

William Russell Smith

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AS IT IS.

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*"What woman in the city will dare say
That I mean her?"*

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LOVE'S SHACKLES.

There never was, and ne'er will be,
For love, the slightest liberty :
The argus eye of jealousy
Doth watch — will watch, eternally.
The glancing eye must never stray ;
The smile for one alone must play ;
The cheek for one alone must glow ;
For one, the breast conceal its snow —
Not even the meek-eyed moon may see
That citadel of chastity.
The lip must harvest all its dew
For one (as mine does its for you).
Those swinging tresses — leaflets of the brain —
Tho' kissed by transient winds, dare not kiss back, again :
So tyrant-like is love — so cold — so vain.

AS IT IS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

JACK STERLING was literally wedged in, on the left end of the front seat of an old fashioned stage coach, with three hundred pounds of human flesh in the shape of a fellow-traveler leaning against him and almost crushing him at every dash of the huge wagon as it rolled over the irregular road. It was night, and Sterling did not know what sort of people surrounded him. As usual, there were several gabby individuals in the crowd, who kept up at intervals a running conversation, which served the double purpose of annoying the sleepy, and of advertising the speakers. Here were merchants, traders and politicians. One gentleman made himself a lion by letting every body know that he lived on Wall street. This person had excited the curiosity of Sterling, who recognized him, next morning, by

his voice, observing some peculiarities in his manners and conversation. He had the habit of letting his hands rest half way in his breeches pockets, with the thumbs out, continuously and gently rubbing the doe-skin, so that his pants, in the region of his pockets, had come to be quite thread-bare. This is a *broker*, and as he is to figure hereafter, in these pages, the reader will excuse us for having gone a little ahead of time, in our narrative, to see this individual in daylight. We will now leave him as he is at this moment leaning over a tin basin, washing the inveterate sand out of his eyes.

If the reader will be good enough now, to return with us to the left end of the front seat of the coach, he will observe in the corner, jammed in as afore-said, a very thin, tall man, with his cloak wrapped over his traveling cap, and his head resting against the side-curtain, sleeping.

While our hero was indulging in one of those delicious snatches of sleep called naps, seeing great visions, and looking into the future and the past, through the mysterious telescope of dreams, suddenly there was a terrible crash, and the whole contents of the coach, men, women and children, were hurled, pell-mell, upon him! The wheel at his corner had given way, and the coach had just so far turned over as to put him at the bottom!

Sterling, in the struggle, found himself in close contact with a woman, face to face; and his mouth, though in pleasant proximity to a very soft cheek, was severely bruised: it seemed to him, that some

of his teeth had been knocked out; and there was a smart twist of hair, the best part of a curl, in his mouth, fastened between two of his teeth. He had grappled rather roughly with the lady;—but it was in self defence.

The coach was emptied immediately, each passenger clambering out in his own way. No bones were broken; but this goodly company found themselves on the muddy road-side, many miles from a smith-shop, with a crushed wheel, at midnight; and the inviting prospect of having to camp in the woods or to walk several miles. It was a cold night, too; but there was a moon, heaving her white chest far, far above the trees, and scattering showers of light through a sieve of silver wired clouds.

Remembering his contact with the lady, Sterling looked round in search of her. He saw, at a short distance, standing by themselves, a group of three or four persons, two of which were females; both, from their voices, very young; the one taller and more fully developed, as it appeared in the moonlight, than the other. In the group was a gentleman, evidently their traveling companion, giving them assurances of safety and protection. Sterling stood near enough to hear the conversation, and learning that some damage had been done, he approached and inquired the extent of it.

"Only a little scratch;"—was the reply.

"Something more, sister," said the other, "for it is bleeding very much." There was indeed, a serious gash on the young woman's temple, to which

an elderly gentleman, with much anxiety was pressing a handkerchief. The traveling cloak was removed; and the collar and laces about the bosom were much stained with blood. Becoming a little faint, from the loss as well as from the sight of blood, the young woman sat down upon a carpet bag. The basket was rummaged for a bottle of cologne, which was forth-coming; and our friend, the broker, seeing that there was no water about, very gallantly let the company know that he had a flask of brandy at their command. The cologne was applied, with the best effect;—the forehead was bandaged; and in a few minutes no apprehension was felt by the friends, or serious pain by the fair sufferer.

During these little transactions Sterling could not fail to observe, as he supposed, a very fine face and person, in this lady. But, as first impressions are not always the best, and, as appearances, especially by moonlight, may deceive, we will be prudent, and not describe our heroine, until we have better light and a further acquaintance.

CHAPTER II.

In twenty-four hours after the accident of the breakdown, the company found themselves on board a steam ship. It was a dark, dreary afternoon in November, when the ship swung out upon the angry

and threatening waters. Many of the passengers desired to remain in ———, and wait for fair weather. But during the last day, Sterling had been completely charmed by the fair creature which fortune had mysteriously thrown into his arms; and, without inquiring the reason, he was very unwilling to lose sight of her. Her movements therefore regulated his; and when he saw that she was on the ship, he was resolved to risk the dangers of the sea.

Sterling had made no approaches to this young woman, being as yet a stranger; but he had remained as near to her as polite convenience would authorize. He could not forbear letting his eyes rest upon her, now and then, during the last day's travel; and more than once she had met his glance, in the amiable encounter of eyes, with her own in a full and unsuspecting look, as if she were not unwilling to know more of him. At such a time, Sterling could not measure the size of her great orbs; he only knew that they were blue, very bright; and—something smaller than wagon wheels.

But Sterling was much perplexed. There was about this young woman an imperturbable ease, gentleness and freedom, which for one of her age appeared remarkable, indicating that she had mingled in society just enough to have been inspired with the belief, that, as she was herself pure, so all the rest of the men and women of the world were equally so. There was, in her manner, no shyness, no coyness; no forwardness, no backwardness; no simpering, no solemnity; no frivolity, no auster-

ity;—and her gravity was so blended with the juvenile graces of cheerfulness and gaiety, that no frown seemed ever to cloud the sunny radiance of her countenance. Her eyes beamed with credulous confidence. There was, in short, a total absence of what the world calls affectation. She was a perfect woman, symmetrical in form and education.

But Sterling could not understand why she did not blush, or look away, or let her eyes fall suddenly, when she met his glance. There was something provokingly queer in this. At first, he felt that he was rather attractive in his appearance; but he abandoned this idea, when, after a day's observation, he could not perceive that she was hunting for a sight of him, but that every time she met his eye, it was evidently incidental: the search was entirely on his side. In the calm and quiet expression of her countenance there was nothing either of the inquisitive or of the astonished; and whatever might have been her thoughts, she certainly conveyed no idea to him:—as the illuminated pages of an ancient missal, though very brilliant, are all *Greek* to a barbarian, so her eyes, though luminous, were yet unreadable to our bewildered traveler.

Sterling had discovered that one of the traveling companions of these young women was their father. There was about him an air of wealth and aristocracy. He was very attentive to his daughters, but sufficiently courteous, in his general demeanor, to be agreeable to all persons with whom he came in contact. Sterling, being charmed with the daughter,

endeavored, of course, to be interesting to the father; and had so far succeeded, during the day, as to have attached himself to the old gentleman's party.

Now, it need not be concealed—Sterling, with all his fine qualities and his intellectual capacities, was given to habits of affectation. He was in high life, as we shall see presently; and his little successes in political adventures, had given a tinge of vanity to his feelings, and an air of conceit to his manners. Among his weaknesses was a desire to appear literary. Having written some successful reviews, he considered himself an established critic, and was only waiting a favorable opportunity to make a more ambitious effort to become better known as a man of letters. On this occasion, he carried in his hand a copy of a new translation of DANTE, on the pages of which could be seen numerous pencillings and marginal notes. He was meditating a review, and did not seem to be at all annoyed when any one peered into the book:—of course, it was respectable to read Dante.

He had been sitting by the side of the father of our fair heroine, conversing glibly in a sort of rattling chit-chat, when the old gentleman took the book, and opening it seemed to be struck with the word *purgatory*, which stood at the head of the page.

"Purgatory!"—he exclaimed.

"Yes, Purgatory!"—replied Sterling.

Hearing the remark, our fair friend cast her eyes upon the book and said inquiringly, "this is Dante

"I suppose?" Sterling was more than willing to let it pass into her hand, as she reached out her arm to receive it.

Now, there was something about this arm that made Sterling forget the book. It was such an arm as one seldom beholds. The wrist was very small and very white, but growing a little rosy as it swelled and rounded towards the elbow, with veins running over it, just blue enough to be visible. A glove concealed the hand, but the thumb and finger that developed themselves through their silken covering were full and round. There was no bracelet, and the envious sleeve of the traveling jacket was so arranged that not more than half a dozen inches of the arm could be seen by the common eye:—but eager meditation, in pursuit of beauty, has eyes whose kindling glances can penetrate all the dark contrivances of Erebus: and the lover, in his bounding imagination, with an inch of sight, is as skillful in perfecting the entire form, as the anatomist, who, by science, with a single joint, can frame the skeleton complete.

CHAPTER III.

The old steam ship had swung out upon the waters. The passengers were gathered together in the cabin. Sterling, much to his gratification, saw an old friend there, Judge Burton, a senator from

— He was conversing with Sterling's new acquaintance, the father of our young women. As Sterling approached, the senator gave him a cordial salutation, and turning to his companion, said, "Colonel Walker, this is General Sterling, a member of congress from —."

Col. Walker opened his eyes a little at this announcement, and remarked, very innocently, "I have had the pleasure of traveling with the general for several days, but I had no idea that he was a member of congress—not the least."

Now Sterling did *not* look *much* like a member of congress. There was a soft shyness about him that repelled the idea that he was anything of a blusterer. Yet he felt chagrined at this remark, for he thought that he *ought* to look like a congressman; and he was really surprised that every body did not know that he was one of that honorable fraternity. But if he was hurt at the remark, he was more mortified at the scrutinous manner with which our old friend measured him with his eyes, inch by inch, as if determined to ascertain his exact height.

"Appearances are deceptive, General," said Col. Walker. "But come—now that I know you, I must introduce you to my daughters," and taking Sterling by the arm he led him across the cabin and presented him, rather formally: "these are my daughters—this is my eldest, Mrs. Curtis; this is my youngest, my little Helen."

Mrs. Curtis very frankly extended her hand to Sterling. He touched her cold fingers; and before

he had time to moralize on the singular state of his feelings, at finding himself in love with a married woman, a huge sea lifted the ship upon the waters, causing our hero's head to swing around with a dizzy and sickening lightness. The interview was very suddenly brought to a close. Sterling rushed out the cabin door and reached the side of the ship just in time.

The cool sea breeze, flinging its damp wings against his face, soon revived him, when he returned to the cabin to see that strangely fascinating woman. The discovery that she was married had astonished him, but the surprise had been dashed so opportunely by a fit of sea sickness, and the bodily relief was so great upon the reaction, that he felt neither gloomy nor solemn. Smaller things had often given him the *blues*—in fact the *blues* generally come of very small matters;—but in this there was the beginning of an adventure, the swelling bigness of which, as it loomed up dim and shadowy in the future, took complete possession of his imagination.

When he returned to the cabin, Sterling found that the ladies had disappeared. He knew the cause. From their apartment he could hear suppressed groans, which, as the ship rolled heavily, would subside and break out into little half-uttered yells of laughter, verging upon the hysterical. There was merriment with terror—strange companions—ruling by turns, those timid and bewildered girls.

Sterling had leisure now to reflect: "she was a married woman! another's! what was she—what

could she be—to him? It was not in his heart to envy the man, whoever he might be, the possession of such a treasure—no! he would give her up, but he would see her again."

These thoughts could reach no end; they winged themselves out into broad, boundless reveries. Indistinct idealities rolled through his brain, like the vapors of a cigar tressing themselves into ringlets on the mingling atmosphere. With this sort of thought—if thought it may be called—invariably comes despondency. With the gloom of the mind came the gloom of the night. Clouds and storms thickened and raged without. Neptune made a terrific toy of the old ship, and laughed at human dismay. Sterling retired to his berth and covered his head three deep in blankets—the pillow on top—and thus endeavored to sleep. He lay in this condition, slumbering, but not sleeping, until midnight, when the increased violence of the storm so rocked the vessel, that it was not easy to lie in the berth without wedging with elbows. There were many anxious faces to be seen in the dim, flickering light of the berth-cabin; apprehensions were expressed of the capacity of the ship to resist the blow; there was hurrying to and fro, on deck and below, amidst great confusion.

"The signs are bad—the engineer is frightened," said one.

"The captain ought to put back," said our friend, the *broker*, as he thrummed his pockets and stretched his suspenders.

"The pilot and all admit that they have never seen such a night," said another.

Senator Burton approached Sterling's berth and exclaimed, "Come, Sterling, let's go up and take a drink. I am getting sick, and that is the best remedy."

"Agreed," said Sterling; and the two friends walked to the bar-room, which was tended by a colored boy, who was quite careless enough in the storm to be yawning with a desire to sleep, as he mixed the liquor.

This carelessness on the part of the boy had a most happy effect on the spirits of the senator.

"Are you not afraid of being lost?"

"Oh, no sir," replied the boy, gaping. "This aint nothing to what *I've* seen."

This was a very comforting assurance, and the two dignitaries drank the mixture with great relish and walked on deck to look at the night. Wind, rain, mist and waves so beat over the ship that it was perilous to stand in an exposed position. The lightning flashed so incessantly that the gilded edges of the waves kept up a continuous illumination. Billow plunged after billow, with desperate irregularity; and the old ship rattled as if it was a huge pile of splinters lashed together with frail cordage. The engine groaned as if struggling against granite. The captain admitted that he was not making a mile an hour. Nobody pretended to know where the ship was, or to guess where she would be in the morning.

Senator Burton was evidently a timid man at sea. His frequent resort to drink showed his uneasiness. He asked every person that seemed to be connected with the ship if the storm was more violent than usual. Meeting one of the pilots he asked, "if it was getting no better?"

"Yes, *no better, fast*," was the quick reply.

At this the senator retired to his berth, and covered his head, as a scared child shuts its eyes in the dark to keep from seeing bugbears.

The senator's feelings may be well described by the speech of honest old Gonzalo, in the Tempest: "Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground. The wills above be done! but I would fain die a dry death."

Sterling was not frightened but very uncomfortable. He could not avoid springing, now and then, as the vessel creaked, from his berth in the cabin towards the stair that led to the deck of the steamer. And during all this time, and amidst all this stirring excitement, there was a wondrous pair of blue eyes shining in his heart, and looking, as it were, out of his own bosom into his face.

CHAPTER IV.

That sentimental tyrant, Xerxes, is made, by Herodotus, to utter some very pretty thoughts, among which is this remarkable expression: "Know thou that the spirit of man is in his ears, which, when it

hears things agreeable, fills the body with delight, but when it hears the contrary, swells with indignation." He was rebuking an unfortunate Persian whose speech had not flattered him.

But the spirit of man is not more swayed by the tones of the human voice than it is by other instruments of music. Nor is the soul of man more led by music than is the spirit of other animals. Through the ears all animated matter is controlled :

"For do but note the wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music strike their ears,
You shall behold them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze,
By the sweet power of music."

Not only are men and brutes charmed by music, but fable gives ears to trees and rocks, and even the ocean wakes from its repose under the muttering thunder, and its habitants acknowledge the power of its own musicians.

"A mermaid sitting on a dolphin's back,
Uttered such dulcet and harmonious strains,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music."

Some of these lines floated through the mind of Sterling as he lay in a sort of half slumber. He thought of the Syrens and their dangerous music; how Parthenope and her sisters lured the ships that

sailed by their coasts to destruction; how that, in the deep, deep sea they fingered instruments as accompaniments to their voices, to make their music more murderous; how, that none ever escaped them except Ulysses and Orpheus—the latter out-doing them by playing on his harp as he passed their coasts, and singing the praises of the gods. He thought of Arion and his enemies; how that, when he was cast into the sea, with his harp in hand, he was received on the back of a dolphin, which had been drawn to the ship by the sweet power of his music, and carried safely to Tenedos:

"He, on its crouching back, sat all at ease,
With harp in hand, *by which he calmed the seas.*"

Now, Sterling was not aware of the immediate cause of these dreamy reminiscences: it was the clear tones of his fair friend in the ladies' cabin, who with sublime courage, was singing that sweet song:

"O Pilot, 'tis a stormy night,
There's danger on the deep!"

Indistinctly but certainly these lines ran through his ear. Removing the blanket from his head, and lifting himself up, he listened: sweet and sonorous the words swept by him:

"Fear not, but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou may'st be!"

As one almost frenzied he sprang from his berth and leaned his ear close to the partition that divided the cabins. The voice of the singer had ceased.

"Sing on, sister," said one, "sing on, I am not afraid when you sing." This was the voice of the

younger sister. "Sing, *please* sing." Then again arose those sweet tones, clear and distinct above the howlings of the storm, and the groanings of the engine.

At the beck of Sterling, Senator Burton approached to listen. "That's glorious," exclaimed Burton; — "It would save any ship from sinking. The stars will come out to hear *that*! The sea is not so heavy as it was an hour ago" — and the senator went on deck, greatly relieved.

The lamp was burning dimly: most of the passengers were asleep. Sterling, gathering up his cloak and pillow, made a pallet on the floor, next to the ladies' apartment, and flung himself down upon it. Placing his ear near the partition, he listened to that rich voice which had so soothing an effect upon his spirits. The song was interrupted occasionally by low and earnest conversation between the sisters, the one struggling with terror, the other giving assurances of safety and pleading resignation like an angel.

As the storm began to subside the voices were hushed, and Sterling fell into a profound slumber, from which he was awakened by his friend the senator, who pulled him by the boot and told him that it was daylight, and a bright, beautiful morning.

They went upon deck. The stars were going out; the moon was mid-heaven, very visible — very white. There was no cloud in the sky, no mist on the breeze, no foam on the billows. The sea was

almost as smooth as a river. It seemed that a bar of silver ran along the eastern horizon, growing wider as you gazed, gathering a little yellow on its edges, fringing and tasseling the blue curtains of the sky. The sun was coming, and never with more gorgeous trappings. Sterling was watching for the first rim of his golden crown. Behold, the monarch of light lifts his head, inch by inch, out of the waters, and his beamy eyes embrace the great expanse of ocean as if in search of the remains of the night's disasters.

"Did you ever see anything so grand?"

"Never," replied Sterling, and looking around, he saw the beautiful speaker standing by his side. It was Beatrice, (for that was the name of Mrs. Curtis.) "It is enough to make one a poet," she exclaimed.

"I had a poem in my mind, at the moment," said Sterling.

"Bad news — bad news," said our friend, Mr. Houron, the *broker*, as he approached Sterling and Beatrice. "The captain says that we were blown fifty miles south last night."

Sterling was not annoyed at this. Another day at sea, with the prospect of fine weather and the glorious certainty of having *her* company, was to him full of charming anticipations.

But the events of this day need scarcely be recorded. It was a calm, soft, rosy November day, on a quiet sea with a joyous company. Sterling lingered in the presence of Beatrice, all the day long, in the cabin and on deck — not conversing much,

but absorbed in a wild reverie, as delightful as it was mysterious;—for this charming woman poured into his, the light of her glorious eyes as lavishly as if their rays were inexhaustible.

Whenever she moved his frame trembled: when she departed from him, he was drawn after her, as by some magnetic influence. For once in his life he was graceful in all his movements, so completely was he under her control. The worshiper of beauty may himself grow beautiful,—as the eyes of a star-gazer will become soft and languishing from habit.

Remembering the wound which Beatrice had received on the occasion of the upsetting of the coach, and the singular incident of finding the lock of hair in his mouth, fastened around his tooth, he had been watching her face for the scar, and he observed a slight gash on her left temple covered by a black patch. He was convinced that his own happy tooth had made the gash. But he had not dared to say any thing to Beatrice about it. He had put the curl away very carefully; it was certainly her own—some dozen strands, long and short, broken and irregular; very dark auburn, not silky but heavy, not coarse but,—indescribable. His tooth was still sore from the effects of the wrench; but he consoled himself for this, by the bewildering reflection, that he had kissed her! What if it was by accident?

Beatrice was standing alone, on the deck of the steamer, gazing on the first faint glimmerings of the

evening star, when Sterling, approaching her, looked intently in the direction of the wound.

"What are you gazing at?" she enquired.

"Not the star, but the patch," he replied.

Placing her hand on the wound, she exclaimed, "Oh, that dreadful stage!"

By this time Sterling had unfolded the paper that contained the lock of hair, and showing it, asked if it would pass for her's?

"Yes, but how did you come by it?"

"I bit it off!"

"Ah! well, that is odd enough;—but when?"

"It was my good fortune to be in the lower corner of the coach. When the accident happened, you were pitched head foremost upon me;—and when the scrambling was over I found this curl in my mouth; so I have but little doubt that my tooth cut that —"

"O! Hydrophobia," she exclaimed. "But what are you going to do with it?"

"Keep it, of course."

"Not without an equivalent, certainly," said Beatrice, and she merrily exhibited a shining pair of small scissors, which she gallantly flourished, in the region of his left ear, commanding him to hold still,—when—snap fell the fatal blades together, and the exulting girl lifted up to the eyes of our astonished but delighted hero, a lock of his own hair.

"Grey! grey," she exclaimed:—"who would have thought it, for so young a gentleman?"

She had clipped the lock in the vicinity of an old wound in his head, on the edges of which a few grey hairs had prematurely appeared. At the sight of his hair in its dissevered condition, Sterling lamented, by repeating:

"What time would spare, from steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate;
Steel could the labor of the gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial towers of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! my hair should feel
The conqu'ring force of unresisted steel?"

CHAPTER V.

Our Wall Street friend, Mr. Huron, the broker, when he learned that Sterling was a member of congress, became very polite to him. He lost no opportunity to offer the most graceful civilities. Recently from New Orleans, he was well supplied with genuine Havana segars, and he soon found that Sterling had a keen relish for their delicious flavour.

"I have a scheme," said he, one day to Sterling, as he sat in the smoking car. "I have a scheme which will be brought before congress at its next session, and if carried out, it will redound more to the credit and advantage of the commerce of the

United States, than any act of legislation which has been had for twenty years."

"Ah," said Sterling. "What is it?"

"You shall hear — and as you are a young member, you might make your debut on a new subject. The scheme is large, and on a grand scale. The fact is, sir, our country is growing with such rapidity, that small matters are hardly worth the attention of congress. We propose to establish a *line of mail steamers from —, via — to the —, to connect with the proposed —, from thence to —.*"

"What is your plan?"

"We propose to build our own ships, to make monthly trips, all at our own expense, and to carry the mails for the government at forty thousand dollars the round trip. If we can secure the contract for carrying the mails, we will be ready to begin in a month, for our company has several fine steamers that could be put on the line immediately."

"I know so little about the commercial relations of the country, and especially about the —," said Sterling, "that I cannot say whether I could approve of your scheme or not. But I will be very happy to examine the subject, with such facts as you may furnish me. I feel liberally inclined towards every enterprise that promises either advantage or honor to the country; and I am not insensible to the fact that our merchant ships have added much to our national character."

"That's the true spirit, my dear sir — that's the

true spirit. The nations of the earth are all astonished at the perfection of our models, and the great superiority of our ships. This admitted superiority of American ships led to the establishment of our company — a company which promises to elevate the character of American commerce to a height never before attained to by any nation in the history of the world."

"What is the name and character of your company?"

"The — Ocean Steamship Navigation Company. It is a joint stock company, with a capital of ten millions. We have now six first class vessels afloat, and several mammoth ships on stocks."

"With such a capital," said Sterling, "and true American energy, you ought to be able to do without the aid of the government."

"So we can, in the ordinary channels of commerce. We can keep even pace with similar companies of other nations. But England gives governmental encouragement to her merchant ships, and thus she will in the end overtake us, and surpass us. It cannot be denied that English ships, ship builders and seamen, as a general thing, are equal to ours. The contest for superiority between equals, must ever be carried on with alternate success; and hence, a little extra encouragement on either side must turn the scale. The only patronage of the government we expect, can be extended to our line in a perfectly constitutional and legitimate way, i. e. the contract for the transportation of the mails.

For this she may be to a great extent refunded out of the postage money on all mail matter. Thus in the end, she loses nothing, and at the same time, by her patronage and countenance, gives such facilities and encouragement to us, as will enable us, beyond all question, to carry off the palm of excellence.

"Well," said Sterling, "furnish all your facts and statistics. I will examine; and if it is right, I will advocate it."

"Allow me to say, General Sterling, without being intrusive — for I am many years your senior in age as well as in observation — the great error that young politicians commit when they get into high position, is to stick to the old thread-bare topics of politics, which they have been always familiar with through the newspapers and stump-orators; such as tariffs, banks, internal improvements; — the mere names and designations of parties, and the strategies of partizanism. A rising man should sieze something fresh and new. He who tarries amid old topics, and contents himself with rehearsing thrice told speeches, will soon find himself in the rear of his more active competitors.

' Time hath a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion :
Those scraps are good deeds *past*, which are devoured
As fast as they are made, — forgot as soon
As done: Perseverance
Keeps honor bright. To *have done*, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take instant way,



For honor travels in a strait so narrow,
 Where one but goes abreast. Keep then the path,
 For emulation hath a thousand sons
 That one by one pursue: if you give way,
 Or hedge aside from the direct forth-right,
 Like to an entered tide, they all rush by
 And leave you hindmost.
 Or, like a gallant horse, fallen in first rank,
 Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
 O'errun and trampled on.'

After this fine speech, Mr. Huron, the broker, tendered Sterling another delicious segar, and arising, stretched his suspenders, thumbed the pockets of his pants, and loitered off to the far end of the car, where we must now leave him, looking over the money articles of the New York Herald.

CHAPTER VI.

Sterling and Beatrice were together in the cars again. She complained of cold feet. Sterling was near enough to hear. He offered his huge green blanket, in which he had been enveloped during the morning. Stooping at her feet, he wrapped them up. In winding the blanket about them, he touched her ankle, and without intending, lapped the thrilling embodiment with his thumb and finger! Electricity traveled up his arm, and, spreading its fires over his body, kindled all his veins!

As he returned to his seat, he thought that her

large eyes followed him with a little more of the lingering expression than usual. She was spelling her thanks with syllables of smiles;—but so subdued, so quiet, so calm was the utterance that he could make nothing of it. And yet, it gave life to the imp of his heart;—*HOPE*.

Behold, in her weariness, she leans her head upon her sister's shoulder. Her loosened hair falls in some confusion, along her cheek and ear. A stray curl creeps into her bosom, stealing its way timidly through a small opening left in her jacket by a single unfaithful button, as if taking advantage of her closed eyes to visit that sweet sanctuary.

A fly lit upon her forehead, and, buzzing about mingled its villainous wings with her long eye lashes, tickling her and causing her to shake her head. Lifting her hand she strikes at the mischevious insect;—but Sterling had brushed it away with a simultaneous movement—his hand meeting hers in the contrary dash, and lingering an instant with her fingers.

* * * *

True happiness is felt only and cannot be described.

The heart is too jealous of its treasures to let the world know anything about them.

Rosy lips, joyous hearts, cosy chambers, bounding desires, exhilarating gratifications, dawning hopes, indefinite longings, budding promises, opening realities, extatic indulgencies, full satieties;—the dreamy uneasiness of unalloyed pleasures, and all

of Elysium, imaginative and real, may be sung and told and painted. But true happiness speaks to but one ear;—it is syllabled only by those voiceless tongues whose throats are veins, and whose audible phrases, trembling along the inartificial aisles of existence, whisper to the heart:

"She loves me."

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

The elephant ought to be seen, both by men and women;—and the sooner the better. Let the animal be as large as possible, too, for the eyes will be the more completely gratified, as the pleasure of a surprise depends much upon the magnitude of the object of admiration.

Sterling had reached the Federal City. The resolution to see everything was uppermost in his mind. His eyes fairly protruded with curiosity and expanded with anticipated delights. Everything was new to him. His imagination had been busy in figuring out the scenes which awaited him in Washington. He had been dreaming of its great men; its broad avenues; its lofty buildings; its public grounds; the Capitol with its monstrous dome; the president and his secretaries, those wonderful creatures who make up the cabinet, and whose supposed sagacity inspires the young American with so much

veneration. He had heard of the balls, assemblies and levees of the Federal City;—its theatres and shows; its gamblers and pickpockets; its loafers and hack-drivers; its pimps, pads and pensioners:—and “now, now,” he exclaimed, as he stepped upon the floor of Gadsby’s Hotel, “we are here!”

“Yes,” replied Burton, “we are here, and first, a good supper, and then a frolic.”

“A bath and a barber, before supper,” said Sterling, “are indispensables.”

The two friends separated for awhile,—Burton standing in the bar-room, surrounded by dozens of his acquaintance who were greeting him upon his return;—and Sterling, in a bath room,—where we will leave him, for the present, wallowing in a long tin tub; the fatigues of travel forgetting themselves in the sparkling embraces of a soothing element; while the sweet langour of repose steals over his relaxing body — O how gently!

Burton was an old senator. Having been many years in Washington, he knew everybody and everybody knew him. Gifted above most men with the graces of elocution, he had long been distinguished as a statesman; social and convivial amongst the people, he was an universal favorite; wherever he went applause followed, in all imaginable shapes:—courtesies from the exalted; homage from the dependent, spontaneous adulation from the masses. He had a word for the poorest, a smile for the proudest, and a nod of recognition for the humblest. Timidity grew bold under his amiable

cordiality, and nobody was afraid to jest with him. But this lack of austerity, in Burton, had been fatal to him in many respects. Adulation had allied him to dissolute companions; conviviality had thrown him into the arms of temptation, and pleasures had usurped in his mind the throne of ambition.

He was the great king-key-keeper of all the secret luxuries of the city. And in his indulgences he was as elegant as a Persian and as voluptuous as a Turk.

Such is the man under whose protection the young congressman had placed himself! What a guide! yet he would discourse like an angel upon the beauty of morals, the necessity of temperance, the danger of indulgences, and the folly of excesses. The triumphs of Labor, Patience and Toil for the honors of ambition, formed the staple of his eloquent conversation. To hear him, was to be convinced, that nothing was so sweet as glory, so desirable as renown.

He was familiar with all literature. In his youth he had been a student; and in his busy manhood, while he had found it necessary to toil for preëminence and position, he had so vigorously applied his learning, as occasions of display offered, that the re-stamping of it on his memory had given a deep tinge of philosophy to his thoughts; and all his conclusions appeared as the bright results of intuitive sagacity. He was only not a pedant because he was a genius: for the apt quotation so harmonized in his sentences and illustrated his meaning, that his reflections

seemed to be original, and his mosaic phrases deserved for their elegance to be considered his own.

Sterling believed that the world was not mistaken in its opinion, that Burton was the master spirit of the age; and hence the gratification he felt in the interest which the illustrious senator seemed to take in his political advent.

The libation over, the linen changed, the hair perfumed, and the appetite sated; our hero was ready for an adventure; and walking up to the senator, he remarked, in a low tone, as he familiarly plucked a cigar from his friend's side pocket. "Now, sir Mentor, I am at your service."

CHAPTER II.

They sauntered into the street,—the famous Pennsylvania avenue—whose uncounted acres were paved with brick-bats heterogeneously mingled with various shaped pebbles—many of them sharp pointed—with now and then a slab path crossing from north to south—and from corner to corner. Gas-lights, just then introduced, hung out their white and luminous torches on the north side of the avenue, while the south side seemed to be left in total darkness, save here and there, at some favored corner, a lamp gleamed over the imposing word—"RESTAURANT."

Burton called a carriage, and the friends were

wheeled off several squares, to a large building, brilliantly lighted, through the windows of which you could see the swift mingling of men and women in the whirling dance. Music broke upon the ear, as the friends approached, and the frequent bursts of loud and long laughter, with an occasional shout and a half uttered scream, plainly indicated that the company within was not of the most refined or polished sort.

"You are getting me into a scrape, senator."

"Well," replied Burton, "you have a very good way of getting out of scrapes"—and he flung open the door without ceremony.

There was an old mulatto hag standing in the little drawing room. She was alone, with her eyes fixed upon the wall, as if watching the imaginary movements of the Ellslers and Celestes, which, in plaster statuary, adorned the corners of this chaste apartment. As she turned suddenly from her contemplations, she lifted up her arms and almost shouted—"oh! moss Judge!" then suppressing her ejaculation into a mechanical whisper, she said "Miss Maggy go crazy to see you:—" and she darted out of the room to convey to her mistress the intelligence that Judge Burton had arrived.

In a few minutes could be heard, descending the stair, footsteps alternately light and heavy,—a sort of cat and dog tramp, as if one was running after the other, while something scraped against the banisters like laths rattling in a cart. This rustling jingle was caused by the thick skirt of a

fashionable dress, made of a heavy material called clap-board silk, and which usually heralded the wearer some minutes in advance. Then something in the shape of an old fashioned Georgia round cotton bale, with all the ropes burst except at one end, entered the room, and reeled joyfully towards the senator, who rose to meet it. Sterling saw that this was a woman, for it had arms, a very glib tongue, and a tolerably graceful locomotion considering that one of its legs was several inches shorter than the other, and that the left hand had to be pressed upon the left knee in order to force the foot to the floor. This female Leviathan, as she opened her ponderous jaws, seemed threatening to swallow the senator — who by the way was not a large man. She had not observed Sterling as she entered the room, — and putting her arms around Burton, she fondled over him with intense delight. A sort of exuberant foam escaped from the coral cavern which yawned about him, that would have suffocated any other man, but he bore it like a soldier, and dissembled his disgust with a skill that no art can teach, — a skill which attends the man of the world only, as a sort of good angel, concealing all his schemes with inexplicable disguises; making the heart invisible, the face inscrutable, the pulse inaudible.

Burton soon contrived to let the lady know that Sterling was present, and this brought the caressing to a close. Unrestrained delight gave way to

dignified reserve; and for a short time, there was rather an awkward pause.

Now, Miss Margaret Dobbins, commonly called "Maggie," was not easily disconcerted. But Burton was a senator, and Sterling had been introduced as a new member. She knew the power and force of delicacy, especially on young minds; and she saw at a glance, that Sterling was a new man, as well as something of a novice. The fellow's face was considerably rosy at this moment, whether from modesty or disgust it is not necessary to know. That he presented a very gawky figure is certain, for the senator apologised to Maggie by saying, "My young friend is in Washington for the first time, and came to pay you a hasty visit. Who are here of my old friends?"

"Every body; they are just now dancing. Would General Sterling have no objection to take a round in the saloon?"

Sterling excused himself, on the score of fatigue, and remarked that "he would sit, while she and his friend reconnoitered in the ball room." The senator declined also. So the promenading was abandoned, and Burton told Maggie to send for the girls.

"Certainly;" and she rang for a servant.

"Tell Jane and Ellen to come down; their old friend from —, is here. That'll bring 'em, Judge; the girls were talking of you no longer than this morning. You must know, General Sterling, that the judge is a great favorite here."

