

STANLEY.

STANLEY;

OR,

PLAYING FOR AMUSEMENT,

AND

BETTING TO COUNT THE GAME.

Scenes in the South.

BY

D. WALKER.

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This Work is Respectfully Dedicated

TO THE

HON. JACOB S. YERGER;

IT HAVING BEEN SUGGESTED TO THE AUTHOR BY HIS
ABLE CHARGE TO THE GRAND JURY ON A CER-
TAIN OCCASION, WHILST PRESIDING AS JUDGE
OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF
MISSISSIPPI.

P R E F A C E.

THE circumstances under which this book is presented to the public, are peculiarly embarrassing. It comes rough from the author's pen, with all its imperfections upon its head; the hand that might and would have revised it, lies powerless upon a heart which, when animated by life, beat with every noble and manly impulse.

But it was not so much the object of the Author to give to the public a volume of beautifully rounded periods and harmonious sentences, as to present to the young the consequences of a vice in so bold and convincing a manner as might arrest their attention and save them from its evil tendency. This was his whole end and aim: with what success he has accomplished his purpose, the voice of the public must decide.

The author was born and raised in the South, and Southern breezes now whisper softly over his mortal remains. Those who knew him, knew his devotion to his country, and that he would have shed his last drop of blood in her defence. But whilst he saw her rising in wealth and importance, in wisdom and refinement, he saw at the same time spreading over her lovely plains and fertile valleys a vice which, like

the trail of the serpent, was defacing her moral beauty, and crushing her fairest and loveliest flowers—intellect, genius, and virtue too often becoming the slave of its fascinating and deadly influence; and to arrest this demoralizing evil, he bent the best energies of his pen.

It is published for a daughter's benefit, to whom, with a father's blessing, it was given a few hours before his death. And here it will not be improper to express our most grateful acknowledgments to the Hon. J. J. B. White, of Yazoo County, to whose kind encouragement, liberality, and timely exertion, we are indebted for its publication. May he meet the reward which should ever follow a generous, noble action.

PLAYING FOR AMUSEMENT,

AND

Betting to Count the Game.

CHAPTER I.

The opening lines should fully clear the author's way,
To bring his subject into view without delay.

BOILEAU.

THE large travelling carriage of Col. Clarkson, containing himself and family, with the usual retinue of servants, etc., was moving slowly along the bank of the Mississippi River, near what is called the "Bend," in the State of Mississippi, early in autumn, when "little Agnes," as she was called, a girl of some twelve or thirteen summers, who had for some time been leaning her head pensively out of the carriage window, started up and exclaimed:

"Oh, Ma! See that old man with his long white hair!"

"My!" exclaimed Mrs. Clarkson, "Do look, husband!"

He did look, and beheld by far the most remarkable personage he had ever seen. An old man, above the medium height, with strongly marked features, a broad chest, but not deep; a square, high forehead; high cheek bones, firmly-set lips, hair as white as cotton, and falling down his back nearly to his waist; a little bent in figure, from habit rather than from infirmity; his dress neat and becoming age and gravity;

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his hands crossed behind him; walking up and down the river bank with firm and measured step, casting now and then a glance toward the stream, as if expecting to see some cherished object emerge from the muddy and angry waters. The whiteness of his long locks, and the deep lines in his face, gave him the appearance of extreme age; but the firmness of his step and a certain air of resolution about him, satisfied the observer that time alone had not so frosted his hair, nor made the lines in his face. There was an expression of melancholy, a majesty of grief about the stern, venerable old man, that awed one to silence and respect. Bob, the carriage-driver, upon seeing him, dropped the reins, and gazed as if struck by a spell. All looked in silence until a turn in the road hid the sad, solemn figure from their view, when they sighed, turned and looked each other inquiringly in the face, as much as to say, "What can it mean? Who can it be?" Thus impressed and wondering, they soon drove up to Col. Clarkson's plantation, the end and aim of their journey. The Colonel had been there frequently before, but always by water, and remained but a few days at a time. This was the first visit his family had made to the place. By agreement with several of the proprietors of neighboring plantations, whose families determined to spend the fall and a portion of the ensuing winter on their places, Col. Clarkson's family determined upon the same thing, and had gone up for that purpose.

The family residence, if a rough weather-boarded house, with board roof, unplanned floors, a wide passage, and long gallery, and some unfinished and unfurnished rooms, perched upon small cypress pillars, could be called a residence, was pleasantly situated at a convenient distance from the river, and distinguishable from the two long rows of whitewashed negro cabins, similarly perched upon cypress pillars, and shaded by double rows of China trees, by its size, being some-

thing larger, and hence called by the negroes the "big house," a name common among negroes for the family residence. The prospect for comfort was unpromising enough; but as there were two or three plain carpenters among the negroes on the plantation, and the Colonel had recently purchased in New Orleans, the great negro mart for the Southwest, several "hands," and ordered them shipped to the plantation to aid in picking out the cotton, thus enabling the overseer to spare the carpenters from the field, plans were soon made for enlarging and improving the premises, so as to make them not only inhabitable, but every way convenient and comfortable. Before leaving his residence in Bluff City, the Colonel had secured the services of a good house carpenter to superintend the improvements on his place, and found him there waiting. Material also had been supplied, and we may here remark that all that willing hands and strong arms could do, and good taste and an eye to substantial comfort suggest, and wealth command, to relieve the forbidding aspect, was soon done and furnished.

In the evening, Mr. Blake, the overseer, a gentleman something above his class in education and general information, called to see the family, and give an account to Clarkson of affairs on the plantation. He was inquired of in relation to the gray-haired old man whose appearance had so impressed them in the afternoon.

"All that is known of him," he said, "is, that the first settlers found him here some thirty years ago, when this entire region was a forest of cane and tangled undergrowth, except his little clearing. He looked much then as now, save that his hair was not perhaps quite so white; his manners and habits were the same, walking up and down the river bank, in the bent manner you saw him this afternoon, at all seasons, and sometimes in all sorts of weather. He has two old negroes, a man and woman. They are as silent

and uniform in their habits as he. They are all thought to be deaf and dumb, as no one ever heard either of them speak; nor has the old man ever been known, by look or gesture, to recognize the presence of any one. Wood-choppers and other earlier settlers used to make advances to him—ask him for shelter, water, a meal, direction, or something of the kind, but received no reply from him of any sort, either in word or manner. His air of melancholy and dignity repels and rebukes all impertinent inquiry and curiosity; and his evident desire to be alone, unknowing and unknown, and the belief that he is nursing some great grief, saves him from interruption by the white population, and a feeling of superstition secures him from all disturbance from the blacks. Who he is, when he came here, where he came from, and why he deports himself thus, no one knows; and he either cannot or does not care to tell. A thousand surmises are of course made as to the cause of his singular deportment; but beyond what I have said, nothing is definitely known, save that he is called the 'HERMIT.'

"Have you ever visited his house?"

"Often."

"And you think he and all are deaf?"

"I do not think so myself. That is the general belief, however. I can hardly give a reason why I do not think so, unless it be the air of intelligence about him, and the speaking appearance of every thing about the house. I think you will agree with me, should you ever visit him."

"Do you think he would take it unkindly, were I to visit him?"

"I do not; though he will not notice you in any way, and act exactly as if you were not there."

"Strange being, certainly!"

"Will he let me go?" asked Agnes, a deeply interested listener to all that had been said.

"O, yes," said Mr. Blake; "my children go there occasionally."

For several days Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson were so absorbed in the mysteries of building, improving, repairing, and cleaning up, about the house and grounds, as to lose all thought of the Hermit. Not so, however, with Agnes. He moved strangely through her dreams during the night, and was the first in her thoughts in the morning. As soon as breakfast was over, she took her little maid and started in search of him. There he was, just as upon the day previous, with his hands behind him, walking up and down the river. She seemed singularly fascinated. As she made the turn in the road, she started, upon seeing him, like a timid fawn, with the exclamation, "There!" in a suppressed whisper. She stood gazing at him for a moment; then advanced a few steps, stopped and gazed, with her finger to her mouth, and eyes opened wide; started forward again, and so continued, until within a short distance of the path worn by him in his promenade, at no time taking her eyes from him. Her motions were involuntary, guided as by a charm, her head a little bent to one side, and she touched the ground lightly, ready, like the fawn, to bound away at the least alarm, her eyes following him up and down, unconsciously receding as he approached, and advancing as he receded, as if by some physical force. For some time he was ignorant of her presence; but she finally crossed his path, and was standing between him and the river; and, raising his eyes to look, as was his habit, over the stream, he encountered her fixed, charmed gaze; and a vision of loveliness, seraphic beauty such as is rarely seen in this rugged world, thrilled him like an electric shock. Agnes was lovely beyond the power of pen to write. It was not merely the exquisitely chiselled form, lithe and perfect in all its parts, the clear white skin, softly pencilled Grecian profile, dark brown hair, flowing in light

wavy curls upon shoulders white and pellucid as alabaster, and splendid blazing hazel eye, but the soul that shone through, giving life, animation, and vocality to all. It was a vision such as one sees in dreams, sometimes in pictures, but rarely in real life. Such a being is at rare intervals lent to earth by a kind Providence, to show how far his handiwork exceeds in perfection the utmost stretch of genius. It lasted but a moment; for as soon as she recovered from the surprise the consciousness of being observed occasioned, she bounded off like an antelope, reached the main road, where her timid maid awaited her, and, without a word, walked briskly home. Her visits were repeated daily; and although the Hermit seemed unaware of her presence, he was not; for when by any chance she failed to take her stand beside his path, his glances were toward the turn in the road, rather than the river. Her interest in him increased, and by degrees she grew less shy, more confiding, and would involuntarily follow a few steps, as he passed to and fro. One morning he was more melancholy than usual—appeared depressed in spirits—and she drew closer to him, walked near him, looking wistfully into his face. As she looked, a big tear gathered in the eye of the stern, hard old man, rounded, trembled upon the lid, rolled slowly down the wrinkled face, and dropped in the dust. Little Agnes could stand it no longer, and sprang up, seized the old man around the neck, buried her face in his bosom, and wept as if her heart would run to tears. He folded her close to his bosom, and said:

“What is the matter, my angel child?” The first words he had spoken for thirty years.

“O, you are so sad!” And she nestled closer to him.

“Do you indeed care for the sorrows of an old man, a waif broken and cast away by cruel fortune? an aged hemlock, so old and repulsive that the birds will not build nor perch upon it?” And the tears rained from his eyes; the

first he had shed since boyhood. He soon recovered, and, suppressing his emotion, put her gently down, took her hand, and led her along in his walk. From that time, a perfect understanding existed between them, and each day she placed herself beside him, her hand in his, or holding his with both hers, promenaded up and down with him until her little feet would grow weary, neither speaking a word. For her sake he would often change his walk, until it became a desultory ramble about the river bank and the woods near, gathering at times wild fruit and berries. By degrees, his passion took an entirely new direction; he gave up his old beaten path, and followed and watched little Agnes like some guardian spirit.

It was not long before this simple and beautiful attachment attracted the attention of the ever-careful and fond parents; but knowing it to be safe and innocent, from what they could see and learn of his character, and seeing that it gave pleasure to the solitary old man as well as to their dearly loved and willingly obedient child, it was given full scope. Agnes's chamber, as the house progressed toward completion, was at the northern end of the building, near which ran the road that led back into the swamp; and often at night, when the household were all wrapped in sleep, the measured tramp of the hermit might be heard, as he walked to and fro near her window, like some faithful sentinel keeping watch at his post. She had, of course, explained to her parents how the good understanding between herself and the hermit had begun and progressed, and received their open permission to cultivate his friendship, and do what her young, truthful heart might prompt, to win him from care and thought.

To some it may appear strange how such a touchingly beautiful attachment could exist between so old and stern a man, and such a soft, trusting, lovely child. It was from a peculiar refinement of sentiment and spirit, an exquisite polish

and delicacy of soul common to both. This polish and refinement of spirit is not unfrequently met with in natures outwardly coarse and rugged, and, like diamonds, shows all the brighter for the coarse setting. It is a spark of the divinity; the same that Brabantio's "fair daughter" saw in the Moor, and made her "incur the general mock," in shunning the "curled darlings of the nation" and run to his "sooty bosom;" and not "spells and medicines bought of mountebanks," as her incredulous father thought. Agnes was fond of other children, loved to entertain them, and they were fond of her, but she never seemed to be a part of them. She liked their childish sports and pastimes, but preferred to look rather than partake in them; they were not an object with her, and never recalled after they had passed. She never thought of herself: though beautiful, and always tastily dressed, she seemed not to know or to bestow a thought upon it. She would sit and watch the far-off clouds break and form themselves into a thousand fantastic shapes; count the stars as they came out one by one as twilight deepened, and when surprised in one of these moods, and asked, she could not explain or give expression to the sentiment of the grand and infinite that filled her soul; but she could *feel* it; its impress was there. In the Hermit, without understanding how, she found a spirit kindred to hers. To be sure, he did not sit and gaze in wonder at the creamy clouds that gathered and banked themselves up mountain-like in the summer heavens, nor watch the large sand-hill crane as, at the approach of spring, it stretched its long beak northward, and winged its way towards the pole, calling by its musical *cruke* its feathered mates; and, when lost in the far-distant blue, she did not see him sit down and wonder when the journey would end and why it made it; and passing thence, wonder why it was made at all? But while she did not see this, she saw him buried in thought, and whether like the crane it was lost in the way-

off blue, or was far up beyond the stars, or was down, down, deep beneath the turbid wave, holding communion with some one with wet locks lying there, she could not tell; but as she looked into his sad face, and he all indifferent to the world around, she was lost, as when watching the flight of the crane, counting the stars, or measuring the great infinity beyond. He too found in the sweet child that stared in his face and shared his solitude, a thoughtful spirit like his own, and a common feeling and sympathy wove a tie strong as life between them.

CHAPTER II.

"The tankard foams, and the strong table groans
Beneath the smoking sirloin stretched immense
From side to side, in which, with desperate knife,
They deep incisions make."

THE portion of country in which Col. Clarkson's plantation was situated, was settled by large, wealthy planters, most of whom, as before stated, were spending the fall there with their families, thus forming good society, both male and female. House room, such as it was, was ample upon each plantation. Some were furnished with fine buildings, and all were improving and rendering their temporary homes at least comfortable. Horses and carriages were abundant, the fall dry, and the roads fine. On each pleasant day, gay companies of ladies and children were seen in carriages, riding from one plantation to another, attended by gentlemen on horseback. Their hospitality, for the most part, was free and open, rather than refined; their life rough, and far from conducing to intellectual or moral progress. Hunting, fishing, riding over their plantations, and looking at their crops, constituted the out-door exercise of the gentlemen; cards and other games formed the in-door pastimes. Whiskey and brandy bottles might be seen alongside of the water jar or bucket at one end of the gallery—all Southern residences have galleries—and cigars, pipes, and tobacco, with a servant ready to run for a coal of fire, or a match always on hand. And it was astonishing what an amount of mean whiskey and

tobacco were destroyed that fall at Hermit's Bend. Col. Clarkson, having finished his improvements about the first of October, celebrated it by a large dining party, to which all his neighbors on both the Mississippi and Arkansas sides were invited. Accomplished and elegant women, intelligent and beautiful girls, and gentlemen of the "old regime," were not wanting at this entertainment; for no country can boast of more beauty or chivalry than the South. But there were others at this feast equally well educated, men of wealth and position, but whose generous, noble characters had become so vitiated by excess and indulgence, that the sparkle of the wine cup, the rattle of the dice box, and the excitement of the card table, were preferred even to the society of their lovely wives and daughters; and none of them were either drunkards or gamblers. They would have been horrified to have been even suspected of such a thing; would not associate with one who was suspected. They claimed to drink as a matter of good cheer, and play for amusement, and bet only to count the game.

After the cloth had been removed, and the ladies and younger gentlemen withdrawn to the parlors to listen to good music, or foot it in the dance, tobacco, strong liquors, and cards were called, and the husbands and fathers commenced a game of *Poker*, a fashionable, gentlemanly sort of betting game down South. They commenced the game not as *gaming*, but for amusement! They bet, not to win money, but to count the game! It was only five dollars "anti!" and what was that to men of thousands? They played; wives and daughters inquired from time to time "if it was not time to go?" "Not yet." They played on. The music ceased, and the occasional rumble of carriage-wheels told that the lady guests, one after another, were leaving for home; but the playing continued. They were left alone; evening came;

lights were brought in, and the game continued. Nine o'clock came: ten; eleven; twelve! the game continued; still flit, flit, flit, went the cards; chink, chink, chink, went the money; gluck, gluck, gluck, went the bottle. "I'll go ten better;" "I'll see you ten, and go fifty better;" "I'll see your fifty, and go a hundred;" "I'll call you;" "What do you do it on?" "Aces and—;" "Good." The money is taken down, and the same thing repeated until the closing hours of night. No exercise of the intellect, no generous moral sentiment inspired; only the meanest of man's instincts called into action; his cupidity, his desire for his neighbor's goods. As the plantation bell rung for the negroes to turn out, the players reeled to their rooms; not drunk! O no, certainly not; only dizzy and weak-jointed from long sitting. A dull sleep until nine o'clock in the morning, a passing apology to Mrs. Clarkson, such as "I fear we kept your breakfast waiting, Madam," and their consciences were put at ease; much easier doubtless than their heads. The matter was no more thought of; no apology thought necessary to the wives at home, who counted the weary hours away, waiting their return.

To a greater or less extent, this sort of thing was kept up by the gentlemen from time to time throughout the entire fall. All remonstrances on the part of their anxious wives were unavailing. "It was only for amusement," was the answer to all their reluctantly expressed fears. "But why bet?" "Only to count the game." The invariable answer. "Then why not bet straws or peppercorns?" "Why, that would be childish and ridiculous." Thus all entreaties were vain, and the playing went on. They had hoped, in consenting to spend the fall upon the plantations, that their husbands would be removed from the temptation of the clubs, and saved from this demoralizing vice of playing. They were disap-

pointed, but not discouraged, as it was some respite, at least, and the vice shorn of some of its baldness and moral deformity.

Nothing more of note transpired in the county during the fall, until the session of the Circuit Court. It took place late in the season, and brought to the Bend a number of persons from Bluff City; some as lawyers, some as clients and witnesses, and some merchants and business men, collecting and drumming for custom. The court-house was a half-finished, small, inconvenient building, with benches for the jury, a small stand for the judge, and a long table at which the attorneys sat. Among the latter were Frank Vaughan, Nickols, and Smith. Nickols was about as queer a specimen of human nature as one would meet in a life-time's travel. He was well educated, a good lawyer, and a genius in his way, but an odd genius and compound he was: slender, a little knock-kneed, wobbled in his gait, as if his knees were too weak to sustain him. To avoid staggering when intoxicated, which was by no means a rare occurrence, he would strike off in a sort of dog-trot. He was usually called Old Nick, for short; and when seen in one of these trots, crossing the street, it was remarked, "Old Nick's tight to-day." His feelings and instincts were as refined and delicate as those of a woman, but withal he was as grotesque and uncouth as a monkey, coarse as a clown, and an old bachelor. He had an inveterate habit of hawking and spitting, and hawked with his mouth wide open, and loud enough to be heard across an ordinary town or cornfield, and interspersed his conversation with constant questions, "Do you understand?" and closed his witticisms with, "Heh? ha, ha, ha!" When annoyed, or in a brown study, he would ha-a-awk a whole town out of patience. His frame looked much as if it was strung together by wires, and he had a habit of hoisting his feet up over his head against the mantelpiece in winter,

and gallery-post in summer, or any other object near enough—the side of the house, if nothing else offered—and, crouching down behind his knees, thus making a very unpleasant and indecent exposure of his person in the presence of ladies; for his attitude was chosen from habit, and not to suit the character or sex of his company. When he would detect himself in one of these exposures, he would take down his feet and gaze upon the company with one of his longest and loudest ha-a-a-awks.

Frank Vaughan was a young man of small, slender stature, with long flaxen locks, which he cultivated with care. He dressed like a dandy, though he was not one. He was a good lawyer, and a young man of promise; and though fond of his good looks, talent, and fine clothes, and stood long before his looking-glass, he was withal affable and kind, and very much liked by his companions.

Smith was a good-natured, burly fellow, fond of good eating, and without malice.

Among the merchants was a Mr. Blunt, an old widower, full of anecdote, good cheer, and old dexter, with ruddy face and rotund stomach. He had been a little of almost any and every thing—horse-trader, gentleman of leisure, (only a decent name for a blackleg,) and merchant, and filled all situations equally well. All the gentlemen were fond of a “good game,” as they termed a game of cards, though, like Clarkson, they would take it as an insult to be called gamblers. They were all well acquainted with Col. Clarkson, and readily consented to make his house their head-quarters.

CHAPTER III.

SOME play for gain—to pass time; others
For nothing; both play the fool, I say;
Nor time nor coin I'll lose, nor idly spend:
Who gets by play, proves loser in the end.

HEATH.

LATE in the fall, Col. Clarkson and his family proposed to return to their residence in Bluff City. Several of the neighboring families, too, were ready to make their regular winter trip to New Orleans; for, be it known, that all families living contiguous to the Mississippi river, and who have the means to defray the expense, as regularly make an annual visit to the Crescent City as cranes and other water-fowls do to the sea-shore. A good passenger steamer was expected up, to take off the cotton of the neighboring planters, on Sunday night or Monday morning; and as they patronized her with their cotton freight, they were expecting to receive passage free; a species of economy which men, who were profligate in expending for the most trifling and sometimes vicious purpose insisted upon. Nickols, Smith, and Blunt accepted the invitation of Clarkson to remain and wait for the steamer. Some of his sporting neighbors were invited, tables spread, and cards and liquor produced. No one, of course, bets for money—only for amusement; and, to make it very amusing, it was proposed to make the “anti” ten dollars. At this, Nickols, who was not wealthy, and, as before stated, disposed to be miserly, gave a long, loud ha-a-a-awk; at which Ned, Clarkson's polite serving-man,

started, and, supposing that he was about to heave up his dinner or lungs, ran for the basin! which caused a laugh at Nickols's expense, in which he joined as heartily as the rest, not in the least annoyed. The game commenced. Nickols played shyly, Blunt rashly; the one to save his stakes, the other to win. The balance of the players bet on the strength of their hands, putting their money up in a free and easy manner, losing and winning with the same grace and *sang froid*. Blunt evidently desired to win, and tried the nerve of each of the players in turn. His first run was upon Col. Clarkson, who, he saw, put very little value upon money, and played alone for the love of the game; and, though sometimes vexed and annoyed at being beaten, the losing of his money constituted no part of it. Blunt would "bluff" by betting high on small hands; Clarkson, however, was indifferent, betting if he had a hand to bet on, and not otherwise; betting always on the strength of his own hand, and not on the size of his purse or the presumed weakness of his adversary's hand. Blunt threw out every temptation possible, by showing, after he had won a stake by "bluffing"—that is, betting high on no hand at all—upon what a weak hand he had "gone in" upon; betting, and talking with the utmost volubility. He possessed the finest conversational powers, and a vast fund of anecdote; and to indifferent observers, such as many of the players were, he appeared to be the most careless, reckless better in the world, and to keep no note or count of the game, playing for the sake of good company and the pleasure of giving his tongue full play among genial and appreciative companions. "Colonel, did you ever see Lefont? Queer brick—go ten—travelled with him on the old Michigan, once—a Cincinnati chicken-coop—go fifty—[hawks and spits]—but had a glorious time. Ah, mine? Foolish, but had n't a pair. You had kings, heh? Devilish good hand—easily run off—played a d—n good

hand, Lefont did; played a trick on me, too—go a hundred—I'd been running him pretty hard—pass—why, how foolish! had three tens—he stole my coat—go twenty—pawned it at the bar for liquor—how much was it I put up then? seventy-five? very foolish in me—got no hand—and what do you think? the knave treated the whole boat's crew on the faith of it, all hands, cook and bottle-washer, and it cost me a five to redeem my coat—Smith, loan me a hundred—won, did I? Good—return your hundred—had only a small pair." Thus he ran on, like a machine, betting and losing and bluffing as if by mere chance thoughtlessness. But it had no effect upon Clarkson. It neither diverted his mind from the game to make a foolish bet, nor excited his cupidity enough to tempt him to increase his stake. He would have regarded it as ungentlemanly, and a breach of good hospitality in him to take advantage of his guest's carelessness and good humor to win his money. Failing in this, Blunt tried one after another, with no better success, until he came to Nickols. He had selected him last because his "pile" was the smallest, and he preferred running down larger game. Nickols, in playing to save, to keep even, had managed to accumulate a considerable stake, and had been sinking it in his pockets unobserved, as he hoped, by the others. "Why, Nickols, you have a considerable stake there, I see," said Blunt; "I must try and reduce it for you, and see if I can't call back to the table some of those bank-notes I noticed you stuffing in your capacious vest-pocket." The answer was a loud ha-a-a-awk, which roused Ned from his nodding attitude beside the sideboard, and caused him to start again for the basin. Nickols had been wide awake to his interest, and had watched the game and his growing heaps with keen relish. "Ha-a-a-awk! Colonel, give me a chew of tobacco." Tobacco-begging, even when his pockets were full of the weed, was another of his weaknesses. It was Blunt's deal.

"Nickols, old fellow, how many? Three? Clarkson has picked out a fine buxom widow for you—I'll take one this time—rich beyond the cupidity of avarice—[ha-a-a-awk]—go ten—[ha-a-a-awk]—fine plantation—go fifty—[ha-a-a-awk]—plump as a partridge—see you bet, and go five hundred better."

"Ha-a-a-awk! call you."

"The h—ll and d—n—tion you do! What do you do it on?"

"Ha-a-a-awk, heh? ha, ha, ha, deuces."

"The thunder and lightning you say! I thought you were hawking at my descriptions of the widow, and not at my bets. Take your money."

This had the effect to silence Blunt for some time, and it took several stiff pulls at the brandy-bottle before he could get his tongue in good running-order again. In trying to catch others, he was himself caught, and, first and last, he was loser some thousand or more dollars, a sum he was by no means able to lose, having a sister and four children at home, subsisting upon a rather short allowance.

The game continued until near day on Sunday morning! no one reflecting that it was the "Lord's day!" They had drunk unusually deep, and their playing and loud laughing, with an occasional oath, had kept all the adult persons about the premises awake until it closed. Mrs. Clarkson, without being a member of any Church, had been raised by pious parents, and was of a religious turn of mind, and had all a refined lady's respect for the Sabbath and holy things, and felt so horrified at this desecration of Sunday, that she had not slept a wink. At what time the players broke up the game, and how they got to their rooms, they could not tell. They threw themselves down upon their beds, two and three together, without undressing, and were soon in a deep, oblivious slumber. The house becoming quiet, the sleep of all its inmates was

profound. How long Mrs. Clarkson had been asleep when she had been aroused by two reports of a gun in quick succession, and a sense of suffocation, she could form no estimate; but she awoke and found her room full of smoke, and the whole house in flames; and the fire raging with tremendous fury. The night had been warm and pleasant, and the playing had taken place in the passage, and an unextinguished candle or the stump of a cigar had been left, from which the house took fire, and, being ceiled and papered, and very dry and inflammable, it burned like brushwood, and the drowsy inmates had barely time to escape before the beds they slept upon were in flames. Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson sprang up and seized hold of their younger children, sleeping in their room, aroused the nurse, and, throwing blankets over them, rushed out through the flames, scorched and terror-stricken. They gathered in a group, a little removed from the fire, and looked eagerly and hastily around to see if all were saved, when a long, loud, terrified shriek went up from Agnes's room.

"O my God!" exclaimed Mrs. Clarkson; and rushed wildly towards the burning building, now almost completely enveloped in flame.

"Great God! O my daughter! my sweet, my angel daughter," and with his wife, Clarkson rushed madly to the flame, but it drove them back!

"Save my daughter! my daughter!" loudly both cried.

The awakened negroes came running in crowds, half clad, from the quarter.

"Freedom to any that will save my daughter! Freedom to any that will save my daughter! Can nobody save her? O God! O God!"

Strange how the wicked, in time of trouble, will call upon the Great God! The shrieks from Agnes continued, and the black tide from the quarter rushed to the rescue, not from a

desire of freedom, but love of their young mistress, and a human instinct, a powerful passion with the negro when called into action. They were driven back burnt and suffocated. The old woman who had nursed Agnes in infancy, hearing her cry loud and wildly, "O Aunt Fanny, Aunt Fanny! save me! save me!" pushed into the flames, stumbled, fell, and was burnt alive. At this fearful moment, the tall form of the Hermit, with his white locks streaming in the wind, and a dripping blanket in his hand, dashed past, with the blanket over him. The flame lifted for a moment; he bounded forward into the room, wrapped the exhausted girl in the blanket, covered his mouth and nostrils with his hand, closed his eyes, pushed through the flame, and emerged from the smoke bearing her in his arms. His gray locks were crisped up, and his feet and limbs were so badly burned, that when his boots were ripped off, the baked skin followed—a most sad sight. The mother was beside herself with joy, and sank down unable to utter a word; but her manner and gestures were far more eloquent of her thanks and gratitude than words could have been. Clarkson expressed in every way a fond father could, his thanks, and all gathered around the old man, offering congratulations and sympathy; but he rather repulsed them; was annoyed at the thanks of the parents, and the congratulations of the others. The fresh air having restored Agnes, as soon as Mrs. Clarkson could speak, she asked:

"How, my dear daughter, did you survive in that room, surrounded and filled with flame and smoke as it was?"

"O mother, I don't know; but it seemed to me, some beautiful creature, some angel, stood between me and the flame, and with light-spreading wings fanned it back!"

"I knew she would! I knew she would!" exclaimed the old man; the first words he had spoken. "I stayed all night by your window, until the lights were extinguished, and all

went to bed! I felt a shadow of evil to come, and was reluctant to leave you, and did not until I asked *her* to protect you; and she did."

Agnes threw her arms around him, kissed his face over and over, drooped her head in his lap as he sat at the root of an old gum tree, and sobbed away. The big tears slowly gathered, from a deep spring, into the old man's eyes, and dropped one by one into his kind bosom. Empty-hearted as Blunt was, he turned off and brushed away a tear; and Nickols, who had but little room in his heart for any thing besides dollars or bank-notes, pulled out his handkerchief and went hawking off to the river-bank.

The Hermit was conveyed to his cottage, and Col. Clarkson and his wife, finding that their attentions were disagreeable to him, did all they could for his relief through Agnes, the only person he would have about him. The remains of kind old Aunt Fanny, who had fallen a martyr to her love for her foster-child, were taken from the ruins and decently interred in the plantation burying-ground.

Fears were entertained by the physician who had been summoned to prescribe for the Hermit, as well as by Clarkson and wife, that his injuries might prove fatal, and Agnes hearing of it, could not conceal from the patient, suffering old man her anxiety. One day, as she sat weeping by his bedside, he interrupted her by saying:

"Do not mind what they tell you, my sweet child; I shall get well. My time has not come; my mission for you is not fulfilled; more remains for me to do."

She did not understand him, but she was satisfied. Such was her faith in him, that there was nothing she would not have believed at his telling. He did not himself understand fully what he meant, but he felt that he had spoken truly. That he would get well, and that he would be of future service to her, he felt as certainly as if the book of the future

were open before him. How much one feels, that he can neither explain nor understand; nor, as the world goes, know; but which he believes, and upon which he acts with as much confidence as upon absolute certainty! How it is, and why it is, no philosopher has undertaken to explain; and he would fail were he to attempt it. One's feelings—presentiments, anxieties, and heartaches—one's likings and dislikings, are often as inexplicable as the coming and going of the swallow, and may be relied on with as much certainty. At some period in each man's life, he has seen or rather *felt* the same shadowy vision which the patriarch describes. "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my head stood up! It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an *image* was before mine eyes; there was *silence*, and I *heard* a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall man be more pure than his Maker?" It comes, he knows not how; perhaps in the wind, as it whispers to the leaves in the solitude of the "grand old woods;" perhaps in the throcs of the monarch of the forest, as it flings its giant arms about in the storm; perhaps in the hum of the busy city, the chime of church-bells, the swell of the cathedral choir, or as he looks upon the broken monuments of past grandeur. All are certain to feel it at some time; the more impressible, the oftener and the more distinctly it is felt. What it reveals cannot be learned from philosophy; it is not in the books; no man has written it; no man will write it. It is written by the finger of God upon the heart, and the stains of sin may blurr or blunt it, but cannot efface it. The old man felt what he said, and said it because he felt it. Let proud philosophy mock and cry, Superstition! men will feel in spite of philosophy.

CHAPTER IV.

First, two entire pheasants he ate;
Then swept a seasoned leg of mutton from his plate.

MOLIERE'S TARTUFE.

AT Agnes's earnest request and the silently expressed wish of the Hermit, it was determined to have a room prepared her in the overseer's house, whose kind-hearted wife promised to do all she could to make her comfortable, and leave her there until the Hermit's sufferings should terminate one way or the other. Accordingly, the carpenters were set to work, and, in an incredibly short time, the room was ready to receive the plain home-made furniture which Mrs. Blake could spare, it being the best she had. It was soon replaced by something more elegant, which the ever-kind parents sent to her as soon as they arrived at Bluff City, but which Agnes thought nothing of, being content with what was supplied by her simple, kind-hearted hostess. The balance of the family went to the Bluffs.

When Col. Clarkson arrived in Bluff City, he engaged his family physician, Dr. Floyd, to go up and attend upon the Hermit. Under ordinary circumstances, the doctor could not have been induced to have gone, even for the large fee offered by Col. Clarkson, being fond of the society of the clubs, and dreading nothing more than the ennui of country life. But he had just lost his only sister, Mrs. Hamilton, a widow lady of great wealth and piety. She had been a belle in her younger years, and he had, when a young man, been very

fond of her; and his affection survived the wreck of his good morals and the formation of other ties. He had never married; was a man of high standing in the community, both as a gentleman and physician, but fond of all sorts of dissolute entertainments; and if at any time he had gone to bed without a lunch or oyster supper with some friends, (and they were chosen at random,) he would have felt that something of importance had been forgotten, and could not have slept until he had called to mind what it was. His sister was universally beloved for her amiable and other fine qualities of heart and head. She very much regretted the loose kind of life her brother led, but loved and confided in him all the same. She left to his charge her only son, Robert, a youth of some fourteen or fifteen years of age, with the earnest request that he should be brought up as she had begun with him; with moral and pious habits, and under no circumstances to "let him ever see the inside of a gambling-hell." The Doctor was affected and embarrassed, but gave a full, heartfelt promise.

Robert had been sick, and was just convalescent when his mother died. It was with these new feelings, subdued by the loss of a sister, whose purity and loveliness had so often stood between him and vice, and whose beautiful and silent example had all unknown to himself checked him in his excesses, and with a momentary distaste for joyous, boisterous companionship, that he readily consented to go up to the Bend and attend upon the Hermit.

The Doctor desired to take his nephew along with him, thinking that the change of scene and country air might be of service, after his long and severe attack of illness; and, as no objection was made by the family, Robert accompanied his uncle.

There was a house, with a large single room, standing in the corner of the overseer's yard, used as a sort of *omnium gatherum* about the plantation, which was fitted up and con-

verted into an office for the Doctor, where he and Robert were accommodated with lodging. The Doctor soon found that he could be of but little service to his patient, as he declined to receive his aid. The refusal seem to arise from an unwillingness on the part of the Hermit to accept a reward for an act prompted by an impulse as inexplicable to himself as to others, but in doing which had never taken into account the desire of the anxious, agonized parents, and not from a perverse disposition. In doing what he did, he had not thought of others, was entirely indifferent to them, and hence would take no favor based upon it. He paid no earthly attention to the Doctor, nor to others who called to see him and offer their services. He neither expressed annoyance nor pleasure when they came, neither relief nor regret when they left.

The Doctor was a kind-hearted man, and, though rude in his morals, appreciated a generous action, and admired the incorruptible integrity of the Hermit, who would not, by accepting the well-meant kindness of Col. Clarkson, say that in what he did the Colonel or his wife had been thought of; and he was deeply interested in his patient. He felt, when in his presence, and seeing not a muscle move, nor the slightest expression of pain, though evidently suffering torment from pain the most excruciating the human system can well endure, that he was in the presence of no ordinary personage; and his anxiety to serve him increased with his respect for his patient. From what Col. Clarkson told him, he was prepared to see a resolute, enduring old man; but he was not expecting to meet a piece of mental iron. He had often met with obstinate patients, and peevish ones, who refused his prescriptions, but he generally found means to overcome their obstinacy and peevishness; but here was a man in his perfect senses who would not only not recognize his preserver, but, though enduring most racking pain, would not,

by the motion of a muscle or a sigh, acknowledge the presence of pain or disease. For the first time in his life he felt cheapened. He was inspired with a feeling of reverence, almost awe, as he looked upon the stern, silent, suffering old man. Agnes was the only person or thing he would unbend to, and at times he would caress her. Observing this, it occurred to the Doctor that he would try his nephew, and see if the old man would notice him. It was his wish to get some one between him and his patient, through whom he could prescribe for his wounds. He would have tried Agnes; but there was something in her innocence and purity which made him feel at a distance, and she had always instinctively shrunk from him when he approached. Accordingly, when he called again, he took Robert with him. As the young boy stepped into the room, the Hermit turned and held out his hand to him, took hold of the lad's and held it, looking him steadily but kindly in the face for some time. After surveying his features carefully, he said:

"You are welcome. I am glad to see you. I am not disappointed; better pleased than I expected."

Agnes and the Doctor were astonished; for they were not aware that he had ever heard of Robert before. It is possible that something in Agnes's manner may have caused the Hermit to suspect that her old playfellow had accompanied the Doctor in his visit to the Bend. He answered her look of astonishment by a smile and a nod of the head, as if assenting to something. Well might the Hermit, severe as was his criticism and judgment, be satisfied with the perusal of Robert's face. He was a noble boy: a fine, open countenance, forehead high, square and broad chest, eyes large and lustrous, limbs lithe and muscular, hands small, intelligent, thoughtful look, and a soft expression about the mouth and lips that had an agreeable, softening effect upon the harder outlines of the face; and his half-invalid appearance and

subdued sorrow gave an additional charm to his looks. It was evident that the Hermit was pleased with him, and the Doctor saw in it means to earn at least a portion of the large fee Col. Clarkson engaged to pay for his services. He gave his prescriptions to Robert, and Robert and Agnes entered into a conspiracy to force the old man to observe them. They had the frankness to tell him all about it, and it was wonderful how completely he would unbend to them, and do whatever he thought would give them pleasure. The remedies were simple and easily applied, and the old man soon found relief.

Time soon began to hang heavily upon the Doctor's hands, and the neighbors who played were not slow in finding out that he liked a good game and a drink of good brandy, and would take even a mean article, if good could not be had; and, "to make his time pass pleasantly while among them," converted his temporary office into a gambling-shop. No, that word may be thought offensive. They did not gamble; only played for amusement, and bet to count the game. Robert had been taught to call things by their right names, and to look upon gambling as gambling, and, in his innocence, he could not see the difference between betting to count the game and betting to win money, if the effect were the same. His morals were pure, his ideas single, and he made no compromise with vice; and hence, when he saw his uncle sit down at a table with three or four other gentlemen, and sit there all day, and sometimes nearly all night, playing at cards, and betting high and drinking deep, and then swear at the negro appointed to wait upon him for a piece of cold mutton, salt, and mustard, he very naturally concluded that his guardian and only living blood relative was a gambler and drunkard. If the Doctor had suspected such a thought in his nephew, it would have made him more prudent and private, if not more abstemious; for he loved

his nephew, and was really anxious to fulfil his promise to his deceased sister, and thought he was doing it, by uniformly sending him to church on Sunday, though he never went himself. And, as to his promise that he should "never see the inside of a gambling-hell," he thought it was the easiest of all promises to keep, as he never visited such a place himself; little supposing that that sister would have regarded his office as no better. A gambling "hell" was a place set apart and kept expressly for gambling, where men played for money, and bet to win, and not a doctor's office, where gentlemen played to amuse themselves and kill time, and bet to count the game. The thought of any one regarding him as a gambler, would have horrified him; much more for his nephew to do so. The first shock upon Robert was painful, and, like Agnes, he instinctively shrank from his touch. By degrees, however, as he became more familiar with it, he felt less repugnance towards it, and his respect for his uncle began to revive. His uncle had also noticed the change in his demeanor toward him, and, having a vague fear that it might proceed from his disrelish of his playing, took pains to vindicate himself by showing how innocent it was, and what a wide difference there was between that and the "odious, detestable vice of gambling." He was so decided in his condemnation of that vice, and in his abhorrence of a professional gambler—the most despicable of men, in his estimation—that Robert felt ashamed of his ignorance, and came to look upon playing for amusement, and betting to count the game, as a most innocent recreation and gentlemanly pastime. He soon learned the cards, their value and use, and the different games. The Doctor was not alarmed, and he felt that he was fulfilling his promise to the letter, when Sunday came, by getting Mr. Blake to have Col. Clarkson's carriage brought out, and Robert sent to church, a distance of some eight miles.

Even cards and brandy, with men to help play and drink, were insufficient to detain him from his club companions, oysters, and lunch; and, leaving Robert to help nurse his patient, he returned to Bluff City. Col. Clarkson felt annoyed and disappointed at his leaving before his "friend had been put upon his feet," but, as he was out of all danger, he paid the fee without complaint; the Doctor declaring that he would not bury himself so another fortnight, for the Colonel's plantation.

CHAPTER V.

Why should Æsop to the fox decree
 The prize for cunning?
 E'en after much research, I cannot see.
 When the wolf his foe is shunning,
 Or, himself the attack would make,
 Could Reynard shrewder measures take?
 If such a master I might contradict,
 The greater cunning of the wolf I could depict.

LA FONTAINE.

UPON the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson at their home in Bluff City, the fashionables and upper-tens—for Bluff City had its upper-tens as well as other towns—were thrown into a sort of high-bred hysterics, each being emulous to make the “first call.” The rich rode in their fine equipages, with splendid trappings. Such a newishness and show of finery! The carriages were new, horses new, dresses new and flary, jewelry new and shiny, footmen new and awkward; every thing was new, new, new! One felt surfeited with the newness and glitter. But it made a sensation, and that was enough; it was bought for that purpose. They did not reflect that a monkey-show or a circus would have done the same thing, and perhaps to a greater degree. But as they were pleased with the gild, others had no right to be displeased, as it was all paid for, and where the money came from that paid for it was nobody's business.

Miss Blunt, the maiden sister of Mr. Blunt, and who took charge of his family, considered that she had as good a right

to visit the fashionable, aristocratic Mrs. Clarkson, as any; and though she had no carriage, she knew “she was in society,” though but few poor people were; for was not her notable brother invited to all the parties given by the fashionables, a member of the playing clubs, and a welcome guest at all the places of fashionable resort about town? Proud of the privilege of being “in society,” regardless of the means, she never thought that, but for the mere animal qualities of her brother, which secured to her this high privilege, she might have called upon Mrs. Clarkson in a carriage, with footmen all in livery, as her more fortunate and wealthy neighbors had done.

Yes, and Mr. Piper thought that Betsy and the four “girls,” all just from school, had as good a right to go and see Mrs. Clarkson, and dust her fine parlors as any body, even if he did drive cows on Sunday, and sneeze loud enough to be heard all over town, and frightened the mule in the bake-wagon. Why not, to be sure? Was he not getting rich, and didn't he own “niggers,” and land, and lots, and houses? He did; there was no denying that. And hadn't he just finished his new two-story house—incongruously constructed, it is true, and it smoked at that; but what of it? it was nobody's business but his, and Betsy's, and “the girls.” And hadn't he stuffed the house from top to bottom with furniture? He had; and it was nobody's business if a portion of it was purchased at auction, and the balance taken in payment of a debt for rent; and what right had anybody to notice whether it matched or not? And hadn't his daughters been to boarding-school? and couldn't they sketch with the pencil? no matter if they did have to hold the pattern to the window to do it. And couldn't they play on the piano, and make it make as much noise as anybody? And hadn't they lungs, and couldn't they use them, and sing as loud as other folks? They could, unquestionably, and a little louder. Yes, Mr. Piper had all this, and “the girls” could do all that,

but, somehow or other, they neither pulled in, nor were pulled by the fashionable wagon; fine folks wouldn't go, and fine birds wouldn't fly to their house. What was the reason? he asked himself a thousand times, but the question was unanswered. One thing was certain, neither he, nor Betsy, nor "the girls" went to Mrs. Clarkson's; and another thing was equally certain; Mrs. Clarkson did not expect them; and another thing is just as certain as that, which, if it had been known to Piper at the time, Betsy and "the girls" would have gone; if they had gone, Mrs. Clarkson would have been just as well pleased to have seen them, and treated them with just as much politeness, as she did the newly-fledged birds of fashion that flitted in and out of her parlors every morning for a week or more.

Mr. Piper was what Ovid would call: "*Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno*—a rare bird on the earth, most likely a black swan." He was a dealer in hides and hoofs, was full of action and energy, stepped spry, and fussy as a hen with a field full of chickens; quick and keen at a trade, and would cut a man and his purse right in two, and take the biggest half; had no social nor business status, and morbidly anxious for both. He was too avaricious, and afraid of losing, to engage in a business that required talent and capital—the only kind that could give a business status—and too proud to associate with persons of his class; and the rich and fashionable were too proud to associate with him; and he and Betsy and "the girls," were a society to themselves; but his fretting and fuming made it manifest that he was far from being satisfied that the wonderful accomplishments of "the girls" should be hid away in a "pent-up Utica."

It was Friday, and chanced to be a busy day in town; and the tide of buyers and sellers, and ladies sunning themselves in the smiles of young counter-jumpers, crowded the sidewalks, and fine carriages, and horses champing the bit

and pawing the uneven stones, crowded the street; and Piper was seen rushing along, stemming the tide, with whip in hand—he always rode; had so much business could not walk—was a good judge of a horse; had a fine one; got him cheap: the fellow fairly squealed when he put his trading irons on him, and swapped him out of his horse. There he goes, elbowing his way through the crowded street, to all appearances the busiest man in it. He seized hold of his "particular friend," and, taking him to one side, desired that he would take occasion to impress upon Mr. — the great advantages of a trade which Piper wanted to make with him, as a friend could always do more in effecting a trade than the parties themselves. While full of his subject, and his face beaming as the prospect of a successful trade danced before him, (for his friend consented to enter into the conspiracy against Mr. —,) he heard the clerk at the corner where they were standing ask the niece of another of Piper's friends how she enjoyed herself at Mrs. Corbin's party, the evening before. His countenance darkened, and his nostrils spread, and nose flattened, and under-lip drooped. What, a party in town, and his girls not invited, and he not even know it? Too bad! The trade was forgotten, and he walked about as if he had lost a friend or missed a good bargain; got upon Gilpin, and galloped home to tell it to Betsy, and groan over it. Gilpin had two sorts of gallops, to suit the humor of his master. When a good trade was on hand, or one had just been made, and he was galloping home to tell Betsy, Gilpin carried his head and tail up—he had a long tail—and touched the ground as if he scorned it as not good enough for him. It was refreshing to see the air of cheerfulness horse and rider had at such times; but, upon occasions like the present, Gilpin's head, unbraced by the bit, and unspurred, moved along in a lazy, hitch-up gait, scarcely able to lift his feet. As soon as Betsy saw the

spread nose, she knew that things had not gone well. It looked too much like an adder's head to venture to ask questions, and she sat in silence, waiting to see who would get bit, as, when in that humor, he was certain to drive his tooth into somebody. Though full of his subject, he did not know how to introduce it. He scolded his man Garrison, a lazy, ugly negro-man, that no one about the house could tolerate, except himself; he pushed Richie, a smart little boy of two years, rudely from him, and ordered an older one to leave the room with his stick-horse; but it all would not do. Betsy sat sewing away, and would n't ask, "What was the matter?" The adder-head was still there, and she would not risk receiving the fang, to gratify her curiosity. His patience gave out after awhile, and, as Betsy would n't ask, he had no alternative but to tell, without asking, and began:

"We must give the girls a party, Betsy."

"Why, Mr. Piper! What in the world?"

"They are just as good as other girls, and I am just as able to give parties as Mrs. Corbin; and the girls are just as much entitled to be invited to parties as Miss Thornhill or anybody else."

"And who said they was n't?"

"Mrs. Corbin had as well said so. She gave a party last night, and did n't invite them."

"Mrs. Corbin! Well, she need n't be putting on airs! She had a right to give parties, if she wants to; and if she doesn't want our girls to eat her bread, we've got enough for them at home! I would n't give that [snapping her fingers] for Sal Corbin, nor her party, nor all she's got."

Betsy had a way of calling people's given names, and kept up the backwoods habit of using old-fashioned nicknames, and the emphasis she gave it meant more than type can express. *Sal* was emphasized. Mrs. Corbin and her friends wrote it "Sallie;" and "Mrs. Sallie Corbin," pronounced

with a sweet drawing-room accent, sounded very well—was rather agreeable to the ear; but "Sal," especially when pronounced in a broad tone, by a harsh, double-grater voice, was horrible! To hear Betsy do her best on it, and this was one of her best efforts, the dignity of Mrs. Corbin's party, and the indignity shown "the girls," in not inviting them, fell, in Piper's estimation, fifty per cent. every crack she took at it; and, before she let "Sal" off, he thought it a fortunate thing and a compliment paid "the girls," in not inviting them.

"Sal Corbin! I knew Sal when she was a child, and stupid and awkward enough she was! Sal! When she gets tired giving parties, I'd advise her to send some of her spare change or old party dresses to her sister, making dresses for a living at Pewterville; and glad enough she would be to get them. Sal sewed upon many a dress I've worn before that smirking face of hers caught Mr. Corbin, with his rheumatism and gout, and wheedled him into leaving her his property when he died. And Suke Thornhill! She was there, eh! She had better clear up that scandal about her old dead daddy, before she puts on airs. [Now Susie never put on airs: she was a modest girl.] And Mrs. Smith was there, was she? She'd better feed her old beef-eating husband with a sassage-stuffer. He looks as if she did. And Hanner Phillips was there! I know'd her in the lifetime of her first husband. I s'pose she has forgot what people said then about her, and the man she's got now. If she has, other folks hav'n't. And as for Jude Brown, she never had sense enough to sleep by herself, or she would never have married that old gambler."

Under such a powerful alkahest, the mountain of aristocratic pride that had weighed down Piper's spirits, gradually melted away, and his nose resumed its proper shape.

"Well, Betsy," said he, in a much more cheerful tone, "the girls shall have their party, anyhow!"

So it was determined; and by the time it was all talked over, it was two o'clock and past, and it was to be given that night; for, with Piper, it was "no quicker said than done." Betsy was flurried, and "the girls" were flurried, and Piper was fidgety. A party was a new thing in the history of the family: and the thought of the thing was as intoxicating as a gill of "old red-head." Gilpin was saddled, and away went Piper to tell his next-door neighbor, and consult—he was great on consultations.

"Betsy has been thinking about giving the girls a little party; just a little social gathering; not exactly a party; just a little social gathering; and I thought I would talk with you about it. I know so few of the young gentlemen about town, and there are so few that one likes to have visit their daughters, that I thought I would consult you who to invite."

"There are quite a number to choose from," naming some half-dozen or more of the leading gentlemen of town; but somehow they did not exactly strike Piper's fancy—whether because he did not like them, or because he feared they would not attend, he did not say; perhaps the latter; and others, upon whom the party-giving class set a less high estimate upon, were named.

"Ah! they will do. I like them better. They are very nice young men. And"—throwing up his head slightly, and prolonging the a-n-d—"I'll invite some of those you first named too."

Off he starts for Gilpin, and, as he is about to mount, calls out, "You must be sure to come early."

Away goes Gilpin; and it is remarkable what a change in his gallop! How briskly and nimbly he bounds along!

Any one could see at a glance that horse and rider were acting under a spur. He meets one of the gentlemen on his list; takes him to one side:

"There will be some young folks at my house to-night, and I want you to come out."

"Thank you."

Takes him by the arm: "You must be sure to come!"

"If I can, I will; but I have been very busy to-day, and we have just received a large lot of goods, and they must be opened and marked this evening; and there is only one other clerk in the store now besides myself, one being absent, and another sick; and it is possible I may not be able to attend, which I should very much regret, as I should be pleased to attend."

"O, you must come! I can't do without you. A-n-d [giving his head a toss] there'll be some nice young girls there."

