

And so years and years passed away. Marcou returned to his tropical home—he travelled in Europe—but everywhere the image of Dinsmoor clasping the hand of the fair, tender-hearted Fannie, haunted him with its

never-sleeping call for vengeance. He never lost sight of them. He knew all the movements of Dinsmoor. Indeed, his agent was instructed to correspond with him, as his fortunes advanced, and open commercial relations with him, always carefully concealing the name of his principal; and thus it will be seen that Cosmello and Marcou were the same person. He knew of the growth of Imogen, of the pure, tranquil life of the husband and wife, and this served but to augment his hatred; for this picture of a wife, content and reliable, beautiful, yet careless of admiration, peaceful and secluded, presented an aspect soothing to the senses; and such a life, to which would have been superadded all the dreams of poetry and romance, all the devotion of a heart left free to only love, might have been his but for the intervention of Dinsmoor; and often he might be heard to say to himself,—

“He shall drink of the gall and wormwood as I have drank. He shall know the desert waste through which I have walked. He shall eat the Dead Sea apples as I have eaten.”

And there he stood morning and evening, watching the windows of the house, gazing at Fannie as she came and went, now a girl soft and winning as then, —but he felt no return of the old tenderness. His self-love had been too deeply wounded. He saw that the hearts of both were concentrated in Imogen, and

through her the blow should fall. Time had so changed both of the men that Dinsmoor often passed his deadly enemy unconscious that he did so; and Fannie, as well as Dinsmoor too, had ceased to think of the threat of the Spaniard. The years had rolled away with them so happily, that, as it has been shown, neither dreamed of evil. So happy were they, that pitying spirits sent a foreboding pang to usher in the deadly sequence, just as they did to the generous, loving Moor, when he cried,—

“If it were now to die, 't were now to be
Most happy, for my soul hath her content
So absolute, that not another comfort
Like to this succeeds in unknown fate;”

and so Mr. Dinsmoor paused all at once and bethought himself, that in all this he had not acknowledged and blessed the good God “who sendeth songs in the night-season,” and then he said, “To-morrow, Fannie;” and to-morrow, when it came, the song had ceased.

XXXIX.

The Slave.

THE plan of the little fête given by Imogen to her young friends on the anniversary of her birth-day, was fully known to Skillings, who, having procured a package of pocket-handkerchiefs, combs, cheap embroideries, &c., contrived to gain admission into the kitchen under pretence of effecting a sale with the female servants of Mr. Dinsmoor. Here, by adroit flatteries and cajoleries with the girls, he not only effected a good trade, but learned particulars which he communicated to the Spaniard, who now felt that Imogen was of an age and sufficiently hardy to be removed. Various plans had been devised before now, but abandoned one after another as too hazardous. But this night the evil fates lent their aid, and the child, as we have seen, disappeared.

She had scarcely left the car of the Newsboy when she felt herself suddenly lifted in the arms of some one so silently, that, exhilarated by the sports of the

evening, and expecting every moment Charles Gardner would make his appearance, she imagined it was his arms that encircled her, and she struggled laughingly to be put upon the ground. But when the man pressed something over her lips and threw a cloak over her head, she struggled more violently from terror as well as suffocation.

"I will not hurt you," whispered the man; "I will carry you home, child," and he moved rapidly onward. She knew nothing more till she opened her eyes in the gloomy vault of the cellar, where a woman was bathing her face with water. She had, as we have shown, received a parcel from the coachman, which Marcou, in hurried words, had told her to dispose of in this way; accordingly, she laid the burden down on the floor of the cellar, went forward with light in hand and closed the inner door opening upon the grate in the side-walk, entered the vault, which was partially used for wine, and drawing the door to after her, bolted it upon the inner side.

The water revived the child, and she drank it eagerly, looking all the time into the woman's face, who made no attempt to speak, nor did she exhibit any signs of sympathy. Imogen's dress and hair were disarranged, and with intuitive nicety she smoothed them with her hand and turned toward the door.

"Let me out, please," she demanded.

The woman laughed a scornful laugh and pushed her aside. Imogen now cast a glance around the dismal brick walls, and a sudden panic caused her to scream violently. The woman did not speak, but caught her head between her two hands and thus held her mouth confined.

The child struggled for liberation, but the woman told her she would not let her go till she promised to be silent. She gave the desired pledge, and was released.

"What am I brought here for?" asked the delicate little creature, to whom unkindness or severity had never before come.

"To die, perhaps," was the reply. "It doesn't much matter."

Imogen still could not realize her situation; it looked a terrible dream. She, so tenderly beloved, so gently reared, standing in the presence of this dark, fierce looking woman, surrounded by cold brick walls, the darkness hardly obliterated by the dim waxen taper coil which the woman held in her hand; everything had so much unreal about it, that her little mind went back to the stories of the Arabian Nights, about caves, and genii, and sorceresses, and she felt as if suddenly involved in mazes of the kind which would soon disappear and reveal something sweet and beautiful, for she was of a poetic, hopeful make, and could

not well receive suffering into her experience. Accordingly she approached the woman, and bursting into tears, said,

"Dear, kind lady, carry me home, please. I'm such a little girl it could n't do any good to kill me. Everybody loves me, and papa and mamma will break their hearts if I don't go back."

This sweet childish appeal lost its effect. The woman pushed her aside and listened at the door; she spoke through the key-hole a few words in Spanish, and then turned to Imogen, who was now weeping bitterly. She held up her finger, "Whist, whist!" she uttered in a threatening voice.

"Now mark me—do you see this dirk? well I shall put it through your heart if you attempt to speak or cry. Will you be still?"

The child nodded assent.

"You will? well then, I will take you up stairs, way up, up; you must not speak, you must go very softly. After you are there we will see what we will do. Will you be still?" she asked again.

Poor Imogen, shivering with the damp, promised again, and the woman, holding the naked dirk and taper in one hand, and Imogen in the other, went out. On the way up Imogen heard the steps of a third person behind her, but she dared not look round. On reaching the attic she was placed in a room under the

roof, the small windows of which were hidden on the outside by iron tracery painted white, so that they could not be distinguished from the cornice which ornamented the entire side of the building. These windows were grated upon the inside so closely as to add still more to the gloominess of the room. A rich carpet had been hastily thrown upon the floor, a lounge and other articles of convenience.

As the woman was about to leave the room, carrying the light with her, Imogen leaped up breathless with terror. "Don't leave me here, don't please, dear lady. Oh send me back to dear mamma, send me back, do please; I'll never tell, I'll never say a word only about your goodness and pity;" and she clung to her robes, whispering out her words between her tears and sobs, fearful to be heard by other ears.

The woman pushed her back into the room in silence, and bolted the door as she went out. Imogen fell heavily upon the floor. How long she lay there she could not tell, for upon opening her eyes she had been laid upon the couch, and some one was holding her little hand in his.

"Papa, dear papa, is it you?" whispered the child.

There was no reply, and she drew back her hand, and was silent; but the darkness of the room, the mysterious silence, and the presence of an invisible

human being whose appearance she could not even imagine wrought upon her with fearful power.

"Oh mamma, mamma!" she ejaculated, giving way to a low wail, far more touching than a more elaborate grief. A light suddenly appeared, and then Imogen saw that the tall dark man whom she had often seen in the street, was seated in a heavy chair beside her. He did not speak, but bringing the light down near to her face, he put back the tangled hair and studied her face closely.

"The same eyes, the same golden hair, but far less beautiful; but there is his look—his, to blast me, and madden me to vengeance," he muttered between his teeth; and then he gave a glass to her lips, and bade her drink. It was dark and foaming, and the child hesitated.

"Is it poison? will it kill me?"

"Drink," repeated the Spaniard. The child obeyed, lifting at the same time her eyes to his face, and then she folded her little hands, and said in a clear solemn voice,—

"God sees you, and hears me—I shall die, but he will come to you and call for me—remember;" but the drug was too potent for her, the lids folded themselves over her innocent eyes, and she slept; a moment more, and she started up and repeated, "deliver us from evil," as if her little heart had been praying all

the while. Her hands were folded nun-like over her bosom, and a cross she wore about her neck had been grasped between them, rendering the appearance even more similar. The Spaniard, with instinctive reverence, observed the attitude, and the cross, and his lips muttered their accustomed "Sacre."

As Imogen slept, whether it was the effect of the drug or the terror, I do not know, but she became so deadly pale that Marcou was alarmed, and put his finger to the delicate wrist to feel if the pulse beat. Imogen's little finger's clung to the cross more tightly. Poor child! she wore it merely as an ornament, but now as the vengeful Catholic saw her cling to the sacred symbol of his faith he felt himself rebuked; for vindictive as he was, he was devout in the Spanish way. He was glad when the door opened, and the woman with the wen entered, and knelt down and scanned with him the face of the sleeper. She too, touched the wrist and whispered, "there is no danger."

As the soft, dark hand rested over the wrist, you couldn't help following it up the arm, round and beautiful and naked to the shoulder, except where the meshes of a black Spanish veil swept lightly over it; and then to the superb bust and neck, where was no wen at all, but a fair ivory tower, curved with pride, and the veins upon either side swelling with passion. Her black hair was partially confined at the back with

silver bodkins, but was allowed to fall in waving masses nearly to her feet. Large, black eyes shone under their finely cut brows, which were contracted sharply over them at this moment.

"Juan," she said, in a quick voice. The Spaniard made no reply.

"Juan"—there was something appealing in the tone, and Marcou looked up.

"You told me she was a child, a mere child."

"She is nothing more."

The woman pointed to the form rounding to maturity, and the limbs emerging from the unmeaning shape of childhood; and at this moment Imogen turned her face more to the light, and revealed the lips full and coral—bright, even while her cheek was pale—her masses of hair had fallen over the couch, and laid like a net-work of gold.

"Juan," repeated the woman.

"Don't be a fool, Nonina," responded the other.

"I am no fool, that you know, Juan. I am no slave at heart, though your thrall—I am a slave only in my love, but even that can yield to ———," and she compressed her lip and turned away.

"Nina," said her companion, softly.

The woman turned her head toward him, but in a cold, haughty manner.

"Nonina, you can be a fiend, when you will—but

is it not better to be yourself, Juan's great, glorious creature of passion, and beauty, and genius? What should you fear from a child like that? I tell you, were she ten times the white angel she is, I should hate her still, because of the mother's blood, and the father's look in her."

The woman threw herself at his feet, and clasped him in her arms amid a shower of tears.

"Blessed Mary! how I love this man!" she ejaculated. "Juan, I am your bond-slave, your thrall, your chattel, anything but your wife, and that I spurn. Give me your love, your soul and heart, Juan, and I am content. When I lose that, I lose all. Life will be no life to Nina. Tell me you cannot, will not love that child, Juan, and I will curse myself a thousand fold for your dear sake; a thousand-fold, dear Juan, for hell would be heaven shared with you, and heaven hell without you."

Juan drew the wild blasphemous creature to his heart, and promised, and promised truly all she required. Nonina was, as she intimated, the slave of Juan—one of those beautiful quadroons so marvellously fair in person, and vehement in passion. She had been educated with care, danced and sang, and touched the guitar with equal taste and skill, composed music and poetry with grace and precision, and read as Juan did all the works of genius of several nations. For

many years, however, her talents and whole life had been dedicated to her young master, whom she loved as we have seen, and whose projects she advanced with a never-failing inventiveness and zeal.

Alas! unhappy woman! everywhere, in every aspect of man, his slave in one shape or another. Woe to her, woe, woe, if love work not out her redemption. Woe, woe if the "much loving" do not open heaven's gates to her bruised and broken heart. Does she stoop in loving? Or is man her master? her God? her head? and through him is her vision upward? Are her sins his or her own? In loving, does she become defiled? or does this element of the great God of love absorb her into himself, and she is little less than angel? Think of these things, Reader, for indeed we are all blind children, needing the light.

An hour after this interview the rich voice of Nonina was chanting her hymn to the Virgin, she kneeling in her voluptuous robes before the crucifix, reverently shaded by its snowy curtain through the day, put aside only for prayer, and then screened lest any sin should be visible to its pure presence:—

Holy Virgin, loving, trusting,
Uttering only thy "behold;"
Oh thou undefiled, dear Mary,—
Angels come not as of old—
Listen, Mary, list, oh list.

Angels come not to our longing,
 Though we utter our "behold,"
 Mercy! oh sweet, loving Mary,
 Virgin pure, and Virgin cold,
 Listen, Mary, list, oh list.

And her face fell to her knees as she poured out her fervent prayer to the pure soul of divine whiteness, for which the true woman longs deepest, when loving deepest. Thus sang Nonina, and the voice of Doña Isabella responded where she sat in her own bower, thinking of the past, and longing for her tropical home. The neighbors heard nightly the songs of the Catholic family, so quiet, and living so entirely to themselves, and they felt a respect for them in spite of the bitter prejudices of religion. Would the interior of a Protestant house bear to be fully revealed to the world? We have shown that that of the pious Catholic had its secret skeleton.

XI.

The Wreck.

WE must now return to our Newsboy, whom we left totally insensible, stretched at length upon the floor of Mr. Dinsmoor's hall. Rack-o'-bones would have had him conveyed back to the little car, but the tumult in the house had aroused the bereaved mother somewhat from her stupor of grief, and she slowly descended the stairs. A few hours had wrought fearfully upon her. She had not grown old, nor bent, nor distorted, but she had grown unearthly looking. Her face was marble white, and her eyes receded inward with a yellow, preternatural light in them. She did not speak at all, nor weep, but seeing Charles Gardner standing pale as a cloth at one side, she opened her matronly arms, and the beautiful boy fell within them, sobbing violently. She laid her hand upon his cheek and patted it as if she would soothe a sick and wearied child.

"Poor, dear, Fannie," murmured the husband, taking her in his arms tenderly. She looked inquiringly into his face and then stooped down over the Newsboy. A clearer light grew into her scattered senses, and she sat down upon the floor and lifted his head into her lap. She rocked her body back and forth, and ejaculated, "Oh dear! oh dear! can you tell me what it all means? where is Imogen?" and she looked from one to the other in so pitiful a way that tears were in all eyes.

Dr. M—— now arrived, and Bob was bled, where he lay, and at length he opened his eyes, but very faintly, and whispered,

"We's poor, and ignorant, ma'am, but we does the best we knows."

"Ah! that you do, my poor boy," responded Rack-o'-bones. "You will rest in the bosom of Jesus, Bob, when them that despised you will be cast out."

"Who is this poor youth?" asked Mr. Dinsmoor, who stood supporting Fannie in his arms.

"He is a Newsboy, without father, or mother, or friend in the wide world," responded Rack-o'-bones, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron, and then smoothing it down again with habitual care.

Bob had now relapsed into insensibility, and as they were about lifting him up from the floor Fannie motioned them to follow her, and they bore him up

stairs and laid him upon a bed in a room adjoining the one in which Imogen had slept. When this was done, Fannie entered her daughter's room and moved from place to place, now taking down her little robes and fondling them against her cheeks, now looking from the window where the dark night still brooded. Glancing into the bath she saw it was empty, and she motioned to have the marble basin filled, and then she smoothed back the sheet and smiled, and sat down in the large chair by the bed-side and listened and waited.

"Oh my God! this is greater than I can bear," cried the miserable husband and father. "Fannie—Imogen—" and he wept aloud.

"Hush!" said Fannie rising and putting her cold arms about his neck. "She will soon be back, and to-morrow she shall be christened, the dear, darling, angel child!"

"Oh to-morrow! how black all futures will look to us, dear Fannie," replied the husband, smoothing back the hair which already was beginning to whiten with her sorrow.

"No, *he* said she would come back—and he knows, for he prays, George, he prays to God, and we did n't;" and she burst out into wild paroxysms of tears.

The noble father, so calm, so large-souled, felt the

rebuke, and he folded her more closely to his bosom, crying,

"My lamb, my blessed lamb, I should have been prophet and priest to thee, while I have been but of the earth. God knows I have loved thee, but I should have walked heavenward with thee. Forgive me, Fannie, forgive me," and he held her nearer to his heart. But she pushed him back and looked into his face. Oh that mute, uncomprehending look was terrible to the poor husband, and he walked back and forth in the room with a slow, measured tread, as if the mind refused to take in the extent of the evil which had befallen him.

Ah, the good Father is merciful in this. Sorrow, clad in her sable vesture, knocks at one chamber of the soul after another, and is unwillingly admitted into each, but she goes on, closing no door behind her, weeping and wringing her hands as she goes, till at length she has circled one and all, and then she sits down, black and mournful, and the light goes out of the soul, unless we reach upward and kindle it again from the dear altar of God's love.

Awhile Fannie watched him vacantly, and then seeing a book just as Imogen had left it, with the ivory folder between the leaves, she took it up where the child had pencil-marked a passage, and read aloud as follows:—

"A little bud, at break of day,
Within its bosom found
A drop of dew, in which a ray
Of sunlight had been drowned.

'I'll shut,' she said, 'the dew-drop up,
And hold it in my heart;
I'll stay a bud, and from my cup
The dew shall not depart.

Sweet drop of dew! so thou and I
The sun shall not disclose—
No rainbow thou along the sky,
And never I a rose.' "

"Read it again, George," said Fannie. "'I'll stay a bud'—I think it means something I don't quite understand, something like the beautiful thoughts of our child."

And Mr. Dinsmoor did read the simple words which had arrested the fancy of Imogen, over and over. It was there that her mind had last rested—the idea had prefigured something in her own pure heart, and now to the father they conveyed a meaning far beyond their apparent import, for words are only words, till some great necessity in our hearts gives them a meaning, and then they are like the burning scroll written upon the palace wall of Belshazzar, which no eye saw save his, and no man could decipher, but the prophet of God. Ah! suffering is the revealer of mysteries.

Upon reading the letter of Flashy Jack, Mr. Dins-

moor had been much surprised to find the officer who brought Bob to the door had so suddenly disappeared, most especially as here seemed work for him to do. Another, however, made his appearance, and that young gentleman was soon put under arrest, as well as the girl called Maggie. Upon their examination nothing appeared to criminate either, and they were at once set at liberty, while the whole force of the police was bent to capture the two Van Dams and the man called Skillings.

The two first, however, were already down past the Hook, for able-bodied seamen are always in demand, and they had both shipped under assumed names, and with a full sailor rig, and tarpaulins upon their heads, it would have been difficult to identify them any way.

Skillings, on the contrary, made his appearance at the Astor House, an invalid gentleman, who had been lamed in one of our many railway accidents. He paid well, saw no company, and finally sailed to Cuba for his health.

Flashy Jack, as may be inferred, could not well apply himself to any settled avocation. His blood was vagrant. Like the Jew, descended from a stock who wandered forty years, dwelling in tents, and thence become endowed with a never-obliterated desire for locomotion, so Flashy Jack came and went, always

hating to repeat himself, disliking this employment because he had followed it three days, and that because he had followed it a week. The place in which he had twice slept became the place to be afterwards avoided. He appeared at intervals as a star at the theatre, but as he could not well endure to repeat the same thing over night after night, as the star must do when he has once mastered the impersonation of a great part, Jack ceased to be a profitable feature of the boards.

He was fond of going and coming, like Wordsworth brook, at his own sweet will, and saw no reason why he should n't ride and sail, smoke and lounge with any other fashionable loafer, who looks with contempt and disgust upon all continuous manly effort. Jack, with a hundred dollars in his pocket, saw no occasion for work till this was expended. He differed somewhat from the mere fashionable loafer, and I think the difference placed Jack in the superior light. Your fashionable loafer, when short of funds, is not ashamed to sponge upon others. He invites himself to innumerable dinners, and *petits soupers*. He dangles in the wake of some fashionable woman, who takes him about as she would her poodle-dog. He flatters the wife, and toadies to the husband, and you will find each of them has contributed to the support of the poor, contemptible parasite, who is too

mean for the lower regions, or Satan would have clutched him long ago.

Jack, on the contrary, earned his right to loafdom by spasmodic toil, and honest money-getting. He would have scorned to take money from any one except as he had given an equivalent; and as to taking it from a woman, I do believe Flashy Jack would have been nauseated at the very thought. By this it will be seen that fashionable loafdom, that is, the exhibition of it amongst upper-tendom, is of a much more revolting order than amongst a lower rank in life; and indeed I am of the opinion that fashionable vices are far more vicious than the same things upon a lower scale. I do not see that the unblushing woman who rides in her coach, earned in her own way, is a whit lower in morals than the unblushing woman who leads the same life, and lounges in the same way in a carriage purchased by her husband, screened only by the name of a man whom she calls husband, but in heart despises. I look at facts, and mind names very little.

Flashy Jack would find himself sometimes driven to exertion quite unexpectedly; but as his resources were unfailing, he might be seen selling papers, working on board of a lighter, or starring it at a theatre, only because some unlucky Newsboy had sunk under fatigue and exposure. Then Flashy Jack nursed

him after his days of toil, and provided the few comforts his simple nature claimed, and finally buried him away in his obscure grave, just as he buried the good deed in his own bosom.

Flashy Jack had found so many poor wretches starving for lack of bread, freezing from lack of fuel, or gone mad from vice and misery, that he emptied his pockets to relieve them, and went to work again as if these benevolent impulses of his were the commonest things in the world; as if everybody would have done the same things. On one of these occasions he once said to Bob, quite in an ill-used way, like a man who might exclaim as one of our erudite cabinet members once did, "Our sufferings is intolerable":

"Bob," he said, "now you are naturally virtuous; I aint. I like to be about town. You don't care a d—n for a cigar, neither for a mint-julep, a glass of brandy, or a glass of whiskey. I like them all within bounds. You like to work, I want to lay off. Now, this makes a difference between us, Bob. You make me think of the twelve apostles, leaving out Judas. I am in no way pious, rather the reverse of it. I don't like to give, hang me if I do; and yet all these lazy loafers get themselves into one fix after another, and I have to get 'em out. I have to pay for their laziness, and all their vile appetites. I can't lay off a day,

because I must work to keep them from keeling way over."

To this Bob replied, "We's very ignorant, Jack, but we knows better nor them, and must use our lights; and on the whole, I thinks it nowise bad for you, seeing you've got the heart, Jack. I thinks, Jack, you was made for a something handsome, and above-board;" and the Newsboy looked admiringly at the dashing exterior, enveloping the no less dashing impulses of Flashy Jack.

XLI.

Unconsidered Trifles.

THE third day after Bob had been knocked down upon the steps of Mr. Dinsmoor's house, while there were yet no tidings of the lost Imogen, and the Newsboy still hovered between two worlds, Flashy Jack made his appearance at the little car. He found Rack-o'-bones faithfully nursing the child Dady, though she had been compelled to resort to begging in order to meet their few wants. The good creature told all she knew of the events of the last few days, and Flashy Jack recounted in his turn the particulars of his arrest and releasement, which was insufficient to throw any light upon the subject. He had known Cosmello as a man of wealth and fashion about town, but had never coupled him in the least with the hardened ruffians whom he kept in pay. Jack lacked that clear, pure insight which distinguished Bob, whose instincts were so much better than other men's reason.

After listening to the details of Rack-o'-bones, tossing Dady in the air, and teaching her to hunt his pockets for money, Flashy Jack turned to go.

"You'll be having a hard time, mother, I'm thinking, now poor Bob's gone. Here's some rhino, too heavy for my pockets, mother—fashionable cut, you see, makes them stick out—I wish you'd take it. The truth is, I have too much money half the time in my pockets, and people that take it do me a kindness. Now no thanks, mother, I'm the grateful one," and Jack darted out of the car as if ashamed of himself. Jack did n't halve his money as you and I would have done with our best friend, Reader; no, he gave every "red cent," as he said with a sort of exultation, slapping his hands over his pockets after buttoning them up.

"Now, Jack, you loon, go to work will you, what right have you to be going round when people need your work, who don't know how to work themselves, butter-fingered people, letting everything slip through? Go to work, Jack, and done with your squirming." Jack addressed this to himself as he ran up the steps of Mr. Dinsmoor's house.

"I must know how Bob gets on, for the boys'll want to know," he said to himself as an apology for the liberty he was taking.

Flashy Jack was ushered into the darkened room

where a nurse moved stealthily from place to place, and in a chair at the head of the bed sat Mrs. Dinsmoor, white and still, and looking at the face of the Newsboy, which gave little indications of life. The room was so cool, so dainty nice, and Bob, with his poor, aching head resting on those white pillows, looked so unlike Bob, sleeping here and there by the wayside, that Jack was affected with a sense of gratitude and happiness for his friend that quite subdued him to tears, and he stooped over him long and tenderly, wiping his eyes, for it seemed to Jack that a few hours would close the scene forever upon this world. He took the thin hand and pressed it softly. Bob opened his eyes and closed them heavily again, but he returned the pressure shortly after, and this was a comfort; so Jack went away in silence, for who was there to suppose that the Newsboy had a friend?

A few hours after the departure of Flashy Jack, the surgeons would have removed Bob to a hospital, but Fannie pleaded so earnestly that he might remain, for somehow she had learned to expect something from Imogen through him, that her wishes were complied with. Accordingly, the Newsboy was placed upon a table and the delicate operation of trepanning performed upon his brain by Dr. M——, who talked all the while in a low voice to the students present. The effect seemed little less than miraculous. His breathing

became less labored, his pulse equalized, and his eyes resumed a look of intelligence. The doctor sat and watched this, interspersing his observations by allusions to Syria and the East. Silence was strictly enjoined when he went out, and now hope was afforded of his recovery.

Mr. Dinsmoor had learned to feel an interest in the Newsboy, and watched night after night by his side. Charles Gardner also, whose pale cheek told how his young heart was wrung at the mystery which hung over the fate of his beautiful young friend. "Oh that she were dead! oh that I knew she was with God," the father would exclaim, and the youth pressed his hand, or raised it to his lips, for his heart was too full for words.

The Newsboy had continued in the way we have shown, utterly prostrated by the shock he had sustained,—a dull stupor shrouding his senses, sleeping much, and at intervals uttering words incoherent in themselves, and unintelligible to those about him. Sometimes he called Dady in a low chirruping voice—sometimes he talked of Broken-back.

"Does you love Bob now, Minnie? Does you ever think of the times when we went to hear the ladies sing? You said you'd come to Bob, you did—do they forget there, Minnie? Oh don't, don't forget poor Bob."

Then, "I's very tired," he would say. "Oh! the long, long road, and the weary feet!" for the fever hung like a weight upon him, and he suffered indistinctly as we suffer in our dreams. He had slept many hours,—days and weeks had passed away, and yet he had no consciousness of life, only a dull sense of pain, and feeling as if he crept along gloomy caves, and climbed interminable hills. Images sad and distorted moved before his vision, shadowy forms appeared in the distance beckoning him away—and then all was blank, except that he seemed to have emerged to the light—he found a soft pleasure in the play of his lungs: there was a quiet delight in lying still, so still, never lifting up the eyes, never moving the limbs, never attempting to speak. He seemed to be floating, and passing away into the distant blue, and all the past faded from his memory. He was a new existence just born into regions of superhuman beauty, and remembering no more the anguish; the mind forgot its terrestrial longings, and drank the fruition of all its former imaginings. He knew there was light around him, he knew voices were uttering words in his ear, but they conveyed no idea to his mind. A heavenly shape moistened his lips, and put back the hair from his brow—he felt the sweetness of delight and joy, but did not open his eyes.

Again there was a period of forgetfulness—he

slept again, for no memories, no traces of thought were left, and at length he opened his eyes. A lady in white, with white hair falling to her knees, and bright, and soft eyes, was bending over him.

"Be you one of the angels?" asked Bob.

Fannie did not speak at first, and then she whispered, with a smile, "Did you see Imogen there?" Bob tried to speak again, to recall the past, but his weakness was too great, and he relapsed into insensibility. Time at length, and a vigorous constitution, recalled the Newsboy from the verge of the grave; but he long regarded himself in another world, and thought Fannie a spirit, and indeed she looked little else, so gently did her pure soul drop its hold upon our grief-laden world.

As Bob was gradually able to combine the circumstances preceding his injury, he remembered his intention had been to denounce the Spaniard living in Abingdon Square, as the perpetrator of the crime in which the Dinsmoor family were so painfully involved. He now related to Mr. Dinsmoor all he had observed for so many years, his interview with the girl Nina in her character of servant, with a wen upon her neck, and other circumstances tending still more to corroborate his suspicions. A search-warrant was at once obtained, but as the family had passed in this country under the name of Cosmello, instead of the true

family name of Marcou, Mr. Dinsmoor could not detect his old enemy in the occupant, as he would instantly have done had the more remarkable name of Marcou been the family designation. The neighbors testified to the excellent character of the Marcous, their piety, liberality, and exclusiveness. They had lately embarked for Europe, what part nobody seemed to know, but they were utterly beyond suspicion. No child went with them or had ever been seen in the house; had there been one they could n't fail to have known it, as more than one considerate neighbor had watched all the process of moving, through the blinds, upon the day of their departure, which was more than a week after the disappearance of Imogen as recorded in the public prints.

The coachman of Marcou pondered many things in his mind, but he had no proof that the parcel he carried that night was any living thing, although he thought it might be; but then it might as well have been a dog or a large monkey as a child; he could n't say—he rather inclined to the belief that it was a dog, for the Spaniard was fond of dogs; and as Marcou on his departure gave him the carriage and horses, by no means an extraordinary gift for a man of his wealth, the coachman could have taken his oath in any court of law, if required, that he took a large, black dog home openly in the carriage that night: he did n't do

so for the reason that he was not required to do it, but he was ready for the oath at any time, so much had his faculties been sharpened up.

The passenger-lists of all the packets had been examined, a police appointed to inspect all the outways of the city, a search warrant had opened all suspicious domicils, and yet nothing transpired to throw any light upon the subject, and gradually Mr. Dinsmoor resigned himself to the belief that Imogen was lost to them and forever.

"Oh that I knew that she was with God!" he exclaimed.

