

LULU.

A Tale

OF THE

NATIONAL HOTEL POISONING.

BY

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P R E F A C E .

At the inauguration of James Buchanan as President of the United States, the author of the following pages chanced to be one of the guests of the National Hotel, in the city of Washington. In company with hundreds of the inmates of the hotel, he was suddenly prostrated with a severe and mysterious illness. After a few weeks, so prevalent and unmanageable had this malady become, that the guests left the hotel in terror, and the house was closed. When the President elect came to this hotel, a few weeks previous to the Inauguration, he and many others were taken suddenly ill. He then went away, and no new cases of this unaccountable disease occurred until he returned again to this hotel, a day or two before the 4th of March, to await his inauguration. Then very many of the guests of this house were attacked again. Some died; others were injured for life; but most finally recovered. The coincidence of the President's distinct visits to this house with the two outbreaks of this frightful sickness, occasioned a widely-circulated rumor that an effort was being made by some mysterious unknown to poison him.

A medical commission reported, as the result of their investigations, that this malady was occasioned by imperfect drainage under

the house. An old physician, who was a guest of the hotel, scouted this conclusion, and remarked, "I am too old a practitioner not to know the evidences of poison on the human system."

Doctor Le Vert, of Mobile, pronounced the patients who were under his care, to be poisoned with *arsenic*. This opinion appears to be strongly corroborated by the symptoms of the various sufferers, who presented all or most of the evidences of having taken arsenic, which are laid down as guides in Doctor Beck's Medical Jurisprudence.

The whole affair remains to this day a profound mystery; but none who were the victims of this infernal plot will soon forget the torture of mind and body it produced. The fictitious scenes which are woven about this catastrophe as a frame to preserve the fact in a manner for history, are respectfully submitted to the public by the

AUTHOR.

L U L U .

CHAPTER I.

DECLARATION OF WAR.

I PURPOSE to introduce to you, gentle reader, in the ensuing pages, some of the living characters of our nation. If your kindness will permit you to follow my tortuous narrative to the end, I promise you to blend in strange if not amusing medley, statesmen and jurists, ladies and politicians of our time, with a few of our substantial merchant princes and our worthy sons of toil. Permit me then to use a writer's privilege and introduce a charming lady first.

She sat quietly at a window of an old mansion on the southern bank of the beautiful Mohawk, and the last rays of an October sun fell gently upon her sweet face and her tall, graceful figure. The window where she sat looked forth upon the broad bosom of the noble river alive and heaving from the wild dash of the glittering falls, which just above the mansion on the left, broke the quiet flow of the waters. Beneath her, at the left, sounded the busy hum of spindles and the plash of water-wheels, making discordant music to the beautiful picture of the setting sun and the bright river before

her. She was one to appreciate the strange blending of light and shadow extended before her, and her rich brown eye detected every changing hue of the western clouds and every glancing beam of beauty from the purple-clad oaks and yellow mantles of the maple trees, which extended down the slope toward the water. I have said that every changing beauty of the scene met her eye and claimed her undivided notice; but I err somewhat. A strange and gloomy expression once or twice settled upon her features, and the bright sunlight and the golden clouds became for an instant one undefined mass of painful light to her eyes, till the flush of her own joyous nature overspread her face again, and the unwonted lines of care faded rapidly away.

But evanescent as were these painful manifestations of unpleasant thoughts, they were detected by the keen eyes of the young lady's sister, who sat close beside her industriously occupied in cutting out work at a low and singular looking work table, the numberless drawers and appurtenances of which betokened unusual preciseness and neatness in the owner. Well may I say the owner of that workstand was neat. She was persistently and excruciatingly neat. The realization of the wildest dream of a New England matron regarding that quality was daily and hourly to be experienced within the walls of that old mansion; and a displaced chair, or a pin upon the carpet, was nearly as novel an event as would have been the advent of a South Sea Islander. The passion for order in the arrangement and appearance of her house, had approximated nearly to a species of derangement, if an aggravated state of arrangement in the mind can, by any possibility of the English language, be styled derangement. The most presumptuous spider in all

that neighborhood never for once gained access to that model dwelling; for the graceful festoons which the cunning animal is wont to form upon parlor ceilings were not appreciated by the amiable mistress of the mansion. Indeed she has been known to controvert the general acceptation of the word, as applied by Pope in the line, "The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine," and maintain that it was the kitchen spider to which the illustrious poet alluded. And then how strange it seemed, to slovenly unbelievers in the omnipotence of soap and water, to see the little terrier most carefully wipe his tiny feet upon the door mat, before he came in to his accustomed lounge upon the hall floor. And what could be more unique than the small pan and duster, with which she followed her husband's walk through the library, to gather up the accidental ashes which might fall from his cigar. But my gentle lady reader, I feel assured *your* heart will warm towards this neat mistress of the mansion, when I inform you that this dwelling was from cellar to attic one vast system of appropriate closets. Yes, they numbered, *seventeen* upon one floor alone, and as the stranger passed from story unto story, their appropriate places and offices seemed to multiply, until he might perchance imagine himself among the Christian Catacombs at Rome. I may have cause, dear reader, in after chapters to detail more clearly the nice arrangement of the apartments of this model mansion; but I cannot now forbear to notice the perfect system she adopted to retain the freshness and the snowy whiteness of all the furniture and linen and accessories of the great room of state in which she lodged her most illustrious guests.