He did not leave the young man until he gave his positive promise to attend. His excuse was real, and was not made from a disinclination to make the acquaintance of Piper's family.

So he continued, until his complement of young men was made up, extorting from each a positive promise to attend.

Having gone through his list of young men, his next move was to gallop around and secure the attendance of some young ladies; and it was curious to see how stiffly Gilpin moved as he passed Mrs. Corbin's, and how both horse and rider unbent as they approached the residences of those honored with an invitation to the proposed entertainment.

Satisfied with his success, he galloped home, to report progress to Betsy. As he passed along, people remarked something good must have happened to Piper, from the freshness of Gilpin's gait. He and Betsy chatted it over; both were satisfied; but nothing yet had been done towards getting

ready to entertain their guests; and they did not know well how to begin. Piper did not seem exactly satisfied with Betsy's plain good sense in arranging for so important an event; nor did he feel willing to trust his own judgment. They were happily relieved from this dilemma by a timely visit from one of Piper's relatives, a lady of some taste and experience in such matters, who, upon being advised of what was in prospect, kindly offered her assistance. Betsy, who did not wish to be thought unequal to the task of preparing properly for a party, but who was, nevertheless, anxious to have the advantage of her cousin's experience and advice, said:

"You need not trouble yourself; I can do every thing."

"Never mind me. What have you got done?"

"O, I havn't commenced yet!"

"Havn't commenced, and it now four o'clock! It is high time you had commenced, then. You have your poultry killed, and meats all ready, and confectionaries all bought?"

"O no. It is time enough to kill the poultry and get the meats ready; and we won't have any confectionaries."

"The young ladies have their things all ready, of course."

"No. They can soon get their things ready."

"These bedsteads and beds must be taken out of all these lower rooms."

"Good gracious! And strip my house dry! Never. If they can't eat in a bedroom, they must go without. They can sit in the parlor, and dance in the dining-room, and eat in this bedroom."

"It will never do to bring your guests into a bedroom to eat."

"I'll never have my house torn upside-down to please young folks."

What her relative, with her energy and good taste, and

Betsy's working qualities, which were equal to her tongue, when started, could do, was done to get ready. The best was of course but passable; but Piper and Betsy were satisfied.

All things done that were to be done, Piper and Betsy sat down to wait for their guests.

This feeling of waiting for guests was a new one to Piper and Betsy; and, though both were tired, and sat down, they could not stay down, especially Piper. He would walk to the door, the window, the back-door, call to Grandison, and explain for the hundredth time what he must do when "the company came," to keep the servants from seeing that he and Betsy were afraid the "company" would not come. The company, however, did come, all who were invited; and the small, ill-constructed parlor, filled already to choking with half-worn, clumsy furniture, was a perfect jam. As the "party" was given to "the girls," Piper was determined they should have the benefit of it, and made use of every manœuvre his horse-swapping ingenuity could invent to draw and keep them into notice, and managed to keep them pinned to the sleeve of some of "the first" young men all the evening. If the young ladies had been left alone, they would have done well enough; for they were not lacking in good sense nor good looks; and though their education was superficial, and their experience in company very limited, it was no fault of theirs, as they had made the most of their opportunities. They, at least three of them, possessed an innate modesty, a woman's modesty and diffidence, which would have saved them from exposure and remark, and would have secured them affectionate regard; for, however much young men may seek the company of young ladies whose manners are as free as their tongues, they all love and extol female modesty; and, should it extend even to diffidence and downright bashfulness, it is greatly preferred to freeness,

and brusqueness, its counterpart. Isadore, the youngest daughter—the oldest two were twins—was rather brusque; thought herself talented and witty, and, by a very common error, mistook pertness for talent, and coarseness for wit. She was evidently Piper's "pet," and he used his utmost to show her off, and succeeded to perfection. He was happy. He saw everybody laughing, and laughing loud, his standard of enjoyment; for, if people were not happy and enjoying themselves, what would they laugh for? People didn't laugh as heartily as his guests were laughing, if they were not enjoying themselves. What if Betsy and the other "girls" did have an indistinct idea that the laughing was at the actors, and not at the act? No such impossible suspicion crossed his mind; and, to use a Southernism, he went it—spread himself! And the more he went it, the more they laughed; and the more they laughed, the more he went it! If the loud talking and uproarious laughter—his idea of enjoyment—ceased for a moment, like a lull in a storm, which would occur occasionally, from mere surfeit and exhaustion, or if spirits cooled, he would call the gentlemen to one side, and steam up with brandy. The swell-heads couldn't monopolize that! (he would boast,) and took pains to tell each drinker how much it cost him per bottle—"ten bits;" and got it cheap at that; "two bits" a bottle less than he saw Col. Clarkson pay for the "same article."

In one of the lulls of the storm, they hear string, string, string, thrum, thrum, thrum, see, saw, sum, sum, saw, see. What was it? a wood-saw? No. A cornstalk fiddle? No. A gourd fiddle? No. A banjo? No. Then what was it? The door opened, and there stood old Tony, with an old, cracked fiddle, with three strings; and the company were invited to foot it in the dance to his music.

The set was formed, and, from chance, or because none of the gallants wanted to be bored or to be made the butt of the

others' wit and laughter, "Pet" was left without a partner. This, Piper felt, would never do; for Pet was a famous dancer: it was her forte. Mrs. Bounce, who taught dancing when Pet was a "little bit of a thing," and whose success was a trap-ball or baby-jumper movement, and Mr. Trip-lightly, who taught some years later, and whose success was a certain tripping, which was performed by hoisting the dress nearly to the knees, sticking out one foot, and shaking it, and then leaping off and sticking out the other foot, and shaking that—a dance much admired and practiced by ladies with a pretty leg and ankle and small foot—both declared she was their "best scholar;" the only hope they had of getting their pay without much haggling and jewing from Piper. With such accomplishments, it would never do for her not to be in the first set; the second might never come. So he, who knew about as much of Terpsichore as Gilpin did of Latin, engaged her himself, and then used all his skill to trade her off; but no one wished to "deal." A few thrums of the three strings, a long draw of the bow, and a heavy stamp of the foot, and Old Tony throws back his head, shakes his body, and calls out, "Balance all!" and "went it!" Piper, seeing his man "going it," and thinking that he knew, as he was the fiddler, and fiddlers ought to know, called out to them all to "pitch in," and "went it." A roar of laughter was the answer, and they all "went it!" Here they went, Piper and Pet, bouncing up and down, hither and back, sidewise and crosswise! The noise and laughter and confusion increased: it pleased him; all pleased him, except that Pet wouldn't "shake her foot." He would hunch her, and whisper, "Shake your foot," and, to divert attention, call out, "Go it, boys!" But Pet didn't shake her foot. Growing impatient, he whispered, loud enough to be heard by others, "Why don't you shake your foot?" She whispered back, "There ain't room!" This bothered

him. He hated to check the fun; for it was fun, up to the brim; but Pet must have room to shake her foot; and, by dint of hallooing and digs in the ribs, he managed to get Old Tony to suspend the swing of his body and head, and stamp of his foot, long enough to have room made for Pet to dance the "trip dance." Her foot was small, and her new shoes fitted neatly, and Piper was delighted. She began, slowly and gracefully at first; grows faster; Old Tony increases the shake of his body; Pet hoists her dress higher, sticks her foot out farther, and shakes it faster; Old Tony's motion increases; his head, body, arms, and feet are all in motion; Old Tony increases; the dance increases; his head is ahead; his arms are ahead; his feet have it; his body is ahead; Pet leads the field. Piper is beside himself! Here they go. Pet is still ahead; faster and faster; Piper is wild with delight—triumphant! No lady at Mrs. Corbin's could hold a torch to that! Pet still leads the field; head grows dizzy; the room whirls; slip goes her foot; pop goes a string; down comes Pet; up go her feet; spread goes Piper's nostrils; down comes his nose, and up goes a shout, Huzza! huzza!

Betsy, who, in spite of her disposition to hew down with a sharp tongue the social status of the pets of fortune to her own standard, enjoyed a good thing, joined in the laugh, despite the flatted nose and drooping under lip of Piper; and besides, "Pet" was not Betsy's pet.

The storm lulled after awhile, as all storms must, breaking in transient gusts, as the cloud rolled away from Piper's face. A young lawyer, whose presence Piper regarded as an event, was determined to have his laugh out, and was too well-bred to be guilty of the wickedness, the malice aforethought, to laugh in Piper's face, and mock his agony, when others restrained themselves, and knowing Piper's and Pet's weakness upon the subject of her musical attainments, to divert attention from himself, and, amid the noise, to secure impunity to

fun, called for music, and led Pet to the piano. Happy hit! Piper was himself again. Pet would have an opportunity to redeem herself! A modest young Doctor, who was fond of good music, and had heard Pet's powers highly extolled by the family, asked for one production after another, of the first masters, but she had never heard of them, and the lawyer, growing impatient for the noise to begin, called out for "her favorite" if she had any, and if not, for any thing so there was sound in it. This was enough, and she struck "Uncle Ned," "Wait for the Wagon," "Dandy Jim," "Camp-town Races," etc., and by the time she got to "John came down the hollow," Piper was literally frantic with delight. "The girls" were all gathered around her, and joined in; and Piper stood without the circle as if surrounding all, and with his face turned up and his voice a pitch higher and louder than the rest, joined in the chorus to the top of his lungs, and, hoisting one foot and arm, would sing out: "Holler, boys, holler-r-r!" Betsy had never seen him in such ecstasy. The song through, he led Pet in triumph to her seat, and took the shout that greeted them as the spontaneous, irrepressible offering to her vocal and instrumental powers; and in the exhilaration of the moment uncorked a new bottle, which he had thought he would be able to save, with a snap of his finger, and "Who cares for a few turnips?"

The drinking over, a wise look from Piper at Betsy took her out, and disposed "the girls" demurely about the room. And presently, supper being announced, all went into the bed-room to receive their refreshments, and laid into them with a hearty good-will.

The "party" broke up with assurances from all that they "had enjoyed themselves," which was true to the letter. Piper felt himself and "the girls" to be "in society," and went to bed a happier man than he had ever been before, or has been since.

CHAPTER VI.

And say to mothers what a holy charge
Is theirs—with what a kingly power their love
Might rule the fountain of the new-born mind.

SIGOURNEY.

ROBERT and Agnes were assiduous in their childish attentions to the Hermit, and when he recovered so far as to give his assent to their leaving, by the directions of Col. Clarkson, Mr. Blake placed them on board of a steamboat, and accompanied them to Bluff City. Their tastes were much the same, and the cast of mind, and mental and moral aspirations of both, were very similar; their appreciation of the pure and beautiful was the same; Agnes was perhaps more impressed with the sense of the sublime and infinite, more *spirituelle* than he; both were fond of books, but she thought more and read less, and he read more and thought less. Both were fond of old classic history and legends; he to learn a new idea or truth, she to catch a new inspiration. Often in their mental rambles had they joined Horace in his walks over "the plain of fertile Larissa," or through "the Tiburnian groves, and the orchards watered by ductile rivulets;" he pensively thinking of the great dead, and she of the spirit of the place. With these kindred feelings and sentiments, and a common object of solicitude and interest, (the Hermit,) it was by no means surprising that an attachment grew up between them, which required nothing but the hardening influence of time to make strong as death and dearer than life. Such a thing

had not occurred to the friends of either, and if it had, it would not have been a subject of inquietude, as there was no inequality in their stations in life which could oppose a barrier to their future union, should they in after-life desire it. Hence, they were permitted to wander at pleasure in the spacious garden at "Rose Hill," the name of Col. Clarkson's town residence, and cull the sweet flowers, or watch the gold fish disport in the artificial fountain, or the steamboats ruffle the bosom of the broad river; or sit together of dark, stormy nights, when "Pa" was out with Dr. Floyd and other companions, playing for amusement and betting to count the game, and "Ma" in the adjoining room, hushing the fears of the smaller children, or teaching them their prayers; or they would stand, hand in hand, gazing into the darkness without for the storm-god, as he beat against the window, and wailed past with the tempest. At such times neither would speak, but both think and *feel*. Feel how? Feel as older persons do in looking upon the waterfall, and think of the "eternal flow of its waters," or listening to the never-ceasing dash of the surf to the shore. And what is that? The consciousness of the presence of the ruler of the storm and the waters? Perhaps so; but "the man who has said in his heart, 'There is no God,'" feels the same. Robert and Agnes did not moralize on the subject; they were not capable of moralizing. But with eyes fixed and vacant, they would inwardly gaze upward to the Source of the pure and the good! How beautiful the tribute of love which innocence there paid to the great Fountain of love and purity! It was unstudied, unbought; sweeter than the incense of flowers which earth sends to heaven with the dew of the morning—the thought of which will come back in after-years, to sweeten sad memories of "hours that were."

Mrs. Clarkson was much too good a mother to suffer her daughter to dream her time and mental faculties away, and

attended closely to her education; preferring to give form and direction to a mind so delicate and appreciative as her daughter's was, than to intrust such an important and delicate task to indifferent strangers. She knew that something more was needed than the mere filling the mind with the knowledge of books. The mind had to grow, and required shaping as it grew; and, knowing her child better than anybody else could, and knowing better than any one else what she wished her daughter to be, she preferred to do that shaping herself; and hers was really the only hand that could have shaped it to her desires. Anybody can teach the routine prescribed in the books; anybody can make the pupil study a lesson and recite it; but he who would properly shape the mind—would bring out in its proper colors the impress of the divinity there—must be superior to the book he teaches. The book is made for the scholar, not the master. He who is fully imbued with the genius of music, though his fingers may be so large and heavy that he cannot himself execute the simplest piece, can infuse the spirit of the composition into the pupil, and send her fingers flying over the keys with an inspiration that can never be caught from the mechanical performer, however artistic his skill. He who feels, can make another feel; a mock sentiment will sometimes inspire a real one. He, therefore, who would make the man or woman out of the child, must to a greater or less extent, be either himself what he would make the child, or fully imbued with the sense of the *personnel* of the character he would make. As well might Powers have taken his chisel and hewn away at the quarry to form the "Greek Slave," without first having in his mind a clear conception of the model upon which he meant to form it, as for a sculptor of the human mind to undertake to form a character, good or bad, without having some fixed purpose as to the shape he means to give it. Mrs. Clarkson in the nursery was what

Powers was in the quarry; she knew the texture of the mental granite upon which she had to work, and the temper of the chisel she had to work with, and her heart and head were full of the model of the character she wanted to form. Should such a sculptor put the chisel to shape lineaments so delicate, fine, and perfect, into a stranger's hands, to deface and spoil as pure a piece of marble as was ever struck from an Italian quarry? Never! She was too true a mother, had too high an appreciation of her duties and privileges, to leave such a sweet task to strangers, however willing or skilled the workman. She felt that nature had done much in forming the physical frame, and a kind Providence more in furnishing a mind of extraordinary beauty and purity, and as it grew, and she saw it shaping itself under her touch to the model, she felt all the pride and pleasure which the artist feels as he sees the rough stone moulding to the perfections of his model. Hence her pleasure was at home. The information which books impart were of course not neglected, but it came in incidentally, and not regarded as the primary object of education; only as an auxiliary—a means to a great end. In this she was not aided by her husband. Col. Clarkson loved his family, was extremely kind to, and fond of all, but he was idolatrously attached to Agnes. And he always seemed to think of her as the beautiful little angel that looked up to him and smiled in his face, as he kneeled by her cradle and bent over her in the first years of his wedded life. If she had been less pure and single-minded as she grew up, his mind would have been awakened from that dream of other years, and he would have bestowed some thought upon her necessary culture. But as it was, she continued innocent and beautiful as in infancy, and the charm had never been broken. For this preservation of infantile loveliness and gentleness, Agnes was in a great measure indebted to her mother. The time, however, was approaching

when the mother felt the necessity of transferring this labor of love to other hands. Twelve months and more had passed since their return to the Bluffs, and Agnes was fast verging to womanhood; and the mother deemed it due to her daughter, reluctant as she was to resign the charge, that she should be sent to some school where she would derive much greater advantages in the mere science of education than could be had at home. But this determination was not arrived at by the mother until she saw the character so well formed, and the mind so far developed, that there was nothing left for the schoolmaster to do but to fill the vase with such flowers as could be gathered from the hill of science. Having cultivated and formed her mind thus far, the going to school was but another step in her own system, and hence, when the proper time came for it to be taken, she was prepared for it. Not so, however, with the father. He was therefore aroused as if from a dream, when, one afternoon in autumn, as they sat in the broad piazza, the sun flinging a gorgeous flood of light into the lap of the beautiful landscape spread out before the city, she approached him and said:

"It is time we thought of sending Agnes to school."

He turned to look at her, reading at the other end of the gallery; and as he looked, she grew, grew, grew into a woman before him! He had only thought of her as a child; the sweet babe that smiled on him fifteen years ago, in the morning of life; the child that first lisped to him with baby breath, "Papa!" and taught him how dear it was to have some helpless thing to protect. His other children grew up like those of other people, and he formed plans for them; thought of what was proper to be done with and for them, when they grew up to manhood. But Agnes, "little Agnes," was his first-born babe; and though fifteen years had sprinkled his head and chin with gray, she was still his first-born, his babe, his "little Agnes;" and so long as she was "little

Agnes" he could not grow old: his heart was still young, and in the cradle of "little Agnes;" and his wife, who was Mrs. Clarkson to the world, was Amy to him; the Amy of younger years; the Amy he used to attend in the pleasant walks, whirl with in the dance, and kneel with in the same pew at church, and recite the prayers from the same book; the Amy he led to the altar, and vowed to love, cherish, and protect, when all was youth and hope, light, and life, and love. How long it seemed, as he looked back! As he looked, she was "little Agnes" no longer. There she was, nearly a woman, and he passed the meridian of life! The heart stood still, and trembled upon the verge before it mustered courage to leap the gap of years. Fifteen years! How quickly they had passed, and how silently and surely they had borne him away from the morning of his life! While "little Agnes" was "little Agnes," it was ever present; but now that she was no longer "little Agnes," and the dear scenes of the past, hallowed by a thousand sweet associations, were receding, receding, still receding, and memory, reaching out her withered arm in vain to stay them, like the child that stands upon the bank of the stream, and cries, "Bring back my flowers," he could have sat himself down and wept.

He walked the gallery to and fro for some time in silence. How busy was memory spreading out and adjusting before him the days and the years gone by! He at last turned and said:

"You are right, Amy. Strange I had not thought of it before. I have never thought of her as other than *our child*, our first-born; and you must excuse me if the surprise, the new feeling that she is no longer a child, and is soon to be our successor in scenes dear to memory, made me slow in giving you an answer. The feeling is new, and painful as new; newer even, than the tinsel and folly of some

of our friends, and without the glitter and the power to please." He resumed his walk, stopped, and said:

"When we were married, sixteen years ago, I had a laudable ambition for distinction in my profession, and the fairest of prospects, equal, if not superior to that of any of my acquaintances; and here, at the age of forty-one, I stand, humiliated before the wife I have disappointed! Do not say deceived! No, thank God! I have not acted deceptively! I have foolishly hoped that the child would always be a child, and keep me young; keep me at the starting-point of life, where I could commence anew the race of life, whenever it suited me to shake loose from my lethargy, brought on by luxury and idleness, and which has made me as unproductive as the 'fat weed that rots on Lethe's wharf!'"

Mrs. Clarkson was alarmed. She was a woman of fine sense, and still finer qualities: one at whom a stranger would turn to look, if passed in a crowd. She spoke but few words, and they were to the point. The course of life her husband had chosen to pursue, had been a matter of deep regret; and she had done all she could, in the earlier part of her married life, to give it a different direction; and when her efforts proved vain, she applied her energies to avoid the hazards and evils with which such a life was beset. Her good sense told her that the worst thing to fear, at his time of life, surrounded by temptation and danger as he was, was *remorse*. She saw him standing upon a precipice; and into the deep, dark gulf beyond, she would not permit herself to look. Remorse was all that was needed to make him leap headlong into it. It was too late for him to gather up what sixteen years of luxury and dissipation in the prime and vigor of life had scattered. Sixteen years of total obliviousness to a profession well learned, it is true, but never practiced, had sped by, carrying with them the profession; and one could no more be recalled than the other; and that incentive to

exertion which could inspire a resolution to begin anew, was wanting. Better, therefore, that he should continue as he was, the careless, idle man of pleasure, and of the world, than something worse. Better drink on, as a matter of good cheer, than drink to drown memory; better bet to count the game, than to win back his youth and youthful hopes and aspirations. She saw the danger, and threw herself, with all a woman's fortitude, between him and the great abyss beyond. She would persuade him that his life had not been barren.

"You have made me happy, at least," she said. He kissed her forehead. "That was one object of your ambition. You have not only not deceived, but you have not disappointed me. Success in your profession would only have given wealth, which we did not need; and political success, once an object of ambition with you, was never desired by me. Its laurels are but a crown of thorns to the wearer. One would have worn out your frame, to accumulate what we did not need, and the other would have worn out your morals, for that which would have supplanted your wife and children in your affections. Then, my dear husband, as you love me, do not regret the past; do not so much as look at it!" And she looked into his face with an anxious, pleading look, that was peculiar to her. It was not a care-worn, sad, or melancholy look, but a blending of them all; such as may be seen in the face of "Mary," in the picture of the Crucifixion, where she leans upon the shoulder of John, "the beloved disciple," and looks anxiously into the face of her Saviour, as he is about being nailed to the cross. Mr. Clarkson placed his arm over her shoulder, drew her hand around him, and walked the gallery back and fro for a long while in silence, and finally took his hat and went down town. She looked after him with a swelling, beating heart.

CHAPTER VII.

O God of Juda, scatter all those clouds!

RACINE.

HE did not return to tea. Night came on, and he still did not come. The children were put to bed, and went to sleep; he still had not come. She took up her prayer-book, and then her Bible, and read; laid them down, walked to the window and door, and looked; but he still had not come. She went out and walked the gallery, and listened. Hist! She hears a footstep; it is his! Her heart beats: she can scarcely hear the walking. It comes nearer; it is steady. Thank God! he is sober, and her fears are groundless. No; she is mistaken: the step passes the gate, and goes on. She walks to the gate, and leans upon it, and looks down the street. All is still. She returns and walks the gallery. O, how her heart aches! Something must be the matter: he must be ill! and gets her bonnet, determined to go in search of him: but, pshaw! why think so? Has he not remained out later than this many a night before? She lays aside her bonnet, takes up her book, and tries again to read; but the letters swim before her, and she reads without knowing what she reads. She looks at the children; they are comfortable; looks out at the servants' hall; all is still there; they have gone to bed, and are asleep. The lights in the houses of the neighbors around are all extinguished, and the inmates asleep; the moon has sunk far to the west, and seems preparing for repose in the lap of the landscape which shone

so lovely in the soft sunlight of the afternoon, and still he had not come. The tramp of many feet is at last heard. What can it mean? Can he be killed, and they bearing his body to her? They approach nearer, open the gate, and tramp along the gravel walk. Her limbs tremble; she is unable to move; they step upon the gallery; she hears his voice! Then he is not dead! She opens the door, and those who are supporting him let go, and, with a hiccough, he reels, and falls into her arms. She utters no reproaches to him, nor to the companions of his revel, but, with their assistance, conveys him to bed, where he sleeps off his debauch.

He awoke next day as all newly-made drunkards do, with a severe pain in the head, and bodily prostration, and deeply mortified, and formed a mental resolve never to be guilty of such excess again, and lays all the blame on the brandy, avowing that he had not drunk more than upon previous occasions, when he had not felt it. This was partly true; for the excited state of his mind, when he began to drink, gave a double power to the liquor. For several days after, he avoided temptation, and abstained from cards and brandy. During that time, the sending of Agnes to school was fully discussed, and a school selected, which was one of the oldest and best-endowed in the Union.

At the earnest request of Agnes, backed by the wishes of Mrs. Clarkson, who wished to draw her husband as far as possible from the influence of the clubs, it was agreed that the time needed in preparing Agnes for school should be spent at the plantation, a new residence having been erected in place of the one burned down. As soon as it was determined upon, Agnes approached her father, and asked:

"Pa, will you please give me two hundred and fifty dollars, and not ask what I want with it?"

"Why, that is a strange request, my daughter."

"Well, never mind, dear papa; will you give me the money?"

"Yes, if you say so. Thinking of your old gray-haired friend at the Bend, eh?"

"Thank you, my father;" and she threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him.

It was determined that they would not return until in the ensuing fall; and it took some ten days or two weeks in making preparations to leave for the plantation. This thing was to be attended to, and the shopping to be done; and Agnes had her two hundred and fifty dollars to spend; a novelty to her, as she had never made purchases or been in trading-shops before. Things all done, and purchases made, they left for the "Bend," and found all to their liking.

A day or two after their arrival, Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson, in an evening walk, visited the negro burying-ground, and were surprised and pleased to see a neat little paling fence around the grave of good old Aunt Fanny, and, standing at the head of the grave a handsome tombstone, with the following inscription upon it:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY

OF

AUNT FANNY

WHO WAS BURNED TO DEATH, NOVEMBER —, 18—; A MARTYR

TO HER LOVE FOR HER FOSTER-DAUGHTER,

"LITTLE AGNES,"

IN HER VAIN EFFORT TO RESCUE HER FROM THE FLAMES, AND WHO

NOW PAYS THIS HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO HER MEMORY AND

MORAL WORTH.

The secret of the two hundred and fifty dollars was explained.

The Hermit had resumed his solitary habits, as silent and impenetrable as ever. There Agnes found him, and joined again in his walks. From his abstraction, she feared that she had lost her place in his affections; that his heart had only opened to close more tightly. He noticed her anxiety, and reassured her, by pressing his lips to her forehead; the first time he had offered an endearment of the kind. It was something for her to carry with her to school, and to recall, when, worried with study, she should steal away from her companions and her books, to think of home and friends, and the strange, mysterious being who had taken such possession of her heart and imagination, and in whom she had inspired an interest for herself as extraordinary as it was deep and unexpected; an interest which made him peril life, and endure the most excruciating bodily suffering, to rescue her from a most awful death; a danger from which her own parents, dearly as they loved her, shrank appalled.

The day of her departure soon came, and the negroes all gathered at the house, to tell her "good-bye;" and their uncouth expressions of sorrow, though affecting, were as grotesque as they were heartfelt. The parting from her mother was the hardest trial to both. Although Mrs. Clarkson had been the first to propose her leaving for school, when the day of separation came, she felt it to be more than she could bear; and nothing but a strong sense of duty nerved her to it. In her cradle she had watched her infancy, nursed and nurtured her, and guided her steps to the verge of womanhood; and then to give her to the direction of another, was a trial her woman's heart could not think of with dry eyes. She folded the sweet, trusting child to her bosom, pressed her long and hard, sighed deeply, turned, and, catching hold of the door, saved herself from falling. She threw herself upon the bed, buried her face in her hands, and lay motionless as death, without a word, without a tear, without a sob!

How long she had lain in that condition, she did not know, when she felt a little soft arm steal gently around her neck, and her little son of eight years laid his head beside hers, and wept. His affection for his mother was beautiful and simple; and having seen her retreat to her room, and his own cry ended, he went silently into his mother's room, and, after waiting until he could stand it no longer, crawled quietly up beside her, and put his little arm around her neck, and nestled his head down beside hers. This touching expression of sympathy from her child had the effect to start the flow of tears, and relieved the oppression about the heart. When she arose, the boat was out of sight.

When placed aboard of the boat, Agnes took her stand where she could see her home, and that of her friend, dear as home. As far as she could see the Hermit, he was walking up and down his old path along the river bank. "How long," she asked herself, "before I shall again join him? How long before I shall see my dear, dear mother?" And as the Bend and loved ones were closed to view, she retired to her stateroom, to weep away the first sad hours of separation.

Dr. Floyd had requested Col. Clarkson to take charge of Robert Hamilton, and leave him at college; and when the Colonel and Agnes got aboard of the boat, they found Robert on board. As Clarkson had no acquaintances on the boat, for a day or so he spent his time with Robert and Agnes, and took little or no notice of the game, which never seemed to cease, day nor night. A gentleman of his agreeable manners could not be on a boat long without making acquaintances, and he was much pleased with a very modest, pleasant acquaintance he made on the second day after getting aboard. The efforts of his new acquaintance, who was himself a father, and on his way to visit his only daughter at school, so he said, to wean his thoughts from painful channels, were so well timed and unobtrusive as to gain Clarkson's regard, and

awaken a disposition to extend the acquaintance. They exchanged cards, and Clarkson was pleased to find him a member of a large and respectable commission house in New Orleans—a silent partner. Like Clarkson, he had not taken a hand in the game, though often solicited to do so. He seemed to know everybody on board, and all seemed to know him; and his declining to join in the game was more from an indisposition to play at the time, than any scruple of conscience. He took occasion to let Col. Clarkson know that he sometimes played for amusement, but only for amusement, and bet to count the game; but abhorred the vice of gambling. It so chanced, either by design or accident, that one afternoon a game could not be made up without Col. Clarkson and his new friend would take a hand; and as time seemed to hang heavily with them, they joined in the game. All the players were severe in their condemnation of gamblers—professional blacklegs—but all bet, and bet high. The game soon became deeply interesting, and Col. Clarkson was so much absorbed by it, that when notified by the Captain that supper was on the table, he got Robert to attend Agnes to the table, and continued the game. Supper was eaten and the table cleared away, and the game still continued; the passengers one by one went to bed, and Agnes waited in vain for her father's accustomed "good-night;" the game still continued. She sat down, a solitary watcher, in the door of the ladies' cabin. Seconds lengthened into minutes, and minutes into hours, and her father did not come to bid her good-night. She knew he was excited more than common; he talked loud, and quick, and angry, and sometimes swore; it was the first time she had ever heard him swear, and at dead of night and in her anxious state of mind, it sounded doubly horrible, doubly blasphemous! She could stand it no longer, and, moved by an impulse she could not control, and a feeling she did not stop to analyze, she walked down the cabin, past the

long row of sleepers, to the card-table, took hold of the cards in her father's hand, and looked him imploringly in the face. His first glance at her was one of stern defiance and rebuke; but there was a charm, a halo about the face of the angelic girl, as she looked at him with a volume of unspoken prayers and entreaties, that overcame him, and his look softened; he yielded the cards, rose, and suffered her to lead him to his state-room, where he kissed her and retired.

Her vigils had not been all alone, as she supposed. Robert had watched, unseen, from his own room, the progress of the game, with little if any less interest than Agnes herself, and saw her, like some fairy spirit of love, move down the long, dimly lighted cabin, and blessed her. As she passed to her room, he whispered a soft "good-night," that lightened the dreams of the dear girl's anxious heart.

Col. Clarkson awoke the next morning to a full consciousness of his folly. And to the mortification of having pained a daughter he would give his right arm to shield from harm, he found that in betting to count the game, he had counted to a parcel of gambling sharks about eight thousand dollars; and, but for the timely interference of his daughter, he might have beggared himself and her. He felt the pecuniary loss the more, as he had drawn the money from his merchant, upon the faith of his crop, intending, after purchasing his plantation supplies and paying Agnes's school-bill, to invest the balance in negroes, while in Virginia; now he would be compelled to submit to a heavy discount, to raise in Louisville the funds required to meet the demands of his plantation, and defray his and his daughter's expenses. When, therefore, he saluted Agnes in the morning, he was a sadder, and, to a limited extent at least, a better man. Noticing that Agnes was about to speak, he interrupted her:

"I know what you would say, my daughter, and I deserve more than you would say, but I cannot bear it now."

"I was not going to say any thing bad, Pa."

"Well, what did you wish to say, my child?"

"O Pa! I never heard you swear before!" and leaned weeping upon his shoulder.

"And you shall never hear me again, my darling child." Brushing away the tears that gathered fast to his eyes, he turned and walked away. It was the last card he played, and the last night's sleep she lost on his account during the remainder of their journey.

Agnes was so fortunate as to meet at school Alice St. Cloud, the only daughter of a widowed mother, a resident of Bluff City, but who was at that time staying near her daughter while at school, having no particular tie at home. Mrs. St. Cloud was a lady of great force of character, and of high moral worth, and Alice was as pure in heart as she was faultless in face. She was a year or so older than Agnes, but only in years. She was small in stature, but perfect in shape; her complexion was a clear, transparent white, and looked like wax-work; her hair was long and black, and glossy as the raven's wing, and her eyes were black and clear as glass, and looked as if set in a snow-heap. She was as innocent, unaffected, and happy as a child. To see her was to love her; to know her was to idolize. She was not deficient in any thing, but never studied; no one expected her to study: she never knew a lesson; no one expected her to: she never got a bad mark at school; no one expected her to: she never did any thing right, and yet she could do nothing wrong; if any thing wrong was done, and it was discovered that Alice did it, it was all right. She loved everybody and every thing, and everybody loved her in return. She was guileless as an infant, and her motion was the very personification of grace itself.

As the two young ladies were from the same place, it was an easy matter to grant Col. Clarkson's request that they

should be permitted to occupy a room together, and to see as much of Mrs. St. Cloud, who had taken lodgings at a private house with a view of making it "home" until her daughter's education was finished, as was consistent with the rules of the school, but to visit no one else. The good fortune of Agnes in meeting such friends at school, lifted from his heart a load of anxiety.

The days passed wearily enough with Mrs. Clarkson, waiting her husband's return. When the time came for her to expect him home, she would sit upon the gallery step, and look until her eyes grew weary and dim. Her little son would seat himself beside her, and, while she gazed steadfastly up the river, he gazed steadfastly into her face; the two forming a life-picture none but a Raphael could trace. One evening, when she had been looking longer than usual, and would run her hand from time to time across her eyes to brighten them, or remove the gathering film, the darling little fellow, with the sweetest naïveté possible, planted his elbow upon his knee, and, resting his chin in his hand, said:

"You go in the house, dear Mamma, and rest your sweet eyes, and I'll stay here and watch for Pa."

The mother put her arm around him, and rested her chin on his head, and suffered the big, warm tears to stand and smoke upon her cheek, a sweet incense fresh from the heart to Heaven, in gratitude for two such children.

Col. Clarkson's return, and the favorable report from Agnes, relieved much of the mother's anxiety. And his free and full confession of his great folly—he would not call it otherwise—lightened the grief which such a folly would naturally enough occasion. The loss of the money was a sufficient excuse for her to urge their remaining upon the plantation the balance of the season. The careless, doing-nothing habits of his neighbors, most of whom were his equals in natural and acquired attainments, being men of

education and travel, would, she thought, save him from the remorse and self-reproach which she regarded as the rock that threatened to wreck all her hopes. He consented to remain.

CHAPTER VIII.

The world's all title-page; there's no contents.
YOUNG.

AFTER Clarkson's return to Bluff City early in the spring, he joined some friends in a visit to New Orleans. He took passage upon the steamer *Belle Creole*, under the command of a loud-talking, high-living, card-playing Captain, who was as generous in his feelings as he was loose in his morals, and who, notwithstanding his dissolute habits, was one of the most popular Captains on the river, with all classes, men, women, and children, married and single; though his love of wine, cards, and women, was as notorious as his boat was popular. Every comfort and luxury was provided the passengers, and a trip to New Orleans lost half its pleasure if taken in any other than this popular steamer. The playing on board was incessant; the card-tables were never vacant; no other amusement was thought of, except perhaps a dance on the part of the younger passengers at night, to the music of a splendid brass-band, hired by the Captain for the season. Among the older men, it was play, play, play. It was play in the morning, play in the evening, play at night, play all night, or nearly so, and bet, bet, bet. But no gambling! If a stranger was introduced and "took a hand," and it was suspected that he played for money and bet to win, though his bets were not half so large as others, they soon "froze him out" and cut his acquaintance. The playing was nothing,

the betting was nothing, the winning and losing were nothing; one could play as much as he pleased, bet as much as he pleased, win and lose as much as he pleased, but he must do it for the love of it; that was not gambling, not immoral! It did not exclude him from good society; it was a fair mark of a gentleman, an almost indispensable passport to their society; and they held the keys to the "best society" at home; were controllers of business, made and unmade aldermen, and manufactured public opinion; but let him use the game for its legitimate purpose—the purpose for which it was invented—to win money, and as soon as he was detected, he fell under the ban, though his winnings or losings were not one-tenth part of theirs. The playing went on, and Captain, Clerk, Pilots, Mate, and deck-hands were all interested, and many of the officers took hands. Those of the passengers who did not take hands, stood around and looked on. No gambling, but the highest sort of betting! No note was taken of time; the boat would stop, but no one knew it; would start on again, but no one knew it. The Captain might walk, or turn toward the bow and look, it was not noticed. The bell rings, dong, dong; no one hears it. A strange bell rings, dong, dong, but no one hears it. A tremendous crash! The tables and players are upset! The women scream, and all run out to learn the cause of the crash. The *Belle Creole* had come in collision with the passenger steamer "*Bosphorus*," and ran her bow into the hull of the latter, sinking her immediately, drowning some hundred or more of her passengers and crew; the result of cards and brandy! Every effort was made by the "*Belle Creole*" and her crew to save the drowning passengers of the ill-fated vessel, and a number were picked up from the water.

Frank Vaughan, who was aboard of the "*Belle Creole*"—but, to his honor be it said, participated to a very limited extent in the game, only taking an absent player's hand at

times—saw a gentleman who had been saved from the wreck of the "Bosphorus," dripping with water and shivering with cold, near the rear stove. The stranger was in undress military suit, and possessed a handsome person, sported a moustache, had a foreign accent, and was about Frank's size. Whether prompted by a generous impulse, or by the unfortunate man's good looks and military air—Frank was fond of military men—he tendered him the use of his wardrobe and purse.

"Ah, me une grande unfortunate! Me tank you," said the stranger; and drawing a wet card from his vest-pocket, handed it to Frank. What was the latter's astonishment and delight to read, "Don John de Castro de Navidad!" Here was a prize! the live son of a live Duke! Frank was in ecstasies. He forced the Duke to share his purse and wear his best suit, which fitted neatly. It was soon noised over the boat that Frank Vaughan had picked up a live Duke out of the water; and the excitement and desire to see him was as great as if he had been a mermaid or the sea-horse. The ladies were especially excited and eager to see him. The anxiety of mothers with marriageable daughters, Mrs. Corbin in particular, was exasperating.

Frank learned from Don John that he was bearer of dispatches from the Government of Mexico to that of the United States, and was on his way to Washington when the sad accident happened which secured him the pleasure of Frank's acquaintance, [Frank bowed,] and that all his baggage, containing his dispatches, letters of credit, and money, was lost. Frank ran his hand into his pocket, pulled out his pocket-book, and pressed the Duke to take it. But no; he was modest; would only take what would serve his present purpose, which Frank thought was very little, but which, if given to a beggar in rags, would have been thought by him enormous. Frank was the envy of the whole boat, and,

in the estimation of the ladies, was second only to Don John himself. He grew in his own estimation, as well as in that of others. The other young men, seeing the Duke using Frank's money, and wearing his clothes, could have thrown the latter overboard, from pure envy.

When the company arrived in New Orleans, a distinguished officer of the United States Army was holding his levee at the St. Charles, and Clarkson and his friends had of course to pay their respects to him. There was a large and rather distinguished company present, and Frank's heart beat with proud emotions as he announced, and was about to introduce to the officer, Don John de Castro de Navidad. At the announcement, the officer turned, and the young Duke rushed forward, and, seizing him by the hand, said, with his eye sparkling with enthusiasm:

"Me no need te introduction to te prave man, te prave soltier! Me see him in te pattle! Me see him tare, mit his sword gleamin' in te sun, and his hair streamin' in 'te win', and he say to te soltier, 'Come on; tish ish te way to vict'ry,' and not, 'Tat ish te way to vict'ry!' Ah, sare, me receive une pad wound tere! Me never recover;" putting his hand to his breast, to mark the place of the wound.

"Ah, my dear sir, I am glad to see you," said the officer, shaking him warmly by the hand, and flattered by the delicate compliment. "I recollect, now that you mention it, of hearing that a son of the Duke de Castro fell, dangerously wounded, at the head of his column, when gallantly leading it into action; and, now that I see you, I recognize you as the same. Allow me to sympathize with you, and hope that your wound is not so serious as you apprehend."

"Me tank you, sare; me tank you; put me no recover," putting his hand again to his wound. "Ah, me meet une grande acciden'! Te poat sink, and me lose all me tis-

patch to Vashington, and when me return to me Governen, me pe pehead."

"Impossible, sir! Your Government cannot be so cruel! I am acquainted with your chief magistrate, and with the general in command; and I will write and explain what has occurred; and if the President should not listen to me, the General will; and I will interest him in your behalf. And, in the meantime, you must not think of travelling in your present feeble health; and I insist upon your going to my country-seat, and remaining until you recover from the effect of your accident. Important business engagements will prevent me from attending you, but you will receive a hearty welcome, and must make yourself at home."

"Tank you, sare; tank you. Put me Governen' no like your Governen'; me governen' no take excuse. Put me accep' your hospital."

"Allow me to shake hands with you," said an old volunteer soldier, who had fought in the wars, waking up, and extending his hand. "I recollect you perfectly. I saw you when you fell."

"Ah, me hones' fren'; me take une trink mit you. Te prave soltier make te prave officare."

At all this Frank was nearly beside himself. The only drawback was the fear it inspired that the shadow of the Duke might fall upon some one else. But, then, was he not wearing his cloak, and using his money? He was—all saw that—and making as if he was at home with both, just as a Duke ought. His fears were groundless; for the Duke had taken quite a liking to him, and accepted him as his companion in all his walks and rides about the city, and visits to the theatres and other places of amusement and fashionable resort; and took pains upon all public occasions to recognize him as his friend, and openly expressed his gratitude for the

favours received. At each expression of the sort, Frank would run his hand deeper into his pocket for his purse, and press it on the Duke. Of course he could not think of doing less than pay for all the tickets, omnibus hire, hotel bills, and furnish money for the Duke to lose at cards; for the Duke had as good a right to lose money at cards as Col. Clarkson, Dr. Floyd, and others; and if he expected to visit Bluff City, and enjoy the advantage of their society, he must take a lesson or two before he came.

In Frank's laudable effort to monopolize the wants and extravagances of the Duke, he had a dangerous rival in Mrs. Corbin. As these favours of the Duke were in the market, she determined to bid high—make a desperate cast of the die. At one time a neat, little, sweetly perfumed note was placed in the Duke's hand:

"The compliments of Mrs. and Miss Corbin. Mrs. C. would be pleased to have the pleasure of the Duke's company in a ride to Lafayette Square, at three o'clock P. M., in her private carriage."

There were pretty cupids all over the note-paper. At another time, the ladies desired his company in a game of "whist;" at another time, to the Opera, in a "private box." And Miss Clara went so far as to try her splendid diamond ring on his soft, white, handsomely-tapered finger. It fitted so well, and graced the aristocratically small hand so much, that it was left there. His jewelry, except his ducal ring, which he never wore, had been lost with his dispatches; and but for his temporary poverty, which he never knew until that moment what it was to regret, it would have afforded him the most exquisite pleasure of his life to exchange diamonds with her. She was delighted; would have given a whole mine of diamonds for another such a speech. Mrs. Corbin began to feel strong in her position. The Duke would not wear Clara's ring under such circumstances, if he

was not pleased with her! His attentions, too, were decidedly marked! Frank grew more and more uneasy. He saw that it was useless competing with a woman, and such a woman as Mrs. Corbin, who had conquered her husband long before his death, and had him tame and tractable as a farm-horse; especially with her handsome daughter, with her girlish ways, thrown in. So he wisely concluded that the best thing he could do was to compromise, and take the Duke as partnership stock, and pay his expenses in shares, and thus rule out all other bidders. As Frank had no maiden relatives to interfere in his behalf, and as in the event of a failure to captivate the Duke, Frank might conceal from the world the mortification and disappointment of the family, by taking the hand which the Duke refused, Mrs. Corbin accepted a compromise. Frank, pleased with the compromise, did not stop to inquire the process of reasoning by which she assented to it.

The advantage of the partnership to Mrs. Corbin was soon made apparent; for, when the Duke took advantage of the officer's kind invitation to visit his country-seat, Mrs. Corbin could not of course attend him, and she had to intrust every thing to her partner.

Her suspense, though great, was not of long duration; for the Duke soon tired of country life, and sighed for more tender nursing and sympathy than servants could give, and yielded to the earnest solicitations of Frank to visit Bluff City.

What an event was his visit to the nabobs and nabobesses about town! What toasting and feasting, and feasting and toasting! What wining and dining, and dining and wining! The carriage he rode in, the chair he sat on, the spoon he sipped with, and the knife he ate with, were all sacred for life from that moment. Miss Clara would butter his waffle, Miss — light his cigar, Miss — make his

toddy, and Mrs. Corbin and Clara prepare ointments for his wound! And so it went. Frank was so beside himself with delight, that he needed some one to sit up with him. Young ladies that he barely knew, and who he once thought were disposed to snub him, would meet him in the street—he was fond of meeting ladies there, and who is not, especially if rich and pretty?—and they would accost him:

"Why, Mr. Vaughan, how do you do? I am so glad to see you! I understand you have been to New Orleans lately."

"Yes; thank you; just returned from a short visit to the city;" bowing politely, and stroking his chin.

"You must come and see us. It has been a long time since I have had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Thank you; I will take great pleasure in calling; nothing will give me more pleasure."

"I understand you met with a new acquaintance on your trip?"

"Yes; thank you."

"The young Duke de Castro?"

"Yes, ma'am; bearer of dispatches to our Government."

"So I heard. You must bring your friend around with you."

"Thank you; I will do so."

They separate mutually happy; he that a Duke is thought to be his friend, and they at the near prospect of having a Duke in the house.

Frank was fond of exercise, and whenever he could command the Duke's time, which was not as often as he wished, as private carriages and footmen were always at his service, he would hire the finest buggy and the finest pair of bob-tail ponies he could get, and go it at a "two forty" pace through town; up one street and down another; cross over, and dash ahead. At such times, each window-pane had a pair of

bright eyes at it; and if he passed a neighborhood where the eyes were not at the windows, he would take it for granted that the residents did not know he and the Duke were passing, and would ride around that way again, at a slower pace; but when he would see a little negro or one of the children look at him, and turn and run in the house, to carry the news of his and the Duke's proximity, the bob-tails would dart forward at break-neck speed.

CHAPTER IX.

Confused, above,
Glasses and bottles, pipes and gazetteers,
As if the table even itself was drunk,
Lie, a wet, broken scene; and wide below
Is heaped the social slaughter; where astride
The lubber power in filthy triumph sits,
And steeps them drenched in potent sleep till morn.
Perhaps some doctor, of tremendous paunch,
Awful and deep, a black abyss of drink,
Outlives them all.

It was announced that Mr. Broadhead, a retired merchant prince, with a fashionable wife and marriageable daughters, intended giving a grand party in compliment to the Duke; and the cards were issued several days beforehand, that all might have full time to do honor to his distinguished guest, by the newness and expense of their attire; for of course it was not expected that anybody would wear to see a Duke what they had ever worn to see anybody else; so time had to be given for each one to prepare for this important event. The company was to be select, and the town was all agog. Those who had new carriages, new horses, new footmen, and new respectability, were of course invited, and crowded the streets and dry-goods shops. Large gaps were made in the dry-goods shelves and the husbands' purses; the needles of mantua-makers, and cash, were made to fly—sewing-machines were not then invented. The servant that carried the card-basket, passed by Piper's

without stopping. "The girls" and Betsy thought nothing of it, and cared less; but Piper's nostrils spread and nose flattened and under-lip drooped, and he exhausted his trading qualities to the utmost to bargain for invitations, but in vain. Mr. Broadhead was very polite, but seemed not to know that Piper had daughters; and neither Gilpin nor Piper could force conviction upon him.

The evening came, and there were no vacant seats. It was one of the parties where all who were desired came. It differed from other parties upon like occasions, only in the excessive outlay and extravagant display of every thing new: the silver waiters were new, the cake-stands were new, goblets were new, the forks were new, the champagne was new, cigars new, the furniture was new, the house was new, the servants were new, the manners of the host and hostess were new, the guest was new; every thing one saw, every thing one touched, every thing one tasted was new. But the newness of every thing did not destroy the appetite nor thirst of the company, and the eating and drinking went on as at other parties, when eating and drinking are expected. Everybody had to drink with the Duke, and the Duke had to drink with everybody; and everybody had to drink with everybody, and it was kept up until somebody put a "brick" in the hat of the Duke and everybody. At least so everybody said on the street the next day.

An amusing occurrence took place the next day in the dining-room. When Mr. Broadhead was sufficiently recovered from the effects of the new champagne of the night before to get up, he walked into the room with his gown and slippers, and addressed his wife's serving-maid, who was assorting the dishes, in order to return such as had been hired and borrowed.

"Which is the plate and knife and fork used by the Duke last night?" asked Mr. Broadhead of the servant.

"Lord, Master, I don't know."

"You huzzy, you! have you gone and put them with the other dishes?"

"Master, I didn't know any better! They was oun."

"Ourn! I know they were ours! I wanted them kept separate, so they could be put away."

"Master, I didn't know it. I didn't know his eatin' with'm made 'em any different."

"Clear out of here, you impertinent huzzy, you! If you speak another word to me, I will——"

The loud talking aroused Mrs. Broadhead, and she came in with night-cap and gown, and wishes to know—

"What is the matter?"

"This creature has gone and put the plate and knife and fork used by the Duke with the other dishes, and I would not have had it done for the value of the whole set!"

"My, Sarah! how could you have done such a thing?"

"Why, Mistress, I didn't——"

"Silence, you thing! Didn't I tell you, if you opened your mouth, I would——"

"Why, Mis——"

"Stop." He took her upon the mouth! "Didn't I tell you not to open your mouth again? What do you know of a Duke?"

"Husband! husband! how can you do so? She was only answering my question!"

"I don't care; I told her not to open her mouth again."

"Dear! see, her mouth is all bleeding!"

The sight of the effect of his violence, though nothing serious, calmed him down, and he stammered out a sort of apology to the negro, and left the room.

By dint of rummaging, thinking, comparing, etc., the fork was identified, and carefully wrapped up in tissue paper and put away.

Mrs. Corbin took the alarm. It would never do to allow Mr. Broadhead to exceed her in paying honors to the Duke, and cards were soon issued for a party to be given by Mrs. Corbin. Her efforts were commensurate with the magnitude of the occasion; and every thing was as new as the latest fashion. The only thing which materially distinguished it from the party given by Mr. Broadhead, was the fainting of the Duke. The constant round of dissipation which the hospitality of the place had forced upon him, had aggravated his wound, and just as every thing was at its tide upon the evening of the party, he fainted, and, O! pleasure inexpressible! in falling, his head drooped upon Miss Clara's knee! He was borne to the nearest lounge, which chanced to be in Miss Clara's room, and she had the additional happiness of supporting his head and fanning him! Almost too much happiness for one frame to bear. His extreme modesty and delicacy were such, that he would never allow any one, not even the physicians whom he consulted, to examine or dress his wound; hence no one would offend his delicacy by opening his bosom to relieve it, while he was in an insensible condition; though Dr. Floyd and a half dozen other physicians were there ready to tender their services gratis, and to mark and lay away for life the instrument that should probe his wound. All that was done was to open his collar, bathe his face with Cologne, and fan him. The blood that oozed from the wound stained the shirt bosom and vest, at the sight of which Miss Clara felt like fainting, and had a good mind to do so; it would show such sensibility and sympathy. She hesitated, and would have fainted outright, but she saw one of the Miss Broadheads there, and if she fainted they would fan him. This determined her not to faint.

The fainting of the Duke was all that was wanting to complete Mrs. Corbin's happiness and triumph. Not that she took pleasure in human suffering; on the contrary, she was

a kind-hearted woman enough; but it furnished an excuse for detaining the Duke at her house for several days, and Clara would be his constant nurse! How pleasing the thought! What if the party was broken up? What if it did destroy the enjoyment of the balance of the evening, so far as her company was concerned? It made no difference, for the party was not given for their enjoyment. What were they but fit hecatombs to the divinity in the other room, with his head upon Clara's knee, and her finest Cashmere shawl thrown negligently across him! And O! happiness too great for mortal enjoyment! fit only for the gods! there is a stain of blood, Ducal blood, upon the shawl! If the Duke could have known, as he lay there all pale and languid, how often in after weeks—we dare not say years, or even months, for the passion of fashionable folks is not measured by time, if of any duration—the dear creature, who supported his well-oiled head, and never wearied in fanning him, and suffered the mosquitoes, that were numerous and ravenous, to bite away at her well-powdered and polished neck, ad libitum, for fear an effort to disturb their carnival would disturb his repose, would put her sweet lips to the stained spot and kiss it over and over again, it must, to some extent, have alleviated his pain. She had never held her mother's, father's, sister's, or brother's head in that way, even when raging with fever and pain; and why should she then sit and let the big swamp mosquitoes hold their carnival about her neck and shoulders, supporting the head, and fanning the midnight hours away, to soothe to sleep this acquaintance of less than half a moon? And why, in this task, hard as it was, should she be the envy of all the votaries of fashion, married and single, in the town? The answer brings a blush to the cheek of every true lover of Republican simplicity.

