

JACK HAROLD;

OR,

The Criminal's Career.

BY GREENHORN.

Author of "The Spaniard's Crime," "The Brigands," "Bristol Bill," &c., &c.

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ABSTRACT OF CONTENTS:

Preface.
What is Public Business?
Rules of Order
Motions—how made.
Chairman—his requisites; necessity of his impartiality; dignity requisite.
The Meeting—order necessary.
Points of Order.
Debate, its rules and usages.
Speakers—their rights and duties.
Arranging for a Meeting.
The "Call," forms and advertising.
A New Club—call to form.
Alma Mater—call for a meeting, to organize.
Boys in Blue—call to organize a Social Society.
Committee of Arrangements, how arranged.
Caucuses and caucusing, explanation of terms.
Conventions—how composed.
Town Meetings—how called.
Ward Meetings.
Committees.
Resolutions and Motions—how presented; form of.
Amendments—form of; Examples as to striking out and inserting words.
Sessions—explanation of the term; samples of.
Yea and Nays—rules, how fixed; how taken; calling the yeas and nays; when a vote may be changed.
Quorum—what constitutes; usages in American Legislatures; English House of Commons.
Making—general observations on.
Points of Order and Appeals—mode making; form of making.
Yeas—when a speaker may speak yeas; when a Chairman may speak yeas; when a member has a right to speak yeas; courtesy of.
Yeas—rules in relation to.
Unsettled Questions—how they af-

fect the regular business; classification of motions.
Committee of the Whole—objects of organization of.
Call of the House—rules relating to; duties of sergeant at arms; closing the doors.
Adjournment—motion to adjourn; when debatable.
By-Laws of Citizens Central Committee: Remarks on ditto; Suspending Order of business; Putting Motions in Writing; Moved by two Members; Stated by the Chair; After the Previous Question; without Debate or Explanation; Member on the floor; Reconsideration; Five Minutes rule; Point of Order and Appeal; Previous Question; Chairman not to speak; Reports of Committees; Preliminary Debate; Retiring committees; Order and Harmony; Suspension of Rules.
Forms and Formulas—On making Quotations; on the duties of Citizens in a Republic; Remarks on Government; Memorial to Congress on Neutral Rights.
Farmer's Club—Formation of; Constitution of.
Insurance Club—By-Laws of.
Social Club—By-Laws of.
Form of Legislative Bill.
British Parliament—Law and practice of.
Congress of United States—Formation of; U. S. Senate; U. S. House of Representatives; Congress in Session; Acts of Congress; Powers of Congress; Passage of Laws; Powers of the U. S. Senate; Powers of the U. S. House of Representatives.
Business Rules of U. S. Senate—Of the Vice-President; Order in the Chamber; Debate Regulated; Calling to Order; Yeas and Nays; Reconsideration; Vice-President's

Vote; President Pro Tem; Bills and Resolutions; Second Reading; Appointment of Committees; Reference to Committee; Two-Thirds Bills.
Business Rules of U. S. House of Representatives—Of the Speaker; Speaker Pro Tem.; Appointing Committees; Preserving Order; Motion to Adjourn; Previous Question; Attendance of Members; Call of the House; Introduction of Bills; Committee of the Whole; Change of Order.
Joint Business Rules of the two Houses.
Rules of the Senate of New York Relating to Order—Of the President; Committee of the Whole; Motions to be written and read; Division of Questions; Debate Restricted; Calling to Order; Alterations of Rules.
Rules and Order of the New York Assembly—Speaker's Powers and Duties; Order and Business; Priority of Business; Committee of the Whole; Absence of Quorum; Record of Action; Yeas and Nays; Alteration and Rules.
Joint Rules of the Senate and Assembly—Reciprocal Action; Conference Committees; Receding from Action; Refusing to Recede; Joint Committees.
Routine of a Business Meeting—The Quorum, the Presiding Officer, the Secretary.
Masonic Rules of Order—Grand Lodge of State of New York.
Parliamentary Authorities.
Parliamentary Summary—Rules, Practice and Precedents; Dispenchment; Judgment; Legislative Bills; Reports taken up; Disagreement and Conference; Amendment and Commitment.
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JACK HAROLD;

OR, THE CRIMINAL'S CAREER.

CHAPTER I.

Showing how the hero of this narrative "dropped in" upon the family, under somewhat mysterious circumstances, and that he was hospitably received.

The scenes and incidents comprised in the following narrative, are principally located in the great city of New York—that mighty metropolis, that lies brooding upon the waters like a slumbering giant; in commerce, a monster—in vice, a hell—in splendor, almost equal to the fabled Oriental cities of the East—and in licentiousness, a rival of gay, voluptuous Paris. Yes, New York is indeed at once a Paradise and a Pandemonium; within it, the extremes of wealth and poverty jostle each other, while piety and vice are next door neighbors.—The millionaire lives in the next street to the mendicant; and the sanctuary of prayer adjoins a brothel. How squalid are those quarters of the city, where wretched, starving poverty has taken up its abode; and yet how beautiful are those places within its borders, which have been set apart for the residences of the opulent, and the recreation of the public! How lovely are the Park and Battery, when Spring has assumed her livery of the green, and the young trees put forth

their tender buds and blossoms? But the Battery is the favorite resort of all classes in summer, for there the fresh breeze sweeps in from the ocean, to cool the heated brow, while the waters of the glorious Bay sparkle like diamonds in the sunlight, or glitter like silver spangles in the soft rays of the moon. Afar off, like a flock of sea birds, are visible the snowy sails of many a noble craft, dancing merrily before the gentle wind; and if anything were wanting to complete the charming picture, that deficiency is more than supplied by the sweet strains of the military band stationed in Castle Garden—strains which, mellowed by the distance, steal softly over the tranquil waters, soothing the soul by their delicious harmony.

"Such sweet, such melting strains!
Their soft, harmonious cadences ring now,
And swell in solemn grandeur to its height;
Now sink to mellow notes—now die away—
But leaves his thrilling memory on my ear."

But a truce to poetizing; let us, in plain prose, state that our story opens in the city of New York, in the "merry month of May," in the year 1820.

It was a calm and lovely evening. In the elegantly furnished parlor of a handsome brick house situated on Broadway, near the Battery, were seated a lady and gentleman in the prime of life. The windows of the

apartment, overlooking the street, were open, to admit the soft breeze that gently stirred the leaves of the delicate plants which scented the air with their perfume. Within, an air of refined and quiet luxury prevailed; nothing glaring or gaudy met the eye—all was charming simplicity and the most perfect taste. A few choice paintings adorned the walls; and all the other ornaments were exceedingly appropriate and chaste.

The lady was seated at a centre-table, indolently turning over the leaves of a splendid album. Her age might have been about thirty, yet she looked much younger. She was a handsome woman with a fine figure and expressive countenance, and was dressed in a very becoming manner. Her entire appearance betokened that she was a lady by birth and position, and in every respect worthy of being the wife of the very good looking gentleman who lounged, half asleep, upon a sofa.

Mr. Harold, the husband of the lady whom we have just described, was possessed of a handsome fortune acquired by successful business pursuits, from which he had retired. He was about forty years of age, of gentlemanly deportment and prepossessing appearance. Upon the evening of his first introduction to the reader, he was negligently attired in dressing-gown and slippers; and a half-emptied wine bottle that stood upon a small table near him, indicated that he had been solacing himself with the generous juice of the grape; for Mr. Harold was something of a *bon vivant*, although he seldom or never went beyond the bounds of temperance.

The peculiar situation and feelings of this wedded pair will be made manifest by the following conversation which passed between them, after the servant had brought in lights:

"Why, Amelia, my love," said Mr. Harold yawning—"it has just oc-

curred to me that to-day is the twelfth anniversary of our marriage."

"Indeed," said the lady, starting slightly—"are you certain, Henry? Let me see—the twentieth day of May—you are right, my dear. How stupid in me to have forgotten it!"

"We have now been married twelve years," said Mr. Harold—"and I may say that we have enjoyed a tolerable share of happiness together. Confident of our mutual love, surrounded by friends, and enjoying every comfort and luxury of life, we have certainly nothing more to desire."

As the good gentleman said this with the air of a man who is perfectly satisfied with himself and all the world, he arose and helped himself to a glass of wine.

"True, Henry," said Mrs. Harold, with a slight embarrassment of manner—"we are possessed of all that is requisite to make us comfortable—but yet—you forget—"

She paused suddenly and cast down her eyes, as a deep blush suffused her fine face.

Mr. Harold went up to her, placed his arm around her waist, and drawing her gently to the sofa, seated himself beside her. His looks and manner were full of tender affection, mingled with sympathy.

"Dear wife," said he, in that tone which had won her virgin affections twelve years before—"I know why you hesitate to declare yourself perfectly happy, for there is a void within your heart which has never been filled, and, I fear, never can be. You will own that I have been unremitting in my attentions to you, ever since our marriage; you know that we are both perfectly fitted for each other, and endowed with every quality necessary to confer complete and perfect happiness; yet Heaven has not seen fit to bless our union with offspring. Nay, do not blush, or avert your head, my Amelia; the subject is a sacred one between us,

and fraught with no dishonor. Like yourself, I ardently desire children to inherit my wealth and name—sons to shed honor upon my memory by their integrity and usefulness, and daughters, to emulate their mother's virtues and excellence. We are childless; but the will of Heaven be done!"

"Yes, dear Henry," cried the lady, as the tears started from her eyes—"but is not our lot a hard one—I will not call it unjust—to pass our married existence in this sterile manner, without enjoying the ineffable bliss which a parent can only know? Oh! when I behold one of my female friends, surrounded by a loving circle of little prattlers, each one truthfully reflecting her own image, and looking up to her with eyes brimful of filial affection, anger and envy obtrude themselves into my heart, and I can scarcely refrain from upbraiding that wise Providence which withholds such happiness from me. It is very wicked—but alas! I cannot help it."

"My poor Amelia," said her husband, gently—"I feel for you deeply, and unite with you in deploring the absence of that blessing which alone is wanting to render our happiness perfect. But let us bow with submission to the will of One who does all things for the best. Perhaps, after all it is better as it is: were our union fruitful, mayhap our children might prove unworthy of their parents, whose gray hairs would then be brought in sorrow to the grave. But the void in your heart may yet be filled; suppose that we seek some friendless little stranger, and adopt it as our own—confer upon it our name, and rear it as carefully and tenderly as if it were our own offspring. Could we not lavish our love upon the child, and rear it in virtue and honor; in short, educate and qualify it to reflect credit upon us hereafter, and fit it to adorn the sphere of society in which it would be destined to move?"

"Henry," said Mrs. Harold, smiling through her tears with the radiance of sunshine through a spring shower—"you have anticipated a request which I was just about to make. Yes, my husband; since God will not give us children of our own, let us adopt, love and cherish some poor infant whose parents would be glad to place it in our care; or perchance we may obtain some unfortunate foundling that has been abandoned by its unnatural mother to the charities of the cold world. Such a one I could love, almost—"

Mrs. Harold was interrupted by the entrance of a female servant, who curtsied and said to her—

"Please, ma'am, something very curious has happened; me and Charlotte was sitting in the back kitchen, when we heard a low knocking at the door that leads to the basement; we both thought it was some of our acquaintances that had come to see us—but when we opened the door, lor ma'am! there was not a living soul to be seen except a small bundle that lay at our feet. We thought it very strange, but carried it in, and when we came to open it, what do you think we found?"

"What was it?" eagerly exclaimed both Mr. and Mrs. Harold, in the same breath.

"A LIVE BABY, ma'am!" answered the girl, with the importance of one who communicates a most astounding piece of intelligence.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold exchanged glances. Words were not needed to express their feelings, on receiving this piece of news, to them so peculiarly gratifying.

"Heaven has heard our prayer," said the lady, "and sent us this little stranger to become our adopted child. Bring in the infant, Janette. The girl withdrew, and speedily returned, bearing in her arms a fine healthy male child, the strength of

with lungs was satisfactory established by his rolling up a vigorous cry. The boy was neatly dressed, and upon his garments was pinned a piece of paper, on which were written the following words:—

"Good people, for the love of Heaven's sweet charity, care for and cherish this innocent babe, and visit not upon its head the sins of its unhappy parents. Around its neck will be found suspended the portrait of its mother, who may one day claim the offspring of her unholy love. The infant is one month old, and is christened John."

"God be praised!" exclaimed Mrs. Harold—"that the poor innocent has fallen into our hands, instead of into the hands of those who would have consigned it to the Alms House, and made it a pauper. But let us examine the miniature."

Attached to the child's neck by a faded ribbon, was a fine gold locket, containing the portrait of a young and beautiful woman, with deep blue eyes and sunny hair. The original of the picture was evidently not a person of mean station; for the air, the features, and even the dress had about them a certain degree of refinement seldom attained by any except those who move in a sphere of life above the common or middle orders.

"Poor young lady!" cried Mrs. Harold, with tears in her eyes—"who knows but that the story of her unhappy love may be fraught with a deep and mournful interest? Perhaps harsh parents forbade her union with her lover; and in some moment of passionate distress, the enamoured pair forgot reason and prudence, and abandoned themselves to the intoxicating joys of love. Their fault may have many extenuating circumstances;—at all events, this dear boy, whom I love tenderly already, shall not suffer for his pa-

rents' errors. Henceforth he is our own beloved son."

"You have an excellent heart, Amelia," said the husband, tenderly caressing her—"and how charming you now look, with that pretty child resting upon your bosom—quite the matron, I declare! We must comply with the mother's request, and call him John—John Harold; that sounds very well—very well, indeed. So now let little John Harold have some supper, and put him to bed; and to-morrow we must procure him a nurse. Egad! I am overjoyed at this event, which has furnished me with an heir to inherit my name and fortune. And now it is time to retire."

Ah! how little did the worthy man think, that the child whom he so hospitably received into the bosom of his peaceful family, was destined, in after years, to make him bitterly curse the hour when he complied with the impulses of his generous heart, and made the foundling his adopted son! But let us not anticipate.

CHAPTER II.

Showing how Jack Harold made a mortal enemy, who swore to bring him to the gallows.

The child thrived and grew, under the fostering care of his adopted parents. He was tenderly reared, and carefully instructed; and, as if to repay them for their kindness, he soon began to exhibit rare talents, and develop uncommon personal beauty.

Ten years passed away, as a pleasant dream, with nothing to disturb its harmony. It was now the year 1830, and little Jack Harold, as he was called, had attained his tenth year. Not the slightest clue had ever been obtained of his real pa-

rents, and he had always been taught to believe that he was the own son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold, who carefully preserved the portrait of his mother, by the aid of which they hoped some day to unravel the mystery of their *protege's* birth.

In disposition, Jack was generous, impulsive and passionate. He was at heart easily susceptible of any impression, either good or bad. Unfortunately for him, his adopted parents were indulgent to a fault; his every whim was gratified, and he was contradicted in nothing. The consequence of this injudicious treatment of him was, that he grew obstinate, self-willed, vicious and ungovernable; yet these bad traits of character were merely ascribed to the weakness of childhood, which a more mature age would entirely remove.

At this early period of our hero's history, an incident occurred which had an important bearing upon his after life, and confirmed him in that career of vice which seemed most congenial to his nature and disposition.

Mr. Harold, in order to gratify his wife, who was passionately fond of flowers, had attached to his house, a beautiful and extensive garden, which he caused to be carefully cultivated, by a man named Lopez, a Spaniard, who was a very skillful gardener. The appearance of this person was repulsive in the extreme; his swarthy face was half concealed by a thick, bushy beard, and a pair of fierce, piercing and malignant looking eyes, increased his natural ugliness. In person, he was sinowy and powerful; and in disposition, crafty, treacherous and revengeful.

This dangerous man was made the mortal and implacable enemy of little Jack Harold, in the following manner:

One day, while Jack was playing in the garden, he either purposely or accidentally, trampled upon some very

choice flowers which the Spaniard had reared with unusual care. This was observed by Lopez, who somewhat angrily reproved the boy for mutilating his work.

"Hold your tongue, old bushy-face, retorted Jack, impudently—how dare you to speak to me in that manner? Recollect that I'm the son of a gentleman, while you are nothing but a miserable servant—so get out!"

Lopez looked at the precious youngster fiercely, and said, in a voice hoarse with anger—

"You are insolent, young sir; but mark me—tho' the serpent crawls in the slime at men's feet, its sting is deadly, and kills. Beware!"

The boy, whose audacity fully equalled his impertinence, ran towards Lopez, and with his clenched hand struck him a violent blow in the face.

The Spaniard started from his leaning position, (he was engaged upon some plants,) and his appearance was absolutely frightful; his face was absolutely black with passion, the veins upon his neck and forehead seemed swelled almost to bursting, and his eyes darted forth the fires of concentrated rage. In vain he essayed to speak; the words died in his throat, and he stood with outstretched arm, quivering in every limb.

The boy, for perhaps the first time in his life, was frightened; he would have fled, but terror rooted him to the spot. At last Lopez hissed, from between his clenched teeth—

"Malediction!—struck!—by a boy! Let me tear out the accursed strippling's heart!"

He looked eagerly around, to see if any body were in sight whose presence would interfere with the execution of his vengeance; and, to his mortification, he saw Mrs. Harold not far off. The lady had entered the garden for the purpose of selecting a bouquet.

"Not now—not now!" muttered

the Spaniard, restraining his wrath by a violent effort—"another time will give me the opportunity I thirst for!"

At this moment Mrs. Harold quitted the garden.

"Now," said Lopez to himself—"Now is my chance! Now will I brain this saucy brat with my spade. But stop—will that be a true revenge? He will die instantly, and feel no pain, and I shall be hung for his murder. Pshaw! that were a child's vengeance, unworthy of a Spaniard. No—I'll spare him for a grander sacrifice; I'll lead him into a career of crime, make him a perfect villain, rack his heart with remorse and his brain with anguish, and swing him at last upon the gallows—by the Holy Virgin, I swear it!"

Meanwhile, Jack Harold had stood at a little distance, wondering why the man kept muttering to himself. The boy's fear gradually subsided, and he concluded that the gardener meant him no harm, and was not a very dangerous person, after all.

Far better would it have been for Jack had he been slain upon the spot, rather than to become a villain of the blackest dye, and meet an ignominious death upon the scaffold. Deep and terrible was the Spaniard's hate—

"For this was not that blind capricious rage.
A word can kindle and a word assuage;
But the deep working of a soul unmix'd
With aught of pity, where its wrath had fix'd!"

Lopez who had regained his calmness and composure, advanced to our hero, and said to him, in a tone respectful almost to servility—

"Master, Harold, forgive me—you did right to punish me for my insolence to a superior, for I am nothing but—ha, ha!—a miserable servant, as you say. I will endeavor to do better in future; let us be friends. Will you not condescend to shake hands with me?"

"Willingly," said Jack, who was not a little proud at having, as he thought, achieved a triumph over the sullen and ferocious Spaniard; and Lopez smiled strangely as he pressed the boy's hand in his, with a force that almost made him cry out with pain.

The gardener resumed his work, and Jack stood by, looking on.

"How old are you, Master Harold?" asked Lopez, after a pause.

"I am just ten," was the reply.

"Humph! no more?—You are large for your age; it is time that I should begin your education in crime," muttered the Spaniard, in a low tone, and then added aloud—"when I was of your age, I was not content to remain tied to my mother's apron-string, but boldly went forth into the world, like a man, to partake of its enjoyments and its pleasures."

The wily Spaniard knew that Jack longed for novelty and excitement, and his remarks were cunningly formed to fan that desire into a flame.

"I should very much like," said Jack, "to see the world, and some of its curious things."

"Your wish can easily be gratified, if you are discreet, and place yourself entirely under my direction," rejoined the Spaniard, looking meaningly into the boy's face. "There are thousands of curious places and things to be seen in this city, which would afford you pleasure and amusement; but those places and things can only be seen to advantage at night."

"But my father and mother would not consent to my going out at night," said Jack, who was much excited by the words and manner of the gardener.

"You need not trouble yourself to ask their consent; you can go out at night and return, without their ever being the wiser of it. What say you?"

"Will you to-night accompany me to a party which is to be given by a friend of mine, where you will see many rare and interesting sights?"

"I should like to, very much—but how can I go without my parents' knowing it?"

"Listen to me: your father and mother retire to bed early—you must seem to retire also; but at eleven o'clock, you will silently leave your chamber, and meet me here on this very spot; then we will go to the party, and return in season to prevent all suspicion. You will have some glorious fun, I promise you. Do you agree to this?"

Jack hesitated—his adopted parents had always treated him with the most indulgent kindness; and although he had often disobeyed and deceived them, he had never yet ventured to leave the house clandestinely at night. That moment was the grand crisis in the lad's fate;—had he resisted the temptation, and indignantly rejected the Spaniard's proposal, he might have averted the awful fate that darkened the horizon of his future years, like "a cloud no bigger than a man's hand." But his good genius did not prevail; for the devil whispered seductive words into his ear, relative to the pleasure to be derived from the midnight festival, and he said—

"At eleven o'clock I will be here."

"Enough," cried the Spaniard, as a gleam of joy shot athwart his dark visage, and ferocious satisfaction glistered in his eyes; for he knew from that moment the victim was in his toils.

They parted: the Spaniard to continue his labor, and chuckle over the success of his scheme, and our hero to anticipate with trembling eagerness the "fun" which had been promised him as the reward of his duplicity towards those who merited better conduct on his part. In the words of Scott—

"Oh, what a laugh I took we went,
When first we practis'd to deceive!"

CHAPTER III.

Descriptive of Jack's first visit to the Devil's Den, and of the agreeable reception he there met with.

Just as the clock struck eleven, Jack Harold issued cautiously from the house, and repaired to that part of the garden where he had agreed to meet Lopez. The Spaniard was waiting for him, and warmly commended his punctuality. The night was pleasant and a brilliant moon rendered objects almost as visible as in daylight, while every steeple, house-top and chimney seemed bathed in a flood of liquid silver.

Issuing from the garden into the street, the Spaniard conducted his pupil towards the East river, and entered Water Street—a section of the city occupied then, as now, by saloon, boarding houses, dance cellars, low taverns and houses of prostitution. Even at that late hour, the street was all alive with merriment and revelry; from every cellar streamed forth the discordant notes of bag-pipes or fiddles; shouts of boisterous laughter issued from the tap-rooms; groups of sailors stood here and there engaged in the combined amusements of smoking and swearing; while many a painted and gaudily dressed courtesan flattered by hoping to attract some amorous individual with a fat purse, who, like the silly moth, might dilly with her flaming charms until his wings were singed in the dangerous contact. All was bustle, noise, and confusion. "This is the place," said Lopez, pausing before an old, crazy-looking wooden building, that seemed ready to topple and fall down at the slightest

breath of wind. Over the door swung a sign, with a hideous and grotesque figure painted upon it, representing that ancient gentleman usually denominated "Old Nick," armed with a pitchfork, and wearing the ordinary accompaniments of horns, hoof and tail. This house was a well-known tavern which flourished in those days under the melodious title of "*The Devil's Den*,"—an exceedingly appropriate name for it, if one-half the deeds of villainy and bloodshed that were associated with its history were true.

The Spaniard knocked at the door in a peculiar manner, and instantly a slide in the panel was withdrawn, and a voice was heard demanding—

"Now, then—who is it?"

"*Pal Lopez*," was the whispered reply.

Instantly the bolts were withdrawn, the door opened, and the pair admitted to a dark and narrow passage, faintly lighted by the feeble rays of a candle which was stuck upon a nail in the wall.

"How's this, pal—you are not alone?" said the man who had admitted them. This personage was a very suspicious looking character, having but one arm, from which circumstance he derived the appellation of "One Arm'd Bill." He was meanly dressed, in a style half sailor-like, and, taken altogether, was not exactly such a gentleman, as one would care to lend money to.

"Oh, this is merely a pupil of mine," answered Lopez, in answer to One Arm'd Bill's question—"a young gentleman whom I wish to initiate into the mysteries of our respectable society."

One Arm'd Bill laughed hoarsely, as if the other had uttered a capital joke; and then led the way into a tap-room which communicated with the passage.

This place was well lighted, and comparatively neat; the floor was

sprinkled with white sand, and around the room were arranged wooden benches. Upon the walls were hung many coarse and showy pictures of naval and military heroes, noted criminals, scriptural incidents, &c. In one corner stood the bar, furnished with the necessary appliances of bottles, decanters and glasses, and behind the bar stood a young female, whose appearance was such as to merit a particular description.

She was certainly not more than fifteen years of age, yet her form possessed all the maturity of fully developed womanhood. Her black, glossy hair, confined at her temples by a gay ribbon, fell in a shower of ringlets upon her snow-white shoulders, which were very liberally exposed. Her features, though not precisely regular, were peculiarly arch, expressive, and piquant—her cheeks glowed with the rich tints of the rose—her mouth (which was her best feature) seemed ever ready to wreath itself into smiles of mischievous mirth, while a thousand devils appeared to be dancing, as it were, in the depths of her coal-black eyes. Besides all this, she was well and even handsomely dressed; and, altogether, she was in appearance a very charming and voluptuous creature.

But ah! within this fair temple dwelt a polluted soul. The eye gazed with delight upon her external charms, but the moment she opened her mouth to speak, the spell was broken; for although her lips were like moist rose-buds, her teeth beautifully white and regular, and her voice as musical as the notes of a nightingale, yet seldom did she utter a sentence that was not accompanied by an oath or obscene expression.

"Ah, old fellow, how are you?" said *Gallus Kate*, (for so she was called,) addressing Lopez, as that gentleman and Jack Harold entered

the room, preceded by One Arm'd Bill.

"Well, pretty Kate—how d'ye do?" rejoined the Spaniard, smiling grimly.

"Oh, first-rate," replied Kate—"but, I say, who the devil is that little *kinchen* you've brought with you? I'll be d—d if he isn't a pretty fellow, any how, and I'll have him for my lover, if I don't—"

Kate completed the sentence with an oath which it is unnecessary to repeat; and coming from behind the bar, she chuckled Jack under the chin in a manner to imply her strong admiration of him, and finally, throwing her arms about his neck, she imprinted five or six sounding kisses upon his lips.

As for our hero, he stood the attack manfully, and seemed delighted with the young lady and her free-and-easy manners and mode of salutation.

"There, my little dear," said Kate—"that seals our bargain, and from this night you are mine, body and soul. Let us see the man or woman that would dare to take you from me; I'd—"

Again the beautiful but depraved young creature soiled her rosy lips with an oath, which, emanating from such a source, seemed like filthy slime oozing from a splendid marble fountain.

"Well, Master Harold," asked the Spaniard—"what think you of your new friend, Miss Kate?"

"She is the most beautiful young lady I ever saw," replied Jack, with unstudied gallantry.

"Bravo!" cried Lopez—"not a bad reply that, from a boy of ten! You're getting on finely, my pupil, and will reflect credit upon your teacher—ha, ha, ha!"

As for the fair Kate, she was highly delighted with the favorable impression which she had made upon our hero, who, young as he was, felt new

and strange sensations arising within him, when clasped in the arms of that superb girl, and when receiving the passionate kisses of her soft, warm lips.

The amorous Kate had conceived a sudden caprice for the boy, whose personal beauty we have already alluded to, and whose development of figure would have led any one to suppose him to be three or four years older than he actually was. This caprice she was determined to gratify, particularly after the following dialogue had passed in private between her and the Spaniard, who drew her aside, and said—

"Kate, I have taken this stripling under my care, and for reasons of my own I wish to make him *one of us*—you understand? Now, you must assist me; young as he is, he is evidently struck with your appearance, and you can easily, by your blandishments and caresses, fan his boyish admiration into a flame of love. Bend him to your wishes—lead him into the pleasant paths of vice—make him at once your lover and your slave—"

"Leave him to me," said the girl, interrupting him—"I love this sweet youth, and need no persuasions to induce me to make him wholly mine. See! even now, while he pretends to examine that picture, he watches me with his fine eyes. In a year or two, when time shall have perfected his physical powers, and rendered him fully capable of enjoying and appreciating the delights of love, what a charming fellow he will be!"

"True," responded the Spaniard—"but that is not all; you can make him *useful*, as well as pleasurable. His parents are persons of wealth and standing; he must be instructed in the arts of robbery, in order to supply you with money and jewels. You must tempt him—nay, command him—to steal from his parents, and you will also familiarize him with all kinds

of vice, and its mysteries. Teach him to drink deeply, he saidfully, and swear continually; inbued him with the opinion that human life is not worth one straw, and should be taken without hesitation, whenever interest or safety requires it, provided the law can be evaded. You understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Kate, who, by the way, was a girl of good education and great natural shrewdness. "Perfectly; I plainly see that you hate this youth, from some cause, and desire to effect his ruin. Is it not so?"

"Yes!" cried the Spaniard, fiercely—"you are right; hell's hottest fires are not more hateful to my soul, than that boy, whose puny arm, this very day, inflicted upon me the ignominy of a blow. God! how my blood boils when I think of it! Hear me, Kate; I restrained myself, and did not kill the brat, but swore by the Virgin to steep him to the lips in orium, and bring him to a death of infamy upon the gallows. *That oath shall be kept!*"

"I care not for your projects, or your oath, good Lopez," said the girl, who could not forbear shuddering at the vindictiveness with which the Spaniard spoke—"I love the youth, and shall teach him to love me in return. If I can persuade him to become a robber for my sake, so much the better. And now we had better put an end to this whispering, or he may suspect that we are hatching some plot against him."

"Right," said the Spaniard—and they rejoined Jack, who was listening intently to an interesting narrative by One Arm'd Bill, wherein that agreeable gentleman expatiated upon the pleasures of robbery and murder, and the glory and honor of being hung, which delightful death, he asserted, could never be attained except by individuals of extraordinary smartness and talent.

Bidding a temporary adieu to Gallus

Kate, the Spaniard summoned his pupil (who seemed very loth to part with the charming girl) to follow him. Jack complied, and having descended a flight of stairs and traversed a long passage, was ushered into a most extraordinary scene.

CHAPTER IV.

Showing how Jack Harold became a member of the "Unholy Alliance" and describing the ceremony of initiation.

In a sort of vast cellar, with rough beams overhead and bricks beneath, about fifty men were seated around a long, narrow table, upon which were scattered a profusion of bottles and drinking vessels. The Spaniard conducted Jack to a seat in one corner, from which the entire scene could be viewed to the best possible advantage.

The company was just such a one as a stranger, with money in his purse, could not venture among without having his throat cut—for a more villainous looking crew never stood upon the gory deck of a pirate vessel, or peeped through the bars of a felon's cell. Jack shuddered as his gaze wandered over this gang of miscreants, whose fierce, bloated countenances and scowling eyes proclaimed their familiarity with deeds of outrage, robbery and murder. Like wild beasts, they seemed to thirst for human blood, and their rufian hands, like vultures' claws, appeared fitted alone for tearing out the quivering hearts of their victims. Their discourse was made up of hoarsely-uttered oaths and terrible blasphemy; occasionally some dispute would arise among them—glaring knives would be drawn, and bloodshed only prevented by the interference of others. Some, whose brains were muddled by the fumes of too

much liquor, belched forth in drunken tones the verses of flash or obscene songs; others, gathered in groups, held whispered conferences, and formed secret plans for fresh deeds of villainy; while a third class occupied themselves in drinking, smoking, gambling, and in other ways most consistent with their own ideas of perfect enjoyment.

This precious assembly was presided over by an individual who, to judge from his authoritative air and the degree of deference paid him by the others, must have been the chief of the gang. Such was indeed the case; his word was law among them, and one blow of his mallet upon the table was sufficient to "call the meeting to order," and produce a profound silence where all had been noise and confusion. All differences were referred to him for adjustment, and his decisions were respected, and regarded as final. He was a large, powerful man, aged about fifty years, of fine personal appearance, although the blighting effects of dissipation and unrestrained indulgence, greatly marred his otherwise handsome countenance. Both in regard to dress and manners, he was far superior to the others; and it was very evident that he despised them in his heart, although he affected to view them as companions and friends.

This man was the landlord of the "Devil's Den," and the father of the beautiful but depraved Kate. His real name was unknown to the band of which he was the chief; and, in consequence of his aristocratic air, he was universally known as "the Prince."

As Jack Harold surveyed this interesting company, he could not help thinking that it was a very singular "party of pleasure," to which the Spaniard had brought him; and, in answer to a question from Lopez, as

to how he liked the appearance of his friends, he replied—"I don't like their looks at all, and would much rather stay with the handsome young lady up-stairs." "You have fallen in love with the pretty Kate—well, well; I am glad of it, for it favors my schemes," muttered the Spaniard; and at this instant his eye met that of the "Prince," who said to him—

"How, now, brother—you have a young and strange face with you, who is it?"

"Please your Royal Highness, it is a *kingpin* who desires to become a member of the Unholy Alliance."

"He is rather young, but might nevertheless prove of service to the brotherhood; but is he brave—is he crafty—and, above all, can he keep a secret?"

"I will answer for him," replied the Spaniard.

"Enough!" cried the Prince, and striking his mallet upon the table, the whole assembly became profoundly silent.

Jack's heart beat rapidly, for fifty pair of gleaming eyes were instantly fixed upon him, and seemed to read his soul. The Prince arose with dignity, and said—

"Brothers, our trusty pal, Lopez, has brought us the youth who sits by his side, in order that he may become one of our honorable fraternity. Our brother vouches for his trustworthiness and fidelity. Are you willing to admit him?"

"Aye!" was the thundering response of the ruffian band.

"Then prepare for the ceremony of initiation," said the Prince—"and give the candidate a bumper of rum."

A glass of brandy was handed to our hero, with a request that he should drink it off. At aid to disobey, Jack complied, and never having answer to a question from Lopez, as

standly mounted to his brain, inspiring could not help thinking that it would him with a feeling of most delightful be a fine thing to lead such a life: exhilaration, under the influence of but his mind was made up at once, which the lights in the cellar seemed when the Spaniard whispered in his to dance a merry minuet, while the vil- ear—
hinous-looking countenances around him appeared to assume an extremely comely and good-humored expres- sion.