Maggie Dobbins was scrupulously exact in her

application of names and titles. No gentleman without a title could visit her house. She shrunk with sublime pity from the plain *mister*. To say "mister," to her, was as much as to say, nobody, or, no *great shakes*. Her friends were governors, judges, generals, colonels, majors or captains, with now and then a doctor; for she held that there was a dignity in titles which added greatly to the charms as well as to the courtesies of life. She had, of her own authority, on several occasions brevetted many an untitled youth with the pompous appellation of colonel;—for Maggie had had her favorites. There had been a time when she had been courted for her charms. In her youth, beautiful in form and face, she had led the flaunting life of a belle courtesan: not so learned, philosophical or elegant as the charmer of Pericles, but as select in her acquaintance and as chary of her favors. In the very hey-day of life, however, when smiles and fortune waited upon her, she fell from the top of the stair to the bottom, and so mangled herself that she became a cripple for life. But she grew fat on her misfortune, and from a sylph, she had become a leviathan. Burton had been one of her earliest friends: he had not deserted, but had so aided her with his purse and countenance that she had been enabled to establish a first class house of gaiety in the city. She was now nearly fifty years of age; had actually grown rich within a few years; and her equipage was distinguishable on the avenue by its magnificence.

But we must turn our attention to the ladies to whom Sterling was to be introduced. Jane Miller came in advance. She was not positively charming at first sight, but probably would grow upon acquaintance, as she was something of a belle; very young, very gay and agreeable, with a constrained backwardness which a skillful man could easily detect as lascivious timidity. She was by no means familiar—rather the contrary; and passed herself upon Sterling as decidedly modest;—drew him gently into conversation, in which he even attempted a display. The girl had been well educated intellectually, and she exhibited a freshness of thought and reading that surprised Sterling. So they drew off into a corner, and rattled away, at a great rate, until Miss Ellen Simkins rushed in, puffing and blowing. "I declare," she exclaimed, "I could hardly get rid of that brute; he has danced me nearly to death, and has pinched my arm into blisters—only look"—and she lifted the lace sleeve to exhibit the marks.

Miss Simkins was presented to General Sterling, after her salute with the Senator, and sat down, all covered with blushes. Seeing that Sterling was very much engaged with Jane, she pouted a little, and made an excuse to retire, to which Sterling objected, as he rose and asked her to join them in the corner. She complied with his request.

Here, now, we have two rivals, the one depending on her tongue, the other on her beauty; (for Ellen was, in the bodily sense, a beautiful woman) the

one all flesh, the other relieved by intelligence; the one all fire and tow, the other all gentleness and smiles. The struggle was not long. Sterling was not in the humor for such a character as Ellen. He knew that her blushes came from dancing, her vivacity from wine. He could see devils in her eye, faithlessness on her brow, and deception in her smiles. The nectar of her lip, if nectar it could be called, was a marketable commodity; and her curls, though beautiful, were as snaky as Medusa's.

Fairly outdone by the glibber tongue of her rival, Ellen, still looking at her pinched arm, exclaimed, almost crying — "I declare that I'll go right straight and give him a lick that he will not soon forget;" and she arose and flaunted out of the room, in something of a rage, Senator Burton following, and Maggie Dobbins, also, as she really apprehended a row.

Sterling was alone with Jane. There was a pause in their conversation. Extreme uneasiness oppressed him. His conscience was stirred by sombre apprehensions that swung through his imagination. The blue eyes of Beatrice floated before him, and her person seemed to be visibly present, with pale astonishment, in her mortified and incredulous countenance. The bright chandelier with its blazing torches took nothing from the heavy gloom that enveloped everything in the room. He strode across the chamber, as in a fit of abstraction, and would have gathered his hat, but for the absence of Burton. He saw a guitar leaning against an ottoman in the corner; — picking it up, he asked Jane

if she could play?" "No," she replied, "but we have a little seraph here who can; — and if you wish I will bring her."

"Do," — replied Sterling, and Jane left the room for a moment.

There was a picture on the wall, partly covered with thick gauze. Sterling removed the covering and exclaimed: "shocking!"

Jane returned, leading with her a timid, frail melancholy girl, a mere child ten or twelve years of age, with heavy but luxuriant curls, yellow as gold. Her eyes were large, black, and seemed to flash. She was tremulously nervous. Her arms were thin and bony, and the sinews and veins of her neck were as visible as if they had no flesh about them. She was dressed as if for a show, with a gaudy little vest, a broad skirt barely long enough to cover her knees, and with fancy red top boots, very like a boy's. Around her neck was a small gold chain, to which was attached a locket, which she held fast in her left hand.

Going up to Sterling, as if she knew that she had been brought to see him, she leaned upon his knee and looking into his face, said to him as she showed him the locket — "*Here* is my father and mother — they are both dead!"

The faces were beautiful ivory miniatures; the father in a military coat — with a wild, youthful face, — the mother, the very picture of loveliness. "This is all I've got in the world," said she, "except

my mother's guitar, and my little box of things—and my father's letters."

Jane, for some purpose or other had left the room. Sterling ran his fingers through the child's curls; gazed at her through the gathering mist of his generous eyes; and lifting her upon his knee, said to her: "what was your father's name?"

"Carey" she replied, "he killed a man and they put him in jail."

Jane had returned. She picked up the guitar and brought it to Sterling, saying: "O fie! Lily you ought not to sit in a gentleman's lap."

"I am sure you sit in gentlemen's laps," she replied, "and this is a good man, I know he is."

"And your name is Lily, is it?"

"Yes, sir; Lily Carey. I can sing for you if you wish. I never sing but one song: my mother wrote it for me.

"Well, let's hear it, my jewel!"

Sitting on a low stool, and putting the ribbon over her shoulder, she touched the instrument with considerable skill, for one so young, and played an accompaniment, looking up to Sterling for encouragement.

"Go on Lily; now for the song."

No father, no mother, to pity;
No brother to stand by my side;
No solace, except my own ditty;
No safety, but in my own pride.

I once had a father to pet me;
A mother to call me her own;
A brother to tease and to fret me;
But now I'm alone! — all alone!
But now I'm alone! — all alone!

My soul! shall I ever surrender?
My heart! be as firm as stone;
The ghost of the past my defender,
I'll be safe, tho' alone! — all alone!
I'll be safe, tho' alone! — all alone!

As she closed the song the music glided into a waltz, and the little fairy springing to her feet floated around the room, twanging her guitar with such infinite grace, that Sterling was enraptured.

CHAPTER III.

While these scenes were passing in the drawing room, there was one of quite a different nature being enacted in the dancing saloon. Ellen Simkins, sore of her pinched arm, and somewhat excited with wine, had made a rude and furious attack upon Colonel Blunderbuss, the unfortunate individual who had undesignedly offended her. Her wrath, at first very slight, had been aggravated by the earnest efforts of Maggie and Burton to restrain her. In attempting to do this, they had made her absolutely furious. With the bounding rage of a tigress she flew through the crowd of happy

dancers, until she reached Blunderbuss, when she slapped him in the face with a blow that resounded throughout the hall above the music! "Take that!" she screamed: "and that! and that! and that!" as she repeated the blows with earnest and astounding rapidity! Blunderbuss reeled before the furious girl, and staggered back, as if more bewildered by the incident than hurt by the blows. In an instant, his face blazed with rage! Seizing the girl by the hair, he held her off at arm's length, while he made her cheek ring with his open hand! Nobody interfered. Ellen got her right hand well fastened in his cravat, which she twisted with dexterous effect; the enraged colonel found himself nearly suffocated. He broke her hold on his cravat; but at that unlucky instant, she pulled a double pointed hair-pin from her head, and making a desperate random blow at his face, ran the little weapon through the lower part of his nose, absolutely pinning his nostrils together! The pin remained dangling about his mouth!

By this time the police had entered, and the belligerents were hastily and roughly dragged towards the door. The uproar became terrific, and the noise in the saloon had reached the ears of Sterling, just as his little angel had ceased her bewitching waltz.

Fearing that his friend Burton might be in difficulty, Sterling sprang along the stair which led to the saloon. He heard the smashing of chandeliers, and the crashing of chairs, amid the oaths of men

and the screams of women. The lights were nearly all extinguished. The women were intent on rescuing Ellen from the police. Blunderbuss was in a rage at the indignity offered to his person—he having been taken prisoner! "I am a member of congress," he exclaimed. "You have no right to interfere with me: release me, instantly."

This brought on a more quiet colloquy. "Here is Senator Burton," said Blunderbuss, "I refer you to him. I am not to blame for this disgraceful scene."

"We will do whatever Senator Burton advises," said the chief of police.

The matter was adjusted. The police were quieted; Blunderbuss and Ellen were released, and the tumult subsided.

As the company was dispersing, Blunderbuss mounted a chair and exclaimed, "Pause, gentlemen and ladies—fellow countrymen! for we are all of one common country; and the greatest country on the face of the inhabitable universal world;—pause I entreat you; for never shall it be whispered by the pestiferous breath of calumny, that I, the honorable representative of fifteen thousand freemen of the 49th district of the immortal state of——— the mother of territories—territories whose expanding arms embrace the cloud-capped mountains of the western horizon and the sparkling waters of the turbid Mississippi as it rolls its mighty waves towards the bottomless Ocean, and the snow covered regions of the fiery Andes: never shall it be whispered,—and *show me* the man that would *d-a-r-e* to whisper

such a thing ! — *I* was not born in a cane-brake to be *skeered by a bar* ! — no gentlemen — never shall it be whispered that Polydorous Blunderbuss ever left any place, be it hall, theatre, or ball-room, with a cloud of obliquitous obliquy resting upon the fair and cloudless eskutching of his name ! Who dares to disperse my honor ? My fame is dear to me, gentlemen ! This exculpation is made to vindicate my fame ! As dear as are the gay and joyous pleasures of this fleeting and transitory life ; as dear as are the bewitching smiles of beauty, the gentleness of women — and, in my “soul’s good estimation,” as Pope says — “prized above all price” — as dear as all these things are ; yet, to *me*, *fame*, fame is the great winding sheet-anchor of my idolatry. ‘Who steals that,’ as Shakespear says ‘deprives me of my all,’ and puts into *his* pocket a load that *he* will find much too heavy for *him* to tote.” Here the colonel paused, nearly out of breath ; for the crowd had received these bursts of eloquence with immense applause ; and Senator Burton, as he stood by, with his hands in his pockets and a quid of tobacco in his mouth, was so moved by this sublime appeal, that his smiling face was the very mirror of approving admiration. Looking steadfastly at the senator, Blunderbuss continued, “Here is my honorable friend. He knows the glory of fame. *He* has sounded, like Cromwell, ‘*all the shoals and shallows of Syilly and Charibdis*,’ — and ‘plucked the bubble reputation even from danger’s precipitating descents,’ — as Tom Moore says. *He* knows that it is

not in the power of human eloquence on this mundane globe of ours, to depict adequately adequate, the true beauty of personal fame, — or the shining glory of public character, in this our beloved Republic.”

Burton was fairly taken down by this appeal. Tremendous shouts followed the closing period ; — shouts that would have drowned the roar of Sylla and Charibdis, to which the impassioned orator had so aptly and learnedly referred.

Taking breath and wiping his nose, from which a little blood was still issuing, he proceeded : “Standing as I do, then, in your presence humbled and humiliated by the humiliating retrospect that I am stigmatised and stained in reputation by the foul stigma of a blow, or, more properly speaking, a *spank* ! Yes, my countrymen ! a spank from the open hand of a woman ! [Sensation]. I understand you, my friends. I can not be mistaken in what I see shining in your faces. You proclaim my innocence by your smiles. [Prolonged cheers]. But I have been led away on this occasion by the resistless and impetuous torrent of my own feelings. And who, let me ask, my indulgent hearers, who can, at all times, control his feelings ? Wy, Fellow Countrymen, from the days of Cæsar to Cyclops, from Cyclops to Pollymephius, the base one-eyed monster that stold fire from Heaven, all history elusterates the astounding physiological fact, that man, as man, commensurate and anonymous with the whole anemil creation,

From Greenland's icy mountains to
Indiana's shore :

as the harmonious poet brilliantly says,—is under the control of his feelings. Yea, sirs; man is the toy of circumstances, the poppet, the Punch and Judy of fate,—if you permit me to speak figuratively—we are emphatically chained to the juginotical wheels of unmitigated accidents! What a small thing is a circumstance! How diminutive in extent! yet how impotent in power! Who knows, if he treads upon a pebble, but that it may stick poison in his heel, where the fellow shot Achilles? Who knows, if he stumps his toe agin a brick, but that it might give him a *stone* bruise that'll take him to his grave? Who knows that, if he slips down on Pennsylvania avenue, but that it may break his thigh! as it did old P—— K——? Who knows but that the air he breathes is super-sur-charged with hydraulick narcotics and circumambient atmospherics that'll swell his in'ards, and bust him clean open? [Vociferous cheers.] And are not these remarks perfectly irrevelent to my present situation? But for the circumstance of my coming to this ball, and of being brutally attacted by that yonder—— But no, my friends, [bridling up with dignity,] I didn't quite say it! [much laughter.] But I must bring these dissolutary remarks to an end. Let me now beg of you, for good sense suggests it, to say nothing about this affair. I'll do the genteel thing. It's not far to Brown's. Come, I'll treat!"

"Good—good!" exclaimed the chief of police—

and the crowd followed the Colonel, as he left the saloon, all in the best spirits; and many of them believing that Blunderbuss was evidently a very great man.

CHAPTER IV.

Lily Carey had followed Sterling to the saloon. She had bounded along with him up the stair, clinging to his elbow and to the skirt of his coat, but so lightly, and lifting her airy form so gently and gracefully as she went, that he had not felt her. The enormous eyes in her thin pale face presented a picture of wild amazement, not of terror, for she was not of a nature to be terrified. Her wafer lip was white and tremulous. She had grasped with both hands Sterling's arm; not attempting in any way to attract his notice, but seeming to cling to him instinctively.

It was not until Sterling saw that Burton was not in difficulty that he observed the little fairy by his side. Her fingers were locked so closely together that she could swing herself along by his side as he walked.

"You were not frightened, were you?" she said.

"Yes, my little hero, I was. Were you?"

"No, indeed, I've seen the like before. O this is an awful place. I want to get away; won't you take me?" —She relinquished her hold upon his

elbow and clasped him around the waist as she hid her face on his vest.

At this moment they were joined by Burton. When they returned to the drawing room, Maggie Dobbins was all of a foam of excitement. "The like has never occurred here before, judge. I am so mortified."

"Oh, that is no matter," said Burton. "These things will happen. Nobody hurt, except Colonel Blunderbuss."

"Are such characters common in Congress?" inquired Sterling.

"No; Blunderbuss is about our hardest case."

"How do such fellows get here?"

"Party, sir, party," replied Burton. "Political parties will support any sort of a character, in a pinch; and sometimes, the greater the knave the more zealous the support. You remember what Chesterfield says: 'a strong party is the same thing to a knave that a strong island in the West Indies is to a pirate, a place of safety to lay up all he has stolen.' Blunderbuss comes from a district, the masses of which are illiterate. With them he is said to be invincible. So the polite and intelligent, in consideration of his strength with the vulgar, take him with all his blotches for the sake of party, fearing that if they attempt to change their man they will lose their political power. You will meet many men in Congress, no whit superior to Blunderbuss; but most of them are genteel, and have the discretion to be silent. He believes that he is really eloquent;

and is so silly as to make an exhibit of himself as an orator every day; especially when the galleries chance to be crowded with ladies."

Such is the account that Burton gave of Blunderbuss,—a character which the reader will again have to encounter in this history.

Sterling proposed to leave. Burton was ready. Their hats were in their hands. Lily Carey, sitting on a cricket, with her arms thrown across her breast, looked very sadly but wistfully at Sterling. "I am in love with my little darling, here," said he, approaching her. She sprang up nervously to meet him, her eyes shooting forth streams of delight.

Sterling lifted her on his knee, and whispered to her: "I will watch for you in the market, to-morrow morning at sun-rise!"

She answered nothing to this. Her arms fell upon her lap. Her frame quivered all over as if convulsed. She glanced her blazing eyes fearfully and timidly towards Maggie. For the first time during the night, from the rush of blood to her face, its paleness was driven away; while the blush that came, holding a light in its rosy fingers, revealed to Sterling a countenance of surpassing beauty.

CHAPTER V.

Let us contemplate the little orphan. When Sterling and Burton left the place, Lily retired to her closet. She opened her little box of trinkets and took them out, and looked at each of them for the

thousandth time. Amongst these sacred relics were some old pieces of jewelry, rings and seals of her parents; the golden head of a walking cane upon which her father's name was engraved; a small side poniard, with a red scabbard; a pair of ear-drops made of her father's hair; a heap of old guitar strings, broken and bound up together, and a package of old letters carefully tied with a blue ribbon. She intended to carry these things with her; for she felt that Sterling was going to provide for her in some way or other. She concealed every thing in her under clothes, not forgetting her locket. She despaired of taking her guitar; and yet she could not bear to part with it. Its strings, its tones, its keys and screws; its broken edges from which the inlaid pieces of pearl had one by one dropped, leaving it worn and shattered—all these things so attached her heart to the instrument, that she worried her feverish brain all the night long, for a scheme by which to save it: but in vain—she could think of nothing.

She contrived to keep her taper burning. Not a wink did the child sleep during the night. The secret joys that pervaded her heart, kept her mind in a continuous tumult. She did not wish to sleep. She longed only to see the broad eyes of day peeping through the windows; for she apprehended no difficulty in getting off, as Maggie frequently sent her to market. At length the slow-pacing morning came. Lily was dressed for her departure. She had thrust the blind open, to see how near it was

to sun-rise. At that moment, Maggie called, from the adjoining room.

"Lily, — here, honey: run to market, and bring the celery and fowls."

Lily went into Maggie's room for the market money. "O Miss Maggie" — she said — "you know there is a screw broke in my guitar. I could hardly play it last night. It'll only cost a quarter. Let me take it with me to the shop, as I go by, and leave it for a screw."

"Certainly, child," said Mag, — and she gave Lily an extra quarter to pay for it.

Lily looked not into Maggie's eyes. Her intrepid spirit sunk under her present disguises. Several months' residence in this den of pollution had not effaced from this child's mind the beautiful registers of *truth* which had been left there by the early teachings of a devoted mother.

In a twinkling, the child was in the street; her market-basket on one arm, and her guitar on the other. She ran until she came in sight of the market, sometimes looking back as if fearful of pursuit! Her little legs were nearly giving way; her heart was in her throat; her eyes everywhere. As she approached the market, she saw Sterling, standing at the corner, with a great cloak over him, watching for her.

CHAPTER VI.

"Come along, my little jewel," said Sterling. It was but a short walk from the market to Gadsby's Hotel. Few persons were abroad. There was no difficulty in passing from the street to Sterling's apartments. Lily followed him with basket in hand. Not even a servant met them; so that when Sterling reached his room he was convinced that no one in the house had seen Lily come in with him. He locked the door to keep off intruders. Lily's guitar and basket were deposited on the floor. The little innocent fell upon Sterling's neck, utterly exhausted, when a flood of tears came streaming from her eyes, as if her heart was breaking. He did not strive to prevent her weeping. Pressing her to his heart, he kissed her burning forehead, and without speaking, soothed her by the thousand gentle graces and caresses which generosity is so forward to suggest to the good spirits of the earth for the comfort of the distressed.

Sterling, in this affair, had taken no thought for the future. Prompted alone by the resolution to remove an innocent child from the cells of pollution, he thought not of the consequences. At this moment, when the girl lay in his arms, some dim foreboding thoughts of heavy responsibilities flung their misty shadows over his mind. What if she should be

taken sick, in his apartments? what if she should die there? How could he explain the matter; how satisfy a scrutinizing world; how appease the hungry curiosity of the legion news-mongers! These thoughts quickly became apprehensions when Lily began to mumble strange inarticulate sounds. Her eyes, half open, glared with insanity. Her brain was in a delirium, and her body trembled as if wrung by spasms. He called her; she answered not! Laying her on a sofa, he wheeled it near the fire, and applied to her face and head large quantities of cologne. Her lips and neck he bathed with brandy. But this brought no relief. Long sighs escaped her convulsed body; and her lips ponting and compressing themselves by turns, were sometimes drawn into her frothing mouth, so that Sterling with difficulty prevented her from biting them. There was a rap at the door. He made no answer. The rap was repeated! Sterling hastily removed the child into one of the chambers, adjoining his parlor, and opened the outer door. It was a *servant* who came to see if he wished anything.

"Nothing," said Sterling, angrily, slamming the door in the servant's face.

Lily had bitten her tongue in his absence, and blood was running from her mouth. Her hands were clinched in her hair; her head was thrown back, exposing her long, white bony neck. Phlegm and froth were gurgling in her throat. Poor Sterling thought that she was dying! what should he do? He was himself now nearly prostrate; as tre-

mulous as a child! Wild with apprehension, not so much for the life of the frail creature before him, as for his own personal honor, he rang his bell with a desperate jerk, so that a waiter was at his door in a minute.

"Who is the best doctor in town?"

"Dr. Curtis," replied the man.

"Send for him, immediately," said Sterling, handing his card to the servant. "Tell the clerk to write him a note for me — quick!"

Sterling ran to Burton's rooms, which were near to his own, and waking the senator without ceremony, requested him to come to his room.

Burton, seeing something extraordinary in Sterling's face, arose, and throwing on his morning gown, followed.

CHAPTER VII.

In a remote but beautiful part of the city of Washington, on the banks of the Potomac, with the front looking upon the river, stands a small, well constructed cottage, with the surrounding pleasure grounds newly laid out. The absence of antiquity about it is relieved by the appearance of improvement, which is sufficiently indicated by the tools and implements of gardening and of building which lie around in various places. Small rows of the box-tree already begin to edge the walks, and shrubbery

is springing up in every direction, displaying the care and taste of gentle and industrious hands. Latticed summer-houses, octagonal, covered by the remains of annual runners, give a wintry appearance to the yard; and long arbors of young but leafless grape vines stretch through the whole extent of the ample garden. A small unpretending carriage house stands off on the left, and a castle in the air is perched upon its top to receive the pigeons. A winding slope, stone paved, leads to the edge of the river, where is moored with lock and chain a fancifully built skiff, decorated as if for a bride.

Here is comfort without; surely, there must be love and happiness within.

This is the residence of Dr. Curtis. His young and lovely wife had but just returned home last night from a tour to the South. Every thing was brisk and cheerful, almost bustling, this morning. The servants were all unusually gay. The return of a beloved mistress, after a long absence, had filled them with lively joy. They desired not to be interrupted by visitors or by the calls of the doctor's patients: so, when the man came with Sterling's note, there was quite a parley before he could be allowed to deliver his message.

The cook suggested that her "master was n't up yet."

The maid declared that "her missus had just come home, and she knew that moss want going out to-day for nobody."

"But the man's about to die," said the bearer of the note. "He's a member of congress, and as big a bug as any doctor in Washington."

This appeal procured a bearer for the note, and the maid tripped off with it to her mistress.

Beatrice was at her toilet. She was as bright as a bird; and only did not sing for fear of disturbing her husband. She moved about the chamber so lightly that a cricket would have been safe under her tread. A zephyr could not have stirred more gently. She turned the key of her wardrobe as softly as you would dip a pencil into a mug of oil. Her little bureau drawers moved in and out, as if slid upon velvet. There was no rustling of silks; upsetting of wash-bowls, or clinking of pitchers. There was no harsh brushing of tangled curls, but the comb glided so cunningly through her hair, that not even light slumbering thought, in the adjacent chambers of the brain, was awakened by it. Oh! what a glorious thing is a still wife! And now, behold this devoted woman, with a curl in one hand and a comb in the other, leaning over her husband as he sleeps; watching his lips, if they move; counting his long eye-lashes; stooping over him, and mingling her sweet breath with his; pressing her lips to his forehead, with the still caution of God-inspired affection!

There is a rap at her chamber door. She flies to it with her finger on her lip! opening it gently—"hush!"

The maid handed her the note, but spoke not. It was unsealed and she read it.

"Gadsby's—Nov. 20th.

Genl. Sterling, of ——— is very sick, and wishes the services of Dr. Curtis, immediately.

— Clerk."

Beatrice remembered the name. Leaving her chamber a moment, she ordered the Doctor's buggy.

"Hub—hub!" she said "I am sorry to disturb you. Here is a note from my particular friend, the gentleman I told you about last night, our traveling companion." Curtis read the note. "Well he must be attended to for your sake." And he arose.

"Order my buggy, dear."

"I have, already. Shall we have breakfast first? it is now nearly ready!"

"No, I will not be gone over an hour. We will not eat in a hurry."

CHAPTER VIII.

Sterling explained to Burton the secret of this adventure. The senator was astonished! "It is really a delicate affair," he said, "but let us see." And he examined the child as she lay upon the bed.

"I guess it is but an ordinary convulsion brought on by over-excitement. Order a tub of hot water, strip off her shoes and stockings."

Sterling unbuttoned the band of her outer frock. There was much clumsiness about her clothing,

caused by the trinkets she had concealed. Her shoes and stockings were stripped off; her tiny feet, as clean as snow, hung over the edge of the bed and were plunged into the warm water. Towels dampened were applied to her head and neck, and the palms of her hands were rubbed as roughly as the tender skin would allow. In a few minutes the child seemed to be relieved. She opened her bright eyes, and raising herself up, smiled and laughed; cunningly drew her feet under her frock, and sat up in the bed looking like a little Turk.

Sterling was delighted. "You have been very sick, child," said he. "Lie down and be still." "Oh no! I am well, now," she said. "It was only a spell. I was so glad and so happy."

"You must lie down," said Sterling. "I shall be angry." She fell back on a pillow.

"There now, lie very still, you shall get up directly." Burton had left the room, when he saw the child reviving. So that Lily knew not that any one except Sterling had been present.

There was now no use for the physician. Here was another impending trouble. Nothing but the danger of the child could have induced Sterling to impart the secret to any one. The doctor must be met with some plausible excuse!

"If anybody comes, Lily, lie very still. You need not be awake; let your hand and arm lie out just as I have placed them; draw your hair back, and your curls behind your ears; there, that's it, now sleep." Lily's eyes were closed, and she seemed to

be in a profound slumber; when a rap at the door announced the physician.

Sterling opened the door himself. "This is Dr. Curtis?" said Sterling.

"Yes, do I see Gen. Sterling?"

"Yes, sir. You are surprised. It was not for myself, that I wanted your services, but for a child here," said he (pointing to the bed in the chamber,) "who had a convulsion—but who is now happily restored, and seems to be sleeping."

Dr. Curtis glanced at the bed-room, and walked towards the fire, taking the chair which Sterling offered.

"Whether my services are needed or not, sir, I am glad of the opportunity of making your acquaintance. My wife informed me, when your note came this morning, that she had traveled with you for several days, and was indebted to you for many kind attentions!"

Sterling was taken aback by this remark. Beatrice had had but little to do with his thoughts during the events of this morning. He had not even thought of the name: "Curtis — Curtis?" yet he now remembered; — Beatrice had told him that her husband was a practising physician.

"Is it possible!" said Sterling, "I am more than happy to see you."

It is not necessary to prolong this interview. It was short. Sterling was too much surprised to be interesting. He was dull, frigid, blockish, but he found in Dr. Curtis an accomplished man, of fine

personal appearance, handsome, young, intellectual, social and elegant, with the outside indications of that brisk and practical energy, which not only promises but promotes professional success.

Dr. Curtis was impressed unfavorably. He had seen much of the world. It was certainly remarkable that this new acquaintance of his wife should have sent for him, so soon after his arrival in the city, *without a cause*. The thing looked the more singular, as Sterling did not invite him to examine the child. And as he was not the man to let his curiosity get the better of his decorum, he left the room without even again looking towards the chamber where the child lay.

"You will consider me your debtor, Doctor," said Sterling! "and I shall claim you as my physician during my stay in Washington. I can not regret that I have nothing for you to do, however much I may be annoyed at having disturbed you so early."

"These disappointments are always agreeable," responded Curtis, as he took his leave.

Sterling, much dissatisfied with the events of the morning, and particularly with his interview with Curtis, threw himself on a sofa, and plunged into one of his habitual fits of vague, indefinite thought, from which he was aroused by the tremendous voice of the breakfast gong.

"Another subterfuge," said he — "another subterfuge necessary?" The only way to get the child's

breakfast is to order my own to be brought up, so that it may be divided!"

Ringling for a waiter, he ordered to be brought "eggs, toast, coffee, beef-steak, buckwheat and molasses."

"A considerable breakfast for a sick man," thought the waiter, as he went to fetch it.

Lily had actually fallen asleep. Her cheek was flushed; her lips slightly swollen, and her breathing was soft and regular. Her curls hid, she looked very like a boy.

Sterling arranged her chamber with washing utensils, towel and soap, and placed a comb and brush near the mirror, with a bottle of cologne. Leaving the child to sleep, he closed her chamber door, not locking it, only taking the precaution to lock his parlor door, as he went out to breathe the fresh air, and to see the sights of the avenue.

Standing on the porch of Gadsby's Hotel, Sterling's attention was attracted by the dashing along of a buggy, containing two gentlemen, drawn by a fleet black horse. There was a crowd of persons by; all seemed to be excited, by the appearance of the equipage, and some hats were lifted. The gentleman driving was pale and thin in appearance; on the left, was seated a red-faced large man, with a monstrous nose.

"Who is that?" asked Sterling, of one of the bystanders.

"That is the President, taking a drive with Colonel Blunderbuss."

"Ah!" said Sterling, "is Blunderbuss a favorite with the President?"

"Yes—they are great chums."

Sterling walked off, almost shouting, "hurrah for *Silly and Charibdis!*"

CHAPTER XI.

The reader will remember that Beatrice was accompanied, on her return home, by her father, Col. Walker, and by her younger sister. Helen was a joyous girl, about thirteen years of age, crowned with all the graces that innocence and mirth could give to youth and beauty. Col. Walker was about sixty years of age, of robust constitution. He had amassed a large fortune, having been engaged many years in the lucrative employment of sugar planting. He had extensive estates. His plantations were distinguished for the beauty, economy and completeness of their agricultural facilities. His daughter had been married about two years. She had given him glowing accounts of the happiness she enjoyed with her husband; and one of the objects of this visit on the part of the father, was to make them a liberal donation of property. Upon her marriage, he had given her a handsome out-fit, and four favorite family servants of her own choosing, but nothing else. - With this she had been perfectly satisfied, for her husband's income, from his

practice, was very ample for their support. But she was not surprised, as she sat by the fire, in her cozy little dining room, waiting for the return of her husband to breakfast from his visit to Sterling, when her father said:

"I suppose, daughter, that you think it is time for me to do something for you, in the way of property? I am very well pleased with the doctor. He is all that I had expected from his fine character and attainments. His professional distinction gratifies me. He will make you happy, if you do your duty, and I have the fullest confidence in you. You would be very well able to get along, without my assistance, but I am more than willing to divide with you now, trusting that you will make good use of your time and means; and above all, advising you, my dear child, not to let a superfluous amount of ready money make you either prouder or more expensive in your habits. Your equipage is not grand, but handsome. Do not set up as a high-flyer. Enrich your grounds; embellish your gallery; enlarge by degrees your house; store your library; have about you the elegancies and comforts of good living, not the extravagances of luxury and ostentation. If you wish one or two more house servants, I will send you the best we have at home. Do not think of having white servants. Don't think of French cooks. You will perhaps need a man for your regular gardener, but I suppose no more for the present. Here is a certificate of deposit for your private use, of five thousand dollars. Here is one for the doctor,

for twenty thousand dollars. He sits at the *foot* of the table, does he, my dear?"

"No father; he sits here on my left. He will never consent to take the foot, except when we have company. This morning, I suppose he will sit at the foot. But here he comes;" and the doctor's step on the porch was heard as he approached.

Col. Walker stepped to the foot of the table and, lifting the plate, placed under it a certificate of deposit in the bank of — New York, for twenty thousand dollars.

Beatrice met her husband at the door. "Is there anything serious?"

"Nothing: Genl. Sterling is quite well. He sent for me for a child that had a convulsion in his room; but it was quite recovered before I got there."

Beatrice was glad; and the cheerful company sat down to breakfast.

The doctor had plucked from the side walk a rosebud, slightly frosted, but beautiful for November. He placed it in his wife's hair, whence it drooped with two or three green leaves over her left temple. The small black patch had been renewed, this morning, for the doctor had kissed it away during the night. The face and eyes of this charming woman glowed with happy exhilaration, as she requested her husband to take the foot of table. There was some witchery in the merry expression of her countenance which he noticed. "Look here," said she, "what a present!" and she flourished before him her five thousand dollar certificate!

"Shall we go halves?" said he.

"Oh! yes, it's a bargain — we go halves — in this and everything."

"Well, that's a clever girl!" said he, "but I think your father had better take the foot. I don't wish to get too far from you *now*."

"You must take the foot, hub; father has the right to sit here this time."

"And you positively agree — halves?" said the doctor.

"Certainly."

When the doctor turned over his plate, he picked up the paper, and just about the time his eyes reached the words "twenty thousand dollars" — Beatrice exclaimed — "Halves — I say, halves."

CHAPTER X.

When Curtis reflected that twenty-five thousand dollars was not more than the annual income of his father-in-law, he was not surprised at the amount of this donation; but he was charmed by the liberality of the gift, and with its unincumbered condition. In fact, he had been expecting something of the sort: and the agreeable sensations which pervaded him, can hardly be described. There was a lifting up of his bounding spirit from comparative poverty to the prospect of positive wealth; an elevation as dangerous to one of his temperament as it was sudden

and exhilarating. Dr. Curtis had received his education at the hands of kind friends, and had won his professional distinction by the utmost energy of character and by devotion to his patients. He was just now beginning to reap a moderate income equal to his necessities, but by no means commensurate with his desires. He had extravagant notions of living, which were curbed only by the lack of means. He wished to be a leader in high life. There was an additional spur, since his marriage, to this desire; he wished to display in society the varied charms of his accomplished wife. He appreciated the eminent position which was awarded him by his brothers of the profession; but that was not enough to place him in the front rank of fashionable life; and when he saw, in looking around him, how inferior was the position taken by merit to that which was assumed and occupied by wealth, his proud spirit shrunk from the vulgar contact, and he had resolved to keep out of society altogether as a man of fashion, until he could have money enough to compete in every respect with his fortunate and presuming inferiors.

During the whole day, after the occurrence at the breakfast table, he was absolutely bewildered. He had got by fortune, that which his laboratory had refused to yield, — the philosopher's stone. Here was a mine opened unto him! would it ever cease to yield? Such thoughts as these thronged his imagination. There was no rest for his unchained spirit. He could find no comfort except in the brilliant sparkle of the glorious wine, or the misty and ir-

regular weavings of the vapors of his cigar. With his long dressing gown about him, the day was spent in lounging, from sofa to settee and from chamber to chamber, until he had momentarily occupied every inch of every apartment in his cottage. But he lost not the sight of his beloved Beatrice. She was his graceful companion wherever he went, she leaned over him wherever he flung himself. She saw through his eyes, white-winged happiness dancing in his soul, and she was all ecstasies herself from the knowledge that she had been the moving cause of his delight. His patients sent for him, but, for the first time, were disregarded.