CHAPTER X.

Wolsey: *Tanta est ergà te mentis integritas, regina serenissima.*

Q. Kath: O, good my lord, no Latin;

* * * * *

Pray, speak in English:

* * * * *

The willing'st sin I ever yet committed

May be absolved in English.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILE the parties and toasting were in full progress, and everybody run mad with the Duke fever, a Federal officer in town, noted for his unimpressibility, became slightly affected with the malady, and was a good deal exercised to know what he ought to do in the premises. He was a man of stern, uncompromising morality, and of superior literary attainments, not surpassed perhaps by any in the State. He eschewed society, in its general acceptation, almost entirely; confining himself to the companionship of books and a few friends, to whom he was much attached, and who took great pleasure in his company. His talents and education placed him far above the empty pursuits of the fashionable world, and he never gave them a thought, but plodded on his even way as though they were not in existence. Ordinarily, a new arrival was a matter of the smallest consequence to him, but here was a distinguished foreigner, a minister from a foreign court to that of his government, and all the élite and aris-

tocracy of town were feasting and toasting him; and although he did not care one straw for either the élite or aristocracy, he felt the honor and dignity of the government he represented was in his keeping, and it ought to be maintained; but how to do it with a due regard for the dignity of the subject and the smallness of his means, was a question which puzzled and embarrassed him. A dinner was out of the question; it would cost more than the salary of his office, and it would fall so far short of the shine and newness of those given by others, that it would bring his government into contempt; and it was a distressing doubt with him, whether he could dispense with the formality of a dinner, and invite a few friends to meet the Duke to tea. In his distress he had recourse to Frank Vaughan, who was supposed to be *au fait* in all such matters; and besides, as he was the intimate friend and companion of the Duke, he could make the matter all right with him, should the affair not come off *secundem artem*. (Mr. Officer was a scholar, great on Latin proverbs.)

"Frank," said he one day, "as an officer of the government, I have thought it perhaps my duty to pay some court to your friend, the Duke de Castro, he being a minister to our court, and not knowing exactly what ought to be expected of me upon an occasion of this sort, I thought I would consult with you, and get your advice. *Quæ fuerant vitia, mores sunt*, as Seneca has it, and I am not quite up to the times. What shall I do?"

"Give a party, by all means. I am glad you have thought of it."

"*Quærenda pecunia primum*; and I do not know where to get it. Besides, my house is too small."

"Don't be poking your Latin at me! I do not know what it means. Speak English, and I will answer you."

"Beg your pardon. It means that money must first be

had, and I have not got it—a declaration one does not like to make in English.”

“As to that, I will loan you the money if you wish; though my deposit has been considerably reduced lately.”

“I am obliged to you; and all else settled, I may take advantage of your kind offer. My house, as I said, is too small, and, worse than that, I have but little silver, new or old, and the thought of feeding a Duke, who has not, from his infancy, known what it was to eat off of any thing newer than family plate, old as the invasion of the Moors, with my old iron forks, cannot be thought of. Can I not waive the formality of a dinner—a party is out of the question—and invite him to tea? and invite a few of the swells about town to meet him? I know, ordinarily, they would not cross their legs under my cheap cherry, but in this case they would be oblivious to every thing except the presence of the Duke.”

“That will never do; it will be worse than the forks. Can you not borrow some plate from some of your friends?”

“I have no friends who have plate; and if I had I would not borrow. My friends are either poor or plain.”

“I’ll borrow some for you.”

“Never. My pride would not permit that, if nothing else interfered.”

“Others are not ashamed to do it, and do do it.”

“That may be: *ego illum perisse duco, cui quidem perit pudor*. Excuse the Latin.”

“I do not know what your Latin means; but if not a party, a dinner cannot be dispensed with. Let it be that or nothing.”

“Nothing it will have to be then. I do not understand those things; they are out of my line; and as Cicero says: *Ne me pudet, ut istos fateri nescire quod nesciam*. Which means, to translate it for you, ‘I am not ashamed, as some are, to confess my ignorance of what I know nothing about.’

And I also adopt the proverb, *Ne tentes aut perfice*: which means, in broad English, ‘I will do it well, or I will not do it at all.’”

“In this you are right; though I regret your inability to show the Duke some attention as a government official.”

“I cannot think of imitating some of the higher functionaries of government, who pay twice the salary of the office to support the dignity of the place.”

“This thing settled, Frank, what are you and the Duke going to do? He seems very fond of you, and still wears your cloak, I see.”

“He will report himself at Washington, and then return home; and I will accompany him. His Government will undertake to behead him, for the loss of his dispatches, and the consequent failure of a portion of his mission. The loss of the dispatches will be used as a mere pretext, as only an excuse is wanted for the purpose of beheading him. His chivalry and daring, and accurate knowledge of military tactics and military affairs generally, have made him a favorite with the army; and his popular manners have endeared him to the common people, and his house is one of the most powerful, as one of the most ancient, among the nobility; and fears were entertained by Government that if a revolution should break out, and he remain with the army, it would be an easy matter to place his father or some member of his house into the Presidency. His mission, therefore, was only an excuse to get him out of the country. He has advised his friends of his misfortune; and they will make arrangements for his safe return to the army; and once there, and on his guard, he can defy the officers. He will wait advices from them, before leaving the United States. For further precaution, it is agreed that I shall personate him, as we are the same size, and are said to favor, [stroking his chin.] The chances are that as soon as I land I will be arrested for

the Duke, and couriers sent forward to the capital to announce the fact of the arrest. His friends will raise a great outcry, and thus enable him to escape the vigilance of Government officials, and at the same time afford to them the means of fomenting an outbreak; and as soon as things are ripe for action, he will appear at the head of his regiment, and, with the aid of his friends among the nobility, and the disaffected among the people, always fickle and ready for a change, he will make a bold strike for the Government. In the meantime I will try every way in my power to protest my innocence; show my passport, which they will believe to be a forgery or an imposition; but, as I will be unable to speak the language, I will be unable to explain how his ducal ring and seal, which I am to have, came into my possession, and how I came by other articles bearing the coat of arms of his house. When he appears in public, however, I will of course be released, and will threaten to complain to my Government. The republic will become alarmed, and make every effort to repair the wrong inflicted upon me. My baggage will no doubt have been seized and destroyed; and I will make a loud complaint of the wrong, and fix the damage to me at a fabulous sum; and the republic, rather, at that critical junction of affairs, than hazard another cause of complaint from the United States, will settle the demand. The Duke is confident of success; and, from information he has furnished me, I know, in the present disturbed, unsettled state of the country, he must succeed."

"And what is to be your share of the spoils?"

"As soon as he or his father is placed in the Presidency, he engages that I shall have any place in the Government I may choose;" stroking his chin, and pushing back his hair.

"And what place will you take?"

"I think I shall go to the Court of St. James. My want of familiarity with the Spanish tongue would be of no disad-

vantage to me there; and the court language being my vernacular, I will be able to serve the republic better than a native. And being removed from view, it will relieve, to some extent, the jealousy which will naturally enough be felt by the nobility, at the placing of a stranger over them. Besides, it will put me out of the way of the dangers of a revolution, which, with such an unstable government and fickle people, may be apprehended any day."

"Frank," and he looked quizzically at him, "I always thought you a little cracked, but I never before believed you were really *non compos mentis*."

"What do you mean, sir?" bristling up.

"I mean that you are a fool to trust to the specious tale of this conceited foreigner."

"Do you dare to insinuate that he is not what he pretends to be?" stretching himself up to his full height, and assuming a fighting attitude.

"I do not! not at all!" eyeing Frank's fist, and stepping back a foot or two.

The conversation ended, and Frank was only half satisfied with himself. But how could he see his vision, his air-castle, securely based, as he thought, and so elegantly and tastefully built, tumble to pieces before his eyes, and not make an effort to prop it up? "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*" caught his ear, as his friend closed the door, going out.

CHAPTER XI.

With lynx's eyes we others see, ourselves with moles';
 All is excusable in us; in others, naught.
 One standard we employ to judge our brother,
 But try ourselves by quite another.
 A kind Creator has this lesson taught,
 That we are travellers; having each one sack
 To carry on the breast, another on the back;
 Our own defects in that behind we store;
 Our neighbor's faults we bear in that before.

LA FONTAINE.

A DAY or two after Mrs. Corbin's party, the Sabbath bells, with their loud and solemn ding-dong, ding-dong, were calling the citizens of Bluff City to the temples erected for the worship of the Great Builder of nature's temple, and the worshippers of mammon and fashion, together with the truly pious and good, were wending their way thither, with the view, let us hope, of forgetting for a moment the new and glittering god of their week-day's idolatry, in contemplating the age and grandeur of the God of the Sabbath. Each denomination of Christians had erected its house of worship; and, after ringing their bells in succession, their sweet chime sounded far over the surrounding hills, returning back in soft echoes which fell like a note of entreaty upon the ear of the careless, telling him it was a holy day.

But on this lovely morning, when even the spring breezes whispered more softly in the trees, and all things spoke of that "Sabbath stillness" which is felt so often, but cannot be

described, the pious ear was shocked all at once by a loud whooping and hallooing, as if a menagerie of wild animals were let loose in their midst. They turn to see from whence this violation of public sentiment comes, and behold Piper on Gilpin, and his man Grandison, with two or three servants, trying to herd and drive his cattle:

"Hui, hui! hey there! hui along! Run there, Grandison, and head Broadhead! quick! You Nance! confound your heart of you! turn Speckle back there! Betsy, O Betsy! [at the top of his voice,] make some of them run down there and turn Fullpiggin's heifer back!" Such a noise and confusion! The calf darts by, and Betsy after it. She heads it at last, and it goes lowing back to the herd. Piper and Gilpin go hither and thither: "Hui, hui! hey along! Confound that blasted bull! he had to turn back. I'll make beef of him! Get up, here, Gilpin: you'll lay down and wallow, next!"

The cattle were finally herded, and trotted off in a compact body, lowing down the street among the church-goers; the large ones horning the smaller, and forcing them upon the sidewalk, frightening pedestrians, and causing them to skit from side to side and across the street, to avoid their horns and hoofs.

The crowd goes on to church, wondering how a man who desires to be respectable and respected can thus desecrate the Sabbath; and Piper rides on behind his cattle, and wonders why he is not as much respected and as respectable as other folks!

As Piper and his cattle are going one way, they meet Smith and Blunt going another:

"There go Piper and his cattle," says Blunt.

"Yes; and is it not strange that a man with a lovely family, such as I understand he has, should thus openly insult the religious sentiment of the community?"

"And while he turns his back openly upon society, and publicly profanes the Sabbath, he thinks it strange and very unjust in society to retaliate, and turn its back on him. I am told it is entertaining, good as a circus, to hear him rate at the injustice of society."

"Ha, ha, ha! I have heard him. And yet if any friend were to dare to hint to him the truth, he would catch a caning for his pains."

Of course they who push Piper and his cattle out of society in this easy, cavalier sort of way, for openly disregarding the second article of the decalogue, in driving stock on Sunday, will themselves "remember the day, to keep it holy?" Yes, they seem to be going to church. No; they ride past. They are perhaps expecting some important news by mail, that will not bear postponing until Monday; and as the mail remains open only a short time on Sunday morning, they purpose to get it before going to church. No; they take a different street. Why, where can they be going? Not to a restaurant, surely? Yes, it must be; they hitch their horses, and go in at a private entrance. But then they will soon come out again? No. Wonder what they are doing in there, that keeps them so long? Let the pious who so severely and justly condemn Piper for the open emblazonment of his impiety, open the door quietly, and walk in, and see what detains Smith and Blunt. It is a slight breach of custom and good-breeding; but they will not take offence. Handsome apartment, you think? finely finished, ceiling elaborately frescoed, rich curtains festoon the windows, carpets soft and fine, furniture elegant, every thing orderly as a private parlor. Hi! you start back! What is the matter? You need not be alarmed; it is only Blunt, Smith, Nickols, Clarkson, Col. Isaacs, and Capt. Orr, taking a social game for amusement! They are all gentlemen, honorable men, leaders and exemplars in society, the same who slam the door in the

face of Piper and his cattle. They bet! you say? Yes; but not to win; only to count the game. They drink, too! you say? Well, yes; but that is for good cheer, just to enliven them a little; nothing more! Worse than Piper! you say? Perhaps you are right; but beware! don't speak it above your breath! They hold the reins here; and if you dare insult them by drawing a parallel between them and Piper, they will run the wagon right over you. Can't stay? Don't leave; too late to go to church. Come, stay it out. You consent? Good! You are rather struck with these two new acquaintances? Not surprised; fine-looking men; their titles are not meaningless appendages, put on as a convenient handle, but well and bloodily earned. They are brave knights, who have gallantly won their spurs, fleshed their swords in their country's cause. The Colonel's name belongs to history; his deeds of daring upon the field where "Greek met Greek," belong to his country. His face will bear reading: peruse it. That full, prominent forehead, defiant look, fierce, flashing eye, shaggy hair and eyebrows, broad, deep chest, and muscular arm, mark him as a very war-god! In the full tide of battle the rage of the lion is not more terrible! Priam had not in all his army a braver soldier, nor Cœur de Lion a bolder knight. The Captain is equally brave, equally enduring, but more modest, and less ambitious. They wield the tongue, the pen, and the sword with equal effect. You are surprised to see them here? Correct. Excess, you think, is beginning to tell on them? Correct again. Take large drinks, you think? Correct again. The Colonel begins to feel his; his face is flushed; he is becoming excited; the other players notice it, and are silent. Nickols sits opposite to him; Nickols wins his money; the Colonel becomes more excited. Did you see that look? The muscles of his face work. There! he has lost a large stake! Stand back! See, he jerks a huge

bowie-knife from his bosom, and staves it through the cards and table! springs up and glares at Nickols with his savage eyes! shakes his mane in a rage! Nickols shrinks away as from destiny; but see, his cupidity is greater than his fears; he reaches for his winnings, clutches and draws them to him. Gracious! Stop your ears! "By ——!" Isaacs has sworn by a name above all other names, a name the pen is reluctant through reverence to write, that Nickols "cheated." Mistake: he did not cheat; but Nickols is afraid to correct him; all afraid to say a word. The man still glares, and shakes his mane at Nickols. Nickols wants to escape; does not know how. If he does not escape soon, blood will be spilt. What is to be done? Do you run out and cry "fire." There, that will do. See, Nickols has escaped, and goes hawking, as fast as his broomstick legs will carry him, to his office, opens the door, turns the key. There he is safe. All right. You breathe freer. Nickols is not a bad man, you ask? Certainly not. No swindler; fond of a dram, fond of cards, but harmless as a woman, otherwise.

Late that afternoon there was a tap at the door of Nickols' office. He started, and turned pale. He looked through the window, and seeing Captain Orr, instead of, as he feared, Colonel Isaacs, he opened the door, and the Captain, in the politest manner possible, excused himself, and handed Nickols an open note from Colonel Isaacs, demanding the satisfaction "known to gentlemen," for cheating at cards; and appointed his friend, Captain Orr, to meet one selected by Nickols, to arrange the terms. Captain Orr was very polite, but very much intoxicated; Nickols was flurried, and went hawking about the room.

"I am sorry to trouble you, but at what hour may I expect an answer?" asked Captain Orr.

"Ha-a-a-awk—ha-a-a-awk—ha-a-a-awk—in the morning."

"Thank you," and bows himself out.

Nickols continued to walk the floor—pulled out the note and re-read it, and soliloquised: "Ha-a-a-awk—a challenge, heh? Ha-a-a-awk—wants to shoot me, heh? Ha-a-a-awk—ha, ha, ha! but if he does, I'm d—d. Ha-a-a-awk—his pistols—ha-a-a-awk—will have to be—ha-a-a-awk—longer than his hair—ha-a-a-awk—if he does." He took out his winnings, and counted them over—was well satisfied—put them in his leathern wallet—put on his hat, opened and closed the door quietly, turned the key, took it out, and went ha-a-a-awking home.

Very early upon the ensuing morning, before the town was astir, Blunt, who had been up all night playing for amusement, and betting to count the game, and was on his way to the Market-house to get a cup of coffee, saw Nickols, with carpet-sack in hand, hurrying towards a steamboat just pushing out from the landing, bound for New Orleans, and called out:

"Hallo, Nickols! where are you going?"

"Ha-a-a-awk," and a quicker pace, is the only answer.

"Off for New Orleans, Nickols?"

"Ha-a-a-awk," and jumps aboard.

"Sorry you didn't let me know you were going; I would have sent some letters by you."

"Ha-a-a-awk," and disappears through the cabin-door.

When he left his office on the preceding afternoon, he went home and informed his aunt, a kind old lady who had for years kept house for him, and who thought the world had no other nephew like to him, that he was going to California, and should leave on the first boat bound for New Orleans. She was greatly distressed at first, and endeavored to dissuade him from going; but upon his explaining the danger he was in, and the necessity of keeping his design a secret until he should have time to leave New Orleans, she entered with all her heart into his plans. His clothes were soon packed; and

after raking up all the cash about the house, and writing her a deed securing to her a life-interest in his property, he took his valise or carpet-sack, and went to his office to await a downward-bound boat; and as soon as one landed, he started ha-a-a-awking on his way to the far-off Pacific, out of reach of Isaacs' bowie-knife and pistol.

Prompt to the hour, Captain Orr went hiccoughing to Nichols' office for his answer, and was almost sobered by seeing on the door, in large letters, "FOR RENT"—and just under them on the same card, in smaller letters: "*Your answer.*" With an oath or two at Nickols' cowardice, as the excellent foppery of this world is pleased to call a man's unwillingness to be shot at, he turned away; and the two friends continued their spree until their overtaxed stomachs would receive no more, Captain Orr's drunken fancy being haunted all the time, like a disagreeable nightmare, with certain large letters, accompanied by small ones.

When entirely sober, they were almost oblivious to what had passed. Colonel Isaacs had an indistinct recollection of having insulted and denounced a very timid man; and, obedient to the instincts of the true gentleman he really was, when not excited by the demon of the bottle, he went with his friend to Nichols' office to offer an apology for his rudeness and bullying. There were the big letters which had so tormented the Captain's fancy. The whole thing came back to them by degrees. With a smile at the timidity which would make a man leave his friends and home, and cross the continent, sooner than be shot, they sought his residence to make there the only reparation in their power. The old aunt was not a little frightened to see them approach the house; but her fears were exchanged for a very different emotion when their errand was explained, and she was desired to convey their apologies to her nephew, and receive a thousand offered to herself.

CHAPTER XII.

Am I to set my life upon a throw,
Because a bear is rude and surly? No.

COWPER.

ONE Sunday evening in the spring of the ensuing year, as Colonel Clarkson and his family were taking a stroll along the river bank at the plantation, a steamboat from below landed to put off some passengers. As the plank was pushed out, some two or three gentlemen hurried ashore, and as one of them hurried to the plank, Clarkson was pleased to hear a loud "ha-a-a-awk."

"By Jove, if there isn't Nickols," said he.

Yes, it was Nickols, Vaughan, and one or two others, who had come to attend the spring term of the court.

"Why, Nickols, my old friend, how are you? I am really glad to see you, old fellow," shaking him warmly by the hand. "I am glad to see you all, gentlemen. Come, walk to the house. Here, Ned," who, upon seeing passengers land that were the friends of his master, came running for their baggage, "take the baggage of these gentlemen. Nickols, I suppose you have returned laden with the dust from the gold region?"

"Ha-a-a-awk—plenty of dust, Colonel, plenty of dust, but no gold."

"How is that? You go to California and not dig?"—As

he said this they stepped upon the gallery, and seats were furnished. Nickols had another peculiarity not mentioned in his first introduction, purely a Nickolism: When very much amused at what he was relating, he would jump up from his seat, stick out one foot, take his thigh in both his hands, and turn around a time or two, with a ha, ha, ha! he, he, he! and planting his feet upon the floor some eighteen inches apart, and his knees together, would poke his two fore-fingers at his auditor, with a grimace such as one sees in a comic almanac. At this remark of Colonel Clarkson, he jumped up, caught hold of his leg, whirled around, planted his feet upon the floor, clapped his knees together, poked his two fingers at the Colonel, grimaced, and exclaimed,

"Ha, ha, ha, he, he, he! did n't dig, heh? By the Lord, I did dig! ha, ha, ha! I did dig! Do you see these hands?" approaching him, and showing him a pair of hands as soft and small as a woman's. "Ha-a-a-awk, I blistered them digging; do you understand? and then carried water until I wore out my breeches rubbing against the bucket. What do you think of that? By the Lord, I did dig."

"Well, compose yourself, and sit down and give us a history of your California life."

"Ha-a-a-awk; take a drink first, to neutralize the poison I was drugged with by the bar-keeper of that boat."

"What sort of a country is it, Nickols?"

"Ha-a-a-awk; the d—dest country the Lord ever made."

"Emphatic enough, but not very definite. What do you mean?"

"Ha-a-a-awk; I love brandy, do you know that?"

"I have always been very much inclined to suspect that you did."

"But I love money better; ha, ha, ha, he, he, he! Four dollars will buy forty drinks in Bluff City, did you know that? At a drink a day, it will last him a month and ten

extra drinks to spare. I like to treat my friends when they are thirsty and it does not cost too much; you understand? he, he, he!"

"Well, what has that to do with California?"

"A d—d sight; ha, ha! You knew S——? Used to know him in Bluff City; always liked him; he always treated me like I was a gentleman, and it is so rare for gentlemen to treat me in that way, I am grateful, and remember it. You are one of the few that always treat me as a gentlemen, Colonel, and I love you;" going up to him and patting him on the shoulder; "I love you, Colonel; you are one of the men I like; you are unsophisticated."

"Well, go on with your story; what about S——?"

"The first thing I saw on landing at San Francisco was a great big sign, with 'S——'s RESTAURANT,' in great big letters. Ha-a-a-awk; it was as welcome to me as 'Entertainment for Man and Beast' to the dusty traveller on the highway at sundown. I was a character on board the ship, you see—they called me Judge—did n't correct it—people had more respect for me—great country that for titles—must support my dignity—had won my passage on board, and a good stake besides, and felt rich, and was thirsty—you understand?"

"Certainly I do; go on with your story."

"I invited four of my travelling friends to join me in a glass, and to S——'s we went. I wanted to patronize an old friend—you understand?"

"Yes, I understand; and you knew he would not, of course, charge you—so glad to see you and hear from home—you understand?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" catches up his leg and whirls around; "Ha, ha, ha! very good. 'Why, ——,' says I, 'old fellow, how are you?' He was delighted to see me—had a thousand

questions to ask—knew I was thirsty—saw that I wanted a drink—but did n't ask me to take one—waited for me to ask—he sat down five glasses, and we took our drink—five drinks—I threw down a sovereign—a 'sove' was worth five dollars in California—and waited for my change—four dollars and a half—and if he did n't tell me I owed him fifty cents I wish I may be d—d! but as it was me—an old acquaintance, it made no difference! ha, ha, ha! he, he, he! What do you think of that, heh? What do you think of California now?"

"I think you did n't take many more drinks at S——'s."

"You are right there. I did n't; so let us take another to make up for lost time."

They were reluctant to take another drink, for it was evident that Nickols had taken too many already; but good hospitality, or rather the bad hospitality of the times, required that Clarkson should second the request, and they repeated their drink.

"What do you think that fifty cent charge was for? I have tried to cipher it out ever since, but it defies my arithmetic; ha, ha!"

"What did you engage in first, after you got to California?"

"Mining; wore out my hands and breeches at it, and quit."

"What did you do next?"

"Drove a wagon."

"Drove a wagon?"

"Yes; or six mules that pulled one."

"What did you haul?"

"Whatever people paid me to haul, but principally provisions to the mines."

"Did you make any money at it?" asked Vaughan, who,

though not exactly avaricious, was always in close pursuit of a fortune, just on the eve of making one, and easily excited on the subject of fortune-making.

"Yes; I made money."

"What did you do with it?"

"Spent it; ha, ha, ha!" Walking off a step or two, and turning back, and seating himself by Vaughan, he planted a hand upon each thigh, his elbows sticking out, and looking at Vaughan, said:

"Vaughan, I came within an ace of making the grandest fortune ever made in California!"

"Explain," said Vaughan, all attention.

"Were you ever in Copiah?" (A pine-woods county in Mississippi.)

"Yes, once."

"Did you ever look up at the top of one of those tall pines?"

"Often."

"How high is the tallest one you ever saw?"

"I do not know; a hundred feet or more."

"Yes, nearly twice that. What is the price of shingles in Bluff City?"

"Three dollars per thousand, I believe."

"How many can a man make per day?"

"I do not know; from one to three thousand, I suppose."

"Ha-a-a-awk, they are worth from seventy-five to one hundred dollars per thousand in California! Do you hear? from seventy-five to one hundred dollars per thousand! What do you think of that?"

"That I would like to be a shingle-maker, and have Copiah moved to California."

"You would, eh? You may well say that; but there are pines there that can beat, two feet to one, any pine you ever saw growing in Copiah. While driving to the mines, I passed

a pine forest, the most magnificent a lumber-merchant's eye ever feasted upon. The Copiah pines are saplings to them. There were pines there three hundred feet to the first limb!"

"That is impossible. If you exaggerate in that way, I can't believe your fortune story."

"Those three hundred feet ones had no limbs. Without exaggeration, they were the tallest pine trees that I ever saw, and the shaft was as straight as an arrow, but little smaller at the limbs than at the root—you understand?"

"Be done with your 'understand,' and go ahead!" Vaughan begins to grow excited.

"Only sixty miles—two days' drive—from San Francisco were shingles enough to cover a continent, and worth, when rived out, one hundred dollars a thousand! I was astounded that no one had thought of working the forest up into one hundred dollar lumps: it would beat the mines. My resolution was taken at once; and I was so afraid that some one would be before me, and preempt upon my forest and shingle-yard, that I nearly ran my mules down trotting to the city. I was afraid to mention it even to my best friends."

While telling it he became so much interested as to forget to ha-a-a-awk. He stopped, however, to take a chew of tobacco. Vaughan was more excited than he, if any thing; and, unable to brook the delay, called out,

"Confound it, go on, or somebody will think of it, and get there before."

"I bought my hoes, axes, cross-cut saws, wedges, drawing-knives, and all other implements needed in shingle-making; bought another team and wagon, and prepared to start. A boss-carpenter, with a large building contract on hand, seeing my preparations, and suspecting my object, wanted to make a contract with me to furnish him a million shingles at seventy-five dollars per thousand; but I declined."

"Why the thunder did n't you take him up?"

"I knew I could do better. I asked him one hundred dollars per thousand."

"And lost all by your avarice!"

"Not a bit of it. I knew that I could sell all I could make for more than seventy-five dollars per thousand. I determined to so arrange it that my teams would take a load of provisions to the mines and bring a load of shingles back, which would enable me to haul cheaper than others, and thus monopolize the hauling business, which was itself very profitable. I hired some men to aid in the business, and found that, after completing my arrangements, I was something in debt; but that was nothing with such a splendid prospect before me for an overgrown fortune."

"Certainly not. You did n't take sick?" Vaughan asked, not seeing how he could otherwise have failed to realize a tremendous fortune.

"No, I did n't get sick. Glorious prospect, was n't it!"

"Splendid! Somebody ahead of you?"

"Ha-a-a-awk, no."

"Go ahead, man, I am getting excited."

"All things ready, next morning, bright and early, I started with my teams and men to the forest; and just before sundown on the second day we arrived. I selected a beautiful level spot for my operations, where the trees were so thick that a year's work of my men would hardly make an opening, and the tallest, prettiest trees you ever saw. I do not exaggerate in saying that a majority of them would have measured from sixty to eighty and a hundred feet in the shaft, and nearly the same size all the way. There were shingles enough on one, even at Bluff City prices, to make a fortune of a fabulous size."

"Why did n't you go to work instead of star-gazing?"

"I was in no hurry. I took a sort of delicious pleasure in contemplating it, and going orderly to work to gather in

my fortune. We pitched our tent, fed the mules, cooked and ate supper, and I lay down to dream of pine-trees, shingles, and millionaires. By daylight the next morning I had my men all up, and by the time I cooked breakfast, they had a tree cut down, and several cuts sawed off. Breakfast eaten, I had a cut rolled out, and slapped the wedge into it myself. I wanted to strike the first lick toward my fortune. I let drive at it, and the d——d thing would n't split!"

"By the eternals!" exclaimed Vaughan, bounding up, "why did n't you try another?"

"By the eternals, I did!"

"And another!"

"I did."

"And they would n't split?"

"No, sir, they would n't split!"

"That was very near a fortune, sure enough! What did you then?"

"Got drunk as a beast. Come, let us take a drink, and I'll go to bed, if the Colonel will give me a place to sleep."

"What did you do with your teams?"

"Sold them, and paid my debts."

"Then what?"

"Kept tavern."

"Kept tavern!"

"Yes, sir, kept tavern! I made money at that, and would have continued at it if it had not been for Dick Bowie."

"Why, what did he do?"

"He wanted to shoot me, and I did n't want him to do it; and as he insisted on it, I thought I had better leave. Now, Colonel, you would have preferred being shot, but I had no ambition that way. 'Two bullets and a bragger' I can stand, if I have the 'age;' but there was nothing I could 'hold' that would have induced me to 'see' him after I once got out of his sight."

"Why not shoot him?"

"I wouldn't if I could; and I couldn't if I would. I went to California to keep from being shot, and I could afford to come back for the same laudable purpose. I prefer your brandy, Colonel, to shooting or being shot. Butler says: 'It is as great a pleasure to be cheated as to cheat;' but I say, It is as great a pleasure to be treated as to treat; understand, heh? And now let us take a drink, and, if you will let me, I will go to bed."

"But supper is just ready; let us eat that first."

"I never eat supper. So good night."

CHAPTER XIII.

A boding silence reigns,
Dread through the dun expanse; save the dull sound
That from the mountain, previous to the storm,
Rolls o'er the muttering earth, disturbs the flood,
And shakes the forest leaf.

In awful gaze
The cattle stand, and on the scowling heavens
Cast a deploring eye.

THERE was little or nothing of interest in the Court, and its session was soon closed, and lawyers returned home. The river was very high—booming—and great fears were entertained of an overflow. It had been steadily rising for some time, and was nearly to the top of the levees; and negroes were kept upon the watch day and night to repair breaches, and watch the waters. Upon occasions like this, every thing yielded to the one all-overpowering feeling—even cards and wine. The planting and working the crops were merely mechanical. The great “father of waters,” swollen to the brim, with the melted snow and the rains that had fallen in the vast valley between the Alleghany and Rocky Mountains, and that rushed in ten thousand channels to this immense trunk, went roaring and foaming along, covered with drift-wood of every kind. To look across the channel seemed higher, by some feet, than the frail earthen barrier that helped to bear up its waters. As neighbor met neighbor, the word of greeting was, invariably, “The river is still rising;” and the word of farewell at parting, “I am afraid we shall

all be overflowed.” Houses through the swamp were built upon high pillars, intended to meet a contingency like the one now apprehended. The banks of the river and lakes were the highest parts of the swamp; and hence, when the water once passed the front barrier it rushed madly into the back country, spreading out everywhere; and the back planters were as much dependent upon the levees as those in the front. Day after day they rode to the river, and sat upon their horses and listened to the gurgle, and watched the flow of the mighty river. An overflow was the more dreaded, because it not only involved the loss of an entire crop—in itself an immense calamity—but fencing, live stock, and every movable thing not placed beyond the reach of the flood. The water had risen to within a few inches of the top of the levee, and rippled along its edge.

“Well, Jacob,” said Mr. Clarkson to the negro man, who had been watching the levee, and had come to report, “how now?”

“Still ris’n, master.”

“Made any new discoveries, Jacob?”

“Way up yonder, by Mr. Foster’s hog-pen, whar de hogs and cattle had a path over de levee, and dey put dat new dirt, I’sc afeard will break, sir; it looks mighty soft dar.”

“Good gracious, Jacob! Ned, run down and tell the overseer to come here.”

When Mr. Blake rode up, Clarkson addressed him:

“Mr. Blake, Jacob reports the giving way of the levee where it was repaired at the corner of Mr. Foster’s field.”

“Yes; I have sent some hands up there to try and strengthen it.”

“Suppose you gallop up and see that they do it well; for if the levee should break, then it will overflow the whole country.”

“I was on my way up there when I met Ned.”

"Ride this way as you return, Mr. Blake."

"Ned, catch a horse and take a note to Mr. Gibson. I promised to send him any news that might be important; and if the levee should break there it would cut him off from the river, and he and his family be either lost or seriously endangered."

The note was written and Ned dispatched.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson walked the gallery in suspense and anxiety.

"Wife! we had better not delay any longer. I shall hail the first boat and put you and the children aboard of her, and send you to Bluff City."

"What, and leave you here?"

"Certainly, my dear wife. Why not? It may not overflow, and then there will be no danger to any of us; and, if it does, the danger will be greatly lessened by having you and the children in a place of safety."

"O! I can't think of it! I cannot go and leave you here."

"Nonsense, wife. The children must go, and you must go with them; they can't go by themselves."

"But why, husband, do you not go with us; why risk your life when it is so precious to your family?"

"For the best reason in the world, as you ought to feel. There are one hundred and twenty souls on this place for whom I am responsible, and I cannot abandon them to the mercy of a paid man, who has his own wife and children to look after, and himself to care for. As good a man and as trusty as he is, may he not, in looking to this first call upon his affections, abandon these helpless beings to the mercies of the devouring flood? and who could blame him? No, Amy, my wife, you must go, and without me. After knowing and seeing that you and the little ones are safe, my duty is here."

"I did not think of the poor negroes at the moment; my thoughts were of you. I see it all now—you ought to stay, and I ought to go. I will get the children ready, and be prepared to take the first boat."

Apprehensive of the overflow, Mrs. Clarkson had had every thing so arranged that she could move at an hour's warning. Whatever was needed at Bluff City was packed for travel, and the balance put in a condition to remove to the upper rooms, should the water rise as high as the first floor. Before leaving, Mrs. Clarkson said:

"Husband, let us go around to see the Hermit; he has but little to keep him here, and perhaps we can prevail on him to accompany me to the city."

"Very well. I am glad you suggested it. Let us go immediately."

When they arrived at the cottage, Mr. Clarkson approached the Hermit most kindly, and said:

"My friend, we have come to try and persuade you to go down to the city with my wife and children, and make my house your home until the rise in the waters shall subside, or all apprehensions of an overflow are passed. My negroes and Mr. Blake are now engaged in strengthening the levee at Mr. Foster's field, where serious fears are entertained of a crevasse; and should it occur, your place will be submerged."

The old man looked at him for a moment without responding in any way. But he was evidently less absorbed than usual, or rather his thoughts were not inward. The ever-present, all-prevailing thought had affected him as well as others. Here was a feeling greater than sorrow, and things that could only feel, and never thought, felt it. It pervaded the atmosphere: the cattle felt it, and lay late around the pen in the morning, grazed near the house, coming up early,

and going about lowing as before a storm. The dogs felt it, and howled; the insects that burrowed in the earth felt it, and built upon higher spots of ground; the unlettered wood-chopper felt it, and felled his timbers upon the highest brakes; and the Hermit felt it, and feeling it, he was upon a par with his fellow-man.

"I thank you, Mr. Clarkson," he said, more blandly than usual; "but see," pointing to a small hole in the ground, surrounded by a deposit peculiar to a certain swamp-worm, "that little untaught insect is my water-gauge. He knows more about the footsteps of the water-god than the philosopher or levee-builder. The water will reach him, but will not go beyond; and that will not reach the upper step of my cottage."

"My dear sir, you surely will not trust to that worm?"

"Yes, with more confidence than to man."

"But even then your place will be overflowed."

"I expect that; but my floor will be dry."

"You do not mean to say you intend remaining in your house with the water all under it?"

"I do."

"What will you do for provisions?"

"I have provided for that."

"My dear sir, let me persuade you to accompany my wife and children to Bluff City."

"Is it for the sake of your wife and children you ask this of me?"

"No; but for your own comfort and safety I most earnestly wish it."

"I cannot go."

"Is there nothing I can do for you?"

"Nothing."

"May I not send some one to help you prepare for the approaching calamity—to help save your little stock, etc.?"

"No."

"Sir, allow me to assure you of the very deep interest I take in you."

"Certainly."

"I owe much to you, more than figures will count. You have done for me what I was unable to do for myself, and rebuked a father's love for his child, by perilling your own life in his presence to save her, my daughter. Had any one else performed an act so far beyond me, it would have humiliated me, but not so with you. I have seen you day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year, wearing away life and a powerful frame in silence and solitude, brooding apparently over some great sad secret, and I have not attempted nor desired to probe it; your grief, if it be grief, is as far beyond my sympathy as your undaunted courage is beyond mine, and is scornful of my pity; and in time of peril, doubt, and terror, I see you rise in grandeur almost to a divinity, and the very elements yield to you, and at your touch relax their hold upon one dear to me as life; and now that all are alarmed, and anxiously preparing to avoid a danger they cannot brave, you appear indifferent, and push back the hand reached out to help you."

The countenance of the old man softened, and grasping the hand of Colonel Clarkson, he said:

"Do not misunderstand me. I am in no need of assistance now; if I were, I would not hesitate to accept yours so kindly offered."

Clarkson was silent a few moments, and then said:

"My friend, I feel a deep interest in you."

"And I in you and yours," said the Hermit; "more than mere words can express."

"I wish I could prevail upon you to go down with my family to the city. You may sicken and die here with the water all around you, even under your house."

The Hermit only shook his head. It was useless to trouble him further, and as a boat was expected every moment, they hurried back, signalled her, and Mrs. Clarkson, with her children and servants, went aboard.

Toward evening Mr. Blake came along, and called to report the work on the levee. In answer to Colonel Clarkson's inquiries, he replied: "We have checked it, and it may stand. I have had the dirt well rammed and sodded, but I am afraid the new dirt will melt, and give way."

"Have you left any one there to watch it?"

"Yes; I left Jim and Abe; they seem to understand it."

"Are the stock-boats in order?"

"All but one, and Silas is corking that."

"How about the skiffs?"

"They are all tight, I think. I have had them filled with water for several days."

"Is the corn where it will not be reached by the water?"

"A part of it; and I will put the trash-gang"—a name for the women and children usually employed in the lighter work about the plantation—"to throwing it into the loft immediately."

"The stock had better be all collected together, had n't it?"

"It won't hurt."

"Better do it; better be too cautious than not enough; for if the overflow comes, it will be like losing a double crop to lose my stock, especially my mules. But above all things, Mr. Blake, make every arrangement for the safety of the negroes. Let the mothers with the children be especially cared for; they will be as helpless as infants, and I fear lose all presence of mind, as they almost always do in time of danger."

"I have conversed with them, but they answer me only with a wild stare, not seeming to comprehend more than

half I say. You can do more with them, Colonel, at such a time, than I."

"Perhaps so. At all events, I am here to do all I can."

In all this energy and bustle, one would hardly recognize the idle, careless, time-killing Mr. Clarkson of a week before. He went to each negro-cabin, and saw that each one had his or her things in a condition to throw them into a boat at a moment's warning; giving proper instructions to the nurse who had charge of the children; and attended to a thousand little things which would necessarily have escaped the attention of the overseer, whose mind was occupied with the weightier plantation matters.

A day or two passed, and hope—not exactly hope either, but something almost akin to hope—began to be indulged that there might not be an overflow after all. Reports from the upper rivers were favorable, and each report was sought for with great eagerness. The rise in the river within the past twenty-four hours was only about one-fourth of an inch. Neighbors meet and talk, and look anxious. The succeeding twenty-four hours was a stand-still. What was almost hope before was now confirmed and full-blown. Conversation became more cheerful, price-currents talked over; and the next day, joy of joys, the river had receded an inch. Prospects of the crops were now discussed, their progress, etc.; rides were taken up and down the river, new gauge-pegs set, and old ones examined, and all break up with a general drink, and a strong inclination for a game.

They retire, however, early; but late at night the roar and rushing sound is heard, and, upon running out, they find themselves ankle-deep in water. The bell was rung to arouse the sleeping negroes, boats made ready, and such a hurrying to and fro, lowing of cattle, squealing of pigs, hallooing at negroes, driving and whooping at mules, as made

confusion worse confounded, beggars description. Babel, with its jargon of tongues, could not have been worse. Mr. Blake and Clarkson did all that men could do. The infants and lesser children were ordered to be conveyed to the nurse-house, where they could be taken care of, and kept safely until morning; but each mother, true to her instincts, seized her brood and ran with them hither and thither, screaming *like mad*, and would listen to no one but their master. The mules would n't go into the boats, the cattle would n't go into the boats, and the hogs would n't go into the boats. The water was rapidly rising, and swept past like a mill-race; and it was found that the boats had not been supplied with proper cables. Clarkson and the overseer, and such of the negro men as had presence of mind enough to do any thing, worked all night in water, and by morning succeeded in getting such of the stock as could be controlled into the boats; but much the larger portion were left to perish.

Morning came, and as far as the eye could reach was one wide sea of wild water. The break had occurred at the weak place at Mr. Foster's levee; and the water continued rising until it covered the whole face of the country from one to thirty feet, with only here and there an island. Abortive efforts were made to secure some of the stock that had escaped the night before, but all were useless. There was no high land back to which the stock could be shipped, and they were obliged to be taken to Bluff City, the nearest high land on the river; and to do this the boats had to be carried through the crevasse, a thing that seemed almost impossible. But the stock could not stay cribbed up in those small, crowded boats all the spring and summer, and an effort had to be made.

A boat of fourteen mules was first tried. It was towed up to the crevasse, and means taken to carry it through; but as soon as the roaring current struck it it was jerked away, up-

set, and carried off, mules and all, like so much cork. This, it was soon seen, would never do; and it was thought that a steamboat could approach near enough to the levee to rest its staging on it, and the boats could be brought alongside, and the stock transferred across the levee to the steamer. A boat was accordingly hailed, and attempted to land, but she stopped steam too quickly, and began rounding in too high up, and, drifting into the current, was driven furiously ashore. A scene of terror as wild as the waters ensued, but fortunately no lives were lost. The boat, however, was wrecked, or rather thrown where she became a wreck.

The stock were finally taken down the levee to a point where a steamer could approach sufficiently near to get them on board, and, with the negroes, they were taken to Bluff City.

Through the whole trying scene Col. Clarkson had been the true master. His loss was great, and but for his being present, it would have been doubled, as he must have lost many of the servants, whom terror had rendered insubordinate. Through fear and the habit of obedience, they had always listened to the commands of the overseer; but in the presence of a greater fear, they paid no attention to him, and were as intractable as the frightened horses. And here it was that Col. Clarkson's aid was so efficient. The more timid would cling up to their master, and, at his voice, come running to catch and obey his slightest wish, whilst they would skit about like scared chickens at the orders given by the overseer.

Clarkson felt all the responsibility of a master, and his noble nature never perhaps stood more boldly out from the careless habits of the mere lover of pleasure than at this time. He was ever kind and just to his slaves, and almost worshipped by them in return. Master was every thing to them; and master's wife and master's children the extent,

the sum and essence of life, the boundary of the world, so far as they were concerned. And he deserved it all, for whatever else he might have failed in as a useful citizen, in this respect he had performed his whole duty. As he saw the last negro safe on board, his heart lightened, and he silently thanked God that no lives had been lost. He thought of Amy, too, and knew she would bless him for his kindly watch and care over so many helpless human beings. They were all safe now; and as he stood a moment upon the plank on which he was to pass to the boat, forgetting the present, and thinking over the past three days, the plank slipped, and he was plunged headlong into the flood. The cry and bellow that went up from a hundred pair of lungs, "Master's overboard! master's drowned!" was frightful to listen to, when Abe, a tall, muscular fellow, dashed through the crowd, leaped into the flood, seized Col. Clarkson as he rose, and, in spite of drift-wood, wind, and waves, held him above the water until a skiff came to his assistance.

CHAPTER XIV.

He made me mad
To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman,
Of guns, and drums, and wounds, (God save the mark!)
And telling me the sovereign'st thing on earth
Was parmacity for an inward bruise.

SHAKESPEARE.

COLONEL CLARKSON and family spent the summer season on the Gulf Coast. The sea-breeze, fishing, bathing, and yachting, were all fine, and the company, generally, select. There was an at-homeativeness there that one does not feel farther from home, where faces, manners, and scenes are new and strange. Mrs. Corbin and her daughter Clara and Frank Vaughan were among the visitors, and Duke John, one of the notables, or rather the notable—the observed of all observers. He had a handsome person in addition to his title, was pretty as a lady's page, and, being a half invalid, was petted and caressed by the ladies, feasted by the gentlemen, and toadied to by the whole family of Verysofts. Miss Clara was all smiles and made immeasurably happy at seeing her diamond ring upon his finger—the finger upon which she herself had placed it.

In his partnership transactions on the Duke's account, Vaughan was thrown so often in company with the mother and daughter; and as the daughter was thought worthy a Duke's regard by the Duke himself, and the Duke's discernment of character was so appreciative and correct—his regard

for Vaughan, for instance—that he began to place Clara upon an equality with the Duke himself—something quite removed from the great herd of ladies who sought their summer pasturing in the Duke's smiles, and was accordingly strongly tempted to become the rival of the Duke for her hand. In the great prize lottery, he considered himself one of the largest figure—upon an exact par with the Duke, though he thought the Duke a figure above anybody else. He was just as good-looking—he would say to himself—dressed in as good taste, danced as well, and was equally gifted in the small talk that pleased the small people that spent their small change at small watering-places. The only difference between him and the Duke was, that the Duke was a Duke and he was not; though he deserved to be. He had not always thought himself so much higher than other men, and did so then out of compliment to the Duke's discernment, he having regarded Vaughan alone of all the men of the Republic as worthy to be received upon terms of strictest intimacy. The purse of Vaughan & Co. was the only one in the country he would condescend to share; and the cloak of Frank Vaughan, Esq., was the only cloak he had deemed at all worthy to mantle his shoulders when in distress; and his pride—his ducal pride, something decidedly above the vulgar—revolted at the thought of being under obligations of a pecuniary character to any other brokers than those of Vaughan & Co. This magic "Co." had the effect to make all the members of the firm equal; and as things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other; and as the junior was equal to the Duke—in the Duke's estimation—shown by his wearing the ring; and as Frank was equal to the Duke—in his own estimation—it followed that the junior must be equal to Frank. State the case as he might, the demonstration was clear, and his conviction firm, that the junior would do. Upon the whole, it was settled in his mind, that unless the Duke made

a confidant of him in relation to Miss Clara—and he preferred that he should not—he would try and cut the Duke out and take her himself. This thing determined upon, he deemed it only requisite that the decision should be made known to the junior to secure a stronger bond of partnership between two of the members of the firm of Vaughan & Co.

Full of this idea, and desperately determined to take the junior's heart by storm, and her captive, he arrayed himself in his best; had his barber arrange his hair in the most killing manner; his kids were of the finest quality and highly perfumed. Like the "certain lord" that demanded Hotspur's prisoners, he was

"Neat, trimly dressed;
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reaped;
He was perfumed like a milliner;
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pauncet box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose and took 't away again."

And thus armed, "with many holiday and lady terms," he started to demand a surrender. What might have been the result of such a formal business visit, under circumstances less flattering to the junior than were those by which she was then surrounded, may have been a matter of doubt. His success upon occasions in some respects similar, would have encouraged his friends to hope for the best. His fine looks, fine clothes, and fine hair, were regarded as powerful batteries in Cupid's wars, when conducting a siege upon a young lady's heart; especially when under the direction of one with the reputation of having stormed many such fortresses and come off without a scar. Few hearts could have resisted such an assault as was contemplated; and no hope could have been entertained for the junior's if it had not been well fortified and defended by vanity,

pride, and folly; ready "to do or die" under the command of the Duke.

It had never occurred to Frank, that while he had all this time been looking at the junior through the end of the fashionable telescope, which magnified the junior to huge proportions, she was looking back at him from the other end, which diminished him in equal proportions, and reduced him to the dimensions of a liliputian. To her, his marching up to rout the Duke, was like a bantam strutting and showing his fine feathers in the presence of his Imperial Majesty of Shanghai: the very pullets mock his presumption, and his Majesty walks right over him, holding his head at an immeasurable distance above; and though the little fellow goes strutting and quirking off, it is evident to all he has had his "comb cut."

The junior of the firm of Vaughan & Co. was a long time in answering the card of Frank Vaughan, Esq.; and, as he sat admiring himself, and rising, in his own estimation, each minute, his complacency was refreshing. The citadel had, of course, surrendered without a struggle, and the junior would herself bring the keys unannounced, and was arraying herself in that magnificent dress he had so much admired upon a former visit in company with the Duke, and which he had thought so becoming to her, and which the Duke even condescended to praise. Yes; and she was having her maid, Grisette, dress her hair in that admixture of curls and braids which she alone knew how to arrange, and which he and the Duke had so highly complimented; and all this was being done for him! Upon former occasions—as he had always called with the Duke—it was uncertain for whom she had thus arrayed herself, but now it was being done for him! Ravishing thought! The pleasure which it gave him told how much he had feared defeat, without admitting it to himself. Skilful generally, as he was, he allowed the certainty of victory to put him off his guard, and, in the confident ex-

pectation of the keys, was not prepared for a sortie. A foot was heard—a slight rustle of petticoats—he is right! it is the junior coming, unannounced, to deliver up the keys! He placed himself in the most imposing attitude. The door opened, and O, ye powers of war! what a battery was opened on him! He was riddled; literally shivered to pieces! The junior stood before him in the very plainest calico wrapper, her hair in papers, and her pretty feet pushed into a pair of her mother's old slippers! but charming, in spite of her undress.

It was cruel to have taken such an advantage of his unguarded condition, to open on him in that way. Such a sortie was not only disproportioned to the siege, but the weapons were unheard-of in civilized warfare. He was skilled in "fence," and was ready to parry any ordinary weapons; such, for instance, as "Ma and pa had arranged differently," "Too young to think of such things," "Time to reflect," "Preengagement," etc., but entire indifference! an absence of all suspicion that an attack was even contemplated, much less that one had been made—it was too bad!

"Excuse my dishabille," she began, "you came at such an unseasonable hour; I——"

"Why, it is——"

"O, I know; but I told that stupid servant that I was not at home to visitors until half-past six o'clock, when I expected the Duke. O, Frank! is n't he a love of a man?"

Frank's guns were all spiked. He was a prisoner of war, and was silent.

There stood pretty Clara Corbin, holding the door-knob with one hand, and the edge of the door with the other, leaning her weight slightly on her hands, the door half ajar, and gave no invitation to Frank Vaughan, Esq., to be seated, nor offered to take a seat herself; but looking for all the world as if waiting for a message:

"Dear Frank," she said, in that sort of tone one says, "Dear sonny," or "Dear buddy," "you will excuse me, I know. It will soon be time to expect the Duke; and I was in the act of dressing to receive him when you came, and that stupid servant brought up your card. I felt bound to come down. That was what made me keep you waiting so long. You will excuse me, I know, dear Frank; and I *must* go and dress."

So saying, and bowing gracefully, she left Frank standing in the floor.

She had no more malice than a child, and was as light as the feather one takes in his fingers and puffs off in the wind, and as giddy as butterflies of fashion usually are; but, without intending it, during the interview she had, in the most quiet way imaginable, turned the fashionable telescope around, and presented to Frank's eye the end through which the public looked at him. He saw himself; and as soon as he discovered that the little tomtit of a thing he was looking at was himself, he dropped the telescope and went to his room, a bantam with his fine tail-feathers pulled out, and comb badly cut.

To add to his mortification, he had been in his room but a short time, when he saw Miss Clara whirled past in a buggy with the Duke, beautifully dressed, with her hair in the style he had so much admired.