Jack was now led forward to where the Prince was seated, and that func- tionary thus addressed him, in a stern and solemn tone:—

"Young man, you are about to be received as one of the Unholy Alli- ance, and it is fitting that you should be made acquainted with the purposes for which the band was formed, and with the obligations you will be under, to serve us faithfully, and keep our secrets. Know, then, that we have associated ourselves together as a band of brothers, for the accomplish- ment of objects totally at variance with that institution which fools call LAW; in short, we are honorable thieves, who recognize no law, ex- cept those that govern themselves. In order to become one of us, you must solemnly pledge yourself to be faith- ful unto death, and to value the keep- ing of our secrets more than the preservation of your life. You are very young, but there is that in your appearance which assures me that you are destined to become an orna- ment to our fraternity. You will now take the oath of fidelity; and, in order to test your fortitude, and bind you to us more closely, you will be required to undergo a painful operation. What say you—do you agree to all this?"

Jack was naturally very brave—but now he was rendered perfectly reckless by the excitement, and also by the liquor which he had drunk. Besides, he had read soul-stirring tales of brigands and robbers, who dwelt in caverns, surrounded by piles of gold and costly merchandize, and he

"Consent to join us, and the pretty Kate will love you forever!"

"I agree to everything," said Jack, firmly.

"You are a brave lad," cried the Prince, approvingly—"now listen to the oath:—"

"Brethren of the mystic band,
Here's my heart, and here's my hand,
I pledge forever to your cause,
Spite of God and human laws.
If your secrets I betray,
May my life the forfeit pay—
May I every torture know,
And my blood like water flow—
On my tongue be branded 'Liar,'
And my heart be burnt with fire,
Till my last, expiring breath
Leaves me glushly, cold in death?"

Jack repeated these rude words after the Prince, and then, under his direction, swore a most terrible and blasphemous oath of fidelity to the band, its interests and its objects.

This ceremony completed, our hero was blindfolded, and seated in a chair; his breast was then uncovered, and the Spaniard, in whispered tones, requested him to prepare to undergo the most trying and painful ordeal in the process of initiation, at the same time bidding him to summon to his aid all his fortitude.

"You must not complain of the torture," added Lopez—"for it is what we all were obliged to endure, on becoming members of the band."

A pause of a few minutes succeed- ed—a season of terrible suspense to Jack, who trembled from head to foot, not knowing what might be the nature of the torment he was about to suffer. Gladly would he have withdrawn from that horrible place, and from the companionship of those villains—but he had pledged himself, by a solemn oath, to become their associate, and he dared not for his life show a disposition to recede.

At length he heard a stealthy foot

step approaching him, and cold per- spiration started from every pore of his skin, for he knew not but that a knife was about to be plunged into his heart. The next instant he screamed with agony, for something that seemed like a live coal of fire was applied to his naked breast, burning deeply into his flesh.

"*He's ours,*" exclaimed the Span- iard, with a deep oath, and in a tone of triumphant satisfaction, as the poor boy fell senseless into his arms.

CHAPTER V.

Showing the extraordinary mark of respect conferred upon Jack Harold by the gen- tlemen of the Unholy Alliance.

The next morning, when Jack re- turned to a state of consciousness, he found himself in bed, in his own chamber. A confused recollection of the past night's event came over him; and at first he attributed the remembrance to the effects of some troubled and unpleasant dream; but on attempting to change his posi- tion, he became painfully aware that he had indeed passed through a real and terrible ordeal, for he felt a most excruciating pain in his breast, and placing his hand there, found it covered with a plaster.

"I wish it had been nothing but a dream," he cried with a groan of mental and physical anguish, as he thought of his oath of allegiance to that hellish crew, and the torture which he had undergone, the object of which he could not surmise. Then he began to wonder how he had been conveyed home, undressed and plac- ed in bed, without his being con- scious of anything.

The door of the chamber softly opened, and Lopez the Spaniard en- tered. He approached the bed with an air of hypocritical sorrow, and said, gently—

"How is my dear young Master Harold this morning?"

"Why did you take me to that horrible place last night?" demanded Jack, indignantly, "and why was I burnt upon the breast in this shameful and shocking manner?"

"How the dear boy talks about his best friends!" said the other meekly—"I took you there to make a man of you, by enrolling you among the members of a gallant band of heroic spirits—and instead of thanking, you blame me! As to the little pain you have undergone, it was a necessary part of our cere- monies, and in a day or two you will cease to feel it."

"Do that as it may," said Jack, impatiently—"I shall never visit that place again, nor have anything more to do with your friends, as you call them."

"But you must—you cannot help it!"

"Why not?" demanded Jack, in some surprise.

"For two reasons:—first, because you have solemnly sworn to unite with them, and be faithful unto death; and secondly," added the Spaniard, sternly—"because you bear upon your person, in characters that can never be effaced, the secret mark of the band!"

"Good God! what do you mean?"

"Look!" cried Lopez; and tear- ing the plaster from the boy's breast, he pointed to these words, which had been branded there, with a red-hot iron:—

A CRIMINAL BROTHER

OF THE

UNHOLY ALLIANCE!

His enemy, Law;—his delight, Crime;—his end, The Gallows!"

These infernal words the Spaniard read aloud to his victim with a sort of savage satisfaction, and then said—

"You see that you are bound to us beyond all possibility of separation. Should you refuse to associate with us, this brand upon your person gives us a hold upon you through life, which will enable us to follow in your track like a pack of blood-thirsty wolves, worrying, persecuting, and finally destroying you. No matter how high a position in life you may reach—we have but to say, 'He bears upon his breast the brand of villainy,' and you dare not bare your bosom to examination; you will be cast from respectable society with contempt and loathing."

"Too true," responded Jack, with a sigh—"I can never lead an honest life with this brand upon me."

"And remember," said the crafty Spaniard—"the beautiful Kate—ah, that deepened color on your cheek proclaims your love for that fair girl. Could you forsake her?"

"No—I long to see her again."

"And you shall, as soon as you are perfectly well. I will tell you a secret—she loves you to distraction; you are yet too young to understand, and enjoy fully the bliss of leaving and being beloved in return; but a few more years will enable you to value properly the treasure you have found in that divine creature, who is lovelier than any dark-eyed daughter of my own native Spain."

"She is indeed a sweet pretty girl," said Jack, with sparkling eyes, and a blush like a maiden's.

"Right—but I must leave you now," rejoined Lopez. "You must keep to your bed for a day or two, but on no account let your parents know the real cause of your illness. If they propose sending for a physician, you must positively object to

it; and, above all, be sure to keep our private mark out of sight!"

"Answer me one question before you go," said Jack, eagerly, "have you this private mark upon your breast?"

"That is of no consequence to you,"—and a frown of displeasure gathered upon the Spaniard's brow as he spoke.

"Nay, but tell me; if I am not alone in that respect, I shall be more contented."

"In that case I have no objection to answering you—see!" and Lopez, uncovering his breast, exhibited a brand precisely similar to that upon our hero.

"All our band," continued he, "are marked in this manner, not even excepting the Prince, our captain. The object of this mark is, to shut a man out as it were, from the pale of honest society, and bind him more closely to us. In a short time you will be made acquainted with the secret signs and words of the band, which will enable you to recognize a brother in any place, and under any circumstances. Adieu—think of the pretty Kate, and be cautious—be silent as the grave. Your parents are not aware of the fact of your having been absent last night; for I brought you home in my arms, and placed you in bed, without disturbing any one. I shall see you again soon; once more, farewell!"

The Spaniard withdrew, leaving our hero to his reflections, which partook of the mingled elements of pleasure and pain—but the former sensation predominated; for while he viewed with abhorrence the ignominious mark which had been

CHAPTER VI.

Wherein our hero shows himself to be a man of spirit and courage, and obtains an honorable promotion, which he celebrates by getting gloriously drunk.

Jack Harold soon recovered his accustomed health, and with it, all his usual buoyancy of spirits. Lopez soon made an arrangement with him to revisit the "Devil's Den," and the pretty Kate; and accordingly, about a week after the events narrated in the last chapter, they sallied forth from the house in a stealthy manner, and repaired to the secret rendezvous of the Unholy Alliance.

Gallus Kate received our hero in the most affectionate manner, and nearly smothered him with kisses, which Jack was not slow to return.—The Spaniard viewed these amorous demonstrations with intense satisfaction.

"The game works well," said he to himself—"infatuated with the beauty of that depraved young girl, and bound to us by the mark of infamy upon his person, he will become in my hands a pliant tool for the accomplishment of his own ruin. Ah! when did Lopez ever fail in any scheme to taste the sweets of revenge!"

Great was the applause with which the Spaniard and his pupil were greeted, when they entered the cellar; and the Prince condescended to accommodate Jack with a seat at his right hand. A stiff glass of brandy soon made our hero happy as a lord; and he already began to fancy himself a daring and celebrated robber, the leader of that lawless band, with the beautiful Kate as his mistress. He now looked forward to a future career of crime, not only without horror, but with positive delight; and longed to

placed upon his person, and despised himself for deceiving those kind friends whom he supposed to be his parents, he felt a boyish delight at the novelty and excitement of his position, as one of a band of robbers, and as the beloved of such a charming creature as "Gallus Kate."

His meditations were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Harold, who with true motherly solicitude inquired why he had not appeared at the breakfast table, and if he were ill. Although this good lady was ten years older than when we first presented her to the reader's notice, time had dealt very leniently with her, and while forty summers had shed their bloom upon her cheeks, not a winter had left a snow-flake amid her dark and glossy hair.

"Grace was in her step, heaven in her eyes, in every gesture dignity and love."

A delicate and becoming morning dress set off her fine form to advantage; and her entire appearance suggested the idea of a beautiful woman, of mature age, in whose pure heart dwelt the heavenly attributes of kindness, simplicity and Christian virtue.

The worthy lady kissed our hero tenderly, when he informed her that he was slightly unwell.

"You are feverish, my love," said she, "and I must send for Dr. Dupont, our family physician."

"By no means, mamma," said Jack—"I shall be well to-morrow, and the doctor would only make me worse. Pray, don't send for him."

Mrs. Harold reluctantly promised, and having seen our hero provided with a light and nourishing repast, left him to his repose.

distinguish himself by some bold deed, which should raise him high in the estimation of his companions.—his favor.

Those feelings were greatly strengthened within him, by the reflection that the MARK OF CRIME which had been imprinted upon his person, forever excluded him from the path of honesty—a train of thought which that mark had been expressly designed to create.

After an hour or so had been passed in merriment and song, the Prince called the assembly to order, and informed them that he was about to communicate to their young and newly made brother the secret signs, words, and other mysteries of the band.

"Listen to me with attention," said the Prince, addressing Jack, who was proud of the confidence reposed in him, and mentally resolved never to betray it. "When you enter a tavern, or a public place of any kind, and wish to ascertain if there is a brother of the Unholy Alliance present, you will seat yourself, cross your legs, and cough distinctly three times. If, at the signal, a man arises, and places his right hand in his breast—thus—you may be certain that he is one of us. Should you wish to converse with him, you will leave the room, and he will follow; then, to make all sure, you will say to him—*What is the hour?* He will reply—*I know not, exactly.* Then shake hands with him, giving him this peculiar grip—thus—which he will return; you may then, with perfect safety, demand his assistance if you have formed any plan of robbery, and communicate with him unrestrictedly on any subject relating to the interests of the band. You understand?"

"Yes, your Royal Highness," replied the delighted Jack, who had been instructed by the Spaniard

to apply that lofty title to the captain of the gang, as a means of propitiating his favor.

"Very well," resumed the Prince—"these secret signs and words are very important, because they will enable you at any time to recognize a brother, even though he be personally a total stranger to you—for you must know that this present company constitutes but a very small fraction of the Unholy Alliance, which has many branches in different cities of the Union, and also includes among its members numerous individuals, governed by our laws and acquainted with our secrets, who seldom or never assemble here with us, on account of their assumed respectability. There are various other minor secrets with which you will be made acquainted hereafter—among which are the method of recognizing a brother in the street—the use of *flash* words—the location of *fences*, who purchase stolen property—the use of burglars' tools, &c. These secrets must all be sacredly kept, for their exposure would be our ruin.

"You may trust me," said Jack, resolutely—"I'd sooner die than betray them."

"Bravo!" shouted the company, they crowded around our hero, and exchanged with him the secret grip of the Unholy Alliance.

At this moment, One Arm'd Bill, whose duty it was to attend to the door above, rushed into the cellar with a countenance full of terror, and announced that a party of police officers and watchmen were forcing an entrance into the house, evidently with the intention of arresting the whole band.

"We have been betrayed!" cried the Prince—"and the traitor, whoever he is, shall die—now, men, look to yourselves!"

With these words he overturned the table, and the cellar instantly became enveloped in profound darkness. Jack heard the noise of an opening trap-door, and the sound of many footsteps descending a flight of stone steps—then all was perfectly silent. Confused and frightened, our hero knew not how to make his escape; and while groping about vainly seeking for the outlet through which the others had gained egress from the cellar, the door was thrown violently open, and the place became illuminated by the light of a dozen lanterns, held in the hands of as many stern-looking men, whose appearance indicated them to be officers of justice.

"Ha!" exclaimed one, who seemed to be their leader—"the birds have all flown, with the exception of this young devil's pup, who, I'll be sworn, is as bad as any of them, or worse.—Speak, you young hell hound!" he continued, seizing Jack by the throat, and shaking him until the teeth chattered in his head—"where are your companions—your elder brethren in villainy?"

"If you had asked me civilly, I would not have told you," replied Jack, doggedly—"and now, since you use me in this brutal manner, I'll see you d—d before I give you any information!"

"Insolent young cur—that for your sauciness!" and so saying, the officer dealt him a severe blow upon the cheek, with his open hand.

Jack's blood boiled with rage, and all the heroism of his nature was aroused. Quick as lightning, he caught up from the floor a heavy junk bottle which had fallen from the table, and with it struck the officer a tremendous blow upon the head, which brought him to the ground, bleeding and senseless.

Two of the men now seized our hero and held him fast, while the others raised up their wounded leader, and endeavored to stop the effusion of blood and restore him to consciousness. Having had brandy, in profuse quantities, applied both externally and internally, he soon revived, and regarded Jack with a look which had in it more of admiration than anger.

"My lad," said he, "were I so disposed, I could have you severely punished for this assault; but, in consideration of your youth and courage, I will release you on condition that you give me certain information in reference to the gang of thieves who congregate here, and to whom you undoubtedly belong."

"Well, sir, what information do you wish?" demanded Jack, with a scornful air.

The officer exchanged significant glances with his companions, and said—

"We have become aware that these miscreants have among themselves a number of secret signs and words, by which they can recognize each other. A knowledge of those private tokens would be most valuable to us, as officers of the law, for they would enable us to make many desirable arrests. Are you acquainted with the secrets to which I refer?"

"Yes," replied our hero.

"And will you make them known to us?"

"No!"

"Take care, boy," said the officer, with severity—"do not trifle with us, for you are completely in our power. You had much better reveal those secrets voluntarily, than to have them wrorted from you by violence—for

know them we will. Once for all, will you divulge them?"

"Once for all—no!"

"Put on the thumb-screw, Jessop," said the officer, turning to one of his followers—"we'll see if the obstinacy of this young fascal can stand the test."

The man drew from his pocket an instrument constructed upon the principle of a vice; this he applied to one of our hero's thumbs; and then screwed it up until it produced the most excruciating pain.

"Will you comply?" demanded the officers.

Jack made no answer.

"Give the screw another turn, Jessop—damn him, we'll cure him yet!"

Another turn was given to the instrument, almost crushing the thumb between its iron jaws. Jack quivered in every limb with intense agony, and turned deadly pale.

"Will you divulge those secrets?"

"No—a million times, no!" exclaimed Jack, and then fainted away.

"Gallant fellow!" murmured the officer—"take off the thumb-screw, bathe his temples, and pour some brandy down his throat. He'll soon revive."

This was done, and in a few minutes the boy recovered sufficiently to sit up, although he was very weak.

"Now, my lad," said the officer, with a sternness of tone that was evidently assumed—"since torture will not wring from you the information which we desire, we'll try what the fear of death will do. Moody," he continued, addressing a

big-whiskered, savage-looking fellow—"take this horse-pistol, cock it, and place the muzzle to the boy's ear."

"This was done, and Jack felt the cold steel pressing against his head. The officer took out his watch, and said.

"It now lacks precisely three minutes of one o'clock. If, when the minute hand of this watch reaches the figure one, you do not consent to do as we request, the man who holds that pistol will blow out your brains. You hear, Moody?"

"Aye, aye, sir! was the gruff response."

"When I give the word *fire*, pull the trigger!"

"I've always learnt to obey orders, sir," said Moody, whose finger pressed hard against the trigger of the pistol.

A brief pause ensued.

"One minute has passed," said the officer.

Jack merely smiled.

Another pause, during which the rapid ticking of the watch could be distinctly heard, so profound was the silence that prevailed.

"Two minutes have passed, and but one now remains," said the officer.

Jack, pale as death, placed his hand upon his heart, as if to still its violent throbbings, and forced another smile.

An awful pause followed, and a silence unbroken, save by the ticking of that watch, which sounded like a race-horse galloping to eternity with an eternal soul.

"Moody," cried the officer—"are you ready?"

"All ready, sir!"

"Then, as the three minutes are up —"

"*Fire and be d—d!*" exclaimed Jack Harold, darting on the officer a look of withering scorn.

The report of a pistol thundered through the cellar,—and our hero arose to his feet, almost deafened, by the noise, but entirely unharmed.

How astonished was he, when the pretended officer threw off his disguise and false whiskers, revealing the comely shape and countenance of the Prince!

His wonder was increased, when all the others, whom he had taken to be officers of justice, threw off their disguises, and appeared in their true characters as "brethren of the Unholy Alliance."

The Prince warmly embraced our hero, while the others crowded around him, shaking his hands, and bestowing the most flattering praises upon his courage and fidelity.

"You are indeed most worthy to be one of us, my dear boy," said the Prince. "We always practice this deception upon a newly made brother, in order to test his bravery and faithfulness. Had you expressed your willingness to betray our secrets, you would have been instantly put to death; but neither torture nor the fear of death could wrest our secrets from your loyal heart. Your heroic conduct merits some reward—and I, prince of the Unholy Alliance, now make you my *first lieutenant*; next to me in command, and worthy of all honor and respect from the brethren of our band. Gentlemen of the Devil's Den, greet your second officer!"

By this time the entire company had re-assembled; and at the words

of the Prince, every hat was doffed, and from every throat came forth these words, in tones of thunder—

"Long live our first lieutenant!"

That was the proudest and happiest moment in Jack Harold's life.

"Lieutenant," said the Prince, addressing our hero by his new title—"I am growing old, and must ere long, retire from my honorable station; continue to display the courage and devotion which you have shown to-night, and upon my abdication I may use what influence I possess to make you my successor. And now, brethren, fill up your glasses, and let us be merry."

This request was implicitly obeyed, and the glasses were filled and emptied so often, in honor of the young lieutenant, that the company soon became gloriously drunk, and even the Prince yielded himself to the seductive influences of Bacchus. As for Jack, he abandoned himself to an excitement so delightful to him, and being unaccustomed to strong drink, he was very soon in a state of wild intoxication. The Spaniard seated at his side, like a demon tempting a mortal to sin, urged him to drink, and kept whispering in his ear words prompting him to the commission of every crime and wickedness.

"Only think," said Lopez—"you are already second officer of this band, with an excellent prospect of one day becoming our leader and captain. What a career of glory is before you!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Jack, at the top of his voice—"I'll be a bold robber—I wouldn't be honest for a million of dollars! I'll rob, set fire to houses, kill—"

"Bravo, lieutenant!" shouted the band.

"I'll become a great man!" continued Jack, leaping upon the table, and gesticulating wildly—"My name shall become celebrated, and books shall be written about my bold deeds! I'll bring you lots of booty, comrades; I'll steal from my father—I know where he keeps piles of money; mother has got lots of jewelry—I'll rob her of it; d—n them, I'll shoot, kill, murder!"

He stumbled and fell heavily upon the table. They raised him up, but he was senseless; the liquor had for a time overpowered him and he was in that condition termed "dead drunk." After a short consultation with the band, the Prince spoke a few words in an authoritative tone; Lopez and another man then raised our hero in their arms, and bore him out of the cellar. They conveyed him to a chamber in the upper part of the house, undressed him, placed him in bed, and left him to sleep off the effects of the ardent spirits which he had drunk so profusely.

"Ah, brandy, brandy! bans of life,
Spring of tumult, source of strife,
Could I but half thy curses tell,
The wise would wish thee safe in hell!"

CHAPTER VII

Showing our hero's progress in love, and describing the very satisfactory arrangement which he entered into with "Gallus Kate."

When Jack awoke from his profound and death-like slumber, the gray dawn of morning was just beginning to struggle feebly through the windows of the chamber. His head ached painfully, and he experienced that nauseating sickness which is the usual result of a night

of debauchery. On looking about, he was surprised to find himself in a room that was entirely strange to him; and on turning around in bed, he was still more astonished to discover that a person was sleeping at his side.

It was a fair and beautiful young girl, whom fifteen or sixteen summers had ripened into womanly perfection and loveliness. The snowy drapery that but half concealed her finely developed bust, gently rose and fell in the soft respiration of slumber. An arm of exquisite proportions was extended, and had evidently encircled the neck of our hero before he had awakened. Her superb form was reclining in an attitude of luxurious repose; and in the restlessness of slumber, she had just thrown aside enough of the bed-clothing to display a delicate foot, and an ankle that alone would have made the fortune of a modern *dansuse*. Her rich hair lay in masses upon her ivory shoulders; upon her cheeks glowed the soft hues of a mellow peach. Very pleasant must have been her dreams—for her rosy lips were wreathed in an enchanting smile.

"'Tis the pretty Kate; how beautiful she looks!" murmured Jack. Long and ardently did he gaze upon the slumbering girl; and when, in her sleep she whispered his name, he could not restrain himself no longer,—but bending over her, he tasted the nectar of those lips, where lingered the fragrance of a thousand flowers.

Kate awoke, and as her eyes encountered our hero's gaze, her face became radiant as a sun-beam.

"Dear Jack," said she—"I was just dreaming of you; I thought that we were lovers, wandering in a pleasant garden, and that we were

very happy together. How glad I am that my father, the Prince, placed articles entirely out of keeping with you under my care—for you were that propriety which usually prevails very, very tipsy last night, naughty fellow that you are!"

This was uttered in a tone of mock reproof that was irresistibly charming—at least, so thought Jack, who said—

"Indeed, dear Kate, I believe I did drink too much liquor, for I am very sick, and my head pains me shockingly."

"I knew it would, and I have prepared something that will cure you. Don't look at me!"

So saying, Kate sprang lightly out of bed. As for Jack, he did look, and also admired, as she went to a table, and busied herself in mixing a glass of soda. When the refreshing beverage was ready, our hero drank it off, and remarked that he felt a great deal better.

"And now, as it is too early to get up, I shall turn in again," said Kate—to which Jack made not the slightest objection; indeed, he felt so completely fatigued and exhausted by the exciting events of the previous night, that he had not the slightest inclination to arise from the very comfortable couch which he then occupied.

Kate's chamber was very singularly furnished, and contained many articles which would not have been regarded as in perfect taste, by young ladies of refinement and rigid virtue. Upon the walls hung several loose French prints, and a painting of two pugilists engaged in a prize fight; on the mantel-shelf lay a musty pack of cards, two or three old song books, a flask of gin and a horse-pistol. Play bills, empty bottles, male and female attire, were scattered all about; and the floor was strewn with stamps of it."

The young mistress of this grotesquely furnished place, took a cigar, lighted it, and commenced smoking—a refreshment which our hero was constrained to decline. She then resumed her place in bed, and for several minutes abandoned herself to the soothing influence of the weed.

Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that a pretty woman never looks more charming than when smoking a cigar. When she daintily takes the delicate Havana roll in her taper fingers, and slowly suffers the fragrant smoke to escape from between her ruby lips, to curl in graceful, snow-white wreaths around her head—when she languidly half closes her melting eyes, and nearly falls asleep from an excess of pleasure—she forms a beautiful picture. Let fools and bigots quarrel with this, if they will; I am talking to people of intellect, liberality and taste.

After enjoying her cheroot for a short time, Kate turned to our hero and said, with a smile—

"My dear Jack, you and I must become the best friends in the world—won't we? When you get to be a little older, you will like me better; at present you are too young to fully understand——"

"Not too young to love you, Kate!" cried Jack, eagerly—and the delighted girl kissed him fondly.

"Let that kiss bind us together forever," said she—"and now that you are my little lover, I can speak to you freely. Do you wish to please me?"

"Oh, yes, Kate—can you doubt

"I believe you, dear boy. You know that my father and his men are robbers—not mean, paltry, sneaking thieves, who steal trifles, and like cowards deprive poor men of the fruits of their honest toil—but bold and gallant freebooters, who plunder from the rich and despise them while they do it. Oh," cried Kate, as her eyes kindled and her cheeks flushed—"oh, would that I were a man, that I might become a robber! How glorious it must be to go boldly forth into the broad day or dark night, to win gold and treasure by the faithful pistol or glittering knife! How delightful it must be to creep at dead of night to the bedside of some rich and proud aristocrat, who grinds the poor beneath his iron heel—to point a dagger at the heart of the pale and shaking wretch, and wring from his white lips directions where to find his hidden wealth, while the craven dog humbly implores that his life may be spared! How glorious, too, it must be to become distinguished for such heroic deeds—to build up a NAME that shall inspire men with terror, and make them tremble! And then, in the secret haunts of the band, how pleasant to sit at the social board, surrounded by faithful comrades, and listen to the narration of gallant exploits! Though I cannot be a robber, I thank heaven that I am a robber's daughter; and when I bestow my entire and eternal love, it shall be upon some bold and gallant freebooter!"

"Hear me, Kate," cried Jack completely carried away by her enthusiasm—"I will become a robber for your sake; I will make my name a terror among men. See—here, upon my breast is the mark that binds me forever to a robber's life. Already have I gained the place of second officer in your father's band; and in a few years I shall become distinguished so that you may be proud of me, and say—'I made him what he is'—"

Dear Kate, the gains of my adventures shall all be cast at your feet, and the proudest lady in the land shall envy you the splendor of your dresses and jewels. Will I not then be worthy of your love?"

Kate replied not in words, but clasping our hero in her arms, she pressed her moist lips to his—and at that moment there came a loud knocking at the chamber door, while the voice of Lopez was heard, exclaiming,

"Lieutenant, please to get ready, as soon as you possibly can, to return home; make haste—we are already behind our time, and unless we are back in season, we shall spoil all!"

"I'll be ready in a moment," cried Jack, leaping out of bed, and dressing himself rapidly—"dear Kate, I must leave you now, but we shall soon see each other again."

"Plague on that Spaniard!" said Kate, pouting with vexation—"he has broken in upon the sweetest moments of my life. Good-bye, dear Jack, if you must go—but remember that henceforth we belong entirely to each other."

The boy lover kissed his young mistress, and left the chamber. In the tap-room below he met Lopez, who received him with a grim smile of satisfaction.

"How did you pass the night, lieutenant?" he asked. Jack colored, and made no reply.

The Spaniard and his thriving pupil now quitted the house. Although Mr. and Mrs. Harold had arisen, and the servants were astir, our hero contrived to gain his own chamber without being noticed. Having performed his ablutions, and changed his clothes, he descended to the breakfast parlor, and sat down with the family to the morning repast as if nothing had happened, and without exciting the slightest degree of suspicion that he had been absent from the house during the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

In which our hero is set up in business for himself, visits the "Golden Balls," and forms a new acquaintance.

That afternoon Jack Harold encountered Lopez the Spaniard in the garden.

"It is time that you should do something to distinguish yourself, lieutenant," said the latter, drawing him aside. "As second officer of the band, the men look to you for an example of ingenuity and courage. The Prince and I have marked out a very pretty little piece of work for you. Last night you spoke of money and valuables kept in the house, and stated that you knew where they were deposited. To-night you must signalize, by making it the date of your first robbery."

Jack thought of Kate, and said, "I'll do it!"

"Good. It is now just three o'clock; at four precisely, you will go to the tavern known as the 'Golden Balls,' in John Street. Enter the tap-room, and give the private signal; you will be answered by a brother of the Unholy Alliance who is personally a stranger to you. He has been appointed by the Prince to assist you in this job, as being near your own age, and therefore likely to prove an agreeable companion. You will confer with him, and arrange the plan of the robbery."

"Enough—I'll go at once" and with these words, Jack started for the designated place of meeting with the stranger.

The 'Golden Balls,' in John street, was at that period a handsome and

extensive tavern kept by an Englishman named Berkenshaw; he was however, universally known by the inelegant cognomen of "Copper Nose," in humorous allusion to the fiery hue of his nasal organ, imparted by the frequency of his attentions to his own excellent old brandy. His house was the regular resort of gentlemen, chiefly from the country, who had emigrated to the United States for the purpose of engaging in the practice of their several professions, as pick-pockets, highwaymen, burglars, &c. None but the top crassmen visited the Golden Balls—vulgar thieves were as carefully excluded from that select circle, as poor sinners are from the pews of rich saints, in fashionable churches. Many an English cockney thief has enjoyed the fine-flavored ale of 'Copper Nose,' at the Golden Balls, and afterwards gone home to write a book abusing the Americans as 'an awful set of hountrageous 'orrid barbarians.'

Jack Harold entered the tap-room of this very respectable establishment, and gazed about him with considerable interest. The room was large, cleanly and comfortable; one end was occupied by the bar, a very and showy concern, profusely furnished with pictures, mirrors, and a large quantity of cut glass decanters and tumblers, while upon pegs hung two or three dozen polished silver ale mugs. Behind the bar stood the landlord, a fat, jolly looking individual, whose identity was clearly established by his nose—a feature to which the ruby, cuttunled proboscis of Shakespeare's *Bar-dolph* was a mere crumb of cheese. If we may be permitted to draw aside the veil that obscured the earlier portion of Copper Nose's history we will just state that twenty

cars prior to the opening date of these authentic chronicles, he had left England, for England's good, in order to reside for the space of fourteen years in a certain penal colony, located at Botany Bay. Which he did at the suggestion of an eminent legal functionary, who wished to reward him for his skill in the art of imitating the signatures upon bank-notes. When his term of transportation expired, Copper Nose, who had managed to scrape together some money, came to America, settled in New York and opened the Golden Balls in John street, for the accommodation of the fraternity of genteel pickpockets and thieves—by which arrangement he was rapidly making money. Altho' a great villain, he was withal a very pleasant fellow, shrewd and good-natured: and a huge favorite with the jovial rascals who frequented his bar.

The bar-room was furnished with a dozen or more marble tables, at which were seated a number of flashily dressed men, who were smoking and sipping ale from silver mugs. The reader may wonder that mine host should have trusted such valuable vessels among such dishonest gentlemen; but we beg to observe that—

"Rogues that they were, themselves they would not rob;
Vice in the heart some virtue always leaves—
And tho' they'd thank the public for a job,
They, 'mongst themselves, were honorable thieves!"

"I say, Nose," cried one of the company, addressing the landlord and abbreviating his title,—"did you hear about the rum lark by which Joe Bragg made a thousand dollars the other day?"

The speaker was a dashing pick-pocket, called English Tom, a splendid looking fellow, remarkable for the brevity of his sentences.

"No—what was it, Tommy?" responded Cooper Nose, as he complacently mixed himself a glass of brandy and water.

"I'll tell you. Gentleman found a package in the street. Package contained a splendid gold watch and large sum of money. Very good. Gentleman was honest—therefore, a fool.—What does he do? Goes and advertises watch and money in newspaper. Calls on owner to prove property, and take it away. Joe Bragg sees advertisement. Rubs his eyes. Thinks deeply. 'I have it!' says Joe.—'I'll be the owner.' Very good. Joe goes to gentleman. Tells him he lost a watch and money. 'Describe them,' says gentleman. 'Silver watch and ten dollars in coppers,' says Joe.—Gentleman laughs like the devil.—'Nothing like it, my friend,' says he. 'Hundred times that amount. Diamond watch. Over seven hundred dollars in money.' Joe looks surprised. 'Ah!' says he.—'I never had so much property to lose. Wonder who lost it? I'm a watchmaker by profession. Can tell you what it's worth in a jiffy.' Gentleman says.—'No objection to showing it to you, sir.' Produces watch and money, all packed up in a box together. Joe takes particular notice of the money. Eyes keen as a hawk's. Takes watch, examines it, opens it, and ponders over it. Says he at last.—'Splendid article. Worth two hundred and fifty. Hope the owner'll get it. Too much to lose. Thank you. Good day.' Joe goes home, puts on a black suit, white cravat, and gray wig. Looks just like an old parson. Then goes to gentleman. 'Sir,' says he.—'I have lost a watch and sum of money, and see by an advertisement—and so forth.' Describe property,' says gentleman, very politely. Joe describes watch to a hair, maker, number and all. Tells exact-

ly what kind of a box it was packed in, with the money. Also very nearly describes money. Says gentleman.—'Let me congratulate you, my dear sir. Here is your property.' Accept of some reward,' says Joe, in a fit of generosity. 'Not a cent,' says victim.—'unless you choose to give me fifty cents, the cost of the advertisement.' Joe plunks the half, and chuckles to himself. 'May I inquire, says victim.—'whom I have the honor of addressing?' 'The Reverend Donem Brown,' says Joe. Victim takes off his hat, and makes a low bow. Joe makes another low bow, and takes himself off. Pretty well done, Nose, wasn't it?"

"Aye, a bloody cool game, dom'd if it wasn't," responded Copper Nose, laughing heartily, and wiping the perspiration from his shining face.

During this recital, our hero was standing at one of the windows of the tap-room, engaged in examining the company; but all were entire strangers to him. While wondering if the person whom he came to seek was present, an individual entered whose appearance instantly satisfied Jack that he was his destined companion in the contemplated robbery.

The new comer was a youth of apparently the same age as our hero and an uncommonly handsome young fellow he was, with fine features, fair complexion, an abundance of curly hair, and very graceful form. His dress was elegant, and appropriate to his years; and his whole appearance was singularly prepossessing. Having seated himself at a solitary table, he called for a glass of wine; and while sipping it, he surveyed the company with a careless, haughty glance. For a moment his eyes rested upon Jack Harold; but they were instantly withdrawn, and he took no further notice of him.