"I *can not* go out to-day,—love," he would say to his wife.

Beatrice assented, reluctantly. However much she joyed in his company, she was pained at the slightest professional neglect. The money they had received was as nothing to her when compared to the brilliant character of her husband as a professional man. She had no use for money except to contribute to his comforts; and she could not well imagine that his heart could now wish anything beyond his reach. She knew, poor girl, very little of this restless man. His imagination was full of show. The walls of his cottage began to grow, his parlors to be enriched. His little family carriage swelled into a stately coach; the shafts of his buggy were growing into a pole; and his fleet pony, heretofore a great favorite, was about to be supplanted by two splendid greys! What other use had he for money?

The idea of a speculation never entered his mind. He knew nothing of investments or of living upon interest. He was indeed no longer the same man. The fixed attention, the staid gravity of appearance, so inseparable from the energetic pursuit of business, had given way to feverish restlessness. A vague pleasure-hunting look disfigured his once resolute countenance. And who will be surprised at this? In his little port-monnaie, where he had seldom before had more than one hundred dollars, he now had twenty thousand.

After a day's happy uneasiness at home, sweetened by all the connubial blisses, he went into the city. The avenue swarmed with splendid equipages. A magnificent pair of very large gray horses flashed along by him, pulling a light buggy. He knew they were for sale, and quickly sought the jockey. The horses were examined. They were the finest in the city. A bargain was struck. Two thousand dollars was the price. The twenty thousand dollar certificate which had been deposited in the Bank of Washington, was reduced to eighteen thousand by the doctor's check, which was duly honored and paid.

The same day he sent a check to New-York of one thousand dollars, ordering the finest family carriage that could be purchased for that price.

He intended to surprise his wife with this magnificent present.

CHAPTER XI.

When Lily awoke, she was much bewildered. She sprang up and looked around, pressing her hands upon her eyes as if striving to see more distinctly. Leaping out of bed, she ran to the door of her chamber, and opening it quietly, saw her guitar and market-basket. This reminded her of all that had passed; and she knew where she was. She quickly drew on her stockings and shoes, and fastened her frock; then going to the mirror, began a rapid arrangement of her toilet. When she came to her hair, she found it much tangled, but could not help observing the beauty of the sweet little hair brush, which had a glass upon the back that reflected a pretty face whenever she looked into it. There was the cologne too, with which she moistened her curls. "Oh! what a sweet man he is," she said to herself. She put her locket-chain around her neck, doubling it twice, so that it made a very becoming necklace. She tried on some of her mother's rings but they were all too large. The ear-rings however were soon dangling from her ears: in fact, before she left the mirror, she had made herself look so sweet and lovely that her own fancy was more than satisfied with her appearance; and sighing for the return of Sterling, after looking around the parlor, she began to amuse herself as usual by turning over and arranging her various trinkets.

While engaged in this employment, she heard voices at the door; the key was put in the lock and turned. She recognized Sterling's voice—but there was another; and she quietly bolted her chamber door. Sterling's quick ear caught the sound of the bolt: and he said aloud, "take a seat, sir."

Sterling had encountered Mr. Vereprompt, a candidate for door-keeper of the House of Representatives. This individual had politely persisted in following Sterling to his room, without having received a very pressing invitation. He had, under his arm, a large wallet of papers which he began to unfold, drawing his chair near the table, upon which, one by one, he deposited his documents.

"Yes, General Sterling, your reputation has preceded you to Washington. Counting upon your influence as very great, especially with the Southern delegation, you will excuse me for calling upon you so early after your arrival. And you will of course attribute my visit to a feeling of selfishness which we all have touching our own personal advancement. I depend upon my merit, sir, and upon these testimonials"—spreading the whole out upon the table:

"There is my father's diploma; he was one of the first graduates of Yale College. Here are, with the seals you will observe, ten distinct U. S. commissions, showing how he was trusted by the Government. There is a package containing his correspondence with Mr. Jefferson: These are intended to show that my family have been closely identified with the great democratic party of the country, from

the time of its inauguration by that great apostle of liberty, up to the present day. I am, myself, an humble member of that party—in fact I may say that *I sucked in Democracy with my mother's milk.*

"There is a letter of recommendation from A—s K—d—ll.

"I rank Mr. Benton amongst my friends, as you will observe from a perusal of this letter."

Sterling began to grow uneasy, at this ridiculous display, but said nothing, and suppressed his amazement with a good deal of skill.

"These pamphlets are some of my own productions in behalf of Democracy—there are twelve of them; will you be kind enough to accept them? I was one of the editors of and contributor to the celebrated "Extra Globe," a paper made so famous under the guiding hand of that distinguished citizen, Mr. Kendall, in the canvass of 1840."

"Well sir," said Sterling, "you are certainly well recommended. Have you many competitors?"

"Oh! yes, There are several, but I really do not think I have much to fear from any of them."

"What is the value of the position?"

"Only two thousand dollars a year. But it is accompanied with a good deal of patronage. The door-keeper has the appointment of some forty or fifty assistants, messengers, folders and pages. It is indeed a very important position, and hence I am taking all the necessary pains to secure it."

"You appoint the pages, do you?"

"Yes, some twelve or fifteen lads."

"How old are they, generally?"

"Well, from ten to fifteen. By the way, you might serve some friend; for I would not be behind in advancing the interest of any person you might recommend, for any position under me."

"What pay do the pages get?"

"Two dollars a day."

"Yes. Well, Mr. Vereprompt, call and see me, again in a day or two. I do not think it necessary to make any pledge. I must see who your competitors are."

"Thank you, sir, you are very kind. I will do myself the honor of calling again in a day or two."

So the indefatigable Mr. Vereprompt retired, perfectly satisfied with his interview with General Sterling.

"A page—a page—ten to fifteen—two dollars a day!" muttered Sterling. A page! I have it."

CHAPTER XII.

When Sterling opened the door of Lily's chamber, he found her standing in the corner, looking up into his face, ready to spring into his arms.

"I have been waiting, oh, so long," she said. "I am so glad you have come. What are you going to do with me? Where am I to stay? In this nice room?"

"We must think about that. Come, let's talk," and he led her towards the fire.

"If you were only a boy, Lily, we would have no trouble.

"Ah! that's the bad luck. I had wished a thousand times that I was a boy.* I could then fight my way through the world. I dare say, if I was a boy now, you could make me a page at the Capitol. Once when I was in the gallery, I saw the boys running about there, picking up packages, and dashing along amongst the members, doing their errands for them. Oh! how I should like it."

"You would like to be a page, would you?"

"Yes indeed, I should be delighted."

"Suppose we cut off your hair and dress you like a boy, and make you a page?"

"I'll do it, I'll do it," she exclaimed, snapping her fingers with enthusiasm, — "and nobody would ever know the better."

"Could you keep the secret?"

"Keep it? yes, indeed."

"Well, come here," said Sterling. "Stand against the wall. Let me measure you for your height."

Taking her position against the wall she straightened herself up and dropped her arms by her sides while Sterling took a book, and squaring it upon her head against the wall, marked her height; then cutting a strip from a newspaper he took the length."

"Go into your chamber, Lily, if anybody should knock."

So saying, Sterling left Lily to herself and went to a clothier's for an out-fit.

Finding the inches of his measure, he purchased, to fit a boy of that height, two suits, consisting of jackets, vests and pants; one blue, the other brown, with a half-dozen shirts of pure linen, four silk under-shirts,—not forgetting the drawers—adding, as he passed a shoe store, a pair of soft boots, of the size to fit a boy of ten years.

Sterling returned with a pair of long scissors.

CHAPTER XIII.

It is not always best to have too much hair, thought Sterling, as he quieted his misgivings upon the meditated destruction of Lily's curls.

When the Lilliputians found Gulliver asleep they spread out his hair and drove great wooden pins through the ends of it, thus nailing him to the ground and making him their prisoner.

Helen covered Paris with the character of a coward by winding her long tresses around his neck and thus detaining him from battle.

When Mercury committed the theft upon Venus of her girdle, as he kissed her, his profuse hair, like misty clouds overspread the face and eyes of the credulous goddess.

Hector's long locks served as ropes to lash him to the car of Achilles.

Indeed, nothing has betrayed, deceived and seduced mankind as often as the human hair.

The vanity and ornament of Medusa, but her torment; the beauty of Absalom, but his destruction; the strength of Sampson, but his fatality; the crown of Nisus, but the disgrace and transformation of his daughter.

The long sharp scissors were lying on the table beside a comb. Lily was sitting on a low stool, her head reclining on Sterling's lap. His fingers were fondling with her yellow curls: stretching one of them out, he was surprised at its length; it reached far below her waist. Hesitating at the sacrifice, he enquired of Lily, if he should cut them.

"Oh! yes. I can not be a boy with such long hair; my curls would betray me." She did not look up as she said these words, and Sterling found that she was weeping.

"They must fall, my darling, but they shall never be the 'dowry of a second head'.

'Apollo might for thine, exchange his hair,
'And Bacchus have been proud thy locks to wear;
'Not Venus, rising from the foamy sea,
'Such locks can show, or vie in hair with thee.'"

One by one the locks were cut away; and when Lily arose and looked into the mirror, she uttered a wild exclamation—"Oh! I should hardly know myself. Old Maggie might meet me on the street now every day and not know me!" And she danced about the room as if delighted. But then, again,

gazing in the mirror, a sad expression stole over her countenance, as of regret.

"In vain thou seekest thy silken locks to find;
Banish the dear remembrance from thy mind;
Time for thy beauty, shall the loss repair,
And thou shalt charm again with native hair."

Sterling played the barber perfectly. With a little oil and cologne, he dampened what remained upon her head, combing and brushing the front locks into a stately fore-top. Her forehead displayed, for the first time, its unshaded proportions, and her face seemed to be almost double its former size. Her eyes appeared fuller and larger, while her brows, much darker than her curls, were relieved by the absence of their yellow neighbors. Locks were left long enough to cover her ears, to conceal the holes which had been pierced for rings.

By this time the clothes had been sent in, and Lily retired to her chamber; while Sterling stretched himself on a sofa, and smoked a cigar. Her cunning eyes surveyed the strange garments with a roguish timidity; and before she handled a single article she looked around to see if Sterling was certainly not in the room. She bolted her door.

The boots were tried first; they fit admirably, the legs running up nearly to her knees, but hugging the calves rather tightly; Sterling heard the heels patting on the floor, as she walked about the room.

The little silk under-shirt, flesh colored, when she opened it, looked very funny; and she would not have known what it was but that it had sleeves.

The drawers matched this in color and material; they were not exactly right—but she could alter them, for she was handy with her needle and scissors.

The shirts were next unrolled; and she observed a small parcel wrapped, which, upon being opened, she found to contain studs and sleeve-buttons, coral with golden rims.

She selected for the contrast the blue pants, and the brown jacket with its white vest; and in half an hour she was completely transformed, and seemed as Rosalind,

"In all points like a boy;
With quite a swashing and a manly outside."

After she had surveyed herself several times, she started to go into the parlor, but as she touched the bolt of her door, she paused, and felt her face burning all over! she shrunk back, as if overpowered by shame. Sterling called her; she opened the door, but still lingered at the threshold. He went towards her chamber, and as he approached, she swung back, pulling the shutter after her, so that she was entirely hid behind it.

"Oh! oh! I must see you: come. Ah! that is the very thing. Oh! what a perfect fit; you are indeed a boy! my little Ganymede."

"Do you think it'll do?" she said. The first sight over, she tripped out into the parlor and exhibited herself in her new costume rather exultingly.

CHAPTER XIV.

When Sterling saw that the transformation was complete, the disguise perfect, he went in pursuit of Mr. Vereprompt. He had resolved to place that gentleman under such obligations to him, that he could not refuse to give him the appointing of a page. He had carefully inquired as to the prospects of Vereprompt for door-keeper, and had found that there was little doubt of his success. Vereprompt was not hard to find. Smiling and rubbing his hands, he met Sterling, who expressed his determination to support him, if nothing should happen, of a party character, to break the design. "We politicians, you know, Mr. Vereprompt, are under the control of our leaders. The young members must be governed in some degree at least, by the older ones."

"Not in all cases," my dear sir. "You occupy a position which should make you a leader. Indeed, sir, in this case of mine, your influence will be worth much more to me than that of any of the old members."

By this time, they had reached Sterling's room. Lily was standing near the table, reading. She arose, as the two approached, and retired to a corner.

"Ah!" said Vereprompt. "Who have we here? a fine fellow, truly! Is it your son?"

"No — but an adopted."

"He must be very near, really. He favors you; your eyes to a bead! now he is the very size for a page."

Lily's face was very red; her eyes very eager!

"What is your name, son?" said Vereprompt, drawing Lily towards him by the button of her new jacket.

Now, this was a very awkward question. The name of the boy had not been settled. Sterling had been calling her his little Ganymede! This was an enigma to her.

"Gan —"

"Ernest," hastily said Sterling, just as Lily was pronouncing Ganymede.

"Ernest Carey."

"I'm afraid," said Sterling, "that his health would not allow it. Are the duties arduous?"

"No; activity more than vigor of body is what a page wants. The larger boys generally do the more laborious work. Rapidity of movement and quickness of sight and hearing, are the main qualities for a page."

"I'm sure I could move about as quickly as any of them," said Lily. "I should like it, I know;" as she moved toward Sterling.

"Well Ernest," said Sterling. "If Mr. Vereprompt will make you a page, I think I'll consent."

This brought the candidate to a positive pledge, without any other assurance from Sterling than what the reader has already heard.

"Now, General, if you will enter the lists actively for me I shall feel perfectly safe, I might go home and go to sleep, for that matter. But I am not the man to sleep. And I shall spare no pains to enable myself to serve my friends in turn."

So Mr. Vereprompt took his leave, and Sterling told Lily that there was a very fair chance for her to be appointed one of the pages at the Capitol.

"And you are going to call me Ernest, are you?"

"Yes, don't you like it?"

"Anything that you like — but I was so plagued when he asked me my name: I could hardly remember Ganymede, at first; wasn't it awkward?"

"Very, but that is all over now. Your name is *Ernest Carey*; don't forget it."

"But *you* must call me Ganymede! I like that better."

The conversation was here interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Clodhead, one of the prominent candidates for speaker. His outside was quite imposing. His merits had been very fully presented to Sterling by his friends. He had been a long time in public life, and was distinguished by the remarkable characteristic of *silence*, a masterly habit for one of his intellectual caliber. He had never made a speech in his life longer than a finger; and that had to be done up by the reporter. But he was faithful to his party. The only word that he could spell correctly was DEMOCRACY, and sometimes, when in a hurry, he could not get along even with

that without a *k*, as many of his private letters showed.

He was now an acknowledged leader, and seemed to be out-stripping all his competitors.

He met Sterling with an air of subdued patronage, such as an old and successful politician has a right to assume in the presence of a tyro of his own political faith; gave a brief history of his public life, in which Gen. Jackson played a subordinate part; and wound up his speech by a formal announcement that his friends had kindly brought him forward for speaker. His claims, he based upon his faithful adherence to the great Democratic party; intimating that there never had been a time, in the history of the country, when it was so important to maintain the perfect organization of the party.

While the distinguished Mr. Clodhead was discoursing, in a mild, modest way, upon the necessity of partisan organization, and the sublime beauty of partisan faith, a waiter entered, and handed Sterling a visiting card on which appeared the name

Ponderus Pustleponch

of —

"Invite the gentleman up," said Sterling, laying the card on the table, in full view of Mr. Clodhead.

Mr. Clodhead saw the name on the card. Taking his hat, he remarked: "This is the card of one of my competitors, an excellent, talented fellow."—But before the speech was closed, Mr. Pustleponch en-

tered, blowing a little with fatigue, as he had ascended a dozen steps.

"Ah! Pustleponch," said Clodhead, "you are an active man. It is impossible to get ahead of you!" Rising, he continued, good-humoredly, "I give you over to our young friend, General Sterling." So saying he bowed himself out.

"As a young politician," said Pustleponch, "you can hardly appreciate the importance, General Sterling, of the present crisis in our country. Never, since the foundation of the government, have the political elements disclosed so many and such vast dangers to the Union. The combinations in every direction are inflated with treason. Yes, sir, the integrity of the Union is threatened, and unless something can be done to unite the conservatives, North and South, into an active, manageable organization, we shall be severed into fragments. I see it and tremble. C—— and G——, the one an intellectual angel, the other a brainless firebrand, both equally misguided and consequently equally dangerous, seem to be bent upon the destruction of this Union? And what would we be without the Union? A poor, benighted people; worse than the Grecians in their worst degradation! Greece united was the scourge of tyrants, the dread of Persia. Greece divided, was the toy of demagogues; the sport of ambition; the nurse of licentiousness; the grave of liberty." Here Pustleponch paused, for breath, both hands being extended into flourishing attitudes as he

brought his grandiloquent speech to rather an abrupt conclusion.

"I have never," said Sterling, "permitted myself to indulge the belief that there was any serious danger of a dissolution of the Union. I do not partake of your apprehensions. Factionalism or sectionalism, one and the same thing, carries, in its rampantism, its own destruction, for treason is never dangerous when it has a tongue. Conservatism pervades the body politic. Factions sometimes rule, but not long."

"Pardon me, my dear sir," said Pustleponch. "Your theory is beautiful, but not practical; men *are not* angels."

"Especially when they are politicians," interrupted Sterling.

"Especially, as you say, when they are politicians, and the misfortune is, that *we are all politicians*; every youth is a THEAGES in pursuit of a master, who can teach him the art of ruling mankind."

"And he is more apt to meet a Walpole than a Socrates," replied Sterling.

"The more to his advantage; for Walpole taught from experience, Socrates from theory," said Pustleponch. "The theories of Plato, sir, from love to law, are all Utopian."

"But I am detaining you," continued Pustleponch, as he took his hat. "My friends have placed me in the embarrassing position of a candidate. I care nothing for my success, except as connected with the great conservative element, which, as you seem

to think, pervades the body politic. I agree with you entirely; but there are times when it becomes necessary to concentrate and energize this conservative element; and if there ever was a time it is the present. 'The Union must and shall be preserved,' was the glorious sentiment of the immortal Jackson. May it be inscribed on the heart of every American." So saying with a profound bow, he left, while Sterling was positively overpowered by the lofty theatricals that marked the manner of this eloquent speaker.

In oratory, action is everything; the effect of action depends much upon the figure of the actor. Pustleponch was of the dumpling form, round in the center and waddling all over. When sitting, his middle was most ponderous; his upper and lower extremities diminishing rapidly. His mouth was large and favorable for eloquence. Upon measuring his physiognomy, from his eyes to his mouth, it appeared that his nose occupied only about one-third of the space, and had an inveterate inclination upward; it aspired to a division of utterance with the mouth, and hence the tones were gracefully nasellated. The leaning of his body was so decidedly backwards, that it was extremely difficult for him to bring his head far enough forward to enable him to see his feet. His froggish eyes seemed great blue beads fastened by pins to the upper edges of his fat cheeks. His sharp chin, rounded by flesh, protruded out between his throat and mouth, the former of which was constantly palpitating with

various exertions either to speak, breathe, laugh or hawk; and when he drew in his breath after a hearty laugh, his lips made a noise as if he was supping hot soup. So that altogether, the reader must perceive that Pustleponch created positive sensations wherever he appeared.

Sterling was about to arrange his toilet, for a stroll, when the waiter announced "the Hon. Mr. Plunket," and Mr. Plunket entered. "Good morning, General; you have not forgotten me? I had the pleasure of meeting you —."

"Good morning, sir — good morning: Come, sit and take a cigar," said Sterling.

The Hon. Mr. Plunket was a member from New York city. He had fought his way up, from the FIVE POINTS to the halls of congress. Long notorious as a bully, he had gradually squeezed himself in amongst the politicians, and had grown to be conspicuous at TAMMANY. His mustache was large for that day, and his eyes fiery, small and twinkling under their grey, shaggy brows. His pants were checked, his vest flowered velvet, a ponderous link chain of gold, hanging from the pocket. In his hand he held a bludgeon of hickory;—a terrible instrument. He had come to Washington to play his part in his own way with the politicians; having bribes in his pockets, and weapons on his body, by which to cudgel into terms any one who should presume to have a conscience.

Lighting one of Sterling's cigars, Plunket remarked, "You will find it impossible, general, to get

a good cigar, in this market. If you are fond of the weed you will let me give you a hint how to get the best article. Now, here [pulling out his cigar case] is a sample of the very best—try it. [Sterling lighting it.] I had a present of a thousand from the importer. I will send you a box."

"Thank you, you are very kind; really, this *opens* rich, delicious," said Sterling, as he flung himself half reclining upon a sofa, piling up the clouds, and reading the voiceless minstrelsy of this vapory grey beard, whose music is not the less harmonious for being inaudible.

"What think you of the elections?" said Plunket.

"I care very little about them—want good officers, and suppose, of course, that the older members will control that matter."

"By no means, my dear sir; you and I are both new members. I am inclined to pitch into the battle in the beginning, and I think it is our duty to do so. Two-thirds of us are new, and, by a combination, we can control the old members—not only control them but use them. The election of Speaker is of the first importance, but, between us, that is settled. Clodhead is the man for our party. I have heard enough to convince me that his election is sure. Pustleponch won't do. He has crotchets in his head, is too much inclined to run off into abstractions—an innovator, sir, the most dangerous enemy to partisan organization; he should be cut off at the knees, at once, and taught that democracy will not permit itself to be victimized."

"I have heard that Belvedere was to be a candidate," said Sterling. "I have not seen him, but he is spoken of as a man of great parts, and altogether as a splendid fellow."

"Yes, he is all that. I know him well. His modesty would kill a better man. Modesty, my dear sir, is not a desirable quality in a politician, especially in a presiding officer. A presiding officer for the House of Representatives, ought to be a perfect bull-dog, sir—a bull dog. And you will be convinced of this before you have occupied your seat a week. Belvedere is as mild as May; Pustleponch is as variable as April; Clodhead is as stern as December, as furious as March, and as unrelenting as a terrapin—sir, thunder can't move him; when his jaws fall, they are *thar*, sir, *thar*! he is our man." This period was closed by the falling of Plunket's fist upon the table which absolutely so jarred the inkstand that the black element flew all over the baize.

Sterling was disgusted. His gentleness became nervousness. He arose from his seat and with some trepidation, not very well concealed, walked across the room, stuffing his hands as far down into his breeches pockets as he could well get them.

"Do you expect to carry your wishes by storm, sir?" said Sterling.

"By no means, general, you will pardon this apparent violence. It is my unfortunate manner. It is the habit of the b'hoys."

This interview soon terminated; for Sterling could

not sufficiently suppress his disgust as to place Plunket at his ease, so the bully retired.

"I am going out awhile, Lily; if you choose you may take a turn on the avenue. Don't go far; keep out of the way of carriages. You might go in the reading room. Be very careful of yourself; don't associate with any street boys; and don't stay long in any one place. Here is a quarter for candy, if you go to the confectioner's."

Thus permitted, Lily made her way to the avenue, after having circulated freely and with much ease and propriety amongst the gentlemen who were lounging about the reading room. She lingered a moment with a crowd of hackmen who were congregated by the porch, then strolled off towards the market, where we will leave her for the present at a stall, bargaining for a fip's worth of candy.

CHAPTER XV.

Charles Belvedere had been in Congress but a single term. During that time he had made several brilliant intellectual displays. His fine appearance of itself arrested observation. His bold address in debate was so softened by modesty, so subdued by deference to his peers, so seasoned with logic and argument, and so magically adorned with the graceful embellishments of fancy, literature and learning, that he invariably commanded the undivided atten-

tion of his hearers. His short career had won for him a host of admiring friends both in and out of Congress. Generosity and justice predicted his future eminence; and even jealousy, until lately, had been silent of its misgivings and careful of its sneers. Nobody had suspected him of ambition; he sought not applause; and the hearty congratulations of friends, though gratefully received, like breezes upon an icicle, served only to harden the cold exterior of the intellectual crystal.

Starling had never seen Belvedere: he had heard much of him, for within the last few days his name had been used by many in connection with the office of speaker. Charmed with the character of this young statesman, Sterling, after his conversation with Plunket, immediately resolved to seek an interview with him. He was going out for that purpose, when he met Clodhead. "Where is Belvedere?" said Sterling.

"In his shell, I expect," said Clodhead, laughing, "he never comes out. His room is at Brown's. I will go with you, if you wish to see him."

"I should like to make his acquaintance."

Clodhead accompanied him: he had his reason: he did not care to lose sight of Sterling, and wished to frustrate a private interview.

Sterling was annoyed at this politeness. He wished to see Belvedere privately. He was disgusted with the manner in which Clodhead spoke of him as being, "in his shell." This meant, that he

was not social, but it showed that he was not a bar-room electioneerer.

"In his shell—ha!" said Sterling.

"Yes, emphatically and figuratively," said Clodhead.

"He is spoken of for speaker: I suppose he thinks that the office ought neither to be sought nor declined."

Clodhead had discernment enough to see the broad sneer which this expression conveyed: and he had courage enough to resent it; but the stolid coldness of his nature gave the victory to prudence, and he said nothing.

They found Belvedere in his room, dressed in a long loose wrapper, sitting by his table, on which were lying books and papers. One of the books he laid down, the back upwards, as the two gentlemen entered. Sterling discovered that it was a volume of Cicero's *Offices* of the diamond latin edition. In a row on the table were arranged, amongst many others, odd volumes of Homer, Milton, Shakspeare, the life of the Earl of Chatham, and the memoirs of Charles James Fox. The British Spy occupied a place in the collection, and Faust and Wilhelm Meister lay one by the other, on the corner. The only piece of yellow covered literature to be seen, was a pamphlet entitled *Anecdotes of Paginini*, near which was a fiddle bow, and a case containing a violin.

"General Sterling expressed a desire to pay his

respects to you, Belvedere, and I am happy to present him," said Clodhead.

"I am proud to see the General. You are here for your first time, sir," said Belvedere to Sterling. "I hope you will find both pleasure and profit in Washington."

"Pleasure, I expect, of course," replied Sterling. "The profit, you know, will depend upon circumstances."

"Not so much as you may suppose. Pleasure hunters are apt to find profit in experience."

"Not every one. The wisest, sometimes, refuse to be instructed."

"Hardly the wisest; the old and the head-strong may fail to be benefited by experience: but I believe there are very few who do not grow wiser from a Winter in Washington: whether their acquired wisdom avails them or not, is another question. Wisdom is nothing without the *will* to be governed by it."

"Rather a grave subject, gentlemen," said Clodhead. "I am one of those who believe in the *WILL* governing and controlling destinies; and hence, as I am a candidate for speaker, I am decidedly of opinion that I could make more by leaving you to discourse metaphysics; while I go, and attend to the affairs of the nation." So, Mr. Clodhead, laughingly, bowed himself out of the room.

"A very practical fellow," said Belvedere to Sterling, as Clodhead left. "No man has made more of his capital in Washington than Clodhead. Without

learning, by the dint of industry, and of devotion to party—which latter is considered the touch-stone of integrity by politicians,—he has acquired the reputation of a first rate business man: and he will make a good presiding officer. He has much to recommend him. With early cultivation, he would have made a first class man."

"You are aware," said Sterling, "I suppose, that you are much spoken of just now, for speaker."

"Yes—a few friends have flattered me. I am not so modest as to decline such an honor. But I see no reasonable probability of an election, and really, I have not troubled myself about it."

"I am not sure," said Sterling, "from what I have heard but that your chances are good, if the affair should be skillfully managed. If I knew perfectly your best and most reliable friends, I would like to join them in aiding to bring about a favorable result."

"Thank you, sir. As a general rule, in the practice of life, whatever is worth having is worth seeking. This property maxim is not to be despised in politics. But I can not consent to run about after an office of so much dignity. I will cheerfully, however, advise with you and our mutual friends, on the subject, and contribute my part of the work towards the accomplishment of whatever seems best."

Sterling was immediately placed in possession of the names of Belvedere's confidential friends; and before night he had arranged a meeting of them to come off at his rooms at 8 o'clock.

CHAPTER XVI.

How closely joined are the sweets and bitters of existence. How happy was Lily as she strutted the avenue in her boy's apparel, her boot-heels ringing against the pavement! How her mind swung and soared aloft, as she imagined the new life she was to lead; so novel and so fresh, so free from the tyrannical restraints of a watchful mistress. It was all TO-DAY with her; she thought not of the morrow. The omnipotent now embraced her, lifted her out of the past and tore her away from the future.

But as she was nibbling her candy and lingering along on the outskirts of the market, she saw posted on the pillar of a stall this astounding placard:

"ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.

A Child kidnapped or seduced away.

Lily Carey, a child of eleven years of age, has been stolen from, or seduced to leave, her guardians, who are greatly distressed, and who will give the above reward for any information which will lead to a discovery of her person. Two HUNDRED DOLLARS will be paid if the child is delivered up. She is a delicate, sickly looking girl, tolerably tall for her age, with long yellow curls, a quick black eye and an intelligent countenance. Information may be left at the office of the —."

Lily read the card with the composure of despair. Her hands were clasped and a sudden sickness seiz-

ed her. She leaned, almost fainting, against a barrel of apples. To heighten her horror, at that moment she heard the voice of Maggie Dobbins, who was making her way directly towards her, an old black slave following with a market basket. Maggie paused to price the apples, and looked into Lily's face! Mute with bewilderment, the child returned the gaze, but spoke not. Maggie purchased a peck of apples, and passing on, remarked:

"What a beautiful boy,—take an apple, son."

Lily's white teeth crushed the yellow rind of the apple, as her eye followed the receding form of Maggie Dobbins; and with a quick, springing walk the relieved child dashed along in an opposite direction through the market, pausing not, nor looking to the right or left until she emerged into the avenue, when she made her way hastily back to the hotel.

CHAPTER XVII.

The earnestness with which Sterling entered into the election of Belvedere, enabled him to get together in a few hours about thirty members. His plan was to have a little force from every part of the Union; and in the crowd which we find assembled in his rooms each state was represented. Several of the gentlemen had served with Belvedere; and those who knew him best uttered the warmest encomiums upon him for his learning, his promptness,

his lofty statesmanlike bearing, his freedom from the low tricks and petty *isms* of ordinary politicians, and his generous and amiable disposition. Sterling made a speech in which he appealed to the young men present to set up for themselves; to bring their own men forward; to put down, to some extent, at least, the prevailing disposition of parties to keep old politicians in office. "Vigor, freshness, youth," he exclaimed, "form the life of politics. The state should never be allowed to grow grey. With old fogies to govern it, the republic would be ten centuries old in a hundred years. The glory of a state is found in her ministers. If they be fresh and vigorous so will she appear. Cicero made one of his greatest speeches at an early age; so did Demosthenes. Pitt, Calhoun, Clay and Hamilton, were all in high position before they were thirty. As politicians who are ambitious ourselves of rising, let us take advantage of the spirit of age, a spirit that leaves the indolent behind. Let each man study his own fortunes, and reflect, that this fast country, in its development of genius, waits for no man. In striking for Belvedere, we strike for ourselves. No man can doubt that his administration would impart life and freshness to congress, and give to its proceedings a dignity and vigor for which the country has long been looking in vain. Should Clodhead be elected, fogies, bullies and Plunkets would be placed over better men. Pustleponch, with all his efforts to be brisk, is yet unwieldy. He has just enough of Plato in his head to scorn all antiquity, and enough of Tris-

tram Shandy to be skillful in the burnishing up of hobbies. Besides, gentlemen, I do not like to see men running about the bar-rooms in pursuit of such an office. I can tolerate this in a candidate for clerk or doorkeeper, when money and emolument alone prompt the search; but I do think that a statesman is getting low down when he goes about proclaiming his virtues, and pressing his claims for speaker."

Upon further consultation, it was found that two-thirds of the present members were new, and that more than half of the whole congress were comparatively young men. So earnest was Sterling upon this point alone, that he suggested a committee whose particular business should be to ascertain, at once, the ages of the members, with the view of combining the young against the old in this election.

It was found that Clodhead was the strong candidate; that Tammany had determined to make him speaker; Pustleponch was next in strength; had considerable available force, and was fierce in his hostility to Clodhead. The plan, then, was to defy Clodhead openly; to court and subdue Pustleponch.

"If we can cast thirty votes for Belvedere (one from each state), on the first ballot, we can bring Pustleponch to terms: he will be satisfied with the WAYS AND MEANS. The certainty with which the friends of Clodhead regard his success, will aid us. Stubbornness and energy on our part will complete the work. We will not go into the general caucus;

and, by all means, we must induce Pustleponch to keep out of it. We can convince him that the Union and its preservation is quite a sufficient argument against the caucus system; and that the conservative element can not prevail as long as the professed politicians have the management of affairs behind the curtains. In the people and not in the politicians has the Union its safety. I will undertake Pustleponch, myself," said Sterling.

There were other candidates, besides the ones already mentioned. Several scrubs had entered upon the track. There are always plenty of men in congress who seek to get secondary positions, by striking at the highest. If a man can begin the contest for the speakership with a half dozen friends of the right sort, he can easily secure a chairmanship of some committee, by turning his friends over in due time to the successful aspirant.

Blunderbuss even had a pack of three or four friends yelling him on for speaker. He belonged to the Clodhead school, and would certainly turn his friends in that direction, if not taken in time. Sterling agreed to manage him, through the influence of Burton, for Burton was an earnest friend to Belvedere.

Mr. Wiregrass, from the far west, had hired a letter writer to mention his name in the New York H—— as a fit person for speaker, and to write with some confidence of his probable success.

Col. Rampant was trying to whistle himself into

notice, and one or two of the greener members of his state where urging his claims.

Clodhead's confidential friends had run up the name of Mr. Plunket for speaker, with a view to give that gentleman more importance with his party.

Johnny Jump-up, seeing, with some indignation, that Plunket was brought forward, put a few of his own friends out as feelers. Some gentlemen present, remarked that "Jump-up took it as a mortal offence, that Clodhead's friends should have shown such a preference to Plunket. A skillful manager might bring Johnny over to Belvedere. The breach between Plunket and Johnny must be widened immediately."

"Who will attend to that?" was the question.

The member from New York who was present agreed to see Johnny's barber, and to bring the matter about through that ingenious individual, whose smelling bottles and aromatic lathers had the most powerful influence over Mr. Jump-up. In fact the distinguished gentleman's barber was his confidential friend, and told him the news, and received the news in return, every morning.