Mrs. Corbin was not altogether satisfied with the slow progress the Duke and Clara were making in their courtship. She had flattered herself that she would have been the mother-in-law of a Duke ere that time; and that evening, after the ride, she called Clara into her room, with the view of arranging plans to bring the Duke to an avowal of his intentions:

"It is high time, Clara, that the Duke had openly declared his purpose with respect to you. His attentions have been

as marked as if you were engaged; and everybody believes you are engaged, and it will deter other suitors; and you must so manage it that he will be forced to declare his intentions."

"How am I to do it? If he wont ask me to have him, how am I to make him?"

"Easy enough, you simpleton, you. Frank Vaughan is dying to offer his hand to you now. I saw him in one of the mirrors, this evening, without his knowing it, when he sat in the parlor, waiting for you to come down; and all that fixing and primping and strutting meant more than a desire to make a good appearance before one he knew as well and had seen as often as he has you. Then why come alone? A man who sticks as close to the Duke as he does, would not leave him to make a visit alone, if the visit was intended as a mere commonplace. Mark my word, he had his reason for wishing to see you alone; and do you, the next time you meet with him in the company of the Duke, affect to be entertained by Vaughan, and let your attentions to him be so marked as to attract the Duke's notice; and you may trust to Vaughan to opening the eyes of the Duke to his designs: he will not be able to conceal it."

"Why, ma! why didn't you tell me that before? I treated Mr. Vaughan in such a way this evening, he'll never come back here again, I'm afraid."

"Never do you fear. He will think more of you than he ever did. He prized himself before; he will prize you now."

She was right. Vaughan had not been able to think of any thing else but her, after his visit. He found himself all the while arguing: "She would not have appeared before the Duke in that attitude; and then didn't she say, 'Dear Frank,' as if I were her brother? The Duke may have her fancy, but I have her confidence—her sisterly regard; and

if I do not make something out of it, my name is not Frank." With this resolve, he found himself calling for Miss Clara much sooner than even the mother suspected. It had the effect of distressing Mrs. Corbin with another fear. She wanted Clara to have two strings to her bow, and did not wish this string pulled until the other broke; and Vaughan was hastening matters so rapidly that she did not well see how Clara could continue to encourage him much longer without a declaration from him; and this she was anxious to defer until the Duke disclosed his designs; and Vaughan, anxious to see her alone, and prosecute his suit, would not call in company with the Duke, so as to excite the desired jealousy on the Duke's part.

Things were in this attitude, when a change came o'er the spirit of the mother's dream, which the following conversation between mother and daughter will explain:

"Clara, if Frank Vaughan proposes, do you take him; but bring the Duke to terms, if you can."

"Why do you wish me to take Mr. Vaughan, mother?"

"Because I don't want both birds to fly. Mrs. St. Cloud is just here from Washington City, and I learn insinuates that the Duke is no Duke after all. I don't believe a word she says, the manœuvring old thing. I just expected that as soon as every thing was arranged, and the Duke was about to propose, some such old marplot would come and put her foot in it. I suppose she wants the Duke for that doll-baby of hers, and she is afraid you will catch him before he knows she's out, and before she can practice her arts of innocence on him."

"Alice St. Cloud! I'd like to see her catch a Duke; poor, simple, foolish, affected thing! It is all jealousy of Mrs. St. Cloud to be slandering the Duke. I shan't speak to her when I see her, and I'll tell the Duke not to do it. I'll show her what it is to be slandering her betters."

"I am glad you have some of your mother's spunk. But do you never mind Mrs. St. Cloud. I'll teach her where she stands; do you bring Vaughan to terms the first chance you have, and make a chance if you can't do any better."

CHAPTER XV.

Out with the dog, says one; What cur is that? says another; Whip him, says a third; Hang him, says the Duke. SHAKESPEARE.

MRS. ST. CLOUD, whose advent at the Coast promised so inauspiciously, was what might be termed a splendid-looking woman. She was large and well proportioned, above the medium height, dignified, and rather reserved, though very attractive in her manners; possessing that rare and happy faculty of making every one feel at ease in her society, and yet under sufficient restraint to avoid familiarity or freedom. There was a charm about her which always pleased, but never led astray; and it had often been remarked that he was a bad man indeed who did not feel himself benefited by her conversation. There was a purity, and honesty, and perfect fairness in her thoughts, which stole in upon the heart, winning the confidence of all, which the beautiful order of her life never forfeited when once obtained.

She had been a widow for more than twelve years, and though her hand had been desired by many, none had expressed the wish to her. She was not wealthy, but had enough of this world's goods to supply her plain wants, and to support her daughter at one of the first institutions of learning in the country. Her husband, like Col. Clarkson, had been fond of cards and wine, but neither a drunkard nor gambler. One night in New Orleans, after sitting late at

play with some friends, he stopped, on his way to his hotel, at a restaurant for lunch, and was stabbed by a courtesan who mistook him for her faithless lover. He was borne bleeding and in a dying state to his room, and the devoted, happy, trusting wife of the day before was roused up at midnight, to see the husband of her young affections, and the father of her lovely child, breathe his last without a parting word. All he did was to motion towards his daughter, gurgle an inarticulate word, and die—the victim of playing for amusement and betting to count the game. The sad, broken-hearted mother needed not this mute but emphatic appeal to remind her of her duty to her child, to which her heart clung so fondly. And though for months, and even years, the floods of grief swept over her, at times almost carrying her down under the heavy pressure, and sunlight and shade, summer and winter went “darkling” by, the sight of her helpless daughter, so solemnly recommended to her care, afforded an incentive to action, and the young widow, by degrees, rose superior to the great trouble which was almost crushing her to the earth. It was true that she looked oftener now away to the distant skies, and thought of the rest there prepared for the faithful, and sometimes longed for its sweet repose; but she neglected no duty here. She learned to look upon the world as it was, met it equably, and moving on in the even tenor of her life, “her ways were pleasantness, and all her paths were peace.”

She brought a letter from Agnes to her father and mother. A portion of it ran thus:—

DEAR PARENTS:—My kind, good teachers have given me a whole afternoon to write to you. Mrs. St. Cloud will leave here to-morrow, and will take my letter to you. It is such a pleasure to think about you, and that Mrs. St. Cloud will so soon see you, that I feel more like sitting and thinking and

crying, than writing. I know it is wrong to cry, and I do not do it because I am unhappy; for I am just as happy as I can be away from you.

Mrs. St. Cloud has been staying here near dear Alice, and would not leave now, but she has met with a sad loss. Some one went to her trunk and stole her ring and watch that used to be worn by her husband, and on that account prized very much by her. The thief pretends to be some great body, and has gone down that way. And Pa, I want you to help her get the things back, because she is so sad about it.

Dear sweet Alice is still my roommate. I love her more and more every day. She will leave school a year before I will.

Your affectionate daughter,

AGNES.

"I am sorry to hear of your loss," Mr. Clarkson said, when he had read the letter and handed it to his wife. "Agnes speaks of your having had some articles, much prized by you, stolen from your trunk. Have you any suspicion of the thief?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. St. Cloud, "he passed himself off in Washington City as the son of the Duke de Castro. And I came here upon a report that there was a man in this place claiming that title."

"There is such a man here, and he has turned the heads of all the women, and half the men. I will however make an exception of my wife, who has never been able to tolerate him, though I cannot say the same for myself. Unless therefore you have the clearest proof of his guilt, I would recommend to you to proceed with great prudence, for the whole fashionable hive here is interested in maintaining his respectability, and rumor says he is about to marry one of our Bluff City belles."

"Ah! who is that?"

"Miss Clara Corbin."

"I should regret very much to interfere with any match her mother may have in view for her daughter; for let this pretended Duke turn out as he may, should I be the means of exposing him, I fear Mrs. Corbin, instead of thanking me for saving her child from a masked villain, would always censure me for having defeated the match."

"Too true, I fear."

"If the articles lost were not relics, prized by me far above their intrinsic value, I should say nothing about them; but money cannot replace them, and let it affect whom it may, I must have them."

"What course do you propose to pursue?"

"I wish, if possible, to see some friend of his and demand the articles as the price of silence, and to avoid publicity and exposure so far as I can."

"Then let me send for his intimate friend, Frank Vaughan. He is more interested in avoiding a public exposure than any one else; for, in addition to his being his intimate friend, he introduced him here, and also to Mrs. Corbin."

Mrs. St. Cloud assented, and Vaughan was sent for. As soon as he came in, Mr. Clarkson said:

"Vaughan, Mrs. St. Cloud has a matter of very grave import to converse with you about. She has had the misfortune to lose some articles of jewelry, which she thinks were stolen from her in Washington City—a watch and ring, worn by her husband in his lifetime, and hence highly prized by her. She says they were stolen by a person calling himself son of the Duke de Castro, and hearing that an individual by that name was here, has come to ascertain if he is the same."

"My dear madam," said Vaughan, "I hope you do not intend to ruin yourself by insinuating any thing so disgraceful as that, of the young Duke John!"

"I intend nothing personal to myself—certainly not my ruin. But I wish to get my property, and will do more than brave a duke's displeasure to regain it. I do not know whether the man who stole my jewelry is the one who passes by that name here or not. If he be, his pretension to blood and titles will not save him, unless he delivers up the articles stolen. In pursuit of relics, sacred as those are to me, I cannot be frightened by exclamation-points."

Vaughan felt rebuked, and said, by way of apology: "Madam, excuse my vehemence; I was startled at so grave a charge against so high a personage."

"I do not know," resumed Mrs. St. Cloud, "that he is the same. I have not seen him. The man I speak of is about your size, with small delicate hands, rather feminine features, and soft musical voice. He complains of a wound received in battle, he says, and faints with great ease and grace in the presence of ladies."

"The same, madam, unquestionably. But there must be some mistake. Some adroit scoundrel has committed the deed, and managed to throw suspicion on the Duke."

"There can be no mistake as to who opened my trunk," replied Mrs. St. Cloud; "the only question is, whether this is the man. All I desire, Mr. Vaughan, is to get possession again of the watch and ring; the trifle of money I care nothing about. You may mention my terms to him; and you may likewise say to him that flight is next to impossible, for I have a sentinel who will not let him escape. My complaint is written out and ready to be sworn to, and unless my articles are forthcoming before to-morrow morning, he will be put under arrest."

Vaughan, to use a Southernism, was thunderstruck. The calm, resolute woman had unsettled his faith in the immaculacy of his Duke. The possibility of his being an impostor began to force itself upon his credulity, whether he would or

not, and the part he had played, innocently enough, it is true, pressed upon him. But when he reflected upon the evidences of his genuineness, his recognition by officers and soldiers of the Mexican war, his letters from the leading men of the country, and his duke-like appearance, he felt that there could be no mistake.

With these conflicting feelings, he called at the Duke's room. He explained, in as delicate a manner as possible, what he had heard from Mrs. St. Cloud, spoke of her high standing, etc., and was greatly relieved when Duke John laughed at the whole thing as a good joke, and proposed to visit Mrs. St. Cloud and undeceive her. He went with the utmost cheerfulness to the sitting-room, but as he entered, Mrs. St. Cloud's large Newfoundland dog growled, and, rising up, walked deliberately up to the Duke and smelt of him, but, at a motion from his mistress, switched his tail, sunk down his head and walked back, and, lying down, put his head between his outstretched paws, and kept his keen eye upon the Duke. Don John repeated in the most unembarrassed manner what had just been told him; spoke of it as a trick played upon him by an impostor, of whom he had heard before, but whose personations had heretofore always been of an amusing, pleasant character, this being the first time he had undertaken to personate him in any thing criminal; that so long as he had tried to personate him by acting the gentleman, or playing the harlequin, he felt disposed to let it pass, but as he had descended to infamy, and come so near involving him, he would take pains to have him punished; was very sorry for the loss she had sustained, and regarded it as a duty he owed to her as well as himself to aid in regaining her property and punishing the thief; and if she would be kind enough to give him a description of the impostor, he would take immediate steps to put the police on his track.

"Sir," said Mrs. St. Cloud, with great deliberation, "you have only to copy your reflection in the mirror to obtain the description you desire."

This answer was like an electric shock to all except the Duke himself, who remained perfectly composed, seeming rather to compassionate Mrs. St. Cloud than take offence at what she said.

"Madam," he answered, in his soft, insinuating voice, with just enough of some sort of accent to give a pleasing effect, "you ver' severe."

At the sound of his voice the Newfoundland got up, smelt of the Duke, and lay down again.

"Outrageous!" exclaimed Mrs. Corbin. "Infamous! She ought to be scouted from society!"

"Ma, let us go," put in Clara, with her handkerchief to her face.

"Nevar min', my tear Mrs. Corbin, she pe in une grand tistress!"

The feeling of the company was all on the side of the Duke. The dog seemed to notice it—got up and stood beside his mistress. Mrs. St. Cloud was in no way disconcerted, but calm and resolute, and in the same deliberate tone said:

"I am in no need of compassion: you are either the person who stole——"

"Just hear the beldam!" broke in Mrs. Corbin.

"O, ma!" said the distressed Clara, "have you my salvolatile? I shall faint!"

"Don't you faint here," said the mother; "this is no time for fainting;" and rolling up her sleeves as if for action, advanced a step towards Mrs. St. Cloud. The dog looked hard at her.

Vaughan, seeing Mrs. Corbin rally so brusquely up to their partnership stock, felt bound by all the rules of knighthood

to break a lance in its defence, and turning to Mrs. St. Cloud, said:

"My dear madam, there is a point beyond which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. You are certainly overstepping the bounds accorded by honorable men to your sex."

The Newfoundland growled, and looked fiercely at Vaughan; and Col. Clarkson, facing him sternly, said:

"Do you know who you are speaking to? Mrs. St. Cloud is my friend, sir, and cannot be insulted by a gentleman in my presence. Take back what you have said, young man!"

The company were again electrified. Vaughan was no coward, and when not off his guard, knew what was due to a lady, and readily apologized:

"I am sorry, madam, if I said any thing under the impulse of the moment which may seem rude; it was not my intention, and I ask pardon."

The frankness of Vaughan raised him in the estimation of Col. Clarkson and Mrs. St. Cloud, but sank him in proportion with Mrs. Corbin and her party. When order was sufficiently restored for Mrs. St. Cloud to go on, she said:

"I was saying, when interrupted, that you are either the person who stole my property, or you are not. If you are, there is a scar on your right temple, just under your hair."

"Did you ever!" exclaimed Mrs. Corbin. "Suppose you have him stripped to the skin and his person examined. Perhaps you can mention some other private marks about him. Try if you can't."

Clara screamed, and as Vaughan was standing near enough to catch her, fainted in his arms, and was borne to the sofa. But the crowd was too great, and the dramatic scene then acting too interesting, for a fainting to create a sensation. No one but Frank seemed to notice her save the Newfoundland: he walked up, putting his nose close to her dress, looked

wistfully in her face a moment, and then took his place at the feet of his mistress.

During the whole scene, Mrs. St. Cloud had kept her seat, her maid standing at the back of her chair, the others standing around in different parts of the room.

Clara had sense enough to see that her part had not been acted well; but she and Frank had a little comedy off in a corner, at the sofa, by themselves. He took advantage of her supposed insensibility to press his lips to her hand, and she had sensation enough left to return the pressure, and thank him for his sympathy.

"It is ver' strange," said the Duke; "me got une leetle sear dar;" raising his hair and exposing it. "Me like to see dat second self to me. Me like you fine him, so me see him."

Mrs. St. Cloud was the only person who doubted the Duke's identity. It was impossible, they argued, that a guilty man could affect the innocence he had displayed throughout the trying scene; and as she did not wish to prolong the interview, by way of closing the conversation, she turned to the Duke, saying:

"I desire very much to get my property, not for its intrinsic value, but for the associations connected with it, and will pay twice its value to recover it, and I will add——"

"No, no, no; me will adt, me will adt twice dat sum for de watch and de ring."

"I was going to add," said Mrs. St. Cloud, paying no other notice to the interruption than to wait until it ceased, and speaking in a quiet uniform tone, "that there is but one Don John de Castro, and you must either produce the counterfeit Don John, or my property, or else go to jail."

The excitement upon hearing this was almost too great to bear. Mrs. Corbin raved, Clara fainted again with better success, and the Newfoundland got up and stood close to his

mistress, and whined in her face, and her friends gathered about her and expostulated. They tried to persuade her that the Duke had offered to do all he could—that he was even more deserving sympathy than she, as he had been seriously compromised by a designing rascal taking advantage of an accidental resemblance to him to personate him in an act of villainy—that her anxiety to regain a much-treasured relic had betrayed her into wounding the fine sensibilities of a man who was too much of a gentleman to retort. All to no purpose: she adhered to her resolution.

CHAPTER XVI.

O for a forty parson power
To chant thy praise, Hypocrisy.

BYRON.

THE matter furnished a fine dish of gossip, and Mrs. St. Cloud got the worst end of the bargain. Every one present felt a deep interest in the Duke; they had all in one way or another taken stock in him, and could not consent that it should depreciate. They were anxious that the Duke should be a Duke, and he acted so much like a Duke in his conversation with Mrs. St. Cloud, that they were better satisfied with him than ever.

That night, after the hotel was all still, and a majority of the visitors asleep, the whole house was aroused by a tremendous running and noise in the hall along the gentlemen's apartment. Each boarder jumped up, and, poking his head out of his door, saw the Newfoundland with the Duke's carpet-sack and breeches, streaking it for his mistress's room in the apartment occupied by the ladies, hotly pursued by the Duke in his silk-shirt and drawers. As one and another would put his head out and see the race, they would roar out, "Ha, ha, ha! go it, Duke! go it, Ponto!" And here went Ponto, and here went the Duke. It was nip and tuck, but the Duke gained on him. Ponto was too heavily weighed to run well. The crowd followed after; Ponto turned into the ladies' department, and the ladies looked out to see the cause of the noise; but the Duke, desperately determined

upon reclaiming his goods, was not embarrassed by his nude state, but dashed ahead; Ponto could not get down stairs well; he would embarrass himself by treading on the breeches, and the Duke kept gaining on him, and the shouts, "Ha, ha, ha! go it, Ponto! go it, Duke!" grew louder and faster, and the crowd larger. At last, just as the dog entered the last stretch, the hall upon which his mistress's room was situated, the Duke so far gained upon him as to plant his foot upon his breeches. This brought the race to a stop. The Newfoundland was determined not to lose his dry-goods, and planting his foot upon them, turned square upon his pursuer with a resolution which checked the Duke's impetuosity, but only for a moment; he was determined to "do or die," and seized his pants, but as he did so, the dog seized him, and, what was worse, he would not let any one else approach, until Mrs. St. Cloud's maid came out, to whom he delivered the things. As the maid picked them up, and the Duke stepped forward to demand them, the dog stepped before him and growled. The singular behavior of the animal satisfied every one that there must be some cause for his conduct, and they determined to have an examination. The Duke begged of them not to expose his wardrobe in that way, but to give them to Colonel Clarkson, and let him examine them; that there was nothing which he was unwilling for him or any one else to see, but begged that he should not be made the sport of a mob raised in behalf of a dog. It was agreed that Colonel Clarkson should go with the racers, the Duke and Ponto, to the Duke's room, and examine the Duke's wardrobe, and either satisfy Ponto of his mistake, or reward him for his fidelity. Clarkson remained but a short time in the room, when he and Ponto came out. Ponto was satisfied—decidedly in a good humor—and trotted along before Mr. Clarkson a few steps, and then would turn around, look up and bark, and wag his bushy tail, and so on, repeating his motions until Clarkson

got to his own room. Ponto seemed disappointed at his entering there, but went with him. He soon came out with something in his mouth, very much like a note, and went with long jumps, his shaggy tail swaying behind him, to his mistress's room. At his scratch, the door was opened, and an exclamation, very much like one of pleasure, was heard. With this, the curious had to be content the balance of the night.

To all the questions asked him in the morning, Colonel Clarkson laughed at the ludicrous scene, and gave evasive answers, as if all was a farce, and nothing noteworthy in it.

Frank Vaughan feeling the great depreciation of the capital stock of the firm, called early upon the ensuing morning to see the other two members. The protestations of the older member, and her tirade against Mrs. St. Cloud, failed to inspire confidence; but the smiles of Clara assured him that though the capital stock might be a dead loss, the firm was not entirely bankrupt. He noticed that she was by no means oblivious to the sofa scene of the evening previous, and by a number of telegraphic communications, known only to those who are learned in the mysteries of love, she made him understand that she recognized the assault he had made upon the castle, and that the keys were in his hands. As flattering as this was to his vanity, it was going ahead a little too fast for Vaughan. His opinion of Miss Clara had been tried in the loss of the Duke's, and the Duke's good opinion being below par just then, other things which were dependent upon his opinion were also under par. He was therefore not exactly prepared to accept the surrender, and not altogether satisfied with this new position affairs were taking.

As the desire for a matrimonial union with the Duke cooled with Mrs. Corbin, and Vaughan's chances of representing the Republic of Mexico at the Court of St. James began to vanish, the firm of Vaughan & Co. suffered the

drafts of the Duke upon them to be dishonored; who, finding himself out of character and out of funds, stole Frank's watch and a small amount of money, and left for New Orleans, leaving his board and other bills unpaid, and the following letter, addressed to the firm of Vaughan & Co.:

MESSRS. VAUGHAN & Co.:—The best of friends must part; and I take advantage of the sad occasion of our separation, perhaps for ever, to renew to you the expression of my thanks and gratitude for the many favors received from you, as individuals, and as a firm. The junior and Frank Vaughan, Esq., have been especially kind; and it may seem a refinement upon meanness for me to steal Vaughan's watch and money; but the fact is, after my foot-race with Ponto, I have been without a watch or the means to buy one, and had not means left, after your firm had been compelled to suspend further operations on my account, to defray my travelling expenses, else I should have parted company with you sooner. I hope he will not be inconvenienced by the loss. The junior must allow me to continue to wear her diamond ring as a souvenir. I would be pleased to exchange rings with her, but for my "temporary poverty." Though I may not be able to redeem my pledge to Frank Vaughan, Esq., to have him appointed Minister Resident at the Court of St. James from the Republic of Mexico, if he will visit me at my shop in Vera Cruz, I will dress his hair, and give his chin as clean a shave as I have given his purse and pocket. Please accept the assurances of my continued regard; and if either of you should ever visit Vera Cruz, be sure to call upon

Your friend,

DON JOHN DE CASTRO DE NAVIDAD,
Alias CARLOS, THE BARBER.

P. S.—May I trouble you to give my kindest regards to Mr. Broadhead, and my other numerous admirers and friends

in Bluff City, who feasted and toasted, dined and wined me upon the occasion of my very agreeable visit there. Barring the newness of every thing, the champagne and cigars included, the dinners were fine.

N. B.—Miss Clara need have no fears of that stain upon her shawl. It is not blood, neither that of a Duke nor of a barber; but a little colored matter that will do no harm.

What a denouement for our fashionables!

The watch, the purse, the ring, were not thought of. A barber! Horrible! If he would only reinstate himself in his title, be a Duke again, he might lie and cheat and steal to his full—do any thing he pleased but become a barber! That was too much!

It was a fall; a fall that made pride and vanity weep with vexation.

The members of the late firm of Vaughan & Co. were not long in discovering that the watering-place was not at all suited to their constitutions, and that sea-bathing in no way relieved the malady with which they were suffering, and packed up and left for home. Mrs. Corbin and the late junior, upon the dissolution of the firm of Vaughan & Co., and the likelihood of its entire bankruptcy, felt still more the necessity of the new partnership between the younger members of the old dismembered firm, and managed so to take advantage of the distracted state of mind in which their unfortunate speculation in imported stock had plunged Frank, to cause him, by manner, and an occasional smile, to treat the "sofa scene" as a plight of faith; at which, in his cool moments, he was alarmed and pained. Events had hurried him along so confusedly that in the bustle he had mistaken a common feeling of humiliation, sympathy, and shame, for a more tender and lasting passion, and permitted the mother and daughter to treat him as affianced to Clara, without his

having formally declared himself her lover, or any words of engagement or pledge of love spoken. The piercing of an arrow through his heart would not have pained him more than this thought. In his infatuation, when he saw her caressed and flattered by a Duke, and a ministry to England in prospect for him, and life a long, foolish, but sweet romance, he had the ambition of cutting out a Duke; but when he awoke from this dream of romance, and looked upon the dusty, every-day track of life, which he had to tread along with every-day folks, the thought of taking a mere butterfly along with him upon such a dull, plodding way, one without perfume and without flowers, made him shudder and grow sick at heart. And yet he saw but little chance of its being otherwise. The mother and daughter were just suffering one distressing humiliation, and he could not add another to it. Besides, he had so long acquiesced in their recognition of an engagement, that he was not at liberty to treat it otherwise, and determined to trust to the developments of the future for means to shape his course, hoping that some more dashy lover might take her off his hands; otherwise, he should sacrifice his happiness to his honor, and marry her.

The mock Duke managed, by disguising himself, to escape to New Orleans. Neither of the members of the late firm took any steps to have him arrested. They were but too anxious that he should escape to his barber-shop, where they might never hear of him again, and their names become disconnected from his, and all memory of their transactions on his account forgotten, and feared nothing more than his arrest. But the affair was too notorious to escape remark, and the vigilant police of New Orleans, eager to overtake so notorious a rascal and impostor, and also to serve the distinguished personages who had been made his dupes, soon got upon his track, and as he was about going aboard of a ship

bound for Vera Cruz, he was arrested. Very soon thereafter each of the members of the late firm of Vaughan & Co. were chagrined and distressed beyond measure to be served, while upon a visit in the Magnolia State, with an attachment to appear and give evidence in the case of the State of Louisiana *vs.* Carlos, alias Don John de Castro de Navidad.

There was no help for it; they were compelled to go and testify. It was rather a novel case, and the curiosity of the judge was as much piqued as that of the bystanders, and he extended the largest latitude to counsel in the examination of witnesses, and the three speculators were forced by little and little to go over and over again the entire history of their business transactions with the Duke, down to the most tedious and mortifying details. To make matters worse, a young fluent lawyer, who had become rather pleased with Miss Clara, and was ambitious to attract her and her mother's favorable regard, and believing the best way to do that was to prosecute and bring to punishment the villain who had plundered and swindled them, volunteered to make a speech in the case. There was such a jam in the court-house that Mrs. Corbin saw no chance of wedging herself through it, and was compelled to listen while the eloquent young barrister portrayed with emphasis and in swelling, poetic sentences the outrage and wrong practiced by the prisoner upon the "fair daughter of a sister State." The stealing the watch was nothing, the stealing the money was nothing, for "he that steals my purse, steals trash; 'twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands; but he that steals away the young affections of a but too confiding fair one, steals that which cannot enrich the thief, but leaves her 'poor indeed.'" Thinking that he must of course rise in the affections of the mother and daughter as he rose in his eloquence, he denounced the Duke as the serpent insinuating himself into Eden, quoting largely from Milton and other English classics;

told how the modern Eve listened to his persuasive voice, the influence of his imposing title upon the mother, anxious, as all mothers were and ought to be, to secure eligible matches for their daughters, especially the first-born of her love, etc., until Mrs. Corbin could stand it no longer; and, though a member of the Church, and an habitual observer of the proprieties of life, she lost her patience, piety, and dignity, and springing up, exclaimed, loud enough to be heard by all but the speaker,

"What does the confounded fool mean?"

He noticed that he created a sensation, and construing it into applause, mended his hold, and dashed off into new heroics. Mrs. Corbin made a vigorous effort to push a way for herself and daughter, aided by Frank Vaughan, through the human wall around her, but it was in vain, and she had no alternative left, and had to hear the young orator through.

The barber was convicted, and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

The eloquence of the young barrister had a very different effect upon Clara from that of the mother. His frequent allusions to her beauty, innocence, and trusting simplicity, "Charms," he said, "that might very well attract a duke, that might even tempt a barber to counterfeit a duke, and if he had acted thus under such a temptation, he might have excused him, for such a face would tempt a saint to sin," etc., had flattered her vanity and carried her fancy captive; and the smile she gave him when he offered his arm to lead her from the court-room was full compensation for the crustiness of the mother.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Come, and trip it as you go,
On the light, fantastic toe."

Soon after Mrs. Corbin's return from the ill-starred witness-stand, a grand ball was announced to be given by the military company, whose marching and counter-marching, "red-striped trousers" and red plumes had long been the admiration of the fair of Bluff City. All the beauty and chivalry of the town and surrounding country were expected to be there in full display. Amid the hurry and bustle of such an occasion, the rustling of fine dresses, the cracking of coach-whips, and the tramp along the side-walks, friend Piper might have been seen, whip in hand, pushing along in the crowd. As he was dashing ahead, a young gentleman called to him, and handing him a neat little package, said:

"I will trouble you, if you please, to hand these to your daughters."

Piper was excited—gave a sort of knowing look of inquiry at the young man, but received no knowing look in return. The young man was not a dealer in horse-flesh, and had no horse-trader looks to answer horse-trading questions. Piper's impatience would not permit him to wait until he got home to learn what the neat little package was; and hoping, doubting, fearing, he darted along to a place of concealment and opened it. Yes, it was as he hoped—"the girls" were invited to the ball! He had talked about the matter with Betsy, and both hoped "the girls" would be invited, but both

feared they might not. His fears were all gone, and with a light heart he put the notes of invitation in his pocket, and with light heels Gilpin galloped home. So glibly did he gallop that passers-by exclaimed, "Hi! Piper must be in luck to-day; he and Gilpin are in good spirits."

Betsy and "the girls" noticed directly that things had gone well with him. They collected around to hear the news. He was fidgety, and frisked about in a provokingly unsatisfactory way. Pet walked coaxingly up to him, and, putting his arm around her, he walked about the room in high spirits.

"What would you give to go to the ball?" he asked.

"O! have you got tickets?" exclaimed all at once, and rushed at him; and such a romp and race as they had!

"Ha! get away from here, you wild colts!" and he twisted to free himself. "What will you give for tickets, heh?"

After a good deal of scuffling and twisting about, and a number of "ho, ho, hos" from Piper, Betsy came to the aid of the girls:

"Mr. Piper, what makes you do so? Why don't you give the girls their tickets? I know you've got them."

This brought the tickets; and they were read and re-read, and then read over again, and finally carefully folded and put in the card-case.

If those who give feasts could have seen how happy a very little attention had made four very deserving but neglected young ladies, in giving feasts they would not overlook the humble simply because they are humble, but would oftener set a chair for them at their tables. Coarseness and vulgarity are by no means necessary attendants upon lowliness and poverty; no more apt to be found there than among the rich and proud.

"We can go, can't we, pa?" they asked.

"I don't know, my daughters. I'll think about it;" not willing to admit to himself how much pleased he was to have it in his power to decide whether they could go or not, and how anxious he was an hour previous to have them go.

"Yes, you can go. What do you want to tease the girls for? You know you expect them to go," said Betsy.

"Say yes, pa," entreated Pet.

"Well, yes; you may all go."

There was as much rummaging among the scanty wardrobes of Piper's four daughters for "something to wear," as among the dry-goods shops for something to please the more liberal and extravagant votaries of fashion. "Ma, what shall I wear?" "Pa, wont you get me a new dress?" "I have nothing that is fit to wear," were some of the volley of sentences which made Piper almost regret the invitation.

Betsy made out a list of the articles that were indispensable for even a passable appearance at a bran-dance or a Fourth of July barbecue, and showed it to Piper, with the request that he would let her have the means to purchase them. Piper looked at it, gave a loud whistle, and refused.

"The girls are bound to have something to wear, or they can't go to the ball," said Betsy.

"Where are all the dresses they had last spring and summer, and this fall?"

"All that are not worn out are soiled, and not fit to wear."

"Where are the dresses they wore at our parties?"

"They are worn thin, and have been washed two or three times, and cannot be refixed so as to look decent."

"Well, I can't help it; I am not going to break myself to dress them up for a ball. However, as it is their first ball, they shall have something nice. Here is seven dollars and a half: take it, and buy their ball-dresses. It shan't be my fault if they don't look as well as other people's daughters."

Betsy took the seven dollars and a half, and went to purchase the ball gear of four young ladies. She was not a bad hand to shop, and could make seven dollars and a half go as far as anybody, when she exerted herself; and on this occasion she swore each dollar to do its best. She made the clerks jump about, and kept them as busy as if she had hundreds to spend; calling for this, and rejecting that, and telling what this was for, and who that was for. She was full of real good mother-wit, which she could make as sharp as old vinegar; and when one of the clerks would grow tired of waiting upon her, and go slovenly about her commands, she would let off her cracked voice at him, with a piece of wit that made him spring as if stung by a whip-lash. With her seven dollars and a half she loaded herself and the daughter she took with her; and when the articles were all opened and spread out at home, upon the cheaply-furnished bed, and viewed in contrast with the litter and trash about the room, it was astonishing how well it all looked, and how much there was of it. She had managed to get enough for three new dresses, and remnants enough to fix up an old one.

Upon the evening of the party, an old bachelor brother of Mrs. Piper, Richard Spence—called "Uncle Dick," by "the girls," and "the girls' Uncle Dick," by Betsy and Piper—went out to attend them to the ball. He was a plain, blunt, good-natured old soul, and had seen a good deal of what was called "good society;" that is, was generally invited to the parties about town, and was a welcome visitor at the houses of the rich and fashionable. Why he should have been thus welcome, would be difficult to tell, unless it was owing to his good temper and good principles and blunt ways; for he was neither rich nor handsome. The fashionable planing-mill had failed to smooth him off, except on top of the head, which was very bald and very smooth. He was fond of "the girls," and was anxious to see them look well and

appear well; and, as Piper had informed him how busy they all were, fixing and getting ready, and complained over and over again how expensive it was to fit out four young ladies for a ball, he expected when they came down ready dressed to see them elegantly attired, and gave rather too round an expression to his disappointment:

"Good Lord, Piper! you are not going to let the girls go to the ball in that sort of toggery?"

"Why, what is the matter with it? I never saw them look any better; I never saw them look as well before. I gave Betsy seven dollars and a half, and told her to use the whole of it in buying dresses and such other things as they needed."

"Seven dollars and a half! A hundred would not have been enough."

"The free use of your hundreds is the reason you are not worth more. If you had taken better care of your hundreds, you might be rich."

"Fiddlesticks! I wish I'd known they had nothing better to wear; I would have bought them something myself. I'll be smashed if I go one step toward the ball."

"The girls" gathered around and entreated him:

"O Uncle Dick, don't say that! It is too late to better it now, and our dresses will do well enough."

His anger was not of long duration, and he was provoked at himself for marring the anticipated pleasure of the young ladies by his ill-timed remark, and tried to destroy its dampening effect as well as he could.

They were anxious to hurry to the ball as early as possible, and were deaf to "Uncle Dick's" assurances that it was much too early—that the élite would not be there for two hours or more, and refused to listen to his advice to "wait for the music," and arrived among the first. It was some time before the more successful votaries of fashion arrived, and "the

girls" had a joyous time of it; but as the room began to fill with the beau-monde, they began to recollect Uncle Dick's exclamation about their "toggery," and a keen sense of the disagreeable contrast cut short their fun; but only for a short time. They had not been to balls enough to know that each one is employed about him or herself too much to notice others, unless it be in something very superior. And they were relieved to find that they were not objects of attention—a circumstance that grieved Piper not a little. He thought his "girls" were certain to create a sensation; that all they needed was an opportunity, in order to make a stir in the fashionable world, especially Pet. He expected the morning after their introduction into society—and this was the introduction—he would be troubled by any amount of offers from marrying young men for their hands, and had conned over in his mind what he should say in reply: how he should play coy; the fond father; what a happy, love-bound circle at home; how reluctant to have it broken; how tenderly they had been raised; never known harshness or sorrow; never thought what it was to yield up his child to another; but girls must marry; the world must be peopled; and, sad as it was, fathers had to give up their children; and, as it was a thing that had to be done, though it was like sapping the springs of life, he knew of no one to whom he would sooner intrust their happiness, etc. But, as it was, the evening was passing away, and they were passing without notice, and he determined to exert himself; and doing so, soon had their dancing cards filled. Nothing occurred to mortify them; and, if they had not satisfied Piper's ambition, they were satisfied with themselves; and after forgetting their plain attire, which was soon lost in the novelty and fascination of every thing which surrounded them, they were as happy as young and innocent hearts could be; and Uncle Dick, observing their bright faces, and wishing to atone for the damper

he had so unfeelingly thrown upon them in the early part of the evening, was very attentive.

The ball-room was extensive and brilliantly lighted—not by gas, for at that period the city had no gas—and the assembly of beauty unusually large, even for Bluff City, so renowned for her handsome daughters. There were belles of all kinds and shades—tall and low ones; fair ones and brown; rich ones and poor ones; witty ones and grave. In a pause in the music, as the sets were forming, a slight stir was noticed near the door, and gradually increased until it became general throughout the saloon. It was occasioned by the entrance of Mrs. St. Cloud and her daughter. As they moved down the room in search of a seat, or place to stand, a universal whisper greeted them—"What a beautiful creature!" "What a lovely face!" "Who is she?" "How fair!" "What a face!" "What eyes!"—from belles and beaux. She was soon the centre of general attraction—the belles to know and to welcome her, and the beaux to secure her hand in the dance. The other belles soon found themselves objects of secondary interest; but such was the homage paid to the exquisitely fair and unconsciously beautiful Alice, that no feeling of rivalry or jealousy was awakened. Even Miss Clara, in the face of her mother's savage commentary, yielded her the palm. The homage paid was as sincere as it was involuntary, and received without a sensation or expression of vanity. Neither by look, nor word, nor action, did she give evidence of the slightest consciousness of being the shrine at which the beauty, chivalry, and talent of her childhood's home kneeled and gave the heart's earnest, truthful offering. She was only conscious of being very happy, and of everybody being very kind. This was the real secret of her power; it was what extracted the tooth of envy and silenced the tongue of the fault-finder. Her beauty was beyond the power of words, because it was not in the features;

a sculptor might chisel them, or they might be copied in wax-work, or an artist might paint them, but neither would be Alice St. Cloud. As well might one try to describe a sweet strain of music that thrilled the soul and carried the will captive, as to describe in what her beauty consisted. It was not ethereal, and yet it did not seem to have the impress of mortality; it was not like fruit blushing on the limb, and yet it had all its lusciousness; it was not like the lily drooping on the stem, and yet it was just as fair; her face was white as a snow-flake, with a blush of the rose coming and going at pleasure, and lit up by a pair of as soft black eyes as ever illumined the "human face divine," and all derived expression from her heavy mass of glossy black hair. While others were bending the knee to her, Frank Vaughan bent his whole soul; her smile, gentle as that which the moon-beam flings on the lake, entranced him, and for the first time in his life he was wounded, and wounded to the death, by Cupid's arrow. He longed for freedom to lay his hand, his heart, his all, at her feet, but honor forbade. He had allowed another to consider him as her affianced, and was too honorable to humiliate her before the public by declaring the truth and breaking with her. He preferred to suffer himself rather than to make her suffer. The image of Alice was as deeply engraven upon his heart as *Calais* was said to be upon the heart of "bloody Mary;" and he had the satisfaction during the evening of noticing that she was not insensible to his silent admiration.

There is a sympathy between hearts made for each other that cannot well be explained, and the scent of their mutual regard, like murder, "will out." Though neither Vaughan nor Alice had said any thing or did any thing that betokened love or regard for each other, they both left the ball-room that night with the self-satisfied assurance that neither was an object of indifference to the other. It was strange to

Alice how she should, without having made Vaughan a subject of conversation that she was aware of, become possessed during the evening of a full knowledge of his history, and the relation he sustained to Miss Clara Corbin. In her simple, honest heart she congratulated Clara upon her choice, and none who knew the quick beating of her pulse at the mention of his name will blame her if she turned a shade whiter, if possible, at the thought of his choice.

Among the many who had gathered there to "chase the hours with flying feet," none entered more fully into the spirit of the occasion, or abandoned herself more entirely to the exhilaration of the music, than Mrs. Smith, the accomplished and engaging wife of our jolly friend, the lawyer. She was fond of the society of young people, and they were equally fond of hers. She had been married about six years, and had three interesting and healthy children; was idolatrously attached to her husband, though their tastes seemed to be altogether different, or rather they were the same, but sought different modes of expressing and gratifying them. They were both fond of pleasure, but he found his at the table and cards, while she found hers in the dissipations of the young and gay. She was not exactly gay, but cheerful and light-hearted, and had never had a greater weight "on the heart than she could shake off at the heels," as she had often boasted. She was in unusually high spirits on the evening of the party, and while whirling away in the dance with heart light and spirits gay, she all at once started and uttered a low wail. Her friends gathered around and eagerly inquired:

"My dear Mrs. Smith! what is the matter?"

"O my!" she sighed, and breathed freer.

"What can be the matter? Are you sick? Let me send for a doctor?"

"O no! It is nothing, nothing at all," she laughingly answered.

"Something must be the matter. What makes you act so?"

"I had forgotten the dance, and my imagination or fancy was running riot to keep up with the waltz, I suppose, when I was startled by a most frightful picture. I thought I saw some one lying on a bier all covered with blood, and it looked like Mr. Smith."

"Mrs. Smith!" exclaimed a dozen at once.

"Pshaw! it is nothing. Silva," (her waiting-maid,) "go and see where your master is."

The girl soon returned, informing her that he was with Col. Clarkson and some friends, near by, and seemed to be enjoying himself as much as his wife. Mrs. Smith put in practice her proverb, and went to work to shake from her heels the load on her heart, and very soon succeeded.

Mrs. Smith had to send a servant in search of her husband because she felt assured that, when found, he would be where ladies were not expected to go. It may seem strange to some, that husbands, and fathers, and brothers should frequent a place so disreputable as that their wives, daughters, or sisters would be disgraced to be seen at it. But so it was. A little removed from the ball-room, up stairs over a *respectable* drinking-house, the servant found a number of the husbands and fathers and brothers, whose wives and daughters and sisters were left to the entertainment of others, seated at little round tables, with money, and cards, and brandy before them, playing for amusement and betting to count the game; and the negro was astonished how much money it took to count with; and was equally astonished to hear disputes all around the room about cheating, unfair count, etc.; and gentlemen whose word she thought would have been taken for thousands, disputing with each other about a dollar. But so it was: a gentleman whose word, in all the legitimate transactions of life, was worth any amount that might be staked on it, found it questioned by his most trusty friend, for the

paltry sum of a dollar. Nothing seems to develop the baser feelings of man's nature more than cards. Let the game be for what it may, and the players as trustworthy as they may, disputes about matters the most trifling will arise, and often become serious.

Smith sat at a table with Col. Clarkson, Floyd, Blunt, Isaacs, Orr, and a young friend and protégé of Isaacs, called "Bud," a diminutive little fellow, and of whom Isaacs was very fond, and from whom he would bear almost any thing. A large amount of brandy had been drunk as well as money lost, and "Bud" would have been called drunk, if a protégé of Isaacs could have been called so with impunity. Isaacs himself had drunk but little; Smith had drunk more than common, and was as mellow as a ripe apple, and as good-humored as brandy could make him. "Bud" was drunk enough to be quarrelsome, and accused one and another about the board of cheating, but directed his accusations mainly at Isaacs.

"Colonel, you cheated."

"You are mistaken, Bud." His voice trembled a little, and his face colored.

"No, by —, I am not mistaken. You did cheat."

"You are mistaken."

"You didn't deal the cards fair. You shall deal them over again," and dashes up his hand.

"You are drunk, Bud; and too small physically for me to resent what you say."

"Deal the cards, and don't be talking."

Isaacs trembled with rage, and was almost blind with passion, and in dealing made a mistake, and failed to give Bud his full complement of cards, at which Bud again accused him of cheating.

"You are mistaken, Bud. You are too infernally drunk to know when you have your full complement of cards."

"Bud is right this time," said Smith, counting over Bud's cards, and meaning simply that he was right in not having received his full complement. Col. Isaacs regarded it as an endorsement of Bud's charge of cheating, and springing up, his hair bristling about his head, roared out like an enraged lion:

"By —, that is just what I wanted to hear! I have not resented the repeated insults of that boy because he was a boy, but you are a man."

And before Smith had time to explain, Isaacs smote him with his open hand upon his right cheek, and then upon the left with the other hand; and telling him where he could find him, if he desired to wipe out the insult, turned and left the room.

The insult was public, and, according to the Southern sense of honor, too gross to be atoned for by an apology; and if it were not, Isaacs was not the man to make one, without some explanation from Smith, which, according to the "Code," he could not make, smarting, as he was, under next to the greatest insult one gentleman could offer to another. No alternative was therefore left to Smith but a peremptory call upon Isaacs for satisfaction; and Col. Clarkson was asked to bear from him a hostile message to Isaacs. It was a new game for Col. Clarkson to play, and the stake was the life of two of his friends. He much preferred not to take a hand in such a game. He could play for amusement, and bet to count the game, but he desired to bet money; but in the game he was expected to take a hand in, human life was the stake, and honor the forfeit! What would Amy, the wife of his bosom, say, with her pleading face turned up to his? What would his angel daughter say, when she heard it? And, above all, what would the agonized wife say? He would have turned away, but the hand was dealt out to him, and he must play it, or be false to his friend. He waited upon Isaacs with the

note, and was referred to Captain Orr, as Isaacs' friend. As delay in such matters expressed timidity or a desire to obtain some trifling advantage in the weapon, by practice or some other way, it was determined that the parties were to fight on the Louisiana side, opposite Bluff City, at eight o'clock next morning, with rifles, at fifty paces. News of the intended duel soon spread over the town, but was scrupulously kept from Mrs. Smith, the person of all others the most interested.

Early in the morning the ferry-boat and skiffs were crossing the river, carrying over crowds curious to see men in deadly combat, with much the same feeling that whole towns and villages in Spain turn out to see a bull-fight. The principals, with their seconds, were upon the ground, prompt to the hour.

Capt. Orr takes Col. Clarkson to one side; they consult for a moment or two; go to their principals and lead them off a few steps, and talk in a suppressed tone; meet and consult again; walk about and inspect the ground; walk to one spot, and look at an opposite one; walk to that, and look at the first; examine if trees or undergrowth or other thing standing near will aid either party in catching aim; Clarkson stands at one point, and Orr at the other, and they scan closely the advantages or disadvantages of either position; they change positions, and make the same examination; look at the position of the sun; Col. Clarkson takes from his pocket a tape-line; Capt. Orr takes out his knife, and whittles to a point two small pegs, and sticks one in the ground; Col. Clarkson gives Orr one end of the tape-line, and they measure fifty paces; it stops in an inconvenient place; they speak a word or two; a few steps are added to the distance, to get a good position to stand, and the other peg is stuck in the ground; they walk off a few paces; Capt. Orr hands his friend's rifle to Col. Clarkson to examine; Clarkson does the

same; the guns are returned; a cap is bursted on each, to see if the tubes are clear; they toss up a half dollar for the word; Clarkson wins, and Orr has choice of pegs; go to their principals—Col. Isaacs standing by a tree, his nostrils distended, and a look of blood in his eye, Smith seated at the root of a tree, looking quietly and thoughtfully; they talk in a low voice to them, and walk with them to the pegs; meet midway; diverge a little from a right line; take out their gun-chargers, and show them to each other; fill them with powder, and show to each other, and turn them in the muzzle; take out a bullet; examine, to see that it is round and without flaws; show to each other, and ram them in the gun, and put on caps; load two other rifles, and put two well-loaded pistols in their belts; walk to their friends, turn, and meet in the centre, and, turning at right angles, step twenty-five paces; Col. Clarkson takes out a paper, and says:

"Gentlemen, I will now read you the terms of the duel:

"Item 1. The parties are to fight at eight o'clock on the morning of the — day of —, A. D. —, opposite Bluff City, on the Louisiana side, with rifles stocked in the ordinary Kentucky style, and not to be less than thirty-two nor more than thirty-six inches in the barrel, nor to carry a larger ball than forty to the pound.

"Item 2. The parties are to stand at a distance of fifty paces from each other; and the guns to be handed to them by their principals, cocked, and triggers sprung, and to be held with the butt to the shoulder used in shooting, the muzzle pointing a distance of not more than twenty inches from the forward foot.

"Item 3. The seconds shall throw up "heads or tails" for the word; and the party losing the word shall have choice of positions.

"Item 4. The word shall be given thus: "Gentlemen, are you ready?" If ready, each principal shall say, loud

enough to be heard by the seconds, "Ready;" when the second shall say, in a distinct voice, loud enough to be heard by the principals, "Fire! one, two, three—stop!" And either party shooting before the word "fire," or after the word "stop," or who shall otherwise violate the rules of duelling in a manner to obtain an advantage of his adversary, shall forfeit his life; and the second of the opposite party shall take it at his option.

"Item 5. After the parties are stationed at the pegs by their seconds, these rules of the duel shall be read over to them by the second winning the word."

"Will you please call over the word, Col. Clarkson, as you intend giving it to the parties?" asked Capt. Orr.

"Gentlemen, I will give you the word thus: 'Gentlemen, are you ready?' You answer, 'Ready.' 'Fire! one, two, three—stop!'"

Clarkson and Orr take to their respective principals their guns, cock and hand them to them, and return to their places. The multitude standing around breathe hard, and have a fixed stare. Isaacs runs his eye along the line to his adversary, fixes it keenly upon him, compresses his lips, and braces every muscle. Smith is passive.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" rings out clear and startling. Smith looks at Clarkson, and answers, "Ready." Isaacs fixes his eye steadily upon Smith, and answers, "Ready." "Fire!" Bang go both guns, before the word "one."

"Smith is hit!" bursts from a hundred lips. Col. Clarkson rushes to him, and arrives just in time to hear him gurgle forth, "Tell my poor wife and chil——" as he fell back into his arms a dead man. The ball had gone through his heart.

The river is again dotted with skiffs and ruffled by the ferry-boat, crowded with returning passengers; and her pad-

dle-wheels splash away in the water, unretarded by the overwhelming load of grief she bears to the home of the newly-made and unconscious widow! She lands; a hearse is obtained, and six men bear the jolly, harmless Smith of yesterday to it, all stark and bloody. The hearse rumbles solemnly along the street, attended by Col. Clarkson and a few other friends. The heart of the messenger sent to prepare Mrs. Smith for the sad intelligence failed him; and there she stands, at the window, and wonders whose funeral procession approaches thus slowly, at which Col. Clarkson is the chief mourner, all unconscious that the father of her three children is thus being borne home to them and her! Here was a trial for Col. Clarkson! And the wail of the overtried heart, as it broke, and the widowed wife sank upon the body of her dead husband a raving maniac, still haunts the pillow of the man who played for amusement, and bet to count the game, and lost the life of his friend.

The victim of *innocent* play was buried, and a tombstone with letters cut in it commemorative of some of his virtues was erected over him, to mark the spot where he lay. But no one wrote thereon, as a warning to youth: "Beware of playing for amusement, and betting to count the game!"

The children thus untimely orphaned were kindly cared for by Colonel Clarkson; but the wife, with her weight of sorrow, sleeps quietly beside her husband; and the spring bird that builds its nest in the rose-vine that monthly blooms over the perishing clay, as it warbles to its mate and its little ones, sings not of all the grief that lies buried there.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was the purpose of Vaughan to avoid temptation; and as he thought honor and his own peace of mind required that he should not extend his acquaintance with Miss Alice St. Cloud, he resolved not to see her again, and had resisted all the entreaties of his young friends to visit her with them. One afternoon, when thinking of her, and lamenting the folly which had placed a barrier between him and her, and congratulating himself in a sort of irresolute way upon his stoicism in resisting the temptation to see her, Nickols walked into his office, with his thumbs in the arm-holes of his vest.

"Good morning, Nickols. Take a seat."

"Ha-a-a-awk—no, I thank you;" and commenced a promenade back and fro in the room, hawking as he went.

"Come, take a seat, take a seat," insisted Vaughan.

"Ha-a-a-awk—no, no; sit still;" and takes a turn or two more, drops into a chair, and cocks his feet up over his head.

"Vaughan—ha-a-a-awk—I saw the prettiest piece of human flesh to-day I ever saw, in so much domestic manufacture—an angel in dry-goods!"

"Ah! Who is she, Nickols?"

"That's what I come to ask you—that's what I want to know;" and jumping up, whirls around, with a "Ha, ha, ha;" and squaring himself before Vaughan, pokes out his two fingers, and grins, "You understand?"

"Well, no, not exactly; describe her."

"Describe her! Can you describe light? Can you de-

scribe a moonbeam? Can't describe without a comparison, and have nothing to compare her to. You understand? heh! you understand?"

"I do not understand sufficiently to tell you who she is; and unless you can compose yourself, and give plain answers, I fear you will have to go unsatisfied."