"Don't you know that now, Sir?" asked the Newsboy. "It seems to me she is with him always. I do not care to see God, if he could be seen, for I feel him in my heart, and see all along the earth where he has been; for it seems to me the trees are his cards placed all along his path, and the ocean is a great handbill spread out for us to read him. I do not see Silver-tongue, but she is with God somewhere, and he will keep her; and he will never let the dew, as was said in that piece, fall out of her heart."

"Just hear him, dear George; he will bring Imogen back some time, won't you Bob," Fannie would say, for she was now more of a child than Imogen had been; and now the language of the Newsboy had something prescient and inspired about it, and her

poor heart clung to him as to her only hope. She did not question him, but she waited for him to speak, and listened to his words as a true believing heart would listen to a prophet. Then as the Newsboy gradually arose from the bed of suffering, Fannie grew every day more feeble. She made no complaint. She did not weep, but she became less and less able to rise, and at length she remained altogether in bed; and then, seated by her side, might be seen, day after day, the Newsboy, still pale and weak, but buoyed up as ever, by good and great thoughts.

XLII.

The Benefits of Orphanage.

BOB was yet too feeble to descend the stairs, but now that he was convalescent, his thoughts naturally reverted often to little Dady, whom he had not seen for so long a time. Rack-o'-bones had helped to nurse him all through his terrible period of suffering, leaving Dady at home in the car, where she amused herself much as a young kitten would have done, now looking from place to place, twirling a stick, a ball, or bit of paper, and now sleeping. Bob, as we have seen, was a straightforward boy, and accordingly he addressed Mr. Dinsmoor one morning, with some little hesitation, and yet with a direct sort of old-man way.

"I think, Sir, I'd like to have Rack-o'-bones bring over my child to see me, seein' she has n't nobody else to love her," he said.

"Your child, Bob," repeated Mr. Dinsmoor, eyeing him with a surprised look.

"I does n't know how many years it is since I was

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put into this world," answered, the Newsboy, "but I's had one or more children this four winters on my hands, Sir, and I am free to say I've done a father's duty by them, letting alone the larning, and Minnie was too delicate-like to larn."

Now Rack-o'-bones in giving the history of Bob, had left Dady altogether out of the matter, conceiving her to be of little or no account, and this was the first knowledge Mr. Dinsmoor had of the existence of the child. He seated himself by the side of the Newsboy, and inquired more fully into his history, which he gave as we have before related.

Mr. Dinsmoor listened in silence. Here was a poor, ignorant, friendless youth, who had done so many acts of good-will for his kind. Who, without guidance from any one, had acted out so much of the divine element of love, that it is more than probable the thoughts of the rich merchant rapidly recalled the circumstances of his own career, and he felt his own short-comings. He to whom thousands were less than a dime to the noble-hearted Newsboy, he must have felt rebuked before him, for the tears came to his eyes.

"Bob, you are a miracle of goodness," he exclaimed, and he pressed his thin, hard hand, with more reverence than he had ever approached that of priest or ruler.

"There, Sir, you are not quite right, the will was in me, but I'm more ignorant nor a heathen, and how could I do good, when I'd so little money? Oh, Sir, many 's the time I've heard singin', and dancin', in a great house, men and women lookin' so handsome, and a smilin' as if everybody in the world had nothin' else to do but smile, and the poor critters outside lookin' on, some on 'em climbin' up on the trees to see, some on 'em on the lamp-post, and some on the railin'; and they was hungry, but they forgot it in the fine sight; they was miserable, but they forgot it then; they was in rags and tatters, but they forgot it all then; only some, who went away with murder in their hearts, and some with plans to rob and steal; but oh, Sir, not one of 'em went away blessin' God in their hearts, and I'm free to say these things is all wrong. No Sir, I've done no good. I kept some from starvin', that's all, and Minnie more 'n paid me back, she did."

Bob was silent a moment, for something in his throat stopped him, and then he went on.

"Molly, Sir, what's dead, she died with her head on my shoulder, and the rain a pouring on to her face. Molly came to me once, and I went with her to look into a great house where the singin' and dancin' was. '*He will be there,*' she said; and, Sir, he was there. Molly wrung her hands and cried; he so fine, and she naked as 'twere; he so honored-like, and she despised

and abused; he so happy and so rich, and she pourin' out her tears, and sayin' 'oh mother, mother!' and there on the cold stones, and nothin' to eat. I went up the steps and I called him out, Sir, and he had to come. I told him he should come, and he did, Sir; and I showed him poor Molly, but she gave a shriek as brought out the police, and he threw down some money and ran up the steps again to dance, and smile; and, Sir, that is the way the poor come to hate the rich, not because of the money but the sin that goes with it; the sin which the money hides; the sin which the money keeps out of prisons; the sin which money keeps away from the gallows; the sin which money makes all fair and honored-like."

Bob, weak as he was, arose to his feet in saying all this; he was very pale, but his cheek glowed as he spoke, and his deep, dark eyes had a fire and beauty in them now. His hair, brushed back from his forehead, had under better care become smooth and glossy; his thin limbs clad in a partial undress, all conspired to render him half beautiful and inspired in his looks. Fannie, as she lay pale and smiling amid the lace and embroidery of her pillows, listened with an intense, contented look, more touching than the interest of her husband.

"He will bring home Imogen, dear," she murmured, addressing Mr. Dinsmoor, and the husband

and father could only kiss the pale hand extended to him, and smooth back the white hair scattered over the pillow, and read in every sweet, calm look, and in her pale cheek, "death's doings."

"Look at him, George, dear, and he has n't any mother," continued Fannie. "I'm Imogen's mother, Bob, did you know it?" and she half raised herself upon the pillow. Bob sank down by the bedside, and kissed the little thin hand, and sobbed aloud.

"I'm glad I has no mother," he murmured. "It's dreadful to make 'em ache-hearted as mothers are. Bob never made anybody weep, and when he dies the sun will be in the sky and on the face of all just the same."

"But you would love your mother, Bob, would you not?" asked Fannie, with the look and tone of a little child.

"I've thought of that," replied the Newsboy, "and I thinks I should be placing her on a bank of flowers, and putting them on her head, and in her hand. I should work all day and all night for the joy of thinking about her. I've looked at mothers and seen children callin' of 'em mother, and I thought they didn't know how a mother is so like God, givin', givin', and never askin' for a return. I sees they pray to 'em in some churches, and so should I, if I ever had one."

"Mothers are not always worthy of so much love, Bob," replied Mr. Dinsmoor.

"There, Sir, I can't think with you," responded the Newsboy. "'Cause why? mothers is always good, good in their hearts, but for the wrong done 'em somewhere; the woman may be bad but the mother is good. I've seen 'em go to bed on the ground without a mouthful to eat, and yet the children had bread. I've done it many's the time for my children, and mothers'll do more than I've done. I thinks, Sir, women is better nor we; they always have soft kind of feelin's in their heart, when men don't; and they pray, Sir; I've heard 'em pray because of the sin, till I could n't stand it; but bad men does n't pray."

"But suppose your mother were very bad, Bob, would you love her then?"

"Yes, just the same, and cling to her, and honor her, for the good she had done me. If I was rich as you are, Sir, I would leave the whole world to follow her, and ease her heart when the grief come."

"You do not know, Bob, you do not know but your father and mother, could you find them now, would be so bad as to make you ashamed of them," persisted Mr. Dinsmoor.

The Newsboy's face became suffused with a faint blush, and his eyes fell for a moment, but he answered calmly,

"I know there was good in them, because of the good in me. I do not care to find them—'cause why? I could not bear the learnin' to feel that I belonged to them. Now I can do in my own way. I belong to nobody. If my father and mother were bad, nobody can point and say Bob is disgraced through them. I'm alone, Sir, have come up alone, but I couldn't shame anybody in any way."

Bob said this proudly, as he had a right to say it, and feel it also, for he "knew his worthiness"—could look down into his whole being and find nothing there over which to rake the ashes and dust of concealment.

"I'm thinkin', Sir," he continued, "them that never know their parents is the best off. They will have no bad to be ashamed of in that case; and if they find something good and manly-wise in themselves, they can know how they come by it; and then, Sir, their mothers is like angels in books and picters, things beautiful away off, to be loved and honored. Silver-tongue, ma'am, is like you. She'd be white in her soul, and lovin' in her heart, like Minnie was; if all the world was bad, *she* could n't be. The dew is in her heart, ma'am, and it will stay there."

"God bless you, my noble boy," ejaculated Mr. Dinsmoor. "Send for Dady, Bob; and now you must not talk any more, for your cheek is growing too much flushed already."

XLIII.

The Slave.

IMOGEN had no means of estimating time, but it was late in the day when she awoke to find a dark, slender woman looking steadfastly into her face, whose sharp features were nearly concealed by masses of black hair loosely gathered under a gold and crimson handkerchief; she had also a large wen upon the side of the neck, concealed by a fold of linen. Black, penetrating eyes looked out under a brow stern and contracted. There was the serpent in that look, the fixed serpent gaze, and the undulations of the figure as she slowly moved her body or stirred a shoulder under uneasy thoughts, gave her still more the appearance. The arms were folded in front, each hand grasping the elbow of the other arm, and there was something lithe and serpent-like in the round taper wrist thus convolved.

Imogen's eyes opened from sleep upon the form of

Nonina thus seated. Her large, candid eyes grew wide and wide as she gazed. She felt there was something sinister in the look which she encountered, and she tried long and earnestly to fathom its import, but the black tinge and the black eyes were a mask under which little could be read. She could not escape the gaze of the woman, whose expression grew more intense every moment, and who bit her red lips till they looked a thread of coral overlapped with pearls. Like the dove fascinated by the snake, Imogen raised herself upon her elbow and thus approached nearer, and then a flood of memories came suddenly to her mind and she wept. The spell was broken, for nothing evil can resist the holy baptism of tears.

"Will you take me home?" asked the child.

"Ha—a," said the woman, too deaf to hear her, and bringing her head nearer, and growing all at once old and imbecile in look.

"Will you take me home to my poor, dear mamma?"

This time Nonina could hear, and she answered sharply,

"This is your home, you will never go out of it."

Imogen glanced around the small prison-like room, and into the face of her keeper. She held up her little, powerless-looking hands, and clenched them with instinctive contempt. She arose to her feet, shook out

her hair, and glanced at her small figure as she crossed the glass, the woman following her all the time with her snake-like eyes. Something was growing upon the child, something that every moment transformed her to a woman. She sat down and attempted to veil her round limbs with her short dress. Nonina observed the movement and muttered,

"Yes, you shall have rags to cover your nakedness."

The first impulse of Imogen was to weep at this rude speech, but she checked herself and replied,

"You may bring me rags, but I will not wear them."

"Ha—a," said the girl, seizing her by the wrist.

Imogen repeated, and with still more decision, for now it was a contest of will between the two.

"We shall see," she rejoined. "We shall see; there's the black-hole and the whip for the slave, and you are a slave; ha, ha, a slave of the worst kind. I'll help you to be tamed. I'll help you to the end of your tether, and then help you down, down, till the poorest slave shall scorn you."

All this time Nonina held the wrist of the child firmly grasped, and eyed her with a keen, malignant gaze, and when she ceased she threw her arm from her. Imogen was unable to comprehend the meaning of the woman, but she knew it was of evil import, and

she gathered up her little person, with a new dignity, and replied with a lip that did not even tremble,

"God will keep me."

"Hold your blasphemous tongue," rejoined the woman, forgetting her assumed deafness. "I tell you, that the dead of a thousand years are no more dead than you are. Call *her* a child!" she muttered to herself, walking up and down the little room.

This time Imogen approached her, and laid her hand in turn upon her wrist,—

"You are not deaf—look—the bunch on your neck has fallen off," she said, pointing to the folds of linen upon the floor, which Nonina had loosened in her jealous rage.

"No, I am not deaf, nor deformed, nor blind, nor weak. You are in my power—obey me. You are in my way—cross my path, and feel my hatred—"

"Nina," whispered a voice at the door. She was suddenly silent. She stood a moment irresolute, and then flinging a Spanish mantilla from her shoulders, she said, "Here, cover yourself with that—obey me!" for Imogen turned from the garment with loathing.

When Nonina left the apartment, Imogen stood like a young Pythoness, in the centre of the room, the garment untouched, and her whole faculties strained to the utmost in vain efforts to fathom the extent of the evil before her. She shook the doors and the

windows, but they resisted her utmost force. She approached the lattice and screamed aloud—her voice came back weak and powerless, deadened by the rumbling upon the pavements below, and the ever-noisy tide of human activity. Wearied with her efforts, and comprehending their impotence, she stood holding back her hair, listening if any sound came up from the apartments below, till she became painfully conscious of the beating of her own heart. All else was far from her, the world went on, and she was lost to it, and forever.

She had long fasted, yet she felt no desire for food. Her poor little heart yearned only for the soft hand of a mother upon her head, and the morning benediction of a father. She felt weak and sorrowful, now that Nonina had left her: she sank upon her knees, and amid tears and sobs poured out her whole soul to the Father above. As she prayed for the dear sorrowing mother, who might see her no more in this world, sobs and tears choked her utterance, and she fell all along the floor uttering only heart-breaking sobs, and the cry of, "Mother, poor dear mother!" as if all her grief concentrated itself there.

Nonina returned and placed toast and tea upon the table, and went out again, silent as she came. Imogen hardly knew of her presence. She did not lift her head, she did not cease to weep, but ejaculated at in-

tervals her childish love. It seemed as if suddenly the world had become black to her; that all was night within and without. At length some one lifted her from the floor and laid her upon the couch. The act was gently done, but she did not look up. She continued to weep and ejaculate, as if her little being would fade away in the agony of this her first experience of sorrow.

It was Cosmello who had lifted her from the floor, and who, now seated in the large chair, watched her in silence. There was no look of remorse in his dark face,—no token of regret. Hour after hour he sat, listening to the low wail of the child, and then he went out as he came, silent, unmoved, impenetrable.

Nonina had before entered and thrown the mantilla over the limbs of Imogen, and then watched the face of the Spaniard with a keen look of jealous scrutiny. As he neared the door, she whispered,

"Remember, Juan, I am free, in this country; I am free, Juan, and I will be so in spirit and in fact."

"You are not free Nina," returned the Spaniard, closing the door and turning the lock, "you are not and cannot be free—a woman never was nor can be free. Her love makes her a slave, if not born to bondage else," and he bent his handsome eyes admiringly upon her excited face, and drew out a long tress of hair, and playfully cast it over his own shoulders, thus creating a beautiful fetter between them. And Nina

smiled again, and studied as woman will a lover's face, striving to read its hidden import, when it were better did she throw herself upon her own measureless womanhood, and look to God instead.

"Yes, you can go, Nina," continued the Spaniard, "you can go and denounce me to the authorities, and condemn me to a prison, perhaps to death. Your jealousy I know would be deadly—but look here, child," and he loosened the bodkin from her hair and it fell rippling to her feet—the wind caught it from the lattice, and its threads disengaged themselves, floating and undulating, gleaming purple in the light, as only a Spanish woman's can, till she seemed a veiled priestess worshipping at her shrine.

"Mine was but a mawkish boy-love, such as the man rejects, and was as quickly turned to hate. One thread of this," and he kissed the tresses fondly, "is worth more than a thousand of those loved by the boy. I tell you, Nina, the child is in your keeping; treat her as you will, but mark me, I will know what you do. There is a something in the child that awes me; I will not have her degraded. And mark me, she shall not be sick," and he touched his finger to the small, beautiful chin, and lifted it up, so that he met the large eyes of the girl, while he raised the finger of the right hand as one would admonish a child, "mark me, Nina, she shall not die."

"I am your slave, and obey," answered the girl, without a change of feature, at the terrible suspicion the words implied.

"Not my slave, Nina," responded the other, "leave me if you will, it will be but another desolation; another bitter cup of which I have drank full many."

"Oh, Juan, cease—would I could govern this vile blood, for your sake. I only know to love you—I have no wise, cold maxims, such as the women have in this clime. I have but one world, and that is in your love; that lost, all is lost; Nina is but a poor, broken reed, to be swallowed up in the great deep."

"My poor child!" returned Marcou, and it may be that he felt annoyed rather than pleased at the fervent devotion of poor Nonina. It may be he thought he returned less than he received. It may be he wished she were less absorbed in him, that there might be something more of nobleness or of dignity.

Nonina was not a slave, for Marcou had years before given her her freedom, the papers to that effect being still in her own possession; but to her mind there was no degradation in the position she now occupied, and she knew of no other to which she could be admitted. She had thought of no other for years, and in her tropical home, where conventionalism is so little known, the favorite Nonina was an object of envy rather than of censure.

XLIV.

The Peril.

THE day came and went, and still Imogen was confined to her prison. She did little else but weep. Hour after hour she stood at the low, heavy-ironed window, the tears dropping from her eyes, and watching the passers-by in the street below. The song of the sweeper came up loud and cheery,—

"Sweep, oh sweep,
From the bottom to the top,
Without a ladder or a rope,
Sweep, oh sweep;"

and he shook his dirty rags, brandished his scraper, and glanced and swung himself right and left, the image of hilarity.

Then came by the yeast girl, singing in a clear sonorous voice,—

"Yeast, nice fresh yeast,
Here's your nice fresh yeast."

but she did n't glance up at the top of the house as the

sweeper had done, and therefore Imogen's heart beat no quicker for her coming. The ice man came, the milk man yelled, but they all looked as did the yeast girl, down to the basement windows, not up to the roof.

Then came an artisan with tools in hand, and he stood over the way looking steadfastly upward. Imogen's heart beat wildly now; she reached her little fingers through the irons, and screamed so loudly that it seemed a miracle he did not hear; but he was only looking at the architectural mouldings, calculating the height and breadth of the cornice, and he could not see the pale, agonized face pressed frantically against the irons. She was too far above the street for her voice to penetrate the world below. She tore a ribbon from her dress and fastened it to the bars; the wind caused it to float outward—his eye is arrested; he is about to go,—he turns back—surely, surely he will study its meaning. He is a young, handsome workman; he smiles—he examines the house; he smiles again—glances over his shoulder, with another smile. He is gone.

Imogen left the ribbon upon the bar; presently the girl, Nonina, in her worn and shabby dress, crossed to the other side of the street and looked up to the room; her eye caught sight of the bit of silk, and it was not long before she returned. She entered the room and

tore the ribbon from the bar, and now she examined the child's dress more carefully, the laces and trimmings, and marks by which she might be identified. She was silent and cross. She went out, and brought long garments, so long they encumbered the feet, and forced them upon the child, and then left the room.

When she had gone, Imogen again took her place at the window. It was now twilight, people were returning from toil, and the gay and fashionable were walking or riding, for the air was fresh and cool. She watched the carriages as they rolled by, but the dark Spanish-kept house, with its blinds always closed, attracted no eyes. Listlessly she looked upon the flowers in the little triangular spot in front. She saw the children leaning against the rails, and ragged and dirty as they were, she envied them their freedom. All at once she beheld her father and Charles Gardner pass below. Her father was thin and bent, Charles seemed pale and very weak, for he walked slowly; both were apparently silent.

Oh, was there nothing to attract their eyes upward? Imogen screamed again, she tore the hair in masses from her head and scattered it without. "Father, Charles," she cried, but they passed slowly onward. The noise brought Nonina to the room. Imogen heard her approach, and placing herself to one side she darted past her as the door opened, and rushed

along the hall, but her long robes impeded her feet, and she fell to the floor, the blood bursting from her lips.

Marcou lifted her from the ground and bore her to an inner room. She was pale as are the dying, and her life seemed oozing with the blood that issued from her mouth at every breath. Nonina watched her in silence, and, it may be, hoped that all would end here—it may be she was tired of ministering to the vengeance of her lover, when its object excited so much her jealousy. Marcou was no mean physician, as all the planters of the South and of the West India islands find it necessary to understand something of a science so often essential in the management of living 'chattels.'

He felt her pulse, and administered to the attack with skill and precision. As the night wore on he sat by her side, calm and remorseless, not a feature giving evidence that any human emotion stirred in his bosom. Nonina moved up and down uneasily. Once she leaned upon the shoulder of Marcou, but he slipped it aside; she knelt down at his feet, he did not notice the humble position, nor the endearment in the slight pressure of the hand that hid itself in his.

His eyes were bent upon the face of the child, and his ear listening to her faint breathing. "She may die," he whispered at length, and sank back in his

chair. "I had thought a child might be easily managed."

"She is no child, Juan. I hope she may die, I pray all the saints, and—"

"Silence, girl," exclaimed Marcou, laying his hand upon her shoulder. "Would you lead me to the scaffold? There is but a step between me and public infamy. She must not die in this accursed city; help her out of it, and then she is in your keeping. Save her life now, now, Nonina, for my sake;" he added more softly.

"Juan, I distrust you. Tell me you will not love that girl; tell me you will sell her into bondage; you will give her to some one who will take her from my presence; tell me this, Juan, and I will do all you bid me do."

Juan drew the kneeling girl to his bosom, and pressed a kiss upon her forehead.

"Yes, kiss me there, Juan, upon my brow; it shall be a seal in God's eyes; do you swear to do this, Juan? Her presence will drive me mad, Juan, it converts me to a fiend. Your old love for the mother will revive in the child. I know it will. Swear that she shall be mine and I will save her this time, but when we are in Cuba, I shall do my will upon her; shall I not?"

She spoke rapidly, half bending over to the eyes

of her lover, one hand upon his shoulder, the other clasped in his.

Marcou, even, recoiled from the exhibition of the same deadly hatred which lurked in his own bosom when it presented itself in a woman's shape—he dared not make the promise. Something within himself arose and forbade him. Nonina saw his hesitation, and she tossed his hand from her.

"You will not promise, because I have spoken truth," she muttered.

"You have skill, Nina, my own great, glorious child of evil, you have skill; use it once now, for Juan's sake, and he will not be ungrateful." He extended his hand toward her while he spoke, and she threw herself upon his bosom; for when did woman ever resist the low, pleading appeal of the man whom she loves!

She left the room a few moments and then returned bearing crucibles, and elixirs of various kinds; she poured some upon a napkin with which she enveloped the chest—a few drops upon the tongue stayed the flow of blood, and Imogen at length sunk to a quiet slumber.

A few hours afterwards the remorseless hands of Nonina severed all the beautiful golden locks of Imogen from her head. And then a skilfully-applied ingredient converted what was left to a deep black. Under pre-

text of bathing her face, a dark mixture was applied, which stained her lovely white skin to brown, so that no friend of the child's could have recognized her under the change.

Marcou had said he should go to Europe, and such was the belief of the neighbors; but in the meanwhile he had procured a barque, which having manned entirely with sailors and officers of his own country, and having hoisted the Spanish flag, he set sail for Cuba, leaving the furniture and other effects of the house to be disposed of by an agent. The boxes and bales of Doña Isabella returned once more to her beloved Cuba, and Pomp and Dinah, clad in their gayest colors, grinned, and danced, and whooped, at the thought of their tropical home.

As they went to the vessel bearing a large hamper between them, carefully covered, they swung it so violently and vociferated their joy so loudly, that people turned back to wonder at their merriment; and the deaf woman with the wen, who followed on behind them, more than once rated them soundly for their noise. It was certain that she eyed the hamper uneasily, and hurried on the black merry pair, who, happy in the present, understood nothing of the miseries or the degradation of their race.

Upon reaching the vessel, the hamper was borne carefully to the cabin. Doña Isabella was already

there; she opened her eyes and fanned herself briefly, as Nonina lifted Imogen into her berth. At length she crossed herself, as a good Catholic does at the sight of what is new or unexpected, and then resumed her fan again.

XLV.

Retribution.

It didn't take Flashy Jack long to replenish his pockets after having emptied them out in behalf of Rack-o'-bones and Dady, but the illness of Bob, and his new and unexpected position as the favored guest of a wealthy family, was a thing at once embarrassing and strange to him, as much so as had been to Bob, his own sudden metamorphosis into an actor. It perplexed him greatly: he wished to see his friend, but he felt always out of place and uncomfortable in mounting the splendid staircase to do so. To avoid this, Maggie was despatched to make inquiries at the kitchen door. Maggie never ventured further, for she had a certain dislike to Bob, which she could not well overcome, ever since the time when she had felt her self-love wounded by his indifference to her charms, when they were both children in years, though old in the rough usages of life.

Flashy Jack was leaning his foot upon the hub of a carriage wheel, near the Jefferson Market, where so many streets and avenues converge, and the great tall tower, composed of timber, supports the alarm-bell of the district. He had waited some little time, and was whiling away the interval by slapping his polished boots with a light cane, teasing little Vic, and whistling "Nelly Bly," when the coachman leaned over the box and recognized him :

"How are you?" both exclaimed at once, for it was the former coachman of Cosmello.

"Improving your young mind, I see," observed Flashy Jack, as the other folded up a newspaper.

"Yes, I was looking over the ship news to see if I could find anything of the Cosmellos. I'll be hanged if I can find out a word about them."

"Well, I suspect that Spaniard was a d——d rascal," answered the other. "I always coupled him with the abduction of that child, and hang me, Peter, if I don't believe you think so too."

Peter threw himself into an attitude—"Look you here, Sir, I allow no man to speak to me in that way. You impeach *me*, Sir, when—"

"Oh! get out," answered Flashy Jack, coolly blowing the dust from the nail of his thumb which he was paring. "You know, Peter, what you do know, and it's my opinion you're very much of a scamp."

Peter was down from his coach-box in a jiffy; he made a show of rolling up his shirt sleeves, stuck out his little heels defiantly, and switched up his trousers till the red tops of his boots appeared below them. Flashy Jack didn't abate in the least the attention which his thumb-nail demanded at his hands. On the contrary, he rather grew more absorbed in the matter, and didn't even take his boot from the wheel-hub.

"Don't fret your gizzard in hot weather, Peter, it's bad for the health," he said.

"Come out here, come out," cried Peter, spitting upon his hands.

"Have done your nonsense, Peter, and own up," continued Flashy Jack, not deigning to glance at the other.

Peter gave a spring into the air, by which he looked all at once as if composed of innumerable arms and legs, and nothing else, but he came down in quite a harmless manner just where he went up.

"Come, no more figuring, Peter, or I shall grow wrothy. You had something to do with that devilish trick—so Bob believes, and I too. You'd better own up, and done with it."

Peter grew ashy pale at this, and he sprang upon Flashy Jack, butting forward his head in a threatening manner, springing up into the air, and butting as he came down. Flashy Jack put out his foot and tripped

him up, but at the same moment Peter had thrust himself against the sharp open knife which the former held in his hand, and he fell heavily upon the sidewalk.

"That's science," shouted the crowd, applauding the ease and dexterity of the movement on the part of Flashy Jack.

But Peter lay motionless upon his face. Flashy Jack seeing Maggie approach, moved rapidly along the street to meet her. A yell as of a thousand wild beasts, and the tramp of innumerable feet, caused him to look back.

"Stop the murderer, he has killed a man! stop him! stop him!" was echoed by a hundred tongues.

Scarcely could the youth comprehend the meaning of what he heard. He did not at first realize that he was the one thus designated, and he moved onward at a brisk pace, till a heavy blow from an officer arrested him. He was dragged back to the spot where Peter still lay, and where the people were holding up the bloody knife with which the deed had been done. Loud cries and imprecations followed him, but Flashy Jack could n't well realize that he was the one impeached. So little malice had been in his heart, so little attention had he paid to the imbecile rage of Peter, that when he saw him lying there with the blood flooding from a great vein in his neck, and all appearance of life gone, he looked on amazed and horror-struck.

"Look at him—look at the hardened wretch; he doesn't care. There's the knife that he stabbed with. Killed him like a flash of lightning; cool about it—never minded it no more'n if it had been a dog. Walked off whistling Nelly Bly, to meet his gal, just as if nothing in the world had happened."

The tumult increased; a dense mass of people thronged the spot. There was jostling, and shouting, and screaming. Maggie clung wildly to the arm of Flashy Jack, never for a moment doubting his innocence.

"Look at her," cried one of the crowd, "that's the murderer's gal."

Maggie turned sharply round, "Yes, look at me, you fools, he's no more of a murderer than you are. Jack, dear Jack," she added more softly, "how did it happen? Tell me Jack, will you not speak to your poor girl?" and she drew her shawl up to hide her tears from the multitude, who only derided and hooted at her. All the way to the Police Station the people yelled and shouted, and even the stout nerves of Maggie gave way to terror as she looked far and near and saw the hideous, cruel faces of the vast multitude glaring upon them.

"Run, Jack, run," she cried, pulling him by the arm. "They will kill us, they will; hear them, Jack, they will tear us to pieces."

She was answered by jeers and hisses.

"Good enough for you. Hang 'em—lynch 'em both," shouted the mob.

Jack moved along mechanically, as if in a terrible dream.

"Speak to me, Jack, won't you speak to me?" cried the girl, hiding her face in her shawl to keep the sight of the crowd out.

At length they reached the Police Station. A brief examination by the official left no doubt upon his mind as to the entire guilt of the prisoner, and he was conveyed to the Tombs.

Maggie still clung to the arm of the youth. All the efforts of the officers could not force her away.

"Speak to me, Jack, speak to me," she cried, wringing her hands, and gasping for breath. "Do tell me, Jack, I did n't bring you to this. Have I done anything, Jack, to bring it on?"

Jack's lips were ashy white, and dry, and parched. He could not take in the scene, and he put his arm around the girl and kissed her forehead. Poor Maggie, overcome by this tenderness, fainted at his feet. The officers pushed her aside with a brutal jest, and the crowd, which had forced itself into the lobby, gave way to a loud shout at witnessing her distress.

When she at length lifted herself from the ground, the iron door had closed upon Flashy Jack, and she

looked around, half kneeling as she looked, holding back her hair, and her large, lustrous eyes searching upon every side for one look of kindness or sympathy. There was not one. Her human heart shrunk inward with terrible pangs. All that had been holiest in her poor, vagrant, uncared-for life, seemed suddenly converted into crime.