But it is not important to detail all the proceedings of this meeting. The reader will readily perceive that thirty politicians earnestly bent upon any design, form a powerful combination. Every member present entered into Belvedere's interest with great enthusiasm. Each one had his particular as well as general duty marked out. "The work must

not be delayed. It is not eleven o'clock; and something may be done even to-night. I will see Pustleponch before I sleep," said Sterling; and the company separated with mutual pledges and assurances.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Pustleponch was a man of considerable literary pretensions. He had received, in part, a collegiate education; had at one time in his life been able to translate Virgil and Horace with some facility, and had waded through the Anabasis and Medea. Having entered early, however, into politics, after the manner of William Pitt and other eminent British statesmen, he had grown rusty in the classics; but he still aspired to acquaintance with the ancients; and kept generally before him, on his table, Plutarch's Lives for amusement, and Plato for show. But his great passion was Tristram Shandy. He was dead in love with Uncle Toby, and could quote whole passages from the chapters on Hobbies. He knew all the story of Le Fevre by heart, and in reciting it, when he came to the celebrated passage about the tear of the "recording angel", he would arise from his seat, and throw the most passionate sentimentality of attitude into the manner of his utterance, and close the exhibition by dashing his handkerchief over his face.

But, besides the few books named, Pustleponch had, in his room, great rows of political documents and writings; there were the Annals of Congress; the American Archives; the writings of Jefferson and Burke; the speeches of Fisher Ames; the Federalist; Congressional Debates, the Mirror of Parliament and Jefferson's Manual; the latter book much thumbed and worn; for, to admit the fact, Pustleponch was well versed in the details of parliamentary law.

It was important, just now, that this book should be seen in his hand, or on his table, by his visitors; and on this occasion, hearing a rap at his door, he hastily snatched up the volume and held it open in his hand, as he said "Come in."

Who presented himself, but Sterling!

"Ah General," said Pustleponch, rising joyfully to meet him. "I am delighted to see you, sir: come, take a seat."

"I know so little about the habits in Washington, that I may be visiting at too late an hour; but I was anxious to renew our conversation on the subject of the speaker's election."

"It is never too late to see a friend, sir. But as to that matter, we soon become owls here; we sit up all night and sleep all day: night is the work-time here, especially, when there is any plotting or scheming going on," replied Pustleponch.

"There is much of that just now," said Sterling. "I see the greatest possible exertions on the part of the friends of Mr. Clodhead. I come to say to you, sir, with the utmost frankness, that my first

desire is to elect Mr. Belvedere. My second is to beat Mr. Clodhead. If Belvedere can not be elected I am at your service."

"Well, I like a frank man, and I appreciate your position. It is difficult for any man to know Belvedere, and not to love him. To tell you the truth, if it were not for my friends, I should give the track to Belvedere, and support him with all my might. I have no concealments. If Belvedere can beat Clodhead, as soon as we can ascertain the fact to a reasonable certainty, I will support him.

The reader will see how perfectly innocent Mr. Pustleponch was. The truth is, he was more of an honest man than the world supposed him to be. His vanities and literary eccentricities had given him, in public estimation, the character of being ambitious, and it is difficult for the populace to believe that an ambitious man can be honest. Doubtless, in this affair, his hostility to Clodhead, and his sincere admiration of Belvedere, had much to do in bringing him to the frank avowal above made.

Sterling smoothed over this conversation by some happy flings at the power in caucuses of such men as Plunket and Blunderbuss, and closed the interview by an eloquent allusion to the Union of the States, expressing his belief that the conservative element should be lodged in the hands of the people, and that there was no better way to give a fatal stab to Faction, than by declining to encourage the caucus system.

When Sterling was gone, Pustleponch felt very

much out of spirits. He began to see that Belvedere would supplant him. Others even of his own friends had made similar suggestions to him; and the matter of his declining in favor of Belvedere had already entered seriously into his reflections. He was not a man to sell out, but at the same time, he knew the difference between an awkward and a graceful movement in politics; and he felt that the mode of his retiring would regulate, to some extent, his position in the speaker's cabinet.

Sterling went, after this interview, to Senator Burton's rooms, and developed to him the Belvedere schemes. That senator entered so warmly into the plan, that he put on his cloak and started immediately in pursuit of Blunderbuss, whom he found at one of the fashionable hells, betting at faro.

"D——n the luck," said Blunderbuss, just as Burton entered the hall. "That infamous Jack has lost seven successive bets for me," and with a long drawn sigh and a terrible oath, he dashed upon the table his few remaining checks, received a small amount of money, and arose to leave. Having lost several hundred dollars, he was in no good humor. He was much excited, not to say saturated, with liquor; and his nose was not the less fiery in its appearance, from the two black patches that adorned its either side,—gloomy mementos of the rage of Ellen Simkins.

Retiring to a remote part of the room, with Burton, Blunderbuss, after complaining of his losses, fell into rather a serious conversation, in which the

subject of his nomination for speaker was prominent. Burton soon discovered that Blunderbuss had very little hopes of his own success, and inclined to favor the election of Clodhead.

"The fact is, Judge," said Blunderbuss, "I do not care much how I vote. But I feel it due to myself—between us, confidentially—I feel it due to myself, that I should make all that I can out of my position. You know that a man's standing with his constituents depends much upon the position he occupies on the committees; and I do not see any great harm in culminating to a respectable position. Now, I have been here several terms, and I think I have evinced a disposition to labor for my constituents. And, although I have not the vanity to suppose that I could make an able speaker, I think that I ought to be entitled to lead one of the chief committees. This, I conceive to be my due."

"Certainly," said Burton, "do you think that Clodhead will give you a high place?"

"Yes, I have very little doubt of it. I meet him frequently, at the President's, in consultation on various state matters. He treats me with marked agility and profoundness."

"Belvedere would make a splendid speaker."

"So he would, but he is too modest to be elected. Do you think he has any chance?"

"I would not be surprised; the young men are all alive and on the stir for him. He is a great favorite with the young men."

"So he is, and he deserves to be. I must feel

around and see how the *cat jumps*," said Blunderbuss, as he drew on his overcoat.

"By the way, Colonel," said Burton, "have you seen our young friend Sterling? He was *struck* with your speech, the other night, and has mentioned it several times."

"Only casually. I have met him once or twice consecutively, and intend to call."

"Do. He is a man of high capacity, but knows nothing at all about the tricks of politicians. You may find him a little green at first, but he has remarkable readiness. I predict that he will soon be a leader."

"I shall pay my respects to him to-morrow," said Blunderbuss. "By the way, who is he supporting for speaker?"

"He thinks well of Clodhead, but I am inclined to believe that he prefers Belvedere. He is very manageable, however, and a great fellow for his friends. Link yourself to him, and then he will do any thing for you."

CHAPTER XIX.

When Blunderbuss retired, Burton felt in his pockets and found several coins, amounting to some twenty or thirty dollars. He was not addicted regularly to gaming,—but he seldom visited a *hell* without betting. Seating himself at the end of the faro-table, he began by putting down one or two

dollars at a time. He soon found that the interest of the game, at that moment, on the part of banker and by-stander, centered in a gentleman, the size of whose bets indicated that he was not only well stocked with money, but that he was desperately bent on winning or losing a large amount. The senator ceased to bet—but looked on curiously. The individual in question was of rather youthful appearance; handsome of feature and mild and amiable of manner—restless in temperament, and quick, nervous and somewhat impatient in all his movements. "Go on," he would say to the dealer as the latter paused for the accommodation of others. In two or three deals he lost four or five hundred dollars; and had pulled out his port-monnaie more than once to renew his stake. Fortune, or fate, or whatever else you may call this unseen agent, was against him. He, lost until he was driven to request the dealer to cash a check for him on the Bank of Washington.

"Certainly," said the accommodating banker; and a thousand dollars worth of faro-chips were placed in the hands of the excited and restless young man, in exchange for a check for that amount.

He bet with no regularity—no system, but at random as one crazed and reckless. Sometimes he would strike a lucky card, but in two or three deals the money was gone; another check for the same amount drawn and exchanged for faro-chips. A few desperate bets again reduced the pile to nothing, and the countenance of the better assumed a

rigid and abandoned aspect. Rising from his seat he retired to an adjoining room. Burton took advantage of his absence to inquire—

"Who is that?"

"Dr. Curtis," was the reply.

"Not the distinguished physician?"

"The same, sir. He has been running on the banks for a few days."

"I am astonished," said the senator.

Dr. Curtis by this time had returned, and handed to the banker a check for five thousand dollars. This amount was divided into three piles, and in three bets it was all the property of the banker!

"It is now time to leave," said Curtis, feigning carelessness, but with a hoarse, hysterical sound in the subdued tones of his agitated voice. Throwing his cloak over him, he left the house.

"Seven thousand five hundred and sixty dollars," said the dealer, in answer to one of his copartners, who asked how much the doctor had *deposited*.

"That's nothing; his father-in-law is rich." And with this cold remark Dr. Curtis and his fortunes were dropped.

The dealer now paid no attention to small bets, and was so careless that most of those who were betting, quit. This is usual after a large winning or losing. Burton, however, was not to be driven off, and he continued *piking* in a small way. The dealer proposed to close—

"No,"—Burton demanded a deal or two, and soon ran up his twenty dollars to several hundred,

so that some animation was again imparted to the game.

"Come at me again!" he said, laughingly, as he piled up his chips.

"I have won six hundred dollars from twenty. Give me twenty in cash. I will bet the rest, and if I lose, nobody will be hurt."

The dealer handed the senator twenty dollars in exchange for so many chips.

"I bet six hundred on the king," said Burton. "And I do not intend to move it. Draw your cards carefully," he said, as his eagle eye rested at once on the dealer's hands and face.

The king won.

"Go on," said the senator.

The king won again.

"Go on, *sir*," said Burton.

Again the king won.

"Now stop a minute, and let's breathe," said Burton, as he smiled upon the dealer, whose face glowed like a burning coal.

"I believe now," said Burton, "that the bet amounts to forty-eight hundred dollars."

"Nothing *shorter*," replied the dealer.

"Well sir, we will make it ten thousand, or nothing, if I have a friend here that will lend me two hundred dollars."

"Here it is, Judge," said several—for everybody was on tip-toe, and the whole room was in a buz of excited suspense.

"There sir, now *turn!*"

Again the king won, and the banker, closing his game, handed Burton ten thousand dollars.

"So much for the accidents of life," said the senator. "From twenty dollars I have won ten thousand. Dr. Curtis, in a shorter time, lost nearly as much. How foolish it is for a man to come into a faro room with more money than he can spare with perfect convenience? Had I lost the twenty, I should hardly have known it."

CHAPTER XX.

When the banker redeemed Burton's checks, supper was announced. With some bustle and considerable rush the dining saloon was filled. The company was large. To a close observer it might have appeared that during the last half hour the number of persons in the rooms had been greatly increased. The visitors of the hell know the eating hours, and are apt to drop in to enjoy the feast.

On the present occasion Burton was the hero; he occupied the seat on the left of *Prince Au-fait*, who officiated at the head of the table. The prince did everything after the French manner; his words were all pronounced in the simpering style of a Virginian just six months out of Paris; his bow and the toss of his head were eminently French; his ruffles were French, his vest was French, his suspenders were French. He handled hot oysters with

his fingers, and ate crabs claws foremost. He did every thing with exultant motions. Talked and laughed as if moved by the sound of trumpets. When he did eat he seemed to be trying to keep up with a drum beating the roll, and when he ceased it was as if he was obeying the word *halt*.

The prince was particularly polite to Burton, laughed heartily at the senator's jokes, grew very familiar and even leaned over and spoke with him, sometimes in whispers, and was pleased to take a nod for a response.

The banquets at this hell were always rich. Much magnificence was displayed about the tables, in the massive elegance of the plate. Every delicacy of the market, served by the best cooks, was here to be found; and the wines, chiefly Champagne, were of the best brands.

These banquets were free to all regular visitors of the house and their friends; sometimes fifty gentlemen were seated at table together. This assemblage was, of course, very promiscuous; senators, members and clerks of the house of representatives, commodores, with or without commissions, captains, strangers, citizens, small bankers, idlers, loafers, ropers and spies.

All these persons knew Burton; he knew many of them, for whenever he saw a man with a marked face, he was sure to inquire his name.

"Who's he with the bald head and short nose, sitting by himself eating cabbage with vinegar and cheese," said Burton to the prince.

"Col. Placid," said the prince, "the man that never loses. He visits here once a week, Friday night; and during ten years he has never lost a dollar at the bank! He does the same at the other houses, going to each, on regular nights, once a week."

"Does he win?"

"Yes, he has grown rich out of us. He begins with a stake of one hundred dollars; with this he wins ten and jumps. He never speaks to anybody. When he comes, he hands a hundred dollar bill to the banker; bets as he pleases—seemingly by no particular rule; risks, in various ways, the whole hundred for ten—never fails to win it in the end; then shoves up one hundred and ten dollars in chips to the dealer; receives the money and withdraws from the table; never drinks, but always steps to the cigar case, takes out half dozen of the best and retires. He has now an exchange office on — street and promises soon to be a millionaire."

"A remarkable man, certainly," said Burton, "but you will yet crush him if he continues to come. That he has escaped so long is indeed a marvel."

"He never drinks, senator; and has no more soul than a pebble. We have despaired long since of being able to beat him. He has many peculiarities: never bets alone; never gives us a single-handed turn at him. I have known him to sit for hours reading advertisements in some newspaper, waiting for the table to be surrounded by others; and I never on any occasion saw him try to win more than ten

dollars. Once I remember he had won eleven by a miscalculation of his chips. He seemed to be much annoyed at this occurrence, and handed the extra chip back to the dealer, insisting upon not receiving the money for it."

"He then has a system and rigidly adheres to it under all circumstances," said Burton. "Many of us imagine that we have system, but how few of us have the iron nerve to adhere to it? How impossible to do so in the pursuit of fortune by the chances?"

"Who's that," continued Burton, "with the long nose and sharp, restless eye; that pale, student-like fellow, just taking wine?"

"Mr. F——. He is just getting through the last remains of his patrimonial estate. Two years ago he came into possession of forty negroes and a splendid farm in Maryland. There is little of it left. The negroes were sold and the money spent the first year; the land is now mortgaged for twice its value. A span of dogs, a double-barreled shot gun and a gold-headed cane are about all his fortune now; but he retains his vivacity, and is gay and graceful. If you don't wish to be sympathetically interested you had better avoid him. By the way, he's a poet and is ambitious in that line."

At this moment the young man arose and approached the head of the table, evidently expecting that the prince would introduce him to Burton. But the prince, after the remarks just made, did not feel at liberty to do so; so Mr. F—— presented himself. Seating himself in front of the senator, on the right

of the prince, he remarked: "Senator Burton, you will pardon me if I take the liberty of introducing myself to you. I have heard you speak several times in the senate and have long desired to make your acquaintance. I have just now heard of the splendid run you had on the bank to-night, and I congratulate you. Will you do me the honor to allow me a glass of wine with you?"

"Certainly," said Burton, and he lifted glasses with the stranger.

"And you got 'em for ten thousand dollars did you?" said the youth, growing familiar and earnest, "That was glorious! They have many times ten thousand of my money, and it does me good to hear of some one raking 'em. But I can't do it. I have visited this house for years and I do not think I ever left it without empty pockets."

"You were unfortunate."

"Yes, the fates are against me. I have lost a handsome estate in two years."

"Why do you continue to bet?"

"It is easy to ask, and not easy to answer. I have no reason, except an indefinable propensity to risk money, and an intense belief that the chances would at some time enable me to regain a part of my fortune. I once thought I had discovered the secret by which I could beat the bank, and did frequently do it for hours together, but my plan was not infallible, and from my inveterate disposition to hang on to the last, I generally quit loser. I now think I have a plan, senator, by which, as

a regular thing, the bank can be beaten, and all I want is a stake of sufficient size to test it; I will explain it to you."

"It is late," said Burton; "I must retire. I will hear you some other time."

"I can do it in a moment," said F.: "it is just the simplest thing in the world;" and in a rapid whispering tone he explained to the senator how he could certainly beat the bank — requesting a loan of five hundred dollars, to enable him to test the thing; proposing a mortgage on his real estate for the amount. "Let me have it, senator; one lucky night may restore me my lost fortune."

Burton could not resist this appeal. The face of this young man, and the brief communication made concerning him by the prince, had interested the senator; so he pulled out his roll of bank bills, and said: "I will let you have the money upon one condition."

"Well?"

"If you lose it, you will never again visit a gambling house."

"Agreed! I promise," and returning Burton many thanks, the young man hastened away with the utmost impatience and seated himself in front of the dealer, throwing down one of the bills.

Burton remained at the table. A bottle of extra sherry had been placed before him, with some nuts and a glorious cigar. The prince was still assiduous in his attentions, enlarging liberally on the qualities of the wine which he had himself brought from

Europe. The cigar too was of his own importation.

As Burton grew mellow, the prince became communicative. Burton asked him how he came to take to the black art?

THE GRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE PRINCE, *Au fait.*

"I began life," said the latter, "with a handsome fortune. My father had encouraged me in loose habits. He was himself fond of the turf, and often carried me with him to the races. I had a purse of my own, before I was ten years old, and often at that age laid wagers on favorite horses, and would even bet at faro with my father's approbation. I had an equipage of my own, with servants and dogs. In fact, I was a man long before I had a beard, and had contracted habits of idleness, extravagance and debt. I gloried in being considered dissolute.

"When my father died I was twenty years of age; and as I could not come immediately into possession of my estate, I managed to spend much of it on the strength of my prospects. The gamblers are most liberal fellows, and I ran up with them ten thousand dollars of mortgages the first year. They would lend me a thousand and win half of it from me by way of interest before I left the room. As soon as I got the unlimited control of my fortune I began to *splurge* extensively, and had every thing the most costly and splendid.

"Faro was my favorite, as it was my most expen-

sive, amusement. I scorned all small bets, and all small betters; and would scarcely recognize a man who carried in his pocket less than a thousand. I soon got through. My money went, then my negroes, then my land; then my establishment, horses, buggies, guns and dogs.

"I became a borrower of tens and fives; I bet quarters, and would play poker for dimes on Sundays; got to drinking bad whiskey and smoking stubs of cigars. I was low down, in every sense of the word.

"I was at this time, remembering my former affluence, subject to fits of extreme melancholy.

"I left my old haunts and forsook my old associates, for I could easily perceive that I was no longer a welcome visitor where I had formerly been a favorite and pet. I had lost a fortune sitting in front of the bank, and I resolved to win it back sitting *behind* the bank. So I retired to the country, got a set of faro tools, and went to work diligently in a garret, devoting my time day and night to the solitary employment of dealing faro, without a human being being present! I had several great examples before me, of men of genius asserting and illustrating, by recuperation, the marvelous energies of human nature. I became skillful in shuffling as well as dealing. I could handle the cards with grace and elegance. I had mastered the black art in all its intricacies. I could cheat, if necessary, in a thousand ways.

"Satisfied of my abilities, and panting for revenge, I emerged from my obscure retreat and came back to the city. I spent one Sunday in convincing K——, the sole proprietor then of this house, that I was eminently fitted for employment; and I obtained a situation in his establishment, as dealer, at a fair salary.

"I soon became a favorite; my habitual politeness won for me hosts of friends. I never lost my temper, nor my presence of mind. My skill as an artist was universally acknowledged; my honesty as a dealer was admitted; the house increased in popularity. My salary was soon doubled, and finally I became a copartner in the establishment; And now senator, now sir, I divide fifty thousand nett a season between myself and my two friends. Pretty snug, isn't it?

"Allow me," continued he; "allow me the pleasure, in this glorious sherry," filling the senator's glass and then his own. The prince gracefully drank the senator's health, but remained sitting, as it was his habit never to leave the table while any favorite guest lingered at it.

At this moment, Mr. F——, to whom Burton had loaned the five hundred dollars, came rushing in with a large roll of money in his hands, exclaiming: "Senator, yours is lucky money. I took 'em for a thousand. I am under five hundred obligations to you. Here is the money you were so generous as to lend me."

"I am sorry you didn't lose," said Burton. "I was willing to give five hundred to get you to quit this ruinous habit."

"By the way, Prince," said F——, "*They are taking Col. Placid at last!*"

"What? no."

"Yes! They've brought him down."

"I must see that. Senator, excuse me;" and the prince arose and entered the betting room, somewhat amazed.

Placid at last had lost his temper. With a remarkable run of bad luck he had lost twenty consecutive bets! His hundred dollar stake was gone! It was the first time in ten years! He had checked for another hundred and had lost that. He was in a furious excitement. His face blazed with anxiety and astonishment. His system at last proved not to be infallible!

"Give me another hundred," he said. This was gone at a few bets! Placid arose and walked about the room, put on his hat and cloak as if to leave, paused and went to a side table, and drew a check for a thousand dollars; went back to the bank and drew out *blues* (\$50 chips). Rashly dropping them about on the cards, without regard to calculation, giving the bank all the science, with variable luck, in two or three deals, he lost the thousand, and seemed as one absolutely bewildered. He could not realize this remarkable incident. The idea of leaving the house without his usual *tribute* money, was as over-powering as it was new. He had

come to believe that the house owed him ten dollars a day! and cigars to boot! and now, all of a sudden, when he least expected it, he had lost about fifteen hundred dollars, the whole winnings of one hundred and fifty nights!

"Give me a little wine," said he in a hoarse whisper. The wine was brought. He drank it: it was the first wine he had ever tasted in the house.

"Open that window, I am very hot," said he, and to please him, the window was thrown open, though the frosty air chilled everybody else.

Col. Placid went again to the side table and drew another check for a thousand dollars.

"I will try this. If I lose, I shall quit." The prince had taken the dealer's chair. His whole attention was given to Placid—no other bet was particularly noticed. The idea of getting Placid in a swing aroused all the prince's energies. His sleeves were rolled up. His face was wreathed in smiles. His eye was second in brightness only to the diamond studs that glittered in his shirt bosom. Placid bet fifties and hundreds, often winning, but oftener losing. He jumped from card to card impatiently. He continued to do this for several deals, until he was reduced to a single chip. This he dashed upon the table and arose. "Give me the money for it,—” and he put fifty dollars in his pocket and ran out of the room.

The prince left the chair and conversed apart in whispers with his copartners. It was late—past 2 o'clock. Burton had long since retired.

"Let's close," said one.

"No," said the prince. "Placid will be back in an hour."

"Not he," said another.

"I'll bet a thousand dollars that he is back in an hour," said the prince.

"I take it."

The money was staked. The prince retired to one of the upper rooms, and returned in a few moments with some new packs of cards, and sat, as if waiting.

There were now but few persons in the room. Those who remained were professional gamblers, some of them the ropers of the establishment.

Three or four of these sat around the table with checks before them, ready to bet if any one should enter.

Many persons will not bet without company. This was particularly the case with Placid. In order, therefore, to keep the game going at all times, the ropers generally sit by the table, when there are no others, and keep up a small game for appearance.

The prince was dealing very carelessly for the ropers, pausing now and then over his cigar, and laughing at his friend who had staked a thousand against the return of Placid.

"I've got you, Major," said he, as the door-bell rang. "I've got you," exclaimed the prince. The door opened, and, in stepped Placid.



The prince was exultant; not so much over the thousand he had won, as the sagacity he had displayed.

Not a word was said. The deal went on with all gravity. Placid approached, and drawing from under his cloak several bags of gold, laid them upon the table.

"No limit?" asked he.

"None," replied the prince.

"These, then, on the ten," said Placid, placing a bag containing a thousand dollars on the card.

The ten won, and Placid quickly moved the bet to the deuce.

The deuce won.

"Hold!" said Placid, trembling like an aspen. He sat a moment irresolute, then took the bet down, leaving a single chip on the deuce.

"Turn," said he, and the deuce won again.

"What an ass am I," said Placid.

The prince remarked, dryly, "faint heart never won fair lady."

"A thousand on the ace," said Placid.

The ace lost.

"Another," said Placid.

The ace lost.

"Another."

The ace lost.

"Another."

The ace lost again.

One bag of the desperate broker was gone on the

first deal, and he leant back in his chair and groaned while the prince drew out a fresh pack of cards and fixed the box for another deal.

"A very little wine," said Placid; "don't be in a hurry; let's breathe a spell."

"Certainly; *take your time, Miss Lucy*," hummed the prince, as he drummed the table with his musical fingers.

"I bet on the five and seven," said Placid, placing a bag on the corner of the five pointing to the seven. The dealer began slowly to draw the cards. Several turns were made and neither of the numbers appeared.

"Stop," said Placid, "I take in the six." The six was the next card and the banker took down the bet.

"Two bags on the same," said Placid.

The five fell for the dealer!

"Four bags on the same."

Again the six fell for the bank.

"I have four bags left," said the broker, his white lips pinching each other upon his teeth. "I bet them all on the eight," placing the four bags of gold on the card.

It was an intense moment. The stolid frame of Placid absolutely jarred the table with its ill-concealed convulsions. The nails of his fingers were white as snow. His hair grew into bristles on the top of his head. His eyes glared.

"Go on—go on," he gasped, and in a moment the eight fell on the dealer's side, and the broker was again penniless!

He fell back in his chair, his head leaning on one side, the stub of a cigar hanging between his teeth, when he began a still, low laugh, not very audible, not very merry, growing louder by degrees until it swelled into a sort of half-stifled scream, mingled with words hardly articulated—"ten—ten—ten a day—dollars—a—"

* * * * *

The blind was thrown open; it was broad day. The prince looked out upon the glowing morning. AURORA had changed her silver star for gold, with which she had burnished her cheeks; and now with her yellow lips she was sipping the dew from the sparkling tree tops.

CHAPTER XXI.

"There, sir, you are beat again," said Beatrice. "You are not playing your best, you let me win on purpose."

"No. You are not doing yourself justice," said Sterling.

"Two games in an hour: your head must be running on politics. I will not play again; you might deprive me of my laurels." So saying, Beatrice arose, and left Sterling leaning over the chess-men that were dispersed about the board.

They had been sitting by the chess-table about an hour. He had vainly tried to play a respectable

game. His moves were the most awkward imaginable. His eyes and heart and thoughts were full of the matchless symmetry of her hand and fingers, now that he could see them all gloriously ungloved before him, near enough for him to touch. Ah! why had he not the privilege of seizing and devouring them?

It was the first time Sterling had seen Beatrice since her arrival home. He had called, partly to relieve himself from the whirl of political excitement, partly from a desire to see her again. He certainly had no design; no definite plan of the course he should pursue towards her. But his vague longings were unsuppressed. He made no effort to quiet the riotous tumults of his brain, or to check the impetuous impulses of his heart. He loved her, and he would not inquire into the morality of his love.

"What is your favorite?" said Beatrice, as her fingers wandered amid the strings of her harp.

"The Pilot," said Sterling. "Let me hear it again: it will remind me of that memorable night at sea."

She sang it, oh! so sweetly.

"What else?"

"Something about love," said Sterling.

"Well, what shall it be?"

"*Here we meet too soon to part.*"

"Tom Moore—it is an old favorite. Turn over the music and find it for me. I have forgotten it," and she touched one of the screws of her harp as Sterling looked for the music.

At that moment a splendid vehicle, drawn by two lovely grays, dashed up to the cottage; and Beatrice stepped to the window. She was surprised to see her husband get out of the carriage. A liveried driver sat upon the box; and the equipage had the air of the highest aristocracy.

Beatrice met her husband at the door. "Here is Gen. Sterling."

"Ah! general—glad to see you, sir: we have been expecting you. But I suppose you are deeply engaged in politics?"

"Yes, doctor, it is difficult to keep out of that whirlpool just now."

"Who are you going to make speaker?"

"Belvedere, I hope."

"It would be glorious if you could. But how will you get rid of Clodhead?"

"We expect to beat him in a fair race."

"I hope so," said the doctor. "Belvedere is an old friend of ours, a great favorite with Mrs. Curtis."

"Yes," said Beatrice. "I am delighted to hear you speak of his election with confidence. He's a beautiful speaker in debate; and so gentle and elegant in society."

"I heard so good a report of him, that I sought his acquaintance; and I am one of his friends in the election. There are great odds against him; but we have the strongest hopes. Monday will decide. You must come up and see us conduct him to the chair."

"You are not going?"

"Yes,—I have made a long visit. Mrs. Curtis has beaten me two games of chess. I shall be revenged, however, hereafter."

"She's a good player—you will find her hard to manage. But you have now found the way. We shall be happy, at all times, to see you!" said the doctor, with the utmost warmth and courtesy.

When Sterling was gone, Beatrice, taking her husband by the hand and leading him to the porch, inquired, "Whose carriage, hub?"

"It is yours, my dear," said the doctor.

"Mine!" said Beatrice, with some amazement.

"Yes; who has a better right to have such an establishment? It is yours, driver, horses and all, a present from your ever affectionate hubbie," said the doctor, as he placed his arm tenderly around her and kissed her.

"But you don't mean to say that you have bought that dashing establishment for me? why dear, what'll become of the ponies?"

"We'll keep them."

"That will be too extravagant. Indeed I am sorry you have spent so much money for me, when we could have done just as well with our little carriage and ponies."

Dr. Curtis felt hurt at this cold reception of his gift. He expected his wife to be all delight. She was absolutely pouting over it! So he pouted in turn, and remarked in rather an unamiable tone:

"Well, my dear, if you don't like it, I will send it back. We can sell it for nearly its cost. The

horses are in great demand." And the doctor called the driver and told him to drive to Mr. ——'s livery stable, and leave the establishment there.

"No, no, my dear. *That* is a little unkind. You should not be so hasty. I do not mean to refuse your present. I thank you for it from my heart, and I know that it was prompted by the high generosity of your nature. I was only grieving over our ponies. I will keep the carriage, and we will take a ride in it immediately, if you wish," said Beatrice, as she ran to get her bonnet.

As soon as little Helen discovered that the establishment was her sister's, she ran out and began playfully patting the beautiful horses about the neck, almost kissing them, oh, what lovely creatures," she exclaimed, and dashing along the walks amongst the shrubbery, she hastily gathered two variegated garlands, and tied them in the bridles, as she made the driver hold down the heads of the impatient animals.

Tying the ribbon of her bonnet, Beatrice saw in the mirror that her face was uncommonly rosy, and her eyes excited. This was indeed the first pass in their married life at all resembling a quarrel. She felt herself to blame for this. Everything she could do to quiet the doctor and to restore his good humor, was done. This glorious woman threw about her at this time all the charms of her generous and repentant heart. Her mind glowed with intellectual vivacity. Her graceful gayety would have captivated the coldest heart. Her smiles were

never so bright, her tongue never so glib. She expressed herself delighted with the beautiful horses and with the inside arrangement of the carriage, which was indeed as superb as it was convenient and comfortable.

The doctor was silent and thoughtful. The ride was long; the atmosphere mild and pleasant. She put her arm over his neck, and begged him to smile. He smiled, but "in such a sort as mocked itself."

"You are angry," she said.

"Indeed, I am not," he replied.

"But you are so cold. It is the first time I have ever offended."

"You are very good—my dear," said he, "do not be annoyed further at this foolish incident; there is no harm done; but I was sorely oppressed at the careless manner in which you at first received a present that I had been at so much pains to get. Imagine for a moment, that when I expected all delight and found all regret, how my heart must have been shocked."

"I see it, I see it all. It shall never happen again," said Beatrice, and the restoration seemed to be complete.

But Dr. Curtis continued to muse. He could not drive Sterling from his mind. He recollected the singular conduct of that gentleman on the occasion of the professional visit. It was a mystery; and taken in connection with the enthusiastic and warm encomiums which Beatrice pronounced without reserve upon this dashing young congressman, he

concluded that the pretended call was a trick by which he had been drawn into an early acquaintance with Sterling; an acquaintance which of course was intended to throw open the doctor's house to this titled stranger at the earliest moment; and he really began to think that Beatrice had connived at it.

His mind was curtained with dark and shadowy misgivings; so that the occasional smiles which played upon his face as he seemed to listen to his wife, appeared faint and sickly, imparting sorrow and dejection to the pale cast of his melancholy countenance.

CHAPTER XXII.

What is first love? The dreamy idleness of a child's mind, when the heart is very busy with indefinite longings:

Sitting on a bench in school, at ten years old, and looking all day long slyly but steadily into the face of some creature whose image lies on the surface of your heart:

Or leaning with copy before you at a double sided writing-desk, face to face with a congenial spirit of the opposite sex, near enough for the feet to meet underneath, and for the throbbing ankles to touch, thrill and linger together:

Lounging under the shade of the old oak in the

the school yard, with your little darling near you playing with your hair, while you do up her arithmetic, all wrong from the lack of capacity on your own part to think or to enumerate:

Lying in a girl's lap, of double your age, with no definite inclination except never to move:

Gathering cherries and standing near the corner of the garden, twice a day, waiting for the passing to and from school of your favorite, and filling her satchel with the fruit, without the courage to ask her for a kiss in return, or the fortitude even to look straight into her eyes.

When Lily returned, after her adventure in the market, Sterling was absent. She was very restless. She attempted to sleep on the sofa; but there was Sterling's morning gown lying under her head; how could she sleep. She wrapped herself up in it, and put her cheek and lips on the collar, and again lay down. She buried her face entirely in its folds, and produced out of its red lining a sort of rosy darkness; but this served only to illuminate a vast, indefinable spectacle. Great, shapeless images, in panoramic irregularity, as infinite as they were various, flashed and faded before her. Giants and dwarfs, drums and trumpets, soldiers and cavaliers, fairies and angels, men and women, double-headed monsters and limping gorgons, with the threatening features of Maggie Dobbins; such things as these were ever present, and only relieved by the ever beautiful and smiling countenance of Sterling.

But why don't he come, so that she may see him in reality, and tell him all about her adventure?

Again she arose and walked about the room. She put her little feet into his slippers; she opened the book he had been reading and kissed the mark; she peeped into his chamber, for the first time, and saw his great white pillow, large enough almost for a bed; she ran in and laid her face upon it, and left her kisses all over it; she took his hair brush and touched up her topknot; looked timidly into his mirror; dashed some of his cologne on her shirt bosom and went out.

Listening to all the footsteps that sounded along the passage, as she lay upon the sofa, hoping that each one announced the coming of Sterling, she fell into a gentle sleep, which lasted long, and in which there were many dreams. She thought that her mother came and held a rose to her lips; she awoke—Sterling had just kissed her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Sterling had an interview with Blunderbuss on the subject of the speaker's election. He managed, without compromising himself, to convince that gentleman that the success of Belvedere was almost certain. So satisfied, indeed, was Blunderbuss with the figures and prospects, that he began to think

that his best plan, in order to make the most out of his position, was to support Belvedere; and, giving Sterling a broad hint as to what he should expect, he left, with an intimation that under certain contingencies, he would be found right.

The New Yorker who had undertaken the management of Johnny Jump-up's case, had done the thing so handsomely, that we have but to tarry a moment in the barber's shop to see the result. When Johnny entered to be shaved, his favorite barber handed him the N. Y. —, in which he found the following article:

"Telegraphic.