"Well, you know Mrs. St. Cloud has been away for several years, and her house, near my old shanty, has been untenanted. Lately I have noticed a great clearing up there, and a rapping of hammers, and an unloading of furniture, and all that sort of thing, and this morning as I passed I saw leaning over the balcony-rail an angel in dry-goods. Now, who is she? I come to you, because I know that no new calico or cambric can come to town without your knowing it."

"I presume it is Miss Alice St. Cloud."

"What! Mrs. St. Cloud's daughter?"

"Yes."

"I used to know her when she was a small girl, and she was then a beautiful and innocent child, but I never expected to see her grow into such a picture as that."

He ha-a-a-awked about the room a time or two, and turning upon Frank, said:

"Frank, what makes you look so grave, old hoss?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing don't affect men's livers, man; and yours must be out of order, or you would not be so close. Come, if any thing is the matter, out with it."

"There is nothing the matter. I am perfectly well."

"Then rally, and talk to me about sweet Alice St. Cloud."

"What do you want me to say?"

"Any thing in your dictionary. Are you in love with her yourself?"

Frank started as if something had stung him.

"You need not start so; I won't tell anybody, and will not

try to cut you out. You marry the girl, and I'll marry the mother; be your daddy-in-law—ha, ha, ha! Don't be down, Frank; I give her up at once; I am used to it. I have been waiting at the pool for the troubling of the waters, lo these forty years, and whenever an angel like Miss Alice comes down and troubles the water, some fellow like you steps in before me. Suppose we call and see her this evening; you the daughter, and I the mother—you understand? What say you?"

"I'll go."

"Good. I'll call round for you at seven—ha-a-a-awk," and left.

Vaughan felt ashamed that he should thus have committed himself to see her, and voluntarily place his heart in harm's way. He had felt some sense of cheapness when returning from his evening walks, to reflect that they had always led by Mrs. St. Cloud's residence, and his truant eyes would wander about the windows, hoping to encounter a pair of black ones looking out for him; but here he had consented to spend the evening in her company! The effect of such a visit he felt would but be a new attack of the heartache, and a multiplying his unavailing regrets, and hence determined that he would break his promise to Nickols, and went to work to frame some good excuse.

Prompt to the hour, Nickols called, and notwithstanding Vaughan's resolution to excuse himself, Nickols found him ready and waiting; and he was pleased to find that though elegantly dressed, it was in perfect taste, and none of the extravagant display of finery with which he had been in the habit of disfiguring himself, giving to him so much the air of a dandy. He was rather sedate—almost grave. Nickols rallied him about his gravity, feared he was going to turn parson, etc., but to no purpose. One who had seen him a few months previous on his way to call upon the junior of

the late firm of Vaughan & Co., would not have recognized him as the same.

They found Mrs. St. Cloud's neatly but plainly furnished parlors filled with company. Alice did all that childlike simplicity could do to entertain each of her worshippers, and each felt that she had done the very thing he wanted done. As the evening waned, one and another, as by common consent, gave place to Vaughan, who soon monopolized the attention of the young hostess. Nickols was the last to leave, and he had long since made his adieus to Mrs. St. Cloud and gone hawking home, when Frank and Alice were aroused from a blissful reverie by the clock striking one! He was astonished! she was astonished! both were astonished! He thought there must be some mistake; she thought there must be some mistake; both thought there must be some mistake. He felt for his watch; but, alas! the counterfeit Duke had stolen it, and he had not felt able to replace it. The thought fell upon his hopes and true manly affections—sunning themselves in the smiles of the most beautiful and lovely creature he had ever seen—like the frost upon violets, wilting their bloom and freshness. He stammered out an apology and tore himself away, and with anathemas, deep but not loud, found his way to his room, and lay down to dream of an angel with wings half folded and a robe of light cloud floating about her; and as she approaches him, and he is about to fold her in his arms, and become pure and immortal like to the angel herself, it vanishes, and he is left alone.

From the time of the dissolution of the firm, Vaughan was, to all intents, a changed man; and but few would have recognized, in the solid man of business, the counsellor-at-law, No. — Oxford street, the Frank Vaughan, Esq., of Duke John notoriety. He had almost lost sight of his former self, and most heartily wished others had done the same; but this was not so easily accomplished, and he found himself com-

pelled to submit to many a hard rub and severe joke. For a long time he bore it like a philosopher, or rather like a martyr; for he had the good sense to understand that the joke was altogether too good—too pregnant with fun—to freeze up by a cold, haughty demeanor; and an effort to do it before it became stale, he saw would not only fail, but increase the sport and compromise the modern Frank Vaughan. Hence, from month to month he winced under the cognomen of “Don John,” and was compelled to smile at the constant salutation: “How is the Duke this morning?”

His patience finally gave way at this persistence of his friends in identifying him with a dead man—a myth; and to check the injustice, and to remove the delusion with as much effect and éclat as possible, he issued cards to those of his friends who had taken the largest liberty with him to join him in a wine supper. They were pleased, and hailed it as a return to himself; for notwithstanding the name and person seemed to be the same, they saw and felt that he was not the same pleasure-loving, dressy, band-box of a man they had formerly known.

The wit and wine flowed freely, and, in the midst of the hilarity, one of the guests rapped for silence, and proposed as a toast:

“Mine host, the ‘Duke,’ long life to him; and when it shall please Hymen that he depart from us and be no more, may he be received by a *Saint* enveloped in a *Cloud*; and in casting his mantle, may it fall upon shoulders more deserving than a piece of counterfeit.”

The toast was received with vociferous applause, and when the noise subsided, Vaughan arose to respond. He was grave almost to sternness, and his voice trembled slightly as he spoke: “Gentlemen, you are my guests, and I thank you for becoming so; and what transpires here to-night, under what is temporarily my roof, I desire to be held by you as

sacred as if occurring around the family-board in the freedom of home intercourse. You have enjoyed yourselves at my expense for several moons past; I have borne it without resentment if not with patience. It was a good joke; I was the victim of my own vanity and folly, and I felt disposed to allow my friends the largest liberty, and you have used it as I should have done if our positions had been reversed. But all things must have an end, and why not this? I have invited you here to-night that you may enjoy yourselves to the full. I want no one to feel under restraint. I want you to run your joke to the uttermost; I shall enjoy it with you. But mark me: the man who says Duke or Don John to me after he passes that door will have to answer to me for the insult—as such will I consider it. I do not say this as a threat, or to intimidate; far otherwise. I like you all, and I hope you like me in return; and I beg you will not take offence at what I say. It is not so intended. And I hope, further, that you will not allow it to check the hilarity of the evening.

“One other remark: If I have ever been so weak as to affect coquetry, I hope I am cured of it; and hence, I will not affect not to understand the allusion in the toast to Miss St. Cloud. The author of it must allow me to say, with the utmost kind feeling for him, that such an allusion was in bad taste. I conceive it highly improper that the name of any young lady should be mentioned upon an occasion like the present, and more especially the one named.”

The silence that succeeded was almost oppressive. It was broken by the gentleman who first proposed the toast. He had the grace and good-humor to rise and say: “Vaughan is right, boys. We have run him hard enough, and for one, I am satisfied with my share, and will stop. And I beg your pardon, Vaughan, and that of the young lady upon whose name I had the extreme bad taste to make a very bad pun,

for having coupled her name and yours in that way. And, gentlemen, if you will fill again, I will give you the health of our friend Frank Vaughan, Attorney at Law, up stairs—'always to be found at his office, except when absent on professional business'—May he be as successful in the business road upon which he has started as his best friends can desire, and may he not find it a 'hard road to travel.'"

This had the effect to restore the joyous feeling, and a happy evening was writ down in the memories of all present.

The next summer Col. Clarkson brought Agnes home to spend her vacation. She had grown a most beautiful and attractive girl, with the appearance of a woman and naïveté of a child. What a well-spring of joy opened to her as she reached her home once more—the meeting of mother and father, of sisters and brothers, of dear Alice, and all her friends! How the heart gushed over with love! How dear each familiar spot, and how thickly the sweet memories come! She was too young to feel the restraints which society imposes, and her heart was ready to bound at each generous impulse.

She had not disappointed the bright promise of her youth; and every plan which her fond parents could suggest for the enjoyment of herself and sweet Alice, as she was called, was arranged; and time sped by upon his fleetest wing. It was a beautiful sight to see these lovely girls mounted upon their handsome ponies—a present from the ever-indulgent Mr. Clarkson—every evening in the early fall, as the sun was stooping to the west, galloping in full riding costume over the hills and across the valleys in the neighborhood of town, their shadows spanning the deep ravines, and bounding along on the opposite hill-side like rival equestriennes.

The city is built, or rather is being built, for it is far from being finished, upon a high, precipitous range of hills, which take their start some hundred or more miles below and run

along the edge of the swamp, jutting into the river, as at Natchez, Rodney, and Vicksburg. Those about Bluff City are wild and very romantic, rising above the level of the river from three to five hundred feet. By means of deep grading, and the filling up of gorges, the city is made not only habitable, but one of the most beautiful and picturesque upon the river. From "Crown Point," a high hill about a mile above the city, is the finest view to be had anywhere on the river south of the Ohio. The road leading to it was at that time rugged and ragged, and was one of the favorite rides of the two fair equestriennes. Almost every deep, shady glen or dell had its tragic history of the robber, Phelps, the daring bandit of Mississippi, who was shot by the sheriff, upon the court green, in an attempt to escape, the day before he was to have been hung, or as affording a secure retreat for the horde of desperate gamblers who once infested the city, and whose daring misdeeds so far outraged a forbearing but incensed and enraged public as to force them to seize and hang the ringleaders, and break up their dens about town, and expel the rest. An old house now stands where the gallows was erected upon which those who were seized were hung, near what is termed the "old graveyard." One accustomed to see graveyards carefully fenced, and white stones erected, to tell the passer-by who rest under them, would not have recognized it as a place where the dead sleep, but rather a piece of common pasture. Cattle and live-stock of all kinds grazed leisurely over and trod rudely upon the ashes of the dead. But then it must be considered that this was "the old graveyard," the graves of the early settlers of Mississippi; that a people who lived in log-cabins that would hardly protect them from the winds and the rains of winter, and the burning suns of summer, could not be expected to adorn and beautify the house of the dead, who felt not the wind nor the sunshine, nor heeded the rattle of storm. A

new generation of people, however, had taken the place of the old pioneers whose bones were thus left without a finger-board to warn the careless to "tread lightly," and a new state of things inaugurated with regard to the dead—a new graveyard purchased in a lovely vale north-east of the town, where after "life's fitful fever" the dead sleep well. It lies between two long, huge hills; and its whitewashed fence, thick studding of gray and white marble, and long lines of bending willows and creeping rose-vines, present a sad but pleasing effect viewed from the top of the hill a mile or more to the south.

Over all these tragic and classic grounds these charming, light-hearted maidens galloped or walked their ponies, as the mood moved them. Upon Crown Point they would haul up, after a brisk gallop, and sit and watch the play of the last rays of the sun, as they softened the broad landscape that spread out for miles and miles before them, and listen to the eternal gurgle of the river as it washed the base of the hill far below them. The river makes a turn at the point of the hill, and the two ends run parallel for ten or twelve miles, giving a view of the river for upwards of twenty, upon which the most magnificent steamers were ever moving, lashing to foam its muddy waters, with the perpetual splash of their paddles. A full view was also had of the busy city, sloping from the highest hill-top to the river's edge, with its church spires piercing the clouds, its long rows of business houses, fine edifices, with their broad piazzas shaded by the deep rich green of the China tree, and the old, rusty court-house, where many of Mississippi's great men, whose names will brighten the page of her history, when some son that loves her deeds shall choose to chronicle them, took their rise. It was a picture worthy of the best inspiration of the artist—those girls sitting upon their palfreys, hat in hand, and hair floating in a mass about their shoulders, that of Alice sweeping down

her back to the saddle-skirts—watching the setting sun, and then gathering up the reins and bounding away, the evening breeze revelling with their long locks.

Upon these occasions they very rarely had any other escort than Ponto; for the young gentlemen who had sensibility enough to appreciate it, felt that the presence of a third person would have marred rather than enhanced the pleasure of such excursions. Such commonplace subjects as beaux and balls and parties never entered their heads, much less their hearts; and he would have deserved the fate of Prometheus who would have disturbed their summer elysium by designedly kindling in their hearts the fire of love. Hence they rode when and where and as their free fancy pointed. Agnes never saw company. She was too young, and had no desire for it; and if she had had the desire, Mrs. Clarkson was much too prudent a mother to have permitted her to gratify it. Alice, however, was crowded with company each evening, of both sexes; but the adulation paid her did not in any way deface the beauty of her character or corrupt the simplicity of her manners. Her watchful mother, however, soon noticed that she was restless and uneasy when Vaughan failed to make his accustomed visit, and felt anxious about it, but deemed it prudent to say nothing about it. Agnes had never seen him, nor heard Alice speak of him or any other gentleman. The pastimes and compliments of the drawing-room never formed the subject of discourse between the young ladies; and Agnes was of course ignorant that the empire of her dear friend's heart was threatened to be disputed by a very formidable rival; nor was Alice herself aware of it. A very trifling incident revealed it to Agnes. One afternoon, late, as they were standing upon the upper balcony, Vaughan passed, and politely lifted his hat. The salutation brought the color to Alice's face, and she looked after him abstract-

edly, until he turned the corner. Agnes put her hand around her, and said, in a half-whisper:

"Who was that mild, handsome gentleman?"

Alice put her head on Agnes's shoulder, looked up into her face with the sweetest and most innocent look in the world, and in the same tone answered:

"Mr. Vaughan."

"I have read something of love in books, dear Alice, and I have at times thought you were too pure to love any thing but God, your devoted mother, the bright sky, and sweet flowers; but you let those large eyes of yours fall so softly upon Mr. Vaughan, and you looked so anxiously after him as he turned the corner——"

"Hush! hush! my darling Agnes, do not finish what I see is on your lips. I cannot hear it. Mr. Vaughan is betrothed already. Earthly love, my sweet friend, is not for me; I feel it here," laying her hand upon her heart.

"O! you will marry some time," said Agnes, trying to be cheerful; "almost every one does, you know."

"No! I shall never marry; I have never thought of it. Were Mr. Vaughan free to offer me his hand, I would not wish it. I would not have him ask me, for I feel certain that earth has no home for me other than the sweet one of my idolized mother. Look yonder, dear Agnes, do you see that beautiful cluster of stars? How soft and pure their light! It is the light of heaven, and my home, sweet one, will be there."

Agnes could not speak, but she drew her arm more tightly around her friend, kissed away the tear which lay upon her cheek, and walked with her silently up and down the gallery.

Not long after Agnes returned to school, Alice ceased her rides, and resisted all the entreaties of Vaughan and others to join them in their gallops over the hills. Her rides were sacred to the memory of her absent friend.

CHAPTER XIX.

We may smile, or coldly sneer,
The while such ghostly tales we hear,
And wonder why they were believed,
And how wise men could be deceived:
Bathing our renovated sight
In the free gospel's glorious light,
We marvel it was ever night.

MRS. HALE.

THE ensuing summer, Agnes completed her education, and Col. Clarkson and his family spent the season, in company with Mrs. St. Cloud and Alice, and a number of other Bluff City notables, at "Cooper's Well," a new watering-place, just then becoming famous. It was situated in Hinds county, in a poor, sandy, pine-woods country. The causes which led to the digging of the well, and its great popularity as a healer of the people, and a place of fashionable resort for pleasure-seekers, were supernatural and singular enough. It took its name from the original proprietor, Rev. Mr. Cooper, or "Brother Cooper," as he was universally called. He was a distinguished and popular and talented divine of the Methodist Church, a denomination numbering a vast multitude of worshippers throughout Mississippi and the adjoining States.*

* The Rev. Mr. Cooper here spoken of now sleeps with his fathers, and that voice whose deep tones have echoed and reechoed so often in the wilds of Mississippi, calling the ungodly to repentance, is now tuned in harmony with that of angels on high, sounding the eternal praise of Almighty God.

The reverend gentleman must not take offence at the truthful history here given, for the writer esteems him highly, and would, under no circumstances, give him pain.

"Brother Cooper" was a tall, raw-boned, cadaverous-looking man, his skin as dark as a Spaniard's; dark, deep-set eyes, black wire-looking hair, heavy eyebrows, prominent cheek-bones, sunken cheeks, and a sepulchral voice, which was sufficiently powerful when at its full compass to be heard over five acres of camp-ground, without breaking, and apparently without effort. He was devotedly attached to his religion, an enthusiast, and many regarded him as somewhat cracked—a monomaniac upon such subjects as took strong hold of his powerful imagination. His great reputation as a pulpit orator, and his powers of description, especially his descriptions of the fate of the damned, "the lake of fire where the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever," were so awfully graphic and grand, that crowds, everywhere, of all classes, would gather to hear him. And his piety and sincerity gave weight to all he said. He dug his well in obedience to a strange dream that made a deep impression upon him. He had told it to his friends, and the fame of it preceded him to his appointment; and such was the morbid appetite of the public for the marvellous and supernatural, that crowds would press around him and urge the recital of his dream; and in this way he acquired the habit of relating it in his sermons, with many other wild and thrilling imaginings, and visions from the spirit-land. "In my dream," he would say, in that deep, solemn voice, "when deep sleep had fallen upon me, a voice appeared and said to me: 'Brother Cooper, dig a well!' I woke, and thought no more of it. The second night, at the self-same hour, it said: 'Brother Cooper, dig a well!' I treated it as a sleeping fancy, but it took strong hold of my mind, and I found it difficult to shake myself loose from its hold upon my mind.

The next night at the same hour it said: 'Brother Cooper, dig a well!' I asked: 'Where shall I dig?' It said, 'Follow, and I will show you where you shall dig!' I followed, and was led to a retired spot in a deep vale, where I should not have thought of planting my spade for water. The next morning I awoke, and so vivid was my dream that I arose and without difficulty found the spot. I took my wife and showed her the spot, and related my dream. She said, 'It is from God!' I said, 'Then I will dig.' I hired a man, and began to dig. He labored to dissuade me, but I said, 'Dig.' After digging a number of days and no sign of water, he laughed at what he called my superstition, and quit, and I abandoned the work. But again in my dream the voice said: 'Brother Cooper, finish the well!' I hired another workman, and he likewise grew disheartened and ceased to work, and again I resolved to abandon the digging; but again the voice said: 'Brother Cooper, finish the well!' I hired another digger, and the profane man said he would dig until he found water or the brimstone that fed the lake of everlasting flame. He found water, but the smell and taste were so offensive, that no domestic use could be made of it. I knew not of its medicinal qualities; my skill in the healing art extended only to the sin-sick soul, and not to the perishing frame. Poor, weak mortal that I was, and hard of belief, I thought my imagination had trifled with my judgment, or that some foul fiend had tempted me to sin, and the windlass and crank were left to rot. But God would not suffer what he had provided for the healing of the nation to be lost through the ignorance and weakness of his servant, who knew not what use to make of his gifts. Dr. —, a man eminent in his profession, and a learned chemist, was perishing away with dyspepsia. His disease had baffled his own great skill, and that of the other physicians of the State, and, despairing of earthly help, he sought the balm of 'Gilead and the Physician there.' One

night, after his weeping family had prayed around his bedside, and his devoted and pious wife, worn out with watching, had fallen to sleep by his side, a voice in his sleep said: 'Drink of the water of the well I will show you, and you shall be healed!' Thrice it thus spoke. The next night it spoke thrice the same words in the same voice, and the next night thrice. The third night, when it had spoken thrice, he said: 'Show me the well!' He was shown the well, and a few days thereafter I was surprised to see him being borne upon a litter, prostrate and emaciated, into my house. He said he had come to drink of the water of my well, and told me his vision. I fell down upon my knees, and smote upon my breast, and said: 'Blessed be the Lord! He is wiser than I.' Some people say, 'Brother Cooper is crazy.' I love to be crazy like Brother Cooper. If loving, and serving, and glorifying God is being crazy, I wish you were all crazy, just like Brother Cooper."

This thing, told at every camp-meeting, quarterly-meeting, and Conference in Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, by a man noted for his zeal and good works, with the real merits of the mineral water, gave to the well wide-spread reputation, and the diseased flocked there as did those "sick of the palsy" to the "Pool of Bethesda." And there Colonel Clarkson and his family went.

This was Agnes's first season in society—the first season she was seen by or was permitted to see company. She and Alice were like twin flowers, shedding odor and freshness around. Agnes was the taller of the two, and possessed more character, but, withal, gentle and easy in her manners. One was all love, the other admired as well as loved. In decision and point of character Agnes resembled her mother, but was more impressible. She had the same Grecian outline of face, the same clear, white skin when in repose as when first seen at the Hermit Bend, but when animated, her face was suf-

fused with *couleur de rose*, and her lustrous eyes shone like stars. Her step was elastic and queen-like, and her voice soft and musical as Orpheus' lute, "strung with poets' sinews,"

"Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,
Make tigers tame, and huge leviathans
Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands."

And its effect was almost as great. For a number of evenings in succession, the music of her voice, and the charm of her conversation, together with the beauty of her person, drew even the lovers of cards and brandy from their long sittings. Agnes was a natural musician, performing the compositions of the best masters with an ease and grace rarely seen in private life. She loved to follow Mozart and Beethoven through their graceful passages, and often became so engrossed with their music that she would seem almost inspired with the genius of these great masters, and, forgetting all else, her whole soul would pour itself out in harmony so sweet, and sounds so touching, that few could listen unmoved. Even Colonel Isaacs, for whom ladies had but few attractions, left his cards and brandy to listen to her voice, and look upon her surpassingly beautiful face and figure. To Alice, the sensation her friend created was a source of great delight; but Agnes was unaccustomed to the adulation and compliments of the gay fashionable world, and it all pressed heavily upon her young heart, and she loved the quiet of her room, with Alice by her side, far more than the gay festivities of the saloons, with all their fascinations. Her mind was pure—the world had not yet touched her with its withering breath, and she could not understand or appreciate its hollow pleasures or unmeaning gallantries. There were at the Well an unusually large number of visitors, and Alice and Agnes soon collected about them a circle of elegant and accomplished young ladies and gentlemen, who, like themselves, preferred

something more rational than the adulation and compliments of a heartless, pleasure-seeking crowd. Frank Vaughan was one of their circle, and no one added more to their happiness or amusement; he was quiet, but never obtrusive, and when the young ladies were compelled to have a gallant, he was always welcome.

Mrs. Corbin and her daughter were at the Well, and the attention paid by Vaughan to Miss Alice gave her great uneasiness. Clara did not seem to notice it in the least, but flirted away with every new beau who offered his coat-sleeve, and the newer he was the better. It was her boast that she caught all the new beaux; but, to an attentive observer, it was very plain that her favors were more especially given to the young Louisiana attorney.

This kind of life was so new to Agnes, that after the novelty had worn off a little, she and Alice longed for the quiet of their homes, the hills, their ponies, and old rides. Mrs. St. Cloud readily consented to take them back with her, and Mrs. Clarkson was not sorry when Agnes complained of the distaste which she had for the idle flatteries with which her ears were nightly filled, and gladly assented to the arrangement.

The lovers of conquest could not understand how two reigning belles could, in the full tide of a successful season, leave the scene of their triumphs, and score of worshippers, for the seclusion of home, and the society of each other. Could these votaries of fashion have seen the smile of pleasure, the look of love and happiness with which these young girls resumed their old but rational pursuits, and could they have entered into their occupation as Alice and Agnes did—the reading of standard works, the music, their sweet voices mingling in harmony, the kind word to the afflicted, and the charity to the needy—could they have seen all this, and then have witnessed the content and satisfaction with which they

bounded over the hills on their fleet ponies, they might have felt that woman's destiny is not confined to the artificial and transient pleasures of the gay world, and that reason holds her empire far above emptiness and folly.

CHAPTER XX.

"Fly drunkenness! whose vile incontinence
Takes both away the reason and the sense,
Till, with Circean cups thy mind possessed,
Leaves to be man, and wholly turns to beast."

THE evening after Alice and Agnes left the Well, Vaughan was gloomy and taciturn, and to relieve his ennui determined to join Colonel Isaacs and some others in a game of cards. When he proposed to do so, Colonel Isaacs asked him to one side, and said:

"Frank, my friend, I would advise you not to play."

"Why? There is no harm in it."

"Yes, there is harm in it, particularly in your state of mind."

"How do you know what state of mind I am in?"

"Pshaw! you can't deceive anybody; your face is a table whereon your thoughts 'are visibly characterized and engraved.' You love Alice St. Cloud; and you are right, my boy. Marry her, Frank, if she will have you, and there is no reason why she should not. You have talent, and no bad habits, and your prospects for business are good, and daily improving, and your person comely enough to please any woman. Some time since I would not have said this much to you; it would have spoiled you then, but you have improved since."

"I thank you for your good opinion; but I never expect the good fortune to marry Alice St. Cloud."

"Why not?"

"I might give a dozen reasons, but one is sufficient: she would not have me."

"How do you know? Have you ever asked her?"

"I have not, and would not for my right arm."

"Nonsense, Frank. I thought you were done with romance. Away with such love heroics, and take my advice and marry Miss Alice St. Cloud. All stuff about woman's not wanting to marry. All that is needed is a good chance, and I regard you now as a very fair match for any young lady of my acquaintance, but more especially for Miss St. Cloud, for you love her, and I think she likes you, and if she does not, she very soon will. If your reported engagement with Miss Clara Corbin, which the mother is so industriously circulating, be the cause of restraining you from obeying the impulse of your heart to offer your hand to sweet little Alice, do you be honest with Miss Clara and yourself, and disclose to her the truth, and break with her at once. The mother may storm, and say a few scandalous things, but, my word for it, the daughter will not care a sou. She likes that poet-quoting Louisiana attorney better to-day than she does you, and he will very easily console her for the loss of a lover that cares nothing for her, and for whom she cares but little."

"My relations with Miss Corbin are partly the cause, and a sufficient one, why I should not address Miss Alice St. Cloud, but not the only nor the most material one. It is no vanity in me to say that I believe I am not an object of aversion to Miss Alice; indeed, I think she likes me as well as a pure, single-minded creature such as she can like any gentleman. But I cannot be mistaken in believing that she has never thought of marrying any one; and my own appreciation of her tells me that it would distress her no little to be compelled to think of it; and I would, like the brave 'Mutius,' put my hand in the fire, and let it burn to the wrist, before I would give her that much pain."

"Too romantic, Frank; too romantic, my dear sir. Beautiful as she is, she is not an angel, and must think and act like other folks; and I never knew a young lady that was not peering eagerly about her for a husband, and who felt disappointed if she had not at least half a dozen offers, at her age. So do you take my advice, and marry sweet Alice St. Cloud."

"I cannot ask Miss Alice St. Cloud to be my wife; though I would not only brave Mrs. Corbin's displeasure, but a whole regiment, to call her mine. But when I look into her sweet face, and meet the light of her gentle eyes, and, above all, when I feel the influence of her pure nature upon me, my wish to marry her is rebuked, and I feel that I stand before one too good, too spiritual, and possessing too much of heaven's loveliness for erring man like me."

"I am sorry, when your heart is so full of love, that your head should be so full of such high-flung, romantic notions. I am sincere in what I have said; and as I would be sorry, with my experience, to see you, in your present mood, sit down at cards, with your leave I will try to explain why I give you this advice. I shall speak of myself."

"I shall certainly feel flattered by your confidence, as I am deeply grateful for your kind advice and affectionate regard."

"You, Frank," and his eye kindled, "have stood and felt the ground shake under you, as the brazen cannon roared its welcome to 'Mississippi's favorite son,' as he was borne home bleeding from the ensanguined field, with blushing honors thick upon him. You have thrown up your hat, and shouted, 'Huzza!' as he rode past, with banners, drum, and fife, and an admiring multitude applauding. You have seen newspapers invent new names by which to distinguish him from other men; and you have seen the State heaping its highest honors upon him, and the common voice of the Southern public calling him to still higher posts; and he

deserves it all, every inch. But, sir, let me tell you, I am to-day a greater man than he! I have a stouter arm, a braver heart, and a clearer head!" His eyes fairly blazed as he said it.

"His equal, at least," Vaughan modestly said.

"Ay, 'his equal, at least!' Then why not his equal in fame? Why are not my name and deeds, like his, trumpeted round the world? Why am I 'shrunk to this little measure?' I'll tell you why; Cards and brandy! Drinking for good cheer, and playing for amusement, and betting to count the game! If I had never seen a card nor a brandy-bottle, I might have been high in command in the army, or a Congressman, Senator, or what I listed! Beware of them, sir: they are more fatal to ambition than the blades of Brutus and the 'envious Casca.' The great body of the people are virtuous; and no mere slave to vice can be their servant long, if they know of his bondage. A judicious marriage might, nay, it would have saved me, and, instead of being as now, a Satyr to that Hyperion, I would have been his compeer. Hear the warning of a man who has drunk deep at every fountain of excess: Beware of cards and dice, wine and bad women. The breath of the Upas tree is not more fatal to life than they to innocence and virtue. Beware of them! Like the faithful Kent, 'I have years on my back forty-eight,' and am 'too old to learn,' but at a good age to advise. So you will do well to heed me, my boy. I never preached morality before: it is my first sermon; it is also my last. At your age, life was a blissful thing to me. I was full of hope and energy, and the mere sense of being was in itself a full equivalent for what of mischance befell me; but now I am without hope, without a future, and a past that I deplore, and life is a burden that I would shuffle off as cheerfully as I would wipe out twenty years of vice; and I would do it, but for the triumph it would afford my

enemies. They shall not use my name 'to point a moral or adorn a tale.' To avoid that alone will 'I grunt and sweat under' a life my excesses have made 'weary.' Feel of that hand. It was once as soft and smooth as yours; it is now hard and wrinkled. Look at it. Do you see nothing there?"

"Nothing."

"Look again! Do you see nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Sir, there is blood on it! the blood of a good man; and 'the wide sea hath drops too few to wash it clean again.' But for cards, sir, it would not have been there. Do you wonder now that I warn you thus earnestly? You may wonder that I warn you at all. I wonder at it myself. There are few men I choose to warn, and still fewer occasions when I feel in the humor to warn anybody. Go to the gaming-table and the intoxicating bowl when you please. I have said my say, and if it were to say over again, I would not say it. When you fall, and become all over stained with guilt and sin, say, 'Col. Isaacs warned me of this.'"

As Vaughan was expressing his thanks for the interest manifested in staying his first step to ruin, the door opened, and Capt. Orr came in.

"Captain," said the Colonel, "I have just been warning Frank to 'beware of cards and dice, wine and bad women.' Your experience is worth something. Am I correct?"

"You are, and more. You are young, Frank, and as yet the 'trail of the serpent,' as the pious would say, has left no mark on you; and if you would not have it leave one that will act as a mildew upon every hope and aspiration of your life, take Col. Isaacs' advice. And let me emphasize the last clause: 'For the lips of a strange [bad] woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.' You see

I can quote Scripture; so can the devil. See that you practice it. Excuse what I have said, and, if you will allow me, I will deprive you of Col. Isaacs' company." Saying which, the two left the room for the card-table.

It was not likely that, against the warning of two such men as Isaacs and Orr, Vaughan should go to the card-table. He was satisfied that they had gone there, and for some time after the door closed he stood without moving even his eyes, and then said: "Go; but as for me, see you, 'I'll go pray.'" And for the first time since he lisped his child's prayer by his mother's knee, he bent before the great God, saying: "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil."

The next day he left the Well and returned home, and employed his first leisure hour in calling upon Alice and Agnes. The pleasure the young ladies expressed at seeing him assured him of his welcome.

"You came home earlier than you expected?" asked Miss Agnes.

"Yes, somewhat. The whirl of every thing there rather dizzied than entertained; and after you two had left, nothing remained to compensate me for the wearisomeness which succeeds the intoxication. I shall be lonesome at home, as there is but little business doing during the summer, and most of the families of the town are off spending the dull summer months at some watering-place; it is possible I may afflict you with my company more than may be agreeable. If such should be the case, I hope you will pardon me, and dismiss me when you may like."

"Why should you suppose that we may regard your company as an affliction?"

"You are so happy together, and so well satisfied with the society of each other, that I cannot but fear that a third person may be regarded as an intruder."

"I am sure we never thought of you thus."

"I am glad to hear you say so. And as you are likely to see a good deal of me this summer, unless you forbid it, let us agree upon terms."

"Very well; you propose them."

"Your having left such a troop of beaux at the Well, in search of quiet here, is sufficient assurance that you will not receive me as a beau; and as it is evident that neither of you are in the market, I dare not come as a suitor. You need not fear, Miss Alice, as your slight start at the word suitor would seem to express. Be assured I will never hazard the good opinion you have been kind enough to form of me, by coming to you as a suitor, until I at least have some assurance of a possible welcome as such. Neither of you have a brother at home; suppose I fill the place of one, as near as a stranger may?"

"Agreed. That will do," replied both the young ladies.

"Mind, now, I take a brother's place. With a brother there is no constraint; he is never in the way; serves when he can be useful, and takes for pay sisterly regard. I ask no more; and if at any time you have cause to apprehend that I may demand more, you have only to abandon our contract, and no questions asked."

"Very well; it is a bargain. And to begin making yourself useful, we have no chess-men, and it is too dusty for us to go down town, and the servant has not taste enough to select a set; so we commission you to get us one."

"With pleasure; and I will beat you with them when they are purchased."

"You will find your boast more difficult to make good than you are aware of," said Alice.

"Why so?"

"Because Agnes plays a very fine game."

"You think so, dear Alice, because I beat you sometimes. Mr. Frank may be a more formidable opponent."

"Well, we shall see;" and off he started to fulfil his commission with an amount of pleasure he was scarcely able to estimate.

When the young ladies advised Mrs. St. Cloud of what they had done, she looked a little grave, and Alice said:

"Dear mother, I hope we have done nothing wrong?"

"Not exactly wrong, my daughter, but a little imprudent. Familiarity with young men is never advisable. 'Have charity for all; but familiarity is not expedient.'"

"I am so sorry we have displeased you," said Agnes. "I never thought of the impropriety, and do not see it now exactly; but I know you would not condemn what we have done if it were not wrong. Mr. Frank seemed so lonesome that I could not say no to his proposition. As I made the bargain, I will break it when he comes."

"No, do not do that. Let it stand as it is. He might not understand it rightly, and you could not, by any possible explanation, place matters upon the indifferent basis they were on before. He is an honorable young man, and I believe you may trust him to the full extent of his engagement; and I would not have you uselessly wound him. All I ask is that you be prudent and avoid all familiarity. Do you always regard him, and let him always regard himself, as a visitor. Let him come when it suits him, and go when it suits him; but do you receive and dismiss him as any other gentleman. Fail in no respect to him less than to a stranger, and exact the same from him that you would from a stranger. In other respects fulfil your bargain."

"I understand you, I think," said Agnes, "and will not fail to profit by what you have said." Both of them put their arms around the true, good mother and friend and kissed her.

The evening was a very pleasant one to all. Vaughan found his boast premature. Out of three games, Agnes beat

him two, and the third was a stale-mate. Music and conversation succeeded chess, and all were mutually pleased and happy. Mrs. St. Cloud was noticed, at a seasonable hour, to leave the room, and soon after a little bell rang and the servants went quietly in, when her voice was heard reading the evening prayers, the servants responding. Conversation ceased in the parlor, and Frank indicated his willingness to join them in the evening devotions, and Alice was in the act of leading the way into the oratory, when checked by a look from Agnes, who remembered Mrs. St. Cloud's advice, and thought such an act more familiar than her kind hostess and temporary guardian would approve. Vaughan understood and appreciated it. Trifling as the incident was, it had the effect of establishing the line of respectful deference, beyond which Vaughan's good sense told him he should not desire to go. It served to restrain him ever after when tempted to observe a familiarity and at-homeativeness which his contract might by some be thought to include.

With this good understanding the time passed swiftly and happily and profitably. The young ladies recommenced their rides—Vaughan joining them only when they intended extending them farther than it was thought prudent to go without an escort.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN the families about town were breaking up and leaving for the summer season, and trades were becoming scarce, friend Piper's nostrils were spread and nose flatted, and Gilpin's tail drooped all the time. The failure of "the girls" to secure husbands, and the possibility of their becoming old maids, tormented him beyond measure. When trades were plenty, in the flush of successful speculation he would forget "the girls," and the failure of his matrimonial speculations on their account; but when trades became dull, the vision of four old spinsters haunted him when awake, and was a nightmare in his sleep, and he would form every imaginable and childish plan for marrying them off, and talk and fret about it until home would cease to be home for any one about the house. Upon such occasions even "old Tom," a large gray cat, would leave his quiet place on the hearth-rug, and rich harvest of crumbs, chicken-bones, and mice, and take to the brier-patches and sage fields to feed upon sparrows; Betsy would grow snappish, and let her tongue off at everybody and every thing; and "the girls" felt themselves to be unwelcome guests in their father's house. They were worked up to the belief that the failure to get husbands, whether men wanted them for wives or not, was a crime, but one they were puzzled to atone for; for they naturally enough asked themselves, If men would not court them, how were they to compel them? They knew that Piper had done his part, and that Betsy had done her part; and that their part,

which was to say "yes," when asked, alone remained to be done; but how could they say "yes" if they were not asked? If let alone, they would have thought but little about beaux or husbands, and cared less; but as it was, they had heard "Pa" say so much about "old maids," that they had come to consider them as a most repulsive species of animated nature, and to be avoided at all hazards. Thus the years that might have been spent in the sweet enjoyment of home pleasures, and each other's society, secure from the blight of the worldly-minded, were poisoned, and were wasted in unavailing regrets and the most painful and choking of all the sensations that can distress the young and ardent—the consciousness of neglect, a feeling that they were not regarded as worthy as others.

One Saturday evening, after a week of failure—not a trade had been made—Gilpin came home with his tail drooping, and Piper's nostrils spread wider, and his nose flatter than common, and the old song of "the girls" becoming old maids was begun. Things had not gone well with Betsy that day: the old Shanghai hen had refused to set, and had destroyed a whole setting of eggs, and the old sow had caught the turkey-hen sitting by the garden fence upon nineteen embryo turkeys, and eaten her up; and the calf had got to old "Pide" and sucked all the milk; so altogether she was in no humor to sympathize with old spinsters nor their anxious parents. Hence she cut the tune short by saying:

"I don't want you to talk to me any more about the girls getting married. If you want to get rid of the girls—and gracious knows the sooner the better—do with them like other folks do with their girls."

"And how is that?"

"Fix them up and send them to the Well."

"And spend ten dollars a week? You've lost your senses if you think I'm as big a fool as that."

"If you are too stingy to pay the expense necessary to marry them off, what do you keep up such a fuss about their marrying for? All the girls can't get husbands, so hush your fuss about it."

"Betsy, don't talk to me that way!"

"How do you want me to talk?"

"You shan't talk to me that way!"

"I'd like to know what'll prevent me? I'd like to know when you became too good for me to talk to? Things have come to a high pass when I must ask you what I shall say! Fine times it would be, for me to come whining about, 'Mr. Piper, may I say this?' before I am allowed to use my tongue! When it comes to this, sir, I'll bite my tongue off and let you put it in your pocket, along with the ends of your trades."

Piper saw that he had better compromise; for though he could beat Betsy at a horse trade, she could beat him in the "King's English," and he had been too often foiled in a tilt of the kind with her, to desire a passage-at-arms with her; besides, in his struggles with the phantom of four old maids, he wanted her aid and sympathy. He therefore said in a much milder tone:

"I am not going to take them to the Well, to spend all I've got, flirting about there, but I am willing they should go to some less expensive place."

"Then take them to the country—anywhere, so that I may get rid of this everlasting ding-dong. Mr. Flinn asked me a short time ago to let them come and stay with his wife while he went to Texas to look at some lands. I reckon there's some *men* there, as well as at other places, so you can take them there."

"Has he got room for them all?" said Piper, much interested.

"How do I know? If he has n't, what did he ask me to

send them for? I reckon he knows how many his house will hold, and he is not fool enough to run it over."

"As he asked you, suppose you and the girls' Uncle Dick take them over."

"Well, I'll do any thing to get some peace from this old-maid song. I am tired of it, but I am not yet tired of my girls."

Mr. Flinn lived upon one of the Bayous in the swamp, on the Louisiana side of the river, not quite two days' ride from Bluff City, and it was arranged that Betsy was to take one of "the girls" in the buggy, and that Piper was to practice upon uncle and swap him into procuring a conveyance to take the other three. He could not think of hiring a hack for the purpose, for it would take the fat end off from a lean trade to pay for it, and, unwilling to undergo the expense of any other conveyance, he had recourse to good-natured Uncle Dick. He therefore starts off, and Gilpin once more hoists his tail, and gallops Piper down town.

"O Richard, let me see you a minute," and walks with him to one side. "I have some very important business on hand, and cannot possibly leave home just now, and Betsy has promised to take the girls over to Mr. Flinn's to spend a part of the summer. Mrs. Flinn is a particular friend of Betsy's, and Betsy hates to disappoint her, and I hate to disappoint the girls, but I cannot leave home, and I thought you might be able to go with them."

"It is rather an inconvenient time for me to leave, though I suppose I can obtain leave of absence long enough for that; and rather than the girls shall be disappointed, I will accompany them."

"It would be a pity to disappoint them, they have set their hearts on it so; and they have set their hearts on having you go along with them. I never saw girls so attached to anybody as they are to you. They make them-

selves fools about you, and think you know every thing, and that I don't know any thing; and they are hardly willing to turn around without you are with them."

"I am glad they think thus well of me, and I desire to continue to merit their good opinion, though I can't hope much success."

"You will meet with it by accompanying them to Mr. Flinn's. Betsy will take the buggy and Crooked-ears and one of the girls, and you can take the other three in with you."

Uncle Dick flinched as if Piper had stuck something in him, but did not have the courage to say no. He knew the young ladies would feel the disappointment greatly, and he felt that the money spent in obliging them in a pastime of the sort was "bread cast upon the waters;" and, as he had no one else to care for, he had as well use his little means in purchasing them a summer respite, and let Piper save the odds and ends of his trades for the future.

Pet was extremely anxious to take a seat in the handsome conveyance hired by "Uncle Dick," drawn by a pair of blooded bays; but as Betsy had all the trouble of the thing, and had not regained her good-humor, she made Pet take a seat with her behind the mustang. The bays were fresh and spirited, and Uncle Dick loved a stiff rein, and he allowed them to dash off in a brisk trot. For the first dozen miles or so, while the mustang was good-natured, Betsy managed, by dint of jerking and whipping, to keep along pretty well; but when the day grew warm, and the mustang became a little leg-weary, the whipping and jerking were to no purpose, and Crooked-ears took his own time. This worried Uncle Dick not a little, for he saw that, owing to the obstinacy of the mustang, it would take at least three days to make the trip—time which he could ill spare. The bays, eager to go on, had to be held in, and time hung heavily on them all,

and glad enough they were on the evening of the third day to reach the end of their journey.

They were received with great kindness by Mr. Flinn, who had not only plenty of room, but a heart as big as his house, and Betsy and "the girls" soon felt that ease and satisfaction which always follows true hospitality. Uncle Dick forgot "Crooked-ears," and all sat down to the bountiful supper, prepared by their kind hostess, with merry faces and light hearts. The girls felt free—the incubus of "not marrying," so often and uselessly obtruded upon them, had vanished; they saw that they were understood and appreciated, and every thing promised a happy and delightful summer.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Death lies on her like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field."

SHAKESPEARE.

DURING the summer the yellow fever prevailed to an alarming extent in the city of New Orleans, and, as Bluff City was in daily communication with it by means of steamboat navigation, serious fears were entertained that the fever would be brought to Bluff City, and the anxious citizens prevailed on the City Council to purchase a quarantine-ground a mile or two below the city, and establish quarantine. As the fever increased in New Orleans, the fears of the people of Bluff City increased in proportion. Daily some family or families might have been seen moving toward the railroad dépôt with travelling equipage. Steamboat-travelling was entirely abandoned, as most of the boats bound upward had cases of fever on board. The inquiry of each citizen, as he met his neighbor in the morning, was, "What news of the fever?" The inquiry of their families, when they returned at night, was, "What news of the fever?" and the answer of each was, "Still on the increase." The daily reports of mortality from the Crescent City were heart-sickening to read. Rumors at last began to spread that cases had occurred in Bluff City, but they were in whispers. Every one feared, every one believed it to be in town, but no one dared say so. The newspapers, the sentinels on watch, proclaimed in a graveyard voice, "All's well." All knew and felt that the appear-

ance of the fever in the town would ruin trade, and prostrate the energies of the city, just recovering from the effects of the over-speculation and ruin which levelled all the industrial and commercial interests of the country some few years previous; and as a large proportion of the private families and citizens of leisure were out of town, the commercial interest, the buying and selling, made public opinion, and public opinion, like all other despots, was then, as now, tyrannical, muzzled the press, and smothered the cry of the suffering.

In obedience to the despot, the Esculapiuses of town were compelled to invent all sorts of names for the "Wandering Jew" that daily and nightly crept about the frightened town and stopped the breath of its good citizens. So long as the despot had one physician who could say that he had not seen a case, it held all the others tongue-tied. In silence the disease worked, in silence science grappled with it; but disease was the stronger force. It was on Sunday morning when there was not left a physician who could say that he had not seen a case: each had a case, and some had scores, and all proclaimed that the fever was not only in the town, but was of the most "malignant type." The tap of the fire-bell at sea would not have alarmed the doomed crew more than did this announcement the people of Bluff City. Though all had felt its presence, this authoritative declaration was like the whispered statement, "He is dead," to one who has watched long at the bedside of a dear friend, fearing, yet hoping. The excitement, and running to and fro, and mounting in hot haste, in "Belgium's capital" at the approach of the foe, was not greater than that occasioned by this announcement. Men and women ran frantically about, and, with white lips, cried, "The fever! the fever!" The stream of inhabitants fleeing from the disease stretched across the town, and kept up a heavy tramp and rumble all day on Sunday, and most of the day on Monday. Numbers, how-

ever, could not leave, some on account of business, and others because members of their family had already been attacked, and could not be removed.

The epidemic spread fearfully, and the mortality was frightful. All the remedies that had been successful in former years and in other places, seemed no more than so much poison. At first the dead were carried to the graveyard in hearses with long black plumes, followed by large processions of friends, moving slowly and solemnly; but as the disease progressed, and the number of its victims multiplied, the processions grew thinner and moved faster, until corpses where whirled along in sweeping trots without a mourner. Every house was a hospital, and small pieces of black crape hanging upon door-knobs everywhere over the town told that death had entered there. Midnight was made awful by the wail of the bereaved. It was like "Rachel weeping for her children." Business-houses were all closed and all business stopped, and all the sounds of business were hushed, except the eternal rat, tat, tat, rat, tat, tat, of the sexton's hammer. The thoroughfares along which the tide of business had been accustomed to rush were as silent as a city of the dead, broken only by the tramp of the hearse horse, or some solitary person seeking drugs or ice; the latter to answer the constant cry of the sick for "ice, O for a little ice!" Nurses could not be had, and the suffering among the poor was distressing beyond description; whole families were down at once, and unable to answer the call for "ice, O for a little ice!" In many instances their dead lay rotting beside them, and none to help. The doctors and the few clergymen that were spared were going day and night; relief associations were formed, and disbanded by death. Over the silent city death held his carnival. The hearses were unable to bear off his victims, and drays and carts were loaded with the dead and sent galloping to the graveyard, where coffins lay

in heaps waiting for interment. Entire families were swept off, and in many cases where survivors were left they did not know which of the long rows of little mounds of fresh earth covered the remains of their friends. Frost alone could check the ravages of the terrible epidemic.

Among those who had been unable to leave, were Mrs. St. Cloud and family. When the presence of the disease in the city was authoritatively announced, it was discovered that two of her servants were prostrate with it; and she would not leave them, and Alice refused to leave her. Col. Clarkson sent word to Agnes to meet him at the house of a friend, a few miles in the country, where she could spend the balance of the season out of reach of the epidemic. Agnes made every effort to induce Alice to accompany her, but in vain. Vaughan generously offered, if Mrs. St. Cloud would leave, and take Alice with her, to stay and take charge of the sick servants, and see that they had all needful medical attention and nursing; but, like the true mistress and noble woman that she was, she said no; that the negroes had served her faithfully when in health, and she would not abandon them in sickness, but would stay and nurse them through.

The parting between Alice and Agnes was affecting. When it was evident that they had to part—part and place a disease that was no respecter of persons, that spared neither age nor sex, beauty nor purity, between them—neither could speak. The trunks were packed in silence, tears dripping as they walked about the room. When all was ready, and the carriage waiting at the gate, the two walked together in the little oratory, and kneeled before the family altar and prayed for strength, resignation, and hope. Agnes arose, pressed a kiss upon Alice's forehead, turned, and left her kneeling; left her in the hands of her God and guardian angel, and, seating herself in the old family carriage, it rumbled away over the pavement, and up the steep hills, where she cast a

last fond look behind, as the heart closed upon scenes dear as the memories of childhood.

A promise had been extracted from Alice by Agnes, that if Alice should be attacked with the fever, she would send for her. From day to day, from week to week, reports were borne to her of the progress of the disease. To-day some loved schoolmate, and to-morrow another, had gone; to-day some kind old man, upon whose knee she had sat in childhood; to-morrow some affectionate old lady who had warned and guided her wayward footsteps, had gone; but Mrs. St. Cloud, the kind nurse, and Alice, the ministering angel, were safe and well. The season had far advanced, and the weather had become cool, and frost reported in the low, moist places, and death's carnival almost over; and Agnes began to breathe freer and easier, when, late at night, the clatter of a horse's hoof, in full gallop, and the loud "Halloo," as it stopped at the gate, aroused the household. Col. Clarkson jumped up and inquired:

"Who's there?"

"It's Simon, sir. Miss Alice mighty sick, and Missus told me to come tell Miss Agnes. She was took day 'fore yisterday; and Doctor say she's mighty sick."

It was a severe trial to the anxious and fond parents; but they had not the heart to refuse the call of friendship from the early friend and companion of the idol daughter; and the horses were hastily harnessed, and the carriage brought out; and ere day Agnes was seated by the bedside of her friend, bathing her hot temples, and answering the ever-constant cry, "Ice! O for a little ice!"

It was soon noised over town that Alice St. Cloud was sick—sick unto death; and, though money could not buy help, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the sick and the well, came to offer their services. Death's hand was upon the dear girl; but he did his work slowly, as if loth to

destroy so much beauty. She lay patient and uncomplaining as a lamb. How soothing to the dying girl was the memory of the "God bless you" of the grateful poor to whose lips she had held the cooling ice, in answer to the call, "Ice! O for a little ice!" Death had thrown his scythe broadcast over the city, but had reserved this beautiful sheaf for the last. All the day and night before her death crowds were coming and going on tiptoe through the house and yard. When the sad hour came, in a low, almost inarticulate voice, she said, "Dear Agnes, kiss me;" and the gentle spirit of the lovely and loved Alice St. Cloud bore the kiss to heaven. *She was dead.* There was no wail there; there were no tears there; but there was grief, pure, perfect, and all-pervading. O, how heavy fell the stroke upon that mother! It bore to the dust her brave heart. And Vaughan, poor man! The star of his life went out in midday. And dear Agnes! who sat like a marble statue by the bed of death! The dead was as beautiful as in life. Death had the power to slay, but not to mar. That pale, white face was as beautiful as in life. Hundreds came to look at it; and the pious clipped a lock of the long raven hair, and braided it with their relics; and many left their own dead to follow her remains to the grave. A quiet spot in a retired part of the graveyard was chosen for her last resting-place, where

"They have fitted a slab of the granite so gray;
And sweet Alice lies under the stone."

And thither each day at sunrise, whether hot or cold, wet or dry, Mrs. St. Cloud went and sat, and sighed the weary hours away, without a tear to relieve her overcharged heart. The enclosure around the grave was neat and simple, and flower-vases were placed there, which she kept filled with fresh flowers, from the shrubs of Alice's own planting. Each night some unseen hand placed upon the slab a bouquet of the

rarest and richest flowers, displacing the one of the day before. She never inquired, but her heart told her who it was that thus nightly offered this incense of flowers to the shade of the departed Alice. Frank Vaughan, the once volatile trifier, it was, who thus laid his offering of love upon the tomb of the dead of his heart.