"This must be the one I am looking for," said Jack to himself.—"Lopez said that the new pal whom I was to meet, was about my own age. At all events, I'll give the private sign."

He seated himself, crossed his legs carelessly, and coughed thrice. Instantly the stranger youth arose, and thrust his right hand in his breast. Jack then got up and left the tavern, followed by the others. After walking a little distance, our hero turned and said to his follower—

"What is the hour?"

"I know not, exactly," was the reply.

They instantly shook hands, and exchanged the secret grip of the hand.

"I greet you, brother," said the stranger youth, and throwing his arms around Jack's neck, he kissed him.

They then walked off, arm in arm, engaged in earnest conversation.

CHAPTER IX.

Setting forth the particulars of our hero's first step in crime, and describing the unpleasant consequences thereof.

Every necessary arrangement was made, that afternoon, between Jack Harold and the stranger youth, in reference to the contemplated robbery.

An hour after midnight, our hero cautiously admitted his new friend into the house, and conducted him to the door of the sleeping apartment wherein Mr and Mrs. Harold were buried in profound slumber.

The two youths entered the chamber, softly approached the bed, and by the dim light of a lamp that was burn-

ing upon a side table, satisfied themselves that the worthy couple were indeed soundly asleep. Jack examined the pockets of a pair of pantaloons, that were placed upon a chair, and drew forth a bunch of keys.

"All right, pal," said he, in a whisper—"these keys will open the door of my father's study, and also the desk wherein he keeps his cash. Remain here until I return, and if anything happens, give the alarm."

The young stranger remained in the chamber, and kept watch over the slumbering couple, while Jack ascended the stairs, and repaired to the study.

Our hero had in his possession a piece of candle, and the means of procuring a light. These he put into immediate use, and then entered the room, which was fitted up as a library, and was employed by Mr. Harold as a quiet and convenient retreat, when he wished to read, or transact private business.

Approaching a desk, Jack selected a key from the bunch, and unlocked it without difficulty. He then opened a small compartment in the desk, and to his inexpressible delight, found a considerable sum of money in bank notes and gold. These he quickly transferred to his pockets, and then began to examine the contents of various small drawers, in one of which he discovered a sealed package.

"We'll soon see what this contains," thought Jack; and breaking it open, a fine gold locket was revealed to his gaze, enclosing the portrait of a young and beautiful female, with deep blue eyes and sunny hair. Attached to the locket was a faded ribbon.

While wondering whose likeness this could be, our hero noticed that a

small piece of paper, folded like a note, had dropped from the package to the carpet. He picked it up, opened it, and to his intense astonishment, read the following words:—

MEMORANDUM.

"On the evening of the twentieth day of May, in the year 1840, a male infant was left at the door, around whose neck was suspended this portrait and attached to whose dress was the piece of paper enveloped in this note."

Jack examined the piece of paper referred to, and read these words, which were written in a delicate female hand:—

"Good people, for the love of Heaven's sweet charity, care for and cherish this innocent babe, and visit not upon its head the sins of its unhappy parents. Around its neck will be found suspended the portrait of its mother, who may one day claim the offspring of her unholy love. The infant is one month old, and is christened John."

"Heavens!" thought Jack—"these papers must allude to me!" And he continued the perusal of the first note which he knew to be in the handwriting of Mr. Harold:—

"We determined to cherish and rear the infant, having no children of our own. Upon him we bestowed the name of John Harold, and never having revealed to him the mystery attending his introduction to our family, he fancies himself to be our own son—a belief that we have ever carefully encouraged. The portrait and the note which accompanied it, we preserve in the hope that they may one day lead to the discovery of his true parents."

HENRY HAROLD,
AMELIA HAROLD.

"Written in May, 1840, when the child was exactly ten years old."

"Good God!" then they are not my parents, and I am of unknown and infamous birth!"

Such was our hero's exclamation when he had completed his examina-

tion of these documents, to him so astounding.

"Well, I am glad they are not my parents, after all," he remarked, after musing for awhile in silence. "I can now rob them without feeling an atom of self-reproach. It has often been to me a matter of astonishment, that a young devil, as I am, should be the son of such respectable people. The mystery is now explained!"

He gazed long and earnestly upon the portrait, and thus soliloquized:—

"This, then, is the likeness of my mother—how beautiful she must be; is she still living? and who is, or was, my father? These questions cannot be answered, at present; but I'll keep these things in my possession, and they may some day aid me in clearing up the mystery. And now to rejoin my new pal."

He found the youthful stranger still on watch, in the chamber where he had been left.

"Has everything been quiet?" asked Jack.

"Still as a mouse," was the reply.

"Good! I have made a thundering booty up stairs, and also made an astonishing discovery, which you shall know hereafter. My mother—no, Mrs. Harold, I mean—for it seems that she is not my mother—keeps her jewelry in yonder desk, which she calls her *escritoire*; the key is beneath her pillow. Now for it!"

This dialogue was of course conducted in low whispers. Jack went to the side of the bed on which the lady was sleeping, cautiously insinuated his hand under her pillow, and began to feel for the key he was in search of.

We have before spoken of Mrs. Harold as a very handsome woman—a fact which our hero had never particularly observed, as long as he supposed her to be his mother; for one is apt to be very dull of perception in reference to the mental or personal good qualities of one's relatives. But now, as Jack bent over her as she lay in soft and tranquil slumber, he could not help admiring her matured beauty, as set forth in the exceeding fairness of her complexion, and the full development of her bust.

"Isn't she pretty?" he said, addressing his young companion in a whisper.

"Fool!—don't stop to admire her prettiness, but steal her key!" was the stern response of the other youth, and a purple tint, very like the hue of jealousy, mantled upon his smooth, fair cheek.

"Damn the key—I can't find it!" cried Jack, aloud; for his rage overcame his prudence.

Instantly did he repent of his rashness; for to his horror, the lady awoke, opened her eyes, and gave utterance to a long, loud scream.

"The game's up—fly for your life!" cried the stranger youth; and the two young robbers rushed to the chamber door, and plunged madly down the stairs. They might easily have made their escape from the house, but for the unlucky circumstance that Jack, in the trepidation of the moment, and also in consequence of the darkness of the hall, could not find the bolt which secured the street door.

"Hell's fury—all is lost!" cried Jack, as Mr. Harold appeared at the head of the stairs, arrayed in his night-clothes, and bearing in his left hand a lighted lamp, while his right grasped a pistol.

"Stand, villains, or I fire!" he cried, taking deliberate aim at the robbers; but our hero, regardless of the words, continued his efforts to open the street door.

"Come away from that door!" exclaimed Mr. Harold, in a determined tone—"come away, scoundrel, or a bullet shall pass through your brain!"

"Oh, that he did!" said Jack, disdainfully—for at that instant his hand touched the bolt which alone separated him and his companion from liberty.

Mr. Harold took a deadly aim at the bold youth, and pressed the trigger of the pistol; but ere the deadly contents of the weapon could be poured forth, the stranger youth, who had been standing in a place of comparative safety out of the range of the pistol, threw himself before our hero, just as the loud report awoke a hundred echoes in the hall.

"Thank God! I have saved you, dear Jack!" said the stranger, faintly, as he fell to the floor, weltering in his blood.

Jack raised the gallant youth in his arms, and endeavored to stop the blood that was fast ebbing from a wound in his shoulder.

"Oh, why," he cried, passionately—"why have you done this? Why should you sacrifice your life, to save mine?" And tears gushed from his eyes, as he spoke.

"Escape—quick, fly! Leave me to my fate!"

"Never! I'll avenge your death. But tell me your name, that I may ever gratefully remember you for this deed of self-sacrificing devotion.

During the utterance of these hurried words, Jack had loosened the young stranger's vest. Perceiving that his breath grew short, and finally appeared to cease altogether, our hero thrust his hand into the breast of

the wounded youth, in order to feel if the heart still beat. Suddenly he started back, with an exclamation of surprise.

"Heavens!—It is a woman!"

"Yes, dear Jack,—it is your own dear Kate!" murmured the disguised girl, falling back insensible.

Mr. Harold was a spectator of this singular scene. He had descended the stairs, and was looking on with a countenance full of wonder.

It is impossible to describe the grief of our hero, on finding that his devoted friend was no other than Kate, to whom he was strongly attached.—Throwing himself beside her bleeding form, and kissing the pale lips, he cried in accents of the most piercing grief,

"Oh, Kate—my darling Kate!—Scarce had I heard the music of your voice, and tasted the sweetness of those lips, when you are laid before me, cold in death! And then to die for me—ah, my God! it is too much—too much!"

"Come, sir," said Mr. Harold, sternly—"there has been quite enough of play acting. Get up and explain how you came to be involved in this rascally affair—this midnight robbery!"

Jack arose to his feet, and confronted the speaker with eyes literally blazing with scorn and hatred.

"Behold your work!" he cried, pointing to the form of Kate—"sanctified smooth, oily villain that you are, behold it! Now hear me, old Harold; I have this night discovered that you are not my father—have in my veins no kindred blood to restrain me from shedding yours! You shall bite the dust yet, for this deed!"

"Wretched, ungrateful boy, I have been to you a friend—but now

I cast you off forever. You have tonight forfeited all claims to my protection;—go, pursue your own course. I wash my hands of your future fate. But first, restore the property of which you have robbed me."

"Never!—neither will I go until I get a taste of the vengeance I shall hereafter drink deeply of!"

With these words the desperate youth sprang upon Mr. Harold, who, totally unprepared for the attack, was borne to the ground. The struggle was, however, of but brief duration; Mr. Harold being a powerful man, mastered the boy with comparative ease, and, his anger being now thoroughly aroused, he called loudly for the watch.

The watch soon made its appearance, in the person of two or three portly Dogberries, who demanded in gruff tones the cause of the tumult?

By the way, watchmen always speak in gruff tones, for they very properly think it beneath them to speak with civility to any one; such is the dignity of a high office!

This fellow, and his companion whom I have shot," replied Mr. Harold, "have been robbing this house; and if you search them, you will doubtless find sufficient evidence of their guilt, to warrant you in taking them into custody."

"Very good, sir," said one who constituted himself the spokesman of the party, and who certainly never was in danger of being hung for his good looks, as the saying is—"very good, sir; but it seems to me that one of these here young chaps is already in the custody of Old Nick, for he's as dead as a smoked herring."

The watchman laughed boisterously at his own wit, and the rest laughed because he did.

"If the lad, or girl as she seems to be, is dead I will answer for the deed," said Mr. Harold. "Meanwhile, we had better search the survivor."

This suggestion was instantly acted upon. Jack was seized and held fast, while the searchers of his pockets were quickly brought to light. The money which he had taken from the desk in the study was produced, and also the portrait of his mother, with the accompanying documents.

"Here's evidence enough to hang the young scamp, if justice was done him," said the head watchman, exultingly—for menials of the law are never more delighted than when there is a fair prospect of utterly destroying a poor devil by a "sufficient" quantity of evidence.

"You may retain the portrait of your mother, John," said Mr. Harold, addressing our hero—"I have no desire to deprive you of the possible means of discovering her at some future day, after you shall have paid the forfeit of your crime."

Jack replied not, save by a look of contempt. Then, turning to the watchman, he implored them to convey the body of Kate to some place where medical assistance could be rendered, provided that life was not extinct.

"Aye, aye, she shall be attended to, never fear, young chap," said one of the night guardians. "We'll take her to the watch-house, and then send for a doctor."

Jack was now handcuffed, and they were about leading him away,

when Mrs. Harold came down stairs, and with streaming eyes entreated them to release the young prisoner.

"He is my own adopted son—he is yet but a child," sobbed the excellent lady—"oh, do not take him to prison, it will ruin him forever! I will be responsible for his future good conduct, and —"

"Can't do it, ma'am," interrupted one of the watchmen, in a tone of rough respect—"it's a bad offense, and we must hold on to him."

"Henry," said the lady, appealing to her husband—"interpose with these men for the poor boy's release."

"It is useless, Amelia," said Mr. Harold, tenderly, but firmly—"this crime indicates so much innate depravity in him, that I never could trust him again. It would be doing society an injustice, to suffer such a depraved being to go unpunished. His insolence alone to me, his benefactor and friend, deserves severe chastisement. Finally, as he is now in the hands of the officers of justice, his release is altogether out of the question."

"There's where you're about right, sir," said one of the officers of justice, straightening himself up, and looking mighty important.

Mrs. Harold clasped Jack in her arms, and bedewed him with her tears. In truth, she had all of a mother's affection for him; had he been the child of her own womb, she could not have felt more poignant grief at his painful and degraded position.

"Oh, woman! in prison, how loving and tender—in adversity, how faithful and unchangeable! Even the dark shadow of crime cannot dim the lustre of thy radiant and gentle heart, or turn it aside from the object of thy holy love!"

Jack Harold was visibly affected by the good lady's grief on his account, and strove to utter some words of comfort. At last she was able to bid him farewell with a tolerable degree of composure, and to assure him of her careful attention to his wants, while in prison, awaiting trial.

Our hero was duly escorted to the watch-house, while two of the guardians conveyed the senseless form of Kate to the same agreeable resort. Here we leave them for the present.

CHAPTER X.

Showing the hero of this narrative in a "tight fix," and showing also how he got out of it.

An old newspaper, dated 20 years ago, (1830) which invaluable document is now in our possession, contains the following among other items of criminal intelligence:—

John, otherwise Jack Harold, was found guilty of an extensive robbery from the premises of his adopted father, Henry Harold, Esq., gentleman; at the intercession of the prosecutor, and in consideration of the extreme youth of the prisoner, he was sent to the House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents, there to remain until he attains his majority, or until his good behavior will warrant the overseers in binding him as an apprentice to some useful trade.

"The prisoner, although a lad of an extremely prepossessing appearance, is a most hardened young dog; for on receiving his sentence, he had the audacity to make several very insulting remarks to the bench,

among other things, that he would yet have the felicity of dancing (or doing something else still more disrespectful) upon the grave of the venerable presiding Judge, when His Honor should be gathered unto his fathers. On being ordered to keep silence by the clerk of the court, he expressed a strong desire to "punch" that respectable functionary "in the head;" and while being removed to jail by the attending officer, he indulged in a pugilistic encounter with that useful citizen, who is unfortunately of feeble personal powers—blackening his eye, and seriously damaging his nose. It is to be hoped that a long imprisonment will tend to the reformation of this desperate young reprobate."

And now, reader, having safely deposited master Jack within the walls of an institution especially designed for the reformation of such juvenile rascals as he, we might with a good show of propriety leave him to his fate, and close our narrative at once, trusting that subsequent good behaviour on his part might enable him to avoid the ignominious end marked out for him by his particular friend and tutor, Lopez the Spaniard, who it will be recollected, had sworn to bring him to the gallows.

But we have undertaken a task, and must accomplish it. Moreover, silence on our part with reference to the after career of our hero, cannot avert his eventual destiny. So we shall continue to follow his desperate fortunes, until the end.

"What fate imposes, man must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide."

The House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents was, as its name implies, a sort of penitentiary, devoted exclusively to the imprisonment of offenders whose extreme youth rendered them improper subjects for confinement with older felons. The discipline of the institution was excessive-

ly severe, the convicted urchins were kept at the hardest labor, and the slightest misbehavior on their part was punished with flogging, solitary confinement, and partial starvation. The food was of the coarsest and most wretched kind; and in short, the entire arrangements of the concern were admirably calculated to convert a youth from a state of comparative innocence, to the condition of a hardened and irreclaimable miscreant.

Young girls were also sent to this "House of Refuge," and their treatment was scarcely less severe than that of the boys. They were of course rigorously separated from the male inmates, and indeed the two sexes seldom or never saw each other at all.

When a lad, after a confinement of four or five years, had been beaten and starved into a condition of apathy or partial idiocy, he was bound, apprentice to some hard and tyrannical master, who was especially charged by the overseers of the "Refuge" to continue their wholesome discipline, by beating and starving the poor wretch, and thereby, in the end, "make a man of him," to use their favorite expression. Should the victim of this cruelty attempt to run away from his tyrant master, and be re-taken, he was either again consigned to the tender mercies of the "Refuge," or else was forced to undergo an additional course of beating and starving, at the hands of his "owner;" for, in truth, he was on an equal level with the negro slaves at the South, save in the respect, that the latter received ten times better treatment than he.

We cannot give a more perfect idea of the concern, than by stating the experience of Jack Harold, after his introduction there.

Immediately upon his arrival at the office of the "Refuge," Jack was stripped of all his clothing, and introduced into the uniform of the establishment; said uniform, which was

several sizes too large for him, consisting of a jacket and trousers of coarse gray cloth, and an equally coarse shirt that chafed his skin painfully, accustomed as he always had been to the finest linen. But he was destined to suffer still more humiliating transformations; for every particle of his hair was cut off close to his head—a process, peculiarly distasteful to him, as he had always taken particular pride in his hair, which was remarkably fine and luxuriant.

We may as well here observe, that Jack was allowed to retain his mother's portrait in his possession, at the especial desire of Mr. Harold himself.

During the operations of undressing and dressing, the branded marks upon the breast of our hero did not escape the observation of the head overseer, whose name was Piggot. This man was a long, lean, sinister-looking individual, with snake-like eyes, a brandy nose, and a small rivulet of tobacco juice trickling down each corner of his mouth. He was renowned for despicable meanness and brutal cruelty; and had attained his lucrative situation as a reward for his false dealing and perjury at the city elections. To sum up his character in a few words, he combined the ignorance of a jackass with the savageness of a hungry hyena.

"Ha!" exclaimed this engaging gentleman, on seeing Jack's branded breast—"a young gallows bird, eh?—a marked criminal, eh! You're the very customer I want. By God! you shall curse the day when you was first put under the care of Hiram Piggot! As a proof of what you may expect hereafter, you shall pass ten days in solitary confinement, on bread and water, and d—d little of that, too—ha, ha, ha!"

Jack made no reply to the ruffian in office, save what was expressed in a sneer of contempt. His toilet being completed, he was conducted into

the interior of the prison, and commanded to enter a small stone cell about six feet in height, and as many in length and width. He obeyed, for he had the good sense to see the folly of resistance; the iron door was closed and locked upon him, and he was left to enjoy the profound darkness and his own pleasant meditations.

As the cell contained not the slightest vestige of bed or blanket of any kind, Jack threw himself upon the cold stone floor, cursing his ill luck in general, and Mr. Piggot in particular. Hour after hour passed, and he grew faint with hunger, while every bone in his body ached painfully, in consequence of the hardness of his couch.

Having no means of computing the lapse of time, he knew not whether it was day or night in the world without. At length, when he began to fear that he was to be left to starve to death, his door was opened, and he beheld the amiable countenance of Mr. Piggot, illuminated by a lamp which that gentleman carried—from which latter fact our hero judged that it was night time.

"Come, you young whelp, get up—here's your swill!" said Mr. Piggot, in a tone between a grunt and a growl, as he deposited upon the floor a cup containing about a gill of water, and a very small crust of bread.

Jack was very hungry, but he also felt exceedingly obstinate; he therefore took no notice of the overseer's command, but remained lying upon the floor.

Mr. Piggot became enraged; the "Refuge" was a kingdom, of which he was the sovereign despot, and his word was law there; he was accustomed to have his most unreasonable orders implicitly obeyed by his juvenile subjects, to which he was an object of intense fear. Yet here was a new! arrived prisoner, who, on the

very first day of his confinement, dared to disregard his commands!

Mr. Piggot swore a great oath, and strode into the cell with rather an unsteady gait; for, to confess the truth, he was rather more inebriated than usual; and as he was usually rather more than half-drunk, the reader can form some kind of an estimate of his condition at that particular time.

Mr. Piggot kicked our hero heavily in the side, and ordered him to go to the door and take in his "swill," as he facetiously termed it. Jack arose very meekly, and advanced to the door very humbly, but there was a wicked expression in his eye that boded no good to the personal well-being of the overseer, who stood leaning against the wall at the back part of the cell, chuckling at the facility with which he had compelled the "young whelp" to obey him.

Jack took up the "swill," and disposed of it in a very curious manner, by hurling it with all his force at the overseer's head; then, quick as lightning, he stepped out of the cell, closed the iron door in a twinkling, and turned the key, which fortunately remained in the lock. Mr. Piggot rubbed his wounded eye, which had been laid open by the edge of the tin cup, and groaned deeply. He saw that he was "done for."

As Mr. Piggot had left his lamp on the outside of the cell, Jack enjoyed the full benefit of light, while the former gentleman experienced the full misery of dismal darkness.

The faint voice of the overseer was now heard, pleading in the most abject tones for his release, and promising Jack all sorts of rewards, if he would comply.

"Let me out—do, now, that's a good fellow, and I'll give you a first-rate berth in the kitchen, where you can get lots o' grub—I swear I will! I'll give you a good chance to run away. I'll set you to work in the

girls' department, where you can—"

"Cowardly scoundrel," interrupted our hero—"stay where you are, and be d—d to you!"

"Help! murder! prisoner broke loose!" cried Mr. Piggot as loud as he could howl; but unfortunately for him, the cell was situated in a part of the establishment so remote, that there was not the slightest possibility of his being overheard by any of his assistants.

While Jack was studying how to take the best advantage of this singular and successful adventure, his eyes chanced to encounter the key which still remained in the lock of the cell door; and he now for the first time noticed that, attached to this key by a steel ring, there were two other keys, which, in his excitement, he had not before observed.

"I'll try it!" thought our hero, as a vision of liberty dawned upon his heart. Taking the keys in one hand, and the lamp in the other, he traversed a hall of considerable extent, until his progress was stopped by a huge iron door. Nothing daunted, Jack applied one of the keys to the massive lock; it fitted, the bolt flew back, the door swung heavily upon its rusty hinges, and he found himself in the open air. But his liberty was not yet gained; for he stood in the prison yard, and this yard was surrounded by a stone wall of great height, garnished at the top with sharp iron spikes.

"There must be a door somewhere, and this other key may unlock it," muttered Jack. But to find the door, if any there were, was a matter of some difficulty; for he had blown out his light, (which he feared might lead to his detection,) and the night was profoundly dark.

Groping his way to the wall, he commenced feeling along its surface, for the door; and while thus engaged, he was startled by a noise which

made him tremble, not only for his liberty, but also for his life.

This was the barking of a tremendous bull-dog. Jack knew he was tremendous, by the depth and power of the sound; and he feared, if the animal were loose, he would be torn in pieces, as he was entirely unarmed.

While deliberating on the best course to pursue in this emergency, his foot came in contact with a stone of considerable size. This he raised with both hands, and poised it on high, at arms' length, determined to give the savage brute a warm reception, should he be attacked.

He soon had reason to congratulate himself on having taken this precaution—for a low, deep, ferocious growl assured him that his enemy was near. Suddenly two huge paws were placed upon his breast—and just as the dog was about to fasten his teeth in Jack's throat, down came the heavy stone with tremendous force upon his head, felling him to the ground, and killing him instantly.

Thanking his lucky stars for this deliverance, our hero resumed his search for the door of the yard; when all at once he was startled by the appearance of a half-dressed man with a light in his hand, at a little distance, who rubbed his eyes, and seemed to have been just awakened from a sound sleep.

"Devil take the dog!" muttered the man—"he has woke me up from a good snooze, by his infernal barking and growling. Wonder what's the matter?"

As he spoke, he raised up his lantern, and endeavored to peer into the surrounding darkness. Jack crouched down close to the wall, and fortunately escaped observation.

"Where the devil's the dog?" continued the fellow, in a grumbling tone. "Here, Tiger, Tiger! Where are you? Tiger, Tiger!"

But in vain he called and whistled.

Tiger could not very well obey the summons, for the simple reason that he was "laid out" with his skull broken in; and the man, muttering deep curses upon his canine friend, intermingled with lively threats of the "licking" which he was bound to bestow upon that ill-fated animal in the morning, retired into a little house from which he had issued.

"I understand how the land lays now," thought Jack—"that man is the porter, or keeper of the gate, and he sleeps in that little wooden house, which I remember passing on my arrival here. The gate directly adjoins the house, and I must be very cautious in making my exit, lest I awaken the porter, for then all would be lost. I shall wait here in patience until he has had plenty of time to fall sound asleep—then one turn of this key, and liberty is mine!"

An hour elapsed, and then the young fugitive cautiously groped his way towards the porter's lodge. He listened intently, and had the satisfaction of hearing the inmate snore heavily. A faint light gleamed from a small window in the house; for the man had not extinguished his lantern.

Jack now found the gate without difficulty. His hand next sought the lock, which was of immense size; and, to his intense disappointment, neither of the three keys in his possession would fit it.

"Have I so far succeeded, to be balked at last?" thought he, and he ground his teeth with rage. To climb over the wall was impossible; to pick the lock was equally so, for even were that practicable, he had not an article in his possession adapted to that object.

He reflected deeply upon the peril of his situation. It was probably near day-light, when all the inmates of the place would be astir. Should he be captured, he was well aware that the most merciless treatment would

be meted out to him, for the trick he had played upon the overseer would render that gentleman furious against him. He would be whipped, starved, chained, and so closely confined, that all future attempts at escape would be perfectly abortive.

But not long did he deliberate; for his ready mind soon suggested a plan of operation.

"One thing is certain," thought he: "the key of this gate must be in the possession of the porter. That key I must obtain, at all risks—even if I have to commit murder; so here goes!"

He pressed against the window of the lodge; it yielded, for it had fortunately been left unfastened. On looking in, he beheld the man stretched upon his bed, evidently sound asleep.

Summoning to his assistance all his resolution and courage, Jack Harold crawled softly through the window, and stood within the lodge.

The porter was a large, powerful man, and the dim light from the lantern, shining upon his face, revealed his stern and determined features.—Our hero instantly saw that a personal conflict with such a stout fellow would be fatal to his hopes. The man could only be overcome by moral heroism.

The first object that attracted Jack's attention, was a blunderbuss which rested upon a shelf, directly over the sleeper's head. To gain possession of this formidable weapon was the boy's first object; but in order to reach it, he was obliged to lean over the bed, in doing which his person came in contact with the porter's hand. The man stirred, half woke up, muttered an incoherent word or two, and went off again to the land of dreams.

Jack was now armed; and as he cocked the blunderbuss, his brave heart swelled with delight; for he

felt that he was now the hero of a daring and perilous adventure.

"I'll be a great man yet," thought he. "What boy of my years would have the courage to do what I have done to-night? When the Prince, and Lopez, and my comrades hear of this, how proud they will be of their young Lieutenant! Within two hours, if I am fortunate, I shall be at the Devil's Den, receiving the congratulations of the brethren. What astonishment my appearance will create among them—for they will suppose me to be snug and fast in the dungeons of the 'Refuge.' But Kate—shall I ever behold her again? Alas! I know not whether she be dead or living; for, since my arrest, no one would answer my questions concerning her. Would to heaven that I knew her fate! * * * But, 'pshaw! this is no time to shed tears; I must look sharp, and find the key of that cursed gate!"

He began a close and careful search for the all-important article, not forgetting to hold the blunderbuss in readiness, in case the porter should awaken. He determined to blow the man's brains out, rather than be captured.

In vain he searched; he could find the key nowhere, although he opened every drawer, and examined every place, wherein it was likely to be laid away.

Jack grew desperate—for the first glimmer of the dawning day was beginning to peep through the window of the lodge.

"I must make a bold push," thought he—"this fellow, must have the key hidden under his pillow: I'll search for it there, and if he awakens—"

He paused—for at that instant there pealed forth the clear, loud notes of the prison bell, summoning the juvenile convicts to prepare for breakfast, and the labors of the day.

The porter started up, rubbed his eyes, and beheld a youth with closely cropped hair, and dressed in the prison garb, levelling a blunderbuss at his head.

"Hullo—what's this?" cried the man, perfectly overcome with astonishment.

"Just this," said Jack Harold, very coolly—"hand over the key of that gate, and keep your head shut, or I'll shoot you as I would a dog!"

The porter leaned against the bed, and regarded the daring youngster with a vacant stare; for he was confused and bewildered.

"Come!" cried Jack, impatiently—"where's the key? Don't trifle with me; I'd sooner murder you and be hung for it, than to be confined in this earthly hell. If you hesitate one minute longer, you die!"

By this time the man had recovered his scattered senses; folding his arms, he said, deliberately—

"It's all very well, young shaver; you're no doubt a very nice boy, and a very smart one, and show very good pluck; and how you came here, the devil only knows;—and you might shoot me, and get away, and all that—if it wasn't for one thing: that blunderbuss is not loaded!"

"Not loaded!" gasped our hero, perfectly horror-stricken, and losing all his heroic fortitude in a moment.

"Just so," said the man, with provoking coolness—"Now, young fellow, you're in a pretty fix, ain't you?"

Jack stood irresolute; had he been armed with a knife, he would have thrown himself upon the porter, and either slain him, or perished in the attempt.

"Come, you d—d young rascal!" cried the man, suddenly assuming a savage tone—"tell me how you managed to escape from your cell; but first get down upon your marrow-bones and ask my pardon for the impudence you just now gave me!"

The fellow's display of petty tyranny enraged Jack, and brought his brave blood back to his heart, as he scornfully replied—

"Low-bred cur! sooner would I die a thousand deaths than kneel to such as you! Even now do I spit upon and defy you!"

During the utterance of these words, the blunderbuss which Jack still held in his hands, chanced to become pointed towards the porter, who promptly stepped aside. This movement arrested the attention of our hero, and the thought rapidly flashed through his mind—

"This weapon must be loaded, after all—or why would this fellow manifest a fear of it? Besides, is it at all likely, that a man filling his situation, as gate-keeper of a prison, would have in his possession fire-arms that are not loaded? I'll try him; and what is to be done, must be done quickly."

He raised the weapon, and levelled it at the gate-keeper's head; the latter worthy looked rather uneasy, and turned slightly pale—symptoms which confirmed Jack's suspicions that the blunderbuss was in order for deadly execution.

"You have lied to me, despicable wretch!" cried our hero, triumphantly—"at all events, if I do not blow out your brains, I'll give you credit for speaking the truth. So here goes—"

His finger was about to press the trigger, when the gate-keeper fell upon his knees, crying—

"Don't fire—for God's sake, lay aside the weapon, for 'tis charged to the muzzle!"

"Ha! then you are in my power; give up the key of the gate, if you would save your life. You thought to make me kneel to you; but now you humbly grovel at my feet, and pray me to spare your life. Come sir—the key!"

The gate-keeper drew from his pocket a huge key, and handed it to the intrepid youth.

"Now, sir," said Jack, with an air of determination—"I am going to take my departure; and remember, if you dare to pursue me, or give the alarm, or even stir from your knees, you die! Tell Piggot, your master, that Jack Harold despises him, and defies his power—and never can he be kept a prisoner in this miserable den. Now, farewell; and if you value your life, stir not!"

Still keeping the blunderbuss levelled at the affrightened porter's head, Jack drew back the bolt that fastened the door of the lodge, stepped into the yard, and thrust the key of the gate into the massive lock. The gate swung open upon its rusty hinges, and our hero was free!

Having ascertained that the porter was still in his kneeling position, Jack again admonished him not to attempt alarm or pursuit, and then, having carefully locked the gate after him, ran rapidly across the open fields—for the "Refuge" was situated without the limits of the city, and there was no other building of any kind within half a mile.

CHAPTER XI.

Wherein our hero gets into comfortable quarters, and meets with a startling adventure.

It was broad day-light, and raining heavily, when Jack Harold paused for a few moments in his rapid flight, to gain breath and look about him. The "Refuge," being situated on a hill, was still visible, although at a considerable distance. Suddenly, the alarm bell of the prison pealed forth its clear, ringing notes, and our hero's sharp eyes enabled him to distinguish several men issuing from the

gate through which he had just made his escape.

"The fox is pursued, and must find cover!" thought he; and, seeing the blunderbuss had become damp and consequently useless, he threw it into a ditch, as an unnecessary encumbrance, and resumed his flight under the protection of a high hedge, which screened him from the view of his pursuers, for the time, at least. Onward he sped with the rapidity of a deer chased by the hunters; and when he imagined that he had gained a good distance upon his enemies, he paused to gain breath, to listen, and to determine in what direction it would be most advisable to flee.

In a few minutes he was startled to hear voices on the other side of the hedge, nearly opposite to the spot where he was standing. He instantly recognized the tones of the gate-keeper, and Piggot, the overseer.

"Damn him!" said the former gentleman—"he must be somewhere, hereabouts, for we traced his foot-prints clear down from the gate to this cursed hedge. I'd give half a year's salary to catch him, just to pay him off for killing the dog, and saving me such an infernal trick!"

"Blast his eyes!" growled Mr. Piggot, ferociously—"I shall be killed with the rheumatism, after passing the night in that cold, damp cell—and besides, the young devil cut my head open with the tin cup! Now, sir, what in hell are you laughing at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the gate-keeper—"what a figure you cut, when I let you out of that dark hole! You looked like—"

"No matter what I looked like; I'll be sworn, I didn't look half so mean and foolish as you did, when like a coward as you are, you let a boy escape right before your face! But come, we mustn't stand talking here, let's get on the other side of this hedge, and scour the whole country

until we catch the young villain. By G—, if I find him, he shall be literally skinned alive!"

Fortunately for Jack, the two men were obliged to make a considerable circuit, before they could gain the side of the hedge on which he was. Seeing that he had not a moment of time to lose, and being now pretty well rested, he left the shelter of the friendly hedge, and darted off across the fields.

The rain continued to pour down a perfect deluge, drenching our hero to the skin, and rendering the ground so soft that he soon lost both of his shoes in the mire, and could with difficulty make any progress. Besides, his naked feet often trod upon sharp stones and brambles, wounding them painfully; yet onward he sped right gallantly, nor did his brave heart despair, until he heard a loud shout from his pursuers; and turning around, he beheld Mr. Piggot and the gate-keeper, who had just doubled the hedge, and seeing him, were pressing hard upon his track, feeling sure of their prey.

Then, for the first time, did Jack Harold begin to give way to despair.

"Stop, you d—d young rascal!" shouted Piggot, who was completely out of breath.