WASHINGTON CITY, Dec. 1, 18—.

The canvass for speaker has taken a sudden and unexpected turn. Last night a meeting of the friends of Charles Belvedere was called at the rooms of Gen. Sterling, at which thirty members were present, one from each state. Plans and combinations were formed and the most active measures resolved upon. It is said that the friends of Pustleponch will all go for Belvedere. It is strongly intimated that your indefatigable and talented representative, Mr. Jump-up, disgusted with the double dealing of Clodhead, Plunket & Co., will undoubtedly give his valuable support to the new combination. If this should be true (and the character of Mr. Jump-up is so well known and appreciated, that few doubt it), you may set it down as certain, that Belvedere will be elected. The city is just now all agog on the subject; Mr. Clodhead looks grave, and Plunket is absolutely ferocious."

As Jump-up got through the article, the lathering began. The barber remarked: "I have just shaved Mr. Belvedere."

"Ah!" said Jump-up, "what did he have to say for himself?"

"He talked a good deal about sundry matters; he's a pleasant gentleman," said the barber.

"Yes, a capital fellow, and if they don't watch him he will be elected speaker," said Jump-up.

"Do you think so?"

"Yes I do."

"I think," replied the barber, "that he dreads you more than any other man."

"Ah! why so?"

"I happened to speak of you as being a candidate. He said that you were worth a dozen Plunkets."

"That was very kind of him, did he say nothing else?"

"No; as I got through with him, he made that remark and walked out."

"Well, between us, I think he is about half right. What is there in Plunket? I should hate to think that I was not as smart," said the self-satisfied Mr. Jump-up.

At that moment, Johnny gave such a violent toss of his head upwards, that the razor slipped, and for the first time in years, the disconsolate barber saw his lather assume, under his skillful hand, a rosy appearance—and Johnny exclaimed:

"By George—you've cut me!"

So let vanity, pride, pomposity, ignorance, groveling and unworthy ambition always be cut—only deeper.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A sabbath in Washington city, especially the last sabbath before the organization of congress, is a rare day. No where in the world is there more eager and busy restlessness displayed. There you see and hear the quick walk; the ringing for servants; the anxious inquiry; the running up and down stairs; the "See if No.—is in?" There you have the corner interview; the gathering of clubs and knots in close, mysterious confab; the silent, knowing hint; the half laughing wink and quizzical squint of the professed wise-acre; the broad wonderment of the uninitiated, and the vacant stare of the listless loafer who comes to look around, not caring what is to be done or who is to be seen.

Mr. Plunket rushes in and out repeatedly; inquires something of every member; dashes up stairs with mysterious haste; returns and goes out rapping his cane against the marble floor, so that it rings again.

Mr. Clodhead enters, and with slow and dignified movement, perambulates every recess of the ample halls, the lounging and reading rooms, bowing gracefully as he passes, to every acquaintance; giving his ear to a dozen at a time; laughs loud and triumphantly, as if his election was a fixed fact, and throws himself back in his boots a considerable distance.

Pustleponch waddles through the crowd, puffing

and slobbering, twirling the steel watch-key that hangs at the end of a rattling gold chain; trying to bow to his friends, but finding it quite difficult to effect it gracefully, his back-bone being decidedly stiff, with an uncontrollable inclination to jerk his head backwards. But his affability knows no bounds, albeit his hilarity is a little subdued and constrained.

Blunderbuss and Jump-up are seen sometimes arm in arm, in private, earnest conversation, each of them exhibiting a thoughtful, impatient and uneasy countenance, as if they were about to slide down that slippery hill of ambition, which they had just begun most eagerly to climb.

Col. Rampant whistles through the rooms, the very picture of intellectual abstraction, looking down upon the floor and coming in contact with every body, but jumping out of the way with the utmost agility—for to admit the fact, he had great elasticity of body and spryness of foot. There was never a cat that could spring more lightly, or a Frenchman that could cut the pigeon-wing more gracefully.

Mr. Wiregrass, gallanted by the letter-writer of the New York ———, who had been puffing him, lounged leisurely along, as if interchanging opinions as to the subject of the next communication to the ———, and whether it would not be best that something should be said, by which the candidate from the west could be let down, as having gracefully and magnanimously retired from the contest in

favor of Mr. Clodhead; for, notwithstanding the energy of Belvedere's friends, the figures of the outsiders and of the best informed, under all probable contingencies, augured the election of Mr. Plunket's bull-dog.

"Lend me *twenty*, Wiregrass, I have immediate use for it," said this imp of the press.

"Certainly, with the greatest pleasure," said the imperturbable Mr. Wiregrass. "Be a little cautious how you phrase your article," continued the politician, as the letter-writer was about to dodge off.

"Old enough for that!" said the latter; and these two individuals separated.

But the church bells are ringing! Who cares for that? Certainly not those gentlemen in the corner who are just staking a bet of five hundred dollars on Clodhead's election! "Yes sir, I'll double the bet; Clodhead against the field! Your Belvederes can't come in this time."

But the church bells are ringing! Who would suppose that it was the signal for a squad of politicians to meet at the rooms of Col. Blunderbuss, gravely to discuss the propriety of that gentleman hanging on as a candidate for speaker! Yet such is the fact; they were to meet at eleven, and for fear that some should forget the time, the ringing of the church bells was to be the remembrancer.

The church bells are ringing. Sterling descends from his room, leading by the hand a beautiful boy, elegantly dressed, with a little cloak that Raleigh

might have envied, thrown over his shoulders, and a delicate neck-muff of dark fur around his white throat, partly hiding the sky blue ribbon that fastened his shirt collar. They pass through the busy, restless, active throng, without noticing any body, and finding their way to the front door, get into a hack and are driven off to church. Lily had an Episcopal prayer book in her hand; and as they rode towards the church, she turned over the leaves with a perfect knowledge of the pages which embraced the service for that day.

Sterling observed, as he rode round the corner of his hotel, Clodhead, Blunderbuss and Jump-up, standing together in earnest conversation. The truth is, the ever watchful and sagacious Clodhead had received some hints of the probable defection of these gentlemen; and he was just now taking them through a regular drill, giving them to understand that the Democratic party would acknowledge no man who would refuse to go into caucus and to abide the result. These gentlemen were beginning to show signs of penitence. They thought that Belvedere's chances were gone; and, as their only object was position, they were mutually seized with intense regret that they had ever thought of doing anything outside of regular partisan discipline.

Clodhead had his game fully planned. He felt the importance of the votes of these two men; he was keen enough to know that he would be hard run. He played the imperious (and no man could do it better) with these quasi deserters; and when he

had drubbed them into a sense of their duty to their party, he left them to the more plastic hands of Plunket and others who were on the watch, and who elbowed them off immediately; and without compromising their chief, or speaking in his name, pledged themselves both to Blunderbuss and Jump-up that they should have certain positions on certain committees provided they supported Clodhead—for with their support his election would be sure. This last appeal was irresistible, and overturned, at once, all that the friends of Belvedere had done towards securing the support of these two individuals.

"You can make a *good thing out of this*, Jump-up," said Plunket, "and there's no use hanging off. You are as poor as h—l, any how, and it's not worth while to deny it. And when a fellow has a chance to do something for himself, why, I say, let him do it."

This was very true, but it came like a cold shower upon Johnny's feathers. His comb was cut; the idea that he should have, at last, to take the advice of Plunket, and even to except of it as a friendship with a sneer into the bargain, was perfectly shocking to him. But, then, it was much more shocking—the idea of *losing a good position and the chance of making a good thing out of it*.

Not to prolong the expectation of the reader in reference to the election, it is only necessary to say that the effect of the work done on Sunday night was so powerful upon the defected, that there was an easy triumph for Clodhead; and he was elected speaker on the second ballot, by a few votes over

Belvedere—Pustleponch and all his friends having voted for the latter.

Blunderbuss was made chairman of an important committee.

Jump-up was not made chief of the committee on——, the very best thing going, there being much delicate *chiseling* necessarily connected with the operation.

Belvedere, notwithstanding the efforts of his friends to defeat Clodhead, was made chairman of ways and means; and Pustleponch was consigned to the oblivion of the committee on——, in recollection of his passion for literature in general, and Tristram Shandy in particular.

CHAPTER XXV.

The election of Vereprompt, to the post of the door-keeper, settled the question as to Lily's promotion. There is no describing the anxiety she felt, or the restlessness she exhibited. She had been locking her little fingers together; twisting her arms over her shoulders, and parading up and down her chamber all the evening after the election; and when told that she should go to the Capitol the next morning, for the purpose of being inaugurated, she was wild with delight. She got up at daylight, and was ready. It was a long, long time with her until breakfast. She had her cap on repeatedly, to start before the

time. About eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning, the second day of the session, Sterling took her by the hand, and led her along the avenue. When they reached the entrance to the hall of the house, he inquired for the door-keeper's room. It was pointed out to him; and he was amazed to see the door besieged by a vast number of boys and women; the boys ranging in age, apparently, from eight to fifteen years; there must have been two hundred; all handsomely dressed, and looking anxious, eager and rosy. Sterling reached the door with difficulty, and when ushered in he saw Vereprompt, standing in the midst of as many women, boys and men, as could easily be crammed into the small three-cornered room.

"You promised me, Mr. Vereprompt," said one.

"Yes, Mr. Vereprompt, you must not forget my poor boy, and his poor mother," said another.

"I shall hold you to your word," said a third.

"Mr. Vereprompt, my mother sent me up to get my place; she could not come herself," said a fine looking boy, as he touched his cap.

"My dear friends," said Vereprompt, "I have only twelve pages to appoint, and how can I possibly give you all places?"

Lily pressed Sterling's hand with a nervous jerk. She was beginning to despair. Dozens of voices addressed Vereprompt at once—widows, mothers, brothers and sons, all spoke together, so that the confusion was as great as could be well imagined.

"You must all come to-morrow," said Vereprompt. "I can do nothing to-day. I will take all

your claims into consideration and do the best I can."

The crowd began to retire. Vereprompt saw Sterling about to approach with his little boy.

"Ah! General Sterling, good morning, come, stay until the press is over—and we will talk."

Sterling took a seat in the corner, Lily leaning on his knee, her large blazing eyes bent upon Vereprompt, as if she thought him the greatest human being alive.

"I can't satisfy all, you see, General," said Vereprompt, "so I have to appease them with promises. Every one of these boys and their mothers fancy that, in some way or other, I have promised. There are two hundred applicants here this morning, all appealing to me upon the strength of *promises*. Now, how could I promise so many, when I had so few places to bestow."

"Well, the thing looks a little absurd," said Sterling, "but I rather suspect that you are a good electioneerer, Mr. Vereprompt."

The truth is, Vereprompt had promised over two hundred places to boys and their parents (having only twelve to give), and he was now reaping the reward of his duplicity in a harvest of tears and curses; for many a poor widow left him that morning with the corner of her apron pressed upon her eyes, and her tongue uttering maledictions.

"What say you to our boy, Mr. Vereprompt?" said Sterling as he pushed back the hair over Lily's brow.

"Well," said Vereprompt, rubbing his hands, "do you not think, General, that he is rather small and delicate; the duties are very arduous. I am afraid he would break down. But he's a beautiful boy; indeed, a very beautiful boy."

"I have strength too —"

"Hush, Ernest," said Sterling, as he bent his ferocious eye upon Vereprompt. "Do you intend to make Ernest Carey a page, Mr. Vereprompt? I expect it and demand it!"

"It shall be so, sir, certainly. But you must allow me the privilege to supersede him if it should turn out that he is not able to perform the duties."

"Of course; only give him a fair chance."

"Oh, yes! that's all I ask," said Lily, jumping up and clapping her hands together.

It is not easy to describe the exuberant joy that spread its rosy mantle over the glowing features of this excited child. It seemed that she had at last passed through the golden portals of the gorgeous air-castles which her fancy had been building. Her dream had been realized, for she laid her hands upon the cold pillars and found them to be solid marble. The hope that had been dawning dimly through the misty, moonlit atmosphere of imagination, swelled, at once, into full blaze; and her child's heart, under the new illumination, took, in an instant, the dimensions of a giant's, and throbbed to the music of a trumpet. Alexander on Bucephalus, as the fleet gallop for the first time excited his royal blood, felt not more gloriously.

"Now, where shall I go?" she exclaimed. "I'm ready. Show me my place. I am to run to a member when he whistles or calls, or slaps his desk—this way! O, I've seen it. I must find what he wants and fetch it to him; and then go back to my place and wait until another calls."

"Oh, you'll fall into it quickly, I see; come along, I'll show you," and Vereprompt took the child by the arm and led her to the circle under and in front of the speaker's chair, where the pages stand.

It was not yet quite twelve o'clock; the members were gathering in. Sterling had taken his seat, and his eyes were fixed upon Ernest (we must now drop the name of *Lily*). He was amazed to see how manly she looked! perfectly erect, she stood amongst the other pages, as if conscious of superiority. She exchanged looks with her mates, but kept rather aloof. Her eyes wandered over the hall, and her ear seemed listening for a summon. Sterling saw the first rush she made. She flew with much grace and agility to the member who had called, ran to execute his orders, and returned to her place, as if delighted with her achievement.

Sterling rapped on his desk; she was at his side in a moment. He wished to warn her against too much eagerness.

"Take things more quietly. Don't rush so. Let the other boys work some. You can out-do any of them even if you only half try. When you get tired come and sit by me. You need not do much to-day."

"Oh it's such fun, I like it—and I should never

get tired: but I'll do as you say." And she returned to her stand, still eager and active, but calm and subdued.

Here we may properly pause for a moment. Time is, at last, the best writer of history. In all the scenes of life, TIME will officiate. The pen may do its chapter; the sword may do its battle; but TIME brings the maiden to maturity, graduates the pulse of the hero, and best displays the bones of the slaughtered.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

The defeat of Belvedere had not the slightest effect upon his spirits or his humor. He had not permitted himself to indulge in anxious desires or delusive hopes. He knew nothing of those hot and feverish aspirations which fall back exhausted upon themselves, crushing out the intellectual energies. Instead of spending his time in pursuit of position, he labored assiduously to make himself ready for the best that might come,—so that he should be equal to any emergency of duty, or accident of promotion. He was struck with the energetic character of Sterling, and was grateful to that gentleman for his ingenious and manly efforts to elect him speaker. It is not surprising that these two young men should have become bosom friends. Belvedere had changed his apartments, and had procured rooms adjoining those of Sterling. Their parlors opened into each other. Their libraries were mixed;

their studies, in many respects, were the same; and their association much in common. Sterling had more of the world in him, and less of the student; quite as much ambition, but without patience; perhaps he had more genius, but certainly less industry. Sterling expected; Belvedere *resolved* to rise. The one pulled flowers by the way, the other gathered briars for the pleasure of plucking away the thorns, thus schooling himself to the great duty of a statesman's life—the removing of difficulties.

Belvedere had accomplished a complete education. His love of the classics led him still to cultivate the ancients. His models were perfection. Cicero was his orator; Homer his poet; Hannibal his warrior; Catiline his traitor; Roscius his actor; Lucullus his host, and Cato his statesman. In music alone he gave the preference to a modern, and Orpheus yielded to a Paganini.

"Perfection in art is what we ought to labor for," he would say to Sterling, in his glowing conversations. "The perfection of a fiddler, as well as an orator, indicates the character of the spirit that directs and the genius that achieves. Paganini is as great as Demosthenes. Each retired from the world for the perfection of art; the one laboring to harmonize tones with a pebble, the other with horse hair and catgut. A great song is equal to a great oration; a great opera, to many orations."

"Do you know, Sterling," said Belvedere, as he took up his violin, "when I was at college, I was so given to music and so much absorbed in the fid-

dle, that for weeks at a spell, I would abandon everything, and spend my energies in chasing tones all over the campus;—all over the old dormitory, from cellar to dome;—all over the grove, striving to imitate the twitter of the birds; and by the streams touched the strings for the rush of a water-fall or the rolling of the brook over the pebbles. I would lie under a tree and play and twang my strings, so that the mocking bird would linger overhead, and answer me again, as he bent his eye downwards and leaned his fascinated ear to the strange music. It is a truth: there was an old oak near my window, and I never failed to call out the answer of a charmed bird, whenever I touched my fiddle. He would come long before day, and sing in rich screams as if giving me a signal to play for him; and many a time have we carried on this harmonious chitchat for hours. When he heard anything that pleased him particularly, he would change from limb to limb with the utmost impatience, as if struggling to hear it again or to see its source; he would *encore* most vociferously, and sit perfectly mute and motionless until the playing ceased. He was a charming listener. He never moved his throat while I played. When he found I would not gratify him again—after a few impatient screams, he would tune up his throat and give me such infinite varieties of tone, such rushes and gushes of natural music, that my whole frame would be tremulously alive with the sweetest sensations; my spirits pervaded with harmony. Indeed, there is nothing

perfect but God's work. He made everything complete, however scattered and disjointed. All instrumental music, of course, is imitative. There is not a tone escapes an instrument, however curious the combination, but has its original in nature; in the bird, the air, the thunders, the spheres, the water, the shell, the cavern, the echo, or in the animal voice. All motion is music, though sometimes too delicate for vulgar ears, for it crowds the atmosphere. The spider's tiniest thread is a chord from which the fingers of the air draw delicious harmony.

'There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
But, in its motion, like an angel sings—
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims.
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we can not hear it.'

"It is remarkable that so grave a politician should be so much alive to music," replied Sterling.

But the remark was not heeded by Belvedere. He threw open his window and drew the bow over his fiddle with magical skill. The rich tones floated through the still atmosphere, and the invisible white arms of the charmed moon caught them and carried them far, far away into the clashing realms of the ever humming stars. The only sound that broke the harmony was the unbolting of lattices all around and the throwing up of windows, for many a fair hand, with its naked arm, as it pushed open the

window blind to admit the music, allowed itself to be bathed by the cold night air.

It was the Marseilles Hymn. Belvedere seemed to be charmed with his own performance, for the verses were repeated over and over again. Sterling was lying on a sofa enraptured, so that when the strain was over he spoke not.

Turning his chair, Belvedere, with a melancholy abstracted countenance, gazed upon a covered picture on the wall, and seeming to forget that any person was present, in a slow, solemn, half-improvising manner, he played "The Last Rose of Summer." This being over he arose, went to the picture and, as he was about to remove the gauze, Ernest plucked him by the gown and Sterling retired to his chamber.

Ernest was a favorite with Belvedere. His association with Sterling was harmonized by the bewitching presence of this charming boy, who was at home equally in each of their apartments. This eminent statesman, was himself as gentle and playful as a child, always in a glee, except when at business. After the fatigues of an exciting debate, with the hoarse clamor of many voices ringing in his ears, he would hasten to his chamber, throw on his gown, lounge on his sofa, and call Ernest to his side. She was ever present to answer him. He fondled with her as if he was petting his own child; was amazed at the delicacy of her frame, the bewildering and tremulous brilliancy of her eyes. Her feminine smile struck him as remarkable. Her voice

Do the stars hum?

was a girl's—and her dewy lips imparted misty sparkles to her breath. But he had not the remotest suspicions of her sex.

She plucked him by the gown: "Let me play for you," she said, as she exhibited her guitar.

Belvedere, being lost in his own abstract thoughts, was startled by this sudden appeal. But he received her kindly. "Certainly, certainly," said he, "go on."

Ernest had been asleep. Belvedere's music had aroused her. She had thrown her little silk morning gown over her, wrapping it closely around her waist with its heavy cord. She pinned it at the neck, so that the shirt collar was accidently hid. The gown reached nearly to her feet.

She had not put on her pants for she was too eager, and her feet were covered only by her slippers. She looked very like a girl.

She played, but indifferently. She felt this and made several efforts to improve. Her nerves were agitated. Belvedere's music had thrown her into the greatest excitement. She trembled violently as she attempted to sing; tears came along with the failure and her guitar slipped out of her lap, just as Belvedere, in compassion, sat down close by her side and put his arms around her neck. She broke into convulsive sobs and hid her face in the folds of his gown.

"What's the matter, child," he exclaimed.

"Nothing."

"You must not weep."

"I must; I was thinking of my mother. Has Mr. Sterling told you?"

"What?"

"Nothing," said Ernest, "but I am so happy—I have so many fathers," and she placed her arms around his neck, and through her tears poured a flood of misty light into his dewy eyes. He caressed her long; she resumed her cheerfulness and retired to her little chamber.

CHAPTER II.

Ernest's apartment was adjoining Sterling's, and was sacred to him. He never entered it without rapping at the door. Belvedere took no such precaution, not knowing the necessity, but he seldom entered it for any purpose. It was supplied with every conceivable convenience, and adorned with elegance; a prince could not have been better lodged. Her bathing tub was a model for luxury; she could almost swim in it, and scarcely a day passed without her indulging in the refreshing bath. She had but to turn a faucet, and warm or cold water would rush into it in abundance. She loved to hear the water pour, and would almost shout as the cold crystal broke round her ankles. Then she would stoop to catch it on her knees, and throw it on her shoulders. She would lie on her back and stick her toes one by one, then two at a time, into the spout, and thus

watch the stream, as it spread, in its diminished quantity, over her feet. Then she would spring around and receive the whole of the limpid current on her head. Her little shivering shouts were poetical ecstasies! It was never winter within her chamber, and this bath was a perpetual luxury. She brightened and grew round and rosy from this exercise. It had brought flesh to her feet and arms; her shoulders were beginning a positive development.

She was thus indulging in one of these glorious antics, one morning, without having locked her door. It was most unlucky. Belvedere wanted her. Standing upright in the tub, she was gathering the long towel, almost as long as a sheet, when suddenly the door flew open, and Belvedere appeared! She uttered an audible O! and was mute and motionless! but the towel had a happy location, and she sank down into the water! Its cold arms saved her from fainting.

Belvedere, not aware of the extent of her confusion, tarried in the room, saying "You little duck, get out of that. I want you directly."

"Please go out," she said, spreading the towel over her bosom. "I'll come immediately."

The statesman retired, remembering that Cato would not allow his sons to bathe with him in the same pool.

CHAPTER III.

Time passes on. Dr. Curtis continued his visits to the gaming houses. Between playing, dashing and flashing in the gayest society, he already began to feel the want of more money. His parties were the most brilliant in the city, but his practice was gone, his character was soiled—for it can not long be concealed, when a man habitually visits a gambling house. He was falling, by degrees, into the fatal habit of drink. Several times he had gone home to the arms of his lovely wife, nearly intoxicated! At such times he was snarlish, disagreeable, insinuating, disgusting. She bore all this like an angel, hoping for the best.

Sterling continued his visits to Beatrice. As often as propriety would allow, he was by her side. His love grew almost turbulent, simply because he could not disclose it. Never had he dared to avow it. Everybody except Beatrice could see his passion. Devotion of person is the best declaration of love. That Beatrice began to be charmed, need not be denied. The time with him was delightful—away from him, dull. How could she fail to feel the difference between the harsh insinuating phrases of a snarling tyrant, and the soft tones of a tremulous tongue, whose sad voice was freighted with gentleness and deference? Did Sterling love her? Would she ask

herself this question? Why not? Where is the heart that ever refused to be loved by an equal—a supposed superior? Unavowed love is free to rove whithersoever it listeth. And who, in trying to control the heart, ever failed to nurse the passion?

Had Sterling avowed his passion, or offered improprieties, Beatrice would have driven him forever from her presence.

Her virtue was in her honor. Her husband was crushing her hopes—not her heart;—that monarch of life, with elastic spirit, lifts its bright eye undimmed amid the saddest ruins, and looks beyond the fallen temple of fortune, into the far, but ever-green, vales of hope. In accidental misfortune the heart of man and woman may go hand in hand to the grave, and cease their harmonious unison only in death; but ingratitude disrobes sympathy of its richest garments, while suspected virtue arms itself in honor and scorn, not thinking how surely revenge becomes a dangerous hand-maid.

"How do you like the book?" said Sterling.

"Amazingly," answered Beatrice.

It was Wilhelm Meister. Sterling had sent it with desires that she should read it critically.

"For the philosophical development of character," said Beatrice, "I know no romance equal to it. It is a book to be read more than once. As in a great poem, new beauties appear upon every reading. It is suited to every class of society. There is love for the sentimental, adventure for the romantic, acute criticism for the scholar, and poetry for the imagina-

tive. In it every phase of society is mirrored. It reflects the whole of Germany, and the picture is full of life. The prince, the peasant, the merchant, the actor, the minstrel, the mimic, the artist, the philosopher, the astronomer in the heavens, and the geologist in the earth." "No wonder," she continued, "that this book has such complete possession of the German reader, and there is as little wonder that it does not take hold of the American reader. The scenes are not American; the theatre in Germany is a part of real life, in America it is an incidental recreation. In Germany the enjoyment of the stage is habitual and intellectual, in America it is occasional. Wilhelm Meister is read in America only by scholars, artists and poets; for the general reader I should think it had few charms. It is not a book for coaches or steamboats."

"All minds in America," said Sterling, "do not remain American. The books first read shape the early impressions. The dreaming school-boy under foreign pedagogues, with an occasional leisure or stolen hour, for the perusal of eastern romances, will grow up a foreigner in thought if not in habit. The bright boy with restless imagination, turns from his native sky, to view through the telescope of fancy, the poetic clouds that curtain Italian sunsets. He leaves his native hills to rove in idea around the base of Parnassus. From his own grand wilderness, where every tree is a minstrel, and every mound a poem, he flies to the ancient haunts of Pan and Orpheus; and for the every day sight of his mystic

trees and mighty cataracts, he paints in panoramic magnificence the gorgeous scenery of the Rhine. To such readers Wilhelm Meister is always a feast. What romantic boy does not find himself sketched to the life in Wilhelm's description of his passion for puppets, and his longings for theatricals. What youthful poet of true genius is not himself painted, as Wilhelm, in despair of excellence in art, throws his manuscripts into the fire? What lover, as his heart whispers its sorrows to the meek-eyed moon, does not see himself in Wilhelm, as afar off in the cool night, he sits alone watching the lattice of his beloved, to see if her gown or the wings of her long hair should cast a shadow on the glass?" Here Sterling read from the volume:

"At such times, Wilhelm's thoughts were beautiful as the spirits of twilight; rest and desire alternated within him; love ran with a quivering hand in a thousand moods, over all the chords of his soul; it was as if the spheres stood mute above him, suspending their eternal song, to watch the low melodies of his heart."

"Very beautiful," said Beatrice; "surpassingly so. Indeed there are many such passages in the work. Not too many, but just enough to lift us from the common places of minute descriptions into the pillowy realms of fancy. The relief thus offered is delightful; the mind soars away as the imagination grows tremulous with emotion. The perfection of art is in nothing more clearly displayed than in the magical skill with which Goethe adorns his life

pages with the sparkling gems of poetry. It is so natural, too; there is no appearance of straining after beauty; all is ease and grace, showing itself without effort."

"Now, indeed," exclaimed Sterling, "you *are* a poet; I knew it all along; how could I mistake you."

"I love the beautiful in nature and excellent in art; so far I am a poet," said Beatrice.

"Goethe was a true man as well as a great genius. He worships nature, and if he turns aside the veils in which it is mysteriously garbed, it is only to see and to admire. But he worshiped genius in man with equal fervency and was without jealousy. See what he says of Shakespeare as he spoke of the great poet to a young countryman:

"I will lend you a volume of Shakespeare; it can do no harm to see what is extraordinary with your own eyes. You can not better spend your time than by casting everything aside, and retiring to the solitude of your old habitation to look into the magic lantern of that unknown world." * * *

"In this mood of mind Wilhelm received the promised book, and ere long, as may be easily supposed, the stream of that mighty genius laid hold of him and led him down to a shoreless ocean where he soon forgot and lost himself completely."

"There is a vein of criticism upon Hamlet," continued Sterling, "running through the second volume of Wilhelm Meister, which is an unsurpassed effort of the art of reviewing."

These conversations were frequent but brief.

Sterling was a poor talker when with Beatrice. There was too much heart in his mouth, and his utterance was as ungraceful, as his thoughts were undefined. His restlessness often broke out in his impetuous manner of rising from his seat and treading impatiently over the floor. Sometimes Beatrice would sit quietly, for in a turn or two he would resume his seat by her side; sometimes she would rise up with him, her arm in his, and walk along as his shadow, pausing here and there, by the piano or harp, or in front of some fine picture, or by the window, in whose niches the pensive love to linger, especially at night, when the moon sends down her ray-clad heralds to sit amid the enchanted curtains.

The criticism of the book was ended. They thought little of characters, of philosophy, of poetry, of rhetoric, of scenery or scenes. A dull, heavy quiet pervaded their minds, and their hearts beat low, and moved to the most irregular measure. Each suspected the thoughts of the other; but the timidity of guilt was a mutual restraint. Their words were few, but the sigh appealed meekly for interpretation; and that inspired auditor, the heart, answered: "*I know it—I know it; and I believe.*"

CHAPTER IV.

Beatrice was sitting by a window, which looked out upon the gate that opened at the end of the walk, leading towards the river. She saw a neatly dressed

youth coming towards the house, with a small parcel under his arm. The little fellow stopped several times on his way to the house, stooping down by the side-walks.

He had plucked an early crocus, and was arraying it in his button-hole, as he glanced his eye in the direction of the window. The blind was open, and the curtain drawn aside, so that he saw Beatrice. He hurried along the walk, and as he stepped upon the porch, the front-door swung open, and Helen presented herself.

"I came to bring a parcel to Mrs. Curtis," said Ernest. "Is she at home?"

"Yes," replied Helen, "she is my sister. You are Ernest Carey, are you not? General Sterling told us you would come to-day."

"Yes, thank you," said Ernest. "And you are *little Helen*, I guess; for the General told me I should see a very pretty little girl." His cap had been in his right hand, and he immediately transferred it to the left, as he offered his hand to Helen, who was holding out her's to greet him.

"Oh what eyes!" Ernest, as he looked full into her face. "I ~~know~~ we shall be friends, shan't we?"

"Yes, if you are a good boy."

"Oh! I am the best. Never doubt me. I have the praise. I shall obey and worship!" This was said with the presuming gaiety of a young prince, and Helen gazed at the youth with some expression of astonishment.

"Your colloquy is too long," said Beatrice, coming from the parlor. "Walk in, my little page. What have you there?"

"Something for you, if you are Mrs. Curtis," said Ernest. "Are you?"

"Yes, let me have it," and Beatrice received the parcel with impatient eagerness, and turning from the children, tore it open. It was a roll of music, from which dropped a note reading as follows:

"This is the new song which I spoke of. The music does not suit entirely; the words are set to the *air* of '*When I left thy shores, oh! Naxos!*' I shall expect to hear it from you when I come. Belvedere is coming with me, this evening.

Your ob't serv't,

STERLING."

THE SONG.

Leave us not, oh! gentle stranger,
Linger with us yet awhile —
Sweet thy presence, sweet the danger
That is lurking in thy smile;
Sure, my heart at every meeting,
Feels a new and wild delight;
Bliss, they say, is always
Let it not be so to-night.

Thine the power to charm, not caring,
Who turns worshiper to thee;
Conquering but never warring,
With a magic witchery.
From thine eye is Cupid keeping
Watch within its lucid wells;
In thy glances laughing, leaping,
See we many deathful spells.

Wilt thou go and leave me broken,
In my spirit and my heart?
Not a pledge, no gentle token,
Scarce a smile before we part?
Ah! this world is full of sorrow;
What's the pleasure of to-day?
We but wake to see the morrow
Bear our brightest hopes away!

Ernest and Helen were busy with their chit-chat, lingering about the window, while Beatrice sang the song. She played it first on the piano, then on the harp. She thought it pretty and repeated it. Helen lisped the first lines as Ernest was about to start. "Leave us not, oh! gentle stranger," said the graceful child, pretending to pout a little.

"Well, I will not, if you'll go with me to gather flowers."

"There are but few; it is winter yet," said Helen, "but let me get my bonnet." And away she dashed and was gone but a moment.

Ernest was quite as tall as Helen, but not so full and round. They ran along the garden walks delighted. Their hearts seemed to leap together at first sight. As they turned into an arbor, Ernest, forgetting that he was a boy, put his arm around her waist, exclaiming: "Oh! *how I shall love you.*"

"Not so fast," said Helen, pushing him gently away, laughing; "You little audacious!"—trying to frown but not succeeding.

"But we will be *such* friends, wont we, darling?" said he, as he touched her curls, smoothed the

hair on her forehead, and fingered the rich jewel that hung from her ear.

"Yes, but you must behave."

"Well, I promise: If you will just let me love you with all my might, I'll behave."

"Agreed," said Helen; and flowers were pulled, exchanged, and mutually fitted in curls and button-holes, until Ernest, drawing out his watch, exclaimed: "Oh! you little witch, it is twelve o'clock; the house has met—yonder flies its flag! I should be there at this moment, and it is a full mile! I must go now—a kiss—a kiss—

—'a kingdom for a —' "

"There," said Helen, slapping him on the cheek, and breaking out in a monstrous laugh, as the little fellow turned, pouting, toward the gate.

Beatrice's carriage had been ordered at twelve, and as it drove up Ernest called entreatingly to Helen, "Will you suffer me to walk to the Capitol? If I am not there immediately I shall be reprimanded and perhaps turned out."

"Jump into the carriage and ride," she replied, running to overtake him before he reached the gate; "Jump in; sister won't be ready for a half hour yet."

"But you must come with me; you can come back with the carriage."

"Well, come along," said Helen.

"Won't it be elegant?"

"Splendid! You *will* run away with me!" The children jumped in, and as the footman closed the

door, Helen ordered the driver: "Drive to the Capitol with all your might." And away went the fleet horses.

There was romping, shouting and laughing in the carriage, during that short drive. The most boisterous mirth prevailed, in the midst of which Ernest could not keep his arms off Helen. In lounging and jumping about, in the midst of this vociferous glee he actually threw his legs over her lap!

Taking him by the heels she tossed him topsey turvey over upon the front seat, exclaiming: "You little wretch—*what do you mean?* I will beat you!" And she did pound him furiously for a moment, as he cried out—"Pardon, pardon. I forgot that I was a boy."

"If you ever do the like—"

"Never, never—only forgive me."

"I will not."

"Yes, but you will," said Ernest, on his knees; "forgiveness is a part of *your* nature. It leaps from your eye in the sparkling tear! Oh! you *are* angry."

A tear was really bursting from Helen's eye; it arose in anger, but melted away in forgiveness. "I can't be angry with you," said Helen, "but you are *so* rude."

The carriage stopped in front of the eastern portico of the Capitol. "I wish we had another mile to go," said Ernest. "I ought to go back with you for gallantry, oughtn't I?"

"No; you might lose your place."

"Well, good-bye! Come to the Capitol to-morrow. Perhaps Mr. Belvedere will speak."

"May-be-so," said Helen, as she waved her handkerchief.

If we could only harden tears, what jewels they would make, thought this imaginative child as he ran up the steps of the Capitol.

He was but a few minutes behind time, and his absence had not been noticed. He took his stand first, and then went to Sterling.