"Are you married, gal?" asked an officer.

Maggie shook her head, still kneeling, too faint and weak to rise.

"Get out, you dirty trollop, what do you come here for with your noise? Do you think the law's goin' to countenance your doin's? Get out with you," and he followed her in his virtuous indignation down the heavy stone steps.

The brutality of the officer was reiterated by the crowd without, which pressed upon her tottering steps down through Centre street, shouting and jeering, and tossing missiles upon her.

"There goes the murderer's gal," they vociferated, tossing at first apples, and nuts, and pebbles idly against her shoulders, from which the shawl had fallen, and left them, fair and dimpled, exposed to the gaze of the mob. Growing more and more excited, as the numbers increased and the multitude went on, they began piously to stone her with stones, as the Jews did in the olden time. Maggie was too weak to

run, the anguish in her heart was too great for her to feel any external pain, and although the blood flowed from her arms and neck, she made no complaint, she did not turn her head nor weep, nor remonstrate, but went on, a Magdalen loving much, and sorrowing much, and man, the cause of all, hunting her to the death.

The old paralytic woman at the head of Chambers street saw her approach, blind as she was; she saw the blood falling from her wounds. Poor, old, miserable sinner as she might have been, she opened her lank, withered arms, and Maggie fell within them. The old woman tried to speak, but her lips would not obey. Her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and she shook her gray locks from side to side, and there was warning in them. Oh! she mumbled and shook, and looked this way and that, and the rude men shrank away with shame, and left her to her little stand where she sat with the head of Maggie in her lap, she hardly able to breathe, and only showing that she breathed by her low sobs.

Slowly, slowly the great multitude, (presumed to be without sin, by the good will with which they cast stones, and uttered imprecations against it,) went away, one by one, taking a last look at the poor Magdalen where she lay upon the cold stone pavement, her head buried in the lap of the only pitying heart she had

found in her great need. One poor, old, paralytic form, bearing a pitying human heart, a human, woman-heart, had been more powerful than all the brute force of that great multitude.

Reader, we boast of warm, beating hearts, through which flows a red, rich current of vital blood, swaying and circling through every vein, as the sap in the spring-time penetrates all the cells and arteries of the strong woodland tree; have we ever, you and I, placed this vital heart as a bulwark to ward off the evil-doers? as a loving wall in defence of our suffering kind? Have we, as did this old paralytic heart, stood up as best we could, to screen the persecuted and suffering? God made the weak old heart a tower of strength in that day; what might not your red living heart and mine become, if awake like hers to human necessities?

XLVI.

Dilemmas.

Bob heard the slow, labored ascent of Rack-o'-bones up the sumptuous hall and staircase, and knew that she bore his little protégé in her arms, but he was not prepared to see her in her pretty, new pink dress, and cunning red slippers, which the good creature had provided after the visit of Flashy Jack. The luxuriant hair of the child, dark and curling, fell over her plump hard shoulders, and swept her red cheeks upon either side. Her forehead was low, but fairly moulded, and her rich, full eyes were soft, and yet dazzlingly bright. She was a large, handsome child, in the very perfection of health.

Bob took her in his arms, and Dady kissed him over and over, and hugged her arms about his neck, laughing with a pretty giggling laugh like the joy of a young animal.

"I'm thinking you will keep her here," said Rack-o'-bones, looking around upon Mr. and Mrs. Dins-

moor, and displaying at the same time the little stock in hand which constituted the wardrobe of Dady.

Bob's pale face reddened with shame. "We are no beggars, mother," he said; "we has a good home, and we will keep it." And seeing Mr. Dinsmoor about to speak, he added, "We is thankful, Sir, we is."

Fannie motioned for the child to be brought to the bed, and he did as she desired, and then for the first time observed the kitten of Imogen, which Dady kept hugged up under one arm. Fannie saw it at the same time, and the tears fell from her eyes, softly falling, while her pale hands caressed, first the kitten, and then the glossy locks of the child, which kept her large eyes fixed wonderingly upon the sweet, wan face.

Rack-o'-bones arose to leave. "We will keep the baby, George, will we not?" asked Fannie.

"I could n't give up Dady," answered Bob in a low voice, speaking to Mr. Dinsmoor. "I could n't give her up—'cause why? we must love something, and the love for a child is higher-like than the love for an animal. I thinks too, Sir, you'd find many little creters with no parents, what would be glad to come. But Dady, Sir, is all as if she was my own child. I's got used to her—I works better for thinkin' of her—it makes a man of me, Sir, to have

her lookin' to me for her bread and other fixin's. He's a poor feller, Sir, that cannot support more nor himself."

Thus did the Newsboy plead for the privilege of keeping the little waif, as if work and responsibility were privileges, as they are to great hearts.

"Will you forgive me, Sir, if I speak out my mind plain-like, seein' I's well enough to go home now, and take Dady home, and Rack-o'-bones, and set up house-keeping, as a man as is a man should always do?"

Mr. Dinsmoor looked approval, and Bob, his eyes glowing under the beatings of his great heart, went on,—

"I's thinkin', Sir, your house is very large, so many rooms, so many things, very nice, and very handsome, I'm bound to say, 'though I don't know the names nor the use of 'em; but I's thinkin', Sir," and the color went and came upon the honest cheek of the Newsboy, as the dolphin glows in the ebb-time of its life, "I's thinkin', Sir, how many might be made happy in such a house. I's thinkin', Sir, perhaps God gave us the fortun', that we might deal out to them that is too weak, and too ignorant to work,—and he gives us the learnin' and the great hearts, that we might the better teach. I's ignorant, Sir. Minnie and I was talkin' of this when she died. Once, Sir, she put her hand towards heaven

and said, 'Look, Bob, look, I see a beautiful man, leanin' on a cross, and he smiles upon us,' and then she smiled, and laid her hand upon my heart as she always did when she thought she should die." Bob always was obliged to stop when he spoke of Minnie, till he grew too great for his grief.

"Little children, Sir, is like flowers and picters, and I think a house looks more human-like when they's in it. I could n't lose Dady, Sir, but I sees every day children that 'll grow up to the prison and the gallows unless somethin' is done for 'em!"

"Stay here then, Bob, stay with us, you and the child," said Mr. Dinsmoor, pressing the boy to his heart.

The Newsboy grew paler even than before, at this unexpected demonstration, for Mr. Dinsmoor had been kind, but cold hitherto, and his manner had rather repelled than invited the confidence of the former. He was embarrassed also, but as he was both plain and out-spoken, which are two great traits of manhood, he replied,

"When I said this house might make so many happy, I did n't mean I wished to be one of 'em, Sir, though you's been very kind to me, and I shall never forget it; and Minnie, Sir, was Minnie here she'd know how to say thankful things better nor I, for she had a pretty way nat'ral to her. But I's thankful, Sir,

I is," and there was more in the tone and looks than in the words of the Newsboy.

And here let me say, it is one proof of the infrequency of good works in the world, that we have such a vocabulary of thanks. That is a poor order of a soul which is expecting gratitude from its beneficiaries.

"Alas, the gratitude of man
Has oftener left me mourning."

Yes, mourning that so much is needful to be done, and the opportunity for doing is so limited. We step down from the godhead when we ask returns. We are-like God when we give.

"You will stay with us then, Bob," said Mr. Dinsmoor with the same warmth of manner. "This house is your home, and Dady's also."

Fannie smiled, a sweet, saint-like smile, and looked the same petition. But Bob, generally so candid, found it difficult to speak now, and was silent for some little time, with his eyes bent upon the carpet. At length he raised them to the face of Mr. Dinsmoor, and I must say that at this time our Newsboy was handsome and manly looking, for his illness had soothed away the care-worn look; he had grown tall, and his companionship with a refined family had given a higher tone to his manner, without detracting from a certain quiet dignity always belonging to him.

Charles Gardner, who had come in from his books, was not more striking in his appearance than Bob. If the former had more grace, and finish of exterior, there was so much of manly candor, of self-reliance, and self-sustainment in the air of the latter, that he at once riveted interest and attention. You felt there was a solidity, a force, and reliability about him which nothing could tempt, nothing could swerve from its moorings.

Fannie looked at the two young men, and she smiled softly upon Charles, but to Bob her look was as if she said, "I rest here; here is help, here is power, here is heart and purpose. If human effort can achieve, here is the source."

The embarrassment of Bob was rather increased than allayed by the manner of Mr. Dinsmoor, but he replied,

"It's the nater of people to want to go where they feels best, Sir. I'm bound to say, you's very kind, both of you is very kind; was Minnie here she'd tell you so better nor I can; and was Minnie here I should say, take her, Sir, for I loved that little 'un in a way that I'd die, Sir, to make her happy. She was a born angel, she was. But, Sir, I sees Flashy Jack is n't half himself when he comes here; dashing, good-hearted Jack, what is a man in his way amongst folks he's used to, is n't half so much Jack when he comes

here. I sees it; he holds in his heels as it were, and crimps in his elbows some, and speaks soft-like; now that isn't Jack at all. So I thinks, Sir, it would be with me. I can work, Sir, I loves to work, I's proud of work, Sir. I thinks them that wants everything done for 'em, and does nothing for themselves, is poor sneaks, sneaks as is sneaks and nothing but sneaks. Now, Sir, if I lived in this great house, I with no learnin', no gentleman-like ways, I should feel mean, Sir. When Bob's out to work, sellin' his papers, takin' care of his family, and doin' the best he can, he feels like a man, Sir."

"You shall have learning, Bob, I will be a friend to you in the best way. You shall be taught everything to render you an accomplished merchant; and let me tell you, Bob, you have a capital in your own honest, manly integrity, worth millions in a city like this. Whoever helps you helps himself, Bob."

The Newsboy extended his hand cordially to the speaker, as if he had found his equal. He looked upon Mr. Dinsmoor with an admiring respect, such as he had never before felt for him, as if all at once the crust of conventionalism had peeled off, and he saw a man.

"When you speak of the learnin', Sir," he replied, "you comes very near to me. Rack-o'-bones has been a teachin' of me, and I'm bound to say I learns fast, seein' I wants the learnin' as I wants bread."

"You shall have it, Bob, and I will learn of you also; learn the uses of life, and the uses of wealth through your great heart, Bob."

The Newsboy's look deepened to a cordial and thorough admiration of his friend.

"I thinks, Sir, God designed you for something handsome, he did. I thinks when we goes down into our own busoms, as it were, we does good works, and sees good pushing itself out of us, jest as I've seen the hydrant kiver pushed off by the Croton. Rich men kiver up their hearts with a kiverin' of gold, Sir, and then the goodness is held back; they looks about to see how the rich men and women does, and not up to God to see how he would have them do."

There was a solemnity and simplicity, coupled with rebuke, in the words of Bob, but we must remember that the prophet speaks in the right of his own deep revelations, and he utters out of the depths of his own singleness of life, and may rebuke because of his own purity.

"God knows you speak truth, Bob," rejoined Mr. Dinsmoor; "but stay with me, my noble boy, stay, and let me learn of you."

Still Bob hesitated, as if other objections lay upon his mind which he was not entirely free to confess. At this moment Rack-o'-bones, who had nicely folded one little dress, two blue aprons, and a pair of nearly

worn-out shoes upon a chair, together with a petticoat, and one small chemise, the entire wardrobe of Dady, approached Bob, and said,

"I'm thinking, Bob, you will not want me any more, and in truth I should have left you before but for your sickness."

"Why would you leave me, mother," asked the Newsboy, with a look of grief and disappointment, and a little shame also upon his candid face.

Rack-o'-bones was too old, and too sallow, and had too little blood in her withered veins to blush, but a dark hue paled and deepened upon her cheek, and then she answered,

"I have my own trials, my own sorrowful memories, Bob. When I am with you, they come back to me, and weigh me down; but when I am out under the sky, and see the sun shining alike upon the good and bad, and see the great world go by, I forget it all. I will go back, and take my bit of oil-cloth and lay it upon the sidewalk, and let the sunshine warm my old bones, Bob, and I shall be happier than in any other way."

"There's reason in what you say, mother. We acts up to our lights, I suppose, always; but I'm bound to say, beggin's no better nor stealin', so I hopes you will not do much in that line. Mother, I'll keep a place in the car for you o' nights, mother, and perhaps

after awhile you'll stay all the time in it. I shall see you every day down town."

And so Rack-o'-bones went out with a light, alert step, much happier for being relieved from the little cares of the Newsboy's home. She was old, and withered in heart, and this tax upon the affections was oppressive rather than refreshing to her. She had lived solitary and uncared for, so many years, that human ministry came now too late, and all she asked was to be folded once more in the dear heart of nature; to have the sunshine upon her—not as it comes with the soft breeze stirring the bird's heart to song, but as it comes to the creeping things of earth, when they creep out upon the great warm stones by the wayside, or upon the flat ledge dappled with moss-cups. Let her rest where she will, dear Reader, the silver cord of life is loosed to her, the golden bowl has been broken at the fountain, and the grasshopper is a burden. You will see her at her old place, "doubled up," as Bob said, near the hospital, or it may be in front of Beck's, or further up town, for she is creeping up, year after year; and sometime we shall miss her; she will be seen no more a fixture by the shop-door of Stewart's or elsewhere, and then we shall know that the sunshine is coming down, not upon her old, bent shoulders, but over a narrow ridge of grass, hushed as is the old heart beneath.

XLVII.

A Sense of Destiny.

AFTER Rack-o'-bones went out, Bob mused awhile in silence; at length he said,

"It's impossible to change the nater. I never tries. Beatin', and scoldin', and tryin' to make folks over is of no use. Rack-o'-bones might have had an honest livin' with me, and been of use likewise. Poor old thing, she could n't help herself though," and he arose with Dady in his arms.

"You will not leave us, Bob," said Mr. Dinsmoor, glancing at the troubled face of Fannie.

"If I can be of use, in a manly way," answered Bob, "I will stay, in course. But, Sir, Dady and I is both of us sort of come-by-chances, and mayhap you will be ashamed of us; and I'm not one to be in the way of people's feelins', 'cause why, Sir? I's ready to work, and calculate to do somethin' in the world," and Bob's face glowed with an ingenuous blush.

"If you live, Bob, you mean," interposed Fannie. Bob smiled softly, and reverently upon the speaker, but he answered,

"I shall live, ma'am, to do it. I don't say if, because I know I shall. I have a great deal to do. I feel it in me, Sir," and now he turned to Mr. Dinsmoor, as if he could better bear than Fannie his more energetic utterance. "I feel as if called to do—called to work—called to speak—and I must obey, Sir. God would n't call me if he did n't want me; and when I hear him in my heart say, do this and do that, and I say I will do it, I know my life is to be spared. I cannot die, Sir, while all this comes to me."

Mr. Dinsmoor certainly felt the force of much that Bob had said in regard to remaining with them. He was by no means free from conventional vices, that is, the smaller vices of prejudice; he could n't well refrain from thinking "what will Mrs. Grundy say;" and now that all his plans for life had been so cruelly overthrown, and public opinion might surmise the worst fate for his only and beautiful daughter, he was inclined to grasp still more strongly the strong meshes of society, by which the warp and woof of commonplace, vulgar respectability is to be upheld. All were silent awhile, and then Fannie raised herself suddenly and said,

"Say, Bob, you will not die till you find Imogen."

"I do say it, ma'am," answered Bob. "She is alive, for I see her at night in my sleep, not like Minnie looks, ma'am, that is n't to be expected; but Flashy Jack and I will find her, and bring her home to you, we will," and Fannie pressed his hand between her little waxen fingers, in token of her faith and her gratitude.

"Then if you will do this, Bob, let this be your home, go and come as you will, and let Dady be here also;" and the merchant took, for the first time, the handsome child upon his knee.

Bob was greatly pleased at this, for he was proud of Dady, and looked upon that little nice piece of flesh and blood almost as his own, since but for him its stay in this world had been a very brief one.

"I thinks, Sir, you don't quite bring home to your mind the onpleasantness of having Dady and me in the house. We's al'ays been despised. Grand women al'ays looks down at us with a sort of snubby look. When I gets into the cars and stages, I sees people kind o' look to their pockets. I does n't mind it, I knows what I am, Sir, and I cannot be made to feel mean-like. But, Sir, I has friends, a good many friends, Sir. They goes with bare feet, and has rags, and no hats; some on 'em aint good, but the contrary; they's weak, Sir, and poor, and cast out, and ignorant; drinkin' some on 'em, and liein' some on 'em,

and some on 'em do worse things; but, Sir, the very worst on 'em has a good spot in the heart, a good spot, Sir, that might help out the rest of their hearts, if anybody would see to 'em a little. Now, Sir, these is my friends. They comes to me when they gets into bad fixes, and I and Flashy Jack helps 'em out. I could n't give 'em up, Sir, I could n't desert 'em. They need me, and I need them, for the good I does 'em. But, Sir, you'd be feelin' onpleasant to have 'em comin' here. You'd think I must gin 'em all up, and then there'd be more misery and more sin to foller, Sir."

At this moment a servant beckoned Mr. Dinsmoor out, and all at once Bob heard the well-known voice of poor Maggie, so wo-begone in tone, so hollow, and yet so her own, that he followed Mr. Dinsmoor into the hall, closing the door behind him.

Maggie grasped his hand in both of hers, and half knelt at his feet.

"Come, Bob, for the love of God come to poor Jack. He is in the Tombs. Leave this great, proud house, Bob, and be where your friends can come to you. Come to-night, this very moment, Bob, if you ever loved poor Jack," she cried, the tears half choking her utterance.

"What is poor Jack in the Tombs for?" asked the Newsboy, lifting Maggie from the floor, and wiping her face with his own hands while he spoke.

"Oh! Bob, he has killed a man. But he did n't mean it, you know he would n't hurt a living thing. Come to him, Bob, do come now," and she pulled him toward the landing.

The Newsboy staggered to one side; "Killed a man! Poor Flashy Jack!" and instantly a thousand recollections, a thousand misgivings that had come to him for years floated over his mind. He recalled the time when he had appeared at the theatre as Jack Sheppard, in that play so fearful in its power, and so fearful in its tendency.

"I must go to my friend, Sir," he at length said.

"No, Bob, do not go to-night, you are too weak. You can do no good, the law must take its course," replied Mr. Dinsmoor.

"I can help his feelin's by goin', Sir; and Jack is my friend, he has stood by me many's the time, and now I will stand by him."

By this time the Newsboy had reached the basement door, Maggie still grasping him by the hand, when a new difficulty occurred.

"You will see to Dady, Sir, I'm sure, but I doesn't feel quite right about these clothes—"

"Come back, Bob, after you have seen your friend, and then we will talk of all these things."

And so Bob went out. Maggie was very pale, but as she talked with the Newsboy, relating the circum-

stances of the preceding day, her native animation returned. She had not been able to gain admittance to the cell, for there was a general prejudice in the minds of the officials both against Jack and herself. It was well known that the father of the youth had perished by the hands of the executioner many years before, and the gay, rollicking life of Flashy Jack, while nothing definite could be brought to his charge, was still of a kind to engender distrust. Flashy Jack never spoke of his good deeds, never in fact knew that he did them—his instincts were, as we have shown, brave and generous, and in obeying these he was never conscious of meanly claiming a reward, or supposing himself deserving of praise.

"When I do a thing that goes against the grain, boys," he would say, "then praise me, then cry out, then say I'm a devil of a good fellow; but when I do a thing to help another, because I love to do it, don't make me ashamed by calling me good—and don't make me sick by thanking me."

Flashy Jack was multifarious in his pursuits, apt in speech, resolute, hardy, full of animal spirits, and full of resource. He was "about in spots," here and there; camping down whenever convenience served,—now aboard a canal boat reeling off his yarns, now with the pilots, now with the actors and the Newsboys. Everywhere he was welcome, and received with shouts

of joy. It was always a holiday where Jack was. He was the beau of the Bowery, the admiration of the g'als, the envy of the b'hoys.

Of late he had kept rooms in Franklin street, near the head of it. Maggie took care of these rooms, and, if the truth must be told, occupied them also. In justice to the girl I must say she would very willingly have married, but for a reason which shall subsequently appear. But then neither she nor Flashy Jack had been educated in any way by which they could exactly learn the utility of the institution. It was their ignorance, and the fact goes to show our need of city missionaries. They were faithful and devoted to each other, notwithstanding the absence of all bonds, which goes to show that marriage has an original basis, established before the priest assumed his robes of office, and exacted a fee preparatory to giving this relation of love between two persons the sanction of the law and the church. It shows that God's laws are very ancient and very binding.

The handsome pair, so gay, so jaunty fine, at the theatre, museum, in public walks, were always together. Maggie was often connived at in torch-light processions, and "running with the machine," in a masculine dress by the side of Flashy Jack. She was seen waiting for him in her smart green boddice and short skirt, showing a round tight ankle cased in

crimson gaiters, in the lobby of the theatre, or any of his many places of resort. She was well known as the best dancer in the Bowery, and indeed it was a sight worth seeing as the two whirled in the dance, or tired each other out in the polka or schottish, dancing with a life and spirit unchecked by any rules of the schools. In the Bowery there is little exchange of partners, even in the dance. When two persons betray a liking for each other, others are expected to keep at a distance at the peril of something not pleasant to talk about; hence Maggie and Flashy Jack were inseparable companions.

It followed naturally that the two were great favorites in their own circle, the admiration of the Bowery, but watched with distrust and aversion by the minions of the law, who never forgot the parentage of Jack and Maggie; the violent death of the father of the former, and the fact that Maggie was a foundling, or rather a waif, tossed here and there, and living as best she might. To these the free and easy life of the two looked worse than suspicious. Their gaiety was a crime. The mirth of two who had no father nor mother, little learning, and less money, had something unreal and unnatural about it, and they were consequently watched, year after year, as a cat would watch a mouse, or rather as people watch with a pre-conceived opinion of evil against another.

XLVIII.

The Gypsy Curse.

WHEN Bob and Maggie reached the Tombs, there was a dense mass of Newsboys, sailors, actors, chiffonniers, beggars, stall-keepers, and small venders of various kinds, to say nothing of porters, coachmen, men, women, and boys, crowding about the street and lobby, to learn something in regard to Flashy Jack. The people were quietly disposed, yet eager to catch a glimpse of those who might be supposed to know something of his condition.

The officer on duty at first positively refused to admit poor Maggie, but Bob interposed and said,

"When a man has a wound we wraps it up before we asks how he got it; and to my way of thinkin' when a woman's distressed we ought to relieve her without askin' whether she's distressed accordin' to law;" and so Maggie, who had become at once divested of all her coquetries, and all her smart wardrobe, was allowed to enter the cell.

Contrary to what might be supposed, Maggie did

not rush to the arms of Flashy Jack, but remained timidly at the entrance, till the youth extended his hand toward her, when she grasped it in both of hers, and sank down at his feet.

"Have I done wrong to come, Jack? will it be the worse for you?" she asked. "I could n't stay away, but now that I have seen you once, I will do whatever you bid me."

"You are a good girl, Maggie, a good girl," repeated Jack, holding back her head and looking into her eyes. "When Jack's gone, Maggie, you'll miss him, you will."

Maggie answered only by a passionate burst of tears, resting her head upon his knee and weeping as if her heart would break.

"I cannot stand this, Bob," said Jack, for the first time speaking to his friend. "You'll take care of poor Maggie when I'm gone, wont you, Bob?"

"Oh no, no, I will die too, Jack. I could n't live and you gone. I could n't, could n't," and she looked as if she spoke truth, for she had eaten nothing all day, nor had she been able to sleep.

"Poor girl, poor girl," ejaculated Jack. "I pity women, Bob, they love so true if they love at all."

Jack's gaiety was all gone. He looked haggard and dispirited. Maggie at length roused herself to produce a little basket of eatables which she had

brought with her, and which she spread upon the seat of a chair, but neither could eat.

Bob learned all the particulars of the death of Peter, and saw at once that Jack was entirely innocent of all evil intention, but he saw, also, the difficulty of making this to appear with sufficient force to affect the minds of others.

"I'm sorry Peter's gone," at length said Bob. "I'm very sorry. I hoped we might get something out of him in the matter of Silver-tongue. But he deserved his death, he did. Somehow these things all come out right at last, 't was n't in the nater of things that Peter should die in a peaceful-like way, he's got his desarts, but I'm sorry, Jack, he got 'em through you."

"It can't be helped now," returned the other. "It's all up with Flashy Jack this time, Bob, and now all he's got to do is to settle his accounts, and go. The world is done with him."

"I hope it is n't so bad as that comes to, Jack, but the worst come to the worst, you 's innocent, Jack, and that's a great comfort. I'll do all I can for you."

Jack grasped his hand warmly. "Bob, I have felt as if it would come to this ever since I played in Jack Sheppard. I never got over it."

Bob shuddered, remembering his own presentiments.

"That's a devilish play, Jack, it makes rascality

takin', makes it seem easy, as if you could n't help it. But, Jack, I knows in my heart your a good fellow; a great deal better than the world knows of, and I love you, Jack, and will stand by you, and help you, and and so now tell me what I shall do first."

"Help him out, Bob, help him out, is there no way of doing so?" and Maggie grasped from side to side the heavy stone walls and iron gratings.

"Be a good girl, Maggie, and give that up. There is no way of doing it; besides, as it was an accident, I think I shall be cleared, and then we will go away somewhere into the other part of the world, Maggie."

"Don't come to trial, Jack," interposed the girl, eagerly. "There never was such a thing as a poor man or woman being cleared by the law. They'll make a great parade of justice, but they'll condemn you, Jack. Try to escape, help him to escape, dear Bob;" and then she went on to propose a change of garments, to procure files, aquafortis, and other means of escape; for in the region of the Five Points these topics are often under discussion, as means having been put in practice by its inmates at some time, or as likely to be contingently useful.

Flashy Jack would not listen to her plans. "It's of no use, Maggie. It runs in the blood of our family. My father told me so. There was an old gypsy woman who fell in love with my grandfather, and

when he wouldn't leave his country and follow after her, for the reason that he was mate of a ship, and had a wife and children at home, she followed him down to the sea, outside of the walls of Cadiz, and cursed him. My grandfather hadn't wit enough to say, 'curses, like chickens, come home to roost,' for the reason he pitied her. She stood down by the sea as he went out of the harbor, and she tied three knots around the neck of a toad, and hung it on a cross-bar upon the quay, all the time saying over at one breath,

'Three firm knots around I tie,
Black toad hung 'twixt earth and sky,
Blood of his I doom to die;
One, two, three, are swinging high,
Mark the gypsy prophecy.'"

It was evident this singular story had laid for years in the mind of Jack, impressing him more deeply than he was conscious of at the time.

"I always felt I was born to complete the curse of the old woman," continued Jack, "and so I've lived about in spots, and haven't cared to do much in the world for the reason it did n't much matter."

Bob had a deep vein of superstition, and this recital, and the state of mind which it indicated, affected him greatly.

"What became of your grandfather?" asked the Newsboy.

"On his voyage home he was attacked by pirates,

who killed all of the crew, but kept him because they wanted a sailing-master. He couldn't make his escape from them, and saw them murder and rob upon the high seas for more than a year. At length they were becalmed off New Orleans, and the pirates after fighting like devils were all taken and hung. My grandfather had never injured any man, but he couldn't make it appear so, and he went with the rest. My father was a young man then, and down he went to Orleans to be with him to the last, and then he got the story of the gypsy queen. After this he would never marry. He was the only son, and he went off and gave out that he was dead, so that if anything had ever come to him his mother shouldn't know it.

"Well, in course, my father having nobody to look to, nobody to care for him, tossed about without money nor friends, just as you, and I, and Maggie's been all our lives, fell into bad courses."

"I wonders we aint worse nor we is," interrupted Bob, musingly; "we's got so little light; and when rich rascals wants a tool, they comes to us poor bodies, and offers to buy us up to do their deviltry. Now, Jack," continued Bob, rising and spitting to show his disgust, "I's had 'em come to me and mouse, and talk, but I gin 'em to know that I was n't o' their kidney. Let every man do his own dirty work, I'll do it for nobody."

Bob evidently had some disagreeable experience upon his mind, but he didn't explain; and after a pause, Jack went on with his recital.

"For some years my father told me he went and came much as I have done, helping out those that got into difficulty, helping the good and the bad, whichever needed him—when—well I don't know about the rest of the story—"

"Maybe you wouldn't care to tell it, Jack, and accordin' to my way of thinkin', when we feels a check inside, it means stop, and I always stops till I gets further light."

Jack seemed to appreciate the delicacy of his friend, and did not at once renew the recital. The turnkey by this time made his appearance, and Maggie would have again yielded to her passionate grief had not Flashy Jack, in a few firm words, enjoined silence.

"You know, Maggie, these people think we are only brutes and d—ls, and where's the use of crying and making trouble? They don't pity us, they don't care whether we walk or swing. We must hold up, and then they'll not have a chance to abuse us."

Thus incited, the girl passed through the corridor with some little degree of composure; but as she turned towards her deserted rooms, she became more and more distressed, and she held her green veil down close to her face, that her tears might not be visible.

XLIX.

The Ivory Crucifix.

ON the return of Bob, Mr. Dinsmoor listened to his recital of events with great interest. Here was a class of persons living in the heart of a great Christian city, whose lives were like a new revelation to the rich and aristocratic merchant. He had heretofore regarded them as all bad without redemption. A horde of miserable evil-doers, hunted down by the law, and entirely without the pale of human sympathies. One and another had been brought to his observation, and he was astonished to find that some of the hardier virtues, such as answer to corn, oak trees, and the metal of iron to the material world,—bread, and power, and strength—the moral vitalism of the soul, reigned there in a sort of savage grandeur.

He was compelled to think better of man, even while he was brought into contact with him in his worst aspect. If his constitutional exclusiveness re-

coiled at first from the contact, a braver spirit grew upon him as one trait after another in the Newsboy's character revealed to him the sumptuous furnishing of his moral nature,—

“Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom”

of that fathomless heart of his, unknown in part even by himself, disregarded by the world about him, but known and cared for by the Father of Spirits.