When the epidemic subsided, and the citizens returned, they did not recognize in the pale, worn, gray-haired woman, with face furrowed with premature wrinkles, the splendid-looking lady and friend they had parted with only six or eight weeks previous. The places of those who were taken by the fever from the business mart were soon refilled, and the tide of commerce rushed over the sad wreck which had been made in the city, like the waves over the gallant vessel and crew that sink beneath them. But the thoughtful needed not to count the little hillocks and gravestones that stood thick in the graveyard, to learn the ravages of the disease. He had but to look upon that grief-worn face: it told even the careless looker what death had done. Hundreds of hearthstones had been made desolate, hundreds of children motherless, and mothers childless. But death was not content to leave the graveyard, the true index of his doings, to tell the inquirer of his triumphs; but, revelling in his success, he inscribed it upon that living monument of grief in characters so broad, and lines so deep, as to force it upon the attention of the buyers and sellers in Gotham, and those who dealt in "purple and fine linen."

When in full health, Alice, under a presentiment that she would die before her friend, extracted a promise from Agnes that if such should be the case she would join in chanting a requiem at her funeral. The rage of the epidemic was such, and so quick did its victims succeed each other, that it was impossible for the service which the Church has appointed

for the dead to be recited at the time of interment, and, at the request of Mrs. St. Cloud, this service was performed for her daughter as soon after the disappearance of the fever as the services of a clergyman could be procured. Agnes remembered her promise, and nerved herself to the sadly pleasing task of fulfilling it. An immense crowd of mourners gathered to witness and take part in the solemn ceremony. The church and altar were draped in mourning, and all wore a grandly solemn aspect. As the grief-stricken mother walked slowly in, leaning upon the arm of Mrs. Clarkson, dressed in deepest mourning, stopped and entered her pew, and kneeled in silent prayer to God—the God of the widow—hearts that never prayed before, prayed then for her.

The drapery of the church, the solemnity of the occasion, the impressive nature of the service, combined to make all feel that God, and the dead, and a great grief were there. When the full choir sounded the requiem, and one voice and another dropped off, until a solitary female voice, sustained by the low, deep tones of the organ, was left trembling upon the finer notes, and thrilling upward, upward, upward, until the vast nave and dome were filled, and the audience baptized in harmony, and the soft, round, sweet, clear note stretched away to heaven, and melted and died like the note of the swan, the vast audience involuntarily bent the knee and let the tears of sympathy drop without restraint. The tribute thus paid to the impassioned young virgin of earth as she chanted to her sister virgin in heaven was as affecting as it was priceless. At the conclusion, Agnes was borne exhausted from the church. She had fulfilled her promise, but the trial had overtaxed her strength, and a severe attack of brain fever succeeded.

In her delirium, she would talk to and of Alice, strangely confusing her name at times with that of Robert Hamilton.

Mrs. St. Cloud was kept ignorant of her illness, as her knowledge of the suffering of Agnes would only have distressed her, without relieving the sick.

Such was the grief of the bereaved mother that she took no note of time, nor of any other change of nature. Her motions were all mechanical: she rose at a certain hour and took her toast and coffee, and visited the grave, where she remained until sunset, and returned as she went. This was done without reference to the season or the weather.

Agnes's constitution was a solid one, and it soon mastered the disease. Upon her recovery, her heart felt a void—the void which the loss of her friend had made; and her thoughts and aching heart naturally turned to Robert Hamilton, who was then soon expected home. She loved her parents with all a daughter's true devotion; and she revered Mrs. St. Cloud and the Hermit, and Frank Vaughan held a high place in her esteem; but they could not fill the unsatisfied void. Robert could. He had filled the place once, and he could do it again. Thinking of him thus, by degrees his almost forgotten image came back to reassert its empire over her heart. She wondered how she could have forgotten him so long, and if he in return had forgotten her. The pain which the thought of the possibility of his having forgotten her in love for another caused her, told her how dear he was, and how necessary his love was to her happiness. Four years and a half had passed since she had seen him, and four since she had received any direct news from him, and it would be six or eight months more before she would see him. Had he thought of her through all this silence? Would he care for her when he came home? Would he be changed in mind as well as in personal appearance? Would the moral beauty for which she had so loved him be marred? These and many such questions she would ask herself, but they were questions

which the future could alone answer, and what answer it would give was far from being a matter of indifference to her, though her resolute nature would not suffer her to pine and dream away her youth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHILE Agnes was thus interrogating herself, and giving expression to her fears and anxieties, and reënthroning Robert in her affections, he was earnestly pursuing his studies. He had been a hard student, and a successful one, though the college record did not say so. He had not taken the first honors of his class at any one of the examinations, though both teachers and classmates recognized him as decidedly the best scholar in his class. He never studied a lesson—he studied authors, and mastered them. In his classical course he never studied lessons, but strove to learn the language, and did it; in mathematics he never studied a lesson, but the science, and learned it. While others were learning lessons to recite to teachers, he was learning a science or mastering a language. They learned something that they might *talk of* in after life and forget; he learned something to *talk* and to *use*. Hence the lesson-learners, the glib conners-over of phrases made a better and readier show at examinations and commencement seasons than he; but they felt and he knew that in valuable, substantial learning he was vastly their superior. As he did not study for show, nor the éclat of first prizes, but to acquire matter for after life—material to make himself a man—he was content that others should carry off the college palm, so he attained his own solid ends.

There was only one incident of note connected with his college life. His habits of study and sobriety, and avoidance of all those college scrapes which the master-shallows love to

brag of in after life, secured for him not only the esteem and confidence of his teachers, but also that of the people of the town in which the college was located. All the better class of the people sought his acquaintance, and shop-keepers were anxious to get his name upon their ledgers. This he prudently avoided—buying only what he needed, and paying for what he bought; and when he was unable to pay the cash, he would not buy, let the desire be what it might. Among his school companions was young James Blunt, son of our old acquaintance Mr. Blunt. James had been raised to idleness, and to expect the indulgence and gratification of all his desires and worthless fancies. An indulgent aunt and a club-going father had suffered him to grow up without any particular object in view other than to dress and to create a sensation in society. He was inordinately attached to dress, and was a good dancer—the best in the college. His instincts were those of the animal man, rather than of the moral and intellectual. The adornment of his person and the gratification of his pleasures were *objects* in life with him—*ends* to be attained. He had not been taught to do or to learn for the sake of the thing done or learned, but for his own sake—as a success to himself. He dressed not because the occasion required it, but that James Blunt might look well; he learned the courtesies of life not that he might contribute to social entertainment, or help to make others feel at ease, but that James Blunt might cut a figure in society; he went to college not that he might become learned and useful, but that James Blunt might, like other fashionable young men of his acquaintance, have it to say that he had been to college. Thus, James Blunt was the object and aim of James Blunt; and, in all this, he was by no means an exception among the regiment of his companions at home. His was rather the rule, and Robert's course of life the exception. James was a straight-limbed young man, with small hand and foot, to

which his aunt often pointed as a mark of his aristocracy, rather than of a sickly childhood; his head was as small as his hands and feet, and he took equal care of each; he wore the neatest-fitting boot, the nicest gloves, and the smoothest hat—the latter he wore on the side of his head—his hair and white pocket-handkerchief being always well perfumed. He was slender, and, but for a certain air of insignificance, would have been rather handsome. With his wants gratified, he was an inoffensive, idle, pleasure-loving, foppish young man, likely to be entirely worthless as a member of society. His wants, however, were of a kind a full purse could supply, but a full purse was not always at his command. When his father had a good run of luck, and won large stakes, James was abundantly supplied; but when a rainy day came—and men who bet to count the game have rainy days as well as farmers—James was neglected, and his clothes at such times would often become so worn as to give him the appearance of the shabby-genteel, to his great mortification. Towards the close of Robert Hamilton's last year in college, there came one of these rainy spells upon Blunt. Talk as fast as he might, but as high as he might, and swear as loud and profanely as he might at his cards and the luck, the count was against him. James was of course neglected. He wrote letter after letter for means to refurnish his wardrobe, but it did not come. His college bills were unpaid, but he did not think of them, they did not mortify him, and he did not write for money to pay them. The shop-keeper's, the tailor's, and the shoemaker's bills were all unpaid, and had been sent to his father more than once for payment and returned, but he did not ask for money to pay them. These were all matters that did not concern him; the bill-holders were not James Blunt, and James Blunt was the individual he was sent into the world to take care of. He was willing that those bills should be paid, but never bestowed a thought upon them,

nor lost a minute's sleep on their account. If his father had paid them, and he had been supplied with means to meet his wants, and he had given himself the trouble to think of it, he would have been rather pleased than otherwise. The money, however, did not come, either to refurnish his wardrobe or to pay the bills; and his clothes had become so worn and threadbare that he had not a decent suit left, and had to borrow one of a college-mate when he accepted any of the invitations to attend the dancing-parties of town. His pants had all been darned, and his coats were out at the elbows. About that time a new clothing establishment was opened near the college, and the proprietor was anxious to secure the college custom. He was an acquaintance of young Hamilton, and used every exertion to induce him to visit his establishment. Having occasion to make some trifling purchase, Robert visited the store, accompanied by a number of the young men from the college, among them James Blunt, who had borrowed a blanket overcoat of a schoolfellow for the purpose. The proprietor was extremely polite, and conducted them over his well-filled establishment, displaying his "latest French styles" in the most seductive manner. Few or no purchases were made, but an impression had been made upon those fond of dress, which the shopkeeper regarded as an earnest of many future sales. Robert did not bestow a second thought upon what had taken complete hold of the mind and desires of others, and returned to his books with double diligence, to make up for the time the shopkeeper had forced him to lose in looking at and praising wares that he knew but little of and cared less. The next morning he was astounded and mortified to learn that some one of his party on the evening before had stolen a pair of fine cassimere pants from the store on the evening previous. And, to make matters worse, he was told that the clerk who gave the information alleged that it was done by a young man with a blanket

coat. He had worn a blanket coat himself, and was not aware that any one else had; hence, it behooved him to use every effort to detect the culprit as the best means of vindicating himself. Upon inquiry, he learned that James Blunt had worn a coat of that description, and called at his room:

"James," he began, "I am distressed to learn that after we left the store on last evening it was discovered that some one of our party had stolen a pair of pants; and as we are all more or less implicated—and you and I more particularly, as it is said to have been done by some one wearing a blanket coat—it is a duty we owe to ourselves and all the innocent to expose the thief."

"Somebody stole a pair of pants!" he exclaimed with natural surprise and some alarm.

"Yes; and you must aid me to discover the culprit. Who else besides you and I wore a blanket coat?"

"I do not know."

"Do you know of any one who has a pair of new pants of the description of those stolen—a pair of fine French cassimere pants?"

"Nobody, except myself. I received a pair very much of that description from home on yesterday."

"On yesterday, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did they come?"

"By the Packet."

"By the Packet!"

"Yes;" drawing his breath hard and his eyes ready to start from their sockets.

"Why, James, James! The Packet did not arrive on yesterday." This was said at a venture, as he did not know whether it had arrived on that day or not.

"Great God!" exclaimed James, holding up his hands and looking wild, "I am ruined! I stole the pants!" He covered

his face in his hands and sank in a chair and begged: "O, Robert! save me from exposure!"

"If I can I will. If no one else knows of this, I shall never speak of it. Give me the pants, and I will return them, and answer no questions—not even to vindicate myself."

He took the pants and returned them, and was greatly relieved by the clerk, who witnessed the act, declaring that he was not the one who did it. He refused to give the name of the culprit to the shop-keeper or to the city authorities.

News of the theft soon reached the college faculty, and Robert was summoned before them to give information about it. The president, who was a very rigid moralist and disciplinarian, asked to know the facts.

"As near as I can give them," said Robert, "they are these: On yesterday evening, after college hours, several young gentlemen and myself visited the new clothing-store on the corner, and while there one of the young men stole a pair of pants. The pants have been recovered and returned to the owner."

"Do you know who stole the pants?"

"I do."

"Who was it?"

"I am unwilling to say; and I have promised the young man not to expose him."

"You must be aware, Mr. Hamilton, that if, knowing of the theft, we retain the thief in the college, it will injure the institution, and we must know who he is, that he may be expelled, and the character of the school vindicated, and an evil companion removed from among the other young men."

"I am aware of this, and would not willingly do any thing that the guardians of the institution may think would injure it, and am reluctant to decline doing what they think needful for its defence; but I have no doubt this is the young

man's first step in crime, and I think his imaginary, or perhaps real wants, and not a bad heart or vicious disposition, led him to it; and I hope and believe it will be his last; but if he be exposed and publicly disgraced, he will be ruined beyond the hope of reclaim. I can have no part in his disgrace. You must excuse me."

"We cannot excuse you; you must answer. By refusing to expose the offender, you become a party to his crime. If there be error in dealing severely with a case of this nature, the error and the blame are ours, not yours. It is better that the offender be punished, and his fate serve as a warning to the idle and vicious, than that the college be injured, and his companions compromised. The reputation and the morals of the young men here are intrusted to us; it is a sacred trust, and we wish to acquit ourselves of it to the satisfaction of those who have reposed it in us as far as we may, but which we fall far short of doing if we retain as their daily companion and equal a detected thief. It would be almost criminal for us to do such a thing. If the offence were a venal one, a youthful indiscretion, we would willingly excuse you from testifying; and now we respect, indeed applaud the kindly feeling which induces you to ask to be excused; but we cannot excuse you: you must testify."

"It is painful for me to refuse obedience to your command. I have now been under your tuition for nearly five years, and have never been before you for an infraction of college rules, and I have labored hard to acquit myself of blame in both studies and deportment, and regret upon the eve of my last term to find myself opposed to my teachers in a matter of this grave character; but I must in this, as in all I have done since my entrance here, do what my conscience tells me is right."

"Sir," said the president, who was impatient of opposition, with decision and emphasis, "you must answer. The repu-

tation of this institution is deeply involved, and it must and shall be vindicated."

"Sir!" and his eye flashed as the faculty had never seen it flash before, "I would not bow the face of the young offender's parents in the dust, and place him beyond the pale of reform by publicly denouncing him, for all the institutions of learning in the land."

"Do you mean to brave my authority, young man?"

"I do not mean to turn informer against my schoolfellow, and violate my pledge to him."

"Unless you answer, I shall expel you."

"Then all I have to say, sir, is—

—'It is excellent

To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it as a giant.'"

"Don't quote poetry at me, young man. You can take until morning to decide whether you will answer or leave the college."

"I need no time to consider; my decision is made."

"No more words; you can retire, sir."

Robert adhered to his resolution; but, fortunately for him, a knowledge of the name of the offender reached the faculty through others, and the necessity of his answering was obviated. James was expelled, and Robert Hamilton publicly admonished, but in a way that the admonition was rather a compliment than a censure.

It was poor James's first step in sin, and taken without the mind to sin, but from the want of moral strength to resist a temptation, which, but for his raising, would have been no temptation at all. His personal comfort and adornment were objects, ends to be attained by him, and the means by which they were to be attained had never been impressed upon him as the primary object. If he had been taught to con-

sider the means to the end as superior in a moral point to the end itself, the temptation would not have been presented, and he would not have fallen. Much stronger men than James Blunt find it impossible to resist temptation; but all, even the weak, can avoid it. A person may be so raised, and his tastes so cultivated, that temptation will rarely assail him. The man of sober habits is not tempted by the sparkle of the wine-cup, nor the plain man of business by the rattle of the dice-box; but when these things are indulged until they become temptations, they are rarely if ever resisted; hence the importance of avoiding the formation of a vicious habit, or one that may tempt to vice. No man sins for the love of sinning, unless he be a very depraved wretch indeed. The thief does not steal for the love of stealing; the miser does not swindle for the love of swindling; the drunkard does not drink for the love of drunkenness; these passions, when they become passions, are indulged for some ulterior end. One steals to save him from labor; and one swindles to add ill-gotten gains to his ill-gotten heap; and the other drinks to satisfy his inordinate thirst for strong liquors. These appetites or passions are artificial, and if never created, there would be no temptation to gratify them. James Blunt had an inordinate desire to dress genteelly, and suffering mortification from his inability to gratify that desire, when the means of gratifying it were presented, the temptation was too strong for his imperfect moral training, and he yielded. To another it would have been no temptation at all: it would have been no temptation to Robert Hamilton; it would have been none to the president of the college. What a warning should it not be to parents!

CHAPTER XXIV.

"And these once learned, what wants the tempter now
To snare the stoutest champion of men?"

It was the desire of Dr. Floyd, and the other friends of Robert at home, that he should visit Washington City after his graduation, and remain there during the session of Congress. Letters were accordingly furnished, by means of which he obtained introductions to the leading men of the nation. He eagerly sought the acquaintance of a distinguished Senator from the West, whose talents and fame had excited his imagination; also that of the President, and others who filled the great offices of state, and who were placed by his young fancy at an immeasurable distance above the great herd of men, and far removed from their follies and vices. He was surprised to find that officers were but men after all—men who ate and drank and talked and walked like other men, and some of them mere political stop-gaps, men who filled places to keep others out, without any fitness for the places themselves. His hand trembled and voice faltered, as he presented his letters of introduction to his beau-ideal of a great man and statesman; but the easy, affable manner of the Senator disembarrassed him, and put him quite at ease. Through Senator —— he was introduced to the President and heads of departments, and learned the men and means whereby the machinery of government was moved. It was a relief to observe the republican simplicity of the great bulk

of those to whom the nation had confided the direction of public affairs. He was almost as much confused and bewildered, and in as much danger of losing his identity, when invited by the President to dine with him, as was Abou Hassan in the palace of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid. He could not help but love and venerate the government that made the unpretending, shy, and awkward college student the equal of the President, the head of the nation. In the evening, the Senator called at his hotel, and kindly offered to show him some of the sights to be seen and enjoyed in Washington. After seeing much that was novel and interesting, it was proposed to go to P——'s and get a lunch: every sportsman who has ever visited Washington knows who P—— was. They stopped at the door of a large magnificent establishment, and pulled the bright silver bell-knob: an old gray-haired negro man, with the manners of a gentleman, answered the call, and recognizing the Senator, gave an inquiring look at Hamilton, to which the Senator answered, "All right." They were asked in, and the Senator, who seemed perfectly at home, led the way up a flight of stairs to a spacious and splendid saloon, brilliantly lighted with gas, and more richly furnished than the President's mansion. He could scarcely suppress an exclamation of surprise and wonder. The proprietor gave him a warm welcome to the hospitalities of the house, and attentive and polite servants soon served up for them a lunch as elegant as money could buy, or the appetite of an epicure crave. After lunch, the Senator excused himself, and telling Hamilton if he should desire to leave before his return he would find him in No. 8, upstairs, where he had engaged to meet some friends, he left Hamilton in the care of the proprietor. Hamilton was in a sort of maze, and was unable to conjecture what sort of a place it was, but he felt assured of its respectability, else the Senator would not himself be so much at ease there, and

would not have left him alone. Still there was a pressure about the heart that told him that all was not exactly right.

The proprietor, quick to read countenances, noticed Hamilton's embarrassment, and said:

"You seem debating with yourself as to what sort of a place your friend has introduced you to."

Hamilton blushed at being thus understood, but was too honest to affect what was not true, and replied:

"You are right. I am just from college, and a stranger in the city." *W. G. Day, Bowdoin*

"You are in what the world, and especially the pious, have agreed to call a gambling-hell."

The start which Hamilton gave, assured the proprietor that he was not a frequenter of such places, and he said:

"I imagine you are not familiar with the scenes and sports you are likely to meet with here, and my advice to you is to remain so. You are, however, welcome here, and to the hospitalities of the place, whether you participate in the games or not. I need not tell you that lunch can be had here from ten o'clock till three, and from eight till twelve. Come whenever you feel disposed; you will never find any but the most respectable men in the land here, a majority of whom are Senators, Congressmen, Judges, and Generals. If you will allow me, I will conduct you through the establishment."

Hamilton thought any thing better than standing still, and assented. Upon entering the gambling saloon, he perceived at a glance that the proprietor's boast of the quality of his guests was but too true. All the "gambling games"—as certain chance games which depend upon the turning of a card or the motion of a wheel, independent of the skill or genius of the player, are called—were in full tide. Hamilton was surprised to see, seated about the tables, Congressmen and Senators, who the day before had spoken eloquently upon the

insufficiency of their per diem. He noticed that they lost hundreds upon each turn of a card or the roll of a wheel, with the utmost unconcern. The proprietor enjoyed his surprise, and said, pleasantly:

"From the way that old man loses, you think he will need an increase of his per diem, heh? You are right. Per diems have built this house; per diems have furnished it; per diems have purchased and stocked the tables and wheels you see here. Like the M. C.s, I am in favor of an increase of per diems."

While looking on with an entranced sort of interest, the door-bell rang, and a tall, fine-looking man walked in, with a confident, resolute step. He walked up to one of the banks, and asked:

"Any limit to the stake?"

"None," answered the dealer, without looking up. The M. C.s who sat around the bank, betting freely, were too deeply interested in their stakes to notice the interruption. The stranger walked to a light, and taking out a roll of bank-bills, counted them, re-rolled them, and returned and placed them on the "queen of hearts." Shuffle, cut, turn: the "queen of hearts" won. The dealer took up the roll, and counted. The first was a thousand dollar bill; so of the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh! The money was counted out without a word—no noise, except the slip, slip, slip of the bills, as they were counted out. The stranger, without a word to any one, gathered up his winnings, and left the saloon as he had entered. Hamilton could not help feeling that eleven thousand dollars of per diems were stuffed away in the pockets of the desperate player. He noticed, as the stranger left, that a man, whose face had impressed him unpleasantly, and who had apparently lost his last stake, arose and left also. None of the players seemed to notice it; and, if they did, they

thought it natural enough, as he had nothing more to lose. His look and manner, however, excited a suspicion in Hamilton's mind, but which the fascination of every thing around soon caused him to forget. The scene—the intense excitement of the players, as they watched the number upon which their per diem was staked—the silence with which they received back and paid out their per diems or army pay—fascinated him as the eye of the snake does that of the bird. He, however, had moral strength enough left to turn from it and seek the Senator. It was a relief to him to know that these things had no charm for the great statesman who had introduced him there; and, with a curiosity fully satisfied, he sought No. 8, where he expected to find the Senator engaged with a select committee upon the great affairs of state; but what was his surprise to find him and senators from three Southern States seated, with the President of the United States, around a table, playing for amusement, and betting to count a game of poker! an old acquaintance he thought he had left in the Mississippi swamps—the same game at which he had seen his uncle and Col. Clarkson play. It had always been a distressing doubt with him whether this poker-playing was not gambling, and he had tried to persuade himself that it was not; for he loved both his uncle and Col. Clarkson, and from his mother he had inherited a strong repugnance to gambling, and could not think that those he loved were blackened with a crime of the sort. In the father of the being he loved with youth's unselfish devotion, by the light of whose example he had been able to choose virtue rather than vice, in the husband of her who had been to him a second mother, he strove to see nothing but what was pure and good. He had therefore tried to convince himself that playing for amusement and betting to count the game was not gambling, though he had not altogether succeeded. Hence, great as was his disappointment at seeing these

distinguished personages and leading officers of State amusing themselves at a game of "push-pin" that contrasted unpleasantly with the dignity of their characters and place, he experienced a feeling of relief, for it assured him that it was but "amusement." For had they not avoided the "gambling saloons," and all the "gambling games," and sought a relaxation from the cares of state in an innocent game of poker? He was somewhat startled to see what a large sum of money it required to count the game. The price of a good "field-hand" changed owners at every deal, and each player seemed better pleased with himself and the cards as his stakes grew larger; but this latter he persuaded himself was simply the pleasure one feels at the success which attends his skill, and not the suggestion of greed, the love of gain.

He was asked to join in the game, but declined, not from conscientious scruples, but because of the smallness of his purse, and had the youthful honesty and simplicity to say so. Upon being assured that that need not deter him, as he could "have a sight for his money," he accepted the invitation. Conscience may have smote him as he seated himself at the table, and drew from his pocket the imperfectly-filled purse which Agnes had, five years before, made for him; but what were the upbraidings of the conscience of an inexperienced boy to the matured judgments of the great and good men whom the nation "delighted to honor?"

Like most new players, he held "good hands," and though the betting continued high, he left off winner. The playing did not cease until late, and the Senator kindly accompanied him to his hotel.

On their way to the hotel, they stumbled upon some one lying on the pavement, apparently drunk; but by the light of a distant gas-lamp, they saw that he was stained with blood. Watchmen were called, and lights brought, when

the body was discovered to be stark and stiff. The man had been assassinated. The knife that did the deed entered between the neck and collar-bone, and had been driven to the heart. Hamilton recognized him as the stranger who had won the large stake at the saloon during the evening, and guessed whose hand held the steel, and why. Upon examination, a purse with a few hundred dollars in it, a fine gold watch, private papers, etc., were found upon his person; but none of the twenty-two thousand dollars he pocketed in the saloon. The things found upon his person were evidently left to create the impression that something else than a desire of plunder had occasioned the deed. He proved to be a Tennessean, of wealth and standing, but who was fond of sporting.

From the mouth of the dull, closed wound through which his soul had found quick passage to the judgment-seat, came a warning voice to Hamilton to shun the path by which the victim of the card-table had come to his untimely and awful end. For a day or two, he was inclined to listen to its warning; but the example of the living was more powerful than the voice of the dead, and as all the more agreeable companionships were to be found in the resorts of vice, he soon fell into the current, and became a frequenter of the saloons and an adept in cards, confining himself scrupulously to the games that were played for "amusement," and shunning all the "gambling games."

One evening, some young gentlemen, who, like himself, played only for "amusement," who would scorn to play for money, proposed a game called "brag," which was new to him, but which was just as "amusing" and as innocent as poker. He did not understand it exactly, but understood that "two bullets and a bragger"—that is, two aces and a jack—were "invincible." He knew the cards well enough to know that two persons might hold an "invincible," as he

understood it. He noticed that the others, when they sat next to the dealer, generally said, "I pass the age;" and, without knowing what it meant, would always say so himself. The game had progressed for some time with indifferent success, and he noticed that a young man, for whom he had formed a high regard, was disposed to "run at him." He understood it as in sport, rather than a desire to win his money, and allowed himself to be amused at it. He finally had dealt to him "two bullets and a bragger," and, as usual, said, "I pass the age." His friend bet modestly, and Hamilton went a few dollars "better." When his friend was about going "better," Hamilton, not wishing to win his money, kindly said to him,

"Don't bet, I have an invincible."

"Very well; I'll go fifty better anyhow."

"You are foolish to do so, for I tell you I have an invincible, and of course I won't call you. Take down your money; you will lose it."

"Never do you mind my money; bet if you want to."

"I tell you again I have an invincible—I'll go five better."

"And I'll go two hundred and fifty better; which is all I have."

"I beg you not to do it; I tell you again I have an invincible, and I do not wish to win your money. Take back your money; I am bound to win it."

"Do you bet, and never mind me."

"Very well; I won't let the stake go any higher, and I call you. You see, I have two bullets and a bragger."

"Yes; but I have the age!"

Hamilton's lip turned white as he noticed his friend take down the stakes, which had been won upon his own ignorance of the value of his cards. He could not but view it as a grade less than swindling, but was reluctant to think it in keeping with the morals of the card-table, but as peculiar to

the man he had mistaken for a gentleman. His only resentment was to rise from the table, saying: "I shall always know what 'passing the age' means after this, and with whom to play. Good day, gentlemen."

CHAPTER XXV.

"'Tis ever thus
With noble minds, if chance they slide to folly:
Remorse stings deeper, and relentless conscience
Pours more of gall into the bitter cup
Of their severe repentance."

THE largest portion of Hamilton's patrimony was in money. His uncle, who was the guardian of his property as well as of his person, had used some of it to count the game, and would have used it all in that way if the surety on the guardian's bond had not cautioned him to make a better use of it, or otherwise he would ask to be released from the bond. To avoid an exposure to which such a thing would subject him, he had prudently husbanded the balance; and, supposing that Hamilton might desire to use it in the purchase of negroes in Virginia, sent him the bulk of it in checks, that he might thus employ it if he desired. Hamilton had chosen the law as his profession, and, uncertain as to his future location, prudently determined not to invest his money until better advised as to his future home. When he left for home, therefore, he exchanged his checks for checks upon Louisville, and upon his arrival there drew the money and took passage on one of the first-class steamers for Bluff City. Upon the boat he found that habits and morals had not changed—the card-table, as five years before, was in constant demand. In his eyes, however, its immorality did not appear as before. It seemed a very innocent and pleasant pastime. The familiarity

of every thing made him feel very much at home. Men swore the same oaths and took the same large drinks of liquor as before. He had not learned to swear nor to drink, but he had learned to play, and was ready to take a hand.

Among the dashy and dissolute young men with whom he had associated in the national capital he acquired an off-hand, confident manner, foreign to himself, but which won for him among the off-hand, familiar, easy-mannered, loose-moraled men usually met on steamboats, the character of a "boon companion," which means a man who talks at random, mocks at morals, and spends his money without stint upon every new-fledged acquaintance. At Memphis a number of new passengers came on board, and among them Hamilton was delighted to meet a gentleman from Bluff City who was well acquainted with all his friends and relatives there. Hamilton did not recollect him, but the perfect history he gave of everybody and every thing about the Bluffs, and of his uncle and Col. Clarkson and his family, and his assurance, given with a knowing wink, that brought the blood mounting to Hamilton's face, that somebody's "eye" would "mark" his "coming and grow brighter" when he came, placed him upon the footing of a trusted and familiar friend. He introduced himself as Morton, a relative of a family of that name well known to Hamilton as visitors at his uncle's house. Morton had many good jokes to relate of Nickols, Blunt, and other sporting men who had been seen by Hamilton in company with his uncle and Clarkson, told of games they had played together, and described scenes and times which were familiar to Hamilton as the playground of his school-days. He described the funeral of Alice St. Cloud and the great grief of her mother, and the settled melancholy of Frank Vaughan. Tired of conversation, they took a seat at the card-table, played, and rose up still better friends. Hamilton was charmed with the easy nonchalant manner his friend received his winnings and

bore defeat—a decided mark of a gentleman in Hamilton's estimation. He had a well-bred, gentlemanly indifference to money, and was as apt to bet a large stake upon an indifferent hand as upon a good one. While interested in relating some agreeable incident to Hamilton, he would "pass out" upon a very fine hand, or foolishly bet upon a very mean one, and would remark it with a careless toss up of the cards and a continuation of the conversation, which made Hamilton reprove him half a dozen times for his extreme carelessness. Morton was fond of a glass of brandy, and urged Hamilton to take a glass, and, in spite of his refusal, would always make the barkeeper bring a glass for him, and would insist each time and say: "Why, you don't know what is good, my boy; try it." This patronizing air, and calling him "boy," made Hamilton feel as if he would never be a man until he could take a drink "like a man." Hence, he could withstand the bantering no longer, and drank part of his glass. It of course inflamed his imagination and loosened his tongue, and gave him a better opinion of himself than he had ever had before, and more disposed to play the "gentleman"—which was to bet high and recklessly and pay with grace. After drinking once, he was too much of a man to refuse when liquor was again called for; and though he did not drink deep, he very soon lost his balance of mind and swaggered, and bet at random. His companion was not affected by what he had drunk, for though he talked much, and had run Hamilton upon his temperance and not "knowing what was good," he took care to make his own potations small.

The betting grew high and almost furious. The more moderate players withdrew from the game, and stood around and looked on. The interest became so intense that no note was taken of time: the boat stopped and wooded, and glided off down stream without note by the players; passengers

would get off, and new ones come aboard, without observation. Hamilton got the best hands he ever got in his life before, but still he would lose; he bet higher, but still he lost; he doubled the stake, in hope luck would turn in his favor, but he still lost. Such desperate playing, and such an amount of money changing hands, absorbed the attention of the entire boat's company, and a universal sympathy was felt for the young man who was fast being beggared.

Neither of the players appeared to notice a gentleman who had been for some time promenading to and fro past the table, and would stop while the cards were being shuffled and dealt, and scrutinize closely the dealer, and then renew the promenade, casting furtive glances at the table as he passed. Whoever it was, evidently suspected foul play upon the part of Hamilton's new friend. This stopping while the cards were being shuffled and dealt, and renewal of the promenade, attracted no observation from either the players or the lookers-on; and the stranger seemed finally to lose all interest in the game, and walked to and fro without appearing to notice further progress. Hamilton had lost more than half his fortune, and was eager to regain it, and was determined to lose all or win back what he had lost. Morton shuffled and dealt; Hamilton had four kings and a queen. It was a splendid hand, and he was determined to risk all upon it, win back his patrimony, and "jump the game." He was afraid his adversary would take the alarm and refuse to bet. He, therefore, bet cautiously at first. Morton bet back at him, and so the betting continued until Hamilton had every cent he could command, and his watch and jewelry, upon the table. The excitement around the table was so intense as to be painful. Hamilton was flushed and breathed hard; his nostrils were distended like those of a high-mettled courser. The promenader stopped, and all pressed about the table, anx-

ious to see the result, with a painful apprehension that the young man was bankrupt, for all suspected the dealer of cheating.

"I call you," said Hamilton, as he put up his last stake.

"What do you do it on?"

"Four kings;" displaying his hand and reaching for the money.

"Not so fast," said Morton; "I have four aces!"

Hamilton's face turned to marble, and his eyes were fixed in their sockets like those of a dead man. A murmur of disappointment and sympathy ran through the bystanders; and as Morton said, "The money's mine," and was in the act of drawing it to him, some one with a long arm and long bony fingers reached from among the crowd, and, clutching the money, said in a voice that electrified both players and lookers-on:

"No, sir; the money's mine!"

Hamilton started, and, looking up, saw the Hermit, with his gray locks and reproachful face, standing before him. The defeated and enraged gambler caught at the money, and was in the act of drawing a dagger, when the Hermit took him by the breast, and, looking him firmly in the face, said:

"How dare you! How dare you!" and held him as if in a vice. The gambler quailed before his fierce look. "You would swindle the young man out of his fortune by stocking the cards, and then stab an old man who would rescue him!"

The excitement was immense, and the scene beyond description. The gray locks, the resolution, and the virtuous indignation of the old man, and the terror of the gambler as the old man held him fast, and the excited bystanders, who stood ready to execute upon him any order the Hermit might give, with the astonishment and mortification of Hamilton, formed a striking picture. Turning to Hamilton, the Hermit said:

"Here, young man, is your money. Count out your losings, and return the balance, if any, to this swindler and would-be cut-throat. And as for you, sir," turning to the gambler, "you leave this boat." He then called the captain and had the gambler put ashore.

This done, the Hermit turned to Hamilton, and said in a tone of half authority and half entreaty:

"Never play another card, nor drink another dram."

"I premise you, as God is my helper and judge, I never will."

"Do not swear, sir; especially by that august name."

"I did not intend to swear. I am excited, and used stronger language than I intended. My dear father and friend, you have saved me. I cannot thank you; words will not express my thanks; but believe me, I have drunk my last dram and played my last game of cards."

The sincere and earnest look and manner of Hamilton more than his words affected the old man, and he turned away with more emotion than he had ever been known to display toward any except Agnes.

The boat met with an accident which detained her for some time on the river, and three or four days elapsed before she arrived at Bluff City. The embarrassment of Robert in the presence of the Hermit soon passed off, and, noticing that the old man was about leaving the boat with the design apparently of returning to "the Bend," and divining the cause, he approached him and said:

"I cannot consent to this; go on to Bluff City; I prefer it. You think your presence, and the recollection of what has passed, will diminish the pleasure of the reunion with my friends; but you are mistaken; I shall confess all; and your presence will relieve rather than increase my mortification. Besides, the thought that my misconduct had been the means of preventing you and them from seeing each other, and en-

joying each other's society, would distress me far more than your presence can, let it rebuke me as much as it may. You must go; I would not for any thing have it otherwise."

The Hermit yielded; and the balance of the trip down, the two were like father and son. The gratitude and filial affection of Robert were expressed in a manner that pleased and won the old man; and if his confidence in Hamilton had ever been shaken, it was restored before they landed at the Bluffs.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Wilt thou be undone ?

Resign the towering thought, the vast design,
With future glories big? the warrior's wreath,
The praise of senates, an applauding world?
All for a sigh? all for a soft embrace?"

ROBERT found Agnes all his heart could wish: she satisfied his ambition and his fancy. She was as beautiful in mind as in person, loving and beloved, and her life was a living personation of truth. Her delight at seeing the Hermit was unbounded. She would involuntarily walk up and stand by him, or take her seat near him as he sat in the family circle, ever anticipating all his wants and wishes. He only remained a day in the city. At parting, he hung around her neck a string of pearls to which was attached a small locket. Opening the locket after he left, she saw a miniature face of most exquisite beauty and trust, and a dried rose-leaf. She could only guess the meaning, and held each sacred.

The day after the Hermit left, Robert and Agnes visited the grave of Alice St. Cloud. The sad mother was there. Twelve months had passed, and she still kept watch at the tomb of her child. Robert and Agnes recited a prayer, and laid their offering of flowers upon the cold granite, and retired.

On their way home, Robert gave a full history of his five years' exile, his card-playing, and the scene on the boat.

"Excuse me, dear Agnes—allow me to call you so—for thus wearying you with this tedious history of myself. I feel that you are all truth, and we cannot be to each other what I wish us to be without the utmost frankness on my part; and, besides, I could not bear to have you hear of my vices from another. I have nothing extenuated; I have told you all; they 'have this extent, no farther.'"

"The recital," she replied, "so far from being tiresome, has been very entertaining to me. It has filled the gap which five years have made in our acquaintance."

"Then you do not despise me for my vices?"

"No, Robert; though I do not excuse them. I never thought you perfect. My surprise is, not that you strayed from the path of right, but that with such temptations you should not have gone farther; and I am happy, O, how happy! that my dear old friend, whom I so love and reverence, should have been the means of saving you. I say saved, for I have that confidence in you which will not permit me to doubt that you will sacredly keep your promise to him."

"I thank you for your confidence; and next to the happiness this assurance gives me, is the consciousness on my own part that it is not misplaced. It would have distressed me more than I could well have expressed, or you willingly believe, to feel that I had or have lost any, even the slightest portion of the confidence of one who is and has been to me more than a sister—more than all the world else. Whether sleeping or waking, whether poring over musty books, or wandering alone in the wild woods, my thoughts were of you, and my highest ambition, after pleasing my Maker, was your approbation. Others carried off the college prizes, when both teachers and scholars declared me more deserving. I

cared not for that; it was not the prize I struggled for; the acquittal of my conscience, and the approval of my early companion and best earthly friend, were the prizes for which I toiled and sacrificed, and not for college éelat. This is the first time since my return I have had the courage to talk freely to you. I had been guilty of a most pernicious habit, had placed such a mountain of sin between us by yielding to a temptation which twelve months ago would have been no temptation at all, and which had been made so by mere indulgence, that I could not, did not dare approach you upon the familiar, easy footing I should otherwise have done. Like a brother, as I have always felt myself, I should at our first meeting have thrown my arms around you, and wept as at our parting; but stained with unforgiven, unconfessed sin, as I was, I could not embrace one so stainless as I knew you to be. I have fully confessed: am I fully forgiven?"

"You are, most freely and fully."

"And now, dear Agnes, that I am forgiven, tell me how far have I fallen below your standard?"

"Not a cubit; on the contrary, in all things of which I am capable of judging, you have improved beyond my expectations, and they were high. I do not say this to flatter you, but, as you seem to court and value my good opinion, to let you know how much you have to sustain."

"Be it twice its measure, I should reach its last inch."

"Bravely said; but you will find it no holiday-task to execute. I am not ambitious for myself: like Martha's sister, I choose the humble or 'good part'—it best fits a woman; but for you I am ambitious. Have you ever seen the eagle upon its upward wing? I would have the man who has my love and confidence as far above the common vulgar rabble as the eagle is above the unwieldy bird that flaps its lazy wings under him."

"I am proud to hear you speak so. My ambition, like the

eagle, has built high its eyrie, and, if health and frame hold out, I will reach it; and thither will I bear you, if you will trust my pinion."

"Think not of me. The bird flies highest and fastest with full-fledged and unencumbered wing."

"But the rock where I would build my eyrie—to continue the figure—will be bleak and barren, if you do not share it with me; and, while in that proud solitude I might bear the weight of the world's applause, another might possess the heart and hand I desire to be all my own. I would have your love, Agnes; I would buy it at any price, or win it at any hazard: without it, I would not give the breath that stains the glass one looks in for all the applause and empty honors of the world."

"Care not, Robert, for the world's applause; think not of it; despise it as I do. I love you, with all my heart I love you; but I would be proud of you! You need not fear the loss of my love, so long as you square your life by virtue's rules. Be true to virtue, and, though you should be overtaken by temptation, and reel like a drunken man, and lie with him in the ditch, I could still love you; but be false to that, and were you as proud and high in the world's esteem as the bloated politician and world-renowned orator, at whose heels the rabble hoot and cast up their hats, and were you, like him, a defamer of God and a scoffer at morals, I would spurn you as I would a reptile from a flower-vase. Fear not the loss of my love, but strive to deserve."

"I will, and have! And I thank you that it is unmixed with worldly considerations. If my aspirations do not deceive me, I shall strive to climb a steep so high in virtue, truth, and worth, that the breath of the multitude cannot reach it: a point from which, in a moral sense, the successful place-hunter will look as small as he who gathers pebbles under Dover's cliff, when 'its high and bending head looks fearfully

in the confined deep.' *Facere et merere*—To do and deserve—was my motto in college; and it often consoled me for the failure to get what I thought were my deserts. The same shall be my motto in life. By assuring me, dear Agnes, that you love me, you have made me happy 'beyond all that the minstrel hath told;' and will you not complete my happiness by giving me your hand, and uniting your destiny with mine?"

"Not now. You do not need my hand: it will but stay you in your path to future worth; and as to our destinies, they are already united, and nothing but vice can disunite them. You ought not, and I do not wish to marry now. We can love each other just as well without, and I prefer it thus. You do not know how dear it is to think of and love you as you are. Let it remain so, and if any thing should chance that would make it proper that our relations to each other should be changed, either from sickness, separation, loss of friends, or any of the thousand contingencies of life, seek me, and ask my hand, and, with my parents' consent, I will go with you to the altar."

The look of trust and happiness with which she said this were so naïve and touching, as to deter him, ardent as were his feelings at the moment, from persuading her to decide differently. He walked some steps in thought; then said:

"Perhaps you are right. I am not very impulsive nor impatient, nor am I jealous. I do not know what it is to be jealous. I also have much to do, and to love and hope with the consciousness of being loved is just as sweet to me as to you. When a child, I loved my mother, O how dearly! and when I lost her, you came in to fill the place in my heart. Others I have esteemed, venerated some; but you two are the only ones I have ever loved, and to me it is enough: I have no occasion to think of or love another; hence you may know how entirely my heart and thoughts are yours."

"With but few exceptions, my situation is like yours. I

loved sweet Alice beyond what I can tell, as I do also the Hermit and Mrs. St. Cloud. I also esteem and sympathize with Mr. Vaughan. Beyond these and my home-circle, my thoughts and feelings have never gone; and the attentions which society forces upon me are irksome rather than agreeable."

"I am glad it is so: not that I care that others should engage your attention, but because I have the most supreme contempt for most of the great fashionable hive that swarm around you. I owe much to your parents: they have both been kind to me, and your good and true mother has been a second mother to me; and as for the Hermit, I have for him a feeling of the highest and strongest reverence—it amounts almost to awe; and with Vaughan and Mrs. St. Cloud I also deeply sympathize. Miss Alice I barely knew: we met as children years ago, and the memory of her comes back like a ray of sunshine. You were fortunate in your school companion; much more so than I. We both chanced to meet a Bluff City schoolmate at college, but what a contrast! You can think of yours, though lost to earth, with pleasure. I can think of mine, alas! only with shame."

"Yes, poor James! And I understand he is about marrying."

"Indeed! To whom?"

"To the youngest daughter of Mr. Piper, called Pet, I believe; and I understand she is a very worthy young lady, though somewhat vain and foolish."

"Poor girl! What a fate awaits her! Her father ought to interpose and save her."

"It is a match of his making, I understand. He is more foolish than his daughter, and has been trying for a long time to get 'into society,' as some weak-minded people call the foppery of the world; and he is distressed to death that a

place has not been assigned him in fashion's temple, and his four daughters long since married."

"Are the young ladies deficient?"

"Not at all, so far as I know. They do not make a very good appearance out, but that, I imagine, is more owing to the fact of their having seen so little of society than to any defects of their own. And Mr. Piper is said to be too penurious to make them presentable in society, and then frets himself and them out of all patience because they are not leaders of ton."

"A strange weakness in a parent! It has always seemed to me that nothing could well pain a father's heart more than to see his daughter the vain and trifling leader of a vain and trifling throng. I should think a parent would prefer his child to be the flower that opens its petals to the moonbeam, and closes them in the sunlight, rather than the flaming sunflower, seeking the broadest sunlight to display its vulgar charms."

"Very true, but weak people do weak things. All leaders of fashion must, of necessity, be weak, or they would not seek to lead the giddy train. It charms only those who are incapable of appreciating the higher aims and destiny of woman; and a fictitious estimate, I suppose, is placed upon fashionable society by those who, by birth, habits, or poverty, are excluded from it; and there are many who, like Mr. Piper, regard it as the grand climax of a woman's life."

"A most reprehensible weakness, surely. But if stinginess is his only fault, his daughters ought not to suffer doubly on that account, both in their social status and wardrobe."

"That is enough for fashionable society, but it is not all which Madam Rumor imputes to Mr. Piper in this instance. But I know very little of the family. I have met the young ladies sometimes and tried to approach them, but a sort of

mauvaise honte has always kept them at a distance. But, changing the subject—Robert, you have not told me yet any thing of your travels, or your enjoyments in Washington. You know I saw little of the world while at school, and since my return have not yet received my own consent to travel, much as I know I should enjoy it."

"I do not know that I could interest you much with the sights and wonders I saw in our Capital. Indeed, the pleasure one receives there is more in the association of ideas than in what is really seen or heard. When in the Senate-Chamber, my mind went back to the great and illustrious men whose voices once entranced the crowd of eager listeners in that immense dome, but who now sleep with their fathers. Clay, Webster, Jackson, and Calhoun—where are they now? Gone! 'And the places which knew them once shall know them no more.' There are many bold spirits, many splendid orators and noble statesmen there still, and among them all none take a higher position than our own honorable Senator. His character, whether in private life, on the field of battle, or in the halls of Congress, is ever the same—the same incorruptible man—true to his country as the needle is to the north star. Politics, whilst they have naturally roused the elements of his clear, thinking mind, and called into action his best talents, have had no power over his moral character, and he towers high above all those vices which are so alluring to many of our representatives. Were I a politician, Agnes, he should be my model."

By this time they had reached the more thickly settled part of town, and their conversation was interrupted by the friendly greetings of their acquaintances, who were walking, like themselves, taking advantage of the beautiful evening to exercise in open air. Hamilton and Agnes were in no mood to enjoy the mirth of the gay bevy of girls and young

gentlemen who were walking the streets, making music with their cheerful laugh and lively jests; and turning as soon as they could into a more retired street, reached home in silence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship."

SHAKESPEARE.

AGNES had heard correctly: James Blunt was engaged to be married to "Pet." Friend Piper's experiment of husband-hunting for his daughters in the swamps of Louisiana proved a failure, and he fretted more than ever. He would not admit, even to himself, that he was in any manner at fault. He had attributed their failure to get husbands to every variety of cause, and at last saddled it upon their religion; and it was constantly introduced as a subject of distressing comment to all. He insisted that unless they changed their religion they would never get married in the world; that nobody worth having attended their church, and that the respectable families who did attend paid no attention to them; that all the marrying young men attended other churches. Betsy had borne the thing as long as her slender stock of patience could stand it, and put in:

"It seems that you were fool enough to marry without reference to your wife's religion, and all the fools are not dead yet."

"Nobody will be fool enough to marry these girls with their old-fashioned religion, whether they are all dead or not."

"Why, Pa," modestly put in one of the older young ladies, "religion is worth more to me than a husband; and a

man who would refuse me on account of my religion, I would not like to marry: I should not be happy with such a man; and, moreover, I do not want to marry."

"Don't tell me that, my daughter! don't tell me that! You do want to marry, and if you don't, I want you to; but I am not likely to have my wants gratified soon. When you go to church they do not notice you, and begrudge you the seat you sit on."

"If you'd pay for it," croaked in Betsy's voice, "they would n't begrudge it, I reckon. What do you talk to the girls about their religion for? It never cost you any thing. How much did ever you give to the Church? You can say, as the old man did when the preacher congratulated everybody upon the cheapness of the gospel, 'Thank the Lord, it never cost me a dime;' and I can say to you, as the preacher said, 'Lord have mercy on your stingy soul!' You've swopped and swopped until there are no more swops left, and now you want to swop off our religion; if you'd swop and get religion, it would be better for you."

Pet, seeing the breath thus knocked out of Piper, and anxious for a husband, and indifferent upon the subject of religion, approached her father and said:

"Pa, if you will get me some fashionable dresses, I will go wherever you want me, and will attend all the fashionable churches."

"I'll do it, my daughter. I am glad I've got one daughter left. You shall have whatever you want, and by the time you are married and settled off and at liberty to attend what church you please, the other girls will wish they had followed my advice."

Pet was accordingly rigged out in dresses to her taste, which, unschooled as it was, was none the best. But piqued as Piper was, he, for the first time in his life, loosed his purse-strings, and Pet was richly if not tastily supplied.

Thus fitted, she started church-going for a husband. She attended first one and the other, as it was the more fashionable or popular. When it was thought too common to attend church, or she had nothing new enough to attract attention, she remained at home and read novels. The hunt was kept up for some time with rather a discouraging prospect, and Piper's pride alone prevented him from cancelling the bargain. At last Pet's flaunting apparel and impertinent manners attracted the attention of James Blunt, and, without an introduction, he accompanied her home. Piper was triumphant! His plan had succeeded: one of the ton, one of the fashionable, had walked home with Pet, had sat down in his parlor, and promised to call again! It was glory enough for one day. Pet never would have captivated a young man in the very heart of "society" if she had listened to her mother and older sisters; he always knew he was right; and Betsy and the other girls might be assured if they continued to attend that old-fashioned and unpopular church, the girls would never marry in the world. Betsy stood it as long as she could, for she rather thought Piper had the better of it, as the Blunts were, "sure enough," in "society;" but Piper carried his triumph too far, and Betsy let drive at him:

"James Blunt! who is he? If she will go out here to the penitentiary, she can catch plenty of beaux just as good, where he would be if he had his dues."

It was like the explosion of a torpedo, and had a stunning effect upon Piper, and if the aim had been less dead, and delayed until Piper's elation was over, it would have knocked James Blunt out of the head of both Piper and Pet. But to explode it in his face in this savage manner in the hour of his triumph, was more than Piper's human nature could stand, and he retorted:

"It is a calumny trumped up because you and the girls are jealous of his attentions to Pet. You've picked it up

from persons beneath him, who have started it against him because he refused to notice them."

"Well, go ahead. If you want a thief, and a knock-kneed, bandy-shank gumpy, who can set his hat on one side of his cymling head and support a walking-switch, and Pet wants such a husband, I'm sure I don't care."

This was too much for Piper, and he congratulated Pet on her success, and left the house.