"I delivered the message."

"Did you see the lady?"

"Yes, oh! she is beautiful!"

"Did you see little Helen?"

"Yes, indeed. She's dead in love with me. Oh, I shall be *such a flirt*. I kissed her before I left!"

"You little rogue," said Sterling, as Ernest walked off with quite an air of conquest, looking back at Sterling coquetishly.

CHAPTER V.

Poor little Helen, as she rode home pouting, nibbled the corner of her handkerchief, and inadvertently tore it in many places. Ernest was certainly a charming boy. His eyes were so large and full, and his tiny cravat fitted so sweetly about his throat. His playful audacity vexed her; but the soft tones of his beseeching voice lingered still in her ears. As

he pleaded forgiveness, he had seemed indeed to look through an illuminated mist. There was a strange blending of light and moisture in the meek expression of his despairing eyes.

She imagined his face the perfection of beauty; and for a boy of his age, his hand was the smallest she had ever seen, with the longest and whitest fingers. His gloves fitted beautifully, and the one which he had taken off his left hand she found in her lap; it was purple kid — very soft, and she attempted to draw it on, but could only get three of her fingers and thumb into it, her own delicious *little* finger remaining out.

How old could he be, she wondered? When would he come again? Whose child was he? She would inquire of Sterling the very next time she saw him. The carriage stopped, and Helen ran in to tell her sister why she had gone to the Capitol with the page. Beatrice was still playing the song, but listlessly — lingering over it dreamily, and repeating:

"Sure my heart, at every meeting,
Feels a new and strange delight;
Bliss, they say, is always fleeting,—
Let it not be so to-night."

Helen went into her room. Glancing at her mirror she saw that there was a flower in her hair. Ernest had placed it there. It swung very gracefully. She would not remove it, but only feel if it was secure.

She took up her book, but could not read for dreaming. She seized her pencil and spread out her

drawing paper, but could only make imperfect profiles, for she could not remember whether his under or upper lip protruded. Then she would attempt a full face, but nothing was properly proportioned; the eyes and forehead occupied too much space; there was no room for a chin; and she despaired absolutely of a mouth.

She ran to the harp and thrummed at it awhile, but forgot the strings, made no music, improvised a little, and grew pensive. She threw herself upon a lounge in the music room, covering her face, and dozed uneasily. In her sleep she saw many visions, landscapes, groves, gardens and flowers; she ran off into the wilderness in pursuit of a bird; the wilderness became a rugged mountain; the mountain a cavern; the cavern a desert. She felt herself seized by a giant, who was bearing her away. In her struggles, she caught him by the shaggy hair, which grew long and tressy as she pulled it, until it stretched into wonderful curls suddenly adorning a female who had the eyes and features of Ernest Carey! The page's boot was changed to a silken slipper, and the beautiful neck tie that had wrapped his throat so closely had become a string of diamonds encircling the neck of a princess. They were in a palace, and groups of gay couples, men and women, moved through the scene as if by enchantment. There was music and dancing, mingled with shouts of the wildest merriment. Sterling was there, waltzing with Beatrice—and there stood Belvedere, fiddling and romping with all the playful gleefulness of a

boy, the whole company moving to the measure of his bewitching music. A strange, pale man seized Helen and swung her off in the waltz. The chandeliers fell, nearly all the lights were extinguished; the gay music swelled into an anthem; they seemed to be groping their way through the dim aisles of a mighty cathedral. Tapers were burning afar off; priests were officiating, penitents were kneeling and the curious and idle were gazing. Suddenly the tapers blazed with celestial glory; the dim scene sprung from its misty obscurity and swelled into brilliancy, too gorgeous to be serene, for it dazzled the eye and bewildered the imagination. She gazed around with wonder; the wild stranger still led her onward. They had reached the altar! and, behold, there stood Sterling and Beatrice, Belvedere and Ernest the page! The latter was dressed precisely as Helen had seen him that day in the carriage. His countenance lit with the same mischievous smile. He drew off his jacket; his linen was white under his blue suspenders, and the sleeves of his shirt rolled out into long flowing robes! He kneeled before the priest, who sprinkled him with enchanted water, and he arose a princess! Then the priests all sung together, and clapped their hands for joy. Music poured its invisible streams along the unchanneled air; echos kissed their sister harmonies; all the melodies embraced each other, and the symphonies which art had stolen from nature, so blent their combinations with the DIVINE VOICE, that the rapt senses swung off from the stolid brain.

Helen awoke from her long sleep. She sprang up and ran to the window; it was deep twilight; the sun's last rays were fading from the west, and weary day was laying his tintless cheek upon a soft pillow of clouds.

Helen felt bewildered. The dream was very visible — very strange! The music seemed to continue. It came from the parlor; the sublime Marseillais with many accompaniments. She ran to the folding door and peeped through. There was Beatrice at her harp, the doctor with his flute, Belvedere with his violin; and Ernest — the dear boy, he was there with his guitar, touching it so sweetly, and with astonishing skill.

She crept in at the door noiselessly, no one saw her but Sterling; she touched her lip with her finger, and moving toward him sat by him in the corner until the piece was finished.

"Oh! it is so beautiful," she exclaimed, as she ran up to her sister. "It is nearly equal to that which I have just been hearing in my dreams. I have been asleep, Bud'," she cried, to the doctor; "and I woke up in a great cathedral, where the priests were singing with the organs; Oh! it was so divine. You were all there except the doctor."

"That is a compliment to us," said Belvedere. "Dreams are suggested through the ear of the speaker. It was our music that brought the cathedral, the priests and the organs."

"Oh! it was too long for that. I have been dreaming the whole afternoon."

"You should have a long history to tell us then, for the mind moves with great activity in dreams."

"It would make a book," said Helen. "I shall write it out some of these days."

"I'll copy for you, shall I?" said Ernest.

"*Perhaps*," said Helen, with emphasis.

"I've been *repenting*," said the page, *sotto voce*.

"I have been dreaming."

"But you oughtn't to sleep in the day," said Ernest, loud enough to be heard.

"Dreams are rosier when you have to struggle against the sun," said Belvedere, who had heard the last remark of Ernest.

Here Belvedere and Curtis took up the subject of dreams by day and by night, and carried on a long psychological conversation, which was not much heeded by the rest of the company.

Sterling and Beatrice were lingering over the music, culling songs.

Helen and Ernest slipped into the music room, where the delighted girl spread out before the page her drawings, pencils, paints, etc., etc., into all which Ernest was dipping pell mell, begging her to give him lessons in drawing.

"If I teach, I must be paid," said Helen.

"Oh! you sordid creature!"

"What will you give a lesson?"

"A fair price if we can agree as to the currency," said Ernest.

"It must be gold; you are making two dollars a day."

"Sordid! sordid! sordid!" said Ernest; "who would have thought it?"

"Sordid or not, I shall have my price. I know you will be a dunce."

"Not I, not I; but I am willing to pay if we can agree as to the currency. You demand gold; I'll give you something better."

"What?"

"A dollar a lesson, to be paid in kisses at a mill apiece," said Ernest, "and I'll pay in advance. There,—" struggling for a kiss.

"*Quantum sufficit*," said Belvedere, who had stepped in suddenly on the young couple.

Ernest ran off, laughing at the top of his voice.

"He's a rude chap, Mr. Belvedere," said Helen, blushing slightly. "You are spoiling him at the Capitol."

"He's a charming boy—a little rude when with girls, but very sedate and meditative when alone or with gentlemen. He has genius; how skillfully he touches the guitar! did you observe?"

"No, I was listening to the fiddle; will you play me a solo?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I'll fetch the violin."

Sterling and Beatrice were still lingering about the music stand, and turning over the leaves of an old song book. The doctor had retired to his office.

"Where's the violin, sis," said Helen, "Mr. Belvedere is going to play me a solo."

"We must hear it," said Sterling.

"No, indeed you sha'n't," replied Helen; "it's for me alone, I'm selfish just now."

Beatrice and Sterling, following Helen, drew near the door opening into the music-room. It was a dangerous place for them, a dangerous time—"new passions," says Voltaire, "are born in the midst of music."

There was a sofa near;

"Here will we sit and let the sound of music
Steal in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet Harmony."

Belvedere's bow swept the violin. It was a glorious improvisation—soft—mild—low—tremulous—loud and startling. Love and war; hope and fear; triumph and despair; it was the whole of Collins's Ode to the Passions.

It reminded one of the strange stories told of Paganini. Helen's spirit moved in all her veins; her cheeks glowed; her eye sparkled; she clapped her hands and shouted. She was nearly convulsed. Sterling and Beatrice were mute.

Curtis had entered the parlor during the performance. He lowered the gas-light until the rooms were in a sort of twilight, and then approached. His tread was soft; he sat down by his wife and took her hand. He had a soul for harmony. He was enchanted.

"Go on!" he exclaimed; but Belvedere had dropped his bow, and was reclining on the lounge.

"I have never heard anything to equal that," said Curtis.

"Why did you lower the gas, my dear," said Beatrice.

He replied: "I love music best when in the dark.

"How many things by reason seasoned are,
To their right praise and true perfection;
The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither is attended; and I think—
The nightingale if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought,
No better a musician than the wren."

"True," said Sterling, "I have often thought that at an opera, there should be barely enough light to show the characters and scenes dimly."

"The only use of light at an opera, is to show the audience," said Curtis.

"It is hard to tell which is the more insatiate, the eye or the ear; the magnificent in scenery is quite as fascinating to the eye, as the harmonious in music is to the ear," replied Sterling.

"Your observations are all wrong," said Belvedere.

"It is not the color of the hour that has anything to do with music; it is the *stillness* of it. Stillness is to music, what darkness is to a blaze. You would hardly select the day for the exhibition of fire-works. So you could not expect the perfection of instrumental harmony in the midst of noise and bustle."

"But it is all feeling at last."

"No; feeling obeys—the instrument enchants.

Saul was melancholy, but became gay under the music of David. When Elisha was so agitated that he could not receive the spirit of prophecy, his temper was quieted by music. You recollect," continued Belvedere, addressing the page, "that when Argus was watching with all his eyes, the music of Mercury lulled him to sleep."

"Yes, but the old fellow, with long watching, was sleepy," said Ernest.

"Well, you will admit that though Pluto desired to keep Eurydice in his dominions, yet, his heart was so softened by the music of Orpheus, that the beautiful wife of the musician was given up."

"Positive pedantry," whispered Beatrice to Sterling.

"No, you mistake; Belvedere has been teaching Ernest, mythology. His object is more to test the boy's recollection than to amuse us. You can not imagine the care he bestows upon the child. He has taken him completely under his control, and is perfectly devoted to him."

"It is very generous of him," said Beatrice.

"Ernest is certainly beautiful, almost too much so for a boy. How effeminate he seems! His eyes are as liquid as a girl's. I never saw such lashes; how completely they overhang his eyes, leaving, as they lift themselves away, long fringy shadows in the depths."

"And what a mouth," said Sterling. "Observe how smiles and pouts struggle for the ascendancy. His effeminacy is most visible in his mouth."

"How?" asked Beatrice, "because his lip is frothing when he speaks rapidly?"

"No; not only that, but a boy pouts with his brows, a girl, with her mouth and eyes. The features of a boy contract, when he pouts. When a girl pouts, her lips dilate as her eyes bugle-ize themselves."

Belvedere had led Ernest off into a corner with Helen, and he was taking the children through a regular course of catechism on mythology. Helen knew more than Ernest, but her knowledge was not so compact. Helen loved Mercury best, and was particularly pleased with his dexterity in stealing. Ernest clung to *Diana* as his favorite, and repeated the story of the unfortunate Actæon and the hounds.

"But I like Minerva better than Diana," said Helen.

"I can't bear Minerva," said Ernest. "Who was her mother?"

"Now," said Belvedere, "now; who first answers correctly shall have a present."

The children began to muse. Helen under some pretence walked off to where Beatrice was conversing with Sterling, and whispered to her sister, "Please tell me who was the mother of Minerva."

Ernest, making an excuse, ran to Sterling with the same question. Beatrice could restrain her merriment no longer, while Sterling answered, "*Vulcan's hatchet.*"

"I have it! I have it!" said Ernest, as he returned.

Beatrice had whispered to Helen, "*Imagination.*"

"I know," said Helen, taking her seat by Belvedere."

"Who, then?" said he.

"*Imagination.*"

"No; *Vulcan's hatchet,*" exclaimed Ernest. "I recollect now," continued the page; "*Vulcan hewed the virago out of Jupiter's head.*"

"You are both right," said Belvedere, "both right. All mythology is imagination. This is especially so, being the immediate offspring of Jupiter's brain. But you have both cheated."

Such were some of the incidents of this merry night in the cottage. It was growing late. Curtis's temper had been variable, sometimes gay, sometimes moody. His conversation, at times brilliant, would lag as he grew listless. Sitting on the sofa on one side of Beatrice, while Sterling was on the other, the husband would lean closely to the wife as if yearning to embrace her, and tell her how desolate he felt and what shadows were on his heart. Then he would straighten himself up as if his dignity had been suddenly stirred. The green-eyed god was devouring him.

It was growing late. Belvedere had his hat. Ernest had donned his cloak, but was busy talking to Helen. "Come to the Capitol every day, I will show you everything."

Sterling had drawn on his left glove, and was lingering near Beatrice. "One song before we go."

"Shall it be the new song?"

"Yes."

"Belvedere and Curtis had gone into the hall and were busily conversing, Beatrice sang:

"Leave us not, oh! gentle stranger,
Linger with us yet awhile;
Sweet thy presence; sweet the danger,
That is lurking in thy smile.
Sure my heart, at every meeting,
Feels a new and strange delight;
Bliss they say is always fleeting,
Let it not be so to-night."

"Come, Sterling."

Belvedere's voice was unheard. Sterling scarcely knew where he was. Proprieties were nearly forgotten, when Beatrice arose and walked towards the door. Sterling followed mechanically, and the parting word was a hearty "good night." Did he touch her fingers? Barely, but it was enough if their gloves met.

* * * * *

A shadow is falling on this house.

Here is desolation in prospect; an impatient, doubting husband; a neglected, injured wife, each in thought upbraiding the other, and excusing themselves.

Beatrice had returned to her piano and was sitting pensively, not caring to play. Curtis strode across the parlor after parting with his guests, threw himself on a lounge and remained there in sullen silence. The stillness of death reigned in that room where a few moments before there had been the wild-

est outbreaks of merriment. These two persons were alone, alone! Their eyes are not glancing into each other with the subdued fires of affection, or the ember-stirred sparklets of exhausted love. There are no raptures now. The free, glad, deep, confident look is gone forever. Sorrow sits on the face, side by side with sullen carelessness and despair.

Yet it is not too late to cure all this. Curtis, arouse thyself! Be as thou wert in the holy days of thy happy love! Abandon thy wicked course of life. Return to thy allegiance with fervency in thy heart, and bring with thee all that earnest assiduity of home devotion which one true heart has a right to demand of its chosen mate. Thy smiles will be a fortress that no enemy can scale, and thy Beatrice, though tempted by the fairest of the angels, will know no love but thine.

CHAPTER VI.

Sterling had discovered, as he supposed, that Ernest had a talent for music. Her performance on the guitar, though rude, was yet indicative of the most delicate ear. She was nervously alive to the finest touches of harmony. He had observed, when with her at concerts, how she trembled under the swelling blasts of the full orchestra, as it shook the pillars of the old theatre. He had seen her alone with her guitar improvising, until her whole frame

seemed to be convulsed by the rude power of music. At such times, she would laugh, shout and dance as if phrenzied. She was in ecstasies whenever Belvedere would play his violin. She worshiped the very box which contained the instrument, and often, playfully dressed it in garlands of vines and roses.

It was decided that Ernest should be taught music; and Miss Pembroke was selected as her teacher. This lady was distinguished in her profession. She was young and beautiful, with the finest powers to captivate; but she was nervous, melancholy and idiosyncratic.

She had no familiar intercourse with her pupils, but only taught them for the money that rewarded her—being dependent for her comforts on this pursuit. She spoke only to teach, and listened only that she might explain. When application was made to her to take a boy as a pupil, she hesitated,—declined. Sterling repeated the application in a note, and sent Ernest as the bearer of it, hoping that the handsome page's appearance would persuade the lady.

Ernest arrayed himself splendidly; put on a magnificent maroon velvet vest, over which was a jacket of the finest blue cloth edged with black braid. A little watch which had been presented by Belvedere revealed its proportions in the vest pocket, and a very large opal ring gleamed on the middle finger of his left hand. His boots were superb—and fitted as closely as a stocking. Nothing could exceed the graceful manner in which he had enveloped his neck in his little muff. He had turned

under the shirt collar, so that from his shoulders up he seemed very feminine. His hair had grown considerably since the fatal scissors had passed among the locks; and some natural curls like clusters of golden rings overspread his forehead and cheeks. His face and neck were full and round, glowing with rosy animation; for the few weeks of his exciting life had fed his famished veins with joy.

"Is Miss Pembroke at home?" said Ernest to the servant that answered his touch of the bell.

"Yes."

"I have a letter for her, but I wish to see her, only a moment, myself."

"Walk in."

Ernest surveyed the parlor with curious eyes. There were pictures on the walls, but he cared not for them. The musical instruments; violins, flutes, guitars, with a harp and piano; these demanded his notice, and filled him with admiration. The room seemed fitted up for a concert. In the corner was a marble bust of Mozart; he knew it from an engraved likeness of the great composer which Belvedere kept on his table beside the picture of Paganini. In another corner was the great bass-viol. The page stood by it, to see how high it was—he could barely reach the top of it.

But Ernest did not wait long. Miss Pembroke entered the parlor dressed in a loose morning wrapper. There was ease, grace, and elegance of manner about her, with some slight show of patronage. Ernest handed her the letter and as she opened and

read it he kept his eyes fixed upon her countenance. He was charmed with her beauty. Her face seemed to him the very embodiment of benevolence. Her voice was gentle and her smile bewitching. It must not be concealed that Miss Pembroke was surprised when she entered at the superb appearance of the youth; she had looked at him long enough to notice the tender expression of his pensive face, now heightened in its beauty by ill-suppressed agitation. She lifted her eyes several times, while she was reading the letter to observe him.

"Where do your parents live?"

At this question the poor page was overpowered. The slightest reference to his mother always touched his heart, so that unbidden tears leaped into his eyes on this occasion. He attempted to straighten himself up, and made a tremendous effort to be manly, as he answered—

"They are *dead*!"

As he uttered these words, the page sat perfectly rigid; his lips compressed, his fingers locked together, and tears breaking over his eyelids in fragments, like parcels of shattered crystal.

"Never mind, child," said Miss Pembroke, rising. "My question was painful to you. We are all unhappy; you must not weep," and the lovely woman placed her arm around him, and with delicate sympathy, as he arose from his chair, drew him up to her, slightly pressing his head to her side, just against her heart.

"You shall be my pupil," she continued, as she lifted the locks from his forehead.

"Then I shall be happy." The child's tears were forgotten, and his little tongue glibly uttered a thousand pledges of his intention to be industrious to please her, and to learn.

"When shall I take my first lesson?"

"To-morrow—come early—at nine o'clock."

"I shall be here at the moment. Mr. Sterling will be glad when I tell him. Good-bye." He took her hand, and lifting it to his lips gracefully touched the fingers.

"What a gallant little prince," thought Miss Pembroke, as the door closed upon the page; and she could not help lifting the window curtain to watch him as he passed out of the yard.

"I have forgotten my cloak," exclaimed Ernest, as he ran back and rang the bell.

Miss Pembroke herself opened the door.

"I forgot my cloak. I hope you will excuse me for this trouble."

"I am glad," said Miss Pembroke. "I must talk more with you. What instrument do you wish to learn? You play the guitar, I believe."

"Only a little. I will show you if you choose. I see one here;" and the page picked up a guitar to play.

"But it is the piano I wish to learn. Sometimes for a change you will instruct me on the guitar."

"Well, play for me."

Ernest was in the finest humor. His spirits were

wild. He played with more than common skill, and Miss Pembroke was charmed. She saw, however, that there was more genius than science in his execution; that his teaching had been imperfect. The position of his hands and the attitude of the instrument would have to be corrected.

"That will do. You will make a musician. I really think you resemble Mozart."

"Do you think so—*nose* and all?"

"There he is in the corner," said Miss Pembroke. "Look at him."

"Oh! I knew him before you came in. I've read his life. Mr. Belvedere worships him. Mozart was taught music when he was only four years old. At that age he actually composed a piece. It is put down in the book. Shall I bring it? The book says that he could learn a minuet in half an hour, and a longer piece in an hour! What a marvellous boy. At the age of six years he softened the heart of a *custom house officer* in Vienna, by playing a minuet on the violin. That was almost equal to the power of Orpheus, who softened Pluto by his music. Little Mozart astonished the Franciscan friars by his performance on the church organ. The ladies, countesses and princesses, were all in love with him wherever he went. How happy he must have been. Only think of the little wretch sitting in the lap of an empress, and proposing to marry Marie Antoinette."*

* Mozart's first appearance at the Austrian court is thus described: "At present I have not time to say more than that we were so graciously received by their majesties that my rela-

Thus this excited child rambled on through the whole life of Mozart, exhibiting the liveliest emotions at the triumphs of genius.

Miss Pembroke was charmed with his enthusiasm, and the wild and dazzling beauty of his countenance. She did not pretend to check him in the ardor of his descriptions.

"Who taught you all this?"

"Mr. Belvedere. O! he teaches me everything."

Ernest could not check the natural inclination which he had to nestle closely under the arms of a woman. He often forgot his garb and the necessity that his actions should conform to his dress. On this occasion, his head having already been by Miss Pembroke pressed to her side, he felt the less restraint; and during the conversation above rehearsed he could not keep his hands off some part of her dress. At first he caught up the long tassels which swung by the cord that girdled her wrapper, then he fingered the rich embroidery of the flowing sleeve; then he got her hand and tugged at the great diamond ring, unconsciously making efforts to move it towards the end of the finger; then he wound his arm around her and placed his cheek close to her side as if listening and exclaimed: "There, there is music for you—I hear your heart beating!"

tion would be held for a fable. Wolfert sprang into the lap of the empress, took her by the neck and kissed her very heartily.

"We were there from three to six o'clock, and the emperor himself came into the ante-chamber to fetch me in to hear the child play on the violin."

Alas! he little knew the marvelous sensations which he was driving through the veins of this fascinated woman, who restrained him not, but touched in answer to his innocent caresses, the glorious curls that nestled around his magnificent forehead. She thought of kissing his great eyes, and partly stooped to do it, but tears rolled from her own misty orbs, and for a moment the atmosphere of the room seemed thick, heavy, and clouded.

"—— not so fast!

Even so quickly may one catch the plague?
Methinks I feel this youth's perfections,
With an invisible and subtle stealth,
To creep in at mine eyes."

Miss Pembroke had never been in love. Strange as it may seem; though a woman of twenty, with uncommon charms of person and intellect, exuberant of fancy, overflowing with wit, and fashioned with every development which Phidias would have desired for the most delicate touches of his marvelous chisel, in tracing the lineaments of perfect beauty.

She had never loved. Her fancy had been caught but not chained. She had had brief dreams on the rosy bowered domains of Cupid, but nothing more. Handsome, elegant fellows had sought her; and she had listened to and charmed them, but only to turn away and leave them in despair. Everybody could find her wit and beauty, but nobody could find her heart. Her pupils did not love her. To say the truth, to them she was peevish, fretful, harsh, impatient. She dispatched them and their lessons

with cold severity; exacting entire compliance with her rules; enforcing the strictest discipline, and confining the fingers to the last touch of the most difficult performance. She turned out perfectly accomplished scholars, but if they felt any gratitude at all, it was only for the science she had imparted — not for the pleasure she had allowed them to enjoy.

Ernest had been gone but a few moments, when Miss Pembroke's pupils of the day commenced coming in. She dismissed them on this occasion with half lessons. It was a dull day to her. Her mind was busy with inexplicable longings; her heart was uneasy; her head unsteady; her nerves agitated. She retired to her chamber — giving orders that she was not to be disturbed. Closing the blinds and drawing the curtains of the window, she made a rosy twilight in the cosy apartment, and dropping her velvet slippers on the floor, she coiled herself up in her immense arm chair, where we will leave her for the present; her dreamy eyes penciling with their dewy lashes dim but grotesque figures on the ever waving canvas of the future.

CHAPTER VII.

There are entertainments in Washington called *ASSEMBLIES*. The amusements consist mainly in dancing and eating. The company is not very select, but respectable. The more fashionable and wealthy,

even the titled and the aristocratic sometimes condescend to grace those places by their presence. The middling classes of society are tolerated, and even a poor man's daughter may here be allowed to play the belle.

These assemblies are different from the Hor. The hop is exclusive, or intended to be so, but being made up mainly of hotel boarders, male and female, it is usually accessible to all persons who happen to have friends in the establishment. The first assembly which Sterling attended was rather a brilliant affair. Outside of the show and glitter, however, he met with something very nearly akin to an adventure: he encountered an authoress, who had just published a book—*"The REGION of the SALAMANDERS."* This lady was presented to Sterling by a gentleman who had his daughter on one arm, and the fair FELICIANA FASCINATE on the other. Sterling had seen him on the street, and had a sort of avenue acquaintance with him. This was quite enough to authorize him to hail Sterling. "This is GENERAL STERLING—a new MEMBER," said he to his fair friend.

Every body knows what you mean, in Washington, when you say MEMBER. If you make three promenades up and down Pennsylvania avenue, every body knows you—hackman, artizan, banker, gambler, clothier, scullion and scavenger. They not only know *you*, but, in various ways, make you know them.

Whether this ingenious gentleman desired to get rid of the authoress, or to bring his fair daughter

more prominently forward, is unimportant; but as the distinguished person was first announced as the authoress of a very beautiful book, just then published, Sterling could but extend his arm, and invite her to allow him to endeavor to contribute, for a moment, to her pleasure. She was very condescending, very gracious—seemed to be delighted—opened her small eyes until they were bigger than buck shot, though not quite as dangerous. Her conversation was very rich, her periods very round—very round indeed, considering the remarkable shape of the mouth from which they escaped. It was a mouth of some considerable dimensions, but rather cranky. Her rebellious nose seemed to have a hook upon her upper lip, and the two were on a constant tug as to whether the one should come down, or the other should fly up. It was a great nose—*"like the tower of Lebanon that looketh towards Damascus."*

"This is your first winter in Washington?" said she.

"Yes, my first," replied Sterling.

"Have you been out much yet?"

"Very little."

"Your name is already known here, the world has heard of you. It is not common for young men to make so much character by the first speech."

"Thank you," said Sterling; "I did not know that I had made any impression. Indeed, I have not made a speech."

"Not made a speech!" she exclaimed, "I am sure I was in the gallery and heard you?"

"I was not aware that the few observations I made on that occasion had been dignified into a speech."

"A speech is not judged by its length; the beauty of the whole effort;—its brevity, and the magical grace and dignity with which it is expressed. You created an intense sensation in the gallery."

The reader should be advised that the speech here referred to, was upon a bill which Sterling had introduced to have a new post route established from Bill Jones's Saw Mill, on Little Bear Creek, to Pin Hook, on Big Sandy, by the way of Jake Slicer's Ford, on *the road from Lick Boy to Split Skull*.

This compliment of the lady had brought Sterling's eyes to a level stare with her own, under whose sweet and overpowering expression his heart died within him. She saw the impression she had made, and modestly waited for a response.

"You are an authoress," said Sterling, "and have a right to pay compliments. You must let me know something about your book. It is poetry, of course?"

"No; it is not in verse."

"But it may still be poetry," said Sterling. "Sir Philip Sydney says, 'It is that saying notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by.' What is the title?"

"*The Region of the Salamanders*."

"The scene is laid in North Carolina, I suppose," said Sterling.

"Yes; in the dear old state."

"I am glad you have told me this," said Sterling.

"I have a friend here from North Carolina, who would be delighted to make your acquaintance; and I am sure he will feel that his state has been greatly honored as the locality of your musings."

"Thank you. Who is he?"

"Colonel Rozzin, the member from Tar River."

"I should be much pleased to make his acquaintance."

Here the conversation flagged a little. Sterling did not feel very much inspired. He was, indeed, rather dull. They had strolled round the hall some dozen of times, and he thought that he would be quite willing to dance, or to do anything to bring out his spirits.

The reader will not suppose that Sterling was weary of his fair friend. It is true that a little variety of company, a change of companions, the chance of looking upon black eyes, as well as blue ones, and the desire to feel and see all that is going about in a gay throng, is the usual inducement for men and women to prefer, sometimes, a crowded saloon to the more quiet recess of a family drawing room. But Sterling was not sure that he should be able at all times to pick up such a treasure of a woman as Miss Feliciana Fascinate, and hence they continued their promenade up and down the long hall, although at the end of two hours, one might reasonably suppose that this was growing a little monotonous. Certain it is, that Sterling was compelled to

change arms, occasionally, to prevent his elbow from getting benumbed; and although Miss Feliciana spoke of poetry, after the manner of Sir Philip Sydney (only better), and quoted gorgeous passages from Lalla Rookh, and love lines from the more subdued stanzas of Don Juan, there was a sort of tingling inappreciability about Sterling's brain which rendered him wholly incapable of responding, with elegance, to this mellifluous outpouring of intellectual volubility. Perhaps it would have been some relief if he could have found a seat large enough for himself and companion. And in view of this, on their last round, he endeavored to find one, but was unsuccessful, as every seat was occupied. So, with visible despair, he started upon another, about the twentieth round!

During this solemn procedure, there was no pause in the volubility of the enchantress. The cataract of the Genesee never streamed with more incessant regularity. Indeed the conversation was a perfect frothing of effervescent phrasology. There was one thing about it which did not please him: she was very loud, even boisterous, striving to attract more attention than his ideas of female decorum could well approve. It was very evident that she was determined to make the most of the occasion; and when, as they slowly commenced the twenty-first round of their promenade, they met some of her acquaintance, he felt—must it be acknowledged? he felt a slight movement in his heart, a little like hope, that the scene would certainly be diversified in some

way or other. But he was doomed to disappointment. Scarcely pausing to salute them, she led him along, only leaning her ear to one of her fair friends, who whispered as she passed: "You have caught him. I knew it. *Hold him.*"

Sterling heard this phrase very distinctly. Looking around he observed that he was the object of some attention, and that very many in the throng were looking a little quizzically. This brought him to the sudden determination to retreat. But we can not always carry out our resolutions. In society as well as war, nothing is so difficult as a graceful and successful retreat. Oh! Zenophon! forget the rudeness with which, when a boy, Sterling treated thee. Forget that he demolished five copies of thy beautiful Anabasis, during the weary year of his sophomorphism. Charge this to his stupidity, and not to any desire to slight thy immortal book. Forget all this and come now, in thy gracious generosity, to his assistance.

Thanks to this invocation! he had scarcely closed it, when face to face he met his worthy friend, Col. Rozzin of Tar River, and seizing the auspicious moment, he exclaimed, "Colonel, allow me to present to you my accomplished friend, Miss Feliciana Fascinate, an authoress, who has immortalized with her genius some of the scenery of your state. This is Colonel Rozzin, Miss Fascinate," and Sterling placed her hand in the Colonel's arm! It was capitally done! "She is the authoress," continued Sterling, of the Region of the Salamanders; Scenes

in Buncombe; and I have agreed to write as an appendix,—the ANATOMY of the GOPHER, after the manner of Tyson's Anatomy of a Pigmy, only better!! We publish together, and divide the profits. She reviews the Appendix, I, the Region. The latter part of this sentence was said to the gallant Carolinian in an under tone, and produced in his countenance a most indescribable expression of perplexed incredulity. Whispering to Miss Felician, Sterling said, "The colonel can give you some valuable statistics for your second edition. He is well posted as to the state of the *tar* trade, the way to *tap* pines, and the price of *peanuts* in Wilmington."

Sterling fled away from the parties, rushed out of the saloon, found himself up stairs in the midst of refreshments, and added to the exhilaration which he felt, consequent upon his remarkable escape by drinking a bottle of Champagne to the bottom. Poor fellow, who blames him?

Sterling would have taken his hat and retired from the assembly, but for the curiosity he felt in seeing how the perplexed Col. Rozzin got along with the authoress; so he returned to the saloon, and hiding himself in a corner, kept his eye upon this graceful couple in their slow meanderings around the hall. If he had been charmed at first by the intellectuality of Miss Fascinate, how his eyes were delighted now by the motion of her body! Not the waddling of a duck, but the majestic swing of the ostrich! How perfectly she walks turkey! The graceful undula-

tions of those white muslin flounces over that crimson skirt remind one of the gently agitated surf playing about the decorated poop of a Chinese junk.

But our gallant friend, Col. Rozzin, was evidently uneasy. While he gave his ear gracefully to her as she spoke, there was still an indefinable restlessness in the perplexed glances of his eyes, as he threw them about him on the surrounding company. He was evidently watching for Sterling. His countenance gave utterance to the anathematic phrase "*damn the fellow!*" Sterling enjoyed all this hugely! Rozzin answered the poetical phrases of the authoress: "yes," "no," "oh! yes," "certainly," "I think so too," "doubtless," "of course," "no mistake," "you are right," "supper time, nearly," "hungry." Sterling caught one or the other of these phrases from the colonel's lips each time the couple passed him in their circling promenade! He maliciously counted the rounds! "Twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, &c., &c.!" Oh! couldn't she walk for a wagger!"

Sterling took good care to keep himself concealed by the crowd, determined not to relieve Rozzin; and as he beheld the utter despair of the impatient colonel, he was absolutely convulsed with malignant merriment. Sometimes Miss Felician spoke audibly: "*Poetry is the occupation of the Gods!*" she exclaimed. "It was Apollo's delight, Venus's solace, Adonis's looking-glass" (and Mercury's excuse for his petty larcenies, thought Sterling).

The balance of this eloquent harangue was lost;

but there they go again—on the twenty-seventh round!

Now, considering that it consumed full five minutes to make the circuit of the ball room, in the unhurried motion of a lingering step, the reader will see that Miss Feliciana Fascinate has occupied just two hours and fifteen minutes of the valuable life of this distinguished citizen, who, had the same time been devoted to congressional discussions, in which he was so often an eloquent participator, it would have given work to a dozen printers for a whole night, and have illustrated, in a way that no other man could do, the beauties of the social system, the iniquities of the tariff, the glories of democracy, and the uncertainties and instabilities of the American Union!

"Oh! I do love rhapsodies! I could live on them," exclaimed Miss Feliciana, as she began another round.

"They are excellent," replied the colonel, "with sugar and cream."

"With what?" said Miss Fascinate.

"Were you not speaking of raspberries," said Rozzin.

"Oh! no. Rhapsodies—rhapsodies, sir." And she laughed a very loud laugh that resounded above the music and the dance.

"Oh, yes! I *really* was mistaken, excuse me. Rhapsodies *are* very fine!" replied Rozzin.