"Aha! we've got you, have we? You've no blunderbuss now, my lad!" and with these words the gate-keeper limped forward, for he had fallen down and bruised his shin against a stone.

This gentleman's allusion to the blunderbuss, suggested an idea to the ready wit of our hero; he instantly picked up from the ground a stick about the size of the weapon which he had thrown away—and pointing it at his pursuers, he had the satisfaction to perceive that the stratagem succeeded admirably. At a little distance, on that dark, rainy morning, the stick was a very good representative of the formidable weapon that then lay at the bottom of the ditch.

Both the men were cowed a heart; and both paused when they beheld the boy boldly stop and confront them, apparently armed.

"The devil!" quoth the gate-keeper to his companion—"I thought that he had thrown away the cursed blunderbuss; but you see he has it still! We must be cautious now we approach him, or he'll blow us to atoms!"

"Just so," responded Mr Piggot, shivering with fear and cold combined.

Meanwhile, Jack walked forward; and whenever the others attempted to follow, he had but to point his stick towards them, and they stepped immediately. In this manner he gained upon them considerably; and at last came in sight of a beautiful mansion house, built of granite and surrounded by an extensive garden. The place was evidently the residence of persons of wealth.

"If I can obtain a shelter on these grounds, I may be safe," thought our young adventurer, who was now out of his pursuers' sight, being hidden from their view by an abrupt turn in the road.

No person was visible about the grounds; and Jack boldly passed through the garden gate, and approached the rear of the mansion.—He determined, in case he encountered any inmate of the place, to throw himself upon his or her mercy, and solicit a shelter until his pursuers should have relinquished their search for him.

Ascending the steps at the back of the house, he found the door slightly ajar. His danger was too pressing to admit of any delay or consideration on his part, and he accordingly entered the hall and intently listened.

Everything around him was comfortable and luxurious. The hall and stair-case were richly carpeted, and two splendid lamps were suspended from the ceiling. The doors of the front and back parlor were closed; but

from the former issued the sound of voices, in gentle conversation.

Jack advanced noiselessly, and applied his eye to the key-hole. He saw that the family were at breakfast—a venerable looking old man, a matronly woman, and a beautiful female in the prime of life, whose back being turned

towards our hero, he could not see her features.

It was a scene of domestic comfort, so much resembling the boy's former life with the Harold's, and so vividly contrasting with his present deplorable condition, that he sighed deeply. Cheerily steamed the fragrant coffee



JACK'S FIRST ROBBERY—DISCOVERED BY MR. HAROLD.—See page 34

from the silver urn—delicately white were the smoking cakes—golden-hued eggs, and the exquisite preserves. At last, so thought Jack, who had not

tasted a morsel of relishing food for several days—nor since the kind Mrs. Harold had sent to him a comfortable meal in prison, previous to his trial and conviction.

The old gentleman, arrayed in the

easy habiliments of home, alternately sipped his coffee and read the morning paper; the old lady—who enjoyed her breakfast as all old ladies generally do—discussed the good things before her with an excellent appetite; while the younger lady, who might have seen twenty-eight or thirty summers, ate but little, and looked rather unhappy, save when the old lady glanced towards her, or when the old gentleman read aloud, for her benefit, some paragraph in the paper which he conceived likely to interest her.

It was a capital home picture, with much light and very little shadow—just such a scene as one loves to look in upon, from a dreary, stormy outdoors, to a serene, happy circle about the hearth of Home. We could almost find it in us to be angry with that young lady, for manifesting symptoms of unhappiness when surrounded by that delightful atmosphere of bliss; but who knows the hidden secrets of her heart?

Jack looked, and sighed; for he was wet, hungry and miserable, and longed for a cup of that rich-looking coffee over which the old gentleman snatched his lips with such infinite gusto, and a morsel of that delicious bacon which made his mouth to water as he gazed.

He was just mentally debating the feasibility of rushing in and “collaring” a portion of the succulent viands, when there came a thundering knock at the front door. Forgetting his hunger in his desire to become for the time invisible, he quickly mounted the stairs, and stood upon the landing to listen.

The summons at the door was answered by a domestic from the kitchen below; and Jack heard the voice of Mr. Piggot demanding an interview with “the gentleman of the house.”

The gentleman of the house forthwith made his appearance, in the

person of the old gentleman who had been at breakfast, and in a tone of cold politeness he requested to know to what circumstance he was indebted for the honor of a visit from two individuals with whom he had not the pleasure to be acquainted.

Mr. Piggot and the gate-keeper, however self-possessed and perfectly at home they were while tyrannizing over juvenile prisoners, looked rather awkward, not to say foolish, in the presence of a gentleman; however the overseer managed to summon up a portion of his habitual insolence, and delivered the following speech:—

“Why, you see, I’m the head overseer of the House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents—ahem!”

“And I’m also an officer of that valuable institution—ahem!” added the gate-keeper, attempting an air of dignity that failed miserably.

The old gentleman, so far from being overcome by these startling announcements of the elevated stations of his two visitors, said, sharply—

“Well, what do you want here?”

Mr. Piggot and the gate-keeper were astonished:—here was a man who, after having been made acquainted with their high rank, treated them as if they were mere nobodies! Determined to cool him down, the overseer put on a blustering air, and said—

“We’ll let you know what we want here, sir, and that d—d quick, too! A convict has escaped from our establishment. he has been traced to these premises, and we have good reason to think that he is hid in this house, mayhap by your knowledge, and ———”

“Insolent scoundrel!” interrupted the old gentleman, in a towering passion—“beware of what you say; I am a magistrate—how dare you charge me with wilfully concealing a prisoner?”

Piggot and company felt that they had gone a little too far, for they were not before aware that the old gentleman was a magistrate; and the overseer attempted to stammer forth a clumsy apology—

“Ax yer pardon, we didn’t mean to say that you had hid him yourself a’purpose, only that he might have concealed himself in some part of your premises. If you’ve no objection to our searching ———”

“Search my grounds, if you will, fellow,” cried the old gentleman, scornfully—“but presume not to pollute my house with your presence, you or your companion, or my servants shall kick you like vagabonds from the door! And hark’ee, both of you: the outrageous and brutal cruelties practised upon the unfortunate young wretches confined in the Refuge, as ’tis called—of which abominable den of misery you claim to be officers—have come to my knowledge, and you may consider yourselves lucky if inquiries are not set on foot that will bring those cruelties to light, and develop the cowardly ruffianism of the heartless miscreants who hold power there.—And more than this: if any poor youth should escape from your infernal clutches, and seek a shelter in my house, sooner than hand him over to your tender mercies, I’d become his protector and friend—so take that, and be damned to you!”

With these words, the indignant old gentleman abruptly shut the door in the faces of the astonished Piggot and company.

Jack distinctly overheard this conversation, and congratulated himself on having found shelter in the house of a gentleman of such liberal principles. He was almost tempted to emerge from his hiding place, throw himself at his feet, and claim his mercy and protection; but the re-

collection that the old gentleman was a magistrate, deterred him.

“After all,” thought he, “his words were merely uttered in the excitement of the moment; should he discover me on his premises, it would be his duty as a magistrate to return me to prison. I’ll remain concealed in the house until night, and then enter the city in search of my comrades. Should I make my appearance in the streets by day-light, these prison clothes and my closely cropped hair would instantly lead to my arrest.”

Seeing the necessity of immediately finding some secure place of concealment, Jack mounted another flight of stairs, and entered a chamber which had every appearance of being the sleeping apartment of a lady, for it was furnished with feminine neatness and taste. In the grate glowed a comfortable fire, rendered necessary by the chill, damp air of that rainy morning; and drawing a softly cushioned rocking-chair to the hearth, our hero seated himself therein, and very composedly proceeded to warm his benumbed limbs and dry his saturated clothes.

Happening to cast his eyes towards an opposite mirror, he was startled by the great change which had been wrought in his appearance, within a couple of days. His luxurious locks were gone, and his close-cropped head looked ugly and uncouth; his handsome face, with its regular and delicate features, was pale and smeared with dirt; the neat and elegant clothes which he had always been accustomed to wear, were replaced by the hideous and misshapen garments of the prison; his naked feet were bruised and bleeding, and his entire person was covered with mud. His most intimate companions would not have recognized him, so forlorn and wretched did he then appear.

Having warmed and dried himself, he went to one of the windows and looked forth. The rain still descended in torrents; and the wild, open country looked dreary indeed—for at that period the environs round about New York were but thinly settled.

While gazing forth upon the gloomy prospect, Jack had the satisfaction of seeing Piggot and company issue from the garden and wend their way towards the *Refuge*. They had at length abandoned the search and were returning to the prison—and being worn out with fatigue, wet to the skin and soured by disappointment, they made a very miserable appearance as they slowly plodded onwards. Jack could not help laughing as he observed Mr. Piggot with his hand applied to his wounded eye, while the gate-keeper limped painfully upon his bruised shin. Soon they turned the corner, and were out of sight.

At this moment Jack was startled by the sound of foot-steps ascending the stairs; his first impulse was to conceal himself, and he quickly stepped into a small closet which adjoined the chamber.

This apartment was a sort of dressing-room, and was separated from the chamber by a glass door, furnished with a curtain. Jack slightly drew aside the curtain, and saw the young lady whom he had seen at the breakfast table, enter the chamber, and seat herself before the fire in the rocking-chair which he had just quitted.

That she was very unhappy, required but little penetration to discover, even had not the fact been made evident by the tears that poured down her cheeks. Unconscious of the presence of a witness to her grief, she murmured, in a voice rendered indistinct by agonizing sobs—

"Alas, unhappy wretch that am!

How little do my worthy parents suspect the misery of their unfortunate daughter! I am forced to smile and assume a look of cheerfulness, while my heart is rent asunder with remorse and grief!

"And yet my conscience doth not reproach me with having been wilfully guilty; for did I not fall a victim to the specious arts of a villain? Did not his intoxicating flatteries, his expressions of ardent love, his fervent entreaties, and his solemn promises of marriage, alone enable him to triumph over my principles of virtue?

"Eleven years have elapsed since that fatal night, when—in this very chamber, to which he gained admission—John Hamblin robbed me of that purity of soul and person that can never be restored. I then thought him to be the soul of honor; he has since proved to be a despicable villain, worthy of all the hatred which I now feel towards him.

"My kind parents never suspected the frailty of their daughter; for when that daughter's condition began to grow obvious, she left this roof, under pretence of passing a few months with an old school-fellow and friend. Her seducer caused her to be conveyed to the house of a certain female, and there the erring girl became the mother of a male child. To retain the infant, the evidence of her shame, in her possession, was impossible; her desire to preserve her reputation triumphed over the promptings of maternal love. When the babe was one month old, the unhappy mother placed her own portrait about its neck, together with a note imploring charity; and then one night she left the little innocent at the door of a rich man's house. Whether it was kindly received, or consigned to the harsh mercy of an alms house, the poor mother never learned; and though her soul often yearns for the offspring of her un-

allowed love, she never could look upon the boy, and stand abashed in his presence, as his frail and guilty parent!

"Perhaps, too, he would invoke curses on my head, for bringing him into a world where he suffers under the hateful stain of illegitimacy. Yes—it is far better that we should never behold each other.

"But, oh! my God! how the awful consequences of that false step still cling to me! My seducer, and the father of my child—John Hamblin—he who wrested from me the treasures of my virgin innocence—has proved himself to be a monster of villainy, an outcast, a robber, and a felon. Not content with having effected my ruin, and secured my eternal unhappiness, he still pursues me with unrelenting malignity, making me the constant victim of his violence, abuse, cruelty and extortion. Heavens! my punishment may be just; but it is greater than I can bear!

"And this very night he visits me. I dare not refuse him admission. How little my parents dream that such a blackened ruffian is so often beneath their roof, in the chamber of their daughter, whom they fondly think to be pure as snow! How little do they suspect that their daughter is compelled to plunder from them secretly, in order to furnish this villain with money, to enable him to pursue his infamous career! And how dreadful to be forced to endure his odious embraces, when his very touch is pollution, and when I detest him with all the intensity of the most deadly hate!

"Sometimes I feel capable of stabbing this man to the heart—thus avenging my wrongs in blood. Often am I tempted to seek for my son, in order to teach him to hate his father for his mother's sake, and take the villain's life. May Heaven forgive me!"

The unhappy lady paused, and a fresh burst of tears attested the painful nature of her feelings. At length she arose and approached a mirror for the purpose of adjusting her hair; and then, for the first time, Jack Harold had a good opportunity to observe her countenance, which had heretofore escaped his scrutiny on account of her unfavorable position.

Why does our hero start, turn deadly pale, and cling to a chair for support?

Because he instantly recognized in that lady the original of the portrait then in his possession—the portrait of his mother. Her words had aroused within him the most intense and soul-absorbing interest; but the view of her features immediately confirmed the impression which had begun to prevail with him, that he indeed beheld his mother!

Then what a tide of tumultuous emotions rushed over his soul!

Eagerly did he draw the miniature from his bosom, and compare it with the lady before him; there could be no mistake—for there were the same blue eyes, the same golden hair—the same exquisite beauty, slightly modified by time and sorrow.

Jack was powerfully affected; in his breast were aroused feelings to which he had as yet been an entire stranger. Nature awoke within him a thousand delicious emotions, urging him to rush from his place of concealment and throw himself into his mother's arms; but he restrained himself, when the following reflections obtruded themselves into his mind:—

"Can I present myself to her, in this terrible and disagreeable plight—dirty, miserable, with my head shaved, and myself arrayed in the uniform of a prison? Never! she would view me with disgust and abhorrence. Rather let me wait until such time as I can clothe myself handsomely, and make a good ap-

pearance; then will I seek an opportunity to proclaim myself to her as her son, and she will have no cause to be ashamed of me. Meanwhile, I must remain concealed until night, when I trust to be enabled to leave the house unobserved—provided I do not starve to death before that time!

There certainly seems to be some probability of that event, for Jack had fasted long, and, as Byron says—

"Man is a carnivorous production,
And must have meat, at least one meal a day;
He cannot live like woodcock, upon mistle,
But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey."

But our hero's mind soon became busied with other thoughts, besides those relating to his hunger. He remembered that his mother had used this expression, when speaking of her villainous seducer—his father—

"And this very night he visits me!"

Then he recollected that his poor mother had spoken of the man's abuse of her—his cruelty, &c., and his compelling her to plunder from her parents, in order to supply him with money.

"I will stay and see this man—my father," thought our hero—"for, independent of my curiosity to behold the author of my being, I am impelled by a desire to protect my mother from his brutality. If he dares to abuse her in my presence, let him look to himself; for his being my father will not screen him from my vengeance!"

Meanwhile, the lady, having made her toilet, and washed all traces of tears from her face, left the chamber, totally unconscious of the near proximity of one so closely related to her. Jack issued from the closet, and began to examine the contents of his mother's apartment with the greatest interest.

We must render him the justice to say that in doing this he was by no means prompted by the wish to appropriate a single article; had

there been thousands within his reach, he would have scorned to touch a penny of it. His investigations were dictated by the intense interest which he felt in everything connected with his mother.

In a bureau drawer he found a letter addressed to "Miss Clarissa Cooper." He opened it, and read the following words, written in the bold handwriting of a man:—

"You may expect a visit from me to-morrow night, Clarissa. Fail not to be in your chamber at ten, and have in readiness the rope-ladder by which I always enter the window. I shall remain with you all day-light. See that you give me a welcome and loving reception; greet me with no more cold looks, or your person shall again feel the weight and power of my arm! I wish not to punish you with blows and bruises—but beware how you excite my anger! You know me; I am capable of anything in my paroxysms of rage!"

"You cannot dissolve the connection that subsists between us; you cannot shake me off. You say I am a villain—granted: how then can you expect from me any other than a villain's treatment? We are inseparably linked together; not heaven, or earth, or hell, shall ever part us!"

"Remember—I shall need some money. Bleed the old couple handsomely, and greet me to-morrow night with caresses, kisses and cash—or BEWARE!" J. H.

The perusal of this letter fired our hero with indignation against the scoundrel who could be guilty of such treatment, and use such language, to a woman.

"Can such a wretch be my father?" thought he—"and so, then, my mother's name is Clarissa Cooper; already do I love her—but how I hate that villain! Take care, Mr. J. H., that your sport to-night is not disagreeably interrupted, that's all!"

Again was Jack pressingly reminded of the extreme emptiness of his stomach. He could stand it no longer, and resolved at all risks to go in search of food. Cautiously he crept from the chamber, and paused to listen upon the stairs. Hearing nothing, he ventured to descend, and

upon arriving in the hall he could distinguish the voices of the family in the parlor. From the kitchen below ascended the savory odor of cooking; the temptation was too strong to be resisted, and our hungry hero boldly but softly made his way down the kitchen stairs, determined to throw himself upon the mercy of madame the cook, rather than fast longer.

The kitchen was commodious, and scrupulously neat; upon the walls hung many a brilliant tin and copper vessel, which reflected like mirrors the blazing wood fire, and the buxom figure of a very fat cook who sat before it. Jack advanced cautiously, and discovered to his satisfaction that the cook was fast asleep, leaving a superb sirloin steak to do itself, or spoil, according to its own inclination. Seizing from the table a plate, our hero transferred to it the steak, which chanced to be just done to a charm; he then mischievously clapped upon the empty gridiron one of the cook's old shoes, that lay upon the hearth. Then, quickly possessing himself of a loaf of bread, knife and fork, and huge lump of butter, he made a rapid exit from the kitchen, mounted the stairs, entered the chamber, and safely bestowed himself in the closet, without discovery.

Scarcely had this feat been effected, when the kitchen bell rang loudly, as a signal for the cook to bring up the dinner. Up jumped the good lady, still half asleep, scolding herself for her heedlessness, and wondering if the meat wasn't burnt to a crisp.—Hastily grasping the gridiron, she deposited the contents upon a plate, and with it rushed up stairs. Very much astonished was Judge Cooper, with his wife and daughter, to see the corpulent domestic bolt into the parlor, and place before them a half-burnt old shoe, which emitted an odor rather more peculiar than agreeable. It was known that

the cook occasionally indulged in a "wee drop ter meek," and the event was attributed to a slight degree of intoxication on her part. She never heard the last of it.

Meanwhile, Jack made a hearty and excellent repast, taking good care of that portion which remained to serve as his supper. As the closet contained a bath, he availed himself of it to cleanse his person of the dirt and mud which encrusted him; he then sat down and impatiently awaited the coming of night.

It came at last, and after supper his mother entered the chamber bearing a light. Jack was surprised to see her change her neat and elegant apparel, for garments the most coarse and slovenly, and also disarrange her fine hair in a very unbecoming fashion. The cause of this singular conduct was soon made apparent by her words—

"The negligence of my appearance, whenever he visits me, may eventually disgust him with my person, and induce him to cease his persecutions of me. Alas! that I am compelled to resort to such measures, in order to get rid of a man whom I detest!"

The unhappy lady took up a book and began to read, while Jack continued to gaze at her, from his retreat, with feelings of the most profound interest.

At last, a small clock in the chamber struck ten; the lady shuddered, put by her book, and listened intently. In a few moments, a handful of gravel came clattering against the chamber window.

"It is his signal," murmured the lady—"O God! how long must this continue?"

She threw up the window, and having securely adjusted one end of the rope-ladder, lowered the other end to the ground. Almost instantly, there appeared at the window the figure of a man, who leaped into the chamber

drew up the ladder and closed the aperture through which he had entered.

Jack took one glance at the intruder, and with difficulty repressed a cry of astonishment; for he beheld "the Prince"—the chief of the *Unholy Alliance*—the keeper of the *Devil's Den*—and the reputed father of *Gallus Kate*!

"Good God! can this man be my father, and Kate my half sister? Amazement! what other startling discoveries will this eventful day bring to light?"

These thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of our hero, as his eyes became rivetted upon the scene.

"So," said John Hamblin, alias "the Prince"—"you see that I am punctual to my appointment. Come hither, sweetheart, and give me a kiss."

But the lady shrank from him, and her looks plainly showed all the disgust and hatred which she felt.

"How now!" cried the Prince, with a frightful oath—"will you never learn to treat me properly, when I visit you? And what means this slatternly garb of yours? I'll be sworn that you have some other lover for whom you are ever ready to don your finery! No matter, you have of course procured some money, in obedience to my commands—give it to me."

Miss Cooper drew from her bosom a purse, and without saying a word, gave it to her persecutor, who examined the contents, and said—

"Perdition! here are but a few dollars; I must have at least fifty. What mean you by offering me this paltry sum?"

"John Hamblin," said the lady, in a firm voice—"these few dollars are the earnings of my own industry, and they are all that I possess. Take them, or leave them, as you will. I here declare to you most

solemnly, that sooner than plunder from my parents another dollar to minister to your extravagance, I'll meet exposure of my frailty, and death itself, at your hands."

"Really, madam," said the Prince, with a malignant laugh—"you grow quite heroic; you'd make an excellent tragic actress. However, I'm not disposed to dispute the point now; it is bed-time, and, as I said, I shall remain here until morning. So come, and be as loving in proportion as you have become honest."

"Listen, John Hamblin," rejoined the lady, in a tone of determination—"I am resolved that this guilty connection between us shall continue no longer, and never again will I enter that bed with you. You may abuse—you may kill me—but you cannot alter my resolution."

The Prince approached her, and grasped her fiercely by the arm. Jack Harold ground his teeth, and viewed the scene with flashing eyes.

"What new whim is this, hussy!" demanded the villain, angrily—"do you now begin to preach honesty and virtue?" And he shook her savagely.

Jack glanced hastily around the closet, and saw a good-sized hammer lying near; this implement he picked up, and then stood in readiness to rush forth and protect his hapless mother from the ruffianly violence of his father.

Miss Cooper was profoundly agitated; she trembled, more with indignation than with fear. Her woman's spirit was aroused; her cheeks glowed, her eyes flashed, her bosom heaved. Her state of excitement rendered her superbly beautiful. At that moment, any observer would have been struck with the extraordinary resemblance that existed between her and Jack Harold, her son.

"Cowardly ruffian!" she exclaimed,

ed, in accents of withering scorn—"thus to persecute and abuse a weak, defenceless woman! Oh, what chivalry, what courage, what honor you possess! Now, at this moment, do I loathe and despise you more than ever. Unhand me, wretch—your touch is pollution!"

"This to me, strumpet!" cried the Prince, foaming with rage; and, unable to control himself longer, he dashed his clenched hand violently in the face of Jack Harold's mother. Ere he could repeat the blow, our hero had rushed forth from his place of concealment, and felled him to



JACK HAROLD DISCOVERS HIS PARENTS—see page 55.

the floor by a tremendous blow upon the head from the hammer with which he had armed himself. The Prince lay stunned and senseless.

Jack's mother, overcome with astonishment at the sudden appearance

of the intrepid and strange-looking youth, and suffering actually from the blow which the ruffian had given her, fell fainting in the arms of her son who carefully placed her unconscious form upon the bed.

The Prince, who was severely but not seriously injured, soon recovered; raising himself up, he gazed wildly around him, and to his wonder recognized the well-remembered features of Jack Harold.

"Am I dreaming?" he muttered—"do I really behold the young lieutenant of our band?"

"Yes—I am he," replied Jack calmly.

"But how have you escaped from the House of Refuge, to which you were sentenced?"

"The prison is not built that can hold me," was the proud answer—"but this is no place for the story of my escape."

"But, in the name of all that's wonderful, how came you here to-night, in this chamber?"

"That you shall know hereafter, at a more convenient season."

"Humph! you are inclined to be devilish reserved, I see. And so it was you who favored me with that tap on the head, just now?"

"Exactly so."

"May I presume to inquire your reason for raising your hand against a superior officer, the chief of the band?"

"Because I wished to protect a defenceless woman from your ruffianly violence."

The Prince's brow grew dark with suppressed rage, and his eyes blazed with fury.

"We will settle this matter at some future time," said he—"at present you will oblige me by leaving this house, instantly."

"I shall not go unless you accompany me."

"By God! if you refuse to depart, I will throw you headlong from the window!"

"You dare not," said Jack, who was not in the least degree frightened at this threat—"if you attempt it, I will raise the alarm, and we shall

probably both be captured, in which case I will be returned to the *Refuge*, from which I can again escape with little difficulty; you will be sent to the State Prison, as a burglar; and you know by experience, perhaps, that to escape from that institution is next to impossible. So you see that to attempt throwing me out of the window will scarcely pay." And our hero laughed heartily at his own acuteness.

The Prince was no fool, and he instantly comprehended the force of this reasoning. He had already "done the State some service" in her prison, and had no desire to renew the obligation. Besides, he knew that the proprietor of the house, Judge Cooper, was proverbial for his judicial severity towards criminals, and would prosecute him relentlessly, if once in his power. Therefore, the Prince "bottled up his wrath" for the time being, but mentally swore a solemn oath of vengeance against the bold, stripling who had dared to cross his path.

Thus it will be seen, that our hero had made two implacable enemies—Lopez, the Spaniard, who had sworn to bring him to the gallows, and the Prince, whose designs respecting him were less definite, but none the less dangerous or deadly.

Jack had now discovered both his parents; but neither his father or mother was aware of his identity. The former he hated; the latter he loved with an ardor enhanced tenfold by her misfortunes and sufferings.

The Prince, seeing that it was useless to remain longer, now proposed to depart. Our hero assented; and, under pretence of ascertaining if the lady was likely soon to recover from her swoon, he approached the bed whereon lay the still unconscious form of his mother; and his tears fell upon her pale cheek.

The Prince, meanwhile, improved the opportunity by opening various drawers, and transferring to his pockets such articles as chanced to excite his cupidity. The industrious gentleman was wont to boast that he always had an eye to business.

Jack Harold leaned over his mother, and pressed his lips to her forehead; then, as if actuated by a sudden impulse, he removed her miniature from his neck, and placed it in her bosom.

"She will know, by this token," thought he—"that it was her own son whose sudden appearance deprived her of consciousness. Farewell, dear mother; we shall meet again."

The lady now began to betray signs of returning sensibility; and Jack, satisfied with this evidence of her safety, reminded the Prince that it was time for them to depart. That individual having secured about his person every available article worth carrying off, made no objection; and accordingly, the father and son passed through the window, and, by means of the rope-ladder, safely descended to the ground.

The Prince had in waiting, at a short distance from the house, a horse and buggy; our adventurers entered the vehicle, and the animal being urged forward at a rapid rate, they reached the "Devil's Den" in Water street just as the numerous city clocks were proclaiming the hour of midnight.

CHAPTER XII.

Wherein Jack rejoins his respectable friend, and receives a hearty welcome.

The personal appearance of our hero had undergone so great a change for the worse, that "One Arm'd Bill," on admitting him and the

Prince to the tap-room of the "Den," did not recognize him in the slightest degree.

Jack looked eagerly around him, as if in search of somebody. Intense was his anxiety to know the fate of "Gallus Kate;" yet he dreaded to inquire concerning her, fearing that his questions would be met with the reply that she had died of the wound received at the Harold house, on the night of the burglary.

While refreshing himself with a mug of ale at the bar, his eyes were suddenly covered by a pair of soft hands, while the most musical voice in the world exclaimed—

"Guess who it is!"

"Kate," was the instant reply.

And so, indeed, it was—wicked, romping, voluptuous Kate, looking a thousand times more charming than ever. Her story was soon told; Mr. Harold had, from motives of compassion engendered by her sex, youth and beauty, declined to prosecute her for her participation in the burglary, and she was accordingly released from custody. Her wound, though severe, soon yielded to skillful surgical treatment, and she was now entirely well.—Her enthusiastic joy at again meeting her young friend, whom she already regarded in the light of a lover, was somewhat dampened when she observed that he did not return her caresses, but on the contrary seemed to shun them.

The reader will comprehend that our hero's coldness towards the pretty Kate arose from the consideration that she was his half-sister; and, consequently, that any intimacy of an amorous nature with her would be criminal and unnatural. Kate, who knew nothing of this, was surprised and hurt at his apparent indifference; and after an ineffectual attempt to warm him into something like his former ardor, she burst into tears.

"My dear Kate," said Jack, kindly—"tell me the cause of your grief."

"You no longer love me," replied the young girl, weeping passionately.

Our hero was mentally debating the propriety of explaining to her the true cause of his reserve, when his meditations were interrupted by the entrance of One Arm'd Bill. The Prince, meanwhile, had descended to the secret rendezvous of the *Unholy Alliance*.

"Lieutenant," said Bill, respectfully touching his tarpaulin—"the gentlemen below is anxious to see you. My eyes! how he's altered!" This last was uttered aside, and the exclamation was accompanied by a prolonged whistle, expressive of astonishment. In truth, Jack, with his shaved head and uncouth garments, could with difficulty be recognized as the handsome, elegantly dressed youth of former times.

"Adieu for the present, Kate," whispered Jack—"everything shall soon be explained to your entire satisfaction."

With this assurance he left her, and descended to the rendezvous of the band, where most of the worthy members were assembled, as usual, to carouse and make merry.

As he entered, those who were not too drunk to stand arose from their seats, and greeted him with three hearty cheers; after which they crowded around him to shake hands, and congratulate him on his escape from confinement.

One of the most enthusiastic in welcoming him was Lopez, the Spaniard. This man still remained in the employ of Mr. Harbld; for, as we have before intimated, he was a most skillful gardener, and his master had not the slightest suspicion of his true character, but on the contrary believed him to be a very honest and respectable man. The worthy gentleman

little suspected that the servant in whom he reposed such implicit confidence, had been instrumental in the ruin of his adopted son—that he was in league with a band of desperate villains, and was even then, in the depths of his own black heart, maturing a plan of outrage upon the honor and purity of a happy family, the very thought of which makes the blood curdle with horror. But we must not anticipate.

The Spaniard was really rejoiced at the escape of his *protégé*, who, while in prison, was beyond his power; but at liberty, the progress of the youthful victim in a career of crime could be hurried by the artful villain who had sworn to destroy him.

Lopez drew Jack aside, and whispered to him—

"My dear Lieutenant, you have achieved immortal honor by your daring and wonderful escape from prison. You will become as famous as the great Jack Sheppard himself."

Our hero was but a boy, and felt highly flattered by this praise; he did not notice the slight tone of irony with which it was uttered.

"In time," continued the cunning Spaniard—"you may become the captain of our band."

Jack's eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"The Prince, only, is in the way of your becoming our chief," said Lopez, regarding the boy with a look of strange significance.

Jack turned upon the Prince a look of deadly hatred. The Spaniard smiled grimly.

"It would be a very easy matter to put the Prince out of the way," said Lopez, gently, as he drew his finger across his throat—a species of pantomime that was perfectly intelligible to his youthful hearer.

Then Jack remembered that the Prince was his father; and he shuddered at the direction in which his thoughts were beginning to turn.

"Let us sit down at the table," said he.

The Spaniard assented, muttering to himself—"Ah! he shall commit a murder soon!"

Jack helped himself to a tumbler of grog, and drank freely, in order to drown recollection. Alas! care and sorrow, though they may for a time be obliterated by the incense of the intoxicating cup, are invested with ten-fold poignancy, when reason resumes her throne!

Our hero was soon in a state of perfect happiness—that being the term which convivial gentlemen sometime apply to a condition of partial intoxication. At the request of several of his worthy friends, he related all the particulars of his escape from the *Refuge*. When he described the manner in which he had imprisoned Mr. Piggot, the overseer, great were the applause and laughter; when he narrated his adventure with the blunderbuss and the gate-keeper, warmly did they commend his courage; but when he told how he had frightened the latter gentleman and Piggot with a stick of wood, three times three cheers attested his friend's high appreciation of his talents, intrepidity and presence of mind.

One Arm'd Bill, who had joined the company, and was a great deal more than "half seas over,"—in fact he was never sober—now arose from his seat, and steadying himself upon the table with his solitary arm, fixed his wandering eyes upon a tallow candle which, to his disordered senses, seemed to be dancing a minuet with a junk bottle, and delivered himself of the following speech, the effect of which was greatly enhanced by a general thickness of utterance, combined with the pleasing spectacle of a rivulet of tobacco juice that issued from his mouth, and fertilized a forest of beard upon his chin:—

"Friends and fellers," said Bill,

when the applause which greeted him had subsided—"although I've got no larnin', and have but one of my grappin' irons, I feel myself among pals and brothers. (Cheers.) We belong to the same profession; we're all on us thieres. (Groans and hisses.) I beg pardon; I meant to say that we're all on us gentlemen as has a werry tuking way with 'em. (Laughter and applause, during which Bill "dampened his dust" and renewed his quid.) For myself, I've been in the business ever since I was a habby, and that's fifty odd years—and I'm proud to say it. My education was completed at Bot'ny Bay, which is a honor that few on yer can claim. (Shouts of approval, which so overcame the orator that he was obliged to fortify himself by another prolonged pull at the brandy bottle.) Yes, friends and fellers, I've had the gallows rope around my neck, with Jack Ketch standing by ready to shoot the bolt, and the parson praying away like fury; and just as I was preparin' to dance the hempen hornpipe, up comes a chap and hands a slip of paper to the sheriff, which was an order from the Gov'nor to spare my neck and give me a berth for life in the State Prison—and be damned to him! But I didn't stay there long; only for a matter of fifteen years or so."

"You were pardoned out, then?" asked one of the company. Bill eyed the querist with a look of drunken indignation, and continued—

"Pardoned out! In course I wasn't; e'ye s'pose they'd pardon me, after choking a woman to death with a clothes-line, and branding her two children with the fire-shovel!"

"Ho, ha! good!" cried a ruffian, whose countenance was horribly disfigured by his having been blown up by an accidental explosion in the stone quarry of some penitentiary—"that was first-rate business."

"That was pretty fair," said One Arm'd Bill modestly, but a glow of pride mantling upon his weathered face—"and now I'll tell you how I got out of the prison."

Here the speaker took another copious draught of brandy, which did not improve his articulation, but on the contrary, conferred upon him that infirmity of utterance known as the drunken hiccup.