Like others in his position, Mr. Dinsmoor had washed his hands of all contact with what he considered as the refuse and off-scouring of the world. He did n't know, and you, dear Reader, do not know, how at times some great, pure human emotion, such as Jesus, were he here, would turn aside to say, “well done,” starts forth to the light, even amid the darkness and misery of these wretched precincts, and looks there and then like a dear white angel calling upon us to help brighten, and purify, and regenerate the place.

Once in the country a beautiful pearl was lost, and we all helped to search far and near to recover it; but weeks and months elapsed, and the pearl was not found. One morning I observed in my walks our great, strutting, noisy chanticleer, scratching and making a great ado over a dunghill—calling his family about him, crow-

ing and calling, as if he had great pickings. I listened to the pleasant country noise, and watched the chanticleer with great interest—when lo! he gave a scratch that sent the black heap far and wide, and almost unsettled him in the vigorous outlay of his legs, and there, gleaming fair, and white, and beautiful, notwithstanding all the filth amid which it had lodged, appeared the lost pearl. There are many pearls, and pearls of price, amid the moral filth of the Five Points and other sinks of wickedness in the great city of New York. Will none search to find them? That old black, undrained marsh of the Collet, about which squalid poverty, and slinking vice, and hunted crime, congregated itself in the early times, because there was refuge and security in its malaria, was but a prophecy of its future debasement, and a prophesying of the great, gloomy, pestilential prison, which has in our days usurped the site.

Mr. Dinsmoor made interest at once in behalf of Flashy Jack, so that his imprisonment was less severe than it might otherwise have been. He even obtained a periodical pass for poor Maggie, and went so far as to propose that the marriage bond should be established between them, a proposal which poor Maggie heard with a sense of new and unexpected shame, and which she refused at once. The girl seemed so embarrassed and troubled at the mention, that Mr. Dins-

moor urged an explanation, which Maggie gave in a few words :

"If Jack gets his liberty, Sir, it will be time to talk about it. If he should n't"—and she paused for breath, "it will be all the same to me, Sir, I should n't live long at the best. Besides, I would n't have him marry me in the Tombs when he might n't want to do so if he was out." The last words were uttered in a low, timid voice, accompanied with a blush.

This was a species of loyalty and delicacy for which the merchant was unprepared ; but a further conversation with Maggie convinced him that she was utterly unable to analyze her state of feeling, or to refer it to any educational source, and he was obliged to confess that there was a sort of innate goodness about the girl, which needed but a fostering hand to develop into something morally beautiful.

Through the intervention of Mr. Dinsmoor and the efforts of Bob, the Newsboys were permitted to talk often with their old and favorite companion through the grate ; and many were the cheering things said to him, and many the papers and periodicals thrust through the iron bars for him to read. The officials scolded and grumbled at the extra care all these attentions caused them, but the hearty good will of the Newsboys was infectious, and even these jackals and badgers, and wolves and foxes of the law incarnated in

the shape of men, were appeased, and acquired something bordering upon human insight, but in a dim way of course.

There were circumstances in the history of Flashy Jack which he had concealed even from his favorite, Bob, and which must be detailed in our subsequent pages. Jack was human all over down to the heels of his boots. He was n't an angel nor a saint, nothing but a man doing the best he could in the condition he found himself in the world. When I write the record of a saint, or the *volantes* of an angel, I shall deal in quite another system of morals and events from those that figure in this book, which claims to be no more nor less than a true history of what transpired in the experience of mortals.

One morning Bob had passed some two or three hours in the cell of his friend, who was more than usually thoughtful ; and accordingly the Newsboy entered into some details in regard to Dady, and spoke of the state of Mrs. Dinsmoor, (whose life waned day by day,) more fully than he had ever before done.

"She's like one of them lilies, Jack, you and I and Sam used to go over to Brooklyn, out in Dick Berry's pond, to get. Don't you remember, Jack, how poor old crazy Berry used to run after us and fire stones, and we would dash into the water, grab a handful and then run—"

"Like the d—l," interposed Jack with animation. "Those were happy days, Bob—but they're all over, all over."

"To-morrow, according to my way of thinkin', is always better nor to-day, Jack. 'Cause why? we's a day older and wiser, and nearer to the lights we wants. But as I was sayin', them lilies always opened as if they thought it a sin and a shame to hide so much sweetness, as if they loved to show how handsome God had made 'em, as if it did n't cost nothin' to be beautiful, as if it pleased 'em to please. Well, so it is with Mrs. Dinsmoor; she's easy-like in her beauty, easy-like in her goodness, as if it come natural. She's taken a great likin' to Dady, and seein' it will be better for her, I says nothin'."

"Do you love that child, Bob," asked Flashy Jack in a careless voice, but he fixed his eyes upon the Newsboy as he spoke.

"In course I do, Jack. We always love what looks to us for love. I'm thinkin' God loves us in the same way. We needs him, and looks to him, and he won't disappoint us. But, Jack, supposin' you tell me the rest of that story of yourn."

Jack was about to begin, when the keeper opened the door and Sister Agnace entered the cell.

"*Benedicite, meus filius,*" she whispered, glancing around and crossing herself. "Did you send this,

my son," she said, showing a small ivory crucifix of delicate workmanship, although stained and discolored by time.

"I did," said Flashy Jack. "My father directed me if trouble come upon me to send it to the convent, and I should learn further."

"You have done well, my son." She then listened in silence while the youth recited the particulars of the unfortunate affray and the death of Peter.

"The son of the blessed Mary perished between two thieves upon a false charge. Bear the cross patiently, my son, it will usher you to eternal glories."

"Is there no escape, think you, good Mother?"

"The law is uncertain; a charge is condemnation to the poor and uncared for. I would have you, my son, ready for the worst, and then should you be liberated your joy will be the greater. Should you die, your preparation will be more perfect."

Sister Agnace had grown more pale and spiritual in her looks since we saw her ten years ago; but her voice had the same heavenly fall, the cadence of divine peace, and pure ineffable love. She had not forgotten Sam and the sweet Mary, notwithstanding so many had since come under her ministry. She asked Bob of his present plans, and life. She listened to his recital of the abduction of Imogen, with her clear eyes fixed upon his face.

"Go, my son," she said warmly as he closed, "go, and God and his blessed angels help you. The voice has spoken to you—obey." Her cheek glowed with animation as she spoke.

"I will be with you on the morrow," she said, and kneeling down, she repeated the prayers for "those that are in bonds," sprinkled holy water upon the cell, and went out.

"She thinks as we do," rejoined Flashy Jack, when she had left. "She believes Cosmello guilty."

The turnkey now signified that Bob must leave, and he did so with a promise to return and hear the relation of Jack in the morning.

L.

The Italian.

EARLY in the morning Bob was by the side of his old friend. But early as it was, Maggie was before him with her little basket of linen and provisions, and the Newsboys had left each a paper. Maggie was more cheerful than her wont, and brought many little items of news to wile away the dull thoughts of Flashy Jack. The lovers talked awhile in a low voice.

"You will be wanting money, Maggie," said Jack.

"No, no, I have enough," returned the girl.

Flashy Jack looked into her eyes with a cold, penetrating look, but Maggie did not shrink; she put her hand in his, and whispered,

"You know Maggie is true, Jack, till death."

"My good girl. Sell all my clothes, Maggie, and my watch. I'm glad little Vic's dead. Go to Sister Agnace when you have nothing to live upon. We are both of us done with the world, are we not, Mag-

gie? When Jack goes he will die the easier to know that there is one true in her love for him."

"Don't, don't, Jack," cried Maggie, sobbing bitterly. "When you die I shall die. There is nothing but death for poor Maggie when you are gone. I've thought it all over, Jack, and I see that death is better than the shame and the falsehood."

Shortly after she went out upon some commission for Jack, and Bob and his friend being alone, the former proposed a continuance of the story which had been interrupted, as we have before seen.

"My father never forgot the gypsy's curse, and for that reason he never'd marry. But it fell out after awhile that he met an Italian girl, coming over to this country. He was mate of a ship at that time, and as handsome a man as need to be. They had bad weather coming on the coast, and were blown off two or three times. Some of the men died, the captain was very sick in his berth, and the crew were put upon short allowance. The father of the girl died, and my father being young, and naturally fair-spoken, and respectful to women, treated her as if she had been a queen. The consequence was they both got into love, and then my father cared very little whether they ever got into port. They were spoken by other ships, and supplied with provisions; but as the bottom of the ship had become foul with barnacles and sea-drift, and sailed slow, this voyage was a long one.

"After awhile they reached New York. Before their arrival my father told Juliet the story of the gypsy's curse; he told her he could n't marry because of it, for he was persuaded some day he should come to some dreadful end, and he was not willing to involve her in his ruin. But Juliet did n't heed this; she declared she would leave the whole world for him; and indeed, Bob, my father had the soul of as true a man as ever breathed, and I do not wonder at the love of the girl.

"When the voyage was over, they could meet only by stealth, for Juliet was a great singer, and made her appearance soon after in public, and my father was too much of a man to be in her way, much as he loved her. He would go to the places where she sang, and take some poor place in the house, that he might see and hear her. Juliet seemed to always know where to look for him, and all the love parts she sang to him. The tears poured from her eyes, and she wept and sang in such earnest-wise, that after awhile the gallants learned to follow her eyes, and then they saw my father with his whole soul upon her.

"She went to Boston, to Richmond, Charleston, all the great cities north and south, and my father went also, but no one knew it. He never in any way made it appear that it was for the purpose of being

with Juliet, who was everywhere honored and beloved for her beauty and her goodness.

"In Richmond I was brought to him, according to a promise she had made. At first my father designed to put me to death, but he could n't do it. Many's the time he planned to take my life, but he saw something in my looks, Bob, that made him weak as death."

"It is n't the nater of a man to take the blood of a human creeter, Jack," responded the Newsboy. "We feels a nat'ral drawin' one to another. But tell me what became of your mother."

"She pined for me more than she thought she would have done; for loving the father, it was natural she should love his child. But she never saw me afterwards. My father put me to board with an old woman, and I believe he hoped I should die a natural death, for he feared I might be the third one included in the gypsy's curse. I was sent out to school sometimes, to work, sell papers, and indeed I had a rough time of it. The yellow fever and the cholera both carried off the people about me, and yet I escaped even sickness. At this time I ¹⁸⁴⁷ could not know that I had any parents. I never saw my mother to know her, for my father, even when he at last revealed himself to me, gave me no clue by which I could distinguish her.

"When I was about ten years old, an officer came to me one day, and brought me to the old prison. I found a man who took me upon his knee, and wept over me, Bob, as much as Maggie weeps. He held me in his arms, and sobbed aloud. He looked into my face, and saw that I was man enough to hold a secret."

"That's it, Jack," interposed the Newsboy. "It takes a man to hold a secret, a man as is a man. Some is like leaky vessels, nothin' goes in that does n't run out again. And the fools will tell women's secrets as quick as their own—and quicker too, as to that, because of the vanity; but go on."

"He saw that I could be trusted, and then he told me all I have been telling you, Bob. He called me child, Bob, child, and it's a pleasant sound."

The tears choked Jack's utterance as he said this, and Bob arose and walked across the cell. Both of them had felt the need of human ministry.

"It is n't to be supposed that a beautiful woman like my mother would be without her admirers, but Juliet loved my father too ¹⁸ well to flirt with anybody else. It chanced, however, that a young man from South Carolina became so deeply in love with her, that he offered marriage, and was greatly enraged at the rejection of my mother. He watched all her movements, and at length became assured that my father was the one in whom her affections were con-

centred. One night he stationed himself in the recess of the door of Juliet's house, and when my father made his appearance a violent contest took place, in which the young Southerner lost his life. He assured me solemnly, that he fought only in self-defence. But circumstances were against him. He was unwilling to challenge a thorough investigation, because of my mother. I don't understand this part of the story," continued Jack, musingly; but it must be remembered that Jack and Bob had no opportunity to learn conventional virtue, and polite respectability.

"My father enjoined it upon her never to come to him. He told her she could n't help him—she had a work to do in the world, and she must do it, and not lose her good name through him."

"Did she never visit him?" asked Bob.

"Never;" and both of the boys looked at each other, trying each to reconcile her conduct to his own system.

"I think she grew ambitious," continued Jack, "and the money she made, and the applause she received made her hard-hearted. But my father died believing she acted only in obedience to his wishes. He died loving and trusting her to the last.

"He never gave me his real name. He said it was better that I should be ignorant. As to my mother, he gave me nothing by which I could identify her.

This ivory crucifix he bade me send to the convent in case of any trouble, and the Sisters would see that I had Christian offices done me. He was very gentle to me, and wept and deplored that he had n't taken better care of me. He said he had thrown away his whole life—he had lost it because of that gypsy's curse."

"And you've had all this on your mind, Jack, and never told of it. Well, I'm bound to think there's something above-board and handsome in you, Jack," said Bob; "I should a done jest so, but I should n't a thought of your doing it, Jack; 'cause why? you's not nat'rally sober and work-lovin' as I am."

"I've enjoyed myself, Bob, I've enjoyed myself some, in the world. When I saw how the case stood with me, I saw how 't would come out, and so I kind of gave way. I sailed, and rode, and walked, and treated myself one way and another. I was n't brought up under rules, but come up in spots, here and there, and so I went on without learning them. Maggie took to me, and I must own I'm sorry for it."

"We's ignorant, Jack," returned Bob. "Maggie'll act up to her lights, and it's better she should die out of love to you, than lead the life she'd a lead without you."

The officer on duty now opened the door of the cell, and another visitor was admitted.

UPON the entrance of the stranger Bob took leave of his friend, believing their communications would be more unembarrassed if alone, than in the presence of a third party. The visitor was a woman taller than Sister Agnace, but being dressed in the usual costume of a Sister of Charity, this fact was not immediately obvious. She seated herself at the farthest distance possible from the prisoner, and looked upon him in silence.

"You sent the crucifix—what is your wish, my son," at length the Sister said in a low, trembling voice.

"I hardly know, Mother, what I wish; but I am the same as a dying man; I wish to be in somebody's heart and prayers."

The woman wept in silence for awhile, and then said, "How has the world gone with thee, my son? Have you suffered or been happy in it?"

"Both, Mother, both. But always I have felt as if I belonged where I could not be; always I have longed for something better than I found."

"And then you have plunged into sin, been the companion of harlots—the friend and abettor of thieves, the consort of profligates, heretics, and evil-doers."

"Not so bad as that, Mother. As Bob would say, and Bob is my only friend, I have lived up to my lights. What I knew to be wrong I never did; but, Mother, sometimes I learned too late," and the tears gushed to his eyes.

The woman groaned aloud. "Did you commit any great sin, my son? are you guilty of the crime now laid to your charge?"

"No, so help me God," answered the youth. "But, Mother, I care not now. I feel as if a curse had been upon me always; what I most desired I could not have, and now I will die. Flashy Jack has led a wild life, but he had a black grief always at his heart, and now that death is near, it seems a pleasant let up. I'm tired of the struggle."

"And yet I hear of thee, even here in this prison, holding communion with one who is of the frail sisterhood."

"Ah! Mother, how should I learn what the wise, and the rich, and the honored know? How should I, living as I have, without a home; loved only by crea-

tures as poor and more ignorant than myself,—how should I know of the regulations of people who never look upon our poverty, and houselessness, and misery, with anything but scorn?"

"But this Maggie, why should she blazon her evil preference in the way she does?"

Jack was silent. "Speak, my son, I would know thy secret thoughts."

"Maggie grew up as I did, unloved, uncared for. We both had beauty. We have both had our tempters. Maggie is more ignorant than I am; but years ago when we have both sat and gnawed a dry crust upon the curb-stone, we clung together in our wretchedness: we have laid our heads upon the ground and slept, because something in us revolted at the horrid revelry within doors. When the weather was cold poor Maggie would fear to enter the house, and she learned to look to me for help. I've saved her, many's the time. And she loves me."

"And what should be the love of a creature like that?" asked the nun in an angry tone.

"Mother, when Maggie has been hungry I gave her bread. When we sat two shivering orphans upon the side-walk, too young to interpret the life about us, Maggie has laid her head upon my shoulder and slept. When she would awake, I laid my head in her lap and slept in turn. Why should I not? The whole world

scorned and abused me, and here was a creature as helpless as myself who loved me. Why should I not love her in return? Our parents had cast us off, who should enlighten us?"

"Silence, my son, silence," returned the other. "You do not know the motives of another. The scorn of the world is not to be lightly hazarded."

"I think of that, Mother; but where love is in the heart it will speak, though the tongue be dumb. The love in the heart will make us despise the world. It seems but a little thing to die, in order to save one's child."

"You do not know, my son, you do not know how fearful the scorn and jeers of the world become to the proud heart."

"The heart that is proud to that degree should be too proud to love," answered the youth. "Such a heart despises its object."

"It may be, and unjustly so," mused the woman. "And you despise Maggie!"

"No, never. She had a gay, loving heart, till she loved me; and now she will starve, die, but Maggie will be true to the last. How many of your rich, fair reputed ladies would live a chaste life as Maggie will, in spite of hunger, and rags, and cold, and misery? I love her, Mother, for she is braver than was she who gave me birth, and left me to ignorance and death."

"My child, my child!" gasped the woman, clinging to his knees. "Do not curse me, oh! my child, your words are daggers. I caused all your misery."

Poor Jack recoiled from her touch. She saw it, and clasped her hands imploringly. "Life of my life," she cried, "do not spurn me, forgive me, forgive me, I am more wretched than you."

Still Jack turned away. "Oh, my child, my penitence came too late. A fatal spell has been upon us all. I alone hoped to serve God and the world. I was not great enough for the heart-freightage entrusted to me. Can you not pardon your mother, Jack?"

"I'm thinking," returned the youth, "of the times I slept on the ground, instead of a mother's bosom. Ah! I might have been very happy!" and he sobbed, and grasped the bars of the prison for support.

"Forgive me, my poor child."

"I'm thinking of the times when I was kicked from place to place, bruised and aching, and no mother's hand interposed."

"Poor, neglected child, and my child."

"I'm thinking how I have strove to learn, longed for the knowledge of the right, and no mother opened the book of life to my young heart."

"No more, oh no more!"

Jack, still grasping the irons, looking off into the distance.

"Oh! I'm thinking how suffering, and remorse, and agony have gnawed at my heart, and a dim voice urged me to pray, to seek unto the Unseen, and no mother had taught me prayer. Oh, mother, mother, God judge between us," and he buried his face in his two hands.

The woman sank down, overcome with her emotions.

"Mother," continued the youth, "had you loved with a mother's heart, you would have screened the creature that owed its life to you. Oh, mother," and he threw himself upon the floor beside her, "the love of your poor boy would have been better than that of the whole world beside. He would have learned at your knee, so loved and honored you, that you would have forgotten it in your child. Then that awful curse might have been defeated, and I have been what I was born to be, not a miserable outcast as I am."

"Can you not forgive me, child? Our passions blind us. They make us deaf and dumb, and when the calm day of thought comes, they scourge us to madness. I have sinned—forgive me. I have sorrowed—pity me. I loved you always, even when I believed, as I did for years, that your little ashes had been scattered to the elements. Then I mourned you in silence, and the Church put up prayers for you, for you were a baptized infant."

"I a baptized infant? Oh, mother, has there been even so much care for poor Jack?"

The women kissed his hands in assent.

"And you prayed for me, mother, when I sat and wondered at the stars at midnight, and wondered why such a poor little outcast was put into this world—did you, mother, in your secret heart pray for me?"

"God is my witness, I prayed day and night for you."

"Bless you, bless you," cried the youth, sinking at her feet. "And you called me child, your child. Say it again, I've tried so often to think how it would seem to be treated tenderly."

The Nun clung her arms about his neck, she held the cross to his lips, and kissed it in return, and they both wept in concert.

"Do you remember once," she continued, "seeing a singer faint at the Opera? I had borne up after the terrible death of your father as best I could. I had supposed you dead up to the time the crucifix of ivory was brought me. That little image had been blessed by the Pope. The material had been brought from Africa by Ignatius himself, and been preserved for ages by the monks. My mother was almost a saint, and she obtained the gift because of her birth, and her sanctity of life. I gave it to your father as the most sacred pledge that could pass between us. I knew he

was not a Catholic, but I knew it would be buried with him unless reserved for another purpose; therefore, when it was sent to the convent, my first object was to find out into whose hands it had fallen, and I surmised the truth before I saw your father's looks in you.

"But I spake of the night in which I fainted. I sang the part of Norma. The agonizing grief of the mother was re-echoed in my own heart. I wept as I sang, when my eyes fell upon your young face, so like that of your father's and my own, as my glass gave it back to me in younger days. I knew it was my child whose eyes were riveted upon me with that intense interest. I struggled to crowd down my heart as I had done a thousand times before. I tried to impersonate as I had so often done, while at the moment my own poor heart was wrung with agony. I had sat for hours alone at midnight, with the dead face of my beautiful—my beloved, lying before me. Hour after hour the great city rolled on, and slept, and yet I gazed. Oh, my God, I did not go mad, for it seemed all the time as though something whispered, 'Be calm, silence, this is not the last.'"

The Nun had laid her head upon the shoulder of her child, and they wept together.

"When my father was buried," said the youth, "I was told he would have decent burial, but I could not learn what that was."

"My gold procured the body, and silence also; and at night when all others slept, solemn masses were chanted for the dead, and a sepulchre, sanctified by holy Christain offices, was obtained."

"Thank God," cried the youth. "Tell me all, that I may know," he continued.

"When all was over, and I alone in the world, I went on in my career; but my energies flagged—the applause of the world palled upon my ear. My heart lacked impulse, and yet even my art was a relief, for through that I yielded to a grief so wild and passionate, that other hearts thrilled in return, and called it the triumph of art, when it was only the outspeaking of nature. Then I saw you. I knew you were my child. I tried to go on. I calculated upon that power of endurance which had sustained me through a thousand trials. It would not be. I had reached the acme of fortitude, and the reaction was terrific. I was borne fainting from the stage, never to return."

"Did you care to see me again? did you try to find me?" asked the youth.

"I offered large sums of money—I searched in all directions, but without avail. I have gone forth at midnight, disguised in poor garments, in the hope of finding you. And now I find you here—here in this cell, with the mark of Cain upon your brow—your brow so like *his*," and she kissed it with tears falling from her eyes.

"Oh, mother, think of us all—think what might have been, and has not been. Think of our misery—think of the cruel death we all die, yet all innocent of murder in our hearts. Can it be that God is good?"

"Doubt it not, my child. Without faith in God we should go mad under our miseries. The warp and woof of life are fearfully interwoven with good and ill. Late as it is, let me teach you submission to God's will. I have learned it. I look back and see how much might have been escaped—I see that the deep regard which hallowed the lives of your father and of me, might have been cast to the winds, and then we might have escaped. But it could not be at the time."

"But your child—to leave that to perish!"

"Ah! that was our crime. That fearful prediction, so frightfully verified once, haunted us in every aspect of life. In our blindness and weakness, we thought death would be better than the contingency. Your father, peaceful, devoted, studious, ran little risk of such an issue, but a child of ours might at some time pierce us as with a sword, and therefore it should die, or be left to some obscure fate. He never told me the result, nor dared I ask him. I could only hold you once to my heart, behold the holy water of baptism sprinkled upon your brow, and then lose you

forever. But that one moment in which I pressed you to my bosom, was a moment of ecstasy never forgotten. It haunted me for years, and then I would rush to the foot of the cross, and implore pardon for ourselves, and blessings upon you."

Jack sank down at her feet.

"My mother!" was all he could ejaculate.

The Nun clasped him in her arms, "My child, my child, say that you love me, say that you forgive me, say that your blood is not upon me."

"Now, mother, I could wish to live." Oh, death is dreadful now, when I have found you. Save me, mother," and his voice was lost in sobs. The weakness, and longing for life, which once made the Shakespear Claudio sublimely eloquent in his cowardice, had overcome the Newsboy.

At this moment the official, faithful to times and seasons, and all the routine of office, appeared, to signify to the pair that the conference must be at an end. He looked surprised at the agitation of the parties, but the Nun arose to her feet, made the sign of the cross upon his brow, and promising him soon to return, took her leave.

LII.

Aunt Becky.

IN the meanwhile the family of Mr. Dinsmoor had undergone some little change. For awhile the presence of the child Dady had served to arouse Fannie to some little consciousness of life, but gradually the sense of bereavement returned with its deadening spell, and her health seemed fatally broken.

Mr. Dinsmoor had summoned to the care of his household a maiden aunt of the family, who, after many conditions, and stipulations, and feeling, as she said, "that it was a tempting of Providence to visit such a sink of iniquity and Sodom of corruption as New York; yet out of respect to a member of the family, upon whom God's judgments had undoubtedly fallen for his pride and extravagance, and taking her life in her hand, as it were, she went forth to meet the worst."

Accordingly, Aunt Becky went round amongst all

her friends and neighbors, and detailed the circumstances of her painful Exodus. With each one she sat a long afternoon, and not till her knitting sheath was duly pinned to her side, and the needle inserted therein, and her gossip seated with work in hand, would she open her mouth to explain what was before her. And thus she went from house to house, and many were the terrible surmises there and then started in regard to the fate of Imogen. Some believed she had been Burked and sold to the doctors, others even surmised that the child might have got an unsteady fit into her head and run off. But other and more dreadful suggestions arose, which were discussed in low whispers, and amid the recounting of other traditions of a like import.

Aunt Beckey at length completed her round of visits, and several pairs of good yarn-stockings in the process. Prayers were duly put up in the church for "a sister bound on a long and perilous journey—that she might be preserved in every trial, and be made strong to fight a good fight in every temptation of the adversary."

The time of departure came, and then a drive of several miles brought Aunt Beckey down to the railroad station. Many of the neighbors accompanied her, taking charge of sundry articles of necessity and comfort which go to make up the essentials of a spinster's

travelling gear; and, truth to say, nothing could be more respectable than the appearance of Aunt Beckey as she presented herself, for the first time in her life, at the door of the car.

Her tall, straight figure, was clad in a spotted mouseline de laine dress, cut decently high in the neck, where a white linen collar carefully concealed every inch of skin and bones, that might be supposed to exist in that vicinity. An oblong black pin, holding a fold of white interlocked with a fold of black hair, guaranteed the allegiance of the linen collar. A large cottage bonnet, modestly trimmed with green ribbon, and a rather broad green silk cape to still further shade the person in travelling, surmounted her head; and thus, as if this were not enough, her maiden charms were still further screened by a large green barège veil, carefully tied with a green string, which passed under the folds of the green ribbon aforesaid.

Aunt Beckey's dress was by no means of the Broadway length; on the contrary, it came some inches above her ankle, thereby effectually preserving it from all contact with dust in the course of her wayfaring. A pair of black morocco shoes tied with black ribbon, the bows picked out to the full width, black worsted hose of her own knitting, furnished the draping of her lower extremities. Her wrists were covered by the sleeves of the dress closely

buttoned—white linen wristbands, folding neatly back.

Aunt Beckey had seen to the stowing away of her several trunks, but the bandbox she insisted upon taking under her own especial charge, together with an umbrella, a large carpet-bag, an extra shawl, and "Baxter's Saints' Rest," which was to beguile her solitary hours on the way, the latter carefully folded in a large white handkerchief, from the ends of which protruded the leaves of the book and the sticks of a small black fan.

Many were the affecting leaves to be taken, the last words and counsels given and received. Many the kisses left upon the lips of the good spinster, who, after each infliction, carefully wiped her mouth with the pocket handkerchief, folded as it was over the book and fan.

Just as the train gave signs of starting, good Mrs. Donder, a small woman, whose thoughts were apt to come a little late in the day, produced quite unexpectedly a large linen sack, which was to shield Aunt Beckey's person from the dust and cinders of the road. Here was a surprise—here was a forecast quite overlooked by everybody else, and great was the triumph on the part of Mrs. Donder; who, not content with presenting the garment, entered the car at the risk of being carried off in the start, that she might button

the sack snug about the neck and wrists of Aunt Beckey.

The little woman hardly had time to finish her task, and take a last kiss, when the train was in motion, and she gave a great plunge into the arms of her friends upon the platform. Then there was waving of handkerchiefs, and last words and shouts, in the midst of which Aunt Beckey, standing her full height, enveloped as we have seen, appeared to great advantage. Baxter's Saints' Rest had tumbled unnoted upon the floor, and the fan rested beside it, while the large handkerchief shook from its folds to its fullest size, waved like a banner for many miles from the window of the car.

Aunt Beckey encountered some perils on her way, but nothing absolutely serious transpired. The whistle blew several times with such force and violence as nothing but the most imminent danger could justify. On these occasions Aunt Beckey closed her eyes, and betook herself to her prayers. As the distance from home increased, and she still found herself sound in life and limb, notwithstanding that "thousands of poor, less guilty creatures than herself, had been hurried without a moment's warning into eternity," her confidence increased.

I quote Aunt Beckey's own words above, and it seems to me that the phrase "less guilty than herself"

is a sort of orthodox figment, a figure in rhetoric, not designed to convey any very definite idea to the mind; for so far as Aunt Beckey was concerned, never was "infant in its nurse's arms" more guileless, more free from all evil than she. If you marked Aunt Beckey, with her large open eyes rounded into wonder as she looked about her, her cheek smooth and hard as a child's, and her hair, with now and then a white thread, so smoothly combed upon each side of her head, and tied in a strong string behind, where it was knotted into the hardest possible knot or club, you would say at once that no lamb was more innocent than Aunt Beckey.

Between Boston and Providence Aunt Beckey encountered a pale, intellectual-looking man, who, in a modest, humble tone of voice, asked if he should take a seat beside her. She was rather pleased than otherwise at this, and when he took up Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, and turning the leaves awhile, said with a deep sigh, "A godly book, ma'am, and I doubt not many are now singing the songs of the Lamb who, but for this book, would be consigned to utter darkness," the whole of Aunt Beckey's heart went out towards him. She turned her round eyes full upon him with such an expression of pious admiration as could only come from the virgin heart of forty-five.