"Farewell, Colonel," exclaimed Sterling—"farewell. I leave thee in the midst of the twenty-eighth round! Thou wilt bless me! I thought I had given

thee a gimblet—but, indeed—indeed, it proves to be an—auger!

CHAPTER VIII.

At the time of the events herein recorded, THE HOP was in its infancy; it was an embryo aristocracy; and though intended to exclude the codfish wing, it was still a very mixed assemblage. Its circle embraced many charity recipients—female protégés—the vassals of patronage. Its features, however, were very distinctive, as compared with the Assembly for the rubbish of the city society was absolutely interdicted.

Dr. Thimblerrigg had come to Washington from the south to press a claim upon the government for his great invention, *The Art of Manufacturing Soap Suds*. He claimed the moderate sum of two hundred thousand dollars, as a remuneration for this invention; and had in his possession ample testimonials as to its great utility, both in the practice of medicine and the washing of laces. In a private confidential conversation with Sterling upon the subject, after enlarging upon the merits of the invention, the doctor remarked, that "less money than two hundred thousand would pay him very well for the trouble he had had; that, indeed, it was not the money he was after: he wanted the honor of being recognized by

the government, as the inventor, in a solemn act of congress."

"But two hundred thousand dollars is an enormous sum," said Sterling, with some incredulity.

"So it is," replied the doctor, "but you do not seem to understand the game here. Things are not done here as they are in the country. If I ask a small amount, congress would not notice my memorial. If I should get a small amount I could not pay expenses. I fix my price high for two reasons: I wish my memorial to be read, and I want money enough to divide with my friends for helping."

"Now, doctor, you are engrossing General Sterling with some long yarn, I dare say, about your *patent Soap Suds*, while here I am dying to dance, and have no *vis-a-vis*!"

This interruption was by Mrs. Thimblerigg, the doctor's amiable and accomplished spouse, who was leaning on the left arm of Colonel Blunderbuss, while her sister, Miss Amelia Bolster (just turned out) was swinging gracefully to the colonel's right.

"General, you have not seen my sister yet; here she is," said Mrs. Thimblerigg. "Amelia, this is General Sterling. Now, come along and dance; you look admirably together," and Mrs. Thimblerigg waddled off laughing, with Colonel Blunderbuss, having received on her shoulder a rap from Miss Amelia's fan. Mrs. Thimblerigg was something of a belle; she took the liberty of being merry, and of saying whatever she pleased. She was young and pretty, well

built, as plump and round as a fully developed squab, she danced with graceful agility, and displayed a neck and shoulders of marvelous whiteness and rotundity; as to her arm, there was nothing like it in Washington. She was evidently not averse to an innocent flirtation, and as Doctor Thimblerigg was not the most interesting of men, and as General Sterling was coming to be something of a toast amongst the women, it is not surprising that Mrs. Thimblerigg should have made up her mind to cultivate him. Much less should we be surprised if she held on to the general's hand with a lingering pressure of her own as she grasped his in whirling the various evolutions of the dance—for it was her duty to her husband to make Sterling a friend of the family in view of the *Patent Soap Suds*.

Sterling was delighted with Mrs. Thimblerigg, so much so that, at the close of the dance he changed off the sister, Miss Amelia Bolster, to Blunderbuss, for Mrs. Thimblerigg—whispering to Blunderbuss—"I say, Colonel, if you get tight to-night and sleepy—there's a *Bolster*."

Mrs. T. kept him busy in pursuit of her. As soon as he became decidedly of her train, she actually flew before him, sometimes pausing to show him, and sometimes pulling him by the button or the hand through the mass of gay dancers. He was very willing to be pressed, so he followed with all apparent eagerness, and seemed lost to the fascinations of this bewitching lady.

Sterling had a pulse of his own, and when her

fingers touched it, the throb of passion swelled from his heart, so that the response was almost audible.

"I am glad I came," said Sterling, as his eyes glowed with that peculiarly warm expression which borrows its subdued brilliancy from the inspiring heart.

"Why so?" said Mrs. Thimblerigg.

"I have learnt to know you better," said he; and he touched the frill of her flowing sleeve.

"I hope we shall be friends."

"Yes," said Sterling, fervently, "more than friends," as he unbuttoned the wristband of her glove, continuing playfully,—

"Do not keep your fingers in prison always; but let them have a little air," and he tore the glove gently away—kissed it passionately, and as he parted from her, put it into the side pocket of his snow white vest. He made an excuse—ran back to her, and whispered—"I shall dream on it to-night."

She tapped him on the chin with her fan as she took it from her dewy lips and said—"Come to-morrow then, and tell the dream."

Mrs. Thimblerigg was satisfied with the evening. She had achieved quite enough. Sterling's smile on her heart was reflected as if from the face of a mirror. She was sad and wished to leave, so beckoning her sister Amelia, who was still lingering with the fascinated Blunderbuss, she proposed to go home.

"How do you like Sterling, love?" said Thimble-

rigg, that night after the ball, as he turned himself over.

"Charmed," said Mrs. Thimblerigg; "I am charmed."

"Charmed!" replied Thimblerigg. "Well, he is charmed too; I see it; and now if you choose, you can make capital out of him. He is destined to play an important part here, this winter. He can do as much for me as any man. Cultivate him, my love, cultivate him; *and do it up brown, at that.*"

"But it might be dangerous to cultivate him," said Mrs. Thimblerigg, a little roguishly.

"Dangerous," said the doctor; "well, if I'm not meddlesome, whose business is it? We must have money, my dear—money. Havn't I told you that your smiles, if coined, would be the purest of gold? Now is the time. In a week, if you choose, you can make Sterling do for you whatever you ask; and half congress is made up of just such men. Young, ardent and passionate; idle, listless and vain; ambitious and gallant. You can not tell how many votes there may be in a single, well managed adventure!"

Mrs. Thimblerigg said nothing to this. She took the hint, and felt but little degradation, for she had found out her husband long before. His remarks on this occasion, were not of much importance, so far as her feelings were concerned. And long after he was asleep, the open eyes of this restless spouse were tracing images of love and beauty on the misty outlines of the twilight atmosphere of that dimly lighted chamber. Sterling's voice was still in her

ear; his eyes were in her heart; his lips were on her hand!

Oh mystery, where is thy dwelling? Not in the sky; not in the stars; not in the rolling of the spheres; not in the thunder, the clouds, the lightning, nor in the evolutions of material substances, but in the heart.

As Sterling was about to leave the saloon, after his pocketing of the glove, he heard Beatrice's laugh! Her voice was perfectly known; but not having seen her during the night, he had despaired of her coming. Turning his eyes in the direction of the voice he beheld for the first time, Henry Clay. Beatrice was leaning on his arm, and the great eyes of this wonderful man, given alone to her as he spoke, seemed to cover her with their intellectual rays.

Sterling gazed at Mr. Clay with agitated admiration.

"And that is Mr. Clay?"

For a moment even the presence of Beatrice was not noted.

"You forget me, General," she remarked, laughingly, "this is Mr. Clay!"

His interview with Mr. Clay was so positively awkward that we must let it pass.

"Keep it securely, General," said Beatrice, roguishly.

"Keep what?"

"The glove. *I saw it all!*"

CHAPTER IX.

The reader need not think that we are crowding Sterling. He was a fast man. Members of congress have ample time to dispose of their public business, and leisure to attend to many outside adventures. Two hours a day spent in the hall is a fair average of congressional labor, especially with the younger members.

Sterling thought very little of the glove, except the discovery of Beatrice. He did not remove it from its place of deposit. In fact, his washwoman, the next week, when she came to iron his vest, finding a stiff substance in the pocket, drew it forth, and behold! it was the glove! all faded and stiff! wadded up into a knot! Such is the care taken of these invaluable trifles; but the vest—an article which the Count de Grammont might have envied—the vest was a ruin, for soap and battling could not remove the purple tinge which, in spots, the glove had left upon it.

But, though he thought not of the glove, he did not forget the hand, nor the finger, nor the glorious arm, nor the more glorious neck and shoulders, nor the mouth—that rosy mug of nectar, the sight of whose sparkling edges would have brought froth to the lips of Nestor or Methusalem.

But above all he remembered the gentle and roguish invitation: "Come to-morrow, and tell your dream."

The morning was spent until eleven at his toilet. He arrayed himself with the utmost taste and elegance. His coat and pants were black, his vest lilac, his gloves white; a rich diamond studded his bosom, and his watch, which he wore in his vest pocket, was fastened by a small black chain which had been the ingenious manufacture of Lily Carey.

It was eleven. He was sure she was ready. And so she was;—sitting alone in her private parlor, her cheek glowing with rosy anticipations. She, too, had been busy with her toilet. No art had been unemployed to improve her natural beauty—the *ars celare artem* had been carried to perfection. Haidee could not have done it more simply. The rich laces over her bosom moved with her breath, undulating to every swell of her passionate heart. Her arms, to the elbows, were covered with snowy frills that mingled like mists, as the foam of disturbed waters may be imagined to envelope the limbs of a Naiad. One hand was without a glove, and the fingers were without rings, save one! It was of plain gold; her wedding ring—left in sight on purpose; for she did not intend to carry the flirtation too far; and the sight of this might be necessary to remind her of duty. Her front hair was loose, in negligent curls, falling along her neck, partly veiling her ears and peeping about her vapory laces with a thousand curious eyes.

“Her foot was loveliest of remembered things,
Small as a fairy’s on a moonlit leaf;—”

as Halleck would say. And as she sat on an ottoman, about an inch and a half of that foot showed itself below her skirt.

Thus sat Mrs. Thimblerrigg, with some impatience; for it was a little past eleven.

The door was ajar, and repeated the muffled rap of a gloved finger.

Lo—Sterling enters! The embarrassed reader must now retire with the author, who is determined not to reveal any secrets.

Sterling remains to tell his *dream*.

CHAPTER X.

Reading a Baltimore paper, in a listless way, Sterling’s eye, by accident, fell upon the list of advertised letters remaining in the post office, amongst which he saw the name of “Mrs. Adelaide Carey.” He remembered that it was the name of Lily’s mother. He sprang from his chair instantly, and running to his room, told Ernest that he was going to Baltimore, that he would be back in the night’s train.

“Don’t lock your door when you go to bed—there might be fire.” So saying, he kissed her and left.

The first person he encountered upon the cars was Maggie Dobbins. There was, of course, no apparent recognition, but they knew each other. What could

she be going to Baltimore for? It was none of his business, and he dropped the subject.

When he reached Baltimore he took a carriage and went immediately to the post office. He met Maggie on the door steps, coming out!

He inquired for the advertised letter for Mrs. Adelaide Carey.

"It has just been given to a lady!"

Rushing back to the street, he saw Maggie Dobbins getting into a hack. He ran to her, saying, just as the hackman was about to close the door—

"Ah! Mrs. Dobbins, how do you do. I must be your companion, if you are going to the cars!"

"I am not going immediately, but will wait for the night's train—jump in, I shall be so happy with you."

Sterling accepted the invitation, and for half an hour was the most agreeable man in the world. Gave a thousand excuses for not having called again—"had been so busy with the politicians and the affairs of the nation."

Stopping the carriage in front of a handsome house in a beautiful part of the city, Mrs. Dobbins remarked: "General, I have some friends here with whom I propose to spend the few hours which intervene between this and the time for the night train. If you will go in with me, we will, no doubt, be able to have a good time of it."

"Certainly, I have a little business in the city, but I was so charmed to meet you, that I will stop with

you. You need not mention my name to your friends."

"Oh no—you are Mr. *Brown*, if you choose, or Mr. *Smith*, either of those names will serve for the hour."

"Mr. Brown, my name's Brown!"

After a few minutes' conversation with the ladies they met at this house, these two friends retired to a private apartment on the second floor, the chamber looking upon the street.

Maggie laid her reticule on the marble slab of the dresser, as she took off her bonnet and removed one of her gloves. Decrepid as she was in other respects, she still preserved her hand in its original beauty; soft, white, even fat; but not the less beautiful on that account; it was, indeed, the only feature about her that was now tolerable.

Sterling was satisfied that the letter was in the reticule; but how to get it?

Chuckling Maggie under the chin, said he, "Order us a bottle of Champagne. I am dull, stupid and thirsty."

"You are just of my mind," said Maggie. "I will fetch it myself; then I know it will be good." And she retired from the room.

Sterling ripped open the reticule in an instant, and lo! the identical letter fell out upon the floor, and was soon crammed into his pocket! the reticule remained precisely as it had been left.

Maggie delayed. There was a blank envelope on

the dresser, and pen and ink. Snatching it, he hastily wrote,

MRS. ADELAIDE CAREY,
Baltimore, Md.

Stepping to the chamber door, he satisfied himself that Maggie was not yet near; so, touching his lips to the envelope, it was sealed, and placed in the reticule, the counterfeit of the one he had filched.

Maggie returned, bringing the wine. The bottle was uncorked, and Sterling drank a full tumbler with unusual gusto, praying, as he swallowed it, that the wine might stir the strings of his invention and enable to escape this *Gorgon* with a reasonable excuse.

Maggie drank but little. Her vivacity needed no stimulant; her temperament was always of the eager; her blood was originally of the finest vintage, and time, as usual in such cases, had mellowed and subdued it. On this occasion, she was lightness itself. She felt to be only fourteen! How could she feel otherwise, in a private chamber with this charming congressman? The reader has never been told that Sterling was handsome. He was certainly not of overpowering appearance, at first sight, but his glorious eye was an intellectual magazine ever ready to blaze. To this was added an easy laziness of manner in his intercourse with women, which is indeed the very perfection of art.

Sterling's first glass did nothing with his inven-

tives. He took another! Maggie thought that he might as well take a little *nectar*, as it was so very convenient; but he was not in pursuit of nectar.

"By the way, Mrs. Dobbins," said Sterling, pulling out his port monnaie, "when does the Bank of — close?"

"Precisely at three" (she was well acquainted with all business matters).

"I have a check here for a thousand dollars, and came over after the money" — exhibiting a paper very like a check.

"What time now?" he asked.

Pulling out her watch, Maggie said "*ten minutes to three.*"

"Then I shall have to wait until to-morrow!" said he dispondingly.

"Oh, no," said Maggie, "by no means — there is the Bank," and stepping to the window she pointed to a house very near — "there is the Bank of —, run — you have still time and we can go home together in the night's train."

Taking advantage of her kind suggestion, Sterling was quickly in the street, and as quickly in a carriage, which he ordered to be driven to Barnum's.

Lounging about the reading room he looked at some of the papers, but soon placed himself in a remote corner where he pulled from his pocket the letter; it was post-marked — —. Ripping it open he cautiously placed the envelope in his pocket and unfolded the letter itself, which he instantly recognized to be in the same hand-writing of

the letters of Lily's father which she had in her little box. It placed him in possession of important facts connected with the destiny of his darling little page.

CHAPTER X.

Some months after Senator Burton had loaned \$500 to Mr. F—— at the gaming house—which incident the reader is required to remember—he received a large package of MSS., accompanied by a letter which read as follows:

DEAR SIR—You were generous enough on one occasion to befriend me in a remarkable way, and this induces me to apply to you again for aid. You will please find herewith enclosed a manuscript poem, which, in my leisure moments, I have written; and I find it extremely difficult to get a publisher. Will you be good enough to run over it, and if you think it contains enough merit to authorize your endorsement, a line from you to some respectable publisher would no doubt insure its publication.

Very Respectfully, &c.,

F——.

Senator Burton opened the MS. and read as follows:

IGNIPOTENCE ABROAD.

Part I.

The devil snatch'd up his traveling shoes,
And rush'd to his iron chest!

He seemed to have heard astounding news;—

For he fumbled the fobs of his breeches and vest,

In search of his keys, you would have guess'd,

Or something to turn the screws.

He was bent, it was evident to see,
The devil was bent on another spree.
Wide open flew that fire-proof chest,
Not with a creaking spring;

For the devil had been so frequently dress'd
Of late, and arrayed in his very best,
That the hinges of that heavy door,
Tho' harsh and jarring heretofore,
Were noiseless now, as the sinewy swing
Of the swallow's wing.

The devil declined his sables to-day;
The weather was mild—it was beautiful May;
So, he thought he would change his style, and be
The flashiest spark in the company:

For he had just received a note
From his sister, Mary H—l,
Inviting him to a ball:
And she begg'd him to wear his new blue coat,
And something to *hide the nose* on his throat.

The devil selected his yellow vest;
As suiting a rollicking youngster best;
A sky-blue coat, with a ponderous collar,
And buttons as large as an old rix dollar;
And skirts as wide as a peacock's tail,
When spread to its uttermost avail.
His new style carpet trowsers gleam
With a broad red ribbon along the seam;
Flowers and lizards, serpents and frogs,
And turtles, sunning themselves on logs,
Gave a charming variety
To those handsome pants,—tight at the knee,
They showed the calf most beauteously;—
But the devil frowned as he look'd below
And saw that his foot was without a toe!
He gnashed his angry teeth to see

His nether limb's deformity;—
 So, he put on a fashionable boot,
 Stuff'd with gun-cotton for a foot!
 Hiding his hoof, and making his toe
 Combustible for a sudden foe!
 When the devil saw that his foot was good,
 He look'd in the glass, and upright stood;
 Straight as an arrow, and as thin!
 He curled his beard and stroked his chin;
 And seem'd to observe with a sad surprise
 That he was greatly shrunk in size:—
 Over his hips the tight waist-band
 Made him a thing to be easily spann'd!
 He touch'd his thumbs behind;
 His long, lean fingers lapp'd before!
 This put his majesty in mind
 That, as yet, he had not dined;
 And, glancing rapidly at the door,
 He remember'd that to-day, at four,
 He was to dine with senator —
 At —'s, on the Avenue:
 So, picking up his horn-concealing hat,
 He bade the little devils adieu!

But before the devil left his bright abode,
 Across the echoing chamber twice he strode;
 And running his fingers through his hair
 Paused, with a mysterious air;
 Then, with a satisfied look,
 Emptied his pocket book
 Of all its contents into the chest;—
 For the devil had found it best,
 To leave his cash at home with his sons,
 When he went to dine at —'s:
 For Senator — was a trump,
 And had the acquisitive bump!

* * * * *

The devil looked in the glass again,
 To adjust his watch's ponderous chain,
 And saw at a glance, as he turned around,
 That his tail was sweeping the ground!
 All unconcealed and unconfined—
 Sticking out several feet behind!
 And his angry yell
 Filled with his rage all the caverns of hell!
 And aroused his favorite wife, who came
 Rushing in through smoke and flame,
 To see what this terrible storm was about.
 "Behold! lady queen! how this tail sticks out!"
 But the woman, no longer timid in hell,
 Exclaimed, "it is looking very well!"
 "Yet my lord, if he wishes, can have it slid
 "Into the seat of his breeches, and hid."
 So she took the tail with a delicate air,
 And rolled it up, like a twist of hair,—
 Then lifting his coat's wide spreading skirt,
 Pok'd her arm down, 'twixt his breeches and shirt,
 Then ramming and cramming, as women can do,—
 Completely concealed the tail from view!

Backward he threw his eyes,
 And, smiling a sweet surprise,
 Took, with his fiery tongue, a sip
 From the young queen's unshriveled lip.
 For the devil loved this wench
 The best of all his dames;
 She could the easier quench
 His anger's rising flames,
 Than all the rest of his wives together,—
 And keep him coolest in hottest weather.
 This beautiful sinner
 Had always so much of the old boy in her,
 And was so devoted,
 That, at times, the devil really doated!

What if he did love more than one?
 Other rulers the same have done;
 Henry the VIII—Napoleon—
 And Brigham, the devil's *young*-est son.
 She was not apt to be jealous,
 As long as her lord would remain
 Within his own hot domain;
 But when he seemed over zealous
 To adjust the fit of his coat,
 And to tie up his stove-pipe throat
 With his red cravat,—
 The wench would repine at that,—
 And playfully hint,
 That her own little nose would be soon out of joint.
 For she knew that the daughters of Earth were fair,
 And had about them a winning air;
 And would set a trap
 For so handsome a chap,
 And, catching him, they might detain him there,
 As of old twice he
 // Himself had stolen and kept Eurydice!

On this occasion, her conjecture
 Broke forth into a curtain lecture;
 She tried, by hinting round about,
 To find his present journey out;
 And wherefore he so much desired
 To hide the thing that she admired!

* * * * *
 "Whither, my Lord, so *very* fine?"
 "Only a little way up, to dine;—
 To Washington: you know full well,
 It borders on the hot precincts of hell.
 There, great political debates
 Give out the grave opinion,
 That several of the sovereign states
 Are soon to be annexed to my dominion.

I've been negotiating for the South to come;—
 But she would *burn* me out of house and home!
 Great W——e on Rosinante's ghost would storm
 All of hell's windmills with a single arm;
 Blow out our fires, without Æolus' aid,
 And leave us here to whistle in the shade!
 S——d would like to fetch the North right in;
 But the cold north would freeze me to the chin.
 I'll none of that;— we'll get them one by one!
 (That's the best way to populate a town)
 For every ghost of 'em will travel down.

G——s would wade through sulphureous flames,
 To liberate all sooty colored dames;
 That B——'s project of amalgamation
 Might make mulattoes of the entire nation!
 And *eco-shin* Virginia's generation!
 G——s might come; but then, his tongue's a bell
 Whose gabby clamors would confound ev'n hell!
 And when it gets a-going, there's no telling
 When the old — will cease his garru-knelling.
 They have a way of stopping him in congress;
 For by the hour-rule, they can make his song less;
 A rule which surely I'll adopt, if he
 Or W——e or H——n comes, or M——y:
 For otherwise, our lower parliament,
 Which only was for high debatement meant,
 Would be but little better than, they say,
 Th' American senate chamber is to day —
 Where mighty men, who ought to be much mum-mer!
 Are turning windmills all the summer!

C—— would come, with G——s not about him,
 But every body seems, just now, to doubt him:—
 He doubts himself, and does not know precisely
 Which way to look, that he may turn most nicely,
 Expressing, in his doubt-begetting face,
 That (things being so uncertain in *this* race),
 He will not lead but follow in the chase.

I'm very much inclined to take this trio,
 If they will sign to bring in all O——o !
 For *that* great state I have a fellow-feeling !—
 She proves herself so good at negro-stealing ;
 At negro-killing, she is even better,
 And substitutes *starvation* for the *fetter* !”

While thus he told the secrets of the state
 To his consoling, true, confiding mate,
 The busy time-piece, with its thundering tongue
 Struck three o'clock — then up the devil swung !
 And through a star* that in the ceiling glow'd,
 Rushed to the cars — and met them on the road,
 Not far from Bladensburgh †—where oft ago
 His majesty had been to claim his own.

* Bulwer puts the devil in a bottle; Goethe represents him escaping through a key-hole. The romancers are fond of placing him in narrow and confined positions, that he may the better display his dexterity in emergencies. I prefer bringing him out at a star as the most natural guide from dark and cavernous abodes. Sinbad, the sailor, when buried with his wife, found himself in a gloomy cavern, and after some days wandering in the dark, says — “at last I perceived a light resembling a star. I went on towards that light, and discovered that it came through a hole in the rock large enough for a man to get out at.”

† Homer and Virgil place the entrance of Pluto's kingdom near to the lake Avernus. Other poets place it at the promontory of Tenarus, where the cave, one hundred and fifty paces deep, was still to be seen when Zenophon wrote, whence Hercules dragged out Cerberus. Lucan locates the entrance of hell on the banks of the Euphrates. The Germans have a mouth of the infernal regions of their own into which they are continually driving the indestructible Dr. Faustus. The ingenious author of the Devil's Progress brings his hero out of hell in Sicily—thus :

“Up towards sun-bright Sicily,
 He made his hot approach !
 There, mounting on his fiery steed,—
 A young volcano's back,—
 He shot into the upper air,
 By his ancient, royal track ;
 And, 'mid the roar of Ætna's guns,
 Which thundered a salute,
 Rode down its side, right royally,
 And dismounted at its foot !”

There are, however, more ways of getting into Hell than of getting out: and I prefer the locality which I have selected, the precise spot being known as Dead Man's Hollow, the burial place of the British who fell in the battle of Bladensburgh in 1814. This place has been notorious as the resort of gentlemen who settle affairs of honor in single combat:—which fact may explain the devil's partiality for the neighborhood.

For, of all sorts of bello,
 He best loves the quiet duello.

Part II.

As the devil waited a little while,
 By the roadside, for the cars,
 He saw two sons of the boggy isle,
 And a Hessian from the southern wars,
 Crouching behind a rock !
 And his majesty was well aware
 That they were working mischief there :—
 For he saw the lack of an iron rail ;
 So, he fixed himself to witness the shock !
 And the devil, sheltered by the wood,
 Exclaimed aloud, “all hail !
 To meet with friends I never fail
 In this goodly neighborhood !”
 Prostrate the trio fell
 Before this voice from hell !
 But the devil cried out merrily,
 “Be at *aise* entirely ;”—
 For he longed, himself, to see,
 In broad daylight,
 That terrible sight,
 The crushing up of a dozen cars !
 The bloody minded Mars
 Ne'er looked upon Napoleon's wars,
 With such a gloating gaze !
 For all the devil's energies,
 Concentrating in a furious blaze,
 Protruded, flashing, from his hellish eyes
 He stood upon a mound,
 Catching the far-off sound
 As it floated near ;
 Snuffing the sulphur smoke,
 As its odors broke
 Through the heated atmosphere !
 Pleasure glides through every vein !

All tremulous he stands;
 And all the nerves in his body strain
 To lift to the top of his boiling brain
 The mighty expectation!—and his hands,
 Grasping, athwart his breast, his either arm,
 Gore, with their horny fingers, warm,
 His fat-less flesh, and scorch the parchment skin
 That clamps it, charred within!

Closer he looked, to see if the rail
 Was certainly out of place;
 For he did not want the thing to fail:
 And he forward stepped apace;
 To measure the gap between the bars!
 Behold, the blood-red train of cars,
 Dashing along with its freight of souls!
 Behold, the curling fog as it rolls
 Sky-ward in sable flakes!
 Old Polyphemus rages nigh!
 Fire gleams from a single eye!
 And not a hand is at the brakes!
 Then the merry shout
 That the devil gave out
 Proclaimed that there was no longer doubt!

Never had music been so sweet before,
 To the devil, as the sullen roar
 Of those iron wheels, and the whistling blast
 Of the snorting engine, screaming its last!
 Its last long wailing note,
 Scalding its iron throat
 With its requiem breath!

Onward came the furious train;
 Screamed the warning pipe in vain!
 Sideways leaning, half-turned—creaning,
 Sudden jump'd the engine, flashing!
 Dashing, crashing, mashing, smashing!

Thundering, leap'd against the sand hill,
 Where the devil kept his stand, still,—
 Over-looking the disaster!
 Never saw he death come faster!
 Headlong rushed the hindward cars
 One into the other driven!
 At a flash, asunder riven!
 Piling up into a splintered mound
 Their own sad ruins at a single bound!

There the engine lay, embedded
 Half in sand,—its chief beheaded:
 No hand to check or break its cries,
 Groaning still it rends the skies!
 So the fierce lion, stricken with a wound,
 That brings him sidelong, bellowing, to the ground,
 Still furious roars, in gasps, his latest breath,
 And warns the shades of his approaching death..
 When the wheels were still,
 And the engine ceased its cry,
 There was wailing around the hill—
 Exquisite human agony!

But the devil had heard such notes of woe
 In his earlier days, long, long ago;
 When beautiful Eve, disconsolate,
 With dry eyes, after the fall,
 Groaned by the garden wall,
 As the jarring hinges of its ponderous gate
 Grating, proclaimed her fate!

And again, when her favorite boy was slain
 By his envious brother;
 As she wept for the one,
 That to darkness was gone;
 And she groaned for that lonelier other!
 For she knew that he could not escape the eye
 And the frightful wrath of the Deity.

Tho' the devil has a fondness still
 For the wailings, wild and shrill,
 Of the living when a loved one dies,
 Yet it suits his ear
 Better to hear
 The low moans and the long drawn sighs
 Of the sufferer in death's agonies:
 So, he left the living to their grief and said,
 "I'll now take a peep at the dying and dead!"
 And hanging his glasses on his nose,
 As if at an opera show,
 Groping around, the devil goes,
 Noting each separate woe!

A child was rent in twain!
 Body and brain!
 "The work of Solomon's sword!"
 Was the devil's muttered word.
 And he looked around, in derision, to see
 If many mothers were claiming!
 There was one sad creature sitting by,
 Looking on with a stony eye,
 All vacantly,—
 No syllable naming;
 Trying, it seemed, to mend her child!
 With manœuverings strange and wild!
 Tying its curls o'er its parted head,
 As if it only slept, and were not dead!
 Lifting the mass of ruins to her breast,
 And holding it there to rest!
 Moving her foot to lullaby again!
 Rocking a cradle in her brain!
 As when, at home, a new-made bride,
 Sitting with only one by her side,
 She used to dream how it *would* be,
 When the time should come for a lullaby!

The engineer had lost his head;
 Severed, it was, mid-way the eyes;
 And he seemed to be very dead!
 For the tongue that was left with the under jaw,
 Uttered no cries!
 The fireman had lost a leg,
 From above the knee;
 And the devil consoled the latter,
 Crying out in his hellish glee:
 "That is, indeed, a very small matter,
 And may be restored with a peg:
 Vulcan, himself, is lame;*
 And so is Santa Anna;
 The one still fights the flame,
 And the other, cocks, at Havana."

* * * * *

Through the riven side of a shattered car,
 The devil softly crept,
 To see what was going on there,
 And how many their last sleep, slept.
 Over benches helter-skelter thrown;
 Over crushed heads and mangled limbs,
 Treading on many a broken bone,
 Groping, the devil climbs;

* So was Jupiter:—for, as the story goes the Giant Typhon, having fought and conquered the great Thunderer, cut out the sinews of his feet. And so were Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott. So were Agesilaus, Æsop, Gasca, Zanger the Turk, and Socrates. So is old Thad. S.s with whom we may mention the Ignipotent, himself, our witty and ubiquitous hero. By the way, the devil might have added in his words of consolation to the fireman, especially as he was in a classical humour at the time, the following sage reflections of Lord Bacon:

"Whoever hath any thing fixed in his person that doth induce contempt, hath also a perpetual spur in himself to rescue and deliver himself from scorn; therefore, all deformed persons are extreme bold; first, as in their own defence, as being opposed to scorn, but in process of time by a general habit. Also, it stirreth in them industry, and especially of this kind, to watch and observe the weakness of others, that they may have somewhat to repay. Again, in their superiors, it quencheth jealousy towards them, as persons that they think they may at pleasure despise; and it layeth their competitors and emulators asleep, as never believing they should be in possibility of advancement till they see them in possession: so that upon the matter, in a great wit, deformity is an advantage to rising."

And his lurid eyes
Sparkled with hellish extasies.

There lay the beautiful wife
Of a desolate house!
Never again to be
In the home of her heart, on her husband's knee.
And there, by her side, low bending,
In vigorous life,
All safe but his heart—
Was that faithful spouse;—
Not yet comprehending
The full extent of his misery!
Nought asking, but gazing steadily
To see if her breathing came!
Now, calling her name!
But she answered him not again!
Oh! agony! to live and see
The heart's beloved borne off, in a misty train,
On the wizard hearses of uncertainty,
And yet remain!

There a young officer lay;—
His authority hushed;
His bounding hopes of glory crushed;
The bird on his button, an emblem of prey,
A vulture flapping its wings o'er his clay!
He had begun
To dream of victories to be won;
But Cæsar is gone!
His body is the field of battle now,
Yielding its legions; and his lofty brow,
That citadel of high ambitious dreams,
Already, with th' incipient army, teems!
His sword, in the scabbard, will hang on the wall
Of his mother's chamber,

And often recall
The hope of her heart as he stood by her side,
In the early days of his manly pride;
And her rambling thoughts will clamber
Over the hills of Heaven, in faith's exulting joy,
In search of her beautiful boy!

Behold yon youthful mother, dying!
She parted from her favorite boy to day,
And felt no fears;—
He begged to come,—and she left him crying
By the garden gate when she came away.
Now, in her bodily agony,
She sees his blue eyes brimming full of tears,
As when her own fond eyes
Last looked upon him through the dew of sighs.
Ah! never again will that mother hear
His light step on the stair,
Running to get the promised peach or pear!

And lo, that beauteous maid!
Her dark eyes in a darker shade—
Gone, in the prime of rosy womanhood;—
As she, in fancy, at the altar stood!
To-morrow was to be her bridal day;—
And in yon basket, that no splinter harms,
Lie the rich trinkets, for her neck and arms.
Never to be worn by her — ah! no,
The bright mementoes now of shadowy woe!
Never again will that maiden hear
Her lover's flute, striving to reach her ear,
Climbing the moonbeams thro' the midnight air.

These scenes were much to the devil's liking,
Solemn and striking;
But he passes on, in his haste, to see
All the phases of misery.

He saw an old man, with a very small head,
 Lying too quietly not to be dead;
 And he very well knew
 That the carcass before him belonged to a Jew;
 For the glistening skin
 Was drawn very tightly around the chin;
 And the razor-edge lips seemed as if they had tried
 To shave one another the moment he died.
 The devil thought that it would n't be rash
 To finger and pocket this old man's cash.
 So, the rusty valise that was lying by,
 The devil seized as his own;
 And its weight (you could tell from his eyes,
 For they very exultingly shone),
 Convinced him that he had got a prize!
 And he crept from the car with a groan,
 Uttering thanks, in a mournful tone,
 For *his* narrow escape
 From so awful a scrape!
 And shouting (but laughing in his sleeves)
 "Beware of traveling thieves."

Then he looked around to see
 Who had escaped the calamity:
 And he met a delicate man
 With his neck a little awry;
 Smiling under his eyebrows,
 Out of his yellowish eye;
 Of very busy appearance—
 Much like a constable;
 And standing back in his boots
 As far as he was able;
 With a Shanghai's bill upon his face
 Occupying the nose's place;
 And his chin protruding out
 As if it had a bone in it!
 This individual was evidently out of time,
 Out of rhyme

And out of money!
 Ruminating, as much as to say,
What shall I do in this emergency?
 There was much intensity in his looks,
 And he carried a wallet of very *thin* books:
 Amongst which you could plainly see,
 "The Softs, the true Democracy,"
 The last great speech of H—— C——,"
 But the devil declined the job
 Of reading *that*.

* * * * *
 The devil saw at a glance
 That this was a politician,
 And he knew, in advance,
 The whole scope of his mission:
 He was going (but would n't tell),
 To levy a per-centum;
 Yet all the clerks would know very well
 The man who sent 'im:—
 For the little fellow looked like he
 Had slept, the over-night, with Peter G——.
 But the thing (and it could n't fail)
 That pleased him most to see;
 The men that removed the rail
 Had gone to eternity!
 For an erring car in a side-long leap
 Had crush'd them and cover'd them under its heap!
 And the devil thought of Haman,
 And he cried "amen!"