Before his return, he learned that Miss Blunt (an aunt of James) had made inquiries of him as to the name and "quality" of the young lady he had attended from church, and learning that she was a daughter of Mr. Piper, she forbade him, under pain of her displeasure, to cultivate the acquaintance further. This enraged Piper, and he galloped home to communicate it to Betsy, which he did in a fury, and it put Betsy in a fury; but their fury this time was not directed at each other, but directed in a broadside at his aunt. Betsy's ire had abated during Piper's absence, and she was a little alarmed at the possible consequences of her severity. She was apprehensive that she had taken a step which might drive Piper and Pet to do a very foolish and ruinous thing. The idea of James Blunt becoming a member of the family, with so disgraceful a report unexplained against him, alarmed her, and, to avert it, she had determined as soon as Piper returned to remonstrate more rationally with him. Piper also rode about on the stool of repentance, and Betsy's picture of James Blunt haunted him, and he had about made up his mind that Pet could put a feather in her cap by rejecting young Blunt. The news of Miss Blunt's opposition changed entirely the current of his thoughts, and its effect was the same upon Betsy. Her pride was cut, and, in her resentment of the affront offered her by the aunt, she forgot the moral and personal defects of the nephew, and determined, in revenge for the wrong, to encourage the attentions of James to her

daughter. He was used to setting at naught his aunt's commands—his father never gave any, except in a pet—and took every opportunity to extend his acquaintance with Pet. The more his aunt scolded, the greater was his determination to prosecute his suit. Although Betsy often ridiculed the young man until Pet was thoroughly ashamed of her choice, she never again alluded to the cause of his college expulsion. James soon proposed to Pet, and was accepted. He did not think it worth while speaking to Piper on the subject, which threatened to defeat all Piper's well-conned speech, which he had kept cut and dried for such an occasion, since the return of his daughters from school, some five years or more. The occasion for delivering it might never come again, as Pet's success thus far had had no effect upon "the girls," and they continued as before to attend the same old-fashioned church. He was determined to take advantage of the present opportunity, and not to trust to the remote chances of either of the other three "girls" getting married, to deliver himself; so he concluded, as James would not speak to him, he could at least speak to James. An opportunity was not long in presenting itself. Gilpin was galloping glibly along, when Piper noticed James crossing the street, and called to him:

"Halloo, James—ah—Mr. Blunt. How are you?"

"Good morning, Mr. Piper;" and stopped and looked at him.

"Needn't stop—nothing particular to say—I can walk along and lead my horse." He dismounted, and putting the bridle over his arm, walked along near the pavement. James was indifferent, and Piper was frisky. Now that he had made the occasion, and his auditor was before him, and his speech well committed, he was at a loss to know how to begin. He would clear his throat, and edge along up to James in a knowing, confidential sort of way, intended to be as father-in-law-ish as he knew how to make it; but James

either did not or would not understand him, and neither by word nor manner would he give occasion for the speech. They were approaching the business part of the town, and Piper seeing that a beginning had to be made or the opportunity would slip by, squared himself before James, and with a patronizing smile on his face, said:

"James, my daughter has just mentioned to me your wish to—a—you-r—to—a—your wish—a—you-r—to marry my daughter. Girls I suppose must marry, but her request was so sudden—I do not know how we can spare her; it will not be home without her. She is the centre of our love-bound circle. Her——"

"Hold on there, Bill," said James, calling to a young idle companion of his, passing on the opposite side of the street; "I hold you bound for that treat. Come, Mr. Piper, wont you join me in a glass at Bill's expense? He owes me a treat." Saying which he took Bill's arm, who had crossed the street to him, and went laughing off.

Piper was bursting with rage, and would have kicked his prospective son-in-law, but for the fear of thereby overturning his husband-built castle. He could easily have chosen a son-in-law he liked better, but barring the man, he regarded the match as a step up in life—an introduction of himself, Betsy, and "the girls" into society, and the sure means of marrying off his other daughters. This thought saved James from a sound thrashing for his rudeness—a worse one than his weak-minded, fashion-worshipping aunt ever gave him. Such a contingency never occurred to him as he thanked his companion for coming along so opportunely, and saving him from a "great bore."

Piper made what he considered great preparations for the wedding, and issued a large number of tickets of invitation. The house was a jam, the supper poor, and the music horrible, but what cared he for this? for was he not "in so-

ciety?" or, rather, was not "society," or the people he called "society," in his house?

Miss Blunt, when the probabilities of the wedding were first mentioned to her, made quite a fume about it, but, when she saw it was inevitable, yielded, and, for fear of having her son lost to "society," used all her efforts to have as much of "society" attend the wedding as she could influence. When Piper saw all the fine folks and fine feathers in his house, he congratulated himself again and again upon his forbearance in not stamping his son-in-law in the street for cutting short the speech from which he had just brushed the dust of five years. Betsy, however, was not so well satisfied. She had gained her end—had shown Miss Blunt that her child was equal to hers—but now that it was over, her conscience was not easy; she questioned if she had not paid more for the triumph than it was worth. She had given her child to a man who, whatever might be her virtues, or her faults, was incapable of appreciating the one, or of properly correcting the other. Piper had sacrificed his daughter to his ambition for social station; she to gratify her revenge. So, altogether, Betsy went to bed with a heavy heart that night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Perseverance is a Roman virtue
That wins each godlike act, and plucks success
E'en from the spear-proof crest of rugged danger."

LIKE all young professional men, Robert Hamilton had to sit many a long day through, waiting for clients that would not come; but, unlike many, he did not go out to the grog-shops and other disreputable places of public resort to find them. He fortunately had the patience and the means to wait, and employed his time in perfecting himself in his profession; and his old motto, *Facere et merere*, came to help relieve the tedious hours of study.

It has been the curse of American genius that the pride and ambition of parents have undertaken too often to force it into uncongenial and distasteful channels. There are no privileged classes, and the professions of law and physic constitute, as far as republicanism and the desire of office which pervades all classes will permit, the aristocracy of the country. Hence, those who are able to give their children a liberal education, force them from pride into one or other of these professions, and in this way they are made objects of ambition with all classes. Fathers therefore often choose for the child with reference only to his own wish, and without regard to the fitness of his son for the profession, or the profession for the child; in which case it is mere chance if the

whole thing does not prove a lamentable failure. The professions are of course overrun, and confer neither profit nor honor upon any save the very skilful and experienced, or the intriguing and unscrupulous. A select few only can rise to distinction, and the odds are so great in favor of obscurity, that fathers should be reluctant to have their sons enter the list. They should also understand that the most helpless of all the human species is a young collegiate with his parchment in his portmanteau, and nothing in his pocket, and nothing to do that will put any thing there. He can turn his hand to nothing to supply even his commonest wants. Well may such an one, if he has any pride of character, curse the pride of the parent whose over-fond partiality made him a professional man rather than have him taught some of the plainer and more practical employments of life, which, though less imposing, and less "honorable" in the estimation of a false-judging world, are far surer roads to wealth and an honorable independence. In the latter event, instead of shunning the curious and compassionating eye of his acquaintances, he would have moved among his fellows with the proud consciousness of a self-sustaining man. Parents who have never tried it, think a book and an ink-horn a second Aladdin's lamp; but the victim of their misjudging pride too often sits from day to day, from week to week, and month to month, and, as often happens, from year to year, without any thing to do, until his patience and substance are both exhausted, and, to blunt the edge of mortification, he seeks the bowl or the dissipations of the gambling-room, and is ruined. Formerly there was more excuse for this parental pride and folly than now, for one might well enough be reluctant to engage in mechanical pursuits where muscle alone could win. But this is not the case now; the field of enterprise in the mechanic arts is much enlarged by recent improvements and discoveries, and offers as full a reward to talent as to muscle.

The mental may successfully dispute the goal with the physical.

And here it may not be improper to suggest, that these improvements and changes in the mechanic arts advise a change in the education of youth, and an abolition of much of the old useless college routine. Of what use is Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, or any other obsolete language, to the millions who waste time in their acquisition? How many of all those who have travelled the whole curriculum of a college course ever put their knowledge of these languages to any practical use? Not one in a thousand. The good plain common sense of the country is at war with it; so much so, that if a man attempts to make a display of his accomplishments in this particular, he is laughed at for his pains. There were, perhaps, good reasons for the original introduction of this system of education, but the reasons have ceased, and, according to a universally received maxim of the common law, the reason ceasing, the rule itself should cease. In the early history of jurisprudence, as a badge of English servitude, the laws were in Latin, and no one could be a practicing lawyer without thoroughly understanding that language. Such, however, is not now the case. The study of the Greek and Hebrew was made necessary for a different, but equally good reason. The Scriptures were written in those languages, and, for several years after the decline of letters on the continent of Europe, the clergy absorbed all the learning of the times, or mainly so. Books were scarce, even long after the discovery of the art of printing; and to be a good theologian, a thorough knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew was requisite. The disputations of the Schoolmen added zeal to the study of these languages. The theological field swarmed with disputants of every nation and grade, who, as a learned law commentator justly remarks, "perplexed all theology with their scholastic disquisitions, and bewildered philosophy in

the mazes of metaphysical jargon." This was, especially so during the fierce disputes occasioned by the Reformation. The good and the bad, the learned and the unlearned, were alike seized with the ambition of being antiquarians, and Schoolmen were seen in flocks traversing the face of Europe in search of musty manuscripts hoarded in the libraries of princes or monasteries, with the desire of wresting something from the ancient cobwebs that would enable them to found a sect and immortalize their names. The offices of the Church, too, just anterior and subsequent to the Reformation, were sought by men of wealth and influence as portions for younger sons. These causes all combined to make a knowledge of these languages a necessary part of a gentleman's education. But none of them now exist; they have ceased, and why should not the practice founded on them cease also? Our laws are written in our own language, and need not the aid of a foreign tongue to enable the student to properly understand and practice them. The Bible too is in the lap of all the mothers of the land, and commentaries enough in English within reach, if read, to make it as obscure and difficult to be understood as if it had never been translated from the Greek or the old Vulgate. If, therefore, this useless relic of a semi-barbarous age should be supplanted by a course of practical study in Mechanics, Chemistry, Agriculture, etc., the Alma Mater, instead of feasting the student upon Dead-Sea apples, without nutrition, would perform the part of the magician, and give him a ring and lamp, which would require but to be rubbed to evoke a good genie, ready to supply all his wants. Nor need any one fear loss of caste by thus preparing for the active duties of life. There is no privileged class here to mark the man of toil, and where all are equal the majority rule, and the idle few would be the exclusives, and, when they should have occasion to test their superiority, would find themselves far under the ban of public opinion.

Elsewhere it is not the case. It is especially not the case in the country whence we have borrowed our college routine. Here a young man may choose his profession to suit his inclination, and not to suit the pride of his family. And if parents would encourage the child so to choose, and not force his inclination and talent into an unnatural channel, fewer parents would be disappointed at the want of success of their favorite sons.

None of the evils, however, which attend the forced adoption of a profession to gratify the whim of a parent, or the adoption of one as a matter of respectability, as one puts on holiday clothes, were to be apprehended in young Hamilton's case; his profession was a matter of choice, and selected as a matter of business, and with the resolution of following it as a business pursuit. He therefore suffered none of the disappointments and heartaches which have so often driven young men from their books to liquor and dice; or, if they escape these, induce a moroseness and hardness of disposition which no after success ever softens. With Hamilton, as with other young men, Courts came and went, but clients did not; but he was neither discouraged nor impatient, but toiled on. The third session of the Court in his district left him as it found him—a briefless lawyer.

CHAPTER XXIX

"O Mischief! thou art swift
To enter the thoughts of desperate men!"

SHAKESPEARE.

Just before the spring session of the Court, the fourth after Hamilton had taken an office and advertised for business, Col. Isaacs, a man of standing and influence, a friend of Clarkson, and one who played with him for amusement, and bet to count the game, and drank for good cheer, got into a "spree." It is possible, and only possible, that this book may fall into the hands of some one who does not know what a "spree" is. It is when a man gets drunk and furious, curses every thing and everybody, whoops and halloos through the streets, insults respectable, quiet people, flourishes a pistol and bowie-knife, and frightens everybody; seizes hold of the passer-by, and forces him to take a drink with him, and, if he refuses, insults and denounces him; mounts upon the counter, and kicks off decanters and glasses, and defaces pictures; jumps upon somebody's horse, and gallops over people who cannot run fast enough to get out of the way; rides into a group, and yells like a savage; cocks his pistol in a crowd, and, flourishing it around, swears he is the greatest man in the country, and can whip everybody, and cracks away at all creation in general; and as everybody has not the activity to dodge a bullet, somebody gets shot, and everybody except the man who is shot says that the shooter was on a "spree"—was gentlemanly drunk—and *accidentally* shot somebody;

and everybody is very sorry for the shooter, that such a sad accident should have befallen him, as the poor fellow will feel very bad about it when he gets sober; and when somebody, if he is not "killed dead," or, if he is, when his friends go among the leading lawyers hunting counsel to prosecute, they are told that lawyers dislike to prosecute, especially for murder, and in no case without a double fee. Such is a "spree," or was, some few years since. Those who lived in Mississippi, especially in Bluff City, in the bank and shin-plaster times, when leading men lit their cigars with bank-notes, know something about a "spree." A man was just no man at all, who could not take a "spree;" and had as little chance of getting into bank society as a man would of getting into that of Clarkson, Floyd, Blunt, and others, who could not "take a hand," or a glass of liquor. "Sprees" were respectable then, and people in Clarkson's day would say of them: "Those were glorious times;" just as those who escaped the neck-pulling and embowelling of Elizabeth's reign, called it "The glorious days of good Queen Bess;" or the Latin and Grecian poets call the days when people could neither read nor write, and lived in rude tents and minded sheep, as "the golden age."

When spreeing was an expensive luxury, and confined to the rich, it retained its respectability; but when the common folk got at it, and reduced the price of a "good glorious bust," as a "spree" was sometimes improperly called, from one thousand to one hundred dollars, and from that to fifty, and from shooting a man, and having the "spreer's" neck broke by a fall from a wild horse, to a bunged-up eye by a fisticuff, or a broken nose by a fall upon a slippery pavement, it lost much of its charm and respectability; and an old-fashioned, gentlemanly "spree" had become somewhat rare. But Col. Isaacs was one of the old régime, a remnant of "those glorious times;" and, true to old habit, would oc-

asionally get on a "spree," if for nothing more, just to let the race of church-going greenhorns, who had taken the places made vacant by "sprees" and fast living, see what a "spree" was. Accordingly, after playing nearly all Saturday night with Col. Clarkson, Dr. Floyd, Blunt, and Capt. Orr, on Sunday morning he got upon a grand "spree," breaking glasses, and knocking the billiard balls about; seizing hold of the players, and forcing them to the counter with him to drink; pocketing the balls, and swearing they should not play until they repeated the drink; frightened half the good people of town out of their wits; chased a hotel-keeper, who was anxious to keep order in his house, all over the tavern with a pistol and bowie-knife, and, failing to catch him, fired a ball or two through the door of the room into which he locked himself; ordered a negro-boy to break open the door, and upon the negro's begging to be excused, presented a cocked pistol at his head to frighten him into obedience, which, by either design or accident, went off, shooting the negro through the head, killing him instantly. The great body of the people, who knew but little about "sprees," and the impunity awarded them, were outraged, and denounced the thing as a cold-blooded murder; but Col. Clarkson, Floyd, Blunt, and the other members of the playing clubs, who made or controlled public opinion, "deeply deplored the sad accident," and were very sorry on Isaacs' account, who, "when sober, was a perfect gentleman."

The negro was a valuable one, and Isaacs found the price of the "spree" fully up to the old respectable standard, and something beyond; and he was not in a situation to meet the just demand of the master of the murdered negro for his value—seventeen hundred dollars—and pay the damage done to the property of the hotel and that of the grocery-keeper. There was danger, unless he satisfied the claim of the master, that some hungry attorney, for half the price of the negro,

might undertake to prosecute. The possibility that one would volunteer to vindicate the violated law and an outraged public, never entered his mind: no one would be so unprincipled as to do so just and righteous a thing. The master was willing to take the acceptance of Col. Clarkson upon short time for the value of the negro; and Isaacs consented to give it upon the condition that there should be no prosecution, to which, of course, the master assented. Col. Clarkson disliked to give the use of his name for such a purpose; but to refuse it under such circumstances would have given mortal offence, and Isaacs was not a man to offend with impunity. He therefore gave the acceptance; and afterwards, as he feared, when he gave it, had it to pay.

The affair was brought before the grand jury, and they could not do otherwise than find a "true bill;" but they and everybody else, Isaacs included, regarded it as a mere formal thing.

CHAPTER XXX.

"He is dead;
Not by the public minister of justice,
Nor by a hired knife; but that self hand
Which writ his honor in the acts it did,
Hath, with the courage which the heart did lend it,
Splitted the heart."

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the morning when the case of "The State vs. Isaacs" was set for trial, the defendant walked with great unconcern into the Court-room, and his bloody hand was taken by all the most respectable and influential persons present, officials and all, Judge, Clerk, and Sheriff. He stepped upon the Judge's stand and passed the compliments of the day with him, and a pleasant joke which brought a smile to the Judge's face; all of which was seen by the special venire summoned upon the case—a fac-simile of the one before introduced to the reader. He passed among the venire, graciously condescending to shake hands with each, particularly with those whose names he had marked upon the copy furnished him by the Sheriff, as required by law, for his attorneys to select as jurors. Most of the leading members of the bar were engaged for the defence,

When the case was called, the District Attorney sat with

both knees against the desk before him, whittling a piece of cypress split from the desk, his lap full of shavings. The Court asks :

"Gentlemen, are you ready in this case?"

"The State is ready, I believe. What case is it, your Honor?" said the District Attorney, rising and brushing the whittlings from his lap, looking the very personification of indifference.

"No. —. The State *vs.* Isaacs."

"Let me see the papers. Mr. Sheriff, are the witnesses in this case all here?"

"I do not know, I am sure."

"Call them."

"If you will let me know who they are, I will."

"These names? Hold on; let me see; who are they?" Scratches first his head and then in the pile of papers before him; picks up one and puts it down, picks up another and puts it down, moves a book or two, and turns to the counsel on the other side and asks :

"Gentlemen, have you got the subpoenas in this case?"

"We have our own, not yours. What's that you have in your hand? isn't that it?"

"O yes! here it is. Call the witnesses, Mr. Sheriff:" hands him the subpoena, and sits down to whittling.

The Sheriff calls the witnesses; a few answer, but the most important ones do not. He returns the subpoena, and lays it down before the Attorney, who continues to whittle away. The Court grows impatient, and asks :

"Mr. Attorney, are you ready to try this case?"

"What case, your Honor?"

"The case I have just called, The State *vs.* Isaacs."

"O—ah—Mr. Sheriff, call the witnesses in this case."

"I have just called them."

"Did they answer?"

"Some did and some didn't."

"Did Mr. — and — answer?"

"No, sir."

"Call them again."

The Sheriff calls again, but no answer.

"We are ready for the State, if your Honor please."

"Gentlemen, are you ready for the defence?"

They give a quick glance, to be sure that no counsel is engaged for the prosecution, and with a confident look and tone promptly answer :

"We are ready, if your Honor please," emphasizing the "we," as if they, who had such a good case, were of course ready and anxious for a trial, and it was for the State, with its bad cause, to come halting to trial.

All this had its effect upon the venire, who were curious spectators of the whole.

"Mr. Sheriff, call over the venire," ordered the Court.

"James Brady!"

"Come round and be sworn, Mr. Brady."

He is sworn to answer questions "of and touching his qualifications as a juror," when—

"Have you formed or expressed an opinion of the guilt or innocence of the accused, Mr. Brady?" is asked in the full, musical voice of Hamilton.

Its unexpectedness astonished the whole mass of lookers-on, and all pushed forward to see who was engaged for the prosecution, drowning by the noise every thing else.

"Silence!" roared out the Sheriff.

"Keep silence in Court, Mr. Sheriff; and report those who make a noise."

None were so much electrified as the counsel for the defence. When glancing around preparatory to announcing themselves ready, they noticed Hamilton sitting near the District Attorney, but never suspected his being engaged in

the cause; no look or action of his betrayed any such thing; and if they had suspected it, they would hardly have thought a young briefless attorney like him in the way; but there was something in his manner, and in his heavy voice, that admonished them "to take care." They therefore asked him:

"Are you engaged for the defence, Mr. Hamilton?"

"I am."

"Who employed you?"

"You have no right to ask."

"Silence, gentlemen!" demanded the Sheriff.

The counsel saw at a glance that there was something solid and resolute about the young man; that he was something more than an idle whittler of soft pine and cedar, and likely to prove a dangerous adversary in a case like the one they had in charge; and after whispering together for a moment, they ask:

"Will your Honor excuse us for a moment?"

"Certainly."

They continue to whisper together; they pull Isaacs into the circle and whisper. The leading counsel rises and says:

"If your Honor please, it has just been suggested that one of our most important witnesses is absent, and if your Honor will permit us, we would like to have the witnesses for the defence called. Mr. Sheriff, will you call the witnesses for the defence?"

The Sheriff goes to the window and calls.

"Did Mr. Flint answer?"

"He did not."

"If your Honor please, this is a very important witness for the defence, by far the most important witness in the cause, and the only man who witnessed the unfortunate affair who can give an unbiased statement of it. We were informed, when we announced ourselves as ready, that he was in Court,

or we would not have so answered. It is impossible, if your Honor please, for us to go safely to trial without this witness, and if your Honor will allow us at this stage of the proceedings, we will prepare an affidavit for a continuance. I know it is a little informal, but in a case of this magnitude, where the life of a human creature, one of our most respectable and best citizens, is at stake, mere formalities should not deprive us of a full and fair defence."

"I cannot grant it unless counsel on the other side consent. Mr. District Attorney, are you willing that the case shall be withdrawn from the jury, and leave be granted to the defence to make an affidavit for a continuance?"

"Sir?" waking up from his whittling.

"Are you willing that the defence may make an affidavit for a continuance?"

"O, cer——"

"Hold!" said Hamilton. "We are not willing, your Honor."

The counsel make a strong appeal to him, and relate, loud enough to be heard by those of the venire who had crowded around them, what the witness would prove, making out a clear case of justifiable homicide, and how they were deceived into announcing themselves ready by assurances that this important witness was present, and how impossible it was that the State could suffer by delay, and how a good and innocent man might suffer by a forced trial.

"I cannot consent," he said, addressing the Court; "blood has been spilt in our streets, and though it does not cry for vengeance, the innocent, and a much-wronged and outraged community, call aloud upon this Court for protection against a lawless drunken brawler."

"Do you denounce me as a drunken brawler!" exclaimed Isaacs, springing from his seat with a savage, ferocious look that made all around save Hamilton shrink back chilled. The

latter looked him unshrinkingly in the face, and with resolute clearness said:

"I do. In a drunken brawl you murdered a poor negro, and you would, if you dared, murder the man who has respect enough for his memory to vindicate it; but when you do, you will murder a freeman, and not a slave!"

From the clap and shout that went up from the excited crowd that pressed hard upon the court-railings, the counsel for the defence saw that they had made a mistake in their effort at side-bar speaking.

While the Sheriff was restoring order, and trying to get the names of the offenders to report them for a contempt of Court, the counsel for the defence whispered for a moment to Col. Clarkson, who took Hamilton to one side and remonstrated with him.

"I regret, Robert, that your first case in Court should be to prosecute a man for his life."

"I am only trying to perform my duty as a good citizen, and to aid in protecting this community against an outlaw."

"Who pays you to do it?"

"My conscience."

"It is not possible that you are a volunteer in the cause, Robert? It will ruin you! All the respectable men in town are in Isaacs' favor."

"I cannot help that."

"Do you not know that it is unpopular to prosecute, especially in a murder case?"

"I do not seek popularity."

"Are you aware that it is the boast of some of the greatest lawyers that the country has ever produced, that they never took a fee to prosecute?"

"If they had taken as many fees to protect the public against bad men, and to enforce the law, as they have to defend and turn loose criminals and defeat the ends of justice,

I would never have been called upon to volunteer in prosecuting this case."

"Robert, let me persuade you not to volunteer your services in this case."

"I have already done so—I am not willing to withdraw. Dave was black, it is true, but he was a man, every inch of him. We were children together, and in childhood sported upon the same playground, and I have since seen him tried in all that makes a man a man, and he proved true; and shall I now stand by and see him shot down by a drunken bully and bravado, and make no effort to bring the offender to justice? Besides, I have promised his poor old mother, who nursed me when a child, and who received the last breath of my sainted mother, to vindicate the memory of her murdered son, and I cannot forfeit my word."

"Perhaps you are right. I applaud your motive and feelings, but I am sorry you are engaged in the case."

"And I am equally sorry to do any thing that you do not approve."

"Come, gentlemen," said the Court, "go on with your case. Proceed with the juror."

"Mr. Brady, have you formed or expressed an opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the accused?"

"I have."

"Have you conversed with any of the witnesses in relation to the case?"

"I have not."

"Have you not formed this opinion you speak of expressly to disqualify you from serving on this jury, and without any real knowledge of the case?"

"If your Honor please," began one of the counsel for the defence, "I object to this mode of interrogating the juror. This gentleman says he has both formed and expressed an opinion, and is of course an incompetent juror, and it matters

not for what purpose he may have formed his opinion. Such questions are but consuming the time of the Court, and I hope your Honor will put a stop to it."

"I have no wish to ask impertinent questions," said Hamilton, "or to consume unnecessarily the time of the Court, and I feel assured that your Honor will indulge me in all needful consumption of time. I am aware, sir, if this man has, as he thinks, formed an opinion of the guilt or innocence of the accused, he is an incompetent juror; but I wish to show if possible from his answers that he has not formed an opinion. A man may learn from rumor that a murder has been committed, and conclude that if such be the case the party ought to hang, and he might call this an opinion, and in a moment thereafter hear that the killing was in self-defence, and, assuming that to be true, conclude that he ought to be acquitted, and he might call this an opinion; but I imagine that neither of these is such an opinion as in the law would disqualify him as a juror to try the fact. Neither the one nor the other, nor a hundred such opinions would influence the mind of the juror, much less would this be the case if the opinion was formed as a mere matter of convenience. The law only intends that the juror who is to try the fact shall go into the jury-box free from improper bias. The opinion to disqualify a man must be of such a nature as to affect his judgment, and give an undue bias for or against the defendant, and not a mere supposititious opinion founded upon idle rumor, and made up as a matter of convenience. Men who are competent to decide upon a case of this sort, and have the resolution to decide correctly, without fear, favor, or reward, dislike to have it to do; and if by forming an imaginary opinion they can be excused from the service, they will form it, and in this way help to defeat the ends of justice. The very men who undertake to practice this fraud upon the law, and evade the performance of their duty, are the ones first to cry out at the

inefficiency of the law. If men of talent and education and virtue were to constitute our juries, vicious men would be reluctant to come before them, and the youth of the country would grow up with an habitual respect for the law and those who execute it, and its certain execution would be a sure safeguard against bad men. The law never will be executed if none but the refuse of society sit upon the jury—men who are easily swayed by learned counsel. Such men go to sleep under the reading of an indictment, and treat with contempt the instructions of the Court. They are told by lawyers out of court who cannot be elected to a judgeship, that the 'best talent' will not go upon the bench—the salary is too small—can make more at the practice of their profession, etc., and hence such jurymen conclude that these learned gentlemen who know so much law that they will not go upon the bench must of course know more than the man who does go on it, and they therefore listen to them rather than the Court. The interest of the country demands that men of sense sit upon juries, and the Court ought not to excuse any man from this duty for an idle trifling opinion made up to order. If this gentleman has formed an opinion of the guilt or innocence of Col. Isaacs, the accused here, in relation to the offence of which he stands charged, he ought not to sit in the case, but I hold that it is a positive absurdity to talk of an opinion founded upon nothing. This gentleman says he has never conversed with any of the witnesses, and of course knows nothing of the case; no bias therefore can rest upon his mind. If it should appear by the answers of the juror that he is mistaken, and has not formed an opinion, but has manufactured something for the occasion, which he offers as an excuse for avoiding the performance of a disagreeable duty, I ask if your Honor will allow him thus to impose upon the Court. At any rate, I should like to have him answer the question."

"The habit"—by the Court—"of gentlemen, when summoned to serve on juries of this sort, hunting up material out of which to manufacture an opinion to excuse them from the performance of their duty, is a most pernicious one; and in consequence of it I have been disgusted more than once upon this circuit, in seeing twelve men, without morals or brains, chosen to acquit criminals, and not to try them—men who neither listened to the testimony, nor understood the law. These counterfeit opinions are far too common, and the man who offers it for an excuse ought to be exposed; and though the opinion may disqualify him, nevertheless the question in this instance may be asked. Answer the question, Mr. Brady."

"Will you put the question again?"

"Have you not formed this opinion expressly to excuse you from serving upon this case?"

"Well, sir, I do not wish to answer that question."

"Answer the question, Mr. Brady, or I shall be under the painful necessity of sending you to jail."

"Well, sir, that had its influence."

"That had its influence, eh? Now, do you know any thing at all of the facts of this case?"

"Very little."

"Do you know any thing?"

"Very little: I heard that Col. Isaacs had killed a negro man."

"And upon that you immediately formed an opinion?"

"No, sir; not immediately. I thought very little about it at the time, and might not have thought of it again, if the Sheriff had not summoned me as a juror."

"Then you formed no opinion until summoned on this venire?"

"I did not."

"And yet you have formed an opinion?"

"Yes, sir, and expressed it."

"Very well, sir: stand aside."

This severe catechising alarmed a number of others who stood in a similar position to that of Mr. Brady; and, when called, they were careful not to thrust forward their mock opinions, but were content to serve as jurors. They were always accepted by Hamilton, if they were men likely to have an opinion of their own; but for the same cause they were invariably challenged by the defence. Much the larger portion of the venire were idle vagabonds, who were too lazy to work, and esteemed it a godsend to be put upon a jury, and hence were always convenient when a venire had to be summoned; and the Sheriff, like a well-fed Berkshire, was not over-fond of motion, and, to save the trouble of riding over the country to hunt up men to serve on juries, gathered up the rabble. For this reason, nine out of ten of Mississippi juries, selected to try men for their lives, would make splendid pictures for the frontispiece of a comic almanac, with the Sheriff at their head, and the District Attorney in the background. There are the halt, the lame, and the blind, long legs and short legs, cross-eyes and cock-eyes, high shirt-collars and no shirt-collars at all, long coat-sleeves and sleeves that stop at the elbow, pants with long legs turned up at the bottom, and pants with legs that scorned to come nearer than within six inches of the huge brogans.

Hamilton was anxious to keep from the jury all such horrible imitations of humanity, and generally succeeded in challenging them for cause; and when he failed in this, exercised his right of a peremptory challenge until his number was exhausted. He had nearly exhausted this right, had only one left, and was anxious to reserve it for a juror whose name would soon be called, who was a sort of striker of Col. Isaacs, and hated the negro man Dave, who had been killed, because his master had refused to permit this man to flog

him. The circumstance was as follows: The man had got drunk upon one occasion, and interfered with Dave's work; and because he was gently pushed aside by the negro, he seized a knife, and undertook to stab him, when the boy pushed him down, and walked over him. He was chastised by his master, but this man was enraged at both master and slave, because he was not permitted to wreak his brutal vengeance upon the negro. Hamilton, knowing these facts, feared that he would make a bad juror, but feared, also, that he would not be able to challenge him for cause, and hence was anxious to reserve his remaining peremptory challenge. Just at this time, a Mr. Rice was called. He was a cross between a fool and a knave, and represented both parents remarkably well. He lived no one knew how or where; sometimes acted as barkeeper of a low doggery, sometimes as deputy night-watch, but most of the time was a general rounder-in at groceries; and was a huge chewer of tobacco and guzzler of mean whiskey, and great on election days; and Isaacs was a politician, and chanced to be on the side to serve the interests of which Rice was in the habit of lying and cheating, and Isaacs was just the man Rice would be likely to perjure himself for. When called, he came forward with a high step, like a horse with string-halt; had a high shirt-collar, made passably clean for the occasion: his entire suit might have been the cast-off garments of "Ichabod."

"Mr. Rice, have you formed or expressed an opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the accused?"

"I have not."

"Are you a householder or a freeholder in the county?"

"I am."

"Do you keep house, Mr. Rice?"

"Yes, I duz."

"Whereabouts?"

"That ain't nothin' to you, is it?"

"Yes, a good deal. Where do you keep house?"

"I keeps house, and that's enough for you to know."

"Do you live in town?"

"What do you ax me all these questions for?"

"Answer my question. Do you live in town?"

"I duz."

"Have you heard any thing of this case?"

"No, sir."

"Nothing at all?"

"What do you keep axin me all these questions for?"

"Answer the questions without your impertinent remarks, Mr. Rice," by the Court.

"No, sir; nothin'."

"What business were you engaged in when Dave was killed?"

"I was keepin' bar under the hotel."

"Keeping bar at the hotel, and heard nothing of this case?"

"I heerd the pistil; but how'd I know anybody was shot?"

"Did you hear any thing said about it by those who saw it?"

"How could I, when everybody left the bar?"

"Did you not leave the bar, too?"

"Do you reckon I'd leave my business, when no one was there?"

"I do not know. Did you leave it?"

"No, I did n't."

"And have not heard the case spoken of since?"

"No, sir; I hav' n't."

"Nor talked about it yourself?"

"What would I talk about it for?"

"I do not know; but have you not talked about it?"

"No, sir."

"At the hotel when it occurred, lived in the town ever since, and never said a word about it yourself, nor heard any one else say a word about it?"

"I have sumf'n else to do besides talk'n about other folks' business."

"Have you any conscientious scruples as to the infliction of capital punishment?"

"Any what?"

"Are you opposed to having a man hung if he had killed another without justifiable cause?"

"I'm opposed to hanging Mister Isaacs for killing a nigger."

"You do not think it would be right to hang him for killing a 'nigger,' heh?"

"No, sir, I don't."

"You can stand aside."

By care and a determination to do his full duty, a tolerably fair jury was impanelled. While the jury were being sworn, a friend of Col. Isaacs took Hamilton to one side, and said:

"Col. Isaacs is pleased with the manner in which you have thus far conducted the case against him; and as you are not regularly engaged by any one to assist in the prosecution, and as a man is excusable for making use of all honorable means to save himself from a conviction which may seriously endanger his life, he hopes you will not take it as an offence for him to try and retain your services in his defence; and he has authorized me to offer you a thousand dollars to aid him."

"I am not worth much," said Hamilton, "but Col. Isaacs is not rich enough to buy me."

"He intends no insult, no bribe, but is really desirous of engaging your services."

"They are not for sale."

"Why should you refuse a large fee to defend, and yet

volunteer to prosecute?" said one of the counsel who heard the conversation.

"I do not care to discuss the matter, gentlemen. I know very little of Col. Isaacs, and care less. I intend to do my duty; and I advise you and Col. Isaacs to look well to the merits of your cause. You had better send for Mr. Flint." The last remark was said in a spirit of satire.

The case consumed the larger portion of the week. The interest which the first day's proceeding excited kept an expectant crowd in the court-room during the entire trial. Hamilton's management of the case during its progress gained for him golden opinions "from all sorts of people;" and it was his province to close the argument. The counsel had been particularly severe in their criticisms upon him in volunteering to aid in taking the life of a fellow-man, as representing private revenge, etc., all of which he bore with stoical indifference. Expectation was high, and his friends feared it was more than he could meet; but when he arose, full of his subject, and his tall, commanding figure half a head higher than the mass around him, his high, square forehead, large, lustrous eyes, full, round, sonorous voice, and long arms, that moved by a mental impulse, giving force and emphasis to arguments in themselves convincing, and especially when he moved off with a stateliness and dignity of manner and argument like "the horse that knows his rider," all fear was lost in admiration. The counsel saw a god full-grown from the head of Mercury. When he spoke of the orgies of the night before the killing, the spree afterwards, and let fall his arm like a very Vulcan upon the vicious habit of playing for amusement, and betting to count the game, the hair bristled upon more heads than that of Isaacs.

"The fathers," said he, "leaders in the social circle, censors of fashion and the press, who indulge in these misnamed amusements, and rally to the defence of a man who has the

depravity to carry them to their legitimate results, should understand that they are sowing broadcast the seeds of vice, which will bring forth a plentiful crop for your and their children to reap. When you and they are gone, those who succeed you will garner this harvest of dragon's teeth along with the household-gods you leave them. You owe it to yourselves, you owe it to them, and, above all, you owe it to your God, to rebuke and stay these broadcast sowers of vice and sin, disease and moral death, these sowers of the seeds of the moral Upas tree. I ask not vengeance; that is with God; I am willing even that the blood of poor, inoffensive Davy shall smoke and dry in your public thoroughfare in vain, if I thought that were an end; but it is not the end: it is not even the beginning of the end. Public virtue is a name, and religion a byword, and too often a scoff. What hope have you, what hope has anybody, in your children, the young men who swarm along your streets, fashionable idlers, genteel loafers? What hope does the public repose in the majority of the sons of wealthy parents of the South? None; and why? Because vice and idleness are made attractive and respectable, and virtue, and industry, and habitual obedience to the laws of the land and the rules of good society, treated with the coldness of unwelcome guests. These are plain, hard truths, and should not be blinked. It is no pleasure to me to refer to them; it is painful to know that they are truths. The remedy, in a great measure, is with the courts and juries of the country. Whenever the monster vice comes within the reach of their truncheon, let them smite him down, and make the temple of justice a terror to evil-doers, a place where innocence may fly for help and protection, and a reform must and will follow. If courts and juries had never winked at vice, and bad men had never been permitted to go out of this temple, which should be sacred to justice, with *éclat*, and left to riot in their wrong,

your streets would long since have been clean of blood. The profession of which I am but a young and inexperienced member, is not altogether free from blame in this particular. Its influence has been mainly cast in favor of the acquittal of criminals; not because the members of it feel less interest in the preservation of order and good morals than others, but because, when engaged in a criminal case, they are usually retained for the defence, the State always being represented by an attorney elected for that purpose; and it is but natural that the feelings and sympathies should go in the channel in which they are most accustomed to flow. And a word here in reply to the criticism of gentlemen upon myself and my connection with this case. They mock at me as the representative of private revenge, or, if not that, a volunteer hangman. It is a weak cause that needs such props. I am not ashamed to acknowledge before you that I did yield to the request of the mother of the deceased, blackamoor as she is, to volunteer to vindicate the memory of her son, and bring his cold-blooded murderer to justice. And I did it the more willingly because the murdered man was my friend; yes, black as was his skin, he had a soul white as yours or mine, and he was my true and honorable friend, and I am proud to remember him as such. I know not that it will make his ashes rest the quieter to learn that his murderer has been slain by the law; but it will make other mothers draw their nestlings closer to their breasts to know that this wild tiger has been turned loose from his cage, again to become the terror of the jungle. It is these mothers, and their, and your children, and the violated law, and a community who press hard around these court-railings, beseeching you for justice, and nerving you by their presence to the right, that I represent. By this standard of right I am willing to be measured; they—the counsel for defence—are measured by the length of the defendant's purse-string. I

would have you protect the public against a lawless, bad man, and a still more lawless, bad vice. If you do this, you will have the approval of your own consciences, and the thanks and prayers of those who need all the force of your strong arm to protect them and maintain the law."

During this impassioned appeal, which loses much of its force upon paper, the possibility of a conviction first flashed upon the mind of Col. Isaacs. The effect was alarming; the wild stare frightful.

At the close of the speech the jury retired, and soon returned and handed their verdict to the clerk, who read, amid the profoundest silence, "We, the jury, find the prisoner guilty." Its stunning effect upon Isaacs was painful to witness. It was the first time in his life he felt that he was not absolute master of himself and his actions—the director and shaper of his own destiny; the first time he ever felt the presence of a power stronger than his will. He had a strong determined will, and was a bold thinker and resolute actor, and had always the proud consciousness of an independent self-sustaining man, and claimed to have every thing he was master of by his own exertion except his life—and that he had long since ceased to value as a boon—would have taken or given it away for a trifle; indeed, had often thought of taking it, but the idea of its being taken by another, or by the law, had never occurred to him before, and the thought was terrible. The thought even of involuntary confinement for one night was more awful than an eternity of confinement in the grave—which his skeptical philosophy taught him was the end of man. He had been a soldier, and obeyed because he had his consent to do so; but he would have preferred death upon the battle-field to chains or a prison-ship. Before him was the prospect of death—and of all deaths the most disgraceful—and no avenue left through which to fight his way and fall, if he must, by the blade of his enemy, fighting for life and

liberty. He gave a quick savage look around, and those standing near were startled by hearing a click, click, quickly succeeded by the report of a pistol! Col. Isaacs was no more! He had shot himself through the heart! He had taken his last drink for good cheer, played his last game for amusement, and bet his last dollar to count the game. The game of life was played out, and he had lost the stake—a stake that dollars will not pay—and begun a game that dollars will not count—to continue through an age that will not waste away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Praise is the reflection doth from virtue rise."

THE tragical termination of the prosecution disappointed the elation of Hamilton's friends at the completeness of his success, and chastened the exhilaration which he might otherwise have felt. He had the satisfaction of having performed his duty, and of finding himself, at a bound, in a position in his profession equal to the older members of the bar. Col. Clarkson, as the trial progressed, and the moral beauty and grandeur of Hamilton's mind and the strength and compass of his intellect grew into proportions before him, could not help feeling an interest in his success in spite of his desire to see Isaacs acquitted. As he bore reports home of the progress of the trial, and of the play and dazzle of Hamilton's genius, the eyes of Agnes sparkled with peculiar brightness and her heart beat quick. At the close of the trial, Col. Clarkson desired Hamilton to bear the melancholy story home and excuse him to his family, while he gave his attention to the remains of his deceased friend. As Hamilton approached the house, with weary step and melancholy mien, Mrs. Clarkson and Agnes advanced to meet him. Agnes placed her arm in his; she looked up into his face and said, "Father has reported to us your success; and O! Robert! you do not know how happy and proud it has made me. I knew you were equal to it, but I wanted others to know it. It is not that you are eloquent, or that you are learned, but that you are true."

"You have not heard of the fatal termination of the trial?"

"No! Neither you nor pa are going to fight a duel with him?"

"No; he is past fighting duels."

"Mercy! Mr. Hamilton; you have not killed him?" Releasing his arm and stepping back with a wild anxious look.

"You need not fear my touch; there is no blood on my hands or conscience, though blood has been spilt. When the jury brought in a verdict of guilty, Isaacs shot himself through the heart before those near him were aware of his design."

"O Robert, you don't tell me!" exclaimed both ladies at once. Agnes returned to his side, and taking his arm with both hands, looked up and said:

"O Robert! did the poor infatuated man rush into the presence of his God with all his sins upon him! How sorry I feel for you! How little did I think, whilst revelling in the joy occasioned by the report of your success, that the glory of your triumph would be thus rudely snatched from me by the bloody hand of the suicide, and you, perhaps, terrified from treading farther in the path of right for right's sake!"

"I am sorry that Col. Isaacs should thus have terminated his stormy life—more, however, for his sake than mine. Better that he should have killed himself, and robbed the gallows of its dues, than have killed a better man; which might have been the case had he been acquitted. Bloody as has been the issue, it will not have a feather's weight in shaping or unshaping my course for the future. I believe I did right, and I should do it all over again if I knew the termination would be the same."

"But then it is so sad!"

"Very true, and I regret it; but I shall not be swerved from the path of duty because bad men do rash things. You

have removed the greatest weight which the affair placed upon my heart, in assuring me that your father is not displeased with my course."

"O, he is not displeased; on the contrary, is every way pleased. At first he said he was sorry you had volunteered in the cause, but afterwards he was pleased that it was so; that you had acted from principle, and not from a desire of gain."

"He remonstrated with me at first, and I thought was displeased at my refusal to withdraw from the case; and it distressed me. Next to the approval of my conscience, I desire the approval of you three. It is a material portion of the reward I expect for a virtuous action; and it helps to instruct and direct my conscience. The censure of either of you would cloud any success I might meet with in life."

"I have seen, very little in you to condemn, thus far, Robert," said Mrs. Clarkson.

"I thank you for saying so. It will be one of the aims of my life to retain your good opinion. What I am you have contributed no little to make me. If I have walked in the 'right way,' it is because your hand pointed it out to me."

"Another and a smoother hand had shaped your moral ends, before mine was reached out to you," said Mrs. Clarkson.

"True; and I thank you for a compliment to the mother whose memory I shall ever revere; but your hand was stretched out to me at a most opportune season. But for your good counsels, and this dear face here, blushing at its own praise, that shone on me through five long years of exile, I might have made shipwreck of all the good lessons received from a sainted mother, who, if angels ever pray for us mortals—and I believe they do, let others call it superstition if they will—has made many a prayer in that world, high above the petty trifles and heartaches of this, for the earthly guardians of her son."

They had unconsciously stopped during the conversation, and now walked slowly and in silence to the house. As they were ascending the steps, Mrs. Clarkson said:

"I suppose Mr. Clarkson is with the remains of Col. Isaacs."

"I beg your pardon; he told me to inform you of what had occurred, and say that he would not be home to dinner."

"You will dine with us?"

"If agreeable, I would like to do so."

Mrs. Clarkson left to give orders about her household affairs, and Agnes said:

"O Robert, I am so proud of you!"

"I would rather you loved me."

"I do love you; I have always loved you; it is an old feeling, but I am proud of you too; this is a new feeling, and makes me love you all the more."

"Are your love and pride together sufficient to secure for me a favorable answer to the demand you are willing I shall make, at some period in the uncertain future, of this soft white hand?"

"Whenever the occasion comes when this 'soft white hand,' as you call it, can be of any service to you, or add any thing to your real happiness, you can have it. But that time has not yet come."

"But may not something happen to prevent it from ever coming?"

"If it should happen by your fault or mine, it had better happen before our volition is gone. If either of us should ever do any thing by which we deserve to forfeit the other's respect or love, better that it be done before stronger vows pass between us than afterwards. I do not think such a thing at all likely, and am willing at all events to trust you."

"And I am willing to trust you. I never feared any thing

of that sort, and yet a thousand things may happen to divide us."

"It frightens me to hear you talk so! Name one of the thousand."

"You might die."

"I hope my memory would be none the less dear because other vows were not plighted between us; and marrying would not keep me alive."

"Your father might become displeased with me, and refuse his consent to our union."

"Why, Robert, what makes you talk so? you distress yourself and me. What has dear papa said or done that makes you talk so?"

"Nothing. Do not look so pale. You asked for some of the thousand reasons that might occur to prevent our union, and I was weak and foolish enough to guess at some. I know of none, and apprehend none, and was very foolish to suggest any, and crave your pardon. To prove how sincere my repentance is, I will not press upon you our union again, until an occasion comes when I can ask it as altogether proper."

"And when that time comes, for weal or for woe I will be yours."

"For weal let us hope it will be."

"For weal I certainly think it will, and pray that it may be."

If Hamilton had desired to advertise his powers, he could not have done so more effectually than the tragical end of his first case had done for him. Reports of the most exaggerated character spread in relation to it, all attributing the tragedy to his eloquence. No persons were more affected by the reports than the prisoners in jail awaiting their trial. They were clamorous to secure his services; but he was prudent enough to avoid wearing the gloss from his newly made reputation, by declining fees except in cases where the right was

on the side of the accused. His determination to be right, and to do right, saved him from cheapening himself by undertaking an indiscriminate defence of all the criminals who applied to him. He was not inflated by vanity, and though the growth of his reputation was sudden as was the gourd of Jonah, it had merit and principle to sustain it, and, so far from declining, it continued gradually to increase and strengthen.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Against self-slaughter
There is a prohibition so divine,
That cravens my weak hand."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE death of Col. Isaacs produced a very serious effect upon Capt. Orr; and the friends of the latter felt great concern on his account. The two had been inseparable for years; had fought public and private battles together; enjoyed prosperity and suffered adversity together; and their sudden separation fell with crushing effect upon Orr. Isaacs had been his military commander, and the Captain was accustomed to follow wherever his intrepid senior would lead. He was at all times, whether on or off duty, ready to answer any call made upon him by Isaacs. Like his Colonel, he had no religious or moral scruples that would deter him from doing what his inclination might prompt. He had not the resolute determination of Isaacs; and though he would follow through fire and flood, he could not lead. For several days after the death of Isaacs, Orr was gloomy and taciturn, and at times exhibited singular fancies. At one time he would dress himself in the most elaborate wedding-attire; at another in full military officer's dress, as if ready to place himself under the orders of his superior. He also drank deep, and was more or less intoxicated all the time. His friends remonstrated with him, but to no purpose. He failed to make his appear-

ance at breakfast one morning, and his friends going to his room to ascertain the cause, found him sitting in full military dress, stark and stiff. He had taken poison! Upon the table by him was a note, addressed to Col. Isaacs, which read thus:

DEAR COL.:—I come to place myself under your command.

Your ever faithful and devoted
JUNIOR.

Among his papers was the following note, addressed to Frank Vaughan, written the day after the death of Col. Isaacs:

DEAR FRANK:—Do you recollect the conversation which Col. Isaacs and myself had with you at Cooper's Well, some two or three summers since? Before you get this, Col. Isaacs and myself will both fill a suicide's grave—the result of the evils against which we then warned you. "Beware of liquor, dice, and bad women," were my last words to you then: I repeat them now. I am a coward! I would not live, and yet I fear to die! "How stale, flat, and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world!" yet I have not the courage to leave them. In leaving, there are none behind for whom I have a kinder regard than for you, save——

Here he had suddenly broken off, as if he had approached a subject too much for his agitated mind. There was a swell in the paper, marking a place where a tear had fallen.

On a separate piece of paper was written: "Yes, beware of a bad woman, but never deceive a good one."

A large concourse of people followed his remains to the

grave. As the procession moved slowly along the street, one disposed to look might have seen an interesting, sad group standing out upon the pavement in front of a modest cottage—a mother and three children, one girl and two boys, the eldest about fourteen years, the youngest six. The mother stood in the gateway, the gate slightly ajar, resting her chin upon the hand that held the gate-picket, the other hand hanging despondingly down by her side, the tears running in rills over her grief-worn face, presenting the picture of a heart-broken, despairing woman. She had been beautiful, and was still handsome. The eldest girl stood transfixed with a stony gaze as the hearse rumbled by. The others were weeping bitterly but noiselessly. They did not know why they should swallow their grief, and not express it like other children; but their mother said "Hush!" in such a soft, sad, heart-reaching tone that they cried in silence. It did not require a second look to tell that one was the victim, the others the children of the suicide. It explained why he had broken off so suddenly in his letter to Vaughan, and why, in all his warnings to him, he had coupled woman's name. It would seem that he had never, until writing the note to Vaughan, thought that even a bad woman might have been made so by a worse man. That thought seemed to strike him when he penned the disjointed sentence, "Yes, beware of a bad woman, but never deceive a good one." It was a soliloquy which ought to have brought to his imagination the picture which those who followed his bier saw in front of the cottage, where once his footsteps sounded gladly in the hall, and have admonished him to make what little reparation lay in his power for those who were fain to hide from the hard-judging world the sorrow with which his untimely death wrung their hearts. Let it be a warning to such as have trod, like him, the same path of vice.

These sad terminations of the lives of two of his companions came with a warning emphasis to Col. Clarkson, that he

could not altogether disregard. For several weeks he was thoughtful, and resisted the entreaties of his friends to join in the game. Old habit, however, was more powerful than any warning the grave could give, and by degrees he fell back into the old routine. At the solicitation of some of his friends in New Orleans, he determined to spend the ensuing summer season at Last Island, a place of fashionable summer resort for a number of the wealthy seekers of pleasure in the Crescent City and other portions of Louisiana.

Mrs. Clarkson had an indefinable dread of spending the summer at Last Island, which she could not well explain. She tried to attribute it to a fear that her husband might fall in with worse company there than he would meet elsewhere; but she was not satisfied with the effort, as they would meet only a small and select company upon the Island, and though playing might be expected, it was much less likely to degenerate into the meaner grade of gambling than at watering-places they had previously visited. The sensation was like the shadow of coming evil. She could not account for it, and felt ashamed to have it influence her decision, but she could not avoid it. Her husband laughed at her fears, and obtained her reluctant consent to disregard them, and spend the summer upon the Island. Her feelings proved contagious, and the packing and preparing for their departure was a melancholy task, such as it had not been upon previous similar occasions. Agnes took a solitary walk over the garden, kissing the sweet flowers that bloomed around her; and wept as she took leave of the servants that were to be left behind, scarcely knowing why. Every thing around seemed sadly reluctant at the idea of separation. The long shadows of the trees appeared stretching out their arms to entreat her stay; and the sunbeams lingered longer upon her fair cheek, unwilling to leave so sweet a resting-place; and her heart sank within her as she bade adieu to all these home-scenes and treasures.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Of winds and waves, the strangely mingled sounds
Ride heavily; the night winds hollow sweep,
Mocking the sounds of human lamentation."