Then the man discussed the "state of religion" in

divers parts, spoke of the "benighted heathen," and "the thousands of the isles lying in wickedness," till Aunt Beckey became convinced he was some great missionary. He went out and bought a piece of sponge cake, and a couple of russet apples; one of the latter he peeled, holding the fruit by the stem lest it should come in contact with his fingers, and all in a sort of pious and resigned way, and then offered it to Aunt Beckey, who took it with a pleasure quite new and unexpected, and a blush altogether girlish.

After awhile the excellent young man asked her in a kind, brotherly way, whither her journey tended, and expressed a hope that the Lord would be her guide, and ever-present helper. Aunt Beckey closed her eyes, and prayed in her heart for the good young man, and then she went on to tell the story of "Cousin George, who had met with a terrible blow," &c., and then she branched off into indefinite space in the matter of "dispensations and providences," in quite an edifying manner.

The man bent his head to one side, and listened as a man who has the good of souls at heart is expected to listen; but when, warming in her subject, she went on to cite one authority after another, the discrepancies in the character of David, who, notwithstanding, was declared to be a "man after God's own heart;" the case of Job, who still adhered to his integrity; the

X flight of Jonah, that he might escape the utterance of the truth; the false prophets slain by the way; the fate of Nathan and Abiram, &c., all brought into juxtaposition to sustain some theory not very clear to the mind of the hearer, the good, innocent creature betrayed a familiarity with the possible workings of the moral code quite surprising; a familiarity also with imaginary, book-recorded evil doings, that might have argued an imagination directed to a channel somewhat unexpected in a spinster of her years. But if any such thought crossed the mind of her auditor, he did her great injustice, for Aunt Beckey had no clear idea in her mind of the nature of any one positive sin. She had a soul as white as a vestal's, indeed whiter, for Aunt Beckey had only a sort of dictionary knowledge of evil, and all the pulpit denunciations upon wickedness, passed over her "like the sweet south over a bed of violets," a healthful stirring up, by which the "pure mind was kept in remembrance."

At length Aunt Beckey landed safely upon our mundane sphere after her long exploring amid abstractions, and then she left the possible cause of the misfortune of her cousin to be disposed of by other powers while she detailed the story itself.

The man listened with great apparent interest, while she told of little Imogen, who was, to say the least, the best and beautifulest child that ever lived.

Her mother, Fannie, was a harmless little thing, and she rather wondered that Cousin George should fall in love with her; but everybody to his taste, and Cousin George always had his own way. But when in the course of her story she spoke of Mr. Dinsmoor, and described the location of his house, the interest of the stranger became intense.

"I have heard of the strange abduction of a child answering to your description," he replied, "but little thought it would ever be my happiness to encounter one so nearly related to the dear angel. Pray tell me how the poor parents bore up under this terrible bereavement, more terrible than death to the sensitive mind."

Aunt Beckey responded admiringly to the sentiment, and then went on to depict the grief of the noble father, and the prostration, mental and bodily, of the poor mother, in a way at once simple and touching. She even held the little black fan in front of her maiden bosom, while she fumbled amid its mysteries, and at length produced the identical letter of Mr. Dinsmoor in which he had urged her to come to them, not even suppressing a postscript in which he stated, "I enclose you a hundred dollars for the expenses of your journey, all in small bills, that you may have no trouble in changing them."

"Cousin George will be surprised," added Aunt

Beckey, "to receive his hundred dollars untouched. I had some things which I turned into money; they wouldn't a bin of the smallest arthly use in York, but up in Bluehill was of considerable vally. So I sold 'em and took the proceeds to pay my way, keeping Cousin George's money safe in my pocket. I always wear two pockets when I go away from home, one tied underneath, and hanging down low, for fear of pick-pockets, and one in the skirt of my gown. I'm told there are pick-pockets all along the road," she continued, "and their wickedness and audacity are surprising."

"Most true," ejaculated her companion, "most true, as is the long-suffering of the Lord surprising," at the same time he turned over the seat in part, and took Aunt Beckey's carpet-bag from under her feet and placed it before her, and helped her to adjust herself with a better eye to comfort. He appeared to have travelled much, was solemn, and low-spoken—sighed frequently. Read an account of a robbery and murder from one of the newspapers which he bought of a country Newsboy, who jerked out his papers, and flirited out his brief words in a manner directly the opposite of the rich rythmetic flow of the New York Newsboy, who prolongs the sound of his own clear voice as if he loved to hear it.

When the stranger finished his perusal, he leaned

his elbow upon the arm of the seat, his hand over his eyes, and sighed frequently, like a man completely overcome at contemplating the wickedness of the world. Aunt Beckey fell into a similar reverie, which gradually deepened into a sound sleep, from which she did not awake till the cars were safely landed at Stonington, at which place she was to take the steamboat Massachusetts and cross the Sound to New York.

The night had become dark, and a slow rain had set in while the good spinster slept; and now all was noise and bustle, people were hurrying out of the cars to the boat. Half-awakened children were screaming and fretting, the employés of the road were hurrying about with lanterns in hand, one of them came along and turned all the backs of the seats the other way, and here he found Aunt Beckey in great perplexity. She found her bandbox, her shawl, her umbrella, but the carpet-bag had disappeared altogether.

"You'll find it on board of the boat," answered the official, "somebody's took it by mistake—hurry, ma'am, or you'll be left," and he did urge her, most unwillingly, over the plank, which was hurriedly taken in, and the burst of steam, the bustle of men, the revolving of the wheels, and one last expiring puff of the valve, answered by a sharp cry of the locomotive, all conspired to drown the shrill cries of Aunt Beckey, but they came one after another, till people were obliged to hear.

There stood the innocent creature amid the crowd; she had torn her bonnet from her head, she had divested her shoulders of the linen sack, and stranger still, had raised the decorous spotted mouseline dress in a way to show the nicely-quilted bombazine petticoat beneath, adown one side of which streamed a huge calico pocket, which had been slit its whole length and the contents gone.

Search was instantly made, but nothing transpired to implicate any one. But a gentleman present expressed it as his opinion that the pious, ministerial young man, who had beguiled the lonesomeness of her journey by the unction of his discourse, was the aggressor; an opinion which shocked Aunt Beckey quite as much as the loss of her money, and going, as she said, "to prove the wickedness of the world."

Aunt Beckey was too much distracted to sleep through the night. She counted the shawl and the band-box, and umbrella and fan, and Baxter's Saints' Rest, over and over, as if in this way the carpet-bag by some sudden interposition, would range itself beside them. But the passengers at length subsided into their berths, the splash of the rain and the working of the machinery became more and more monotonous, interrupted now and then by the ringing of the fog bell, and yet there, all night, under the dim lamp, sat Aunt Beckey, like Marius amid the ruins of Carthage.

LIII.

Aunt Beckey's Housekeeping.

AUNT BECKEY was, at length, without much further discomfort, landed at the house of Mr. Dinsmoor, who had met her at the boat, according to arrangement. He listened with a smile to her tale of grievances, and even heard an inventory of the contents of the carpet-bag, by which he was convinced, as Aunt Beckey avowed, that the articles would be of no earthly use to any man alive, though in the highest degree comfortable and appropriate for a woman. The reader may then judge of her surprise when the first object which presented itself in the hall of Mr. Dinsmoor was the identical carpet-bag, which had been opened and the contents evidently examined. But nothing was missing.

No explanation could well be made; but Aunt Beckey became convinced that the pious young man had taken it by mistake; while Mr. Dinsmoor inclined to the same faith, except in regard to the mistake; the

good spinster never quite recovered the loss of the hundred dollars, and her little plan to surprise her cousin. Other and more abundant funds were at her disposal, but every addition to her purse only served to remind her of her previous misfortune. She was not avaricious, "but such a dead loss was enough to distract anybody," she would say.

The presence of Dady and her foster father was a great matter of wonderment to Aunt Beckey, and she did not at first reconcile them to her system of proprieties. With regard to poor Fannie she was even more at a loss, since her state did not harmonize with any preconceived experience.

"How do you find yourself in your mind, Cousin Fannie," she asked, plying the little black fan with great energy. "I hope the Lord is with you in this trying event."

Now this was n't Aunt Beckey in the least, but a mode of speech which she had learned and fallen into in her simplicity, supposing it pious and orthodox, and appropriate to the occasion.

Fannie made no reply, but Mr. Dinsmoor said, "Aunt Beckey will take care of you, dear Fannie, and love you; and she will keep Imogen's room all ready till she comes."

Fannie's face brightened. "Oh that will be a great comfort—go now then, and see if her little slippers

are just in front of the easy chair, and see that her books are just as she left them. I would not have the dear child think we have forgotten her. Do you think she will soon be here?"

Aunt Beckey arose from her chair, and laid the fan down upon the seat of it, while she looked down into Fannie's face with such a look of heartfelt kindness, that you would n't think whether she was an orthodox Christian or not, for her whole face expressed the simple goodness of her heart. With her large red hands she smoothed Fannie's head upon each side—there was magnetism in the touch of Aunt Beckey, so soothing, so motherly was it, and when she said in her loud rich voice,

"You poor, dear critter, you"—the words conveyed a volume of kindly meaning.

"I'm so glad you've come," said Fannie, rising upon her elbow, "and Imogen will be glad too, we expect her every minute. When she comes I shall give her this bouquet, and then the dear will have so much to tell me, and the house will be so cheerful, and we will go out every day. I'm not quite well just now, but I shall be better when she comes back, you know."

Aunt Beckey took the sufferer in her arms, and the tears streamed from her eyes.

"The Lord's will be done," she ejaculated, wiping the pale lips of Fannie.

"Yes," she responded, "we have learned to say that, and now I am having the loveliest robes made—for Imogen is going to be christened the Sabbath after she returns, and then George and I are going to be—what is it, George, that we were talking about?"

"I want you to get stronger, Fannie, dear, so that we may go into the country."

"Oh yes, soon as Imogen comes, we would n't be away then, you know. Look out, George, I heard something. Put back the curtains, dear, the moon is very bright, I am glad of that," and the full moon shone in upon her pale face, as if it lighted up a marble shape.

Aunt Beckey took her small hands, so colorless, so cold, and lifeless in their look, between both of hers; and then the warm life therefrom passed soothingly over the shattered nerves of the sufferer, and she slept. But in her sleep the tears fell slowly from her eyes, and the heart of the bereaved mother betrayed its agony by sobs and deep groans.

"This won't last long," said Aunt Beckey, sitting hour after hour as we have described. "The poor dear heart is breaking fast."

"Yes, I shall soon be alone. Oh God, why am I thus afflicted?" exclaimed the merchant, walking the room.

"The Lord is my rock and my defence, a very

present help in every time of trouble. Remember this, Cousin George," said Aunt Beckey.

For a period after the arrival of Aunt Beckey, Fannie evidently improved. The generous vitalism of the good creature imparted itself to her, and the languid blood coursed more freely through her veins, while painful memories wore themselves into indistinctness. When weary and disturbed, Aunt Beckey sat upon the verge of the bed and patted her shoulders with her warm, motherly hand, and crooned old pious hymns, and the thoughts of the invalid wandered back to the days of her early youth, or out into the eternal unseen future.

Then Aunt Beckey had a thousand simple and comforting ways about her, that went right into the weak, aching body, and soothed it all over like a warm poultice. Her voice was loud, but it was so equal, so rich, and came so entirely from the heart-side of the body, that its very loudness was its best quality, so entirely did it reach the poor weak, suffering spot of the hearer. When Aunt Beckey leaned over and laid that large hand of hers over poor Fannie's faint-beating heart, it grew stronger at once, and her "poor, dear critter, I know how it feels, I've been just so, many's the time," you knew Aunt Beckey spoke figuratively, for she never had a pain in her life, but it eased you to hear her say it.

And then she made nice, cool drinks; and when she put her hand behind Fannie's neck and lifted her up, it sent a soothing thrill to every sense of the sufferer.

"If I could only give her a cough, or a cold, a fever, or a liver complaint, I could cure her at once," cried Aunt Beckey, "but it's all in the heart—all here," and she laid her hand over her own broad ample space for a heart.

Dady had interested Fannie for awhile, but now she regarded little about her. Even Bob, and her belief that he would bring back her lost child, grew indistinct to her mind.

Aunt Beckey had much to do in regulating the household of her kinsman, which was sadly in need of a careful housekeeper. She began at the attic, and every room was not only carefully inspected, but rigorously cleaned. With knitting-work in hand, knitting as she went, Aunt Beckey passed from place to place, directing the movements of the servants with a careful thrift. At night Cousin George might have sometimes felt annoyed at the details of shaking, scrubbing, and "putting away," but Aunt Beckey's good heart was easily led off into another channel.

It was really a sight worth seeing to follow her from place to place, with a troop of wondering Irish girls in train, to whom she laid down the law, show-

ing them exactly how everything was to be done; but it was better to witness her amazement, when she came back two hours afterwards, and found all precisely as she had left it.

Aunt Beckey, dear soul, could n't scold, her voice was not adapted to it; but the way she appealed to the "principle" and the "conscience" of the poor Biddies, was touching in the extreme.

"How do you ever expect to get along if you have no trust in you? Don't you know that the Lord hates eye-service? Did not I show you exactly how that was to be done? and have you done it?"

In this way good Aunt Beckey would appeal, and then Biddy would make a great show of work.

"Don't flirt the broom so high—look here," and then she moved the broom as a good housewife will. "As I'm a live woman, you're washing them windows with a fine damask towel." Of course Biddy was, and will do the same to-morrow, for she does not know the value of what she uses. And then Aunt Beckey thought Biddy's pocket too protuberant, and she took opportunity to examine it, and found bits of sugar, and dabs of tea, and sundry hard cakes. Not a word could Aunt Beckey utter at the sight of such enormities, except,

"Mark my words, you'll bring yourself to some dreadful end if you go on in this way."

But when Biddy, crying and protesting, told of a sister whom she was about to visit, and added, "Do you think I'll be ateing the tay and the sugar, and she never a bit?" Aunt Beckey's kind heart relented, and she rather added to the stock in Biddy's pocket.

"These Irish are the tryingest critters in the world," she would exclaim. "There is no end to their wasting. They'd rake out the ashes with a silver spoon just as quick as the poker, and wipe every dish on the table-cloths, if I did n't watch them after every meal. They stow away old bones and broken bread on the nicest china plates, and smash cut-glass tumblers into pails and kettles, till every one of 'em has a nick in the side!"

Gradually Aunt Beckey grew resigned, as New York housekeepers learn to be. She ceased to give out the law. She ceased to say, "Did I not tell you thus and so?" expecting obedience would follow. She learned to admonish little, and expect less from this unthrifty part of the community, and she learned at length to feel a relenting pity, when after some terrible blunder which Biddy had committed in her ignorance, she met her blank look of amazement and contrition.

"Lord bless you, I believe the Irish are half natural born fools, every one of them," she would exclaim; "and they ought to be thankful, every day they live,

that they can come to this country and learn something."

"Bad luck to the day that ever I left ould Ireland," Biddy would mutter. "Never's a day pass'd but I'se repented of it."

This touched Aunt Beckey's patriotism. "Why don't you go back, every one of you? 'T would be better for us if the country was rid of every soul of you." And she spake with a warmth, you may be sure.

When Biddy, after a silence, began to crone

"I'm sitting on the stile, Mary,
Where we sat side by side,
On a bright May morning, long ago,
When first you were my bride;"

Aunt Beckey gave in with tears in her eyes; and never failed to declaim for awhile upon the wrongs of Ireland, and the injustice of England.

"Ireland is the beautifulest counthry, ma'am," Biddy would say, emboldened by the sympathy of the good spinster. "Nothing is bad there but the government. An Irish pig, ma'am, grows as fast again as an American pig; and I never saw such potatees in this counthry as we have in Ireland—it's all one as a little bag of flour entirely it is, that'll melt in your mouth; and then the sop of Irish milk, ma'am, goes further than the milk of America; and the beautiful-

est flowers we have there, ma'am; I've seen violets under a hedge of the size of your hand; and roses, ma'am, roses in Ireland are as large as a cabbage in this country."

Aunt Beckey's tender spot had been touched by the lament of the emigrant, or she could never have listened to these disparaging comparisons. The good creature was scathed in the milk of her own human kindness, and taken unawares. Still the exaggeration touched her conscientiousness, and she bade Biddy

"Be careful not to stretch the stocking too wide, there's reason in all things. You must remember, Biddy, we read about Ireland in this country, and know something. Still I respect you for upholding your own country."

LIV.

"The Waxy are at Rest."

BOB, at the urgent solicitation of Mr. Dinsmoor, still occupied the room adjoining that of Imogen, and Dady, under careful nursing, grew every day more beautiful and attractive. Aunt Beckey had at length adjusted herself to the household, and nothing could be more benign or more refreshing to the heart than her whole administration. She was not without her New England, and most especially Maine pride of birth. She loved to expatiate upon births, deaths, and marriages, and refer to registers which went to show that all proprieties had been rigorously observed. She told Bob it was a thousand pities his friends had n't brought over the family Bible to prove that all was square and fair. But as to Dady, the case was different; there was no manner of doubt her birth was a disreputable one, and the only thing was to make the best of it; and then she went on to tell of several instances in which "the parties had turned out well, and be-

came ornaments to society, and burning and shining lights in the church."

Bob listened with interest, and felt he had much to learn, for all these ideas of respectability were entirely new doctrines to him.

"Dady shall never lack a friend or protector while I live," he would say.

"That speaks well of you," resumed Aunt Beckey; "but it's a thousand pities that she should be born as she was in a Christian, law-abiding country like ours, where the minister is upon every side, and the marriage-fee only a dollar."

"I've sometimes thought people might be ashamed of Dady and me, and I'm not the one to be in the way of people's feelings," mused the Newsboy.

Then Aunt Beckey fixed her round eyes upon his face, and looked at him with such a cordial, benign look, and hugged up Dady in such a motherly way, that Bob put aside his misgivings, the more as he was now learning rapidly to read and write, and was improving himself in many ways.

One evening after a restless day on the part of Fannie, Aunt Beckey sat upon the verge of the bed humming,

"There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night
And pleasures banish pain."

The sufferer opened her eyes and peered out into the room, at first with a smile, and then it changed to one of deep sadness.

"She has n't come, George, has she? I thought I heard her step on the stairs."

Alas! sorrowing mother, that step will return no more to thee. The weary heart shall cease its beating, and yet it comes not.

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand drest in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood
While Jordan rolled between,"

Aunt Beckey sung out in a clear, sweet voice, still patting the shoulder of Fannie, who had relapsed into an imperfect sleep.

"'Sweet fields beyond,' and only a narrow stream between," ejaculated Fannie, in a full tone, her eyes glowing with a new light.

"Why did you not take me home, George? I wanted to go."

"Where home, darling Fannie."

"To Brunswick, George. Oh, I hear the old pines by the river whisper, whisper, and in the little graveyard over the white stones. Do you remember, dear, when we walked there, and we were lovers then, and so happy. George, dear, have n't we been very happy? Have n't I always been your dear, dear little Fannie?"

"God only knows how dear you are to me, my sweet wife, my own Fannie."

"But do you remember, George, that great snake, so large and black, that crossed our path, just when we talked of our love?"

Mr. Dinsmoor recalled the circumstance with a cold chill.

"I am very weak, dear George. Carry me home, will you, dear. Do carry me home, George."

"You shall go, Fannie. Be quiet to-night, Fannie, and to-morrow—"

"To-morrow," repeated the sufferer, looking upward. "Oh, to-morrow seems so far away;" and then she sank backward upon the pillows.

"I would not live alway, I ask not to stay,
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er my way,"

sang out Aunt Beckey in mellow tones, and the tears swelled under the lids of Fannie as she listened, and then said calmly,

"George, dear, I see the home to which I go is not the old one, in which we learned to love—not that, dearest, but in our Father's house. Come to me there, won't you, George?"

"I will, I will, and I care not how soon," answered the husband, kneeling beside her.

"And Imogen—our two hearts will draw her like a golden chain upward, George."

Awhile she was silent, and then her face became irradiated with a bright glowing beauty—and she said in a voice louder than even her wonted tone, for

"— her voice was always low ———
An excellent thing in woman,"

"Look, George, she is there—our beautiful child. I see her, there by the palm-tree. Look!" She pointed with her slender finger into the distance. "Come here, Bob, you will bring her home. You will know where to go. Oh! she will come, and no mother to meet her. She will come, and I not here! No mother, no mother, only a green mound, and a white stone, and an empty chair—George, George, keep me, keep me till she comes."

Then the vision brightened, and she cried, "Yes, Bob, look, there is a bright flash of water from the fountain under the palms. Beautiful birds and flowers are there—the air is full of glittering insects with wings of gold; and there, there with her hands folded, and her eyes upon mine, is my child, our child, dear George. Strange flowers are at her feet—a wilderness of rare and lovely plants—but hush, look! look! there is the black serpent, George, the black snake of Brunswick pines trailing amid them all—hark! there

is music—she sees the snake—she does not fear it—no, she looks upward—she sees an angel in the sky. George, George, it is her mother, it is I, your Fannie—”

And even while she spoke, the heavenly gates,

“self-opened wide,
On golden hinges turning,”

let in an angel manifest, escaped the dim shade and sorrowing tears of earth, transformed into the divine image of the pure soul, which had longed to be thus revealed.

Aunt Beckey kissed the white forehead, as she laid it back upon the pillow. But Mr. Dinsmoor himself wiped away the tears that still lay upon the dead cheek—the homesick tear of the weary heart longing for its home. All knelt by the bed-side, and then Aunt Beckey uttered,

“Though I walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;” and, unconscious that she did so, her lips poured themselves in prayer; the good loving heart spoke spontaneously in this hour of need. Then she arose and led Mr. Dinsmoor from the room, leaving the Newsboy alone with the dead.

“Oh them that have the light need n't fear the dying,” he said to himself. “You will see dear Min-

nie, where you've gone. Don't, don't forget poor Bob,” and he kissed the little dead hand. “I'll seek for Silver-tongue to the ends of the earth, I will. And now my work is done here. Poor Flashy Jack—I will go to him till all is over, and then look for Silver-tongue. I wonders if there's any place meant for Bob in this world. I wonders if any heart could comfort Bob's, or anybody feel to love him!”

“I will comfort Bob, and love him,” answered Aunt Beckey, opening her arms and clasping the Newsboy tenderly within them. “Poor boy! I will comfort you. I know you must have felt the need of a mother many's the time, and now Aunt Beckey will be a mother to you, and take care of you, and teach you, my poor boy.”

Bob could only weep. He had ministered much and often to others, but never been “ministered unto;” and now in the presence of the dead, lying so hushed and heavenly still, this poor neglected boy found one heart large enough, and generous enough to take him within itself, without question, and without stint; and never from that day did Aunt Beckey swerve from her office. Never did she look upon him as an outcast, whom it might be shame to love; but once beholding him as he was, the true Bob, seen for the first time now in the presence of the beatified

Fannie, she loved him with a maternal fondness, as beautiful and simple as it was unexpected.

From this time Bob found one who, pitying his ignorance, loved him so tenderly that she sought in every way to enlighten it. And really it was a lovely sight to witness Aunt Beckey instructing the youth; he so simple in heart, though familiar with all the vice, and misery, and crime of a great metropolis, in the which he had lived, from his earliest recollections, without help except from those nearly as destitute as himself. Bob was so single-hearted, so quick to learn, so grateful, and withal so primitive in his views, that it was, as Aunt Beckey said, "a labor of love to teach him."

Never did two extremes more fairly meet than in this experience of Aunt Beckey and the Newsboy. He so ignorant, so simple, great, and true-hearted, coming as he did out of the very dregs of New York life, and she equally great-hearted, pure, and loving, but coming from a rural district whose inhabitants were primitive, pious, and in the highest degree pure-minded in character and orthodox in faith; yet there sat the two so alike in their inner life, that you might have thought them mother and child.

A splendid monument of marble, overhung with magnificent trees, and made attractive by flowers of every hue and shape, but most the rose, marks the

resting-place of the wife of the rich merchant. Often did the bereaved husband pass whole days in the shelter of the marble, and often did Aunt Beckey and Bob resort thither to shed tears of sincere grief at the grave of the beautiful mourner, whose heart had ceased from her sorrow.

At these times Bob with his new friend would turn aside to the humble stone of the Newsboy and Mary, and then Bob repeated their story and wept anew, for Aunt Beckey's tears fell fast at the recital. It was long before he took her down to Staten Island, and pointed out the resting-place of little Minnie; and when he did do so, it seemed to Bob that for the first time he had in reality wept at her departure, for Aunt Beckey, sitting there in the warm sunshine, with the early autumn leaves falling around her, and the continuous roar of the great sea sounding so mysteriously to the senses, found herself melted to a tone of unwonted tenderness, as if for the first time in her life she felt how majestic is nature, how wonderful life.

LV.

Grief of the Magdalen.

AUNT BECKEY was greatly scandalized at the lateness of New York hours for rising. She had been in the habit of leaving her bed before the sun came from his watery couch, and she wandered like an unladen ghost about the house for many hours in the morning while others slept.

"Rise with the lark, and lie down with the lamb," she would cry in her cheery voice, as in her plain calico gown and white kerchief, she walked up and down the hall of the great house, with work in hand, waiting the morning advent of the family. Hour after hour passed, and yet all was silent. Nobody looked out to see the good, patient creature, weary of work, everything dusted, everything in order, waiting when others should begin the day.

Early as it was, Bob had been long in the field, selling the morning papers, and looking in upon his

old friends, for the Newsboys are all early risers. He had been entrusted with a night-key, and thus was able to come and go at his pleasure.

"Well, I declare! was there ever?" exclaimed Aunt Beckey, seeing Bob enter the house in this way one morning, long before the appearance of the family. "Where *have* you been so airy, Bob? afore anybody in the house is a stirring, which I consider is a sin and a shame, letting alone the loss of time, and the ruin of health consequent upon late hours."

Bob, as early as it was, had been to sell his papers, and had given an hour to poor Maggie, whom he found locked in her room, and evidently unused for a long time to sleep.

He knocked several times without receiving any answer, though the steady scuff of a pair of feet were heard slowly moving over the floor inside.

"Maggie, it's Bob, open the door, Maggie. 'Cause why? I's your friend, and Jack's friend, Maggie."

At the next turn of the feet the scuffling approached the door, the key was turned but no latch lifted, and Bob raised it himself and went in. Maggie's petticoats were half falling from her waist, and a loose shawl supplied the absence of hooks and buttons in place of the jaunty boddice which once lent such piquancy to her full, handsome figure. The boddice, and the crimson gaiters, and a smart petticoat, hung

about the room apparently forgotten by its occupant. A small kettle, which had evidently boiled itself dry, sat upon a portable furnace, about which the white ashes were scattered amid half-burned dead cinders. The blinds were closed in, but a ray of light struggled through a broken bar, and fell upon the glazed fireman's belt and cap of Flashy Jack, and one of each of smaller size, which it had been the pride and glory of Maggie to wear by his side. Upon the little table covered with dust were two daguerreotypes, that of Maggie was clasped, but Flashy Jack's was open and covered with tears.

Maggie had grown thin and haggard; she did not stay her heavy feet at the entrance of Bob, nor did she speak to him, but walked back and forth, silent and pale, and unconscious of his presence.

Bob took her hand in his, but she drew it back without lifting her eyes, and continued her walk. He approached her side and put his arm in a brotherly manner about her waist. At this she looked up so woe-begone, that the Newsboy could only weep with her.

"Sit down, Maggie, and tell me how it is?" and he placed her in her little rocking-chair, and taking another chair himself, poor Maggie leaned her head upon his knee in silence.

"How is Flashy Jack?" asked the Newsboy, hoping to rouse her from her stupor of grief.

"He is condemned to die," she answered, without a change of feature.

"Poor Jack! he was so handsome, so good."

"Nobody cares for us," answered the girl.

"They think we has no hearts, no affections, Maggie, because we's never had friends nor home."

"I wish Jack and I had robbed, and murdered, and burned houses, and then we should have something to die for;" and Maggie lifted up her head and put back her tangled hair as she spoke.

"You would a done it but for the lights in you, Maggie. But let me get you some breakfast, and you'll feel better."

"No, no, I can't eat—I can't swallow—every time I try I think of poor Jack. Oh dear, dear, I wish I was dead. Bob, bring me some brandy, bring me some laudanum, help me to die, Bob, help me to forget. Where's the use of living? I wish I'd never been born, I wish they'd a killed me when I was a baby. Oh, Bob, kill me, kill me," and she cast her arms about in a wild, frantic manner.

At this moment there was a low knock at the door, which Bob rising to open encountered our old friend Skillings, in a plain suit of black and a white cravat, with a small Bible under his arm. Bob did not recognize him, but Maggie, annoyed at the entrance of a stranger, sprang to her feet and tightened her shawl

over her shoulders, while she eyed the stranger with a wild, haggard face, that left a doubt whether insanity were not there.

"I am come, sister, to say a few words with you upon this trying occasion; I wish to urge upon you the necessity of repentance and—"

Maggie extended her hand to the door, "Go!" she said.

"I am a minister of the Gospel, seeking the good of souls," continued the man, in a milky tone of voice, and clipping his words short, as if they hurt him.

"You are a liar and an impostor. Go!" repeated Maggie, still pointing her finger.

The man instead of going, approached her, and attempted to whisper in her ear.

"Go!" repeated the girl, turning sharply upon him with a spit into his face, and he did go, clattering down over the rickety stairs, and swearing in a very unapostolic manner.

"Oh these wretches would sink us to h—I. I'm sick, sick. Bob, I've longed for the drink, so that I may forget my misery; but Jack, poor, dear Jack!—Jack made me promise never to drink—and I've minded him, Bob, I've minded him when my head's been on fire, and my heart a flame—"

"Mind him still, there's a good girl, Maggie. Jack loved you, he did—"

"Oh, that he did; and Bob, I'd die in his place, I would. I would willingly stand under the gallows in his place. Oh there's no misery I would n't endure to save him—poor, dear Jack!"