"You see—hic—I made a false key, and got out of my—hic—cell, at night; the sentinel was asleep, and I cut his heart into fifty pieces with my knife—hic—then I took his keys, and let myself out of the infernal jug—hic—but the alarm was given, and they were after me; I jumped overboard, and swam for the opposite shore—hic—when a bloody shark tackled me, and tore off my arm, and he damned to him—hic—but I got off, blast their eyes, and no thanks to any of them, neither—hic—and here I am, promoted to the honorable situation of door-keeper to the Devil's Den. (Cheers.) And now, friends and fellows, axing yer pardoning for this long yarn—hic—I'll wind up with a toast. Here's may the chap as loses one arm in breaking out of the stone jug, never be without the pluck or the chance to steal with the other—damn me!"

While the company were enthusiastically applauding this praiseworthy sentiment, One Arm'd Bill took his leave in rather a sudden and mysterious manner, without going through the formality of bidding his friends good night. To explain, exhausted by his eloquence and discouraged by the brandy which he had imbibed, he had, at the conclusion of his remarks, been seized with a sudden giddiness, which destroyed his equilibrium; the result was, that he pitched headforemost under the table, and being suffered to remain there, as was seen no more that night.

This man had, under the maddening influence of alcohol, revealed dark secrets in his former history, which, in his sober moments, he would have most carefully guarded. But Bacchus is ever ready with a rusty key to unlock the most hidden recesses of the heart. There is much truth in the Latin proverb of three words—"In vino veritas," which, being shaken, out of its Roman toggery, and vested in a plain English garment, means simply, that "no man, when drunk, can be a hypocrite."

Order being restored, the Prince condescended to call upon one of the company for a song. The gentleman thus honored, who rejoiced in the humorous cognomen of "Snuffy," was an English thief, more remarkable for a partiality to strong waters, than for professional skill. He was about forty years of age; his garments were of the shabby genteel order, and he possessed a highly intellectual countenance—that is to say, he had a pug nose, and squinted terrifically. This man had, formerly been a ranting Methodist preacher in London; old women pronounced him a saint, while several young women of his flock exhibited in their persons ample indications of his fleshy nature, and their own frailty. The Rev. Mr. Snuffy was eventually compelled to leave the scene of his ministerial labors, because of a strong aversion which he had to see certain slates, which several landlords, who knew his weakness in reference to the non-payment of his beer and brandy bills, were continually in the habit of thrusting into his face. As one of the pillars of the church, he determined to resent such improper liberties; he therefore with drew the benefit of his gospel teachings from a place peopled, as he declared, by "a generation of vipers." Moreover, his studious habits and

ing domestic manners—his dance at taverns, and, latterly, w pot-houses—made him exceedingly unwilling that persons should at all trouble themselves about him. He had, for some time, been much annoyed by constant inquiries which were industriously made after him by several legal gentlemen, who wore shabby coats, and generally carried sticks. He had a great horror of parchment, or of any document, in any form, which commenced with "whereas" or "you are hereby." Such stiff and stupid productions he condemned as unworthy of the literature of the age. He said that Latin would be the most noble language ever used, if those ugly words *cognovit, fieri facias*, and a few others, could be forgotten; and he considered the English vowels as exceedingly harmonious. "What can be more pleasant," he would frequently say, "than that delightful combination, I: O: U? What can suit a domestic people better than *not at home*; and oh! what a charm is there in *I promise!*" Mr. Snuffy, however, notwithstanding his high attainments, was actually slated by the publicans out of London; he "left his country for his country's good," came to America by "working his passage" as assistant cook on board an emigrant ship; became at first a petty thief, then a burglar, and finally enrolled himself under the banner of the Prince, as a member of the "Unholy Alliance." His peculiar talents and accomplishments contributed not a little to the amusement of his associates: he could dash his pen across a sheet of paper with extraordinary velocity; he wrote in a balloon style, and in a debate he used cataracts of words. His anecdotes of men whom he never saw; of courts which he had never entered; of coroners' inquests which he had never attended; and of public meetings which never saw his presence—

were numerous; and he told them with a humorous raciness which made them amusing, whilst his glib hand, slap-dash, self-confident style imparted to them all the appearance of truth.

We have occupied considerable space in portraying the character of the Rev. Mr. Snuffy, because he is a fair representative of that numerous class of clerical miscreants, who flourish in the odor of sanctity for a season, making religion a cloak for the concealment of their misdeeds; and finally sink to their proper level, and become swindlers, impostors, or thieves.

Snuffy was a bit of a poet, and had always at his fingers' ends an abundance of flash or obscene songs of his own composition. The reader shall be gratified with one of his productions of the former and least objectionable class.

"Give us a song, Snuff," said the Prince.

"To hear is to obey," replied the ex-clergyman, who was very drunk, which did not in the least impair the natural glibness of his tongue. "What kind, or sort, or description of a song shall I have the pleasure, or satisfaction, or honor of singing for the amusement or entertainment of your Royal Highness? Shall it be comic, sentimental, naval, patriotic, military, civic, convivial; amative, sacred, profane, solemn, serious, smutty or flash? Shall it be—"

"Flash," said the Prince, briefly. "Good; then, your Royal Highness, and gentlemen all, both great and small—including, of course, our young lieutenant, Master Harold—who, I perceive, has gone to sleep, and will therefore lose the benefit of my grand vocal and poetic display—harken unto me, listen, pay attention, and be ye still; for verily ye shall hear a song of my own manufacture, construction, production and composition—one that Byron himself might have been pleased, or proud,

or happy to have originated, or written, or perpetrated."

Having thus expressed himself, the Rev. Mr. Snuffy very deliberately disposed of a tumbler of rum punch, having accomplished which feat he threw himself back in his chair and made the table his footstool; then, in a not unmusical voice, considering the apoplectic brevity of his neck, (a capital one for the hangman!) the ex-clergyman favored his friends with the following choice morceaus, the air of which seemed to be a combination of "Old Hundred" and "The Tall Young Oysterman":—

SONG OF THE CROSSMAN.

Come thieves, and bold burglars, and jolly robbers, too,
And likewise all the crossmen, that go along with you,
I'll sing you a ditty, so pleasant and so gay,
Of this jural times we had when we went upon the lay,
Derry down, derry down, hay derry down.

When I was an apprentice, and lived upon the square,
(Was short of pocket money, which I thought was hardly fair,
So I went upon the cross and began to rob and steal,
And when I made a boodle, oh! how proud I used to feel!

Derry down, &c.

I went upon the cabin lay, the entry and the till,
And made such sweeping stakes that they did my pockets fill;
The ushers had to suffer when I caught them on the snooze—
They were a ways sure their dummys or their thimbles for to lose.

Derry down, &c.

I got a pair of flash kicks, a tog and cady too,
A galus jerve, a pair of squills so polish'd and so new;
I sposed a gold thimble and a wipe of cambric fine,
And on Broadway and the Battery so voraciously did dine.

Derry down, &c.

* In order that the unclassical reader may fully appreciate the peculiar beauties of this delectable production of the Rev. Mr. Snuffy's muse, we subjoin a brief definition of the various flash terms with which it is embellished:—

Crossman, a thief. *Lay*, the pursuit of robbery. *Square*, honesty. *Boodle*, booty. *Cabin lay*, robbing vessels. *Entry*, stealing from houses. *Till*, pillaging from the money drawers of shops and stores. *Lushes*, intoxicated persons. *Snooze*, asleep. *Dummy*, a pocket-book. *Thimble*, a watch. *Kicks*, pantaloons. *Tog*, a coat. *Cady*, a hat. *Jerve*, a vest. *Squills*, boots. *Wipe*, a handkerchief. *Pat*, a partner. *Sherry*, to run. *Woman*, a thief's mistress.

I had but robb'd a month or two, when I found myself in jail,
But soon I found a lawyer who got me out on bail;
The pal that I cruik'd with did to me unfaithful prove,
So I cas'd him soon to starg—I was down upon his move.

Derry down, &c.

I've oft-times been in limbo, but I'll go there no more,
For my flash career is ended, and my rambling days are o'er;
But whene'er I meet a crossman, he shall not go away,
Till we drink a glass to old times, when we went upon the lay!

Derry down, &c.

Here's a health to each bold robber, that does his job up right;
Likewise each gallant burglar, that cracks his cribe at night—
Here's a health to each fair blowen, that loves the crossman brave,
May she never be deserted, or weep upon his grave!
Derry down, &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

Interview between Jack and "His Royal Highness."

This villainous effusion, being well adapted to the feelings and tastes of the company, was received with boisterous applause; and the Rev. Mr. Snuffy looked the very picture of vanity—allowing that vanity was ever seen "tight as a peep," with a short pipe in its mouth, which was the precise condition of the reverend gentleman, after he had finished his song.

The Prince now announced that it was time for the company to separate; and in a few minutes the place was deserted, save by "His Royal Highness," and Jack Harold, who was awakened from his slumbers by the noise made by the departing thieves. We must not forget One Arm'd Bill, however, who lay snoring beneath the table.

The Prince turned to our hero, and for some minutes regarded him with a stern look, which Jack repaid by an expression of hatred and contempt.

At length the Prince said, in a tone which he vainly strove to render calm—

"Come, sir, we are alone now, with the exception of that drunken brute under the table; are you ready to explain to me how you came in that house, and why you attacked me?"

"I'll answer you just as far as suits me, and no farther," replied Jack.

After I had escaped from prison, finding myself closely pursued and in danger of being captured, I contrived to enter that house without being seen by any one, and concealed myself in the little closet which adjoins that lady's chamber, intending to remain there until dark, when I might depart with safety. For reasons which I don't choose to tell, I did not depart at dark, but remained in my hiding place, the lady not having the least suspicion of there being a person concealed in her apartment. I saw you enter the room through the window, and heard all that passed; I saw you strike the poor lady—"

"And why the hell did you interfere?" roared the Prince, in a perfect phrenzy of rage, for Jack's tone of calm defiance maddened him.

The hot blood of indignation reddened our hero's face, as he replied—

"I should have proved myself almost as miserable a coward as you are, if I had not interfered, when I saw a ruffian assaulting a defenceless woman."

"Insolent young cur! he shall pay for this!" muttered the Prince, from between his clenched teeth.

"And, besides," continued Jack—"I had a particular reason for defending that lady, above all other women in the world."

"And that reason—what was it?"

"I shall not tell you, at present, but you may know hereafter."

"Damnation! are you determined to balk me at every turn?"

"Yes—whenever it suits my own pose."

"Be careful, boy; you are trifling with a dangerous and desperate man, who has the power, and may soon have the will, to punish you for your presumption. Few members of our band care to tamper with me—for they know me! Do not excite my anger much further, or by God! I will not spare you!"

Jack made no reply, but smiled scornfully.

"Perdition!" muttered the Prince—"why does this boy's smile remind me of—of—Clarissa Cooper? And, now that I examine his countenance more closely—good God! what a strange resemblance! 'Tis as if I saw her face in a mirror! What strange suspicion is this, stealing over my soul?—Can it be—impossible! And yet a mysterious instinct of nature, which I can neither comprehend nor resist, seems to tell me that this youth is my son! It must be so—it is so; he has by some means discovered that Clarissa is his mother, and hence his particular reason for defending her. But does he know that I am his father? No, he cannot; for I remember that nothing passed between that hussey and myself, which could have led him to that belief. How he discovered his relationship to her, and whether she is aware of it herself, I know not. But stop—perhaps she prepared him for my coming, and told him that I am his respectable daddy—ha, ha! It so, the young rascal should be proud of having descended from "His Royal Highness." I knew that he was not the son of old Harold, whom he robbed; but little did I suspect that he was one of my own clever productions! The whole affair is a web of mystery, which time only can unravel. Time, did I say? No, no;—in time this cub and his mother, who will both hate me infernally,

may combine to effect my destruction. This brat must be put out of the way, at once; for his being my son, increases my hatred of him, instead of diminishing it. When he is disposed of, I must attend to his accursed mother, for her desperation has made her dangerous to my safety. Ha, ha! Master Jack—lieutenant Harold, I should say—your time is short on earth. Meanwhile, it will best promote my objects to treat him with affected kindness and friendship."

While these reflections were passing rapidly through the mind of the Prince, the chief subject of them had lighted a cigar, and was smoking it with an air of the utmost indifference—for, notwithstanding his youth, he had already learned to appreciate the good qualities of the weed.

"Come," said the Prince, advancing and offering his hand—"what need is there of our quarrelling?—Let us shake hands, and be friends."

Jack did not take the proffered hand—an indication of dislike, which the other affected not to notice, and he continued—

"As you are at present destitute of funds and a regular abiding-place, you shall be perfectly welcome to make this house your home until such time as you are otherwise provided.—What say you?"

After a moment's reflection, our hero said, coldly—

"I accept your offer."

"Humph! very well; I have a vacant chamber, and One Arm'd Bill shall show you the way to it."

A few vigorous kicks, administered in the region of One Arm'd Bill's ribs soon aroused that accomplished gentleman to a state of consciousness, and he emerged from beneath the table, growling somewhat after the manner of a bear afflicted with the tooth-ache, supposing that animal to be also troubled with a very infirm temper.

"Wot a hell's the muss?" demanded Bill, as he rubbed his eyes—a somewhat tedious operation, as he had only one hand to rub with—"wot d'ye mean by caving into a feller's ribs in that way, and be dam'd to you! Ugh! my in'ards is all knocked out o' shape and my licker has got mixed with my wittles; it'll take over two quarts o' brandy to set me to rights—and be dam'd to you!"

"Come, sir," cried the Prince, sternly—"remember who you are talking to; you have not yet slept off the fumes of your carouse, I see. Listen: conduct this—this—young gentleman—humph!—to the small chamber in the third story; you know the one I mean. He will occupy that room for the present. Make no mistake—d'ye hear?"

"Aye aye; in course I hear," grumbled Bill, who was stupid with drink—"it's the same room wot the stranger slept in, the night I went in through the secret panel, and mur—"

"Damnation! are you mad?" roared the Prince, in a fierce whisper, as he pointed to Jack Harold, who, with his head leaning upon the table, pretended to be asleep.

"Mum's the word, captain; licker sometimes loosens my tongue, and sets it to galloping faster than it ought—but the boy's asleep, and hasn't heard me."

"Awaken him, and after you have shown him to the chamber, come to me—I have work for you to do." So saying, the Prince quitted the cellar.

Bill "grinn'd horribly ghastly smile," and aroused our hero from his pretended slumber.

"Come, lieutenant," said the amiable old gentleman—"I'm ready to show you where you are to sleep."

"Lead on, then," said Jack.

Bill shuffled up the stairs, followed by the young lieutenant; and as they were crossing the tap-room, the latter

suddenly found himself clasped in the arms of "Gallop Kate."

She was arrayed in a most seductive night-dress, which displayed her voluptuous charms with a liberality that would have caused many of our modern "nice young men" to blush—supposing them to be capable of such an achievement.

Now, the amorous reader must not suppose that we are going to gratify him by describing in detail the revealed beauties of the charming Kate; for, as we have the vanity to believe that the bright eyes of many of the fair sex will scan these pages, we fear to raise emotions of jealousy in their fair bosoms, should we happen to depict personal qualities of a loveliness surpassing their own.

We do not, however, wish to be behind those writers of fiction, who fill their pages with lengthy and elaborate catalogues of the various physical items possessed by their favorite heroines; therefore, taking it for granted that our reader is blessed with a rich and fertile imagination, we shall furnish a skeleton sketch of Kate's charms, and leave the aforesaid reader to "fill up the blanks" in the manner most agreeable to his own taste, and ideas of female perfection.

The eye roves with impunity over the nude figure of a marble Venus, and surveys with no warmer feeling than that of admiration, the entirely undraped form of a beautiful woman, depicted with glowing accuracy upon the canvass. So with a living "model artist,"—provided she were so lost to all decency as to appear before us as naked as a sculptured Venus—altho' she might be a miracle of voluptuous beauty—still, if we possessed a particle of refinement, we should soon become sated with the open, lascivious display; our vision would become cloyed, and disgust would soon follow. The works of the artist would excite our passion; his admiration; the

uncovered state of the woman would induce within her a sensation of abhorrence.

But, array the statue, the painting, or the woman in slight, graceful and elegant drapery, so artfully and coquettishly arranged as to reveal the general outlines and superb proportions of the entire form, yet not too palpably—and wholly displaying the rounded arms, the faultless neck, the admirable shoulders, and the glowing bust—not forgetting the delicate ankle and a generous portion of its swelling continuation—and the charming vision becomes suggestive of a thousand burning ideas; while the eye feasts upon those beauties which are exposed, the imagination invests with an ineffable loveliness those which are concealed. In a nude figure, we see too much; in one properly draped, the spectator, unless he be more or less than human, sees just enough to fire his passions, and make him pant for more.

Thus it was with our heroine, Kate—she looked ten thousand times more charming in her voluptuous *dishabille*, than if she had appeared in the primitive costume of Eve, ere that credulous and fruit-loving lady became so painfully conscious of her *shiftless* condition. And now, thrice gentle reader, bring in play all the wealth of thy prolific imagination;—the exceeding brevity of Kate's most intimate garment displayed an *anle* and *blank*—of exquisite symmetry; while the gauze-like transparency of the same, permitted a glimpse of *blank*; her bust, with its *blank*—billows, was *blank*—ivory globes—mountains of Alpine snow—ravishing charms—move an anchorite—raven tresses—classic profile—speaking eyes—faultless nose—brilliant teeth, &c. &c.

We shan't apologize for the abridgement; for we claim to be a particularly independent scribe, and consider ourself privileged to wander from

the regular track, while pursuing our erratic journey through the realms of romance, just as often as convenience or caprice may dictate. Our object in occasionally stepping aside from the road, is, not to pick up ideas, but, on the contrary, to relieve ourselves from a superabundance of them. And now to resume the thread of our narrative.

"I have been waiting for you, dear Jack," whispered Kate, as she embraced the youth with ardor.

"For anything in particular?"

"Oh, yes; but I don't want that d-d rascal to overhear me."

With this compliment to One Arm'd Bill, the beautiful but dejected girl drew our hero aside, still encircling him with her arms.

The "d-d old far-al" improved the opportunity by partaking of such refreshments, in the shape of brandy and tobacco, as the bar afforded. The excellent old gentleman was a bit of a philosopher; and while he growled at the world in general terms, and d-d humanity by wholesale, he always took things mighty easy, and so long as his skin was full of liquor and his tobacco-box well furnished, he was savagely content.

"Pray make haste," said Jack, assuming a coldness of manner that he was far from feeling—"for Bill is waiting to show me to bed!"

"Let the old vagabond go to grass," rejoined the damsel, darting an angry look at the worthy old individual alluded to—"He show you to bed, indeed! You must let me be your chambermaid; and as there is a couch in my room large enough for both of us, why need you good elsewhere? Besides, you will then have a good chance to give me the explanation you promised. Come, this way, dear Jack."

Saying this, the amorous girl drew our hero towards a door which led to her apartment; but Jack withdrew himself from her arms, and said—

"No, no, Kate, I cannot, must not go with you. You know not what you ask. Soon I will explain all, and then you will not blame me for my conduct. Let me go now, dear Kate."

"Go then!" cried the girl, passionately—"and remember, I swear to God that unless, at a good and favorable opportunity, you give me a satisfactory reason for this mean conduct, I will become your inveterate enemy for life.—So, for the present, fare-well!"

She left the tap-room, and having shut herself up in the chamber, burst into an agony of tears.

"Well," said One Arm'd Bill, gruffly—"now you've done whispering to that young blowen, p'raps you'll go with me to your snoozing crib."

Jack motioned him to lead the way, and Bill conducted him up several flights of stairs, which were so old and rickety, that they tottered beneath the footsteps of the pair.

"Here's your room," said Bill, throwing open a door, and handing our hero the candle which he carried—"hope you'll sleep sound—ho, ho!"

Jack made no reply, but entered the chamber.

One Arm'd Bill closed and locked the door; and then went to see his master the Prince.

CHAPTER XIV.

Showing how Jack discovered the Secret Panel, and all that he saw and heard in the chamber of the Prince, who relates a dark and bloody portion of his history, including the amours of the adulterous wife and her paramour.

The chamber in which our young adventurer found himself, was a small apartment, very plainly furnished, containing but little furniture besides a bed, table and two or three chairs. Instead of undressing himself and

retiring to bed Jack began a careful examination of the walls of the room.

"How fortunate," thought he—"that I pretended to be asleep, and overheard the remarks which that old villain, in his drunken heedlessness, made to the Prince! This, then, is a chamber in which murder has been perpetrated, and in which they design to despatch me—but the blood-hounds will find themselves cheated of their expected victim. If I can only discover the secret panel, they shall see that I am a match for them yet!"

The walls were covered with colored paper, ornamented with coarse figures; and in passing his hand over the surface, our hero discovered a small iron projection, resembling a nail. This he pressed, and instantly a door noiselessly opened, revealing a dark, narrow passage, just high and wide enough to admit the body of a man.

Taking the candle to light his way, Jack fearlessly entered the passage. After proceeding a short distance, he came to a flight of stairs, which he descended with extreme caution, as he distinctly heard voices as if in conversation. His progress was suddenly arrested by a door, partially open; and having extinguished his light, he paused to listen.

From his position, he had a tolerable view of the apartment, which he surmised to be the chamber of the Prince. It was furnished with considerable luxury. Upon a table that stood in the middle of the room was placed a globe light; and at the table were seated two men, whom Jack had no difficulty in recognizing as "His Royal Highness" and "One Arm'd Bill."

An object that lay upon the table attracted the boy's earnest attention, and, in spite of all his courage, made his blood run cold. It was a long, glittering, murderous looking Bowie knife—a weapon that had then but re-

cently come in vogue, and was the favorite "tool" of the desperado, the robber and the assassin.

The fingers of the Prince played with the handle of the knife, and his eyes seemed to survey the keen, shining blade with savage satisfaction.

"That will soon slit the young whelp's windpipe, and be d-d to him!" growled Bill.

"Yes," said the other—"and although he is my own son, his heart's blood shall atone for his insolence, and interference. You had better wait for half an hour or so; he will be sure to be asleep, then."

Bill grunted an assent.

"His body we can easily bury in the cellar, where he buried the bones of many others who have fallen victims to your skill as a human butcher—ha, ha! We must then contrive some means to dispose of his mother, who refuses to have anything more to do with me, and declares that she will not rob the old ones, for my benefit, any more."

"Infernal scoundrel! your villainy shall recoil upon your own head!" muttered Jack.

"Well, captain," said Bill—"the more work the more pay, you know—eh?"

"Oh, certainly; you shall have five dollars for killing Jack, and double that amount for slaying his mother, as she lives a considerable distance from the city, and the work may be extra troublesome."

Bill chuckled with satisfaction; not so much in view of the paltry pecuniary reward he was to receive, but because he rejoiced in the prospect of shedding human blood. He loved a deed of murder even more than he loved brandy and tobacco—and that is saying a great deal for the excellent old man.

"Damn it!" said the Prince, smiting the table emphatically with his fist, with an air of vexation—"I'd de-

these jobs with my own hand, but the sight of blood unmaims me; ever since—

"Since not, captain?"

The Prince paused a few moments, and then said—

"Pshaw! what harm is there in telling of it now? To keep you awake, Bill, I'll tell you a story, and then you will know why the sight of blood makes me a coward and a child. What say you?"

"Werry good, sir—I'm agreeable."

"Listen, then. Some fifteen or sixteen years ago, before I took up the business of a robber, and when I was what the world calls a respectable man—"

"Hold there, captain!" cried Bill, shaking his head in a reproving manner—"I rise to a pint of order, as they say in meetin's. Does yer honor mean to insinuate as how a robber isn't a respectable man? Ain't he—"

"Silence! Remember that we are master and servant; and if I occasionally condescend to be familiar with you, in the way of business, you must not presume upon that condescension.—Well: fifteen or sixteen years ago, as I was saying, I married a very beautiful woman. Our union was by no means founded upon love—she became my wife because she was poor, and wanted to live in luxury, for I was rich then; and I married her because I longed to possess her person, having failed in every attempt to seduce her."

"Soon after our marriage, I began to suspect her of infidelity. A young fellow, poor as poverty, but handsome as Apollo, was continually lurking about the house, under one pretence or another; and I frequently detected Kate (for so was my wife called) in the act of exchanging sly and significant glances with the youth, who had been a lover of hers before I knew her. It had probably been agreed between

them, that she should marry some wealthy man, whose money would support the lover, while he should still continue to enjoy the favors of his indulgent mistress. This nice arrangement was fully carried out by my faithless wife and her Charles, as he was named;—the fellow boarded at a first-class hotel, and dressed magnificently, on my money, given him by Kate; but I little suspected it, at the time."

"My wife was an excessive amorous woman; but that circumstance did not in the least degree tend to my advantage, for seldom did I succeed in extorting from her a proper acknowledgment of my conjugal rights; indeed, we had scarcely been married a month, when she insisted upon our occupying separate sleeping apartments, saying that it was both indecent and inconvenient, as well as ridiculous, to comply with the usual matrimonial fashion, which condemned two persons to huddle together constantly, like animals. In support of her position, she reminded me that the aristocratic ladies of London and Paris rarely, if ever, permit their liege lords to come to their couches;—'and,' said she, 'the husbands, like sensible men, seldom, or never, desire it.' 'But, madam,' I retorted, 'the ladies of whom you speak, who are so self-denying with reference to their husbands, have each a lover to console them; are you similarly provided?' She looked into my face with a saucy smile, and said—'Your question is impertinent, sir, and I shall not answer it.' 'Very well, madam,' said I, agitated as much by passionate desire as by rage—for she was voluptuous as Venus, and had been cruel to me for a long time previous—'very well, madam: I am determined to spend this very night in your apartment, for it is high time for me to insist upon my rights as a husband;—you have too long used me as

your banker, merely. Therefore, you may expect me.' She made no reply to this, but laughed scornfully; and then ran out of the room, gaily singing an opera air. Impatiently did I await the coming of night."

"Well, night came at last, and with a palpitating heart and eager footsteps I repaired to Kate's chamber. Although she had treated me with the most provoking impertinence and the most unjust cruelty—although she had again and again refused to grant me the conjugal rights which were indisputably mine by custom, law, religion; and the implied conditions of the matrimonial compact—notwithstanding all this, I was ready and eager to forgive her everything. Nay—I longed to throw myself at her feet, and thank her for the supreme and long-deferred happiness which I believed that she was about to bestow upon me. I did not love the woman; but her infernal beauty had enchained my senses, and rendered me her abject slave."

"On trying to gain entrance to the chamber, I found that the door was locked. I knocked—no answer.—Again and again did I repeat the anonymous, but with no better success. Placing my mouth to the key-hole, I softly called—'Kate!' As all continued silent, I applied my ear to the key-hole, and fancied that I heard the sound of whispering. 'Her lover is with her,' thought I; and fired with jealousy and rage, I bestowed upon the door a tremendous kick. Then I heard the rustling of garments—the key turned in the lock—the door opened, and there stood my wife. Her eyes flashed with anger, like those of an enraged tigress, and she regarded me with a look of mingled hatred and contempt. In her hand she held a pistol, ready cocked, and pointed it towards me with a deadly aim."

"Fellow," said she, in a freezing

tone, 'what means this midnight outrage? What want you here?'

"My dear," said I, submissively, 'you remember that I declared my intention of passing the night with you.'

"Begone! attempt to enter this chamber at your peril!"

"But I did attempt to enter the chamber, and, devil-like quick did I step out of it again, I assure you, Bill; for the she Satan placed her finger upon the trigger of the pistol, and I knew by the concentrated fury that blazed in her eyes, that she would not hesitate a moment in sending a bullet through my brain, if I did not beat a hasty retreat. I believe I may say, without vanity, that the amount of courage possessed by me equals that of most men; indeed, I have often been complimented by my comrades for my bravery; but when a man is entirely unarmed, and sees the ugly muzzle of a pistol ready to send an ounce of lead crashing through his skull—why, in my opinion, the best thing he can do is to keep perfectly docile, and argue the case; eh, Bill?"

Bill passed his hand thoughtfully over his grizzly head, reflected deeply a moment, and then gave an emphatic grunt, in token of assent. The Prince continued:—

"The scene would have been a capital one for a painter; there stood I, outside the chamber door, quivering with rage and disappointment—and there, also, within the chamber, stood Kate, with her weapon upraised, and her fine face glowing with excitement and determination."

"You perhaps wonder why I did not suddenly rush upon her, disarm her, and subdue her by superior strength. I was about to do so, when the thought occurred to me that the noise of the struggle, and perhaps the screams of my wife, would be likely to arouse the servants and draw them to the scene of the disturbance; and

of all things in the world, I dreaded the exposure of my domestic troubles, particularly to a crowd of giggling menials. Therefore, I restrained myself.

"Damn the woman! how beautiful she looked that night! It seemed as if she had purposely tried to render her self most inviting and fascinating in appearance, in order to aggravate me the more, in view of my mortifying disappointment. What a rich hue glowed upon her cheeks, as if the warm blood strove to tint them with the colors of the damask rose! Her full, moist lips, which were parted just enough to reveal the ivory teeth within their fragrant precincts, seemed to pout with charming vexation, because a thousand winged Cupids did not come upon the zephyrs of voluptuous Night, to sate them with an excess of Love's amorous blisses!—How coquettishly her delicate lace cap rested upon her dark and perfumed curls! And then, more distracting than all, how distinctly visible were the snowy treasures of her divine bust, disclosed by the loose and voluptuous negligence of her elegant robe of dazzling whiteness! Long and ardently did I gaze upon the celestial vision; at length she burst into a silvery laugh.

"Poor wretch!" she exclaimed, in a tone of mock pity—of all tones in the world, the most damnably provoking—"poor devil! A husband without a wife! Go to your solitary bed, and dream of a happiness which I will not confer upon you; or else go to the servants' attic, and perhaps you may prevail upon one of the kitchen wenches to suffer you to pass the night in her sooty arms! I shan't be jealous—go!"

"Again she laughed heartily. By God! from behind the curtains of my wife's bed came the sound of another laugh. I recognized the tones. They were those of my wife's lover, Charles—the miserable puppy whose carriage

had long been fed and clothed by my money—who revelled in my dishonor under my very nose, and joined in the laugh at my humiliating disappointment and degrading position.

"I may endure abuse, hatred, contempt—but to be ridiculed, and that, too, by those who had inflicted upon me the greatest injury that a man can suffer, maddened me! I would have rushed in and strangled the paramour of my wife; but her deadly and uplifted weapon restrained me, and I bottled up my wrath for a future day. Pursued by the mocking laughter of the guilty couple, I sought my own chamber, and passed the night in groans, curses, and oaths of vengeance."

Here the Prince arose, and began to pace the room with agitated footsteps. Jack Harold distinctly heard and saw everything that passed, and began to be much interested in his father's narrative.

"Captain," exclaimed One Arm'd Bill, suddenly arousing himself from a kind of lethargy into which he had fallen—"do you know wot I'd a-done with that 'ere woman, if she'd a-been my wife—say?"

"No—what would you have done?" demanded the Prince, with some curiosity.

Bill deliberately removed an immense quid from his mouth, and carefully placed it upon the table; he then wiped his lips with the sleeve of his jacket, nodded his head thrice, in a manner that was designed to be intensely knowing, and then screwed up his countenance into an expression of holy severity and rigid virtue. Having, much to the astonishment of the Prince and the amusement of Jack Harold, gone through these preliminaries, the excellent old man closed one eye and regarded his master steadfastly with the other, his head, meanwhile, inclining to one side, after

the manner of a contemplative mastiff in dog days.

"Well, what would you have done?" again demanded the Prince.

"I'll tell yer wot I'd a-done, if that ere woman had a-been my wife," replied Bill, elevating his voice to a very

loud tone, for he was impressed with the importance of the subject—"in the first place, I'd a-took her right by the head and bang'd her; then I'd a-laid her on the floor and jump'd her; and when she was all mash'd up, I'd a-took that ere lover o' hers, and



JACK HAROLD TAKING VENGEANCE ON ONE ARM'D BILL.—See p. 80

tore his wind-pipe right out of him. That's wot I would a-done, if that ere woman had a-been my wife—damn me!" And Bill struck the table a tremendous blow with his fist.

The Prince resumed his seat in silence. Bill replaced his quid, shook

his head, sighed deeply, and relapsed into his habitually thoughtful mood.

After a short pause, "His Royal Highness" continued his narrative in the following words:—

"Time passed on, and after the lapse of a few months, my wife, great

ly to my surprise, I began to manifest a desire for a reconciliation with me. She acted like a truly repentant woman, deplored her former folly, and seemed anxious to make some atonement for it by her future good conduct. My resentment vanished—my heart warmed towards her; and she made me almost happy by bestowing upon me her caresses in profusion, and by performing every duty required by the conjugal relation. As for her former lover, he had disappeared; she assured me that he had gone on a distant journey, never to return. I was not a bad man then, and might at this moment have been an honest one, but for the conduct of that false, perfidious woman.

"Well, matters went on smoothly enough for a while. My wife grew pregnant—a condition of which I flattered myself that I was the author, and that thought gave me happiness. 'When she becomes a mother,' said I to myself, 'I shall have a double assurance of her fidelity; she certainly would not dishonor the father of her child, and create doubts as to the legitimacy of that child itself.' God! I could almost eat my own heart with vexation, to think what a blind fool I was!

"In due time, Kate was safely delivered of a fine female child, upon which she bestowed her own name.—Her confinement was short; she rapidly recovered her health and strength, and soon regained all her natural beauty.

"A few months glided peaceably by; I enjoyed contentment, if not perfect happiness—for I believed that my wife had thoroughly reformed, and fondly imagined myself to be the father of her child.

"Imagine, then, my astonishment, distress and anger, when one day, on suddenly and unexpectedly returning home, I found my wife seated upon the parlor sofa, talking with her

former lover, whom I thought to be thousands of miles away, never to return!

"Kate blushed, and seemed ready to swoon. I motioned the young man to follow me into an adjoining room, and when we were alone, said to him, sternly—

"Sir, why are you here? Have you not injured me enough already?—or do you wish to destroy the little fabric of happiness which I have reared, within a short time past? It seems that we are rivals—that we both aspire to the possession of one woman. We cannot both possess her; and although I have the best right to her, you shall have an equal chance. By heaven, I'll be a cuckold no longer! See, here are two pistols—take your choice; one or both of us will be killed. If one, the survivor shall possess the woman; if both, why then the matter is finally settled, beyond dispute. Come, sir, choose your weapon."