The busy conductor went bawling about
 To summon a guard for the "mail;"
 The bags lay scattered and torn all around,
 Spilling their contents out;
 But every man on the ground
 Was so busily bent

On some private intent
That no one seemed willing to stand as the guard;
'Till the devil, not wishing the captain to fail,
Politely volunteered:—

The balance of this manuscript was so blotched and obliterated that the senator could make nothing of it.

He thought well of it, but not desiring to connect his name with it in any way, he despatched a note to the author as follows:

MY DEAR SIR—Enclosed I send four hundred dollars. This will be enough to secure the services of a respectable bookseller. There are some of the stanzas much to be admired, particularly those describing the disaster to the cars.

Wishing you great success in your literary labors, I am

Respectfully Yours,

B—.

CHAPTER XII.

It was a cold bright day in mid-winter. The Potomac was a thick sheet of ice. Curtis returned home late in the afternoon, and found, upon inquiry of the maid, that Beatrice and Sterling were out skating. Looking from the window of his cottage upon their playful gambols, he saw Beatrice fall, and Sterling struggling to lift her from the ice. He thought the gallant congressman was rather long about it:— he was jealous. Curtis turned from the window,

almost gnawing his tongue. He sought little Helen in her chamber.

Jealousy, even in the most faithful and loving, may sometimes lead either man or woman, in fancied revenge, to the commission of the hated offence. It often is the beginning of conjugal infidelity. It alienates the heart, and puts it in a position to be stormed and carried. Sympathy gains entrance, and gallantry strikes down the guards of the citadel.

Little Helen had been living in the house with Curtis and Beatrice ever since their marriage. The doctor had kissed her a thousand times, as her brother, in that innocent, playful way which is so common between dear and affectionate relations. At first she was nearly a child; but now she was beginning to grow into womanhood. She was plagued, as well as astonished, in peeping downwards, when at her toilet, she beheld, the swelling roundness of her bosom, whose alabaster whiteness almost reflected her wondering eyes and her blushing cheeks.

She was beginning to get shy of her brother, as she affectionately called the doctor. She hardly knew the reason; but on one or two occasions lately he had held her longer in his embrace than usual, and seemed to cling to her; and she was at a loss to account for the new and marvelous sensations that pervaded her at such times.

Connected with the cottage was a music room to which Helen frequently retired to practice. It was a round room with high ceiling, richly ornamented with paintings and furnished commodiously with

lounches and ottomans. Beside one of the windows, the curtain slightly raised, just enough to let in a subdued flood of light upon her face and neck, Helen had fallen asleep upon a lounge. The room was perfectly cosy and the atmosphere as sweet as summer. The life of Mozart was lying on the floor, having dropped from the hand of the sleeping maiden. She was lying partly on her side, her head bending forward so that her chin was nearly touching her bosom, a little awkward for a waking attitude, but oh! how graceful for a sleeping beauty! Her knee was raised a little so that one of her ankles was exposed just where it begins to swell into more ample proportions. She was breathing as softly as an infant.

Curtis had thrown off his boots and put on his slippers and gown. He entered the room lightly, but not expecting to find Helen asleep. He approached her on tiptoe, and kneeling down by her side leaned over her and touched with his lips a stray curl that lay like an embodied tangible zephyr upon her shoulder; the shoulder was bare, and he kissed it with his burning lips; there was dew about her mouth, and he stole some of the essence so furtively that the theft was not known. He repeated the caress with some warmth, but she refused to wake! Her careless and negligent attitude exposed the upper edges of her bosom, and the removing of a single pin was all that was necessary to reveal the rest! It was done! and his audacious hand found its way under the sacred covering! The girl moved, and he placed his right arm quickly under her head and kissed her

with the most frantic passion. She screamed and attempted to rise! He repeated his caressing, exclaiming, "Helen, Helen, oh! how I love you!"

"O! Brother, brother!" she exclaimed.

When he released her she fled from the room in the wildest confusion. Curtis remained kneeling by the lounge, burying his face upon it in his hands.

Who can imagine the intense self-maledictions that were at that instant heaped upon his degraded soul!

CHAPTER XIII.

Beatrice had been watching for her husband. Several times during the long night, she had looked from the window, to see if he was coming; her eyes were red with weeping; and she had thrown herself without undressing, upon the bed. Sleep she could not, for her mind was disturbed, and her heart was tossed with various emotions.

The length of the life of love is at last conjecture. Nobody is able to count his years. Rejuvenescence is his philosophy; eternal youth blushes on his rosy cheeks, and decks his brow in ever blooming flowers. Shadows envelope, sunshine betrays him. He is a connoisseur in pursuit of beauty, whose eyes, growing weary over the time-defaced grandeur of an ancient-master piece, brighten to behold the fresher excellencies of an undoubted but younger Raphael.

Beatrice, in retirement, with no superior presence

to provoke a comparison with Curtis, would have been blind to his faults, or, at least, forgiving. Had his fault consisted in his neglect of professional duties, in his fondness for pleasures, in his excessive indulgences in wine and society, in his passion for gaming, his carelessness in the enjoyment of his domestic comforts, or the absolute decay of his tenderness: all these could have been forgiven; but personal indignity; positive neglect; gloomy indications of suspicion expressed in the averted eye, or the mocking smile; the disjointed expression; the mysterious and wicked inuendoes which dropped at times from his excited lips: these things were beyond endurance; and under their crushing influences, Beatrice, the tender, the gay, the bright, the affectionate, the devoted, came by degrees to be Beatrice, the estranged, the gloomy, the proud, the rebellious.

"It is two o'clock, my dear," said Beatrice to her husband, as he entered her chamber after a night of intense gambling.

"What of it?" said he.

"If it is nothing to you, it is nothing to me," she replied, as she turned over and buried her face on her pillow.

Curtis was too much excited to observe the tones with which she uttered the mournful sentence that seemed to come, husky and sepulchral, from a crushed heart. He had no ear for the music of a broken lute.

"I can not live much longer this way," she said, as she broke into unsuppressed sobs.

He had removed his boots, and was sitting in his slippers and gown. His head was not very clear or steady. Dim, misty visions floated before him. But he remembered his heavy losses; and himself and his folly came in for the bulk of the curses which, in his zigzag mind, he was dealing out promiscuously. There was a devil in him as big as an elephant.

"It is always this way," he exclaimed. "I am received with a frown whenever I come."

"Not frowns, my dear," said Beatrice. "I do not mean to frown. But I can not help weeping—indeed, I am very unhappy—I am wretched—and it is all on your account. You could make me so happy if you would only stay with me. I am left alone too much and too long. I can not bear it. Not a night do you come to me until nearly day. Do you suppose I have no uneasiness about you?"

"Not much, I guess—you need not; I am able to take care of myself."

"It did not use to be this way," said Beatrice.

"You have plenty of company," he replied; "you enjoy yourself in my absence. You have everything you wish. I do not attempt to restrict your pleasures. You need no attentions which are not ever at hand. Sterling and his page are always at your command."

There was some bitterness in this last phrase. There was a sneer in his manner and tone. Beatrice felt herself accused. She sprang from the bed,

lighted a taper and left the chamber, saying, "I will leave you to your reflections."

Beatrice staggered into her sister's room. The sweet child, little Helen, was lying asleep. The sudden appearance of the light and the noise of her sister's entrance, awoke her.

"What's the matter, sis?" said Helen, as she sprung up in bed.

"Nothing; I have come to sleep with you."

"Is the doctor come home yet?" said Helen.

"Yes; he will sleep alone to-night," said Beatrice.

She placed the taper on the bureau, and staggering towards the bed where Helen was lying, fell upon the floor as if dead! Helen screamed to the utmost of her voice! She sat up in the bed as if unable to move. Her unconfined hair covered her neck and shoulders, as she threw her curls back out of her face. She moved not, but continued her frantic cries, until Curtis rushed into the room.

"What's the matter?" he exclaimed.

"There! there!" said Helen, pointing to her sister.

Beatrice was lying on her face, her right arm under her bosom. Curtis kneeled by her and lifting her body in his arms, said, "Bring water, Helen, quick!"

Water was freely applied; Beatrice revived, uttered a loud laugh, and looking searchingly into Curtis's face, threw her arms around his neck and strove to hide her head in his bosom in the folds of his gown.

"No, no!" she said, sobbing—"You didn't mean it. I know you did not *mean that!*"

"Mean what?" said Curtis.

"Nothing, oh nothing," said Beatrice. "But I was hurt, love! How long have you been home? Is it day? Where's the hearse?"

This incoherence, with the wild glare of her excited eyes, and the clasping ardor of her arms, as they passed in irregular jerks around his neck, alarmed Curtis.

"Dead, dead," she replied. "I have been expecting it—they killed him—he was walking in the dark—they murdered——help! help! murder!" she cried out, and sprung upon her feet, striving to tear herself away from Curtis.

"Let me go, you wretch," she shrieked, as she drew back her hand and slapped him in the face with all her power.

"Let me go—let me go," and she tore herself away. Drawing herself up to her full stature, and folding her arms upon her bosom, she surveyed Curtis with an expression of intense scorn, saying:

"What is your accusation, sir?"

"Nothing, my dear," he said, approaching her with expressions of tenderness.

"Tis false, sir; tis false! You have not the manliness to make an open charge, but you shelter yourself under the shadow of hints and intimations. Your cowardly nature has revealed itself. I despise you. Your degradation is complete, when you seek a bed which your own false and wicked imagination has polluted. Henceforth, sir, we occupy separate apartments. Will you leave me, now?"

Poor Helen was amazed. Her eyes and her mouth were open! her features expanded into all the expressions of bewilderment.

"Sister, please hush."

"Will you leave us, Dr. Curtis?" said Beatrice, calmly. "I am not excited; I desire to be left alone with my sister, the balance of the night."

"Brother, brother," said Helen, "leave us; sister is not angry now; will you?"

Curtis left the room. He felt rebuked and cowed; disgusted with himself. His whole course of living for the last few months rose up before him. He had grievously erred. The imperious spirit of his injured wife, towering to the height of supreme scorn, had confronted him with such composed indignation, that his heart sunk within him. She had told him that she "despised him." He felt convinced that he deserved to be despised. She had told him that he was a "coward," and had commanded him to leave her presence.

And all this had been done so suddenly! Heretofore she had been all meekness, all gentleness, all amiability. It was the first time that she had exhibited so much temper, so much emotion, such frantic excitement! Was she deranged?

Floundering upon his uneasy couch, Curtis lay until daylight. A thousand harrowing thoughts agitated him. He had gambled himself into a beggar. His money was gone. His practice was gone. His character was soiled. His pride was rebuked. His heart was bowed to the earth. His hopes recently,

if indeed he had any, were all centered in his wife. But suddenly, he had been driven from her presence; and that too, just when his last cent had been lost!

But what was the loss of money to the loss of such a wife as this? Her eyes of light, her face of loveliness, her neck of snow, her heart of gentleness, her brow of grandeur and her bosom of purity!

"Is there no restoration?" This thought ran through his mind, and a flood of tears gushed from his eyes. "Beatrice! Beatrice! Beatrice!" he exclaimed, in a tone that was smothered by the pillow upon which he pressed his face. "Is there indeed, no forgiveness?"

Poor Beatrice! she slept not. She lay by her sister, tossing and tumbling. Even her tears came not, her heart was more obdurate than she supposed. Her resentment was not appeased. Her husband appeared a brute. His breath contaminated the atmosphere. She thought of her father; she would write to him immediately, and beg him to come for her; she would go back to the scenes of her childhood—to her own sunny clime, with its soft skies and its balmy breezes; she would go back to the arms of her dear old father.

It was broad day when she arose. She drew back the curtains, and threw open the blind. Helen was asleep, and smiling as an infant smiles. Her sister bent over her, and kissed her forehead. "Sleep on, thou spotless virgin, the angels are not happier."

As Beatrice contemplated Helen's glowing charms, she lamented: "Sleep on a while; your's, too,

will be the common lot of woman. The time will come when some sensual beast will soil your purity, and leave you to curse the hour that you were born."

CHAPTER XIV.

We must not forget in this history, our friend Col. Placid, whom we saw some time ago at the faro bank.

For many years, as has been already stated, he had been a most successful better. He had acquired the name of Herr Driesbach, the tiger tamer. "Give him ten, and let him go," was the merry word to the dealer from some bystander, whenever Placid entered the room. But the change of fortune was positive; and his bad luck now came to be as astonishing as his good luck had heretofore been remarkable. Ever since the memorable night when he had lost for the first time, and that so enormously, he had been fighting the animal with desperation. He was in a constant rage while betting. His losses were immense. Night after night he threw away thousands. His affairs were beginning to be involved. His gold bags were disappearing. His turn of fortune had got to be street conversation; and his failure in business was predicted. His habits were changed. He talked musingly to himself as he walked along the avenue. He noticed nothing.

"Ten dollars a day," was continually falling from his lips. "Ten dollars a day; this won't pay, this won't pay."

Dr. Curtis had had a terrible night. His twenty thousand was gone, and he had nothing to show for it but the splendor of his parlor, the recollection of his late brilliant parties and his superb equipage. He had made a last grand rush upon the bank on the strength of his checks, to the amount of eight thousand dollars; had lost all, and gone home in despair.

Rolling and tossing on his uneasy bed, he cast up his accounts after the losses of the night, and found that he had overdrawn his bank deposit about two thousand dollars. To raise that amount by ten o'clock was no light task. He had never been in such a strait before. His iron nerves were jostled. Beatrice had the money; but he could not tell her of his necessity. He slept but little, breakfasted hastily and left home earlier than usual. Vague anxiety was depicted on his irresolute countenance as he walked hastily up and down the avenue, scarcely knowing what he was doing or where he was going. He passed many friends but was in too much haste to recognize them. He paused at the door of the fatal *hell* and thought of running up stairs to beg the prince not to present his checks for a day or two; but there were throngs of people crowding along, and he did not wish to be seen going into such a house in broad daylight. The idea too of asking a gambler to favor him was not agreeable.

He had never condescended to recognize these men, the dealers and bankers, even while betting at their games. He spoke to them simply with the aristocratic "Sir." He played for speculation and avarice, not for sociality.

Turning from the door he dashed along irresolutely.

"What the d—l shall I do?" thought he, and he paused a moment in front of the Bank of Washington. Beau Hickman approached him, "A quarter, Doctor,"—

"Go to h—l, you brute."

"Not ready, Doctor, can't cross the Styx by myself, want a pilot—will wait for you to lead," said the imperturbable beggar, as the Doctor hurried along towards — street.

The beggar leaned his frail body on his cane. He was the picture of contended aristocracy—though decrepid. His cheek and abdomen were equally sunken, but the smoke that rose, as if reluctant to leave his moustache, betokened, by its flavor, a genuine Havana.

"D—n you," said the beau to himself, "I have seen the day I could buy and sell you."

Curtis had reached the door of Col. Placid's office. He knocked and was admitted.

Placid was sitting in his counting room.

"What interest do I pay you, Col. Placid, on this loan?" said an individual who seemed to be negotiating.

"Ten dollars a day," said Placid.

"Ten dollars a day!" replied the person with astonishment.

"Yes sir; ten dollars a day—ten dollars a day."

"Excuse me, sir, I will not take it."

"Very well, sir—on the square—I bet on the square—ten dollars a day—good morning, sir—ten dollars a day."

"Placid," said Curtis, when they were alone, "I am in immediate want of two thousand dollars—can you let me have it?"

"Yes, at ten dollars a day, on the thousand!"

"Very well; what you please," replied Curtis, "only let me have the money."

"Ten dollars a day, work or play, that's my motto, Dr. Curtis, ten dollars a day," and the banker rose from his seat and pranced about the room, as if following the music of a dancing-master, snapping his fingers and singing,

"Ten dollars a day,
Work or play,
That's my way—
What do you say."

Then looking at Curtis furiously, he said, "It's a lie! They say on the street that I'm broke, but come, Doctor Curtis, look here," and he led Curtis into his vault room, opened his coffers and exhibited heaps of gold. "I made it all at ten dollars a day."

"You are a lucky man," said Curtis, "the only man yet that ever *could* tame the tiger and keep him so."

"Keep him so, did you say?" said Placid, "were you out last night?"

"Yes, to my sorrow, that's the reason I am in a pinch for money, I lost dreadfully."

"How much?"

"Eight thousand."

"Ten, tens, one hundred, one hundred tens, a thousand, eight hundred tens, eight thousand, three hundred and sixty-four into eight hundred, gives, two, seventy. The whole work of eight hundred days gone in an hour! only think of it, sir; only think of it," said Placid, nibbling his finger nails, and walking up and down the chamber, as if he was taking Curtis's misfortune all to himself; so, at least, the doctor supposed, for he remarked, "Oh! that is a small matter."

"Small matter!" shrieked Placid, "the work of a lifetime, sir, all my pains and labor for ten years gone, gone, sir! gone! But I will retrieve, at ten dollars a day!"

"What do you mean?" said Curtis.

"What do I mean, sir? look here," reopening his coffers; "four months ago there were four times as much gold here as you see to-day; where is it now, sir, now?"

"You don't mean to say that you have lost it?"

"Yes sir, lost it! I won it at the rate of ten dollars a day—and have lost it at the rate of one hundred dollars an hour?"

Curtis gazed in utter amazement on the haggard countenance of the broker. What a wonderful

change had four months made in his appearance! But recently he had been the most quiet, easy, unexcited and harmless creature in the city—the model of patience, politeness and sociability;—now the fiercest, quickest, most reckless, desperate and abandoned of men. His face was livid—every nerve moved as he spoke. His eyes gleamed with unnatural light; and froth covered his raving lips.

"You came to borrow: I am yet rich; two thousand—at ten dollars a day for the thousand—twenty dollars a day—sign a note—the interest must be paid daily—ten dollars a day to the thousand or twenty dollars a day—keep it as long as you please—good morning; remember, twenty dollars a day."

Curtis divided the gold into four parcels and put each in a pocket. The money was heavy.

His intention was to place it in the Bank of Washington, so that there would be enough on deposit to meet his checks;—but, as he thought of the twenty dollars a day interest, he concluded that he would go to the hell and bet awhile, with the hope of doubling the amount, so that he could repay Placid and still have a stake.

Passing up the avenue, he saw the door of the hell open, and sprung into it hastily, hoping to elude observation.

It was just ten o'clock. The prince was in his chair, alone—as fresh as a rose—clear and bright—just out of a bath—waiting for his breakfast.

"Ah! Doctor, stirring early, sir."

"Yes sir; I am impatient to regain some of the money I lost last night."

"Take a seat sir; accommodate you; always on hand; though haven't had my breakfast; will you cut?"

The game went on briskly and with variable luck for two or three hours; several times during this playing Curtis had some thousands ahead; but his good fortune only increased his insatiable desire for more. He was ambitious to break the bank. He made desperate bets, and kept the complacent prince very much worried. At last he fell into an awful run, when a succession of losses reduced his two thousand dollars to naught, and the game was closed.

"Have a little wine, doctor?" said the prince.

"Not any, thank you—yes, I will take a glass."

"This is devilish unlucky," continued the doctor.

"Haven't you presented my checks?"

"No sir, not yet."

"Well sir, I shall be troubled. I have only six thousand dollars in bank. I brought the two thousand, which I have just lost, to make up the deficit."

"Well," said the prince, musing, "it is no matter. If you say so, Doctor, we will not present your checks except for six thousand to-day."

"It will be an accommodation," said Curtis, sipping his wine. It *was* delicious; acting with the accommodating disposition of the graceful prince, it exhilarated and soothed.

Yes, exhilarated and soothed. The doctor grew amiable, even sociable, and smiled and chatted nearly

an hour with the prince, whom he found a most jovial and interesting fellow.

When Curtis left the room he felt a most intense disgust for himself. His eyes fell upon the ground, his face was covered with blushes. His proud spirit had lost its iron nerve and was become a thing elastic; for, smilingly, he had *accepted* a favor from the man who had robbed him, and whose daily business was to rob every body.

How bitter are these moments of self-condemnation! And yet how common! Who has not been for a moment despicable? The spirit of evil sometimes drives the angel of the purest heart out of its heaven.

CHAPTER XV.

Lizzy Dash had come to Washington to display her charms and to make her fortune. She was from one of the rural districts of the state of ——. While in the city she was under the protection of the M. C. from her district. She had created a sensation in the fashionable circle for she was really a fine looking girl, something under twenty, with a charming person and captivating appearance. She had fallen in with Beatrice and Dr. Curtis, and had received from them more than the ordinary civilities; had been frequently invited to their house, and was treated as a favorite guest. She had taken a drive with the doctor, behind his dashing greys.

He was evidently partial to her. He had touched her chin, playfully, with his fingers, when he told her that the ball at his house was to be given in her honor. She was surprised and delighted. The doctor, as they drove along, had inveigled one of her fingers into his hand. It was very plump and round, and so soft! Finding it no reluctant reposer in his palm, he drew another after it; the others followed, as a matter of course, while the warm buffalo robe was pulled up over her lap and almost to her chin. Only think of the doctor having her entire hand in his! It was a very pleasant drive to both,—only it was too short! They were near the gate of the cottage! Lifting her hand to his lips he kissed it! Once—twice—thrice, a little higher up each time towards the wrist, until he really began to devour lingeringly her soft arm, which blushed and thrilled and grew rosy under the mysterious touch of his long soft whiskers! “Ah! Lizzy, we will meet again to-morrow night, until then, be happy if you can!” And so they alighted, and were met at the door by Beatrice, near whom was standing the ever assiduous and dreaming Sterling.

To-morrow night came, and with it was gathered at Curtis's cottage a very brilliant assemblage of distinguished persons, amongst whom was Miss Dash. She was the belle of the occasion, and vied, in elegance of manner and appearance even with Beatrice herself. Miss Dash was dressed very magnificently, not tastefully, but certainly for show. Invisibilities were visible; and her uneasy shoulders seemed con-

tinually struggling to get a little higher up out of her dress; the print of the cord that bound the upper edges of her dress, appeared in faint red lines across the rounder portion of her back and shoulders, adding but little to the graceful and bewitching developments round about.

Dr. Curtis was too elegant a man to neglect his guests for any consideration; but as he dispensed the honors of his house, no opportunity was lost to offer the tenderest civilities to Lizzy; who, in her turn, seemed reluctant, in her rounds, to lose sight of him. Her smile lingered with her eye upon him, whenever she passed, whether he spoke or not; and no man could look corresponding longings more despairingly than Dr. Curtis. In the dim regions of his large black eye, behind the vivid ball, sad melancholy sat shrinking as it were from the light of the brilliant orb, and crouching in the shadows, pleading silently and beseeching consolation. Dr. Curtis had tried (and had succeeded) to convince Lizzy that he was most unhappy in his marriage with Beatrice; and the fascinated girl really believed that it could not be any possible harm to pity so disconsolate a man, and to cheer him with the liveliest expressions of her sympathy. She thought too, that, as the doctor could not love his wife, it was the best reason why he should love another: and whose business was it, if she, Lizzy Dash, should be the happy recipient of his affections? It can not be denied, that some such thoughts passed through the mind of Miss Dash, just at the

auspicious moment, when the doctor approached her, taking her by the fingers for a dance. It so happened, at the same moment, that Sterling, with his arm around Beatrice, swept by the doctor in a clinging waltz and Miss Dash remarked: "Really, doctor, you had better look after General Sterling, he quite monopolizes Mrs. Curtis."

A quick frown passed over Curtis's face, and his lip quivered slightly, but his color changed not, and with a sigh, as he pressed Lizzie's arm, he whispered, in the most melancholy and *confidential* tone, "*I believe she loves him;*" and away he whirled with his gay partner, dancing with an abandoned energy, which was not the less graceful for being reckless.

The waltz ended opportunely, near a large door that opened upon a porch. Curtis and his partner passed out. They were alone. The moon looked sweetly through the vine-covered lattice, and a mocking bird, kept awake in its cage by the unusual noise and bustle of the night, was screaming in answer to the artificial music of the band.

"Listen," said Curtis, to his fair, exhausted partner. "There is music everywhere; how the bird strives to imitate the band."

"And in some notes, how successful."

"Truly, its voice is the perfection of tone, not imitation; it is the instrument that imitates the natural music."

The bird continued to pour out a stream of wild melody, strangely combining its inartificial tones with the most delicious harmony, that came well

nigh enchanting Curtis, and driving the devil out of him; but he hurried past the cage, and gently drew Lizzie after him into the dimly lighted passage that led to the library.

In a moment Beatrice and Sterling stood in the place which had been just vacated by Curtis and Lizzy. She lingered by the bird and Sterling leaned against the lattice. Beatrice had withdrawn her arm as they entered the porch. She was joyous, playful, bright and talkative; Sterling was silent and moody. Her neck was full of rich jewels, and the moon came down to glass her eyes in the diamond water. Sterling was dazzled with the brilliant appearance of Beatrice.

"It is cool here," said she.

"Not to me," said Sterling, "but you live in a cold atmosphere," he continued in a husky, tremulous tone, as he attempted to take her finger, "my heart is—"

Before the sentence was finished Beatrice had glided into the passage that led to the library, and so rapidly that Sterling did not attempt to follow; indeed he remained standing where she had left him, throwing his face up and looking with a dim, dreamy gaze into that great azure ocean whose waves find beaches on a thousand stars.

When Curtis entered the library, he led Lizzy to the centre of the room, whence hung a chandelier lighted with gas.

"This is too bright," said Curtis, as he turned the screw to lower the blaze. "Let us make it moon-

light," lowering it still more—"nay, twilight," he whispered, and the blaze was reduced to a little blue bead—so dim that nothing but itself could be seen in the room.

The timid Lizzy Dash clung to the doctor's arm, and he led her to a sofa. He felt for her brow—not with his hands—but his lips! Her eye-lids were covered with the exuberant dew of his passionate kisses! Then came her little mouth to which he clung with all the intensity of a bee to a flower.

Her arms were around his neck and her hair had fallen loosely down about her shoulders. She abandoned herself to his knee, as he quietly stooped upon the sofa. "Quit, doctor, you slobber on me," was the only sentiment she could utter!

Beatrice, passing the library door at this moment, astonished to see the gas burning so dimly, stepped to the chandelier, and, as she turned up the blaze to a full head, exclaimed:

"Who in the world lowered the gas?" And lo! her eyes fell full upon Curtis and Lizzy Dash!

"Ah!" she said faintly, but proudly! And drawing herself up, as only an offended woman can do, with an incredulous gaze at the paralyzed parties, she slowly and disdainfully retired; and without pausing to reflect, rushed back into the midst of her guests, amongst whom she mingled with a wild exuberance of manner very unusual to her. Her gaiety approached the hysterical, but it was so subdued by her personal graces, and sustained by her cultivated intellect, that it passed for the genuine vivacity of a

joyous heart. Sterling met her in one of her laughing rounds, and was astonished at the wild mirth which she exhibited. He tried to catch her notice, but she did not allow it. He felt himself cut, and retired sullenly to a corner, a miserable fellow, but still unable to keep his eyes off. He feared that he had offended her, and made up his mind not to leave the house until he knew the certainty. After pouting a reasonable time, he again placed himself in her way. Her fit of wild gaiety had passed off. She was thoughtful—reflective—and now and then nibbled the pearly edges of her finger nails, as if not knowing precisely what she was doing.

"It is time I was going," said Sterling.

"Not yet," said she "it is early."

"I have no heart to stay," he replied.

"You should not have left it."

"I came to seek it."

"Stop—General—wait till the company retires—I have a word for you"—and she passed on to receive the parting adieus of some retiring friends.

What can this mean, thought Sterling. There was a calm, cold, rigidity of feature; a compression of her pale quivering lip, an articulated positiveness in this mysterious phrase, that inspired him with apprehensions. Had he gone too far; had he forfeited his claim to her charming society; had she understood him too well? did she intend to banish him?

He lingered until the house was empty of all except himself and her. With hat in hand, he approached to take his leave. His words were few—

and she gently led the way towards the door. They stood upon the threshold.

"It is very hard," she said, "to lose a valued friend. You must not reply to me, General Sterling. I can not pretend to misunderstand you. After what has passed to-night, we must not meet again! Adieu! forget me"—and she hastily retreated into the hall, which was now tenantless except of herself.

Sterling was choked with the suddenness of this speech. He gazed in her bright eyes. They were mild, gentle, melancholy, but firm and cold; and in their positive expression endorsed the peremptory tenor of her uttered decree. He had no words. To protest his love would be madness, to deny it would be falsehood. "I submit," was all he said; and muffling his face in his cloak, he rushed out of the house and ran up the graveled walk of the yard, just in time to get into Senator Burton's carriage, as it was about to drive off.

Beatrice retired to her chamber. It is difficult to imagine the extent of her wretchedness. Her calamity was two-fold. She had lost a husband and a lover! Her happiness was gone — her spirits crushed, her pride subdued; her husband disgraced, and herself betrayed.

She bolted her chamber door, and gazing a moment vacantly in her mirror, she tore the combs from her hair and flinging herself upon the carpet buried her face in her hands upon the floor.

Dr. Curtis rapped at her chamber door. She arose not. Again he rapped.

"Who is there," she said.

"It is I," he replied.

"You can not come in to-night," she said, "in the morning I will see you."

This man was not as miserable as he should have been. He was afraid to meet his wife. Her answer smote him; yet he was glad of an excuse to leave the house, without an explanation. He ordered his carriage, and drove into the city in search of excitement and game.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sterling had never visited a gaming house. Feeling especially miserable to-night, after his crushing farewell with Beatrice, he suggested to Burton, that he would like to go with him to HELL, or "some other sea-port."

Burton began to moralize on the dangers of such a visit, and was particularly eloquent over the fascinations of vice in general, and of gaming especially; to all which Sterling made no answer, for the reason that he did not listen, his thoughts had carried his ears far, far away.

"But if you are determined to go, here is the place," said Burton. "Stop, driver," and the senator led the way up a mysterious flight of stairs, at the top of which was the string of a bell. This being pulled, brought a negro to the door.

The scene was entirely new to Sterling. He observed a round hole in the panel of the door about the size of his hand, from which the blind was removed to enable the negro to see whether or not the persons summoning were such as could be admitted; for everybody can not enter these aristocratic establishments. At the sight of Burton the door flew open, and the ebony Cerberus was extremely polite, to the two distinguished visitors. Their hats and cloaks were taken and deposited in the appropriate places.

Wine and segars were displayed.

Col. Blunderbuss was sitting in front of the dealer. Before him were large piles of faro chips, red and white. He was betting high and with much energy—but with bad luck. Furious *damns* escaped him almost at every turn of the cards, and now and then the table resounded with the heavy fall of his colossal fist. Beside Blunderbuss sat Mr. Huron, the Wall street broker, whose present visit to Washington was connected with a grand scheme of OCEAN MAIL STEAMERS. He had taken a fancy to Blunderbuss (that gentleman being chairman of —), and he seemed to feel some considerable solicitude in the fate of Blunderbuss's bets.

Sterling looked on with the deepest interest; he was a novice in gaming. He saw thousands of dollars changing hands every few minutes. He was amazed at the terrible excitement of Blunderbuss, whose face glowed like a furnace, while large drops of sweat covered his forehead and streamed along his

shaggy eye-brows. Finally Blunderbuss lost his last bet; arose from the table, went to the sideboard and called for wine. He beckoned Huron out and requested another loan, and the broker, with apparent pleasure, handed him five hundred dollars; this, added to the sums already borrowed from Huron, made Blunderbuss his debtor several thousand dollars; and it was perfectly understood between them, that if Blunderbuss had bad luck at betting, the money was not to be actually refunded; but in lieu of it the chairman of the committee of — — was to advocate the passage of the great Steamship Scheme by which a half million a year was to pass from the government into the pockets of Huron & Co.

Huron had supplied Blunderbuss with the facts and with the leading arguments in favor of the scheme, and had had them so skillfully arranged into a speech (which was already printed), that even Blunderbuss, by reading repeatedly, could comprehend. The chairman was already engaged, with the aid of the very ingenious clerk which Huron furnished, in preparing an elaborate report in favor of the scheme which he proposed to make at an early day. This was to be followed by a speech from him—a speech which he calculated would add greatly to his reputation, and bring him more prominently before the country. Who knows but that it might make him President?

While these transactions were passing between Huron and Blunderbuss, Sterling and Burton had taken seats at the table and were betting in a small

way. Sterling resolved to risk but little, merely to try his fortune for the first time. While thus engaged, his mind not so much upon the cards as upon the dreadful decree which had banished him from the presence of Beatrice, what was his astonishment, when Dr. Curtis touched him on the shoulder and remarked, "Ah-ha, sir, I have caught you, have I?"

Sterling sprang to his feet as if a viper had threatened him with its shrill rattle. The phrase, coming from Curtis, seemed to convey the idea that the doctor was in pursuit of him. It flashed over his mind in an instant, that Beatrice had told her husband all about the occurrences of the night, and that with aroused jealousy, the outraged husband was in search of revenge. To add to his terror, Curtis ran his right hand into his left bosom, as if to draw a weapon; and Sterling's relief was great indeed when, instead of a bowie-knife, a port monnaie flashed upon his eyes.

"Let me sit by you," said Curtis.

"Certainly," said Sterling, as he resumed his seat, still tremulous with the subsiding agitation which Curtis's appearance and manner had so naturally excited.

Curtis threw out several hundred dollars, winning and losing by turns. The bank, however, kept the advantage, and after an hour's play, the doctor's funds were exhausted.

"Here is an hundred dollars," said Sterling to him. "Thank you, thank you," said Curtis.

In a few moments this was also lost.

Curtis sat through the deal, with evident impatience. When the deal was over, he observed that the cards before him had *five marks for the six*. This aroused his suspicion.

"Is this the pack of cards you have been dealing with all night?"

"Yes," replied the dealer.

"Let me run over them if you please."

Taking the cards in his hand, he threw out upon the table, one by one, as he came to them, *five sixes!* and fixing his eye upon the dealer, sternly said to him "What does this mean?"

"It's a mistake," said the dealer, choking with rage and excitement.

"I have lost a thousand dollars here to-night on this false pack. Give me back the money!"

"You do not pretend to say, Dr. Curtis," said the dealer "that I have intentionally dealt with false cards?"

"I say nothing to a thief, sir, except—*give me back the stolen money!*"

"Certainly, sir, the bank claims no advantage," and pulling open the money drawer, the dealer took out a bag which had the appearance of containing a large roll of bank bills, and putting his hand into it, seemed to be pulling out the money, while Curtis was exchanging triumphant glances with Sterling and Burton.

But the bag was as false as the cards and more fatal. It contained a well-charged revolver, the

whole contents of which were poured into the body of Dr. Curtis, whose head fell upon the table, with a spasmodic groan, while the furious dealer springing from his chair, leaped over the body and fled from the house through the back-door; leaving the company paralyzed.

Curtis was dead, his face resting upon the table, as if through weariness and long watching he had fallen asleep!

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