"You're a good girl, Maggie," continued Bob. "Sit down and drink this cup of milk I have brought."

"Jack's often said that, Bob," replied Maggie, pushing the bowl aside. "I think Jack wanted to make me like—I don't know what like, but do you remember the Nun Isabella in the play? and then there was a picture of her in the Apollo, and Jack and I would talk about it all; but then when there was any fun, Jack and I could n't help going to it, and now it's all come to this."

"What will you do now, Maggie?" asked the Newsboy.

"Do? stay here in this place till I die, Bob."

"Will you not go with Sister Agnace and the strange Nun, Maggie?"

"No, no, I could n't bear to see the strange Nun weeping; and I can't pray—oh their prayers weary me. Go, Bob, do go, I am so happy when I have nothing to take my thoughts from Jack. I grow quite content and happy when I am alone," she said, opening the door for him to go, and hurrying him out as if she had some great good in store, which his presence held back.

The Newsboy descended the stairs, and there encountered Yoppy, and Charley, and several other Newsboys, who had come to know something of Maggie; for they had all learned the terrible fate which awaited their former companion and favorite, and now these boys naturally sought to alleviate the suffering of one so devotedly attached to him as had been Maggie, for so long a time.

They each had some small pieces of coin which would provide comforts for the poor girl, and Bob retraced his steps, and knocked once more at the door. The scuffling feet dragged themselves slowly, slowly over the floor, but the door remained unopened. The boys held a consultation, and each one peeped through the key-hole, and started back in a sort of horror at the change in the appearance of Maggie.

At length a knock louder than all others, brought her to the door.

"Go away, will you? go away—"

"Maggie, we's got some money for you, we has, and won't let you want for a thing, we won't; blast me if I will," articulated Yoppy, in a stern defiant voice, eyeing his companions, who responded in a like tone.

Squinty, who was a short, square boy, originally designed to be six feet high, but the ironizing process to which he had been all his life subjected, had hard-

ened him into a man with a broad chin, and projecting forehead at the height of four; so there he stood a stout, firm, little old man, whom nature with all her coaxing, and desire to carry out her plans, was unable to lift more than four feet into the air. "Keep up, keep up—you shall have all my earnings, only barring enough for my old gray cat. Come here, Maggie, and let me hook you up, and eat a bit, and you'll feel better."

As he spoke, little Squinty arranged poor Maggie's dress for her, and held some drink to her lips which she tasted mechanically.

"Don't you think we can get him out, Squinty?" asked the girl.

"No manner of doubt of it. Oh we'll take care of Flashy Jack, we will. Keep up, Maggie, we shall want you to help us."

"I'm well, I'm strong, boys; I can do anything," cried Maggie, with sudden animation.

"There's a brave gal," cried all the boys, delighted at the change in her manner. "Good-bye, Maggie, we'll go and make our plans;" and they ran down stairs, leaving Bob to close the door behind them.

"She'll die when Jack does, that's a fact," articulated Yoppy. Then they each gathered up their papers, and all along the street was the loud cry of the Newsboys.

Bob left the proceeds of his morning toil, together with the contributions of the Newsboys, upon the little dusty table, and went out. Maggie followed him to the door, and turned the key, and then a heavy groan escaped her; and then the slow scuff, scuff, sounded along the floor, now nearing the window where the streak of light played upon her pale face, showing a dark line around the large, distressed-looking eyes, and then there was a slight irregularity of the feet, and then the scuff continued, till she neared the little table on which lay the daguerreotype of Jack; and then there was a pause, and you were sure another tear fell upon it.

LVI.

Guilty?

BOB gave these particulars to Aunt Beckey, sitting with Dady at her knee, whose long, beautiful curls she brushed and combed the while, and braided and tied in a club behind till her eyes almost burst from their sockets. Bob said not a word at this, but when the child came to his arms he caressed her tenderly.

"This Maggie you tell about," said Aunt Beckey, crossing one leg over the other, and leaning forward with her chin upon her hand, as if she would compact herself in order to hold on to a new thought, "this Maggie is Flashy Jack's wife, poor thing!" and her voice took its very loudest and roundest kindly tone, while one hand drew the dress up high upon Dady's shoulders, where it would by no means stay, but slipped off again and showed their white dimples.

Bob looked puzzled. "Maggie loves Jack, she does, and stays to home and minds the house, and never's been anywhere without him," he answered.

"As a good wife does," answered the spinster judicially. "But, Bob, I want to know, flat and plain, whether she's his wife, united in the holy bonds of matrimony, for better, for worse, till death us do part;" and the good creature rose majestically to her full height, inserted the needle into the sheath, and began to knit in the manner of a person not to be trifled with.

"They's acted up to their lights," answered Bob.

"Up to their lights!" ejaculated Aunt Beckey, "as if there was any absence of light in a Christian community, with bibles, and tracts, and preachers of the Gospel upon every side; and every man sitting under his own vine and fig-tree, and none to make him afraid, under the very droppings of the sanctuary also;" and Aunt Beckey plied her needles with great activity.

"I does n't know, ma'am. I must say, I knows very little about these things. I's very ignorant; and now I reads and writes some, I does n't understand half what it means."

"Bob, you're no better than the heathen. Why did n't you go into the house of God and learn the duty of a Christian?"

"I'm bound to say I did, but they spoke of things there that I had no means of knowing what they meant. But once, ma'am, I learned that to please

God we must love one another, and do good as we have opportunity; and I've done it, ma'am, I never forgot it, and Jack and Maggie's done it too."

Aunt Beckey plumped down into her chair, and her round cheek fairly burned with maiden shame.

"Goodness gracious! how scripter can be wrested from its pulpit meaning," she ejaculated. "The Rev. Mr. Ichabod Longwind would never believe his own ears could he hear this."

"I's very ignorant. I am bound to believe Flashy Jack and Maggie, and Yoppy and Squinty, and all on us, does a great many things out of the way because we knows no better. But how should we learn?"

"By going to meeting, and covering yourselves decently. I never in my born days saw such a set of ragamuffins as come round this house looking up to the windows after you, Bob; and when Dady goes out of a morning to take the air, goodness gracious! such a set as try to get a peep at her, is enough to drive a Christian woman mad."

"They's my friends, ma'am," Bob replied.

"Your friends, Bob! I'm sorry to say there is not a respectable looking one amongst them."

"If you'd only seen Maggie and Flashy Jack, ma'am, they was always so well dressed!"

"Bob, it does seem to me, you don't know your right hand from your left," this was said in a very

solemn manner, the knitting needles moving at a funereal pace. After a long pause she added, a blush on her cheek, her eyes very round, and the corners of her lips compressed,

"Do you know, Bob, it's my opinion, and I am inclined to think it would be the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Ichabod Longwind also, that that Maggie of whom you speak is no better than she should be?"

Bob opened his eyes in silence, and Aunt Beckey, having delivered her oracle, plied her virtuous needles without another word.

A long time Bob sat in silence, and then arose, saying as he did so, "We sins from ignorance, I am clear to say; but oh, ma'am, the misery, the misery that's at the bottom of it all! No home, no friend, no teacher, nothing but hunger and nakedness; and then there's the blood, young and boiling, and the brain asking and asking, and no guide; and then there's the beauty, and the tempter, and the money, and the evil life, and no guide, no guide. Oh, ma'am, if we sins, we suffers and we dies, and nobody knows nor cares. If 't want for Dady and Silver-tongue, I would n't mind the dying. But I has a work to do, and I will do it, and then good-bye, good-bye, great riddle of a world;" and Bob went out quickly to hide his emotion.

It is not my design to give the details of the trial

and condemnation of Flashy Jack. Legal investigations are of little interest except to the professional man. A long while the youth lingered in prison, and then when his day of trial came, his friends were not of a kind to ensure much favor in a court of law. They gave in their testimony as to the good-heartedness of Flashy Jack; he was declared to be "gallus," "above-board," "game," "a d——l of a fellow," but somehow none of these qualities availed him much in the eye of the law. Mr. Dinsmore went out of his way to use influence in his behalf, the more because of the interest Flashy Jack had manifested in regard to Imogen. Still this whole state of life was unfathomable to the orderly, respectable, wealthy merchant, and it is not to be supposed that his interference was of a very enthusiastic character.

The long confinement, the absence of all kinds of excitement except that of a depressing kind, had wrought painfully upon the person and spirits of the youth, and he was often heard to declare that he should be glad when it was all over with him.

"Even should I be free once more," he said to Bob, "I should never be a man again. My mother is dying, poor Maggie's heart is broke, and the whole world is changed to me. Only one thing remains, and of that I will tell you before I die."

And so month after month wore away, and then

came the trial, as we have said. And it was a pitiful sight to see the Newsboys crowd to the court-room, and the stall-women, and idle, vagrant girls and boys, peering here and there to catch a sight of handsome Jack. When he appeared, so pale, and yet so beautiful in their eyes, so calm, so manly still, they burst into shouts, and tears, and lamentations, which the officers found it difficult to quell. Not a boy or girl in the Bowery believed in his guilt; but the witnesses were all from another part of the city, who had as little sympathy and kindness for the denizens of the Bowery, as the French have for the English. All these swore positively that the youth held up the knife with intent to kill. They affirmed that he sought the quarrel, exasperated Peter, and then coolly took his life. A large number testified so positively to this effect, that little seemed left for the jury to do but pronounce him guilty.

The counsel appointed by the court for the youth, pleaded, but in a luke-warm way, as if his own mind was fully confident of his guilt. He made an appeal in behalf of his youth, and the favor with which he was regarded by the persons in his own sphere of life; at which the Newsboys, excited and delighted as if it had been the pit of a theatre instead of a court of law, burst out into their accustomed hi! hi! hi!

At this the court was greatly scandalized, and ordered the house to be cleared.

Bad as this was in the eye of the law, it was a comfort to Jack, who saw he should be remembered with affection by his compeers. All through the proceedings of the court, two Nuns, in the black robes of their order, were observed seated at one side. This dress consists of a black crape, scuttle-shaped bonnet, projecting far over the face, a loose long robe of black serge, gathered at the waist by a heavy black cord, supporting a cross of ebony. The sleeves are long and loose, showing coarse white muslin beneath. These women sat as motionless as mutes, their heads bent, and hands inserted each into the opposite sleeve of the dress, so that no conjecture could be made as to the amount of emotion beneath those sable vestures. As they appeared daily, and took their accustomed place at the same hour, people looked upon them with reverence, and a hush always passed over the audience; for in spite of the prejudices of sect, the Sisters of Charity are honored by persons of every faith.

In an opposite direction, sitting where she could look into the face of the prisoner, was another form. This was a young girl, meanly and scantily attired, who shrank away from observation; drawing her veil and shawl tightly about her, and with so firm a grasp, that it was evident she hoped in this way to hold

back the wild pulses of her heart. She was pale and thin, and her eye wandered restlessly from the face of Jack to those of his judges. Oh! there was a volcano of burning grief in the bosom of poor Maggie, which would not be put aside, strive how she would. When Bob came in, and sat down by his friend, and looked consolingly at the girl, she wept and wept, as if her heart would break; but when Flashy Jack put his thin fingers to his lips in token of tenderness, poor Maggie gasped for breath, and turned from side to side, lest her agony should become audible.

The jury had agreed upon their verdict, and were now about to render it in. There was a moment of terrible silence. The whole area of the room was densely crowded; not a Newsboy was away from the premises upon this occasion. The prisoner was commanded to rise and look upon the jury, in the ordinary form of law—as he arose calm and pale, Maggie also arose to her feet and fixed her eyes upon his face. All was so deadly hushed that the beating of human hearts became audible, and a heavy surging of human blood ebbed and flowed throughout the vast assemblage like the movements of a mighty steam-engine heard at a distance. When the foreman pronounced the dread word,

“Guilty,”

there was one moment of dead silence, and then a

cry so long, so loud, so heart-rending, burst from one agonized heart, some said two; some affirmed that the tallest Nun shrieked as Maggie did, but this is uncertain, for when the poor girl fell in convulsions upon the floor and was borne out, the Nun went forth, still and calm as she had entered.

At the cry of Maggie, Flashy Jack grasped the bars in front, and turned towards her, as if he would save her from her misery; it was but a moment, and he heard his condemnation with no mark of emotion. And so the law had secured its victim.

LVII.

Last Hours.

I CANNOT describe the last hours of Flashy Jack. To me it is a terrible thing to move in amid the fibres of a human heart and lay open all its fearful capacity for suffering. I do not believe we are made better by the stress and strain of the sensibilities. The tear that to-day wells like a soft, pitying angel from the heart, baptizing a grief till it becomes less a grief than a fair, sweet grief-child, made holy by the distilled water of the spirit, to-morrow does not flow from a like cause; but a deeper sorrow, a fiercer agony of the soul is required to bring forth the token, and so the heart grows hard under the process; just as those fountains, which hold minerals in solution, dropping water as they do, day by day, at length find themselves choked and lost in the accumulating crystal, and only a marble shaft stands where once had been a fountain. A literature which deals in wild extremes

of passion is demoralizing to a people; but that which depicts the pure springs of our humanity, its strange warp and woof of good and evil, the good always lying like fair inwoven threads of silver, may be made healthful and ennobling.

It was the night before the execution; and here I shall present three aspects of the night, rather than open all the sorrowful lips of the weary hearts that shrank from the coming dawn.

In a small room, plain but cleanly, the door locked and the white curtain put aside so that the full moon poured into the room with a white, ghastly splendor, lay a tall, thin woman, stretched upon a low, iron bedside. So rigid was her attitude, and so deathly pale her cheek, you would have supposed life had ceased to swell those large blue veins, cording the white brow and attenuated hands, save that the lips parted, over the prominent teeth, moved in prayer, and the hands grasped a crucifix. Long black robes depended from hooks upon the wall, and helped to still further increase the unearthly aspect of the room; thus one might suppose the dead to look in their dim mausoleums, and it required little stretch of the fancy to convert the cell of the Nun into a vault at Greenwood.

"Oh, mother! through whose heart went the sharp sword of mortal grief—pity, pity!" Whatever

the form, the dear God knows when the heart needs him, and forthwith a calm, aspiring faith swelled the heart of the Nun, and she wept, and then sleep, who is the sister of tears, came to comfort her.

In a dark, untidy room, damp with the close air, her head resting upon the seat of a chair, and her person upon the floor, sat a pale, haggard shape, without tears, or groans, or prayers. An aspect of black, still, despairing misery looked out from the face. The moon had been rising higher and higher, and now had found the broken blind, and she peered in and looked upon the pale occupant. At this she slid from the chair and lay back upon the floor, for the light was madness to her. Hour after hour she lay, her neck thrown back, her tangled hair matted about her head, and her glazed eyes staring into dim, vacant space.

That speechless agony was more touching than words. The poor, ignorant heart could feel its full misery, but comprehended nothing of its great needs; but the good God knew its wants—softly, pitying spirits breathed upon the brow; softly, pitying spirits eased at the heart, and sleep came, but oh, how terrible when she could not close the lid over the great, staring eyes, nor make the tired nerves cease their rigid tension!

In a small cell, stone upon every side, reclines a

youth in the full flush of life. He is stretched upon his rude, hard couch; and sleep, which has been everywhere with her ministry, has long since claimed him. A Bible is upon the straw pillow—it even touches the curls of the sleeper. It is open, and a tear has fallen upon the words, "Fear not, little flock." Sleep finds him weeping over the tender words of the tender-loving Jesus, and there he lies, his young heart rising and falling more calmly than, perhaps, it had ever before done. The mystery was about to be revealed.

Softly slept the youth. Never in his neglected childhood had he so sweetly slept as now; lying there, a babe in Christ, a stricken lamb borne on the bosom of the Good Shepherd. The moon came down the hollow square, and saw the unnatural preparations there, and then she sought her way through heavy casement, and iron bar, to see for whom this frightful work was to be; and when she found a poor young boy, "more sinned against than sinning," she stole out again, lest he should awake too soon.

As the morning dawned, Bob sat down by the side of his friend, and they talked long and solemnly, as friends talk who part upon a strange journey. It must be remembered, that the ideas of both were greatly cleared in the course of the last few months.

"I've felt all along, Jack, that there's been something upon your mind, more than you's told me,"

said Bob, holding the hand of Jack. "I think I could see you wished not to get clear."

"That is true, Bob. I only feared life when my mind settled itself down to see how I stood with the world."

"We's ignorant, Jack, but according to my views, we ought to wait till we're called, and be willing to wait."

"Well, Bob, can you think of nothing that would make you willing to die?"

"I could die to save you, Jack—anybody would die for a friend."

"In course, Bob; or for a mother, or a child."

"I cannot speak so strong-like about a mother, seein' as I never had one; but I could die for poor little Dady, I think."

Jack grasped his hand, and the tears gushed to his eyes. "God bless you for that, Bob. I die more than content."

Bob expressed his surprise, and Jack went on to explain.

"As I have before said, I have tried for years to forget that gypsy curse, but I could not do so. When I played Jack Sheppard, it seemed always to me that it was another step towards its fulfilment. Time passed away. I remembered that neither my father, nor his father, were guilty. I felt, also, that

there was that within myself that I could never commit a crime worthy of death. Still, there was the prophecy, always like a black finger to an invisible shape, pointing off into a black future. I tried, by a light, careless life, to banish it, but it would not be. Then, as time ripened the character of Maggie, she attached herself to me. In an evil hour I told her this hateful secret, thinking the girl would learn to avoid me. But the event proved otherwise. A terrible foreboding, a wild, tender pity became blent with her love. Why, Bob, Maggie and I, in our imperfect way, tried to pray. We went everywhere, that we might learn; but without friends, ignorant, uncultivated as we were, little could be done. It is a sad, bad story, Bob—but how were we to learn? How was Maggie to learn gentleness, and womanly feelings? She conceived the idea that the third one of the curse might be anticipated. I followed her one dark, dismal night—she had strangled Dady, and then escaped from the spot."

Bob arose to his feet, and laid his hand upon the shoulder of Jack, in surprise as well as horror. Jack went on:

"Thank God, I was in time to save her from that terrible crime; but I dared not confront Maggie with the child. I waited and listened—you came by—you stopped—then you went on at a full run. My heart

died within me, and I thought to take up the precious burden, when you returned and bore the child away. Bob, I knelt down then, and prayed—yes, Bob, poor, ignorant, careless Flashy Jack prayed, from the very bottom of his heart, for blessings upon you, Bob.”

The two embraced each other as they had never before done.

“You remember Maggie never liked you; indeed she did not like my fondness for you; therefore she was not likely to meet the child again, and when she did so it had grown past remembrance.”

“I had thought better of Maggie, I’m bound to say,” answered the Newsboy. “But then it was all out of her love for you, Flashy Jack, and there was a sort of one-sided virtue in the act, after all.”

“It may be,” answered the other. “When I returned, Maggie was weeping wildly; indeed I found she had procured brandy and had become insane from the double cause. I took care of her, Bob. I did not scold nor ill-treat her, though I was less tender, it may be, than formerly. After awhile, seeing that Maggie was like to grow mad with remorse and grief, and that she would perhaps drink herself to death, I told her all, upon condition that she would take no more intoxicating drinks. But I never told her that you were the one who carried away the child. Oh, Bob, you ought to have known how

gentle and submissive it made poor Maggie. Her heart seemed to be dead to all but me. She obeyed me always to the utmost, and dreaded nothing so much as a cold look from me. She is a good girl,” he added, breaking suddenly off from his narrative.

“Yes, she’s a good gal. We’s very ignorant, Jack, as I al’ays say; but, accordin’ to my lights, Maggie’s a good gal, and whatever she is or has been, she shall never lack a friend while Bob lives.”

“And now, Bob, do you not see I would willingly die to shield even from possible harm my poor child?”

And thus talked the two youths, discussing and settling, as best they might, our great moral problems. Talking and feeling as fathers rarely do, from the motherly side of the human heart, where, as behind a soft down, wave to and fro all the best issues of our humanity.

I am weak-hearted, I can go no further with my poor friend, Flashy Jack, although the brave-hearted Newsboy was with him to the last; with him in the last hour of agony and dread, saw the poor youth lift up the white cap from his head and take a last look at the bright, beautiful sun, which he left, and forever, midway in the heavens.

“Comfort poor Maggie,” he whispered, and the scene closed.

LVIII.

Extremes Meet.

BOB, with all his simplicity, had still a certain wisdom about him which induced him to speak or hold his peace as circumstances might justify. In the matter of Dady he made no revelations to good Aunt Beckey, who accepted the child upon broad principles of humanity, notwithstanding her doubtful origin, when, had she been able to point out the delinquents to whom she owed her birth, it might have been otherwise. A child without acknowledged parentage is one thing, a child to whom you may point and say, it is a "come-by-chance" of Polly Slo-cum's, or Susan Newbegin's, is another. In cases like these, it may truly be said,

"Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise,"

and Bob, without the least knowledge of this hoarded wisdom of the past ages, acted according to its dictates.

Aunt Beckey held poor Bob's head in her great motherly lap, and listened, with tears falling in torrents from her eyes, to his account of the last hours of Flashy Jack.

"And so it is all over with him!" she exclaimed. After awhile, her kindly nature turned to Maggie, and she asked of her.

"She lays upon the floor and pulls the hair out of her head, not in great heaps, but hair by hair, mother, slow-like, first one and then another, as if it eased her. Oh, ma'am, there's a great gap left where Flashy Jack and Maggie was. They was something fine and handsome for us to look at."

"It's all beyond my comprehension, Bob. And Maggie would n't be married after all, when you urged it upon her? poor thing. Goodness gracious! Bob, human nater is hard to be understood."

"Human nater, ma'am, seems plain and easy to me. I has lights there, but the doin's out o' human nater is the mystery."

"Sartain, sartain, Bob. But it's human nater to want to be respectable and above-board in the world."

"I understands bein' above-board, ma'am, but to be respectable costs too much money for poor bodies like Jack, and Maggie, and me, ma'am."

"Goodness gracious! Bob, if Maggie'd been married I would not have cared in the least; but its en-

couraging vice, it is, it is subverting the good of society to uphold such doings."

"I'm bound to think you're right, ma'am. My lights don't go so far."

"I'll go and see her," said Aunt Beckey, rising to her feet, as if after a long conflict she had suddenly come to a determination.

Bob hesitated. "May be, ma'am, you would feel bound to speak warning-like to poor Maggie."

"Goodness gracious! do you doubt it? I shall speak in season and out of season, in the hope of snatching her as a brand from the burning."

"I'm bound to say, poor Maggie's too far gone for that, ma'am; she's a poor, broken-hearted critter, ma'am."

The tears were again in Aunt Beckey's eyes; and she went out to return almost immediately, equipped for her errand of mercy.

It was already night when the two ascended the old worn stairs, to the room of Maggie. The full moon cast great shadows along the streets, over which people passed, looking sharply into each others' faces, as they do in cities when the moon lights up the thoroughfares, instead of the street-lamps. The lamp-lighter had a holiday time now, and you missed his alert step, and the ring of his little ladder, as the iron prongs touched the pavement before it leaned against

the post, up which he went and came, leaving a flash of light behind him. Suddenly came the light, and revealed your face and that of the friend who talked with you, under the shadow of the curtain. It may be, the hand clasped in yours is suddenly withdrawn at the coming of the lamp-lighter!

To-night the functionary is not abroad. On the way down Anthony street, which hollows away towards the Five Points, showing its poor, prematurely-decaying buildings, Aunt Beckey declaimed against the idlers who loitered about; asking with her emphatic, "Goodness gracious! why aren't they at home where decent people ought to be? Why aren't all them children put to bed, instead of being up, and out this time o' night?"

Bob made no reply; and it was just as well, for it would have distressed the good creature to learn the facts of the case. Why should her kindly heart be wrung with the knowledge that ten thousand children have not where to lay their heads in this great city of New York? Ten thousand children, amid a Christian community, have neither home nor protectors, neither parent nor guide; but go up and down its thoroughfares, with their poor, aching heads, and weary feet, and growing intellects, and none to lead them by the hand, as only mothers lead—none to comfort, as only mothers comfort—none to en-

lighten, as only mothers can enlighten, the mind of infancy. You may see them about the markets, and bakeries, and docks, all along areas, anywhere that may shelter a forlorn human head, sleeping in the moonshine, cared for by Him who "careth for the young ravens when they cry."

Around the steps were groups of boys, half-naked, looking hushed and horror-stricken. In the shadow of the door-way were others; all along the stairs they stept stealthily to one side, to let Bob and his companion pass.

"Goodness gracious!" more than once escaped the lips of Aunt Beckey, as she observed so many evidences of disorder. Upon entering the room, the odor was damp and cheerless; for the sun had been long excluded from its precincts, while Maggie's tears had fallen there all the time. The blinds were, as usual, all closed in. Sister Agnace had placed a taper upon the table, and even given an air of tidiness to the apartment.

Aunt Beckey looked about her in silence; all her long homilies passed out of mind at the sight of so much suffering. The strange Nun, whom it is needless to say was the Juliet of our story, sat at one side, her head resting against the back of a chair, and the light revealed a face utterly colorless.

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.

Search me, and try me, that no evil remain. Lover and child! Pity, pity me most miserable—pity—pity"—she continued to repeat, with half-closed eyes, and lips white as ashes.

At the feet of Maggie sat good Sister Agnace, holding her cold hands in both of hers, and her lips uttering words of comfort, in her low, silvery voice. The touch of the poor, broken-hearted Magdalen was no contamination to the pure, saint-like Nun, who had sought, but in vain, to lift the thoughts of the poor girl to something beyond her subject of agony.

Aunt Beckey turned her eyes from side to side, and then she went to the strange Nun, and took her hand from the back of the chair, and laid it against her own warm-beating heart, and held it there with her large, kind hand.

"Touch me not, for I am a sinner," gasped the Nun.

"We are all sinners—all need forgiveness," answered Aunt Beckey, wiping the tears from her eyes.

"I will pray the Father, and he will send the comforter," responded Sister Agnace; and Aunt Beckey, with all her aversion to Popery, found herself here, in this sad hour, responding "Amen" to the pious and ready utterance of the Sister.

There is the sound of feet in the street below—a

steady, gathering sound, as of a silent multitude, but the inmates of the room hear it not; there is a slow rumble of heavy wheels—slowly, slowly it moves over the heavy pavement; slowly, slowly it nears, and now it stops beneath the window. A man appears, and beckons at the door of the apartment. The Nun, with a heavy groan, rises to her feet.

"Once before, at midnight—once before, and now for the last time; and then tears, and prayers, and penitence—and death"—she uttered, as leaning heavily upon the arm of Aunt Beckey, she descended and took her seat in a carriage at the door.

"You must be still, Maggie," whispered Bob, assisting, at the same time, Sister Agnace in raising her to her feet. Maggie had not before known of his presence, and she put her arm over his shoulder in a heavy, woe-begone manner, saying,

"Oh, Bob, they have stopped the bravest heart that ever beat—they have stopped the lovingest heart that ever loved."

"I know it, Maggie; but we'll bear it, we will."

"Ah, Bob, the sharp pain is here, here—but I told Jack I'd bear it. I'll mind him, Bob, I will, to the last."

She was more self-possessed than it was feared she would be, and even when she came in sight of the black hearse, and the multitude of Newsboys throng-

ing the entire street, but all deeply hushed, she only struggled forward and threw up her arms with one gasp of agony, and then entered the carriage and laid her head upon the shoulder of the strange Nun. They had never approached each other in this way till now, when all distinctions were lost in the great sense of a common sorrow. Maggie saw the Newsboys; she knew in her heart that only the Newsboys would follow poor Jack to such a place; but she did not see how they looked their pity upon her, nor did she see how they touched her garments reverently, and stood there in the moonlight, every head uncovered, and every heart full of sorrow for the fate of one of their number.

Slowly the black hearse rumbled over the pavements, the one carriage behind it, bearing that fiery Italian heart, all hushed—all its ambition, all its dreams of life and fame crushed out, nothing left but an aching, weary void, an aching, weary heart, subdued to fastings and prayers; bearing also the passionate, burning heart of the Magdalen, which had grown up amid the fierce trials of the great city, in ignorance and desertion, in blindness and despair; bearing also the triad of pure hearts, the representative of Rome, the representative of Calvin, the representative of Vagrancy. Surely God is our keeper.

Slowly the wheels moved onward, and two by

two the Newsboys followed in procession, out on the way to Fordham, where is a cluster of white stones, a small city of the dead, where every grave, however humble, bears the sign of the cross.

When Juliet raised the sombre stone cross over the ashes of her dead so many years before, this spot was a wilderness; now population had pressed upon it, but still it looked more like a cluster of trees and shrubs than a place of burial, for the cross which she then planted was now invisible, showing nothing but the form in green ivy, just as in her own heart the bright hopes of the eternal had overshadowed worldly ambition, and left her to the better promptings of the inner life. Soon there will mingle the ashes of the four, and then nature will silently cover the marble with the velvet touches of time, just as she will ease the heart to which all is dead but grief.

Flashy Jack had implored as a last boon from the strange Nun, that some time Maggie should be laid by his side, and here we may as well state that it was not long before this was done; not long before the strange Nun and Maggie mingled their ashes by the side of those whom they had so devotedly loved in life. Stranger still, it may seem, good Aunt Beckey did not cease her ministry till all was over with poor Maggie, and she departed to "that bourn where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

LIX.

Aunt Beckey's Letter.

WE cannot afford space to follow the personages of our story through the next five or six years, a period long enough to produce great changes in us all. Many a hope and many a love dies out in a shorter time—let them pass—the fruition of the future is before us, and we can afford to bury our dead.