"The young fellow muttered a confused sort of apology, and declined taking one of the pistols.—Perceiving that he was a most consummate coward, my contempt for him overcame all other feelings; seizing him by both ears, I walked him to the street door, and accelerated his progress down the steps by a vigorous kick that laid him sprawling in the gutter. He picked himself up and walked off without saying a single word.

"This occurrence seemed to renew all my wife's former hatred of me. We were no longer intimate; we occupied different chambers, and took our meals separately. She seemed to have wholly devoted herself to her child, the little Kate, whom she loved with extraordinary tenderness. This circumstance materially lessened my resentment against the woman; I could not thoroughly hate her, because I im-

agined that the object of her maternal love was my child—ha, ha, ha!

"For some time I neither saw nor heard anything of Master Charles, the lover. I fancied that he had taken himself off, and could never again venture to cross the threshold of my house. I swore a solemn oath to kill the guilty pair, should ever have reason to suspect them of renewing their intimacy.

"One day, during Kate's absence from home, actuated by a strange curiosity I entered her chamber, and began a searching investigation.

"The first thing that arrested my attention was the condition of her bed, which the slovenly chambermaid had neglected to arrange. There were two pillows, and upon each pillow was a hollow caused by the pressure of a head. Nay, more—the bed itself afforded undoubted evidence of its having been occupied the previous night by two persons.

"The next day I took occasion to visit the chamber again; the bed plainly showed that Master Charles had not visited my wife on the preceding night. But in overhauling the contents of a fancy work box, I discovered a note, which, from the date, Kate had probably received upon the previous evening; it was from her lover, and, as near as I can remember, read in this manner:—

"U. S. HOTEL, Tuesday evening.

"Angelic Kate,—I cannot be with you to-night, as agreed upon, in consequence of being obliged to accompany my party of gentlemen on a pleasure excursion, from which I would gladly excuse myself, could I do so with decency—for my greatest pleasure is found in your arms. However, dearest, on Thursday night, without fail, at the usual hour, I shall mount the ladder of love to your chamber.—By the way, sweet Kate, the hundred dollars you gave me on Monday night have already taken unto themselves wings and flown away, for I have been deucedly unlucky of late, at play. Say, idol of my soul, can you not have a couple of hundred ready for me on Thursday night? But why need I ask?—You

cannot refuse a favor, no matter how great it may be, when solicited by your devoted

CHARLES.

"P. S.—Keep that Russian bear of a husband of yours at home as possible. Deuce take him, my ears tingle with when I remember how he served me!"

"Having read this precious epistle, I carefully fastened it to its place. The expression 'ladder of love' satisfied me that my puppy rival was in the habit of entering Kate's chamber by means of a ladder which I knew to be in the garden; and this accounted for the fact that I had never heard him entering or leaving the house. The evidence afforded by the note, of the large sums of money with which she furnished him, astonished and rendered me well nigh frantic with rage.

"That very day I went and purchased a large, sharp and murderous knife—very much resembling this one, with which you are shortly to let out the life-blood of Jack Harold. Armed with the formidable weapon, I determined to burst into my wife's chamber at midnight, on Thursday night, when the guilty pair were slumbering in each other's arms, and cut both their throats ere they could raise an alarm, or cry for mercy. Who can blame me for that savage resolve, in view of my manifold wrongs? Where is the man of spirit that would not have come to a similar determination?

"But I fear that my story is growing tedious, Bill; in which case we can dispense with the remainder."

Bill, who had been dozing and plunging his head forward in the most alarming manner, suddenly woke up, swore that he had been listening intently, and begged his master to proceed, by all means, adding—

"It's a d—d pretty yarn, captain, particularly where that ere 'ladder of love' way with the spoons, in the king

all the brandy and 'backky—and be d—d to him!"

But the narrator had one attentive listener, of whose close proximity he was little aware—Jack Harold, who still stood at the door, and suffered not a word of the story to escape his ears.

The Prince, without paying any attention to Bill's drowsy mutterings, continued:—

"You must now understand that both my parents were at that time living—a worthy couple, whom I regarded with a respect and affection which prevailed over all other sentiments in my breast, for they had reared me, their only child, with a tenderness and care that had ever won from me the highest degree of filial love. My father was a country clergyman, greatly esteemed and beloved in his parish for the purity, simplicity and unaffected piety of his character; my mother was one of those fine matrons of the old school who were models of virtue, benevolence, and domestic excellence—a class now rapidly passing away, to give place to a race of women who are, for the most part, vain, fickle, and devoid of those noble qualities of mind and heart which distinguished their mothers and grandmothers.

"My parents resided in a small town situated upon the banks of the Hudson river. I had communicated to them, by letter, a statement of my domestic troubles, and asked their advice. (This was before I had come to the determination to kill my wife and her paramour.) They sent me back word, that as soon as they could complete certain arrangements, it was their intention to pay me a visit, when they could consider what was best to be done in reference to my unhappy situation. The prospect of receiving advice from their lips, rejoiced me exceedingly; for as saith the poet—

"Mishaps are mended by advice divine,
And counsel mitigates the greatest smart."

"It was while daily expecting the arrival of my parents, that I discovered the evidences of my wife's renewed intimacy with her lover, and, in the phrenzy of rage which succeeded that discovery, I utterly forgot the intended visit, and everything else, except the means of gratifying my thirst for vengeance.

"Thursday came; I not only absented myself from the house all day, but remained out until near midnight; and I will not deny that I had fortified myself for the contemplated deed of blood by more than a moderate indulgence in wine."

"Wine be d—d! Brandy's the stuff to make a man feel like such work," growled Bill.

"Bah!" sneered the Prince—"you thick-headed fellows stupify yourselves with vile liquor, as a preliminary to any enterprise requiring extraordinary nerve or courage, and in nine cases out of ten fall into the hands of the Philistines, because you have not wit enough left to keep you out of danger; a gentleman, on the contrary, qualifies himself for an amour, a robbery or a murder, by quaffing the generous blood of the grape, which, instead of degrading him to the level of the brutes, elevates him to the sphere of the gods.

"Well, to resume my story, which I must bring to a close as speedily as possible, for it is time to do that little job for Jack Harold.

"I returned home at about midnight, and having armed myself with the glittering instrument of death, stole noiselessly towards the chamber of my wife. Pausing at the door to listen, I distinctly heard the sound of two persons breathing, as if in slumber.

"To my surprise, and much to my satisfaction, I found that the chamber door had not been locked. I entered; the rays of the moon struggled

feebly in through the curtained windows, dimly revealing the forms of the two occupants of the bed.

"Convinced that they slept profoundly, I took off my coat, rolled up my shirt-sleeves, and otherwise prepared myself for the deed.

"Then I felt the edge of the knife; there was nothing to wish for—the blade would have severed a hair; I knew that it would not fail me, in cutting a human throat.

"I stood at the bed-side; I could not distinguish the features of the doomed pair—only the general outlines of their forms were dimly visible.

"For a moment my heart relented, and I felt more than half inclined to abandon my murderous design. 'They love each other,' thought I—'let me leave them to the enjoyment of that love; the world is wide enough for all of us.' I turned from the bed-side, and strode towards the door.

"Then their mocking laugh seemed to ring in my ears, as it did on the night when my wife levelled the pistol at my head. Cursing myself for a chicken-hearted coward, I returned to the bed-side.

"Just then a black cloud obscured the moon, and the room was enveloped in darkness. I stretched forth my hand, and it rested upon a naked throat. In another moment that throat received a deep and deadly gash, and the warm blood spouted forth, and covered my murderous hands.

"The companion of the victim awoke, and screamed. It was a woman's scream—loud, piercing, and full of horror—for she felt the blood of the murdered one upon her face; and the moon had peeped from behind the cloud, revealing to her terrified gaze, my form and the glittering blade of the knife.

"Again and again she screamed.—Her cries maddened me. I heard the noise of opening doors, and the sound of eager voices, and the rushing of

many feet through the passages, and up the stairs. The household was aroused; there was no time to be lost.

"Damn them, they shall not cheat me of the full measure of my vengeance," I muttered. Raising my arm, I struck at the woman wildly; she clutched the blade of the knife in her hands, and murmured the single word—"mercy!"—but the fires of hell were kindled in my heart, and blood alone could quench them. I wrenched the weapon from her grasp, and with full twenty deadly gasps finished my awful work.

"The chamber door flew open, and a dozen lights gleamed into the apartment, illuminating it with a noon-day brilliancy. Horror was depicted in every countenance; and no wonder—for the scene was one which no human being could view calmly.

"There stood I, with bare and bloody arms, holding in my hand the gory knife; there, upon the bed, lay the horribly mangled corpses of those whom I had so mercilessly butchered.

"Two or three of the spectators, more courageous than the rest, approached the bed, and gazed upon the bodies of the murdered pair; their eyes were then turned upon me, with an expression of loathing and abhorrence.

"Witness, all of you," cried I, after a pause—"I have slain this adulterous pair—my wife and her paramour—in the very bed which they have so often dishonored. I confess the deed—I glory in it. Now call in the officers of justice, that I may be conveyed to prison!"

"Your wife and her paramour!" exclaimed the wondering group.

"The housekeeper, an elderly woman of excellent character and great firmness, was one of those who had advanced to the bed-side. She now approached me, and regarded me with a look of mingled sternness and pity!

"Wretched man!" said she, "you

crime is greater than you think. Neither your sinful wife, nor her lover, has perished by your hands. Kneel down, and ask the forgiveness of God for the tremendous crime which you have just perpetrated; for you have murdered—

"Whom? I gasped, as the cold perspiration rained down my face.

"Your own father and mother!"

The Prince paused in his narrative; leaning his head upon the table, he groaned deeply. He seemed to be suffering the most acute mental anguish.

One Arm'd Bill renewed his quid, and scratched his head thoughtfully, almost solemnly.

Jack Harold, deeply interested, continued to gaze and listen.

His Royal Highness was too thoroughly hardened by a long career of crime, to suffer the remembrance of the past to overcome him for any considerable length of time. Therefore, he soon recovered his accustomed coolness and self-possession, and resumed his narrative thus—

"Yes, Bill, I was both a parricide and a matricide—I had killed my own father and mother. The whole matter was soon explained. They had that afternoon arrived in the city, to pay their promised visit of advice and condolence to me. My wife received them in my absence; and, wishing to impress them with a great idea of her amiability and kindness, and remove from their minds the recollection of any reports unfavorable to her which may have reached them, she had resigned to their use her own elegant and commodious bed-chamber, and taken temporary possession of a smaller and humbler apartment. This arrangement did not, however, interfere with her engagement with her lover, for her new chamber still overlooked the garden, and could be reached by means of the ladder—and

she took good care to notify her Charles of the alteration, so that no awkward mistake could occur, when he came to keep his appointment.

"This arrangement, being utterly unknown to me, resulted as I have stated. Instead of killing the guilty pair, as I intended, I slew the best parents that ever blessed a man—the only beings in the world that I loved.

"I'll not weary you, Bill, by attempting to describe the horror and anguish of my feelings, when the appalling truth burst upon my mind.—Suffice it to say, I grew gradually calm, for I reflected that I was morally guiltless of the murder of my parents, firmly believing as I did, while committing the deed, that the destroyers of my honor and happiness were the victims; and the slaying of them I conceived to be a justifiable act.

"When I recovered my faculties of speech and motion, which had been at first completely prostrated by the shock, I turned to the old housekeeper and demanded—

"Where is my wife?"

"In the small corner chamber," she answered, mechanically.

"I strode out of the room, for no one seemed to care, or dare, to oppose my egress. The door of the corner chamber was locked, but I stove it in with my foot and entered. Cowering beneath the coverlid of the bed, was my wife; she was deadly pale, and trembled with affright when she beheld my blood-stained garments, and murderous knife which I still grasped in my hand.

"That her lover had been with her that very night, was evident; for upon the floor lay his cane and gloves which, in his hurried departure, he had left behind him. The fellow, hearing the screams, noise and outcry, had quickly made his exit the way he came—through the window—leaving his mistress to her fate. How strange it is that woman can ever love

a white-livered coward, who is ever ready to leave her at the approach of danger! A man possessed of the most chivalrous courage often fails in an amour, while the efforts of a craven are as frequently crowned with triumphant success."

"Fact, by G—!" cried Bill, who had once been jilted by the red-headed widow of the Irish hodman. "The lady had cast him off, and taken up with a wooden-legged organ-grinder of German extraction."

"Having made fast the door," continued the Prince—"I thus addressed my trembling and conscience-stricken wife:—

"Madam, do you know what has happened?"

"Alas! yes," she replied, in tones of deepest anguish—"those piercing screams—that horrid knife—the blood upon your garments—tell me too plainly, that you have made a terrible mistake. You sought my life and—and his; but you have killed your parents, instead. Oh! why did I make the unfortunate alteration in our arrangements! Would to heaven that all had happened as you designed—that Charles and I had become your victims, instead of those innocent and worthy people!"

"Do you repent now of your follies and your sins—your adulteries, your extravagances, your many acts of perfidy, cruelty and injustice towards me?"—I demanded, eyeing her attentively.

"So help me Heaven, I do!" she replied, her countenance becoming suffused with the flush of hope.

"That is well; repentance becomes a person, upon the bed of death!"

"In God's name what mean you?"

"Well, listen: you say that you have repented, but well do I know that if you were suffered to live on, that lover of yours would soon resume his place in your arms, for he is still in your heart. Nay, don't interrupt

me, but hear me out. Were I to spare your life, you would again enter upon your licentious career, and laugh, you and your Charles, to hear of my disgraceful death upon the scaffold for this night's bloody work. If I die by the hands of the hangman, I shall at least have the satisfaction of thinking that you may not gloat over the record of my dying agonies."

"Surely you will not murder me!"

"No, not murder you; for, to slay you in this couch, which is yet warm with adulterous embraces, will not be murder. I mean to sacrifice you upon the altar of my vengeance—do you understand? And then, when your body is mangled and bloody, like the bodies of my parents, (of whose death you were the indirect cause,) I shall go forth in search of your paramour, and when I find him, he shall die the death of a dog!"

"Mercy, husband—mercy!"

"Ha! you call me husband now—you, who have never treated me as such—you, who have so often made me blush at the name! You are willing to recognize me as a husband now; but that recognition comes too late. Kate, you must die!"

"Then God have mercy upon me!"

"I say amen to that. Come, you shall have five minutes for prayer; and remember, if you attempt to call out for assistance, you will but hasten your end. This knife shall be swifter than the footsteps of those whom you might seek to summon to your rescue. Come, commend your soul to God!"

"For a few moments her lips moved, as if in prayer; then she said—

"Will you not spare me for the sake of our child?"

"Not the innocent child shall not save its guilty mother from the

just punishment of her crime. Your doom is sealed."

"You love your child?" she asked.

"Better than my own life."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried the woman, shrieking with laughter—"now can I triumph in my dying hour. Your child—your child, indeed! Fool—dolt—idiot! think you I could have loved that child as I have done, had you been its father? God is my witness that I would have strangled it at its birth, if it had been your offspring! Come, bury your knife in my heart, and I will die laughing at your short-sighted stupidity!"

"These words overwhelmed me with grief and horror. The woman saw and enjoyed her triumph. Unrestrained by the fear of death, the full malignity of her nature burst forth."

"Only think," she cried, tauntingly—"how often you have fondled another man's child in your arms, believing it to be your own! How readily you fell into the snare which we—Charles and I—prepared for you! Finding myself excited by my darling lover, we found it necessary to use you; I accordingly spread my net, and soon caught you. When my condition became 'interesting,' you fancied yourself the cause; and how ludicrous were the manifestations of your delight, pride and fondness, when at length you held in your arms a lovely infant, and thought yourself its father! Ah! I loved that babe, because it was the offspring of my dear, dear Charles!"

"And here the depraved woman closed her eyes and softly sighed, as if the very thought of her paramour threw her into a sort of voluptuous trance."

"I raised my knife to strike, but restrained myself and said—"

"Then you have not repented?"

"Repented—ha, ha, ha! What repent of having led a career of

delicious excitement and heavenly bliss with a charming lover? Fool, I tell you no! I thought to avert my fate by feigning repentance; but, as you are resolved upon my death, I swear to you that could I now recall the past, I would repeat every act of folly and crime of which I have ever been guilty!"

"Then you are no longer fit to live—die!"

"My arm descended, and the bright blade was deeply buried in her bosom. She struggled once, and all was over."

"The deed accomplished, I hastened to my own chamber, and in a few minutes had washed the blood from my person and changed my clothes. I had scarcely completed these arrangements, when I heard the street door open and confused voices in the hall. A moment's reflection convinced me that the officers of justice had been sent for, and had come to arrest me for the crime of murder."

"I determined, if possible, to escape—but how was this to be effected? The officers were already ascending the stairs in search of me."

"A thought struck me; I remembered the ladder by which my wife's lover had escaped from the house. Why could I not use it for a similar purpose? I dreaded to re-enter the chamber of death, wherein lay the third victim of my knife; but my own life was at stake, and I did not hesitate."

"In another moment I was in that chamber. I studiously averted my gaze from the bed, for I knew that there lay the bleeding corpse of my wife, and I feared to encounter the fixed glare of those dead, staring eyes."

"I raised the window, and was about to pass through, when a sound reached my ears that induced me to pause."

"It was the cry of a child—of

little Kate, the offspring of my wife and her lover. This innocent and ill-fated being had been placed to sleep in a small adjoining closet."

"Some mysterious impulse prompted me to make little Kate the companion of my flight. Perhaps I regarded the innocent being as a living proof of my conjugal dishonor, and desired to remove her from a situation where her presence would be ever liable to excite remarks concerning me, and keep alive the remembrance of the awful events of that night. I was also determined to prevent the father from ever enjoying the satisfaction of again beholding his child—the offspring of his guilty intimacy with my wife. Possibly, in taking little Kate with me, I was actuated by a lingering tenderness for the poor young thing, whom I had once pressed to my heart in the belief that she was my own daughter. 'Twas foolish, I own; but nature, at that time, held a stronger hold in my heart than now."

"Well—whatever may have been my motives for encumbering myself with the child, at such a time, take her with me I did. Having carefully wrapped her up in a cloak, I safely descended from the window and gained the street. To secure a place of safety for myself and charge was my first care, and was easily effected, for I was well supplied with money—and what will not money do?"

"But money will not last forever; mine soon melted away, and I saw the necessity of doing something for the support of myself and little Kate. To engage in any honest or legitimate business was out of the question, for the blood-hounds of the law were still after me, furnished with descriptions of my person, and incited to vigilance by a large reward which had been offered for my apprehension."

"What could I do? A man cannot starve. It is all very well to

preach honesty when one has a full belly and a comfortable subsistence; but when the stomach comes to be pinched by villainous hunger, and 'how to procure a dinner' is a problem very difficult to be solved, then may lean honesty go to the devil, while fat rascality is the best friend we can have."

"In brief, Bill, I became what you see me now—a crossman. I established this 'crib,' and was chosen chief of the 'Unholy Alliance.'"

"You can now judge why I cannot, with my own hand, shed human blood, without experiencing a sensation of sickening horror; for, at such times, it seems as if I saw the bodies of my murdered parents, ghastly and mangled by my accursed hand!"

"Well, captain, and Bill—" your story is a good 'un, and no mistake; but did you never have a chance to get square with your wife's lover—and be damned to him?"

"He has long since paid the penalty of his sins," replied the Prince—"without my agency. I lost sight of him for some years, but at length encountered him in a den of misery to which I had flown for safety from the pursuit of my old friends, the officers. Deprived of the pecuniary assistance formerly extended to him by my wife, and being entirely without resources, he grew seedy, then shabby, then squalid; he was overtaken by a loathsome disease, became a perfect mass of corruption, was driven from every asylum wherein he sought a shelter, and finally took refuge in the wretched hovel where I met him. He was lying upon a heap of filthy rags; he was alive with vermin, and his body was covered all over with the most frightful ulcers. We recognized each other instantly, and yet I could scarcely believe, that in the awful object before me, I beheld the once elegant, gay and handsome Charles!"

"My revenge was complete; the

contemplation of the horrible state to which he was reduced, afforded me a far more intense satisfaction than if he had died by my hands. He bitterly cursed me, and the chance which had brought me there to witness his misery. I heeded not his curses, but spurned him with my foot; and when death came to his relief, I spat upon his corpse, and left it there to rot, and be devoured by the rats, which swarmed from every hole and corner—for that solitary hovel had long been deserted by man. Such was the fate of him who had caused me so much pain and sorrow."

"Served him right, and he damned to him!" exclaimed Bill; "but what became of the young blowen—the kid—I mean the young'un of your wife and her fancy man?"

"Who—little Kate? Why, she's up stairs and in bed, I suppose. You, yourself, first christened her *Gallus Kate*!"

"My eyes, captain!" cried Bill, in astonishment—"then *Gallus Kate* is not your daughter, after all!"

"No—not a drop of my blood flows in her veins; she is the child of that false woman and her paramour."

"Thank heaven! Kate is not my sister!" said Jack Harold, in an audible tone—for his wonder had, for the moment, overcome his caution.

"Instantly did he repent of his error—for the two men leaped to their feet, and surveyed each other with looks expressive of surprise and alarm."

"What noise was that?" demanded the Prince, with an oath.

"It was a voice," said Bill.

"Was it not you that spoke?"

"If it was, may I be damned," replied the veracious old gentleman, solemnly.

"I swear I heard the tones of a voice," said the Prince, gazing around him suspiciously—"some one may

be concealed hereabouts; and so, by God! this knife shall cure them of their curiosity."

Meanwhile, our hero stole softly up the stairs, in readiness to retreat to his chamber, in case they extended the search so far; but the Prince, having thrown open the door and found no one, expressed himself satisfied, said that they must have been mistaken, and resumed his seat.

Not so One Arm'd Bill, however; the old warrior would not rest easy until he had made a most careful and elaborate investigation, in the course of which he opened numerous small drawers and boxes of diminutive size, as if he were possessed with the eccentric idea that a man might secrete himself in places scarcely large enough for a mouse of moderate dimensions. He completed his search by opening the Prince's snuff box; and finding no one hidden therein, (doubtless to his great disappointment,) sat himself down, proud of his own wonderful acuteness and sagacity.

Jack, hearing the termination of the search, again descended the stairs and stood behind the half-opened door.

"You must keep profoundly secret all that I have told you to-night, Bill," said the Prince.

"In course, yer honor," responded the chivalrous old man, hitting himself divers hard thumps in the stomach, in which region he firmly believed his heart to be located—"wot one gen'elman tells another in confidence, ought never to be blow'd on—damn me! And so *Gallus Kate* ain't your daughter, after all, eh?"

"No; although everybody believes that she is—including Kate herself—and I am anxious to preserve that belief, for she's a fine girl, and reflects credit upon me. I have always suffered her to have her own way in everything; and, consequently, she is as wild and reckless as I

could wish. You know that she swears like a pirate, and can toss off a bumper of brandy and water with all the gusto of an old sager. I am pretty certain, too, that she has, long ere this, been initiated into all the secrets of amorous intrigue, for she inherits the passionate and voluptuous nature of her mother. I have never attempted or wished to control her in any way, but have always permitted her to follow the bent of her own inclinations. She is even more beautiful than her mother was; and, gad! I am sometimes tempted to inform her of the real facts connected with her parentage, and then, throwing up the part of her father, play the character of her lover—eh, Bill?"

"A werry good idea, sir," responded Bill. "From what I seed to-night, I thought that Miss Kate was mighty sweet on Master Harold; in fact, she was a-kissin' and a-huggin' of him like fury, though to be sure the young chap was a little offish."

"Humph! we'll soon stop all that," said the other. "But, I have detained you too long already; go and do for the young scoundrel—make sure work of it—and then bury his body in the cellar. I shall go to bed."

Jack Harold noiselessly and quickly ascended to his chamber, closed the secret panel, and awaited, in darkness and uncertainty, the coming of the one-arm'd assassin.

Bill took up the Bowie knife from the table, bade his master good night, and commenced groping his way up the dark and narrow stair-case, saying that he needed no light to aid him in performing such a trifling piece of business as the killing of a kinsman.

Alas! the excellent old gentleman, for once in his life, reckoned without his host.

With which 'er common-place

quotation, we shall come up a chapter that has proved almost as ungetty as the unrecanted tailor's bill of a Broadway dandy.

CHAPTER XV.

Showing our hero's brilliant success in War Finance and Love, inasmuch as he conquers his enemy, secures a rich treasure, and runs away with a pretty girl.

As slowly and cautiously as a hungry cat steals upon an unconscious mouse, did One Arm'd Bill approach the chamber wherein he expected to find our hero sound asleep, and ready for the thrust of his Bowie knife.

The assassin noiselessly opened the secret panel, and entered the room. Jack could distinctly hear him breathe, and wipe the perspiration from his brow.

"What shall I do?" thought our hero—"I dare not risk a struggle with the old villain, for although he has but one arm, he has twice my strength, and is also provided with a deadly weapon, while I am utterly unarmed. Ha! what's this?"

His mental exclamation was caused by his hand accidentally coming in contact with an iron bar of considerable thickness and about two feet in length, which lay upon the window sill, and was probably used to prop up the window, when necessary.

This welcome article he grasped in his hand, and then awaited the proper time to use it.

The assassin groped his way towards the bed, and Jack heard him deal several heavy blows. Then, for a few moments, all was still.

"Why, how's this?" at last muttered Bill—"not a movement—not a groan—not a drop of blood spattered! Where the hell is the boy, and he d—d to him—for c—d me if he's here!"

He had by that time felt in the bed, and found it empty.

"You lie—he is here!" said Jack, who stood directly behind him; and raising the iron bar with both hands, he brought it down with tremendous force upon the old gentleman's venerable head.

Bill fell to the floor like a slaughtered ox; and stooping down, Jack felt a small rivulet of blood trickling from his head.

"I have killed him, and he deserves his fate!" thought our hero; and then, still retaining the iron bar, he felt his way to the secret panel, passed through the passage, descended the stairs, and paused at the door of the Prince's chamber, to listen.

To his surprise, he heard his father's voice; he listened more intently, and was convinced that the Prince was talking in his sleep.

The door of the chamber was closed, but not locked; for the assassin had expected to pass through that way, after completing his bloody work.

Jack entered, and by the light of the globe lamp, which had not been extinguished, he beheld his villain father extended upon the bed, with all his clothes on, and his limbs tossing about as if he suffered from the most intense physical or mental torment.

Approaching the bed, our hero saw, to his horror, that the eyes of the sleeper were wide open, his face black, the veins on his forehead swelled almost to bursting, and his whole appearance that of a man who suffered the most excruciating pangs of remorse.

"So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live by scorpions' gift by fire;
So writhes the mind remorse hath given,
Until for earth, undoom'd for heaven—
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!"

"Ten thousand furies!" cried the sleeper, as he tore his hair and gnashed his teeth—"why does not a me one cover up those two corpses! See!

they point their gashed and bloody fingers at me, and whisper—*Paricide! Matricide!* Who says that I murdered my father and mother? They lie—I could not have had the heart to do it! I only slew that w—e and her paramour! Pah! my clothes, and hair, and every part of me, reek with blood. Keep off! why do you let this foul snake coil itself upon my breast, and lick my face? Its green eyes fascinate and sicken me; now the accursed reptile is gnawing my heart! Its name is Remorse! and its office is to give me a foretaste of HELL! Who is this, standing at my bed-side? Oh, it is my wife—false, adulterous Kate—or, father, it is her spirit; for I killed her—I remember it all now. Say, spirit from the world of flame and darkness, is hell a place so awful, where the disembodied soul writhes in torment through countless ages? Liar!—liar, as well as adulteress! there is no hell—but if there were a million, their combined fires and tortures would be no adequate punishment for my crimes! There is no hell, I tell you!—the tale of its existence is but a cunning fiction, invented by fanatics to drive weak fools to psalm-singing and prayer!—Ha! what pale, sad face is this, that gazes reproachfully at me, with tearful eyes. Clarissa Cooper, the victim of my seductive arts! How came that dreadful bruise upon her face? 'Twas my ruffian hand that caused it. Strangle that babe—cut its mother's throat—strike sure, Bill; let your knife drink their heart's blood! Curse that boy, he rises up in vengeance against me; take him away, or he will murder me—mercy, Jack; I am your father, do not kill me; do not become a paricide, because I was one—murder! murder! murder!"

The unhappy man made the chamber resound with his cries, at the same time writhing and struggling as if in the agonies of strangulation. Pres-

ently he became calmer—nature was exhausted. His breathing grew easier, and he seemed about to sink into a quiet slumber.

Jack turned to quit the room, when he was startled by hearing a movement behind him. To his wonder and alarm, the Prince arose from the bed and advanced slowly towards him.

A second glance banished our hero's fears: for he saw that his father was still in a profound sleep. There was something horrible in the appearance of the staring eyes, which were still wide open, and resembled those of a corpse.

The Prince was a *sonambulist*; often, in his sleep, would he arise from his bed and wander over the house, doing things with as much regularity and precision as if he were awake.

Jack stepped aside, and watched the proceedings of the sleep-walker with the utmost curiosity and interest.

The Prince approached a large and handsome mirror that hung upon the wall, and touched a small spring concealed amid the rich and elaborate carvings of the gilded frame. Instantly, the looking-glass opened like a door, revealing an aperture in the wall about two feet square.

The object of this singularly contrived place was soon manifested. It was the Prince's *secret treasury*, where he kept all the money and valuables which he had accumulated during his long and industrious career of villainy. He had with his own hands constructed the place, and its existence was known only to him.

He drew forth from the aperture a small trunk, and placed it upon the table; then he seated himself, took a key from his pocket, unlocked the trunk, and raising the lid, seemed to feast his eyes upon the contents.

Jack stepped behind his chair and looked over his shoulder. No wonder that he started—no wonder that his eyes sparkled with pleasure; for

in the trunk he beheld a large heap of bright gold coins, mingled with precious and glittering gems.

"So, so!" thought our hero—"this night's adventures promise to terminate profitably, for these treasures shall be mine. But I am anxious to see what my worthy father will do next."

His worthy father emptied the entire contents of the trunk upon the table, and then deliberately began to count the money; as he counted it, he replaced it in the trunk.

Having accomplished this task, and restored the jewels to their place of deposit, he re-locked the trunk, and carefully bestowed it in the secret cavity. Then he returned to the bed, laid down upon it, and remained perfectly quiet, breathing gently and regularly, like a person in a deep and natural slumber.

"Kind sleep affords
The only boon the wretched mind can feel;
A momentary respite from despair."

Jack now went to work in real earnest. After a patient and careful search, he found the secret spring which was concealed in the frame of the mirror; and the next moment he held in his arms the much coveted casket of treasure. Having carefully closed the mirror upon the aperture, he prepared to quit the room.

He had scarcely, however, moved two paces towards the door, when to his alarm the Prince started up in his bed, evidently wide awake, and demanded,

"Who is there?"

Fortunately for our hero, the light of the globe lamp had grown exceedingly dim, so that it was rendered almost impossible to recognize a person at a little distance. We have before seen that Jack was a youth of extraordinary presence of mind; and, in this emergency, that valuable quality did not desert him. Therefore, imitating

One Arm'd Bill's gruff and drowsy tones, he replied—

"It's all right, Captain."

"What devil are you doing here?" demanded the Prince, suspiciously, as he half arose from the bed, as if with the intention of springing

"Why, you see, I've been digging that *linchen's* grave in the cellar, and now I'm going to carry down his body and bury it, and be damned to him!"

"Oh, ah, that's all right," said the Prince, sinking back upon the bed and closing his eyes; "then you've done for the young vagabond, eh?"

"In course I have; but your honor mustn't forget the reward you promised for the job."

"Damn the reward, you shall have it, of course. Get out, and bury the carcass; I want to sleep."

With these words, the Prince turned over in bed, and in another moment was sound asleep.

Jack left the room, bearing in his arms the thousands of dollars which he had gained so easily, and yet with such fearful risk. He was soon in the chamber where he had left the bleeding body of One Arm'd Bill.

The first gray streaks of day-light were beginning to struggle through the curtained windows of the room. Jack drew aside the curtains, and was then enabled to view objects with tolerable distinctness.

Judge of his surprise when he missed the body from the place which it had occupied upon the floor; but how was his astonishment increased, when, on turning his eyes towards the bed, he beheld his intended murderer seated there, holding his solitary hand to a ghastly wound in his head, from which the blood still slowly trickled down.

Bill had partially recovered from the effects of the stunning blow which he had received and had crawled to

the bed, where our hero now found him.

"Shall I finish the old villain at once?" Jack mentally asked himself; but pity for the wounded and bleeding wretch finally prevailed in his breast, and he concluded to spare his life. Besides, it was exceedingly improbable that Bill could recover from an injury so severe and dangerous; for there could be no doubt that his skull had been fractured by the blow from the ponderous iron bar.

Jack was about to quit the room, when he was arrested by the voice of Bill, who, in feeble and piteous tones, implored him to bind a handkerchief around his wounded head, in order to stop the flow of blood.

"You expect me to dress your wound, in return for your having attempted my life," said our hero, unable to repress his indignation—"you may thank my forbearance that I do not now finish your miserable existence, at once."

"I was forced to obey the orders of the Captain," said Bill, groaning deeply; "you have served me right, Master Harold. I'm sorry for trying to kill you; if I ain't, may I be damned!"

Jack's generosity conquered his anger; setting down the trunk, he took his handkerchief from his neck, and began to bind it around the old man's head.

While thus benevolently engaged, a sudden movement on the part of the object of his care, arrested his attention; and casting down his eyes, he saw that Bill had picked up the Bowie knife from the bed, and was about to stab him in the side. The treacherous old villain could not relinquish his murderous designs, even when the object of them was in the act of performing for him a deed of gratuitous kindness.

Justly enraged at this ingratitude and perfidy, Jack wrenched the weapon from the hand of the assassin

which was easily effected; for the latter was faint from loss of blood.

"Spare my life, for God's sake!" cried Bill; for he saw an expression in the face of our hero, that made him tremble.

Jack's only reply to this appeal was a vigorous thrust with the knife between the old gentleman's ribs. Bill groaned with mortal agony, and fell back upon the bed. A few struggles, and all was over.