LAST ISLAND is situated in the Gulf of Mexico, distant from the mainland about twenty miles, and from the nearest point five or six miles. It is twenty-five miles in length, and from a half to three quarters in width, and only three or four feet above the waters of the Gulf. Exposed as it was to the full sweep of the water and breezes of the Gulf, it had become a most desirable resort in the summer months, and the planters in the Gulf Parishes of Attuckapas, Lafourche, and Terre Bonne, made it a summer retreat for themselves and families. Numbers from the city of New Orleans, and an occasional individual from other States, also resorted to it in preference to more crowded and less agreeable watering-places. A fine hotel had been erected upon the Island, and persons of wealth had built handsome summer cottages and some expensive edifices, which were furnished with taste and elegance. All that an unstinted purse and the best taste in the Magnolia State could do to make the Island a summer Eden had been done. The barren sand-bank had been made the seat of elegance, refinement, and hospitality, and from four to five hundred of the wealth, talent, beauty, and chivalry of the State of Louisiana and a few from Mississippi had gathered there. The leading officials of the State, executive, judicial,

and legislative, were there, and Colonel and Mrs. Clarkson found themselves surrounded by enlightened and congenial society, unsurpassed by any in the United States. There was an openness and abundance in the Creole hospitality that amounted almost to profuseness, and put everybody at ease, and the summer days flew swiftly and delightfully by. Mrs. Clarkson found in the educated and polished ladies of Lafourche and Assumption, material to drive away all the forebodings of evil which had made her reluctant to spend the summer on the Island, and often congratulated herself upon the pleasure which this delightful society opened to her. Col. Clarkson, too, found congenial spirits—men, even this elegant circle, who would play as much and bet as high as he could desire, but all in the most gentlemanly way; and though they would talk fast and sometimes loud, their conversation never sank to a level with that of the bully and blackguard. It was seductive, and for that reason the most dangerous companionship in the world. But the majority of visitors of both wealth and talent did not participate in the games—preferring other sources of enjoyment which their education, habits, and the Island furnished. Agnes too found a society to her taste. She met there a large number of young ladies of wealth and beauty, and they were not without young men of taste and education to serve them, and who spared no pains to make their time pass pleasantly.

One Friday evening, as Agnes was walking upon the beach with some of her companions, listening to the dash of the surf and the sigh of the summer breeze that lifted her locks, one of her associates, who had been noticing the passengers from the steamer which had just come in from the mainland, exclaimed:

"O! Agnes, see! What venerable gray-haired old man is that?"

Agnes turned to look, and saw the Hermit approaching

them. Delighted as she was to see him, it caused a chill about her heart that made her feel sick and faint. Recovering from the sensation, she bounded forward, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him.

"Is any thing the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing at home; all well there."

"Any thing the matter here?"

"I do not know. I am growing old, I fear, and superstitious. I felt as if some evil approached you, and you needed my presence, and I am here to serve you."

"O, my dear friend, what can it be!"

"Do not be alarmed; it may be nothing but the fancy of a foolish, fond old man."

"Do not say so; your presentiments have too much the shape of reality; and I have had a presentiment of evil myself, and so has ma. To-day, when I was reciting my prayers, in the little temporary chapel out there, the melancholy moan of the wind through the casement inspired me with a feeling of sadness I have not been able to get rid of all day."

"It may be nothing; but I thought it best to be here, and I have come. I did not intend that you should know of my presence unless I found you threatened with danger, and my efforts necessary for your safety. Do not be sad."

"I cannot avoid being sad, but I feel all the safer by your presence."

"Let your parents know I am here, and what brought me, but tell no one else."

Nothing happened of note that night. Agnes felt the presence of her strange intrepid guardian, and knew he kept watch near her. To avoid the curious looks of strangers, which were unpleasant to him, he had consented to become the guest of Col. Clarkson, who occupied a rented cottage. There was a gloom over the little circle all day on Saturday, notwithstanding the efforts of each to dispel it.

* Towards evening a heavy northeast wind began to blow. It sounded like a dirge to the inmates of the cottage, as it howled around the corners and whistled through the casement. It would occasionally lull, then dash over the Island, catch up the sand, whirl it in eddies through the air, then sprinkle it over the blue sparkling waters. The wind continued to increase during the night, coming in fitful gusts, that jarred the little cottage and made every timber crack—filling all with the fear of an approaching storm. Sunday morning the wind rushed and roared over the Island, blinding its temporary inhabitants with clouds of sand. About ten o'clock in the morning it blew a perfect hurricane, and all felt the tread and howl of the storm-god, and looked wildly around for help and safety. Agnes clung instinctively to the Hermit. The steamboat "Star" that plied between the Island and Bayou Boeuf had arrived outside the bar early on Sunday morning, but the water was too low for her at that time to cross the bar. Col. Clarkson was anxious to get aboard of her with his family, but there was no safe access. The storm soon came on with all its fury, and the steamer was floated across the bar near the door of the hotel. The Hermit urged Col. Clarkson to carry his family to the hotel, and, if possible, pass thence to the boat; but the rage of the tempest was such that it seemed like certain destruction to attempt it, and he shrank back appalled at the thought. The Hermit, however, seized Agnes, and, though blinded by the rain and deafened by the roar, he breasted the storm, and reached the hotel in safety, followed by the negro man, Abe—whom Clarkson had kept near his person since he rescued him from the flood—bearing in his arms two of his master's children.

The scene of terror and alarm at the hotel was beyond description. The chimneys of the steamer were blown away, and she threatened to be capsized and blown out to sea, to avoid which anchors were dropped, and all her cabin and

upper timbers were cut away. By the fury of the storm the waters were heaped up between the Island and the mainland, and upon their return, driven from the shore, the mad sea rushed over the Island. To avoid the rush of the waters, the terrified guests betook themselves to the upper rooms of the hotel. While there, a crash and wild cry, that rose above the thunder and rattle of the storm, drew all to the windows. A cottage, with its inmates, was seen borne upon the bosom of the flood and buried in the Gulf. The terrified occupants of other cottages rushed out and attempted to reach the hotel, and were washed away. Crash succeeded crash, and house after house yielded to the pressure of the storm and wind, and tumbled to pieces, or were borne away by the waves. Col. Clarkson felt his cottage shaking under him, and expected every moment it would go. His remaining children and servants were lashed to such articles of furniture as he hoped might be sufficient to buoy them up above the waves, should the storm carry away the cottage. The presence of mind of his wife amid the wild confusion was extraordinary. Every precaution was taken by her that could be to secure their safety. A sudden dash of wind carried away the roof of the house, killing one of the servants by a falling piece of timber. The other servants and children were borne off, and Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson seized hold of a heavy piece of floating timber and lashed themselves to it by means of strong strips of cloth, prepared by Mrs. Clarkson for that purpose. Agnes saw her parents float off with the wreck of the cottage, screamed, and fell back into the arms of the Hermit. A tremendous crash, and the cry, "The hotel is going!" caused a simultaneous rush to the basement. It was barely reached when the upper story was blown away, and the water rushed into the lower rooms. The scene that followed was awful. The deafening roar of the sea, the howl of the free winds, the fierce glare of the lightning, the torrent of falling rain, the

upheaving of the billows, the wrecks of houses, and the cry of men, women, and children, clinging for life to the floating timbers, presented a scene of the awfully sublime, such as few ever witnessed, and none who witnessed it can think of without a shudder and an involuntary invocation to the great God of the tempest and sunshine. It was evident to all that the remnant of the hotel, where the terrified survivors of the storm found temporary foothold, could not much longer withstand the combined force of the mad elements. The hull of the steamer lying near the door, fast anchored and nearly buried, alone promised to outride the storm; and thither the attention of the apparently doomed ones was directed: the distance was short, but the passage perilous to a degree that made the stoutest hesitate. It was a grand sight, amidst that terrified group, to see the stern gray-haired old Hermit, with bared head, face the tempest. He looked indeed like a very sea-god, and all turned instinctively to him for aid and counsel. When it became evident that the hull of the steamer offered the only hope of safety, he caught up Agnes as if she had been a child, and bore her in safety to the wreck. His example was quickly followed by others, but in such haste and confusion that great numbers lost their balance and were washed away. He strove to establish something like order, and performed prodigies of strength, as did others who were sufficiently self-possessed to act with judgment. There was only one moment when he manifested any thing like human emotion. The living had been swept from his side, falling timbers had prostrated others, mothers gathered around and prayed him to save their children, husbands to save their wives, and children their parents, and amid all he acted like a man of iron, helping where help could avail, but as deaf to cries and clamor as to the roar of the storm; but he had noticed an old man, about his age and make, who, like himself, had exerted every energy to save the frightened

guests, and had crossed at the imminent peril of his life some dozen or more times the fearful passage, each time bearing one or more persons too timid or too feeble to attempt it alone; and at last, in endeavoring to convey a lady across, missed his step, and, with the lady, was borne off into the boiling surge. The old man's eyes swam and the muscles of his face trembled as he saw his companion in danger and deeds of daring borne away by the revengeful flood, as if in rage at the numbers he had rescued from its liquid embrace. Among those who perished in their charitable efforts to save and rescue the timid was the faithful negro man Abe, who had struggled like a hero, and exhibited a contempt of danger and death to save the helpless that shamed many a white face. His deeds will be told over by many a mother to her offspring, both saved by his brawny arm. He did not perish until he had saved the two children of his master, taken by him from the cottage.

Between two and three hundred of Louisiana's bravest sons and most beautiful daughters in one short day found a watery grave, where but the day before all was hope and festivity! Not a tenement was left upon the Island.

The suffering upon the hull of the steamer, where the survivors were huddled together, was truly appalling. They remained there in an unsheltered, famishing condition all the succeeding night, and the next day and night, before relief came.

Vessels were sent out in search of those who might have saved themselves by clinging to falling timbers, and numbers were found and picked up. Agnes, who had been conveyed with the others to Berwick's Bay, waited until her heart grew sick and faint, hoping to hear that her father and mother were among those thus saved. But in vain: no tidings of them were had. The remains of her brother and sister who perished were found and recognized. A parcel

of wreckers, semi-pirates, who infested a portion of the coast and Island, had visited the scene of disaster in search of plunder, and had stripped such of the dead as were left upon the Island of every thing by which their friends might recognize them, and it was only in rare instances that the recovered bodies could be known by their surviving friends.

Each day Agnes would walk upon the beach, and look longingly out upon the now quiet Gulf, as if expecting to welcome her sea-washed parents from the embrace of the mermaid, and would turn disappointed away, and, with sad heart and weary step, return to the hotel in company with the Hermit. As she was about leaving for home, Robert Hamilton stepped unexpectedly into her apartment. She threw herself into his arms, and both wept in silence together. He at last said:

"I see you are prepared for your journey home. Go; I have heard all. The kind friend who has already done so much for you will see you home, and I will stay and search the coast and Gulf, and not leave off until I restore their dear remains to you, or all hopes of a recovery of them are gone."

"O, Robert! Robert!" she said, with her imploring face turned to his. "The sight of you has revived the hope almost dead at my heart that I shall again see my dear, dear parents. O, they cannot be lost! they cannot be lost! Something here"—pressing her hand upon her heart—"tells me they are not lost. O, my God! my God! spare a bended reed! Leave to me this hope—the sweet hope that I shall again see my parents. O God! I bend to thee, I bend to thee; break not the bended reed! O, may I see my parents once more, once more! O, my sad heart, it will break, it will break! What shall I do? O, what shall I do? Will not some kind angel guard and save my parents, my dear father, my blessed mother?"

"Yes, my daughter, yes," whispered the Hermit.

She gave him a wild, anxious, searching look. He looked abstractedly in her face, and said in a husky voice, "Yes, yes," without apparently being conscious of what he said. She sprang forward, threw her arms around his neck, and emptied into his broad bosom the flood that seemed drowning her heart. He immediately repented what he had said, and was astonished at the act. When he said it he believed it to be true, but the feeling left him as he felt the clasp of the young girl's arms around his neck, and he reproached himself for having inspired a hope his better judgment told him must be vain. He could not explain to himself why he had done a thing which seemed so unwarrantable, and which for the moment felt like reality, but which vanished almost with the sound of his voice. The thought of the terrible reaction which would take place when the hope thus incautiously inspired should be succeeded by despair, gave him the keenest sense of pain.

No persuasion of Hamilton or the Hermit could induce Agnes to leave until the search for her parents proved successful, or should be abandoned.

Vessels dotted the Gulf and bay in every direction in search of the missing, and every nook and obscure corner of the coast and bay were searched by smaller craft, but all in vain. Morning after morning came, but brought no tidings to Agnes.

Colonel Clarkson and his wife were borne off by the waves with the piece of timber to which they had lashed themselves, and, left to the mercy of the winds, they were blown far out to sea, beyond the range of the vessels sent in search of the missing. When the storm lulled, they were floated by the reflux waves in toward the land, but out of sight of the vessels and friends in search of them. All Sunday night, Monday, Tuesday, and Tuesday night they were buffeted by the sea. Their thirst and hunger were inexpressibly great.

He bore it less patiently than his wife, and begged her to loose him from the timber and let them go down together, but the true and brave woman encouraged him to patience and resignation. They were finally cast ashore a short distance up a small bayou. Clarkson was almost entirely disabled: his limbs were stiffened and swollen, and he was powerless to help himself, and his wife was barely able to move about. The country around them was flat and marshy, and their only chance of final rescue was that of being seen and picked up by some one passing along the bayou. They could see the vessels far out in the Gulf in search of them, but could do nothing to attract attention. They saw the skiff of Robert pass up the bayou and return, and were unable to make noise enough to attract his attention, though they did not at the time know who was in the skiff, nor that it was in search of them. They subsisted upon buds, and such crawfish and frogs as Mrs. Clarkson could catch, he being entirely unable to help himself. When they saw the skiff pass, and were unable to make themselves heard or seen, Mr. Clarkson despaired, and was detected by his wife in an effort to cut his throat with his pocket-knife. When interrupted by her, and the knife wrested from him, he begged to be led into the water, where they might perish together. She rebuked and exhorted him to patience and resignation.

Knowing that the skiff would pass near them on its return, she tore a width from the skirt of her dress and fastened it to a bush which she could shake, and by means of which she hoped to attract attention; but before the return of the skiff, some fishermen—an old man and his son—chanced to pass down, and, seeing the signal, took them in their scow and furnished them with food and fresh water, and started with them to their anxious friends. Hamilton in returning overtook them, and hastened to bear the welcome intelligence to Agnes. Her joy was as wild

as her grief. She flew to them and nestled close to them like some fond birdling. She could not speak; she felt too much for words. Nor did she forget the wants of those loved parents who had suffered such anguish upon the waters. It was affecting to see how patiently she bore the fretting of her sick and disabled father, and how unwearily she tended her worn-out but brave mother. Colonel Clarkson had lost almost entirely the use of his limbs; and his temper, which had always been so placid, was as irascible and fretful as an infant's. Mrs. Clarkson was nearly bald. The sea water had matted her long luxuriant hair, and the pain was so intolerable that she had managed to saw it off with her husband's pocket-knife whilst lying in the bayou.

The Hermit was so overcome when the news of their recovery reached him, that he buried his face in his hands, and the large tears forced themselves through his fingers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Brave spirits are a balsam to themselves:
There is a nobleness of mind that heals
Wounds beyond salves."

MRS. CLARKSON very soon recovered from the effects of her exhaustion and exposure. Not so, however, her husband: for some time he suffered almost torment in his limbs, and for several days he was unable to walk, and could only drag himself about with much difficulty and pain; and his fretfulness and peevishness made him a very difficult patient to nurse. Agnes and the rest of the family, including Robert and the Hermit, were all attention. His sufferings had evidently, to some extent, impaired his mind, and made him harsh and exacting towards his family, and especially so towards the wife who had braved with him the dangers of the tempest, and borne so patiently the cravings of hunger and thirst.

As soon as he was sufficiently recovered to travel, they started homeward. In passing New Orleans, they engaged a physician to accompany them to the plantation, where they went in preference to their residence in the city, as the sickly season was not entirely past, and the yellow fever had prevailed there the year previous. The attention of the doctor, for a few days after their arrival home, was directed exclusively to Col. Clarkson; but he chanced one day to notice the

appearance of the Hermit as he passed through the sick-room, and was struck by the appearance of bodily suffering visible upon his face, and, turning to him, said :

"My dear sir, you need my services far more than my patient here, whose sufferings—I beg his pardon for saying so—are to some extent imaginary."

This remark directed the attention of all to the Hermit, and they were surprised and pained to note the lines which suffering and disease had made, without their having observed it. They had thought only of the one who, by his complaints, had drawn attention to himself. It was so unusual for Col. Clarkson to be sick, and still more for him to fret and complain, that they had been absorbed by their sympathy for and attention to him, and had not thought of others. He, too, turned and looked at his old friend ; and the change was such, that he sprang up from the lounge upon which he lay with bandaged feet, and, despite the twinge which shot through his limbs as he put his feet heavily to the floor, he approached the Hermit, and said :

"My dear friend, and the saviour of my child, have you been thus uncomplainingly suffering, with disease feeding upon your life, while I have absorbed the attention of all by my childish complaints and fretting ? You must let the doctor prescribe for you, and we will all nurse you."

Agnes crept close to him, and, kneeling down by the chair in which he had seated himself, gave expression, by look and moan, to the deep feeling of sympathy which she felt for his sufferings, and a full acknowledgment of the double debt of gratitude she owed him ; and, at the same time, by her manner, expressed her pain and mortification that his sufferings should have so long escaped her notice.

"Never mind, my darling," said he ; "you have nothing to reproach yourself with. You have been used to regard me as exempt from pain—something beyond human suffer-

ing and disease ; and I have thought so too. For thirty years, I have not been subject to the ills and infirmities to which flesh is heir. It is changed now. The cord of life is loosening ; my office tenure is nearly out."

"O do not talk so ! do not talk so, my kind friend !"

"Do not distress yourself : it is a pleasure rather than a pain to me that life is losing its hold upon me. I have little to bind me here, and much to draw me to the home of the blessed beyond the floods and casualties of this life. And do not, I beseech you, make bitter the only cup which I have longed to drink, by unavailing sorrow at the prospect of my departure. I can be of no more service to you ; so let me pass, without regret, to embrace those who have long waited my coming. I knew my course was run when your parents were recovered from the Island wreck. I had then nothing further left for me to do ; and my days since have been only so many steps downward."

"O ! you will live, and be spared to us yet many years !"

"Not so, my child. Would you know why I have been from the first so drawn to you ? My life has been all thought and feeling, and in you I found a sympathy which I did not see in others ; and it secured you a place in my withered heart, which you have warmed by your innocence and love. Let the thought of the little sunshine you have given to the evening of my life console you for the loss you may feel when I am gone."

Agnes and all tried to dissuade him from such thoughts, and to think of life rather than death ; and the doctor said :

"You are mistaken, my old friend : you will outlive us all yet."

"I am not mistaken, Doctor, and your looks tell me that you know I am not. The springs of life are all dried up, and I experience a giving way of the vital functions which warns me that my end is nigh. My dear girl," turning to

Agnes, "like the mistletoe, you have added a little verdure to an old dried trunk; but it was not native growth, and the bare trunk must go. It was once a pleasure to think that when the summons should come, there would be none left to drop a tear on my coffin, or follow my remains to the grave, save the two old companions of my solitude. But I am selfish enough to feel a melancholy gratification that one so pure and good as you, will some timesthink kindly of me when I am gone."

At their earnest solicitation he consented to take whatever prescription the doctor might offer him; but no persuasion could prevail upon him to remain at Col. Clarkson's house. He persisted in his determination to return to his own humble cottage. The next day he was unable to make his accustomed visit to Col. Clarkson. The latter, feeling deeply rebuked by the Hermit's uncomplaining course, and grieved that he should have been the means of diverting attention from the greater sufferer, threw off his lethargy; and, though the effort cost him considerable pain, walked with his wife to the Hermit's cottage. They found him in bed, unable to be up. What kind nursing could do to alleviate pain, and ward off the stroke of death, was done. Mrs. Clarkson, whose full woman's heart flowed out to him for having twice restored to her her child, was assiduous in her attentions to him. He had a powerful frame, and, like a solid fortress, it yielded slowly to the enemy. The gray of autumn set in, and he still lay upon his bed, with the kind and ever attentive nurses about him. The leaves of the china trees which shaded his yard and house had all turned that pale and beautiful yellow which precedes their fall; and, at each gentle rustle of the autumn wind, would leave the stem, and flutter in clouds to the ground, falling as soft as snow-flakes, and producing a singularly sad, pleasing sensation, that forced upon the mind thoughts of decay and death. One such

afternoon, he motioned Agnes to approach him, and asked her to hand him a little casket that lay upon a table near the foot of his bed. From it he took a manuscript, carefully rolled up, and, looking at Mrs. Clarkson, said:

"It was with no desire to write a tale, or to interest any one in my history, nor to excuse my unproductive and solitary life, that I have penned this sketch of myself. I did it because I knew you must have some desire to know who I am, and why I am thus, and you are entitled to have that desire gratified. My end draws near, and I would hear you read it. I have a human weakness to be known to those I love and who love me, before I go. Please read;" handing the manuscript to Agnes.

It was a severe task for Agnes, in her agitated state of mind, to comply with his request; but she did so, and, rallying her energies, read:

CHAPTER XXXV.

"A blossom full of promise is life's joy,
That never comes to fruit."

THE HERMIT'S HISTORY.

My father, David Stanley, was an unpretending planter in one of the southern or middle counties of Mississippi. My parents were both pious people of the Baptist persuasion, and resided near a country church where the different Christian denominations of the newly settled country, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian, preached once in each month. My father was one of the earliest settlers in the neighborhood, and had moved there when I was quite a child. When I was twelve or fourteen years of age, the neighborhood was thickly settled by small planters and farmers, each owning his homestead and stock, some a few negroes, and others a good many more. This was before the speculations which prostrated the energies of the State and ruined its morals. At that time the society was moral, and good schools were abundant and well patronized, and the largest hospitality and best social feeling prevailed. My father was the wealthiest planter in the neighborhood, and his house, though rough, was large and roomy, and his hospitality unbounded, and his home became a resort for all the young people in the neighborhood, more particularly upon Church days. I had an older brother,

and also a sister older than myself. At the time I speak of, my brother was twenty-three years of age, and my sister seventeen, and were both fond of company, and were good equestrians. My tastes were different. Society was distasteful to me, though it was always a pleasure to see company at my father's house. When the young people would gather there, and make the house, and woods, and orchards vocal with their boisterous glee, I would take my dog and Amos, my faithful old serving-man, then a lad, and wander through the fields and woods, or along the brook that watered the large pasture-ground. Game was abundant, but I had no desire to kill it. I delighted to see the wild deer bound free through the grand old woods, and felt a pang when one was shot down, and its beseeching eyes rolled in search of sympathy and help. I was enthusiastically attached to my sister, and loved my mother with a feeling akin to idolatry. I would sit for hours and watch her at her needlework. At such times I had no wish to talk, I only wanted to think. I did not care to be with her when others were present. I had the same feeling with regard to my sister. I loved to see her admired and courted, and when none others were by I sought her company, and would listen to her voice as she would talk, sing, and read, with a music in her tone and accent that always charmed me. At such times I was silent; if another joined us I would walk off, though I was never jealous. I did not then nor do I know now the feeling of jealousy. I could think of her, look at her, and listen to her clear, ringing, happy laugh, just as well removed a little from her as when nearer.

The family for a long time thought me lacking in that spirit and resolution which characterized both branches of my family, but upon one occasion I chanced to hear a gentleman make a light remark about my sister—something about her being heartless, a coquette, or something of that sort—

and the fierce, demon-like spring which I made upon him, and clawed his face and tore his bosom, startled everybody, and not only removed the fear of a want of proper spirit, but caused great anxiety on my account on the part of my mother. It gave to her a knowledge of my character, which enabled her to shape her lessons so as to weed out passions and noxious thoughts which might otherwise have been my bane. I never joined the gay cavalcades formed by the young people. I had no wish to join in them, yet I loved to see them. Horseback was almost the only mode of conveyance in the country at that time, and men and women were of necessity good riders; my sister was particularly so, and it afforded me the intensest pleasure to see her in her beautiful, close-fitting riding-habit, and graceful little cap, with long drooping feather, vault into the saddle and bound off, with heart as light and free as her horse's heels. She always understood me; my brother never did, though I never censured him; indeed, I never thought of it.

After a time, more wealthy planters and speculators began to move in and buy up the smaller farms, and to open large plantations. The felling of the forest and the breaking up of the virgin soil occasioned a decay of vegetable matter, which produced annually congestive chills and fevers, which carried off a large number of the population, and among others, within a few weeks of each other, my mother, brother, and sister, leaving my father and myself to weep over their graves, and mourn that we could not accompany them. I hardly know how I survived this utter wreck and ruin of my every earthly feeling and hope! The void, the vacancy about the heart, can be understood only by those who have felt it. Even now, when all is wilted about me and my very muscles are dry and hard, and time's ploughshare has made deep furrows on my then smooth face, my heart cleaves closer to my side as I draw the veil which time has flung over my

long-buried grief. The blow was equally heavy upon my father. His all was gone. We were the last of our race. I had been told of a female cousin, but my father had never been able to ascertain if she were living; and, of a large family, my father and myself only remained. My silent, thoughtful life had made me secondary with him to his other children. In his plans and hopes for the future I was not included, except as an object to be provided for. In my older brother, all his hopes for the family and its success had been centred. It was long before he rallied sufficiently to consider what had best be done with me. He thought it advisable to send me to college, and yielded to the persuasion of an old friend of his, who had disposed of his place and negroes in Mississippi and settled in one of the Western States, to place me under his guardianship, to be sent to a new and flourishing college, in the village in which he lived. Thither I was accordingly taken. The village was a quiet and orderly place, and the school as good as a new and only partially endowed college could be. The teachers were kind, and I was well satisfied with my situation.

The change of scene and formation of new acquaintances by degrees blunted the edge of my grief, and I became as cheerful and lighthearted as others. I was contented; I believe I was happy, if a perfectly inactive state of feeling and sentiment could be called happiness. If I did well or ill, it was not from a desire to do either, for I am not conscious of ever having formed a design of any kind. I acted by the mere force of chance. If I behaved virtuously, as I believe I did, I deserved no credit for it, as it was done without thought, and because I had formed no vicious habit, and hence was not tempted to do wrong. To those whose society was agreeable to me, I was a favorite, for I was never moody, always cheerful, and preferred to listen rather than talk; and those whose society was unpleasant to me, I avoided rather

by instinct than by design, and hence never gave them offence. Though often invited, I never attended any of the parties given in town, nor for some time extended my acquaintance beyond the family of my guardian. Being from the South, and having the reputation of great wealth, I was much caressed both in the college and by persons in town, though such a thing never occurred to me at the time. Upon one occasion I was invited by the young lady who lived at the house of my guardian—a ward and relative of his—to an evening party given by her at his house. I did not think of going at first, but my roommate, the only other young man in the college who had been invited, insisted upon it, as he was anxious to be introduced to the family, and would not go without me. The company was small and select, and among the guests was Miss Jessie Stanhope. How I became introduced to her, and why I gave my exclusive attention to her, and how I chanced to accompany her home, I do not know, and did not then, but such was the case. Whether I danced, or whether I talked, or who was there, and what was done three days afterwards, I could not have told. If I left her during the evening, I do not know it; if I slighted others, I do not know it; if we were the subject of remark, I do not and did not know it, nor did I think of such a thing. I only know that my heart before I went there was vacant, empty, except memories which would sometimes crowd upon me in my moments of solitude, and she filled it. There was no excitement, no fire in the sentiment she inspired, but a quiet, tranquil, satisfied feeling, a revival of the feeling covered by the grave-clothes that shrouded the loved form of a lost sister, with an additional feeling which I did not understand, but which added to the pleasure which her society gave me. She was the only lady except my mother and sister that I was conscious of ever having thought about. Why in all my evening walks afterwards I should pass the house at which she was

staying, I never asked myself, and never thought of it. Her father was dead, and herself and mother were staying with her uncle, an old childless widower. The house was a large three-story brick building, containing four immense parlors on the lower floor, with a large wide hall, with high ceiling, dividing the two suites of rooms. The parlors on each side were provided with folding-doors, which were thrown open on grand occasions. They were expensively furnished, and exactly alike. The owner was vain of his folly, and fond of displaying it to visitors. He had been acquainted with my father in early life, when but a poor man, and was anxious to make an exhibition of his finery to me, and had often before my acquaintance with his niece pressed me to visit him and look at his house, but which I had declined from indifference, and not from a disinclination to afford him an opportunity of gratifying his pride. Now, however, my visits were as often as he could desire. From going once a week, I increased it to twice, three times, and from that to every evening, and spent my Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays in the company of his niece. Whether my attentions to her were remarked by others never occurred to me; I wanted to go, and I went, and was satisfied when there, and was restless when away. If I found visitors there, and I could not have her all to myself, I went away. A month or six weeks from the date of my first introduction, our intimacy was such that as soon as my foot sounded upon the pavement, she would leave other company and bound forward to meet me, and, arm in arm, or, as often happened, our arms around each other like brother and sister, we would walk the garden, or, seated upon the stone-sill under the high projecting portico, the roof of which was sustained by large tall pillars of the Doric order, and holding each other's hand, the swift hours passed away. Whether she was beautiful or not never occurred to me; I do not think I looked at her face—at least I am not now conscious of

having ever done so. That I had looked into and through her face at the soul that shone in it, and gave it life and expression, a thousand times, and gazed like one entranced, is true; but I never marked or noticed an outward feature. In this state of utter obliviousness to every thing but the object of my idolatry, between seven and nine months glided unconsciously away. The first thing that broke the happy revery was a letter from my father, informing me of his intention to remove me after the spring session to one of the older colleges in the Eastern States, and selected Yale. I showed the letter to Jessie, and the thought of separation pained us both. We had never talked love, never plighted faith, had never thought of doing so, or that such a thing was common. It no more occurred to me to "make love to her," in the ordinary acceptation of that term, than to a sister or an angel. That we were to live and love, and be all to each other, was understood as a thing of course, and neither thought nor asked for vows. No promises were given, and none asked—none were needed. Our hearts were bound by a web stronger than words could weave. That we were always to be to each other what we were was a thing of course, as much so as that a mother would always love and cherish her offspring.

Some time previous to the receipt of the letter, her uncle, an unjust, capricious man, from some affront, real or imaginary, offered him by Mrs. Stanhope, intimated that she had kept house for him long enough, and she purchased a small cottage in the edge of the town, with a piece of woodland and a neat pretty garden attached, into which she and her daughter went to reside, and were residing there when I received the letter from my father.

A short time before I left we wandered through the green woods and culled the wild rose and other spring flowers together, and talked of when my education would be finished and we meet again; it would take three years at Yale to

complete the course of study, and three years was to be the time of my exile. That I should be back three years from the day of my departure was as certain as that I would return home at the close of my college course.

I prolonged my stay in the village as long after the close of the college exercises as I could—giving myself only time to get to Yale at the opening of the session. The day of my leave-taking at last came. Jessie and I walked the garden and sat upon the door-step as we had done a thousand times before. In the little parlor I bade good-bye to Mrs. Stanhope. She gave me her blessing and went weeping from the room. Jessie walked to the door, leaned her head upon my shoulder, her long curls sweeping about her face and neck. Our tears mingled, as did our feelings and hearts. All I could say was to whisper in a choking voice, "Three years, three years, I shall be back." I pressed a kiss upon her forehead and tore myself away. The cottage was situated at the head of an avenue, a half or three quarters of a mile long; at the end of it I turned and saw her, as when I left, leaning against the door-facing.

I had consented some time previous to act as groomsman to a young college-mate upon that evening, not knowing at the time I consented to do so that it would be my last evening with Jessie and her mother. When I found that such would be the case, I asked to be excused from serving, but the young man was of the humble class of collegiates, and I saw that he was likely to misunderstand my motive in wishing to be released from my engagement, and I could not avoid wounding his feelings without a full explanation—which I was unwilling to give—and so fulfilled my promise to him.

After the wedding, I remained all night at the residence of the bride's father. The next morning a widower, brother-in-law of my friend, and an inmate of the house where I boarded, came running in with great glee, calling out, "A

letter for Mr. Stanley from Miss Jessie!" and handed me the following letter:

Rose Cottage, July —.

DEAR HORACE:—Uncle is here, and complains of your not calling to take leave of him, and I take advantage of his intention to call and bid you farewell in the morning to write to you and enclose you a dry rose-bud and leaves from the bouquet of wild flowers last gathered by us; when again we meet, it can be restored to its companions.

O, how sad and lonely I feel! and what a long, dreary three years stretch their length out before me! I try and try, but cannot look to the end! It fades into confused obscurity. A broad, shaded and straight lane seems to open before me as I strain my thoughts and eyes to the future, but it is short, and a little beyond it is clouded and confused. O that the confusion would break away and I could look down the path, the long avenue to the future! You do not know how sad it makes me. Is it ominous? Kind angels forbid! It is foolish in me to write thus, but I feel so sad. The fancy I know arises from the confusion of every thing as I watched you pass down the avenue to-day. A film covered my eyes, and as you moved farther down the avenue, every thing grew confused. I could see you going, going, going, but all swam before me, and I could distinguish nothing clearly. This, I am sure, caused the distressing fancy which torments me as I try to look forward through three years of time. I ought not to trouble you with such things, but I feel all the better, now it is written. I hope you will not disappoint your friend by refusing to act as his groomsman, as you spoke of doing this afternoon. I can understand the sacrifice you make, and the effort it costs you to act a part in a scene of festivity when the heart is burdened. I sympathize with you. I judge you by myself: I would not exchange the pleasure I feel in

sitting here, thinking of, and writing to you, for any earthly good except your presence. I can therefore fully appreciate the self-abnegation and the kindliness of heart which induce you to suffer yourself, rather than mortify the pride of an humble friend, by refusing to take part in his joy.

Must this, indeed, be the last letter I shall write to you during our long separation? I fear it must be so, for I shall not like grim old unsentimental professors to see what I write before it is placed in your hands, and by the rules of the college which you showed me, they claim that right. You must write to me; you surely will find means to smuggle a letter to the post. But no; that would not be right, and your honest nature would not allow you to do what you cannot do openly, nor would I tempt you to do so. We must, therefore, be satisfied to write every thing in our journals, and read when we meet. I have already begun mine.

At eight o'clock I shall look up at the stars, whose soft twinkle we have so often watched together, especially the two we call "our stars;" at half-past nine at night, I shall write in my journal, and as the clock strikes ten at night, and seven in the morning, I shall recite my prayers. I know you will do the same. I shall thus see you reflected from the stars, and our vision and thoughts can meet and interchange there, and at the great cathedral altar on high our petitions will meet, and our love centre in the Source of all love and good!

Uncle calls for my letter. Excuse the blots my tears have made: I could not help but cry.

Yours ever,

JESSIE.

There were several young ladies and gentlemen present, of the class most likely to gossip, and, as they were disposed to regard Miss Jessie as proud, because she chanced to move in a sphere somewhat removed from theirs—though neither

higher in the sense the poor too often regard it, nor esteemed by her as higher than their own—I felt it my duty so to act in the matter as to secure her from unkind remark. All clamored to see the letter, and had many remarks and “guesses” to make about it. I affected to treat it as nothing, and promised to read it to them, if they would meet me in the sitting-room after breakfast. They did so; and I pretended to read the letter, but read such a one as an indifferent person would write, using the excuse she had made in her letter for writing; and added some trifling request, which gave it all an air of propriety. They were annoyed to hear nothing more, and their curiosity disappointed. The hurry and bustle of departure made it impossible to explain to Jessie what I had done, and it soon passed out of my mind, and gave place to the deeper feeling, the consciousness that leagues were fast multiplying between me and the dear object of my love. It would be impossible to describe the sadness which weighed upon my spirits, but it only added zeal to my firm purpose of study. Travel was not as rapid then as now, and I only arrived at college a day or two before the commencement of the fall session. The last use I made of my liberty was to write a long letter to Jessie.

In the course of eighteen months, my father grew uneasy upon the subject of abolition; and the college itself being but a hot-bed of abolition fanatics, he transferred me from Yale to Princeton, where I completed my course of study. Soon after I entered at Princeton, in a letter received from my father, he mentioned having received some letters directed to me at Yale, and forwarded from thence to his care, adding that he would retain them until I returned home, unless I should request otherwise. I supposed them to be letters written by some of my old college chums whom I had left in the West, and thought nothing more of it.

As the time drew near when I should finish my course

and visit the loved of my heart, my anxiety and impatience were almost uncontrollable. I had learned some time previous, from a paragraph in a newspaper sent me, with black lines run around it, that Mrs. Stanhope had rented her cottage, and removed with her daughter somewhere upon the Northern lakes. This prevented my writing during my vacations, as I did not know where to direct my letters. It gave me no anxiety, however, as the image of Jessie was always present; and I knew that upon the third anniversary of the day of our separation, and at the same hour, when I should turn into the avenue leading to her mother's cottage, I should see her, as last I saw her, in her white dress leaning against the door-facing, looking wistfully for my coming; and she would bound forward to meet me, as she had done a hundred times before. And O how I longed to throw my arms around her, and receive her joyous welcome home!

A few days before the close of the session, I received a letter from home informing me of my father's death. I acknowledge with shame that it scarcely affected me, so intense was my desire to be restored to the girl of my heart. His death, however, made it requisite that I should hasten home, which I did immediately upon the receipt of my diploma. I graduated, it seems, with honor, and stood first in all my classes; but I was not conscious of either, nor once gave it a thought.

My college days passed like a dream, a shadow. I do not know the names of five of my college-mates, and did not when I left college. If they, or my teachers, or my books ever attracted a distinct thought, it has not left its impress. I am only conscious of quite an annoyance and a *to do*, congratulations, etc., at the close of my college-course, but nothing more.

I found that I would barely have time to get home, and attend to necessary business affairs, and to reach the little

village where I left Jessie and her mother upon the longed-for anniversary. I wrote, the day I left Princeton, a hurried note to an old classmate, who had located in the village to practice his profession, of the death of my father; and asked him to write to me, so that his letter would reach me before leaving home, and requested him to give me any news he had to impart respecting Mrs. Stanhope and her daughter.

Upon my arrival home, and reading over my father's will, and seeing so many evidences of his worth and kindness, and so many things demonstrative of his loneliness, and desire to be united with his family in heaven, and his many anxieties on my account, and the care he had taken to provide every thing for my comfort and happiness, I was rebuked and humbled; and felt for the first time the real sorrow of a son for the loss of a good father. I deeply regretted that I had not done more to lighten his sorrow. I was astonished and mortified to find, upon reflection, that he had scarcely been in my thoughts during my long absence, though I had been the only living object of his thoughts and care. I eagerly looked into his correspondence with the college faculty, to see if any thing had been reported to him of me which might have added to his sorrow. It was one of the most delicious moments of my life, when I discovered that, so far from bad reports, they were of the most flattering and encouraging kind. It was not that I thought I deserved praise for what I had done, for I did not, as I had acted mechanically, without the desire of good, or the temptation to do wrong, but solely to finish my course of study by a particular day. The pleasure I experienced was the consciousness that I had chanced to act in a manner that gave him the only pleasure left for him in life. I had, according to the reports, been most exemplary in my deportment, and successful in my studies; and enjoyed the good will and confi-

dence of my teachers, and the affection of my schoolfellows. It was all news to me; as much so as if it had been written of a stranger; but, true or false, it made me happy, and enabled me to kneel without serious self-reproach in the family burying-ground, where my parents, brother, and sister lay buried.

I picked up the bundle of letters my father had spoken of as having been forwarded to his care from Yale. The seals were unbroken, another evidence of his kindness and delicacy. Most of them were from old schoolmates. Only one attracted my attention: it was a package in the handwriting of Jessie. My pulse beat quick with delight as I hastily broke the seal; but O! what suffocation succeeded, when there dropped from it a plain gold ring which I had placed upon her finger, and a lock of my hair which she had clipped, and worn with her curls, and a few dried rose-leaves and buds! My breath came hard, and the rush of blood to my head blinded me, and it was some time before I could see to read. The letter read thus:

HORACE STANLEY, ESQ.:

Sir, I once loved you! O God, how dearly! But it is past. I then thought you a gentleman; I know better now. I then thought you all that was honorable, all that was noble, all that was generous; but I have been taught better. And O! what a lesson, what a lesson, what a lesson for this poor, weak, trusting, breaking heart to learn! I am ashamed that you have the power to wring such exclamations and such tears from me!

I enclose the lock of hair which I once wore and loved for your sake. I send you the rosebuds and leaves we last gathered together. Their natural sweetness fled long since, but love gave to the dry withered things a sweetness far

greater than the fresh ones that bloomed where we trod, and now attract the bee and the butterfly; but this is gone, and they are now but thorns and dust.

I have heard of your base exposure of my letters, your trifling with my dearest affections before a giddy, thoughtless, vulgar crowd. If it is any pleasure to you to know that you won my affections, that they were all yours—yours to sport with and ridicule before the gossips in town—if it is any pleasure to you to know that you have humiliated, bent me low in the dust before my inferiors, you are welcome to it. Your triumph is complete. I am bent, broken! I am no longer the happy, joyous, but the wretched, heartbroken

JESSIE STANHOPE.

P. S.—I have opened this to say: Surely my trusting, happy heart could not have been so mistaken! You cannot be so base as these people tell me! There must be some mistake! If there is, O relieve my aching, bursting heart by telling me so. It will depend upon your explanation whether you will ever again hear from

JESSIE.

I looked at the date, and saw with consternation that the letter was nearly twenty months old! By my silence I stood convicted; before my heart's idol, of all that these gossippers had said. What must have been her pain as she waited, mail after mail, for the expected explanation, which, alas, did not come! And how she bowed down under the consciousness of my villainy, as time gradually removed all hope of an explanation! My silence itself was an insult, and added an additional weight to the already overburdened heart. The thought was maddening. I ordered my trunk to be packed, and the carriage made ready to convey me to the river, where I might take the first upward-bound boat. As I was about starting, a letter was brought to me from the post-office. It was from the classmate I had written to on leaving Prince-

ton. I opened it hastily, hoping to hear something from Jessie; it ran thus:

SIR:—I was sorry to receive a letter from you this morning. I do not regret the death of your father, as I suppose he died ignorant of the baseness of his only son.

I will so far gratify your curiosity to know something of the victim of your heartlessness, to inform you that upon receiving full assurance of your baseness she sank under it, and has gradually wasted away, and is now worn to a shadow. Her mother, grief-worn and sad, will leave with her for Cuba on the next downward trip of the steamer Elkhorn, which will be in about ten days, there to die, should she reach Cuba alive, which I very much doubt. In your future coquetties and flirtations, may the grief-worn image of this pale girl fling its shadow before you! I was slow, Horace Stanley, and so was she, to think you utterly base. She hoped, if you could not explain, you would at least apologize. But no! you preferred the full benefit of your triumph! Well, you have it! and welcome be all the pleasure it may give you.

Sad and unjust as the letter was, it contained news, and I directed the captain of the boat upon which I took passage not to fail under any circumstances to hail and place me on board the steamer Elkhorn, should we meet her on her downward trip. The second day I was informed that the steamer was in sight, and O, how my heart leaped! How I longed to meet and explain all, and restore health to that pale face!

The signal-bell tapped, and was answered as we supposed by the Elkhorn, but the ringing on the latter became furious, and the wild howl of "Fire!" went up from her by a hundred terrified voices. She became unmanageable in a moment, and the whole side next to the boat upon which I stood, satchel in hand, ready to leap aboard, was wrapped in flames;

and, to save his own boat, the captain was compelled to back her from the burning wreck. I saw two locked in each other's arms spring from the wreck, the long locks of the feeble floated for a moment upon the water, a wild piercing shriek, and they went down—all I loved on earth! I leaped madly into the stream, and exhausted every effort to rescue them, but, alas! the waters of the muddy Mississippi closed over them, and shut out all hope of explanation or reconciliation, in this life. The one only loved, the one only thought of for three years of arduous labor had gone to her liquid grave believing me a scoundrel; and that belief had killed her! "If the Everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter," I should have cast myself in the stream and perished with the object of my love.

Is it any wonder that I stood upon the bank a wreck, without one hope, one aim, but death? Is it a wonder that I eschewed society, and wore away the grass walking near her loved remains?

Just opposite here, due west three hundred and seventy-five yards from the bank, she went down, and right there I want my remains to go down. It is my request that the rosebud that will be found by itself in the casket be pinned to my bosom, and that my journal, in which are the rose-leaves and lock of hair, be placed, sealed as it is, in the coffin with me, and that the coffin be furnished with weights sufficient to sink me to the bottom beside her. The ring I give to Agnes for her wedding-ring; it was intended to grace the finger of a bride as innocent, fair, and worthy as she, but it was ordered otherwise. She will not fail to wear it.

The silence which succeeded the reading was almost painful, it was so breathless. It was immediately broken by the Hermit, who said:

"You will say I ought to have had more philosophy, and torn myself away from here, and learned to forget, as I

had in the case of my sister. Perhaps I ought; but I could not: I lacked the resolution. If I could have seen her but for a moment, and removed from her mind the belief of my guilt, I should have been satisfied, and my life would have been different."

As he ceased speaking, Mrs. Clarkson walked to the bedside, and kneeling down buried her face in her hands, and her whole frame shook with emotion. Calming herself, she raised her eyes to his, and said:

"And this is Horace Stanley, my only relative, the last of our house and name!"

The Hermit put his hand upon her head, and fixed upon her his stony gaze. Something like a smile of recognition passed over his rigid features, and he whispered, "A blessing upon you, Amy, cousin Amy."

After this he lay for some time apparently dozing. Waking up, he began to talk at random; his mind was wandering. It was affecting to hear him.

"To-day," said he, "is the anniversary of our parting! I am hastening to see her; it is near the hour. Here is the avenue. How natural every thing looks! Ah! did I not tell you she would be waiting? There she stands, the sweet creature, where I left her three years ago, with her white dress and curls. Ah! she sees me! she knows me! she runs to meet me! She flies! Look! look! she floats upward!" His eyes were directed so earnestly in the direction of the river, that all involuntarily turned to look, and saw one of those strangely beautiful illusions which may sometimes be seen in the swamp: a light fleecy cloud, in the shape of a woman, with long flowing hair and loose robe, floating upward. "I knew you would be waiting, watching for me, darling. I have kept my promise to you, love!" and held out his arms as if to embrace her, and sank back, dead!

They had met, and all was explained and all forgiven.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"A good *wife's* prayer

Will from the deepest dungeon climb to heaven's height,
And bring a blessing down."

THE wishes of the Hermit were scrupulously carried out, and Mrs. Clarkson and Agnes, often after his burial, walked up and down his old, solitary, well-worn path, talking of his virtues, his stern integrity, his great courage, and, above all, of the strange and incomprehensible manner in which he had served them; and how Almighty God had shown them at last who he was; and of their great happiness in smoothing his pillow in his last moments, and that it was not left for strange hands to perform for him the last sad but sacred wish of his heart.

On examining his papers, he was found to be the owner of a large fortune, a part of which was disposed of in charity; the remainder was given to Robert, to take effect on the day of his marriage with Agnes. He left a request that Col. Clarkson should act as trustee for his old serving-man Amos and his wife, and allow them the use of the cottage, stock, and ground, so long as they lived, and at their death it was to go to Robert and Agnes.

Mr. Clarkson, as winter approached, recovered his health, and took his family to the city. His wife was anxious that he should dispose of his residence in town, and make the

plantation his permanent home. He suspected her reasons, but did not partake of her fears. There was no danger of his becoming a confirmed gambler, he would often say to himself—he so detested the character. On his return to Bluff City, he was beset by his old companions, and, in violation of all his good resolutions, joined in their games, drinking deeper and playing more desperately than ever before. He would occasionally dispute and quarrel with the rest, and when it was over and his mind fell back upon itself, he would feel humiliated, and resolve not to yield again; but he had no moral or religious ballast to sustain him, and human strength yielded to temptation.

One night, for the first time in his life, he got into a regular brawl, and was badly hurt. He was borne home, almost insensible, to his deeply mortified and distressed family; and for several days after he remained in the house, apparently in deep thought.

It was a lovely evening in the last of October—one of those soft, golden fall days, when all nature sets the heart to thinking—when she seems to say with the softest and most pleading voice: Man! look into thyself; see thyself in the falling leaf; listen to the autumnal breeze whispering mournfully in the stout old forest trees, scattering their lingering verdure, and telling of decay. All this Col. Clarkson felt as he sat on his gallery, and his eye ran over the beautiful landscape, tinged here and there with the finger of death. He thought of poor Smith, of Isaacs, and Orr; he thought of Blunt, and Floyd; thought of what they were when he knew them years ago—how each had gone back. From these his mind turned to others whose path of life had been in a different direction: how worthless one class was, and how useful the other.

In this thoughtful state of mind, his eye wandered over the lovely landscape in search of something to rest upon—something real and substantial—something beyond the power

of time and decay. Thus chastened by the gentle voice of nature, his eye fell upon the church which stood in full view of his house, and of which his wife and Agnes had long since become practical members. The beauty of the building had never struck him before; and looking at it a few minutes in silent admiration, he arose, took his hat and went out. It was the first time he had left the house since his affray, and his wife watched him with a beating heart, trembling for the result of a visit to the clubs in his excited state of mind. His steps, however, were not towards the clubs or drinking-saloons. He seemed attracted to the vicinity of the church. He stood without a short time admiring its architectural proportions and lofty steeple, and his curiosity, and a feeling he could not withstand, led him into the interior. The grandeur and stillness of the place filled him with respect and awe, and here and there a silent figure, in deep devotion, made him inly exclaim: "This is none other than the house of God!" He felt irresistibly drawn onward, and, inspired by a worshipful feeling, he seemed in the presence of the old patriarchs of the Church, and of the great Builder himself.

Kneeling before the altar was a female figure, in deep, earnest devotion. She seemed wrestling with Almighty God for some great want, and would not let him go until he blessed her. The form was familiar to Clarkson, and the sight touched him. It was his true and faithful wife. When she saw the direction he had taken, that he sought the quiet of the church rather than the exciting bowl or card-table, she hastened to pour out her grateful heart in thanks to God, and had gone in unobserved at the rear entrance. He walked softly to where she was—kneeled by her side, and said:

"From henceforth, Amy, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." He had found something real—something his whole life had needed—something beyond the power of time or decay—something more than human strength

to assist him in resisting temptation: he had seized upon the only thing which could save him; and there, before the altar, the husband and wife prayed together for the first time, and mingled their tears with their prayers. It was a sight for saints and angels to rejoice over. The long years of anxiety, of prayer, and watchfulness, the loving trust, the patience and Christian forbearance of Mrs. Clarkson, how fully were they repaid in that happy moment! As she rose from her kneeling posture, the clergyman, an elderly, venerable man, observing her peculiarly happy countenance, looked anxiously a moment at Mr. Clarkson. He saw it all, and said, in kindest tone,

"Take courage, my daughter. The *husband* of such a *wife* can never be lost."

Two weeks after, Mr. Clarkson was regularly received into the Church; and the same day, Agnes and Hamilton were united in marriage.

On each Sunday after, Col. Clarkson might have been seen worshipping with his family, an example for all good fathers. All trace of former dissipation had disappeared from his now fine intellectual countenance; and he walked among men a noble specimen of God's creation.

Three years have since passed. Robert Hamilton has continued to rise in his profession, winning golden opinions from all classes of people. Vaughan sleeps by the side of sweet Alice St. Cloud. Their graves are covered with the same vine, kissed by the same moonbeams, and watered by the tears of the same heart-broken mother, who still pays her daily visit to the grave of her child. James Blunt has committed forgery, and was saved from the penitentiary by the exertions of Robert Hamilton. His wife, Pet, has obtained a divorce from him, and returned to her father with infant twins. The other "girls" are all well married, and most excellent and exemplary women. They attend the same old unfash-

ionable church, and their husbands, though not of their own faith, often say to each other, "There can be no harm in a religion which makes such devoted and dutiful wives." Piper is a wiser if not a better man: his nose droops more than formerly, and so does Gilpin's tail; but he does not desecrate the Sabbath as he used to, or grumble at Betsy about her religion. Nickols goes hawking about as usual, his countenance showing the effect of long dissipation and excess. Miss Clara Corbin is married to the Louisiana lawyer; and Mrs. Corbin is looking for a suitable match for a younger daughter.

It is Sunday morning. Standing near a certain noted restaurant, might be seen in one direction Col. Clarkson going to church with his family; in the other, two men reeling down street, endeavoring to hold each other up. "Hic—why, Doe., if you do n't walk steadier—hic—I'll let you fall—hic—on the pavement!"

"Why, Blunt, you'll—hic—make me break—hic—some of these windows—hic. If you do n't—hic—walk steadier—hic—I'll let you fall in the gutter."

Tilt they go. It is Dr. Floyd and Blunt. They still drink for good cheer, but another pays for the liquor; they still play for amusement, but have to borrow a dollar in order to count the game.

THE END.