The poet, the preacher, the philosopher, conversant with the inner experience of our humanity, too often grow weary of the conflict of life and sink down by the wayside. Not so with the merchant. His every-day experience is broad and commanding; he is compelled by the force of moral obligation to go out of himself; hundreds and thousands look to him for guidance and occupation; hundreds and thousands in cities where are his piled-up warehouses, in the forests, where the stout lumberman swings sturdily the axe, felling timbers for his ships, on the high seas,

where his freighted barques bear a little empire within; about the docks, where the active laborer toils day and night disposing of his cargoes; everywhere, in all parts of the world, hundreds and thousands look to his integrity of life for the means of supporting theirs, and thus, though his heart may ache with bitter pangs, he may not yield, nor venture upon a little rest, a brief easing of the heart, a short respite of the brain. No, no, the merchant of all others must be girded to his task, and if he die, die gallantly with harness on his back.

Thus it was with Mr. Dinsmoor. Those who noted the rich, handsome merchant, upon whom had fallen such heavy grief, saw no diminution of activity, no abatement of his wonderful forecast, no failure in enterprise or zeal. To stop would be the wreck of others, not himself merely, and therefore his life and schemes flowed on in their accustomed channel. Those who watched him more narrowly, however, saw the white thread gather more and more upon his brow, and his smile came less often, and had lost all the brightness of other days. He grew more munificent also; never a beggar asked in vain, never a plan to relieve suffering was presented to him without a liberal return; and when the Sabbath came he never failed of church service, though the occupants of his pew were quite other than those of happier days.

Upon the subject of church-going, Aunt Beckey had been greatly tried, and not till she had consulted, at some length, the Rev. Mr. Ichabod Longwind, was she fully at rest in her mind.

"Pray for me, my dear brother in the Lord," she wrote, "for, verily, I have fallen into the hands of the Philistines, at least for awhile. It is in this wise: I had made up my mind never to go to the Episcopal church, preferring, of course, the simple milk of the word, without the intervention of men's devices; but when I saw Cousin George going like a lone sheep to the house of God, my heart relented, and I went with him. I feel, dear brother, as if the everlasting foundations were giving way under me, for in the way of duty I have had many trials. I went to see a poor young woman, fallen into the snares of the adversary, and whose state, I must own, went to my heart; and I stayed with her, and did not fail to speak the seasonable word, though I greatly fear to little purpose, for she died more deploring the cause of her sin, than the sin itself. But this is neither here nor there. I was greatly helped, in my duty to the girl, by a Sister of Charity, (who are not exactly Nuns, but something like it,) and I must own, greatly as I abhor Romanism, and much as I strove to escape entanglement, such is the weakness of human nature, that I found my heart greatly drawn out towards the woman.

But this is all over with the occasion, I do assure you, my brother, so I would not have you waste prayers to that effect, seeing as I have already washed my hands of the offence.

"I look upon Episcopacy as little better than Romanism, but Cousin George is wedded to his idols, and rather than see him 'a lone, a banished man,' as we used to sing in the great weaving-room, when Lydia Keene and I was gals together, before she threw herself away upon Sam Dolittle—well, as I was going to say, rather than see him go alone to the house of God, I went with him, feeling all the time that I was countenancing abominations. Help me in these things, oh, my brother; and beware, also, that you do not fall into the devices of the enemy, as I have before warned you in the case of that Jezebel, who looketh out of her windows as you pass by. Remember thus did the painted woman of old, of whom we are told the dogs licked her blood; remember I have before warned you. Of course I mean that subtle widow Jemima ———. I will not soil my pen by writing her name in full.

"I have wrote these things in confidence, by way of showing how the Lord has dealt with me in this city, the wickedness whereof is greater than was that of Sodom and Gomorrah. I have before spoken to you about Bob, a Newsboy, taken by my Cousin George

to bring up, except that he is pretty well up already, being nigh upon twenty or more, at this time of writing. I had great hopes of Bob, but he's so opinionated that, were it not for faith, I should give up entirely. Howsomever, he scares me sometimes with his views, and a sort of savage virtue about him, that makes me think of Obadiah Liscom, who was carried off by the Injins in the old French war. Bob might be thought to be rich now, but he sticks to the ragamuffins that he lived with in early life, as if nothing in the born world was like them; which goes to prove, that what's bred in the bone, and-so-forth.

"Then we have another one in the family, and Cousin George calls her his protégée—I blush to write it. Pardon the blushing cheek of a virgin, dear brother, when I say—no, I cannot write it. Imagine the worst—savagely the worst. Well, this unfortunate child is the most beautiful creature eyes were ever laid on; which goes to make good the old adage, 'wit and beauty'—spare the remainder in consideration of my burning blushes. I have great hopes that this child, Dady, (I intend to try to have her christened Charity, or some other Christian name,) will turn out a devoted missionary of the cross. She is now, I should judge, (it's a thousand pities about her,) about six years old, and can already read any book put into her hands. She sings like a perfect bob-a-lincon, and I

should say she was a born Samuel of the female gender, didn't she cry and laugh, sing and dance, and pray, pray like a little saint, all in one breath; and then wind up with calling me Aunt Beckey, dear Aunt Beckey. She's amazingly large and healthy. I told you before, Bob picked her out of the gutter, poor thing; and the way that Newsboy loves her, and takes care of her, and glories in her knowingness, is enough to shame decent respectable parents, who let their children go to ruin, and that after they have been christened according to church regulations. I wish you would preach a sermon especially on the short-comings of fathers and mothers; but don't let this get wind about my cousin having this foundling in the house, as I regard the example of the thing bad.

"I must draw to a close, for Bob is about to go out to the Indies on business for my cousin. Oh the change produced in that boy! From being little short of a heathen, he is now, by the Lord's help and that of Cousin George, enabled to read and write and speak languages, and goes dressed like a gentleman. He keeps a pair of old shoes, and a pair of trousers, and a coat, which you'd be ashamed to sell to the rag-man, hung up in his room, and he says it reminds him of his early life, which he never means to forget;

and for all he's so well to look now, and knows so much, he's no more pride than an old shoe.

"More than all this, he even talks to my Cousin George jest the same as if he'd been brought up in the best style in the world, and not come up as he did any way. But the only fault of Bob, as I said before, is in his being so terribly opinionated. I have writ thus fully because when my pen once comes to the paper I cannot well stop it, and because I want to let you know how we come on here, and I want to learn the same in return,

"Your sister in the Lord, BECKEY."

In justice to Aunt Beckey, whose letters close here, I having found it impossible to secure the former part of the correspondence, I must say she never after wrote to the Rev. Mr. Ichabod Longwind, for hardly had the above been consigned to the mercies of the post-office department, when a newspaper reached her in which, around the record of marriages, was the black mark of a pen. The good spinster read with a palpitating heart that the Rev. Ichabod Longwind and widow Jemima, whose name she would never write out in full, had entered the holy precincts of matrimony. She was heard shortly after singing, in a voice slightly changed in its treble,

"Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound," &c.,

from whence a suspicious individual might imagine some maiden hope had been suddenly nipped in the bud. It was evident the good spinster in future would solve her own moral or religious problems without aid from the Rev. Ichabod Longwind.

LX.

A Voyage.

BOB is now twenty-two or three, a wise old man in one sense, in another a mere child. He could never be brought to look upon life in accordance with the policies of worldly wisdom. To him suffering was the same, whether it looked out touchingly from the face of beauty, or revoltingly from that of squalid poverty. It was in each but a human heart indicating its need of the comforter, and his great, pure soul responded at once.

"I thought I should learn of books," he was often heard to say, "but I do not find what I want in many of them; and so I look about, and learn of nature, for I do not care to make my mind like a lumber-yard, piled up with what may be good for others, and yet possess little value to me."

One thing was noticeable in him; the character of Jesus, "who went about doing good," seemed to possess an indescribable charm to the Newsboy. This he

was never weary of studying, and he was heard to say often, "I find there nothing to blame, nothing to blame." He did not forsake his old haunts, and his old companions; on the contrary, the best movements in their behalf originated with Bob. He was now tall, and, if not handsome, very striking in appearance. Charles Gardner and Bob might often be seen together. Charles had entered upon the practice of the law, and was a fresh, joyous and manly-looking youth. Though the memory of Imogen had never been obliterated, he was by no means indifferent to the charms of others; on the contrary, few were the bright eyes that did not grow brighter at the approach of the handsome, fine-spirited young man, who, it must be confessed, had a world of pleasing nothings to utter, never lost, however, upon the heart of beauty.

Bob now wrote his name Robert Seaborn, though his old friends called him Bob as in the olden time. Mr. Dinsmoor would have had him adopt his own name, and Aunt Beckey's heart was set upon his taking hers, of Higginbottom, but Bob could not bring himself to take either.

"I am but a wilding stock—a new sapling with an unknown origin. I will be the first of my family, it may be the last. It doesn't seem man-like to me to step into the shoes of others, and those silvered

ones," and so Bob, though the friend and companion of the rich merchant, preserved his identity.

Bob, if not so attractive or handsome as Charles Gardner, certainly won to himself an uncommon degree of interest. He was tall, and though thin and pale, there was so much of candor and manly dignity about him that he at once riveted attention. His brow was high and white, surmounted also by hair of a rich, wavy brown. His eyes had lost their former anxious expression, but in the place there was a soft melancholy which extended itself to the whole face. He was grave, for his experience had been such that depressing memories were often busy at his brain. There were Sam and Mary never to be forgotten; and poor Flashy Jack and Maggie, with their wild, sad life; then there was little Minnie, always with her hand upon the heart of her humble but noble friend; and all these lived warmly in the memory of the Newsboy.

It may be, also, that the lost childhood of the youth, the lost boyhood of the youth, who had never known the bird-like mirth of the one, nor the exalting joy of the other, looked out at times from his pale face, as if they mourned the loss. But to me the grave smile of the Newsboy, coming slowly over his clear, calm features, like a ray of sunshine gleaming and brightening up some sylvan lake, was the most

beautiful in the world. It came up so clear, so child-like pure, as if never an unholy, or bitter, or envious spot had marred the tranquil depths of his great nature, that I watched its coming, and watched its fading, with an interest unknown to any other.

He was now the confidential clerk, some said partner of Mr. Dinsmoor; and if Bob's nature could have harbored a jealousy, it would have been in the matter of Dady, who had become so great a pet with the merchant. Here was a name, also, that Bob would never allow to be changed. It should be Dady Seaborn, nothing else. Her parentage was a secret locked in his own heart, a secret which rather augmented than diminished his love for the beautiful child; but he was well aware this would be otherwise to other minds.

"I'm bound to acknowledge," he would say, relapsing into his old style of speaking, which will never leave him, "I'm bound to acknowledge, this is above-board and handsome in you, Mr. Dinsmoor, to wish Dady and me to bear your name; but nater is nater, and how that of Dady may come out, I can by no manner of means calculate. The learning will do much, but not all. Let her be only Dady Seaborn. Cause why? if bad blood should get uppermost, nobody will be disgraced but Bob, who loves her like a father, I'm bound to say; and when worst comes to

worst, would always lay her head upon his heart, where Minnie's hand is. I could n't be made ashamed for her, only pitiful."

"Bob, my noble boy," answered the merchant, "you make me ashamed of my weaknesses. I am rebuked before you."

"Now, there, then you are to blame," replied the Newsboy, extending his hand cordially. "'Cause why? you've been unfortunately born to wealth and station; you have learning, and a high place in the world—partly made, partly made for you; and I'm bound to say, I think these things a misfortune, as it were, and hinderance to the manhood in us; and of course you cannot know the human heart, nor your own strength so well. I take it Jesus was the more what he was for having not the where to lay his head, and so he had the more pity, the larger heart. A man, Sir, should be afraid of help—afraid of help, Sir. It is a hinderance to him. Let him lift the log to-day if he can—if not to-day to-morrow then, but let him not take help."

And where was Imogen? Had she passed from the hearts of those who loved her? Not that; but time had softened the sense of bereavement, and she had become a memory, rather than a hope in the family, to all but the Newsboy. He alone said, "when Imogen comes—when Silver-tongue returns;"

others reckoned from "the time of Imogen's loss." Aunt Beckey scrupulously carried out the plan of Fannie, to keep the room always ready. No one had pressed the downy pillow, or taken the little robes from the wall. All was as she had left it. It was true the child, if living, must be a woman now, but that did not matter to the heart of the sorrowing father, who saw her always only as a child; saw her always in her short frocks, with the sun upon her golden curls, just as she bounded to his arms, and encircled his and Fannie's neck the morning of her disappearance.

Mr. Dinsmoor had been for some time determined to send an agent to Cuba, in aid of his commercial relations there, which had induced our Newsboy to study much the history and character of this most beautiful gem of the tropics; and, after long deliberation on his part, he one day presented himself for the situation.

"Let me go and try what I can do for you there, Sir," he said. "Something prompts me strongly to go, and when that is the case, I must obey." Bob had other and deeper intimations which he didn't care to explain; but so strongly did he desire to go, and so urgently plead, that at length Mr. Dinsmoor gave his consent.

"Go, my son," he said, "but in parting with you

I lose more than you will believe. You are very dear to me."

Bob was affected. "Human nater is a great thing, I'm bound to believe, Sir, and you have it, Sir, in spite of your wealth," he replied.

Aunt Beckey appeared in all her glory in preparing the trunks of the Newsboy. A large number of yarn stockings, which poked a pillow-case out all over in bunches, might have looked apocryphal in utility to an observer, but Aunt Beckey's heart was set on seeing them go; for it had been her delight, for many months, to knit them with her own hands. Then there was a large junk bottle, filled with pulverized charcoal, and duly labelled in her largest and roundest letters, "To be taken in a little milk, a teaspoonful every half hour, in case of yellow fever."

There was also a bottle of "brandy in case of illness," labelled "medicine" upon one side, and on the other "poison," for Aunt Beckey was an advocate of the Maine Liquor Law.

Last of all was a Bible, a nice Polyglot, in the which, out at sea, Bob found a letter inserted by the good spinster, in which her warm maternal heart went forth in all its fulness to her young friend. There were her blessings poured out; there were her prayers, and there were her tears, with which the paper was literally blistered.

Before the departure of Bob, he took the child Dady down to Staten Island, and talked with her about Minnie, and then out to Greenwood, and let her read the names of Sam and Mary upon the stone, but he went by himself alone to the grave of Flashy Jack and Maggie. Theirs was a tale to be buried in his own heart, to be wept over in silence.

At length he is on his voyage, the blue sea around him, the blue sky above—*undique cœlum, undique pontus*. This was a great change for the Newsboy, from the confined streets and alleys of his childhood, houseless and friendless, to the deck of a noble ship as the agent of a wealthy house, the companion and friend of the rich merchant of New York. Bob felt it all, but in his own way. He did not see that the trappings of wealth conferred any dignity upon him. He was intrinsically the same, and if anything, he respected himself less now that less was apparently required of him. He had always done heart work and head work, as well as other work; and now that wealth superseded the necessity of anxious toil for daily bread, he was apt to undervalue its utility.

"It is work that makes the man after all," he would say; "I would work not for riches, but for manhood."

Every aspect of the sea, every flight of sea-birds,

every capture of a fish, presented a new world to the Newsboy, which he studied with intense interest. But we must leave him now for other personages of our story, perhaps too long hidden from our readers; for six years, as I have said, was working its changes everywhere.

LXI.

A Home in the Tropics.

WE must now take our readers to a coffee-plantation in the interior of the island of Cuba. It is not one of any great extent or importance; it is worked in a lazy way by a group of negroes of either sex, who are old and decrepit, being past service upon the sugar plantations of the proprietor. When a slave gives out by age, or is disabled in any way, he is sent down to the coffee plantation, where, with light work and kindly treatment, he wears out the remainder of life. Here all is tranquil, indolent and kindly, for the superintendent, Nonina of our story, has but one passion, which absorbs all others. Less inert than the white Creole, she is fond of her little empire, and boasts of even a fine stock of slaves whom her skill prolongs to a green and serviceable old age.

The house is low, and is in fact a series of verandahs, opening in all directions, the interior divided and subdivided by heavy and gorgeous curtains,

sweeping the floor, or festooned by massive rings and tassels. These curtains are in place of doors. Around the walls are couches shaded by the invariable snowy net, sofas, lounges, and cushions of the costliest make, relieved by vases, guitars, harps, and pianos. Groups of naked children roll about with low gigglings upon the piazza; old, solemn looking negroes smoke under enormous palm trees; large, fat negresses, in gay turbans, move lazily here and there, spreading lawn upon the grass, clapping muslins to clearness, or beating sugars, or eggs, or rolling pastry, preparatory to family use. Everything has a gorgeous look, for the people delight in rich colors, vying, in that respect, with the gay parrots, and splendid flamingoes, and sumptuous flora, of the region. There is a large white parrot, old and noisy, and he keeps up a perpetual clatter to the people as they move about, scolding one and laughing at another like an incarnated imp. The sight of a stranger turns him half wild.

The sun is in its descent, he has already fallen behind the mountain which bars up the western pass of the valley. The tall palm trees stand motionless in the golden twilight; the vines bend under their luscious fruitage; roses drop slowly, as at an invisible touch, their petals from the stalk; the blossoms of the butterfly-plant quiver like living creatures, and you

cannot tell them from the real ones, which move from side to side, glancing their bright colors, and sipping at the yellow tubes of the jessmine, as if to shame away the humming-bird as it whizzes through the air, and poises its gay gossamer over the flowers. Slowly steals the sea-breeze along the valley, so light and airy, that you would not know of his presence but for the odors scattered from innumerable flowers at his coming, and the touch of coolness borne upon his wings.

Nonina has drawn aside the curtains, and now she stands upon the piazza watching the long train of peasants as they wind their way along the road a mile in the distance, their little ponies laden with panniers, and the nose of one tied each to the tail of its predecessor, a not inapt illustration of "old Fogy" progression. These montañeros, in their slouched hats, with high boots and loose garments, belted to the waist, are as picturesque now as they were in the times of Cervantes, when their ancestors threaded in the same way the valleys of old Spain. One of their number strikes up a rude song; another has a cracked guitar at his saddle-bow, which he seizes and with which he drums an accompaniment, others strike in to the chorus; here and there a negro starts up at the sound and joins his voice to the rich melody, which dies away amid the hills.

Nonina stands watching all this, and yet she has not seen it at all. Her long, snowy robes sweep the piazza, adown which, trailing to her feet, are her glossy curls, and a part of these she holds back as if to listen, while the other hand grasping a fan is held clenched over the heart. The sun, which had lighted up her rich olive cheek and brow, had fallen, and now only showed the coral of her lips, while the shadow of the mountain came down cold and gray and rested upon her head. A woman listens often in this wise, and as often the shadow comes; every year, as little by little hope dies in the woman's heart, a doubt enters.

A soft voice from within sings in a low voice, to the touch of the harp:

"Oh gorgeous bright are Cuban skies,
And dazzling fair its bloom,
But dearer far to me arise,
The sombre skies of home,
The simple blooms of home."

Oh, mother, slowly fades the day,
And slowly pass the years,
Unnotedly they pass away
Marked only by my tears,
My bitter falling tears."

A dash of a horse's hoof interrupted the song. Nonina sprang forward in her old, animated way, exclaiming, "Juan." "Nina," returned Cosmello, flinging the reins over the neck of the horse, which our

old friend Pomp seized at once. Hand in hand the two walked the piazza, talking in a low voice.

Nina seemed restless and disaffected with her lover, for she said,

"You come often to my poor house, Juan, of late. I did not expect it, as time wore on;" and she glanced with a quick, penetrating look at his face.

"Not too often, I trust, Nina," he replied, blowing the smoke lightly from his cigar, and taking it from his mouth. After awhile he asked, "Where is Imogen?" As he spoke the girl made a hurried gesture, and a curtain softly closed over an inner room. She answered, "in bed, moping as usual."

The curtain which had been dropped was suddenly drawn aside, and a tall, elegant girl stood before them. Her eyes glowed with a soft internal light, her golden brown hair, partially knotted at the back of the head, was braided like a coronal across the clear, white brow, and gave a queenly tone to the contour of her finely-shaped head. A snowy robe of muslin fell in waves about her person, confined at the waist by a rose-colored girdle.

"Queeney!" exclaimed Cosmello, starting forward with a glad smile, and raising her hand to his lips.

"I came not for this," she replied in a cold, haughty tone, withdrawing her hand.

Nina bit her lips angrily: "Why are you here, Imogen?"

"To demand my release, to demand my return to my own country. Señor Marcou, I have had the whole story of your love and your revenge from the lips of Nina. Mark me, so true as yonder cross, (and she pointed to the constellation in the heavens,) the symbol of your faith, holds its eternal way in the heavens; so true as there is a God guiding the destinies of men, so true will judgment come." She stood with her hand raised, her head thrown back, like a beautiful prophet denouncing the transgressor.

"She speaks truth," responded Nonina; "send her away."

The Spaniard at this grasped the wrist of Nonina, and looking her sternly in the face, said, "This is a trick of yours, girl, to get up this scene. What devilish plot have you in store, that you have revealed this tale?"

The quadroon's eyes flashed their snake-like glances, and she flung back her long black hair impatiently, as she withdrew her arm, and muttered,

"I knew it would come to this."

"Come to what?" demanded Cosmello.

The girl did not reply, and Imogen interrupted the silence:

"I have listened when you thought me deaf and

dumb, and blind with grief; I have studied and learned what you little thought, and whose purpose you could not divine; I have patience—endurance—courage—I will be free.”

“Beautiful, most beautiful,” whispered the Spaniard.

Imogen heard the words. She confronted him sharply, her cheek grew suddenly pale, she raised the curtain and disappeared. Nonina heard the words also, she started, and pressed her hand again over her heart, as at a sudden pang, and then her hands dropped to her side, and she staggered against the lattice; rousing herself, she placed her hand softly upon the shoulder of the Spaniard.

“Juan, it is enough; the pride of the father is fully humbled, the mother dead, the household desolate—in God’s name have pity, and return the child.”

Cosmello laughed lightly. “A most sudden outbreak of tenderness this on the part of Nina. Look here, girl,” and he put his fingers under her chin, as he had done often before, and lifted the face, so wondrous in its fascination, upward; “look here, Nina, your sudden kindness is as transparent as the trick of the bird that conceals its head and imagines nobody can see the whole body. I will not return the girl.”

“Why, Juan? tell me why.”

“Because I will not.”

Nonina studied his face in silence. This time there was no malice in her look, no fiery passions of jealousy, but the deep, agonized look of a woman who feels that the love, which is the whole world to herself, is fading from the heart of its object. It was a mute, sorrowful scrutiny, so sad, so womanly, that the Spaniard was softened; it was so unlike the ordinary Nonina, that it touched a new cord in her lover’s heart, and he drew her to his bosom. It was well, for the shadow of the mountain, which had rested upon her head, enveloped now her whole person. She did not respond in her wild, passionate tears, as in former times, but leaned her head softly upon his bosom and wept. It was Cleopatra in one of her many moods; Cleopatra, whom

“Age cannot wither, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety.”

Shortly her mood changed. The tenderness of Cosmello had its effect to re-assure her, and she met him in a more cheerful vein; for Nonina was of an active, busy turn, and had many sources of interest, and many topics of conversation with which to amuse or startle the listener into delight, or wonder. She spoke of the crops of her little plantation, of the state

of some negroes who had been overworked during the sugar crop, and had been sent down to swell the number of her household. She did not fail to condemn this cruelty in no measured words. She went from place to place, and exhibited her many improvements; showed a span of elegant saddle horses, one of which she called "Mignon," and patted fondly, at which the animal responded with a glad neigh, and many tramps and curvets.

"And whose is this?" asked her companion, patting the other animal, which shrank from his hand with a shiver and snort, as of terror.

"Imogen is my companion. I have been faithful in her training, Juan, because you wished it; but your course has been a weak one in regard to that girl, Juan. Some time it will all out, and then you will see that my advice to send her into some European city would have been the best one."

Juan shuddered. "Why did you tell her that story of her parents? Nonina, I distrust you."

"I was ill, and like to die, and Imogen cared for me so tenderly that in a moment of weakness, thinking death at hand, I revealed all."

"Fool, coward!" exclaimed the Spaniard.

"Yes, Juan, I was weak, but it seemed to me day after day that the pains of purgatory opened beneath

me. You were in Europe, no one came to me, no one cared for me, but this poor, injured child."

"And so you sent for the priest and confessed all."

"No, no, Juan, mad as I was, I told only Imogen, thinking if I died the prayers of one so pure might help me."

"Fool, coward!" ejaculated her companion once more. "But it will avail her nothing. In this island, among a people of foreign faith, and government, and language, she is in effect dead. Thank God, the Spaniard meddles not with the affairs of his neighbor. The Spaniard minds his own business."

"And yet I fear, Juan. Something tells me evil is at hand."

"You are ill, Nina," replied the other, looking tenderly into her face.

Nonina shook her head, "No, nothing of the sort. I am—"

At this moment a bird near at hand poured out a flood of such wild, ecstatic melody as at once to arrest thought and speech. It was familiarly called the musician, from its varied and exquisite notes. The moon was just rising, and where the two stood under the open sky, the topmost twig of a neighboring orange-tree was observed to sway and quiver in the light. Quick as thought Cosmello levelled a pis-

tol from his pocket, and shot the songster to the heart.

"An evil-omened act," murmured Nonina.

"You grow as superstitious as a weak, canting priest, Nina. This solitude is too much for you. We will go to the Havana and court gaiety for awhile."

"No, no, I like this place; here I have been most happy; here there is not a bird, a shrub, a shadow of the mountain which has not witnessed some passionate joy. The very air is filled with thy love-tones, Juan. Nina is queen, priestess, nun, lover here. Oh Juan! my pulses thrill at a thousand memories lost to me elsewhere. Alas! happiness so exquisite as mine must come to a close. I have felt the joys, and must know the pangs of existence."

Both were awhile silent. At length Nonina, changing her foreboding tone, said, "I hear vessels have arrived to you from New York; to-morrow I go to the city and learn what I may. I am full of presentiments, and action will chase them away. Look here, Juan," and she raised a leaf of the vine and showed the under surface white, while above it was green.

Cosmello laughed lightly. "A shroud, Nina; we'll wind it round old Carumbo, the white parrot, who keeps such a confounded screaming to-night."

"Carumbo has something on his poor brain, I am

sure," answered Nonina. "It may be a snake on the premises," she added musingly.

"I'll wring his neck for him, and that will suffice for all your omens; he's 'the oldest inhabitant' here, and nobody would be more missed than Carumbo," answered Cosmello.

LXII.

A Surprise.

THERE was indeed a cause for the screaming of Carumbo, little imagined by the listeners. Juan had long since confessed to himself a growing passion for Imogen. Years ago, when her light figure crossed his path in New York, he had felt an interest so inexplicable, that he supposed it but the action of a revenge which had engrossed the thoughts of his youth and manhood. Whatever it was, the effect had been to confirm every plot for her abduction, till he had felt that life itself were valueless without its achievement. When this was, as we have seen, securely accomplished, and the beautiful child in his power, he was for awhile content. Indeed, so content had he been, that his design originally to write to Dinsmoor, telling him that the loss, and forever, of Imogen, was owing to the revenge of a Spaniard, the retribution of an injured lover, and that Spaniard and lover

Marcou, passed out of his mind as too puerile a triumph.

Other thoughts, more wild and guilty, came, but the purity of the child, her soft, maidenly tears, her sweet, confiding prayers, her unaffected piety, as year by year she grew into womanly beauty, all conspired to change his evil purposes. Sometimes he did not see her for many months, for she was vigilantly watched by the jealous Nonina, who kept her from his presence under various pretexts; she was ill, she had some distemper, she was at her prayers; and Juan, enwrapt in the fascinations of Nonina, forgot even his revenge.

Now, however, it had been for a long time otherwise. He had travelled in Europe, and returned unexpectedly to find his captive and Nonina together. Imogen was now more beautiful than even the promise of her childhood; for, thrown upon herself as she had been, feeling the need of self-reliance as she had done, her beauty had that tone of intellect and dignity in which it might otherwise have been deficient. Cosmello saw all this, and a dream more beautiful than the one of his youth grew upon his rich, fertile imagination. Nonina, with the true instinct of love, read all this also. She became moody and dispirited, wept where she had once so queened it, and strove, by various means, to rouse the fears of

her lover, in the hope that he might relent and send Imogen away. She slept little, she wandered from place to place, concocting a thousand plans to do this herself, and was only deterred therefrom by fear of Cosmello, whose cold, vindictive nature she too well knew. She saw, day by day, the waning of her own power, and she too grew to brood over plots of revenge at possible injuries. She became devout also, practiced fastings and penances, as the strong in passion and weak in moral purpose are apt to do, hoping the good Father, who demands integrity of heart, may be deluded into favor by one-sided oblations.

When Cosmello, gallantly mounted as he was, rode along the richly-shaded highway, had he looked backward he would have seen that he was closely followed by a rider, mounted upon one of the fleet little ponies of the island. This rider kept at a short comparative distance, never losing sight of him, and yet never obtrusively in sight. When Cosmello turned down the rich citron avenue, along which hung the luscious fruitage of the tropics, the stranger passed onward, and then dismounting amid a thickly-set grove of acacias, tied the small animal under the dense, prickly foliage, and found his way to the grounds by a more circuitous pathway.