"Now, old fellow," said our hero—"if ever you have another chance to attempt my life, I'll forgive you, and say that Satan is a devilish poor turnkey, for suffering you to escape from his dominions!"

Taking the precious trunk again in his arms, Jack issued from the chamber, and proceeded directly to the apartment occupied by "Gallus Kate."

He had arranged a plan of operations, in his own mind, which he determined to act upon forthwith. What that plan was, will appear presently.

Having knocked at the door several times, and received no answer—and having moreover ascertained that the door was unfastened—he resolved to enter without ceremony, for he was anxious to escape from the house ere the Prince could awaken and discover the loss of his treasure.

He raised the latch and entered. It had now become sufficiently light to enable him to see very distinctly.

His eyes turned towards the bed. There lay the youthful, charming and voluptuous Kate, in an attitude of unconscious grace. No envious drapery concealed the glowing beauties of her matchless form, which was as fully developed as that of a woman of mature years, whose charms have ripened into glorious luxuriance. One of her white and jewelled hands was partially buried

amid the rich masses of her hair; the other nestled upon her bosom of snow—and it could not have had a diviner resting-place, speaking with reference to its physical beauty alone; for alas! that fair bosom, which seemed to be a temple of purity, as it gently rose and fell in the soft respiration of a slumber full of pleasant dreams—that bosom was the abode of unholy passions, and knew not the celestial virtue and innocence that elevate a woman almost to the sphere of the angels.

Kate had evidently been weeping, for upon her cheeks were the traces of tears. Yet her spirit must have been wandering in golden dream-land, for radiant was the smile that wreathed her rosy lips.

And now, from those lips, so soft and inviting, Jack Harold stole a kiss. How could he resist the temptation? As well might the weary traveller, parched with thirst, strive to resist the impulse that prompts him to pluck the luscious peach, which, teeming with delicious juices, hangs directly in his path.

The kiss awoke the girl; she started up with a slight scream, which instantly changed to a cry of delight, when she beheld our hero. Throwing her arms about his neck, she pressed him to her breast, with all the ardor of impassioned love.

"Ah! eruel one," she murmured, half reproachfully—"hast thou repented of thy coldness—thy indifference towards thy Kate, who loves thee so dearly? Now, to punish thee for thy lack of gallantry, Master Jack, I swear to love thee ten times more than ever; and thank thy lucky stars if I do not smother thee with kisses. See! my arms imprison thee; thou art my captive; thou shalt never leave me more. And now tell me the cause of thy strange conduct last night; but, good heavens! how fatigued and exhausted you look! Lie

down by my side and rest yourself, while I listen to your confession; come, dear Jack."

"We have not a moment to lose, Kate; the explanation which you require, shall be given at the first convenient opportunity. Thank heaven! there is now no obstacle in the way of our intimacy. Kate, I must leave this place at once, and forever; will you go with me?"

"To the end of the world!" replied the young girl, with enthusiasm; and springing from the couch, she busied herself with preparations for an immediate departure.

Oh, Love! who can comprehend thy mysteries? How wonderfully dost thou sometimes manifest thyself, particularly when dwelling in the heart of woman! Here was this young girl, ready and eager, at a moment's notice, to quit the roof which was to her a shelter and a home, and follow the fortunes of her boyish lover, whom she believed to be penniless, and whom she knew to be an escaped prisoner, liable at any moment to be torn from her embrace, and consigned to a disgraceful captivity. She knew not the cause of his sudden flight, nor where he purposed going—neither did she care. She only knew that she loved him to idolatry—that without him she was miserable, with him supremely happy—and that he was going away. That was enough; she was ready to follow him "to the end of the world."

Kate had a complete and extensive male wardrobe, which included every garment that could be desired by a youth of taste and fashion—for she often delighted to array herself in male attire, and go forth in search of exciting adventures; a practice somewhat prevalent among certain ladies, at the present day. Dressed in her masculine garb, Kate seemed the very *beau ideal* of a fair, beautiful youth; and many a lady lost her

heart in consequence. Our wild heroine would often make an assignation with some amorous fair one, and conduct the intrigue in the most approved style; but alas! when the fair one began to anticipate, with palpitating delight, the consummation of her wishes, the supposed youth would very ungallantly take to her heels, leaving the victim of the trick to her astonishment and disappointment.

We may as well state here, that Kate was a daring and expert *pick-pocket*. Attired with all the elegance of a Parisian dandy, she would lounge along some fashionable promenade, and generally succeeded in extracting some gentleman's pocket-book from its place of deposit. By such operations she not unfrequently realized considerable sums of money.

Her male wardrobe now proved to be of practical utility; for her ready wit suggested that it would be best to disguise herself as one of the "sterner sex."

Jack approved of the plan; and regarded his young mistress with admiration, as she rapidly and dexterously invested her superb form with a suit of fine broadcloth, which fitted her with exquisite nicety, and was exceedingly becoming. Her long, luxuriant hair she skillfully arranged in a masculine style; and a beautiful cap, of blue velvet, ornamented with a gold tassel, completed her elegant costume. So fine was her appearance, and so admirably did she enact her part, that no one, not in the secret, would have taken her to be otherwise than a youth of remarkable grace and beauty.

Turning to her lover, she made him a profound bow, and said, in a tone of mock gravity—

"Sir, your most obedient servant."

Then, taking from her pocket a silver card-case, she presented him with a visiting card beautifully em-

bossed, on which was engraved the name—"Clarence Fawcett."

"Remember," said she, "to address me by that name when strangers are present; provided, of course, that I am wearing the breeches. And now, my dear, how do you like my looks?"

"You are perfect; but alas! how can I appear abroad in these sorry garments?" said Jack, with a sigh.

It will be recollected that our hero still wore the coarse and wretched garments of the *Refuge*.

"Ah, what a sad dunce you are!" rejoined Kate, good-naturedly.



ENGLISH TOM RELIEVES MRS. LOVEIT MUCH OF HER ARTICULE. P. 114.

— see, we are very nearly of a size, and I have a dozen suits of clothes. Make your own selections!"

And from a bureau drawer she threw a profusion of garments, in-

cluding linen, hosiery and in fact every article necessary to make a complete and handsome toilet.

Jack was soon transformed from a meanly-dressed urchin to a young gentleman of dashing appearance.

and the hopeful pair prepared to quit the house.

"Fortunately for us," whispered Kate—"I have in my possession over two hundred dollars in cash, which will serve to give us a good start in the world; had I anticipated this event, I might have had five times the amount, for I have been a little extravagant of late. But no matter; we shall soon replenish our finances."

"Be perfectly easy on that score, sweetheart," said Jack, gaily, as he raised the precious trunk from the chair on which he had placed it—"our finances are at present in a most flourishing condition; for, look you, Kate! this trunk contains thousands of dollars!"

"Heavens, you astonish me! Where did you get it?"

"The Prince is the sufferer; but there's no time for explanations now. Come, let's be off."

They quitted the chamber, and were descending the stairs, when to their consternation they heard the voice of the Prince, crying out—

"Curse the old scoundrel, he must have done it! Fool that I was, not to have seized upon him last night, when I awoke and found him prowling about my chamber! But how did the one-arm'd villain discover my secret treasury? that's what puzzles me. Damnation! ten thousand dollars gone at one fell swoop! Abundantly has he paid himself for his trouble in killing that boy! But has he killed the young rascal? Damn him, I'll go up to the panel chamber, and see; but first I will inquire of Kate if she heard anything unusual during the night."

The young fugitives heard the Prince coming up stairs. They rapidly retreated to the chamber which they had just quitted. Kate locked the door, enjoined her companion to

keep perfectly quiet and threw herself upon the bed.

The next instant the Prince knocked loudly at the door; he was obliged to repeat the summons, with thundering effect, ere he received an answer. Then Kate stretched herself, yawned, and in a sleepy tone inquired—

"Who is there?"

"Tis I—the Prince; some one has robbed me of a large sum of money, Kate. Get up, and let me in."

"Oh, father, don't ask me to do that; for I am stark naked!" replied Kate, winking mischievously at Jack.

These words drew the thoughts of the Prince into another channel; and, for the moment, he forgot the loss of the money.

"Humph! she calls me *father*," thought he—"why should I not tell her the truth, at once—that I am not in the most distant manner related to her? I have lately noticed that she has grown most voluptuously beautiful. Egad! her lovely image fires my soul with passion! When she learns that I am not her father, perhaps she will be happy to reciprocate my passion, and treat me with every kindness, in gratitude for my care and protection of her. The opportunity is favorable—and I'll do it!"

Again he knocked loudly at the door.

"Is that you, father?" asked Kate.

"Damn that word *father*!" muttered the Prince, and then added aloud—"yes, my dear; open the door, for I must come in."

"Dear father, pray consider—"

"Open the door, I say, or I shall burst it in! I wish to see you for something very particular."

Kate and Jack exchanged looks expressive of perplexity and alarm.

"What in the world can he want?" whispered the girl—"can he suspect that you are in here, or does he think that I have taken his money, and hidden it in this chamber? If I am to

him, and he finds me in this garb, he will be sure to suspect something wrong. Good heavens! he will kick the door in!"

This event seemed very likely to occur, for the Prince's boot coming in contact with the door, threatened to tear it from its hinges.

Jack, who knew that no relationship existed between Kate and the Prince—having, moreover, heard the latter declare to One Arm'd Bill, his intention of "playing the lover," with reference to Kate—was at no loss to guess his object in desiring admission to the young girl's chamber.

There was no time for explanation, however. Jack's presence of mind came to his aid; and having whispered a few words to Kate, directing her how to proceed, he crawled under the bed, taking with him the precious trunk.

"Come!" cried the Prince, now thoroughly enraged—"will you open this door at once, or shall I break it in with an axe?"

"Wait a moment, father," cried Kate, in pursuance of Jack's directions—"I will get up and unfasten the door. If you will promise not to come in until I have covered myself up in bed; for, as I told you, I am all undressed."

"Very well; I promise," replied the Prince, as he rubbed his hands in an ecstasy of delight, which, for the time, rendered him quite insensible to his heavy loss.

"Wait, then, until I give the word," and saying this, Kate arose and unfastened the door. Believing her to be, as she said, all undressed, the amorous and excited Prince was tempted to rush in upon the instant, in the hope of feeding his sensual eyes upon a form which his imagination invested with the most distracting charms. But he restrained himself, when he reflected that she still supposed him to be her father, and that

her alarm and indignation might interfere with his plans concerning her.

Kate, all dressed up as she was in her male garments of broadcloth, quickly got into bed and covered herself up carefully, drawing the coverings close up to her chin, in order to prevent the Prince from observing the circumstance that she was entirely dressed, instead of being completely nude, as she had stated. Besides, her being arrayed in that peculiar costume, at such an early hour, would have excited within him strong suspicions that all was not as it should be; he might search the chamber, and finding Jack hidden beneath the bed, together with the stolen treasure, all would be lost.

Firmly believing the man to be her father, she did not for a single moment dream of his true object in entering her chamber, but supposed that he merely wished to consult with her on the best means of recovering his money. Having placed herself in bed to her own satisfaction, she said—"I am ready, father—you may come in."

His Royal Highness entered, and having taken a seat at the side of the bed, turned his ardent gaze upon Kate. Only her face was visible; but that face was so beautiful as it appeared above the white counterpane, like a delicate rose embedded in snow, that the beholder was for a few moments lost in admiration.

"My dear," said he, at length—"will you give me a kiss?"

"No, father, I won't give you one, but you can take one, if you like," replied Kate, laughing heartily at her own humor.

There is something singularly fascinating in the silvery laugh of a pretty woman. We hardly know what to compare it to: it is like the musical chimes of distant bells, when borne upon the soft evening air; it resembleth the harmonious ripple of water

in a quiet place—yea, it is more pleasing than the notes of a nightingale. Bulwer says that it is difficult to laugh, or even to smile, at once naturally and gracefully; and it is one of Steele's finest touches of character, where he says of Will Honeycomb,—"He can smile when one speaks to him, and sighs easily."

Now Kate had the most musical laugh in the world. So thought Jack Harold under the bed; so thought the Prince, at the side of the bed, as he took, not one kiss, but a great many kisses. In fact, he glued his mouth to hers with so much ardor, that she was exceedingly astonished.

"Why, father, how strangely you act!" she said.

"Humph! my dear," said His Royal Highness, with some confusion of manner—"I wish you would desist from calling me *father*; for, the fact is—"

"What?" cried Kate, eagerly.

"The fact is, that I—humph! My dear, are you not uncomfortably warm, with these bed-clothes drawn so closely about your neck?"

As he spoke, he attempted to pull the counterpane down, but Kate held it firmly in its place, for its removal an inch would disclose the fact that she was dressed in male attire.

"He evidently suspects something," thought she—"and wishes to examine me. How shall I get rid of him?"

"I spoke to you of having been robbed of a large sum of money," said His Royal Highness, fixing his eyes meaningly upon hers—"but now I have found my *treasure*."

"Found it—how—where?" faltered Kate, with difficulty controlling her agitation.

"Here—in this chamber!"

Jack, beneath the bed, gave up all as lost, while Kate turned deadly pale.

"Yes—my treasure is in this chamber!" cried the Prince, passionately—"here, in this bed, beneath this counterpane; it is now in my arms!

Ah! 'tis a thousand times more precious than gold or jewels!"

He clasped the form of Kate in his arms; and then she, as well as her concealed lover, comprehended that he (the Prince) had alluded to *her* person as his treasure, and had no reference whatever to the money which he had lost.

Kate knew not what to make of this extraordinary conduct on the part of the Prince; she believed that he had lost his senses. While struggling in his embrace, she contrived to keep the coverlid wrapped around her form, notwithstanding his efforts to remove it.

Her determined resistance enraged him; and he prepared to accomplish his purpose by violence. Then, for the first time, did the young girl perceive his real design.

"Unnatural monster! can it be possible that—"

He interrupted her with a loud laugh, and said—

"It is all perfectly *natural*, my beauty—for you may as well know, first as last, that I am not your father. We are not in the most distant manner related to each other, unless your being the bastard child of my adulterous wife and her lover, establishes a relationship between us. Come, you are now old enough, and beautiful enough, to repay me for my kindness in rearing you from your infancy up to the present time."

In her struggles, Kate had shifted her position to the further side of the bed; unconsciously, her arm had extended over the side, next the wall. She felt a hand clasp hers, and she knew it was Jack's; then something was placed in her hand, and she felt it to be the handle of a knife. She understood the hint, and resolved to act up to it, if necessary.

We forgot to mention that our hero retained in his possession the Bowie knife with which One Arm'd Bill had

attempted to assassinate him, and which had given that worthy old gentleman his *quintus*. This was the same knife that was now pressed into the hand of Kate.

"Come, my dear," said the Prince—"why will you not treat with kindness one who has so long been your protector and friend? Ah, you smile scornfully, but I will soon tame you, for you are perfectly defenceless. You had better submit quietly."

"Never! You say that you are not my father, and I am glad that I do not owe my existence to such a villain. Beware! touch me not, or you'll repent it!"

"Good heavens!" muttered the Prince—"she looks just as her mother looked, on that night when, at her chamber door, she menaced me with a pistol—yet this young girl is even more beautiful than her mother. By hell! she *shall* be mine!"

Again he clasped her in his arms; but, the next instant, he staggered back with the blood spouting from his breast. Kate had stabbed him. With a deep groan, he fell to the floor insensible.

"His blood be upon his own head!" cried Kate, leaping from the bed—"come, Jack!"

Our hero issued from beneath the bed, bringing with him the precious trunk.

Within ten minutes after the last tragical event, the hopeful pair took their departure from the "Devil's Den," and turning out of Water street, walked at a rapid rate towards the more respectable portions of the city. Jack carried the trunk, while Kate, alias Mr. Clarence Vincent, had taken care to secure about her person the Bowie knife which had proved so eminently serviceable to them both, and which had become, as it were, identified with their history.

"Shall we go and put up at a fashionable hotel?" asked Jack, as the

precious metallic contents of the trunk which he carried, clinked musically in his ears.

"That would be hardly prudent, my dear," replied Kate, who was perhaps rather older than our hero in experience, as well as in years. "We had better not render ourselves too conspicuous at present, but keep shady. Now listen to me: you have heard tell of Mrs. Noble, who is sometimes called 'the Giantess,' on account of her colossal size?"

"Yes," replied Jack—"and often have I wished to see her. She is a celebrated *fence*, is she not?"

(It is perhaps unnecessary to inform the city reader that a *fence* is a receiver of stolen goods; to the country reader however, the information may not come amiss.)

"The Giantess is the most noted fence in the United States," said Kate. "She possesses an immense form, but her heart is big in proportion to her size. She has known me since my infancy, and loves me with all the fondness of a mother; her affection I heartily reciprocate.—She has often told me, that should I ever need a place of shelter, or assistance of any kind, to come to her. Let us for the present take up our abode with this lady—we may be sure of a hearty welcome; what say you?"

"Let us go to her, by all means," was Jack's answer.

A walk of fifteen minutes brought them to the abode of the Giantess, which was situated in Canal street. It was a large and handsome brick edifice;—a flight of stone steps led to the front door, upon which was a silver plate, bearing the name—"Mrs. Julia Noble."

Kate's ring at the door-bell was answered by a smart, tidy looking servant girl, who seemed to recognize the young lady, in spite of her disguise.

Our young adventurers were ushered

ed into a handsome parlor, furnished with elegance and taste.—In a few minutes the door opened, and a lady made her appearance. Kate ran towards her, and Jack noticed with a kind of awe, that the girl seemed to shrink into absolute nothingness, by the side of the majestic female, whose face arose to the height of seven feet, and yet was most exquisitely proportioned.

This was Mrs. Julia Noble, the "Giantess,"—formerly exhibited in London, and throughout England, to admiring thousands, at one shilling per head—but, at the time of which we write, a celebrated New York *fence*, computed to be worth fifty thousand dollars, and conducting her unlawful business with a secrecy and skill that defied the vigilance of the police.

We must now bid a temporary adieu to our hero and his mistress, and leave them. The hospitality of the Giantess, while we follow for a time the proceedings of that very respectable gentleman—LOPEZ THE SPANIARD.

CHAPTER XVI.

Showing the audacity of the Spanish gardener, the dignified virtue of Mrs. Harold, and the piety of her housekeeper

It is quite unnecessary that the readers of this story should be informed of the "why and the wherefore" of Mr. Henry Harold's departure for Europe, which took place at about this period; and, to confess the truth, we neither know, nor care to know, the particular reason of his going. As he was unaccompanied by his lady, we presume that his object was one of business, not of pleasure; for surely he could not have enjoyed the gaieties of Paris, the "sights" of London, or the delightful "pilgrimage of the

Rhine," if unblessed by the society of his amiable and accomplished wife, who was admirably qualified, both by nature and education, to appreciate the wonders and the beauties of the old world. Our private opinion is, that he went to take possession of a legacy, bequeathed him by some gouty old gentleman or vinegar-faced old aunt; and if such were indeed the case, we will venture to affirm that the said victim of port wine or acid belonged to that class of people who are prodigies of meanness all their lives, but who, at their deaths, acquire a reputation for benevolence, by leaving behind them heaps of money which they cannot very well carry with them into the other world, although their journey thither should be an easy one, being all the way *down hill!*

Be that as it may, to Europe did Mr. Henry Harold go, leaving his lady to await his return with impatience, and amuse herself meanwhile with her books, her music, her flowers, and the society of her friends, in whose elegant and brilliant circles she had long moved as the "bright, particular star"—for while she still retained a considerable share of youthful beauty, she was endeared to all who knew her by her moral excellence, elevated virtue, and, in short, by the possession of every amiable and lovely trait that can adorn the female character.

Mrs. Harold was now about forty years of age, yet she was still what the world calls an exceedingly fine woman, possessing an order of beauty remarkably voluptuous. She always dressed with the most perfect taste and elegance; preferring a refined simplicity in her attire, rather than a gaudy display. It was at that time the fashion among ladies to exhibit, for the gratification of their male acquaintances, and also to promote their "conquests," their uncovered necks

and a liberal portion of their bosoms; but Mrs. Harold resolutely set her face against such indecent displays, and her own charms, although they were of the most luxuriant description, were always modestly veiled, except to the eyes of him whose sanctuary they were.

"Alas! beauty is a fatal gift, for how often doth it entail upon its possessor a shameful life, or a miserable death! An ugly woman should be happy in her ugliness, for she is not liable to be tempted to her ruin by false, designing men. But, if her mirror reflects an image of beauty, let her beware! for though her bosom be virtue's strongest citadel, the infernal arts of a wicked, cunning man may triumph over her person, and make her pure soul the inhabitant of a dishonored body. We allude not to cases of forcible violation, but refer to instances which have been brought before our criminal courts, wherein beasts in human form have succeeded in their diabolical designs, in consequence of having administered to their victims certain drugs, which either excite an excessive amateness, amounting to insanity, or else produce total insensibility.

Lopez the Spaniard had long regarded Mrs. Harold with a lascivious eye. His occupation as a gardener, and his extraordinary skill in rearing flowers, very frequently brought him in contact with the lady, who almost worshipped the sweet offerings of Flora, and delighted to watch their growth and progress towards perfection. She loved to question the man concerning the peculiar properties of rare plants; and firmly believing him to be a very worthy, honest fellow, her manner towards him was ever kind and condescending. She even treated him with an innocent familiarity, which ladies in her sphere seldom show to a merdial, and which the exceeding goodness of her pure heart alone suggested.

The day before the departure of Mr. Harold, that gentleman sought an interview with his gardener, and said—

"Well, Lopez, my good fellow, tomorrow I start for Europe, as you probably know. My absence from home may be protracted, and it is impossible to say when I shall return. During my absence, Mrs. Harold will pay your wages. As you have always served us faithfully, you will oblige me by accepting this fifty dollar note, as a present."

The Spaniard muttered his insincere thanks, and the gentleman continued:—

"I have every confidence in your integrity and fidelity. You have now been a number of years in my service, and I have never had occasion to find fault with you."

"I have tried to do my duty," said Lopez.

"You have done it, my good fellow. Now, during my absence, you must be the protector of this household—you must, to some extent, be in my place; and I am certain that I can depend upon you."

After some further conversation, which it is unnecessary for us to repeat, Mr. Harold shook hands with Lopez, bade him good-bye, and left him.

"Ho, ho!" muttered the false Spaniard—"he wants me to fill his place, during his absence; and I'll do it more literally than he expects!"

The next morning the good ship "Samaritan" sailed for England, with Mr. Harold on board; and that afternoon his lady, as was her custom, came into the garden to gather a bouquet of flowers—

"Sweet garland wreaths
Of pansies, pinks and gaudy daffodils."

As, in her white robes, she moved gracefully amid the bright-hued throng, like their presiding divinity the gardener, who stood at a little

distance, gazed admiringly upon her. She gradually approached him; and the hot blood of lust circulated like lightning through his veins—for never before had she appeared so voluptuously lovely.

The lady greeted the man with a nod and a smile, and remarked, as she plucked a brilliant rose from its stem—

"So, Lopez, your master is gone." "Ah, yes, madam, and I am sorry, for he is the best master in the world—so kind, generous and good!"

The hypocritical villain uttered these words with a scarcely perceptible sneer upon his face. The lady turned, and cast upon him a pleased and grateful look; for it is pleasant to hear the praises of those we love.

"Heaven grant that he may soon return, in health and safety!" murmured the wife; and a tear fell upon the flowers which she held in her hand.

"Amen!" said the Spaniard, piously; and then added, mentally—"Curse him! may his carcass feed the fishes of the great Atlantic!"

"You will be very lonesome without him, madam," observed Lopez, after a pause.

"Lonesome indeed!" said the lady, with a sigh.

"So many long days and—and—nights to pass in solitude!" remarked the gardener, almost in a whisper, yet with a strange significance of tone, which Mrs. Harold, in her abstraction, did not notice.

"Ah, yes!" she said, almost unconsciously.

The Spaniard devoured her lovely form with his eyes. He drew nearer to her, and was obliged to battle fiercely with his inclinations, to prevent himself from clasping her madly to his breast, and ravishing unholy kisses from those tempting lips.

They were standing near a beautiful arbor, entirely covered with

fragrant and creeping vines. Lopez glanced towards it, and said, softly—

"Does not madam feel the heat of the sun to be very oppressive?"

"It is indeed warm," replied the lady, partly throwing from her shoulders the scarf that covered them.

The sight of those naked shoulders, so beautiful, so white, so plump, kindled the passions of the licentious Spaniard almost to madness.

Scarcely knowing what he did, he laid his hand upon the lady's fair neck, and whispered—

"Pray, dear madam, come into this arbor, or the amorous sun will kiss these snowy charms until they have become tanned."

Mrs. Harold started as if an adder had stung her; the flush of indignation mantled upon her face, and anger sparkled in her eyes. Drawing her figure up proudly, she said—

"You forget yourself, fellow!"

Not another word did she deign to utter; but walked off with the dignity of a queen.

The Spaniard saw that he had gone too far; he cursed himself for his precipitancy.

"Malediction!" he muttered—"I have nearly spoiled all; but she looked so tempting, that I could not control myself. Well, well; have patience, Lopez; thou hast a plan that will, ere long, give her to thy arms!"

The insulted lady, whose kindness to a menial had been thus shamefully abused, returned to the house, threw herself upon a sofa, and burst into tears; for it was the first time in her life that an insult had been offered her, and she felt shocked and grieved.

"Alas!" she exclaimed—"now do I indeed suffer in consequence of my husband's absence, and miss his protection, since, upon the very day of his departure, a vile wretch has dared to insult me with bold words and licentious looks, and even pro-

sumed to pollute my person with his touch! I will at once discharge this fellow from my service."

Not wishing to see the man herself—for now she loathed the very sight of him—she summoned Mrs. Rogers, the housekeeper, into her presence.

Mrs. Rogers was a widow woman of fifty, very stout, very red-faced, and very consequential withal. She had formerly been in good circumstances; but became destitute after the death of her husband, and Mrs. Harold, sympathizing with her misfortunes, took her into the house and gave her the situation of housekeeper—a very comfortable position, embracing few duties other than a general superintendence of the servants. Mrs. Harold had every confidence in her honesty and propriety of behaviour. The true character of Mrs. Rogers will be developed hereafter.

The housekeeper bustled into the room, wiping her red face with her white apron, and jingling a huge bunch of keys that hung from her waist.

"Do you want me, madam?" she asked.

"Yes; go at once and tell Lopez, the Spanish gardener, that he is no longer in my service."

"My gracious, madam!" cried Mrs. Rogers, lifting her hands towards heaven, in the intensity of her astonishment—"you surely can't mean to discharge such a skilful gardener, who rears you such beautiful flowers! You'll never be able to get his equal."

"Please to do as I bid you," said the lady, firmly—"tell him to go at once."

"There must be some reason, madam, for this abrupt dismissal," remarked Mrs. Rogers, in a tone of respectful remonstrance—"for only

this morning I heard Mr Harold praise Lopez very highly."

"There is a reason," said the lady—"and I see no impropriety in confiding it to you; on the contrary, it is right that you should know the cause of this dismissal, in order that you may not impute my conduct to caprice. You are a woman of piety and virtue, my good Mrs. Rogers, and will, when you have heard, justify my conduct, although the painful recital will make me blush with shame."

Mrs. Harold then told the housekeeper all that had occurred between her and the Spaniard. When she had concluded, her listener took a pinch of snuff with great composure, and said—

"The behavior of the gardener, madam, must of course seem very improper; but let me say, in his behalf, that I really don't think him capable of cherishing any impure desires, with reference to you."

"Impure desires!" cried Mrs. Harold, indignantly—"I tell you that the man's looks—the expression of his eyes—betrayed his sensuality. And then his insolent words—his request that I should go into the arbor—and, oh heavens! his touch upon my neck—"

"Pray, listen to me, madam," interrupted the housekeeper, who was evidently anxious that the man should not be discharged. "The Spaniards are a curious people. Lopez is a Spaniard; his ways are different from ours. You attach too much meaning to his words, looks and actions, because they do not harmonize with our customs and ideas of propriety. I've no doubt the poor fellow meant to be very polite to you, and over-did it. In his country, the beggar speaks to the princess in the language of gallantry, praising her beauty, and all that; she is not offended at the unmeaning jargon, but smiles

and throws him a piece of money. The language used by the gardener to you, if uttered by a gentleman, your equal in rank, would be an insult; coming from a servant, the words amount to just nothing at all, in my view."

"Why, then, did he put his hand on me?" demanded the lady.

The act was a natural accompaniment to his words. The sun was in your neck was uncovered; he raised its whiteness, suggested that it would become tanned by the exposure, and advised you to step into the arbor, which was close at hand, and which is, certainly, the most agreeable retreat in the world, on a sultry day like this. The gardener acted unthinkingly, but naturally and with perfect innocence; of this I am firmly convinced. For instance, if he were speaking of a flower, he would probably say, "this flower," and touch it; he said, "this neck," and touched it, with a design as pure as that which would prompt him to lay his finger upon a flower. As for his eyes expressing lust, they never expressed anything but stupidity in all matters not relating to the garden; as for his words, pooh! twenty times a day he says to me—"Rogers, you are old, ugly and very fat!" What do I care? I don't even condescend to box his ears for his impudence, which springs from excessive good nature. No I don't notice him in the slightest degree."

Mrs. Harold could not help laughing at the concluding words of the housekeeper's harangue. Once invest a case with a ludicrous aspect, and it is as good as gained. Make a jury laugh at the drollery of a facetious rogue, and they acquit him in nine cases out of ten; they cannot find it in their hearts to consign such a funny fellow to prison. Momus is a famous chap for divesting a case of its bad aspect. Lawyers know this; Mrs. Rogers knew it, and

that lady's mirth convinced her that Lopez the Spaniard would not lose his place.

"Now, madam," said the artful housekeeper—"do you insist upon sending the gardener away? If you do, you'll never again be able to excite the envy and admiration of your friends, by the beauty and profusion of your flowers."

The specious reasoning of the shrewd, intelligent and very deep housekeeper, had produced the desired effect; Mrs. Harold believed that she had done the gardener a great injustice.

"I don't think, after all," said she—"that the man meant anything improper; but as such words and actions are not agreeable to me, be so good as to request him, in my name, not to repeat them. He remains in my service."

"Very well, madam," said Mrs. Rogers, striving to conceal the pleasure which this announcement afforded her. "In pleading for the poor fellow, whom I have rescued from the loss of a good place, I did but perform a religious duty. Blessed be God! I am a Christian, and strive to 'do unto others as I would that others should do unto me.'"

With this pious speech the housekeeper withdrew, leaving Mrs. Harold to wonder if all Spanish gardeners possessed the same peculiarities as Lopez.

CHAPTER XVII.

Introducing a lady's bath, a strange midnight encounter, an infernal plot, and the triumph of a villain.

On leaving her mistress, Mrs. Rogers went directly to the gardener, who occupied a small but very comfortable house situated at the extreme verge of the extensive garden. She found Lopez in his chamber

smoking a fragrant Havana, and discussing a tumbler of brandy and water.

"Well," cried the housekeeper, seating herself upon the side of the bed, and fanning her flushed face with her apron—"here's a perky kettle of fish, to be sure! You could not wait for the proper time with patience, forsooth! but must insult Mrs. Harold in open day-light, and lay your filthy paw upon her. Ugh, you brute!"

"Why, mother Rogers, what the devil—"

"Mother, indeed! How dare you apply that word to me, when you know that I am a lady of middle age! But, old as I am, you ungrateful monster, you have always been happy to enjoy my favors, and have sworn by all the saints in your calendar, that you loved me to distraction. Can you deny all this?"

The gardener made no reply, but very deliberately mixed another tumbler of brandy and water. This done, he seated himself at the side of the indignant lady, and encircled her plump waist with his arm. Then he raised the tumbler of grog to her lips, and she, nothing loth, imbibed every drop of the anti-temperance compound. The change in her temper and demeanor, effected by this ingenious mode of treatment, was marvellous. Her ruddy face relaxed into a smile, and she regarded Lopez with an affectionate, even an amorous look. Finally, when the gardener imprinted several kisses upon her lips, she could contain herself no longer, but threw herself into his arms and declared him to be a "darling."

The reader has probably, ere this, arrived at the conclusion, that Mrs. Rogers' professions of virtue and piety were all moonshine. To sum up her character in a few words, she was a very shrewd, intelligent, vain

and (notwithstanding her age,) sensually inclined woman, and a most consummate hypocrite. An improper intimacy had long existed between her and the lusty Spaniard—an intimacy brought about entirely by advances on her side.

The gardener, in the absence of more attractive entertainment, not object to amuse himself with amorous dams, who in a whisper, it stated, passed many a night with her paramour, in his little house at the verge of the garden.

Mrs. Rogers was an exceedingly avaricious woman, and the accumulation of money was one of her chief delights. By pandering to this passion—the love of gold—the Spaniard had succeeded in securing her assistance in the infernal plan which he had formed, with reference to Mrs. Harold.

But let us return to the amiable pair, whom we left in the act of exchanging kisses. After indulging in a few more delicate little endearments, which put the housekeeper in a state of great good humor, the gardener said—

"And now, my angel, tell me all that passed between you and Mrs. Harold, in relation to my affair with her in the garden, this afternoon."

The angel—a very fat one, by the way—complied with this request, and related the particulars of her interview with her mistress. In concluding her narration, Mrs. Rogers remarked—

"So you see that, had it not been for me, you would have lost your place, and then all your fine plans for ruining the poor lady, would have been knocked in the head, as the saying is. It was very stupid in you, Lopez, to treat her as you did this afternoon; but we'll say no more about that.—Have you the powder safe?"

The Spaniard drew forth from his pocket a small paper parcel, which he

carefully opened, and displayed a very fine white powder.

"Take care!" cried the housekeeper, in alarm—"should a single grain of that stuff fly up my nostrils, I should be put into a slumber as sound as that of the seven sleepers. Then you know that you might take advantage of my insensible condition, and come as you intend to take advantage of poor Mrs. Harold—the wretch that you are!"

The gardener laughed heartily at this sally, which was uttered in a very jocular tone. He knew very well, by long experience, that no stupefying powders were necessary to enable him to do with Mrs. Rogers whatever might seem unto him good.

The well-matched pair, having indulged in more brandy and water, and a few more kisses—which latter luxury the lady seemed to enjoy with a much greater gusto than her friend—proceeded to converse on matters of a pecuniary and business nature, all having direct reference to the Spaniard's infernal plan concerning Mrs. Harold.

Lopez drew from his pocket the fifty dollar note which his master had that morning presented to him, and exhibited it to the greedy and glazing eyes of the housekeeper.

"That's a very pretty thing, is it not, my queen of hearts?"

"Beautiful, my Jack of hearts," retorted the witty lady—"beautiful! The figure '5' upon a half-dollar is charming; but the addition of a cypher makes it positively divine. Now, dear," she added, coaxing—"say that you're going to make this pretty little bit of paper a present to your own ducky."

The "ducky" accompanied this appeal with an expression of countenance similar to that which she assumed upon the stage, when she requested long-lost lovers to "follow my vine."

"This bank-note shall be yours," said the Spaniard, "upon one condition."

"Name it," cried the housekeeper, eagerly.

"I have a strong desire to see Mrs. Harold in *debt*, previous to the final consummation of my plan. Enable me to gratify this wish, to-night, by concealing me in a convenient place, in or adjoining her chamber, and this bank-note is yours, in addition to the hundred dollars which I am to pay you, as soon as I have succeeded in my plan, in regard to the administration of the powder."

"I don't see how it can be done," said the woman, thoughtfully—"and yet I really can't afford to lose this fifty dollars. But what a singular wish, on your part! How can you desire such a thing, when you know that in a few days the lady will be entirely yours? What gratification can you possibly derive from merely watching?"

"No matter—will you aid me?" "My dear friend, fifty dollars is a large sum to pay for such amusements. Now, for half that amount, I myself will consent to—"

"Pooh!—you!" interrupted the Spaniard, contemptuously. "Mrs. Harold is a model of voluptuous beauty, and a preliminary contemplation of such charms as hers will add a zest to final possession. Come, mother Rogers; besides earning this money, you will confer an obligation upon me, by doing as I request."

"Well, well; I'll see what can be done, you wayward, naughty man. I must go now, or my long absence will excite suspicion. If the thing is possible to be done, I'll come back soon and let you know; then we can make all necessary arrangements. Good Lord!—only think, my dear Lopez—I that love you so much, am aiding you in your amorous designs upon another woman! Well, well; money is pre-

cious and one must not be too sentimental. 'Tis not that I love Lopez less, but gold more! One kiss—and now, for the present, adieu!"

With these words, the prudent, modest, virtuous, pious Mrs. Rogers waddled off, jingling her bunch of keys, and singing, from her collection of hymns—

My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
Damnation and the dead;
What horror fills the guilty soul,
Upon a dying bed!"

The shades of evening were beginning to fall, when Mrs. Rogers returned to the gardener's cottage. She was in high glee; and the Spaniard saw, by the elation of her manner, that she had been successful.

"Good news!" she cried, as soon as she could recover her breath—"Mrs. Harold has just this minute gone out in her carriage, to pay an evening visit; she herself told me that she'd be back at nine o'clock—therefore, for the present, the coast is clear. In her chamber is a small closet, which is seldom or never used, as it contains nothing but rubbish;—you can station yourself in this closet, quite secure from being discovered, and view your 'model of voluptuous beauty,' to your heart's content."

"You are a very jewel of a woman, my dear Rogers," cried the Spaniard, in raptures—"here are the fifty dollars; now conduct me to the place of concealment."

"Wait a little—there's plenty of time; but you men are so impatient!" and so saying, the housekeeper cast off one of her shoes, raised her drapery to an alarming height, and proceeded to divest her stout leg of its stocking. The object of this singular movement was soon apparent; the good woman's stocking was her bank of deposit.—From its mysterious depths she drew forth a roll of bank bills, to which she added the fifty dollar note just given her by the Spaniard; she then restored the money to its place, put on

her stocking and shoe, and declared herself ready.

To confess the truth, the worthy Mrs. Rogers had "feathered her nest" pretty well, since she had been an inmate of the Harold mansion.—What with presents from her mistress, and such small pickings as stealings as she was enabled to accomplish without detection, she had accumulated quite a pretty little stock of money, thanks to her own ingenuity and economy. Besides, she derived a snug revenue from the pockets of certain amorous and not over particular gentlemen, whom she met during her evening walks, and whom, for a consideration, she would consent to accompany to an assignation house. Her business engagements with the Spanish gardener now promised to increase the amount of her cash capital.

We wish to make a few remarks, suggested by the assignations of the housekeeper. Many people wonder how female servants—girls and women at service, who receive the most miserable wages—are enabled to purchase the expensive finery in which they appear abroad, on Sundays and holidays. The kitchen scullion often exceeds her mistress, in the splendor and costliness of her attire. She has rich silks, and handsome shawls, and "such a perfect love of a bonnet!" Oh, 'tis marvellous how these servant girls and servant women contrive to array themselves like gaudy butterflies, on four dollars a month!

It sometimes happens that the plainly-dressed mistress encounters her gaudily-dressed servant girl in the street, on a Sunday evening; and lo! with the abigail is a "nice young man," whose appearance, though perfectly genteel, is not exactly that of a gentleman. He chews tobacco, and smells suspiciously of onions; his darling beverage is a "brandy smash," and he "goes in" for cheap amours

with third-rate courtezans, I st don't mind going his length" to the extent of three or four dollars, provided he can have a good time with a good-looking servant girl, whom he can "pick up" almost any Sunday evening.

Well, Mrs. Inquisitive meets Margaret in company with this nice young man, and the next day questions the girl in regard to her companion.

"Oh, my dear, 'twas nobody but my cousin Peter, just come from the country; sober, respectable young man; was going to a prayer meeting, when you met him!" The mistress believes this story, or not, just as she chooses; but we can tell her that Margaret and her "cousin Peter" were on their way to a "bed house," instead of a prayer meeting, and that the girl received a V for her trouble.

A curious set are these servant girls' "cousins." They lurk around the corner, until Mag has cleared away the tea things, and comes to keep her appointment. They sneak into the kitchen, when mistress has gone out. They steal kisses from Mag's lips behind the door, and now and then take her to the museum or the circus. If Mag stops out all night, she says that she has slept at her "aunt's." That's a fib; Mag has slept with a male friend at an assignation house, and earned five dollars by the operation, besides having gratified her strong penchant for such agreeable recreations! We trust that we have thrown some light upon the means by which many a kitchen Mag, or Betty, or Biddy—with no visible income beyond a miserable pittance in the way of wages—contrives to deck herself out like the peacock, whose only real beauty is in its tail.

"In diamonds, curls and rich brocades
She shines the first of better'd jades,
And flutters in her pride."

We have seen that Mrs. Rogers was not behind-hand, in the profits de-

rived by industrious serving women from the assignation business.—We have also intimated that the worthy soul did considerable in the way of "picking and stealing." Individual ly, her thefts were small; collectively, they amounted to a round sum, in the course of a year. Silver spoons were missed, and the servants were scolded by the excellent Mrs. Rogers, for their carelessness. Gold rings, and other small articles of jewelry, "stepped out" in the most mysterious manner; they had probably been dropped upon the floor, and rolled beneath the carpet. Several of Mrs. Harold's most valuable dresses annually disappeared; no one could account for their absence. Occasionally, a bank bill, a gold coin, or a handful of silver, that had been laid in some drawer, or desk, would be sought for; when lo! the deposit would be found to have "taken unto itself wings and flown away." At such times, Mrs. Rogers would lament that there were dishonest people in the world; and those who heard the good lady, and were much edified by her moral and religious discourse, little suspected the truth of the matter—that she herself was the thief.

The housekeeper, as we have stated, having duly secured her money in her stocking, announced that she was ready. Accordingly, she proceeded towards the house, followed at a little distance by Lopez. They were so fortunate as to reach the mansion and to ascend to the chamber of Mrs. Harold, without being noticed.

A thrill of licentious delight passed through the Spaniard's frame, as he entered. An air of sacred purity seemed to pervade the place, which even the presence of that villain could not dissipate.—A kind of soft, holy voluptuousness; a quiet, refined elegance; the most exquisite taste—all were there.

The moon shone brillian'y that

evening, and a flood of gushing, silvery radiance streamed into the windows of the chamber, rendering it almost as light as day. Upon the wall hung the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Harold, rendered distinctly visible by the moon's rays, and startling the guilty pair by their life-like presence. The Spaniard shuddered when his eyes rested upon his master's portrait, which seemed to start from the canvass and frown terribly upon him; and the villain fancied that the sternly-compressed lips muttered an oath of vengeance upon him, for the wrong which he meditated against that pure and most excellent woman.

"This is the closet," said Mrs. Rogers, as she opened the door of a small apartment, which was occupied as a sort of store room for cast-off clothing, and the like.

"See!" cried the housekeeper, pointing to a crack in the door—"this will enable you to view all that passes in the chamber. Now are you satisfied with these arrangements?"

"They are all very well," replied Lopez, "provided that the lady does not discover me. In that case, there will be the devil to pay!"

"Rest perfectly easy on that score; Mrs. Harold never uses this closet—her husband throws his worn-out clothes in here, and an old Jew comes once or twice a year to buy them; that is all. But remember, you must restrain your impetuosity, should you become excited by the lady's charms. Do not repeat this afternoon's folly, for heaven's sake!"

"Depend upon my discretion," said Lopez.

"You will have to remain in this closet all night," continued the housekeeper—"for you could not get out of the chamber during the night, without running great risk of detection. Mrs. Harold is a very early riser, as you well know; at day-break she goes forth from her chamber, to walk

in the garden. At the proper time to-morrow morning, when the coast is clear, I'll come here and conduct you safely out.—Now I've a piece of extraordinary good news for you."

"What is it?" asked Lopez.

"Your model of voluptuous beauty, as you call her—though, in my opinion, she's ten years too young to styled a perfect beauty, for a woman doesn't reach her prime until she's fifty—Mrs. Harold, I say, will to-night take a bath, for she requested me to make the needful preparations."

"Heaven! and can you so arrange it that I may witness the ceremony of ablution?" eagerly demanded the Spaniard.

"Nothing is easier, my friend.—Listen; a portable bath will be brought into this chamber, and the lady, having become divested of all superfluous raiment, will enter and remain half an hour. You must know that she is in the luxurious habit of bathing frequently in a certain prepared and perfumed water, (very expensive, and procurable only by rich people,) which enables persons of middle age, and even those who are advancing in years, to preserve an appearance of youthful freshness. That accounts for Mrs. Harold's fine complexion and smooth, glossy skin. I will attend her to-night, and shall take good care to have the bath placed in a position favorable to you."

"A thousand thanks, my dear Rogers," cried the delighted Spaniard; and, in the excess of his joy, he warmly embraced and kissed the vile woman, who returned his caresses with interest, and seemed strongly inclined to protract the agreeable pastime—much more so, at all events, than her companion; for the latter, in answer to a whispered suggestion of his female coadjutor, gave utterance to a most decided negative.

"Hark!" cried the housekeeper, after a long and protracted remon-

ance with her ungallant friend. "I hear the sound of carriage wheels; can it be possible that Mrs. Harold has returned already?"

She ran to a window and looked out.

"Yes," she continued, "a carriage has stopped before the house; I see Mrs. Harold getting out; she will go directly to her chamber, and I must run to meet her. Quick, Lopez; into the closet with you! There—that will do; now keep as quiet as a mouse, and don't venture from your hole, on any account. Trust to me for all the rest—adieu!"

The housekeeper hastened out; in a few minutes she returned, bearing two lighted wax candles, and ushering in Mrs. Harold. The lady divested herself of bonnet and shawl, and appeared in an elegant evening costume. She threw herself upon a sofa, with an air of fatigue.

"How tedious," she exclaimed, in a tone of vexation—"to be forced to comply with the absurd rules of fashionable etiquette! These formal visits which one is obliged to make, are insufferable bores, my good Mrs. Rogers. One is obliged to sit and listen to the silliest small talk imaginable—to the affairs of the neighbors, the last new importation of Italian opera singers, Mrs. Grandbug's great party in anticipation, and such stuff. This evening I was persecuted by the impertinent gallantries of a foreign moustachied dandy, who calls himself a Count; becoming both wearied and disgusted, I pleaded indisposition as my apology for an early departure."

"These are the trials of beauty, madam," said the housekeeper, as, in obedience to a sign from the lady, she began to loosen the dress of the latter, preparatory to its removal.—"Humble, ordinary people like myself are exempt from the cares and troubles which afflict the beautiful and rich.

I am almost disposed to be thankful that I am only a housekeeper."

"Yet your superior education, Mrs. Rogers—your excellent moral and religious character—the purity of your life—your sterling honesty—all render you deserving of a far more elevated sphere than that which you now occupy."

"Ah, madam! the goodness of your own heart makes you think me better than I really am."

The housekeeper spoke the truth, for once in her life. Mrs. Harold's excellent heart, which could scarcely comprehend hypocrisy or wickedness of any kind, prompted her to believe the vile woman to be the very pink of moral and religious propriety.

The process of disrobing gradually progressed, and the concealed Spaniard was a breathless and excited spectator. His lascivious gaze was rivetted upon that superb form, whose luxuriant and voluptuous beauty was fully displayed, in all the unconsciousness of innocence and fancied security.

The fair, sloping shoulders—the magnificent bust—the arms, so full, yet tapering down towards the small, white hands—the shapely foot and comely ankle, as well as the outlines of a fine, ample leg—each successively claimed the admiration of the libidinous Spaniard.

"You will please to ring for them to bring in the bath, Mrs. Rogers," said the lady, as she threw a shawl over her shoulders; and, approaching a window, she drew aside the damask curtain and looked forth into the quiet, moon-lighted streets.

The housekeeper obeyed, and in a few moments two stout daughters of the Emerald Isle made their appearance, bearing between them a small bath of an unique and handsome pattern; this was partly filled with a clear liquid, that exhaled a most delicious and grateful perfume.

Mrs. Rogers was very particular to have the bath placed directly in front of the closet, and within a few feet of it. Knowing that Lopez was watching her movements with interest, she looked towards his place of concealment, and by an expressive glance claimed his gratitude for her ingenuity in his behalf.

The two servant girls withdrew the chamber door was locked, and Mrs. Harold prepared to enter the bath, and immerse her limbs in its fragrant and refreshing waters.



ENGLISH TOM VISITS THE MINISTER'S STUDY.—See page 116.

And now must we check the wandering impulse of our rambling pen, which prompts us to glide into all the particulars of that voluptuous scene; but O! thrice gentle reader! again do we implore thee to bring into requisition all the sparkling treasures of thy rich imagination. If thou art one of earth's fair daughters—born of the world, but fitted by thy transcendent beauty to adorn a celestial sphere—think of thine own sweet charms, whose praises are whispered to thee with mute eloquence by the faithful

mirror, when thou art all alone in thy most private sanctuary, and no sound is heard save the breezy murmuring of the summer trees, commingling with the soft rustling of Cupid's invisible and golden wings; then, fair one! thou mar'st thou conceive the loveliness of that superb woman, whose limbs were kissed by the wano waters of the bath. But, reader, thou art one of "creation's lords."

Thy mind to dwell upon the memory of the most beautiful female thou hast ever seen; or imagine the undraped beauties of Eve, when bathing in some limpid stream that flowed musically through Eden's garden; then may'st thou attain some adequate conception of the voluptuous scene upon which gazed the concealed and enraptured Spaniard.

During the half hour that Mrs. Harold remained in the bath, a desultory conversation was sustained between her and the housekeeper, a portion of which may prove interesting to the reader.

"This will be the first night, for many years that I have slept alone," said the lady, referring to her husband's absence; and the smile with which she accompanied her words, partook more of sadness than of cheerfulness.

"Ah, madam," remarked the housekeeper, glancing expressively towards the magnificent and voluptuous bed—"I know that you will feel very strange, to sleep alone, after being so long accustomed to the society of a handsome and agreeable gentleman like Mr. Harold; you will sadly miss him from your arms."

The lady made no reply, but sighed as she layed her bosom with the sweet-scented water. Her eyes partly closed, and she seemed to resign herself to the tide of delicious longings that filled her soul;—feelings engendered by the allusion to her husband,

and enhanced in power by the luxurious pleasures of that delightful bath.

The concealed Spaniard gazed with a wildly palpitating heart; and the housekeeper looked upon the lady with feelings of envy—those fair, glowing and yet delicate charms were in such striking contrast with the peculiarities of her own coarse physical organization.

"How many women there are," continued Mrs. Rogers, assuming a sorrowful tone—"who would not hesitate to indemnify themselves for their husbands' absence, by forming improper intimacies with other men! Nay, they would rejoice when their liege lords went on a distant journey, because an opportunity would then be afforded them to gratify their lewd passions to their hearts' content."

"Such wretches as you speak of," said the lady, indignantly—"are unworthy the name of women. No temptation could ever induce me to prove unfaithful to my dear husband although his absence should be protracted for years;—even should I never again behold him on earth, his memory would be sacred to me, and no man could ever supplant his image in my heart."

As she uttered these words, Mrs. Harold gazed affectionately at her husband's portrait; while Mrs. Rogers glanced meaningly towards the closet door, behind which stood the Spaniard.

"And yet, madam," remarked the housekeeper—"there are many honest, well-meaning women, of ardent temperaments, who are patterns of virtue while their husbands are with them, and would continue to be patterns of virtue all their lives, provided that they enjoyed the society of those husbands. But when they are left widows, as it were, by the departure of their lords and masters on distant journeys, their ardent temperaments will often overcome

their virtue, and the tempter triumphs. It seems to me that in such instances, nature and circumstances are more to be blamed, than the poor women themselves. But I'm neither a philosopher, nor a logician, madam; and perhaps my argument is a bad one."

"You have a great deal too much charity for such creatures," said Mrs. Harold; "nothing can justify the departure of a woman from the path of virtue. She should prefer death to dishonor; and she must indeed be a weak-minded wretch, if she cannot practice a sufficient degree of self-denial, to preserve her from such shame and degradation. The image of her absent husband should alone be capable of arousing her amorous desires; the prospect of his return, and the anticipation of the pleasures which will accompany that return, should be all-powerful in keeping those desires in check. If he never returns, she should consecrate his memory by a life of virtue, and constantly pray for strength to resist temptation. As for second marriages, I abhor them."

"Such elevated sentiments were to be expected from you, dear madam," said the housekeeper—"you are altogether too good and pure to comprehend the strength of those passions which often overcome poor mortals, whose natures, unlike yours, are earthly and sensual."

"Your opinion of me, my good Mrs. Rogers, is altogether too exalted," said the lady, with some embarrassment of manner—"you are entirely mistaken in regard to my true character, if you suppose me to be destitute of those feelings and desires so inherent to weak human nature. My passions are strong—my temperament is of the most ardent kind; yet, though my tastes and inclinations are eminently voluptuous and my habits of life very luxurious, thank heaven!

I have always been enabled to restrain the impulses of my hot nature, and have never violated my sacred obligations as a woman and as a wife. Guilt is a dreadful thing to contemplate; yet, so help me heaven! sooner than sacrifice my virtue, I would destroy myself with knife or poison!"

"But suppose," rejoined the housekeeper, regarding the lady with a fixed, steady look—"suppose that you should become the victim of a ruffian, (which God forbid!) who should forcibly violate your person; or suppose that a drug were administered, which should, by throwing you into a condition of insensibility, render you the prey of an artful scoundrel; would you then commit suicide?"

"These are strange questions," said Mrs. Harold—"but I will answer them truly. Should I become the victim of either one of the outrages that you have named—which may God forbid!—I would not imprison my pure soul within a polluted body. I would try to live until my husband's return; then, without suffering him to embrace my dishonored form, or even to touch me with so much as the point of his finger, I would tell him of my wrongs, make him swear to avenge them, and, before he could have time to prevent me, plunge a dagger into my heart, in emulation of Lactetia of old, after she had been made the victim of a tyrant's lust."

"But, madam, suppose that you could not point out the perpetrator of the outrage, how then could your husband avenge the wrong?"

"You exhaust me with your suppositions, Mrs. Rogers," replied the lady, with some impatience of manner—"and I can't, for the life of me, see their object. I should be certain to suspect some one of having committed the outrage, and that suspicion might lead to the detection and punishment of the villain.—A righteous God would never suffer such a man

ster to escape the just reward of his crime. Even should he go 'un-whipped of justice' in this world, there is a world hereafter in which his punishment would be endless and eternal."

"Pardon me, madam," said the housekeeper—"if my language has given you offence. I introduced my absurd suppositions merely for the purpose of making talk, as the saying is. Your position in life raises you above the possibility of such terrible outrages."

This conversation here ceased; and, the customary half hour having expired, Mrs. Harold issued from the bath. Again did Lopez gloat upon her matchless charms, as she submitted her person to the drying process, performed by the housekeeper with the aid of fine white napkins. Then, having been arrayed in the seductive garments of night, she retired to her couch.

"You will cause the bath to be removed, Mrs. Rogers," said the lady—"and leave both lights burning, for I cannot endure the darkness, now that I am alone; then you can yourself retire, for I shall not need you any farther to-night."

These directions were obeyed; and the housekeeper bade her mistress good night; but before taking her departure, she stole a significant glance towards the closet door—a glance warning the Spaniard to be silent and cautious. Then Mrs. Harold was left alone with that murderous ruffian, whose presence she so little suspected.

The lady tossed uneasily upon her solitary couch, and ever and anon regarded the portrait of her husband with looks full of ardent affection. Then, pressing her hands upon her wildly throbbing bosom, she would give utterance to the most melting sighs.

As she reclined upon the gorgeous

couch, in an attitude of voluptuous abandonment, her superb countenance glowing with health and beauty, and her fine eyes sparkling with the fires of ardent yet tender sensibility, she murmured—

"Ah, kind heaven! enable me to endure my Henry's absence with patience—may I be sustained in the pure path of virtue, by bright-eyed hope! Yes, I must discipline this wildly-beating heart to practice self-denial; should temptation assail me—should these amorous passions madly struggle to overcome my virtue and my better judgment, then shall the image of my absent lord banish from my breast such unholy desires! Alas! why are poor mortals afflicted with such weakness? 'Tis that the triumph of moral purity may be more glorious, in proportion to the intensity of our carnal cravings. And now may my slumbers be free from unholy imaginings; may they be fraught with dreams of happiness and peace!"

The eyes closed—the limbs sank into a graceful attitude of repose—the respiration became more regular—a smile of ineffable sweetness parted the rosy lips; and Mrs. Harold slept.

The moon kept on in her starry path through the heavens; the mystic hour of midnight arrived, and was proclaimed from a hundred steeples throughout the vast city. The streets were deserted, save by the watchman on his lonely round or by some staggering pedestrian, returning home from a late revel. From a distance faintly came the music of a band of serenaders—no vulgar fellows with vile negro banjo and the rattling "bones"—but gentlemen in dainty attire, furnished with the mellow-toned flute, and that sweet instrument of romance and of song, the "light guitar." Perchance, too, the figure of some be-

laid courtesan occasionally fluttered by anxious to avoid the observation of ungallant and meddlesome "Charles."

Well, it was the midnight hour, as we have said; and then forth from his place of concealment in Mrs. Harold's chamber cautiously issued the Spaniard. He approached the bed, and gazed upon the slumbering lady. Then did the villain's breath come hot and thick; the perspiration started from every pore; his heart beat audibly—for the near view of those distracting charms well nigh maddened him. Unable to restrain himself, he bent over her, and polluted her ripe, moist lips with a licentious kiss.

The lady awoke with a start, and a slight scream; quick as lightning, Lopez concealed himself behind the curtains of the bed.

"Gracious heavens!" cried Mrs. Harold, partly arising from the couch, and gazing wildly around her—"could it have been a dream only, or did I really behold a dark figure at the bed side? Nay, I thought that some hideous being imprinted upon my lips a kiss; and, O my God! I fancy that I can detect upon these lips the foul taste of tobacco juice, as if left there by the ravisher! This is dreadful; but, after all, it may be nothing but imagination. Yet that closet door—how came that open!"

As if animated by a desperate resolve, which overcame her fear, she leaped from the bed, seized one of the candles, and began to search the chamber. The situation of Lopez was a critical one; but he knew how to act, in this emergency. He drew from his pocket a huge clasp knife, and determined to cut her throat, if she discovered him. Crouching down, he crawled beneath the bed, and covered himself with a roll of carpeting that had been placed there.

The lady finally looked under the

bed, but fortunately for the villain, she did not observe him.

It would, however, have been fortunate for poor Mrs. Harold, had the discovery been made, for in that case her instant death, by the ruffian's knife, would have been certain—then would she have been preserved from the dreadful fate that awaited her.

"I am a silly creature," she murmured, as she resumed her place in bed, perfectly satisfied that her imagination had deceived her—"to dream of the possibility of any person's gaining access to this chamber! As for the closet door being open, a draft of wind probably did it; but that singular and disagreeable tobacco-like taste upon my lips I certainly can't account for. When I remember the strange remarks and questions of Mrs. Rogers to-night; in relation to my becoming the victim of personal violence and outrage, there seems to be some reason for my alarm; but those remarks and questions have probably operated upon my imagination, and induced me to suspect the presence of danger, when none really exists. Ah! my husband! it is at such seasons of alarm that I shall doubly miss your dear presence. There is no one now to embrace me, but Morpheus; and again do I seek repose in the arms of the drowsy god. Heaven protect me, and bless my Henry!"

Again she slept; but Lopez did not venture to come forth from his hiding place, until a profound silence of half an hour's duration, assured him that he might do so with safety.

Then again did he bend over that divine form, and devour its beauties with his licentious eyes. Then, holding his clasp knife in his hand, ready to murder her if she awoke, did the audacious villain venture to perpetrate new outrages; but not the extreme outrage which his black soul longed to consummate, and

which he was obliged to defer until after the administration of the infernal powder.

But hark! the ruffian hears a noise in the hall beneath—a sound like a foot-step; then all is silent as the tomb. He listens; he softly opens the chamber door, but hears not the faintest sound. He curses his imagination for conjuring up a groundless fear; he closes the chamber door, and again approaches the couch.

He resumed his villainous and lecherous gaze, which in itself was a stupendous outrage upon that innocent, unconscious and foully-wronged woman; yet still she awoke not—still did the lightnings of heaven refrain from blasting the wretch, and hurling him to the ground, a withered and blackened corpse.

Suddenly he started, and turned deadly pale; for the chamber door opened, almost noiselessly, and two persons entered. They were evidently burglars; for their faces were covered with masks of black crape—one of them carried a dark lantern, and both were armed with pistols.

The astonishment of the burglars seemed to equal the fears of Lopez. The former personages conversed together apart, in low whispers.

"Come, you Spanish hell hound!" said one of them at length, in a subdued tone, addressing Lopez—"you see I know you; what in the devil's name brings you here?"

"Before I answer you," said the Spaniard, gaining courage—for he conceived that the burglars would be as averse to detection, as he was himself—"before I answer you, perhaps you'll be good enough to tell me what the devil's name brings you here."

"We a cracksmen," answered the robber, who, as well as his companion, was of a slight, elegant figure—"we are gentlemen of the cross,

and came merely in the way of business. Now, damn you, answer my question—what are you doing here?"

"Oh, I came merely in the way of pleasure," replied Lopez, coolly pointing towards the bed, whereon lay the well-nigh denuded form of the sleeping lady—"Mr. Harold started on a long journey this morning, and I am taking a little advantage of his absence—that's all."

"You are an infernal scoundrel!" said the robber.

"Well," rejoined Lopez—"we won't quarrel about names; but it seems to me that you and your friend have but little to boast of, on the score of honesty. However, I give you both credit for your courage and skill. I do a little in the crack line myself, occasionally."

"Then you must be a miserable petty thief," said the robber, scornfully—"for no true gentleman of the cross will ever take advantage of a defenceless woman!"

"Ha! I know the tones of that voice," cried the Spaniard—"I believe that I have the pleasure of addressing—"

"Jack Harold!" said the robber, removing his mask, and displaying the features of our hero.

"And your companion is—"

"Gallus Kate," said the other, in a musical voice, as she raised her mask, and revealed her beautiful countenance.

Jack was dressed in the most unique and splendid manner, in a suit of silk velvet, profusely ornamented with buttons of solid gold. He also wore a flowing and luxuriant wig, in order to conceal the loss of his own hair; and in the lace bosom of his shirt sparkled a diamond pin of great value.

Kate was attired more plainly, yet still in the most elegant manner; and her own beautiful hair flowed over her shoulders.

Our hero stepped to the bed-side, and gently drew the coverlid over the form of Mrs. Harold, who was still in a profound slumber; then, turning to the Spaniard, he said, in a stern whisper—

"Leave this chamber, instantly!"

"Come," said Lopez—"you mustn't interfere with my arrangements, young fellow. You'd better retire with your blowen, at once, and save trouble."

"Leave the chamber, I say, or a leaden pill shall find its way through your skull! You know me too well to think me capable of trifling."

And, as he uttered these words, Jack cocked a pistol, and levelled it at the Spaniard's head.

"The devil! Take care, lieutenant, or that pistol might go off," exclaimed Lopez—"is this the way in which you repay me for the trouble I have taken to make a crossman of you? Remember, it is to me that you are indebted for your present position."

"Yes," said Jack, bitterly—"you are right; had it not been for you, villain, instead of being a hunted criminal, at this moment I would have been honest and happy. But I've no time to waste with you; will you go hence, or die? Take your choice."

"Well," said the Spaniard, doggedly—"if I must go, I must; but why do you insist upon it?"

"Because your presence here is an insult to that lady, whom I once regarded as my mother. Not knowing of Mr. Harold's departure, I came here to-night to rob the house, in revenge for his having sent me to the Refuge; but as that lady was ever kind to me, I'll protect her with my life. Now go at once."

Lopez strode angrily towards the door; upon the threshold he paused, and said, as he saw his clenched

hand at Jack is a menacing manner—

"Remember, my lad, I have sworn to hang you, and I'll keep my oath. The manner in which you obtained the finery that you and your blowen now strut about in, is known to me; as well as all that occurred at the Den the other night."

"Tell me," asked Jack, eagerly—"is my father—the Prince, I mean—is he dead?"

"Yes, and One Arm'd Bill, also; for which brace of murders the hounds of the police are after you; so that the pair of you will be likely to swing upon the gallows, before you're much older."

"Stay," said our hero, as the Spaniard was about to take himself off—"you are a treacherous scoundrel, and, unless secured, may go forth into the streets and bring the officers of justice upon us. Lead the way to your own house, in the garden."

Lopez was forced to comply, for he knew Jack's firm and desperate nature, and dreaded the pistols with which he and Kate were armed. The trio proceeded down the stairs, through the hall, and issued from the rear of the house into the garden; this they crossed, and entered the gardener's house:

"Show a glim, Kate," cried Jack. Kate drew up the slide of the dark lantern which she carried, and a tolerable light was produced thereby.

"Now," said our hero to Lopez—"you must consent to be bound hand and foot. Resistance will but endanger your life. You can easily obtain your release in the morning."

"Here's the very article we want," said Kate, taking up a stout rope that lay in one corner.

The Spaniard remonstrated, promised, begged and threatened—but all availed him nothing. Resistance on his part would have been madness, for two pistols were held to his head—

In a few minutes he lay upon the floor, bound so securely that he was unable to move an inch.

"Curses on you!" roared Lopez, foaming with rage—"you shall both pay dearly for this! By God, I'll have such vengeance—"

"Let the dog growl; come, Kate, let us leave him to his agreeable reflections," said Jack.

"We had better finish our work here, first," remarked the girl, with her accustomed forethought and sagacity—"the scoundrel has the lungs of a bull, and by yelling murder and watch could easily put the police in pursuit of us. We must gag him."

"Always right, dear Kate," cried Jack.

With considerable difficulty, and no small danger to their fingers, they succeeded in forcing into the man's mouth a piece of wood, which, by distending his jaws to their utmost capacity, prevented his articulation of a single syllable; he could only make a guttural noise in his throat.

Bidding the unfortunate Spaniard a sarcastic good night, and wishing him pleasant dreams, our hopeful pair recrossed the garden, and paused at the back door of the mansion.

"Here let us hold a council of war," said Jack, seating himself upon the steps.

"Agreed," cried Kate, placing herself at his side—"shall we enter the house and carry off lots of booty; or shall we, like gallant *cracksmen*, respect the lady's unprotected situation, and go off with light pockets and easy consciences?"

"Supposing Mr. Harold to be at home," replied our hero—"I did intend to make a clear sweep of the entire premises to-night; not that we need money, for we have plenty, thanks to my father's industry—but merely to keep our hands in, and at the same time obtain revenge for both of us; for you, on account of the

wound which he inflicted upon you, on the night of our former burglary; for myself, on account of his having been mainly instrumental in consigning me to the care of my particular friend, Mr. Piggot, of the *Refuge*.—But, as Mr. Harold is absent, we will defer our further operations until his return, for I love and respect his lady, who, while I lived beneath his roof, was like the kindest of mothers to me."

"You are right, my dear," said Kate, approvingly—"besides, it would seem cowardly in us to *crack a crib* during the absence of the master.—So now let us go home."

"I must first warn Mrs. Harold to beware of that Spaniard. Show a glim."

Jack took from his pocket a scrap of paper and a pencil; and, by the light of the dark lantern, wrote as follows:—

"To Mrs. HAROLD. Madam:—Beware of Lopez, the Spanish gardener. He meditates some evil design against you; for last night he stealthily visited your chamber.—He is a villain or the blackest dye, capable of any act of dishonesty, treachery or outrage. This comes from A FRIEND."

Directing Kate to await his return, Jack hastened to the chamber of the lady, who was still asleep, and placed this note upon her dressing-table.—He then rejoined his companion, and the pair, having quitted the premises by the way they came, proceeded towards the abode of the Giantess, in Canal street.

What came of Jack's warning to the good lady, and much other very interesting circumstances which afterwards happened to the various characters of our story, will be luminously set forth in the sparkling pages of the work entitled: "THE SPANIARD'S CRIME."

THE END.