Imogen retired, as we have seen, from the boldly-expressed admiration of the Spaniard, regretting her

temerity, and regretting the secret she had betrayed, fearing it might subject her to closer espionage; but in confronting Cosmello as she had done she had hoped to rouse him by fear, or some other motive akin to it, to return her to her country and her home. She had never imagined any sentiment of tenderness on his part in regard to herself, for Marcou was too much the gentleman, and too finished an admirer of beauty, to hazard its disgust at any gross or premature advances. He possessed a never-flagging pertinacity of nature, which could never be turned aside from its purpose. He had none of the flighty impulses of ordinary minds. A matter of little value in itself became of primary import because he had conceived it, and therefore he never swerved till it was accomplished. In doing this there was within him a mine, as it were, of subtle, unfailing resource, opening as occasion might demand, slowly yet surely. He could wait, as we have seen, for years; wait, but it was no idle waiting. He had intermediate plots and plans, sources of happiness, and faithful, unwearied tools; and thus he moved for years, to most of persons a superior, elegant, somewhat taciturn man; to the church a devout and munificent disciple; to his dependents a somewhat indulgent, yet in "crop times" most exacting master; to the poor, passionate, devoted quadroon, a lover fond and generous, if not

true; but one who lost not his individualism in hours of absorption; who never left the poor girl a moment clear from doubt, notwithstanding all his asseverations. Doña Isabella did not intermeddle with him in the least. When he dropped her family name of Marcou and took that of his father, her haughty family pride was wounded that no representative was left to it; but a Spanish woman is too wise to fret, too passionate to complain when nothing is to be gained thereby; so the handsome Doña smoked her cigarito, fanned herself, went to confession and said nothing.

All these traits of character, as we have seen, had conspired to render Cosmello guarded in his approaches to Imogen. He knew the deadly hostility which might be roused in the quadroon, whose unscrupulous jealousy was so much to be feared, and now he was planning to remove Imogen from her protection, and place her where his admission to her presence would meet with fewer obstacles.

When Imogen retired to her room she dismissed her black attendant, after she had carefully fastened down the curtains of her room, declining her aid in the toilet, for, in her present state of mind, the bead-like eyes of the negress, turning from side to side as if they floated in milk, irritated and annoyed her.

"Missie do herself? do hers hair? do hers feet?

do hers dress?" she persisted, magnifying the difficulties of the toilet.

"Yes, all Rosa," and at this the good creature, glad to be released, ducked under the folds of the curtain, and disappeared. Scarcely had she done so, before Imogen stepped out upon a verandah opening upon an extensive garden, lying in a direction opposite to the one which we have just seen. In this beautiful climate, the light of the moon and stars, contrasting with the dense foliage beneath, is at once startling and brilliant. Night-blooming flowers attract the eye, and the low soft notes of birds who sing "darkling," imparts a soft, voluptuous air to nature, rendering the night far lovelier than the day. Odorous plants fill the senses with a dreamy softness, so that the mind falls into delicious reveries, predisposing it to love, and to the enchantments of the senses.

It is probable these had had their effect upon the growing mind of Imogen, and rendered her confinement more endurable than it might otherwise have been. Still she had never fallen into forgetfulness, never lost sight of the dear ones whose memory were in her prayers, and deeply in her young, pure heart. She was not ungrateful to the excitable and wayward Nonina, who, in spite of her jealous fears, had even learned to love a being, whose existence had contributed to gratify even the hatred of her lover.

Imogen, in the course of her walk, approached the confines of the garden, where a hedge of acacia prohibited egress from that corner. As she stood here, her eyes fixed upon the beautiful constellation of the southern cross, she fancied her own name was pronounced close to her ear. She listened; there was a brief silence, and then some one said in a low voice,

"Do not be alarmed, Miss Dinsmoor; 'cause why? it is a friend who speaks to you."

Imogen clasped her hands, half in terror, half in joy; it was so long since she had heard her own name, or the sound of an English word. While she thus stood, a tall young man appeared from the thicket into the moonlight, and then motioned her to follow him into the shadow of the trees.

Imogen saw a pale, thin youth, whose tones and looks recalled a memory of her childhood. There was something, too, in his grave face, and calm, manly voice, which inspired confidence; and with conflicting thoughts and emotions, she laid her hand upon the stranger's arm, saying,

"For God's sake, tell me who and what you are, and whence you come?"

"You may have forgotten, Silver-tongue, the poor Newsboy who lived in the railway-car, but three times you have laid your hand upon Bob's arm, before now."

The simplicity of this reply had its full effect upon the listener; a flood of memories, long stifled, half forgotten, rushed over her, and she burst into tears.

"No, no, never forgotten; I remember all. And you, how came you here?—tell me of my mother," she gasped, pale as death, and staggering to one side.

The Newsboy was silent for awhile, and then he answered slowly, "Your father, and Aunt Beckey, and Dady, were all well a few weeks since."

"My mother, oh, my mother," she cried; and then, seeing he did not reply, she gasped faintly, "she is dead!" and but for the aid of the Newsboy, would have fallen upon the ground.

The young man laid her gently upon the flowering turf, and bore water from the neighboring fountain with which to sprinkle her face.

When she opened her eyes, he said: "In your father's house the bath has been always filled; your little robes are still upon the wall, as you left them; blossoms bloom upon the table, all awaiting the return of Imogen."

She wept at the recital of these proofs of tenderness, only adding, "but my mother, my sweet, dear mother, gone, gone!"

The Newsboy did not interrupt her. At length he said, "Ah! Miss Imogen, God would never give

us tears if he did not mean we should shed them," and now the youth held his hand over his heart, as he did whenever he thought of little Minnie; and he looked just so pale, just so sad as he did years ago. Bob had other griefs it may be at his heart; griefs which all the sweet ministry of Dady, and the little hand of Minnie, could not comfort.

Then he told of Aunt Beckey, of Dady, and the last hours of poor Fannie, and added, "she laid her hand upon my head in blessings." Imogen reached hers cordially to the youth.

"Tell me of my father; how does he look? is he much changed? does he mourn for Imogen?"

"Your father, I'm bound to say, is a handsome man, and above-board, Miss Imogen."

"Has he grown gray?"

"Yes, his head is white."

"Poor, dear father," murmured the girl; "does he walk strong and straight?"

"I'm bound to own, he stoops much."

"Alas! alas! Is his mind clear? I know his heart is good."

"Yes, there is no abatement of mind; and the poor, and the suffering, are helped by him. He is a good, manly man, I am bound to say," and the tears were in the eyes of the youth.

"God be praised," responded Imogen. "Now tell

me of Aunt Beckey; she looks kindly after my poor, dear father, and your little Dady is caressed by him, and you are his friend and his companion. You saw all this but a fortnight since—saw my dear, dear father, walked with him, talked with him," and she lifted her head, and looked into the Newsboy's face with a sweet, earnest cordiality.

"It is many years since I heard a word from home; great changes must have taken place; the trees at the door must have greatly grown!" The Newsboy assented by a smile. "And you, my good, kind friend, you are grown; I remember I thought you younger than—" she blushed and was silent.

A quick pang shot through the heart of the Newsboy, and he laid his hand over his heart as was his wont. He needed Minnie's hand now, but he answered calmly,

"I'm bound to own, Miss Dinsmoor, I'm nothing but a sea-born child. I do not know my age, but I am younger than Charles Gardner."

Imogen's cheek deepened to a blush, which the Newsboy marked, and marked also how the eyes of the fair listener drooped downward. He did not at once speak, but something told him that busy questionings were in the heart of the beautiful girl, which the lips refused to make.

"Charles Gardner is a handsome youth; not dash-

ing, and it may be brave, like Flashy Jack, but a young man well esteemed."

Imogen's foot played a quick, it may be impatient movement, upon the grass. "Such a youth finds ready favor," she murmured.

"Yes, women esteem him highly, but he does not forget you, Miss Imogen; he talks of you often, I'm bound to say," answered Bob, with simple candor.

Imogen's eyes were lifted to his face, they dropped now upon the grass, and tears swelled from beneath the lids. Bob was very pale, and both were silent. Inquiries followed in rapid succession, plans to meet again, plans for the escape of Imogen were discussed, till the southern cross, now bent in its descent to the horizon, admonished them that their interview must close.

LXIII.

An Interview.

Bob had reached the island after a quick and pleasant voyage. He had always been convinced, in his own mind, that the Cosmello of Abingdon Square, was the Cosmello of the Cuban house, a coincidence to which Mr. Dinsmoor had attached very little importance. He respected the character he learned of the one, and the Cuban planters were in the highest degree honorable in their dealings with him. So also the vision of Fannie, just at the time of her departure, had impressed his pure, mystic mind more deeply than others, and he often said to himself,

"It's natural-like that the spirit should see what is hid from common eyes. 'Cause why? God gives to the spirit its faculties; there would be no spirit if there was no powers for it, and it takes hold of that which it most longs to grasp. In the street I pass a thousand faces and do not see them, but my friend I see because we are one in spirit. So with the dying

mother, she longed for her child, she died with longing, and God opened her eyes to behold her."

Bob, as we have seen, was not only generous but in the highest degree deep in his attachments. Although he had scarcely looked at the child, Imogen, at Grace Church, she had, somehow, never left his thoughts; then when they met again, and again, the impression had each time deepened. Imogen's goodness, Imogen's sweetness, had been the theme of daily talk; the poor, dying mother had so coupled him with Imogen, had so looked to him for help, that somehow she had become shrined in the heart of the Newsboy as the fairest vision there. When Charles Gardner spoke of her, always with a sweet reverence, his heart warmed toward the gay youth, more sympathizingly than it might otherwise have done, for there was a certain levity about him by no means pleasing to the Newsboy.

Reaching Cuba, the first glance of Bob confirmed his suspicions, for the two Cosmellos were one and the same. He had found an opportunity to see him without being seen, and withholding letters from the house till he had learned further in regard to the Spaniard, he had followed him, and been so fortunate as to obtain an interview with Imogen, as we have seen, before Cosmello had learned of the arrival of Mr. Dinsmoor's agent.

The day after the interview we have described, Bob was making his way through the principal thoroughfare of Havana, when he was struck by observing that a volante of a handsomer than ordinary construction, with the screen in front down, was following his movements. He turned round and saw a pair of large, intensely black eyes fixed upon him from the little glass at the side. Presently a hand beckoned him to approach.

"Meet me at once, outside the walls," said a low voice.

The Newsboy turned in the direction of the volante, followed it out into the suburbs, where the coarse grass and gorgeous cacti showed the aridness of the soil, and the long range of white sand intermixed with gay shells lined the margin of the sea. The air was hot, but a light breeze cooled its fervor, and soon they found a shelter beneath a clump of palmettoes. Here the volante stopped, the screen was put aside, and the woman with the wen, the sharp, eager, deaf woman, showed herself from within.

"Have you seen me before?" she asked.

"I have," answered the Newsboy, "and I am bound to say to no good purpose."

Nonina tore away her disguise with a quick, impatient gesture.

"Why do you know me to no good purpose?" she asked.

"The cause why is best known to yourself. But I am bound to say, I believe you guilty of a crime which—"

"We have n't time for twattle," said the woman; "we'll discuss moral points hereafter; but the man or woman who fails to gratify revenge, is a poor, miserable, puling coward. I have helped others, now I will have my own."

"According to my way of thinking," answered Bob, "revenge upon an innocent girl is little short of devilish."

"Did you ever see the girl?"

"Yes, more than once."

"Was she beautiful?"

Bob blushed, and replied, "I am bound to say, nothing in my dreams, nothing in Our Gal, nor in Maggie, was half so beautiful."

"You loved that child," said the other sharply.

The Newsboy pressed his hand over his heart in silence.

"You loved the child—the woman is in my power; she is more incomparably beautiful than I can describe." Here she stopped, bit her lips, and breathed as if in pain. "Yes, she is beautiful—the fair, soft, unmeaning beauty of the north; but it has

its effects—has had it where it shall not, and must not be. What is your name, Señor?" she asked abruptly.

"Bob Seaborn."

The woman smiled. "Monsieur Seaborn—Señor Seaborn."

"What you will," answered the Newsboy, his eyes fixed upon the strange, startling fascinations of the speaker.

"Señor Seaborn, will you marry Signorina Imogen?"

The color of the Newsboy came and went; a bright glow was in his deep, melancholy eye.

"Speak, Señor; you love her, every look tells me you do. If you will marry the girl, she shall be yours."

Bob had recovered his self-possession, and he replied, "I am bound to say, I am weak-hearted; what you say strikes me very nearly—"

"Will you marry her?"

"I cannot answer; 'cause why? Miss Dinsmoor might choose otherwise. I am no sneak to marry a woman against her will, or when she isn't clear to choose."

"This is weak, Señor Seaborn. The girl can be free in no other way. You love her—she is in my way; she shall be immured in a convent, hidden forever from the world, or go with you."

"I am but a sea-born child, ma'am. I have no name, nor friends, except poor outcasts like myself. I owe my fortune and place to the father of this young lady. I am bound to say, he loves me. I am weak-hearted, ma'am, but I have n't a single streak of the rascal in me. I would not by any manner of means take advantage of the situation of Miss Imogen to compel her out of fear to give her hand to me."

"As you will," returned the other. "She shall go to the convent of our Lady," she muttered. "I will bring the power of the Church to keep her there, and as for this green youth—why—why his secrets die with him. As the wife of this dirt-scrub of New York," (thus did she designate the Newsboy,) "even Juan's revenge ought to be content, would be content, but for his false heart." All this passed rapidly through her mind, as she settled backward in the volante, doubtful what course to pursue.

"One thing more, Señor Seaborn; marry the girl for the sake of her freedom. The Church will protect her as your wife. I could call in powerful aid then, which is forbidden me otherwise. Even Señor, her captor," she substituted for the name, "will have no power to take her from you as your wife, protected as she would be by the government and the Church."

"Oh, I could bear to lose him, but I could not

yield him to another. I could bear death from his rage, but not the misery of his loss," she uttered under her breath, revolving, as she leaned back in the volante, the probable contingencies of her situation. Recovering herself, she went on.

"Marry her for form's sake, Señor Seaborn; her protector would have to submit. The truth known, would bring down the authorities upon him; I have but to denounce him, and he dies the death, or shares the prison of the felon."

"I can denounce him as well as you, Madam."

"Then you never behold her again. Who would believe you? Look at me. I am not to be trifled with—I am armed—I do not fear death. Marry her for form's sake, and I will put her into your power."

"Why not do so without this marriage?"

"Because of the power, the wealth of—; because you could not get her out of this island without the aid of the authorities and the Church, both of which you should have. Will you submit to the terms?"

There was no wavering in the heart of the Newsboy. He hesitated to speak, because he was weighing the chances of escape. Whatever might have been the dear, secret desires of his heart, he knew how to combat them, when the shadow of a stain, the shadow of an injury or injustice followed their fulfilment. Lowly as had been the life of the Newsboy, it had

taught him a tender reverence for others, as well as a manly knowledge of his own worth. Impatient at his silence, Nonina repeated her terms.

"I am heart-weak, it may be, ma'am, but I could not do this thing. 'Cause why? I might grow man-weak, were Miss Imogen wholly in my power. I will do my best, ma'am, and trust that God will provide a way."

"Fool!" ejaculated Nonina. "Do not follow me, it would not be well," she cried, looking from the volante, as it moved onward.

Bob remembered he had no need of this, as his previous visit had given him the secret of Imogen's retreat. He feared, however, some evil from the jealous vindictiveness of Nonina, who might immure her in a convent or carry her to some desolate place upon the island, for his instincts told him that she had known a lover in Cosmello, and had found a rival in Imogen. While, therefore, Nonina went from place to place in the vain hope of finding Juan, and even went so far as to call upon the haughty, indolent Doña Isabella, in her search, the Newsboy was quietly wending his way to the little coffee plantation among the mountains. There he hoped to devise some mode of removing her from the power of the Spaniard. He knew that an appeal to the authorities would result in nothing, for the wealth and in-

fluence of Cosmello were such, that he, a foreigner, would risk his own life and freedom in even hinting at the crime of the native. He had observed the fine, manly tone of the mountain peasants, and through these he hoped to achieve her rescue.

Discussing these things in his mind, he rode onward, keeping his pony as much as possible in the covert of the woods, and always seeking some by-path at the approach of wheels. It was nearly sunset when he approached the plantation. Suddenly he heard the sound of wheels and the trampling of horses, when a volante, usually so slow and luxurious in its movements, dashed along the heavily-shaded road. At once Bob recognized it as the volante of Nonina, who, having failed in her search for Juan, had followed an irresistible outburst of jealousy, surmising he might take the time of her absence to visit Imogen.

LXIV.

Revenge.

THE negro mounted upon the forward horse of the volante, whipped and spurred forward the overheated beast. The dust rolled up along the path in heavy folds, the vehicle swung right and left, flew along the road, turned down the avenue of citrons and approached the verandah. Old Carumbo screamed vociferously, first at the approach of his mistress in such hot haste, and next at the approach of a stranger, for Bob had suddenly determined to confront the quadroon in her own mansion, and trust to the turn of events as to what should follow.

As Nonina sprang from the vehicle, she gathered up her robes hastily, and proceeded along the piazza.

"Massa Juan toder side, Massa Juan toder side," cried Pomp in a loud, mysterious whisper.

Hardly had he uttered the words when there was a quick cry, an exclamation, whether of horror or of

fear, could not be known, followed by the sharp report of a pistol.

"Die, false-hearted craven that you are!" cried Nonina, flinging the pistol aside.

A deep groan followed a heavy fall, and the Spaniard lay bleeding upon the ground. A volante and horses were near by, into which, at the moment of the return of Nonina, he was endeavoring to force the faint and terrified Imogen.

For a moment the quadroon stood fixed and pale, as when she flung the pistol from her hand, and then she sprang forward and clasped the head of the dying man to her bosom. She snatched a cross from her girdle and pressed it to his lips.

"Juan, Juan, forgive me, say that you forgive me. God of mercy he is dying. Kiss the cross. Mercy, mercy, he will die without absolution. Juan, dear Juan!"

He breathed heavily; "Nina," he murmured, and a deeper gush of the crimson torrent severed the thread of life.

We must leave the quadroon to her heavy fate. She escaped the penalty of the law by administering death to herself by a potion long kept for the purpose, for the deadly passions of a nature like hers, inheriting, as she did, the best qualities of one race and the worst of another, indicate always a violent close.

She had her revenge, but it was of a kind fatal to herself, for nothing but the grave was left her, when he who had filled up the measure of her life, was taken from her by death or desertion.

The Newsboy would have urged Imogen away from this scene of horror, but recovering herself, overcome as she had been by the terrors of her own situation so lately, she now felt a mingling of pity as well as of dread, as she looked upon the wretched Nonina, weeping and wringing her hands over the dead body of her lover.

"Juan, Juan, could you not speak to poor Nina? Oh, Juan, pale, dead, and by me. Gone, gone! Oh my God, is there no help? none—none—dead, dead!" Then she lifted the pale, cold face up in the moonlight, where a soft calm rested upon the features but half an hour since marked with so many evil passions.

Seeing Imogen, she cried, "Go, go, but for you this had not been. You and your mother were the bane of his life. Go, ere I madly wreak my revenge upon you. Go, ere I help to carry out beyond the grave the vengeance of the Spaniard," and she broke into a wild, discordant laugh.

The Newsboy placed Imogen in the volante, designed for the same purpose by Cosmello, and they took, once more, the road to Havana, leaving the

plantation resounding with the cries of the negroes, who gathered to the spot, with their unearthly lamentations. On their way to the city the Newsboy bethought of the American Consul, and hastened at once to put Miss Dinsmoor under his protection. To him a full statement of the facts of the case was made. Doña Isabella fanned herself violently, but affirmed her total ignorance of anything in the matter; indeed, she affected to doubt the whole story, but her grief for the loss of her only child was certainly much less than might have been expected on the occasion. It was well known that his relation with the quadroon, who became, as we have seen, so efficient a tool for the vicious passions of her son, had been for many years both scandalous and repugnant in the eyes of the proud mother.

A few weeks, and the steamer returned the Newsboy and his charge to New York. We shall make no attempt to describe the meeting of the parent and child. Too sacred their joy, too sacred their grief, for us to lift the veil, and expose the view to human eyes. The Newsboy had redeemed his pledge, he had restored the lost child to her home, and it may be life, from henceforth, lost something of its purpose to him. He was now the acknowledged partner of Mr. Dinsmoor, honored as was his due, but alas! revenged more than loved.

LXV.

Conclusion.

ONE morning, after the return of the Newsboy, Mr. Dinsmoor found him leaning over his desk so abstractedly, that his attention was at once arrested. A slight movement, on his part, caused Bob to look up and find the eyes of the merchant fixed upon him with melancholy interest.

"My friend, my benefactor," he exclaimed, in a trembling voice, "Dady and I will go away for awhile. It is best—'cause why? I'm bound to think we must keep up manfully in the world, and I'm weak—"

He could say nothing more for the tears that choked his utterance.

"My son," said the merchant, laying his hand tenderly upon the Newsboy's arm, "I love you as my own child. You love my daughter?"

The Newsboy's face was pale, and then red by turns, as he struggled to reply.

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"I'm bound to own, Sir, I'm weak-hearted. Miss Imogen has been in my prayers so many years, that she is near to me, as God is."

"Speak to Imogen, Bob, you have my full consent."

Here was indeed a hope to any other heart but that of the Newsboy. He knew the gratitude of Imogen, her unbounded love for her father, and submission to his wishes; and, on a foundation like this, much might be achieved by a mind of ordinary cast.

That same evening Imogen had been touching the harp with exquisite skill, and never had she looked more tenderly beautiful. Preserving still the Spanish dress of flowing white, her hair braided as in Cuba, with those soft wavy movements so common in the tropics, and so rare amongst the more intellectual, and sharper-toned women of America, she presented remarkable attractions to any eye. To Charles Gardner she more than filled the ideal of his youth; and he who had been so gay and careless with other beauties, listened to Imogen with a deep, reverential homage, for every quality of her mind, as well as feature of her body, was of a fine ideal tone. Culture had done much for her; sorrow had thrown a soft, hazy shade of sadness about her which appealed at once to the heart. Her gaiety, even, was tinged with this touching shade; and her smile, slow, sweet, and

beaming as that of a child, had a peculiar fascination about it. Nonina, always careful for the safety of her guilty lover so long as her own claims were acknowledged, had trained Imogen in utter seclusion. It was long before she, a stranger to the language, was able to learn even the place to which she had been carried. Borne sick, and nearly dead with grief, to the little coffee plantation, she had gradually recovered her equanimity. At this time she was so pale, so thin, and forlorn looking, that Cosmello turned from the sight of her with disgust, a feeling which the quadroon was careful to cultivate, by representing her always as moping and half idiotic.

Cosmello, secure of the faithfulness of Nonina, had travelled much, and thought of Imogen little, and only as one who had gratified his revenge, and whose life was now of little value to herself or others. It was during his absence in Europe that the quadroon had been to the confines of the grave, as we have seen. Poor Imogen, neglected and dispirited as she had been, clung with tender devotion to this her only seeming friend, and thus beguiled the grateful Nonina of the secret reason of her abduction. From this time she took a new hold upon life. She began to study, to exercise her powers, and something like a friendship was established between the two. Nonina was a Catholic, and had all the terrors of her sect for

unconfessed, and unabsolved sin; and hence the secret so long preying upon her mind, unrelieved by the rites of her church, often threatened the overthrow of her reason. Cosmello knew this aspect of her mind, which he always designated a weakness; but he was well aware that her attachment for himself would effectually bridle her tongue. He knew, also, her vindictiveness, a violent, hasty quality in her, contrasting strongly with the slow, deadly malice of his own character; and he often trembled at the freakishness of its manifestation. Jealous also was the quadroon, and hence his determination to boldly remove Imogen from her care, which was thwarted in the fatal manner we have recorded.

On the return of Cosmello, as we have seen, he found not a pale, thin, imbecile girl, as he had been led to suppose Imogen to be, but a tall, beautiful woman, whose cast of mind and style of loveliness revived the one fatal passion of his youth. He was still elegant in person; if not young he was handsome, refined and cultivated, why should not the daughter heal the wounds inflicted by the mother? True, the quadroon's fatal disclosures would naturally incense and prejudice her against him, but once away from this jealous, turbulent woman, Imogen might yield to his wishes.

She had lived in such utter seclusion that she was

entirely ignorant of the world, except as she had learned it from books; and now, as she moved in the elegant saloon of her father, she seemed like some fair Nun escaped from her cloister.

While Imogen sang, as we have said, Charles Gardner leaned at one side listening as if entranced, and the Newsboy had drawn near, so wrapt with the melody that his eyes never turned away from the fair singer. When she ceased, he said in a low voice,

"Miss Imogen, will you walk with me in the conservatory. I have something I wish to say to you."

Imogen arose with a blush, and a slight glance at Charles Gardner, as she left the room. She put her arm frankly within that of Bob, and they walked amid the rich blossoms in silence. The white robes of Imogen fell soft and Nun-like about her, and her pure brow looked fair and innocent as that of a child. Bob also had his peculiar attractions. There was much akin in the two—both had a touch of melancholy about them, and both were in the highest degree simple and candid in their mental developments.

Bob placed his companion in one of the light chairs of the place, and leaned himself against a column. The vines clustered about his head, his air was grave and manly, and his attitude graceful.

"Miss Imogen, when I was an ignorant, ragged boy, kneeling in the aisle of Grace Church, so small and squalid that the sexton would have turned me out but for you—you took me then to your side—" he stopped a moment, "since then, Miss Imogen, great changes have transpired, great trials also, but never from that day, Miss Imogen, have you been for a moment out of my heart. I'm bound to say, Miss Imogen, I've hardly seen a woman in the world, so much have you been before me. I have felt holy as it were. 'Cause why? I had an angel sitting always in my heart."

Imogen wept now, and Bob stopped to recover from the tears which impeded his utterance; he went on:

"Your mother looked to me for help, she did; she expected me to bring you home, and I felt always I should do it. She loved me, your father loves me, but the heart of a maiden has its own choice, and I ask you, Miss Imogen, in candid-wise, if you think you can love me?"

Imogen gave her hand cordially to the Newsboy; it did not tremble. "Robert, you are noble and manly. My father loves you, he desires this; that must be a wayward heart that does not see your worthiness!"

Bob looked calmly in the face of his companion.

"It is not of my worthiness I would speak, Miss Imogen. I should not talk with the daughter of my best friend in the way I do, did I not feel my manly worth. I know that, Miss Imogen, and I know also that I could protect you, and wipe the tears that might come, for sorrow, I'm bound to say, might dim even your beautiful eyes, Miss Imogen; but I would wipe them away, tender-like, as if they were my sweet child's, Dady's even. I should be proud-like of you also, as if you were my dear, pure sister, whom I would not let an evil thing light upon, and—" here he bent forward and took her hand in his; "I could love and worship you with the love of a true, manly heart—one, Miss Imogen, to which shame, and dishonor, or unmanliness never entered."

Imogen's eyes dropped to the floor, and the tears streamed from beneath their lids. Bob still held her hand in his.

"Speak, Miss Imogen, candid-like as I have spoken. You know it is all between God and us."

Still she was silent, and still the tears fell from her eyes; at length she said, in a low voice, "My father's wishes are a law to his child."

The Newsboy dropped the hand he had taken in his, and now he laid it over his great heart, for he felt the tender pressure of Minnie's there; it always came to comfort him at any new pang.

"That is enough, Miss Imogen. Your heart is not with me. God forbid I should ever cause it a single pang. I am bound to say I am weak-hearted, I was not quite certain how it stood between us, but I shall not trouble you, Miss Imogen, with sighing and looking unmanly. I will go away; when we next meet, shall it not be as brother and sister?"

Imogen sprang forward and pressed the brave, manly hand in both of hers.

"God bless you, noblest, best. I am not worthy of your great heart, Robert."

The Newsboy turned to go, then he came back, a faint smile passed over his face. "This once, Miss Imogen," and he impressed a kiss upon the beautiful brow! Passing outward he encountered Charles Gardner, who walked up and down the hall pale and distracted. The Newsboy approached him and said calmly,

"I am bound to say, Charles, her father wished it, I wished it also, but the maiden should be free to choose. Go, you will be welcome."

Scarcely did the impatient young man wait to thank his generous friend, but in the eagerness of his selfish, youthful passion, rushed to claim a treasure of such pure, serene worth, as well might cause a manly heart to tremble before it,

"But fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

"I am bound to say, I am more worthy of her love," murmured the Newsboy.

He was answered by a deep groan from Aunt Beckey, who had watched the proceedings of the evening with a silent interest. Ascending the stairs, she followed the youth to his room; and when he would have thrown his head upon the pillow in an outbreak of tears, she received it upon her warm, motherly bosom, and laid her large hand upon his pale cheek, and wept with him.

"I knew how it would be, women never know what is good for them; they'll throw themselves away upon some rascal or another, and give the mitten to the best man alive. I've seen it many's the time. There was Betsey Buncum, might a had Deacon Liscom, a God-fearing man, with a nice farm, and carriages, carts, wagons, and-so-forth, and stock, and all with no incumbrance but his mother, a take-things-easy kind of a critter, that would n't bother nobody; but no, Betsey set her heart upon a sprig of a chap that came down from York, and gin out that he was head of a great firm there, and he was out takin' orders. Well, Betsey married him, and it turned out that he had n't a second coat to his back; but he had another woman down there, and the Lord knows how many children."

The energetic voice of Aunt Beckey, and her

homely details, certainly had the effect to rouse the young man from his sense of disappointment, for he lifted up his head with something like a smile.

"There, that's right, Bob; never you mind; there's as good fish in the sea as was ever caught out of it. Bless my soul, Bob, was I a young woman, I should know better than refuse a man like you. But gals is gals; they'll always go through the swamp, and pick up a broken stick at last."

In this way the good creature strove to comfort him, and comfort came at last; but through the large, manly nature of the Newsboy it came, and not from any of the considerations urged upon him by Aunt Beckey. He travelled much abroad, and thus enlarged his views of life; and, when some months after the interview we have described, the great stone house was thrown open, and a numerous assemblage came to congratulate Mr. Dinsmoor on the marriage of his beautiful daughter to the handsome Charles Gardner, Bob, the young partner of the firm, was not there. But when the father blessed his child, and imprinted a kiss upon the brow of the bride, his noble heart confessed with a pang he would gladly have substituted for the bridegroom, in place of Charles Gardner, the unknown of birth, the unaided in youth, the self-reliant, manly young Newsboy. The News boy is abroad, but perhaps may yet return.