Tread softly, most distinguished stranger, as you pass

that threshold, for each article in that apartment is doubly consecrated to the presiding spirit of the house.— Here, most renowned and learned guest, you find enthroned in solemn stillness one of the great qualities upon which the prolific descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers pride themselves. What could be more inviting to a weary traveler than the irreproachable whiteness of those beautifully fine pillow cases, with their fine lace edgings. And how luxurious seems that silken counterpane, heavy with curious needle-work, and rich in graceful outlines of rare birds and fruits and flowers.— Notice that dressing table with its elegant appointments of carved wood, brushes, and inlaid combs, chased silver bottles of Oriental perfumes, and vases laden with delicious soaps and rare pomades. The tapestry of that toilet cover alone is a study, and you feel a secret satisfaction at the thought of being the first to plunge a pin into the immaculate bosom of the curious cushion which rests upon it. The good fortune of being the first occupant of that beautiful and luxurious apartment and of falling back contentedly upon the raised fruits and flowers of those elaborate chairs, brings to the features a complacent smile, and you long for that next moment to arrive when the neat mistress of this splendor shall summon you out again with her to examine the remaining rooms, and then, her vanity being gratified by the exhibition of all her elegancies and conveniences, you may shortly return to your allotted room to enjoy an elegant preparation for tea.

My precious reader, do you lay the flattering unction to your soul, that in that room when night's dark mantle shrouds the face of nature, you shall revel in those silken luxuries, draw that lace covering about your

throat, and bury your weary head deep in the fine linen of those pillow cases? Do you think the old bent pins which bind your garments on will stand in wild confusion on that embroidered toilet cushion? Do you think the accumulated sand and cinders of travel, on your hands, will wear away the raised figures on that alabaster cake of perfumed soap, which lies so purely in its porcelain bed? Then I assure you that you have reckoned without your hostess. When the glad moment of escape from winding stairs and endless closets has arrived, you will again be ushered into the room of state. You will find in gratifying readiness, your travel-worn trunk placed in convenient position, and just far enough out from the wall or furniture to avoid all risk of the opening lid marring either. Beneath this leathern traveling companion of yours will be found a strip of coarse carpet, to save the velvet carpet of the room from dirt or scratch, and you will be informed in sweetest accents, that when it is convenient to transfer your trunk's contents to the polished wardrobe and bureau, the servant man will put away the trunk in a closet built expressly for that purpose. And it will be better, far, for you not to resist this separation from your old trunk, on the plea that it will not be at all in your way; for it is placed in durance vile, perhaps, to quarantine those sable insects which infest sleeping rooms and sometimes trunks, and your opposition might lead to some such unpleasant suggestion on her part.

When the amiable lady has left you in possession of the apartment, most naturally you will view your quarters once more. If you are a lady guest, I venture to remark, the room of state, the best room, will receive a careful, thorough, and satisfactory examination before

the lapse of many minutes. You will then discover how excessively neat is your accomplished hostess. The bedstead and polished wash-stand and carved bureau and chairs, are all there; but the rich pillow-cases and counterpane are gone, and in their places you will discover others, clean, and plain. The toilet cover is replaced by a very pretty white one, and where the toilet cushion stood is another one, none the better for wear, and riddled as full of pin-holes as its narrow surface will permit. Beside the pin-cushion you will discover a hair-brush, as destitute of bristles as a centenarian's head is of hairs, and also a comb upon the teeth of which Time's hand has left a slight impression. You will discover no bass-relief upon your soap this time, for it too will have given place to an exceedingly neat, white cake of soap; and the elegant spittoon will also have left a more humble substitute upon the hearth. Those superb lace window curtains are still actual light subduers, but you will observe that the peculiarly graceful effect of their former drooping has disappeared, and that they now are drawn rather tightly to either side of the window. This, no doubt, has been done to save you the trouble, in case more light should be necessary for your toilet; and then perhaps also, you might carelessly draw them aside with your hands covered with hair oil. Some people are so careless! When you will have completed your examination of your night quarters, and remarked the several alterations, if you are at all disposed to be sarcastic, you may perhaps relieve yourself of a small sneer; but if you are at all like your author, you will laugh some, as you invade the precincts of the wash-bowl. You will have learned, that in a truly tidy house,

most articles are labeled "to keep," and very few bear that more comfortable mark "to use."

But I have very unceremoniously wandered from the ladies in the drawing room, and begging their pardon, as well as yours, kind reader, permit me once again to suggest that Mrs. Neaton discovered a passing cloud upon her fair sister's brow, and said quickly,

"Lou, what was that thought?"

The young girl turned her full brown eyes in surprise upon her sister, but exclaimed at once,

"Your eyes are bright, Sarah; I was thinking of Mr. Broadhead."

"Well," replied Mrs. Neaton, "why should he occasion you unpleasant thoughts? I'm sure he is the most devoted lover I ever saw. John never showed me such devotion, when I was a girl, and I always regarded him as a model of affection."

"You never had such a prospect for a father-in-law, though," said Lou.

"That's very true," replied her sister emphatically—"but you don't expect to live with the old man, and I can see no reason for your troubling yourself about a matter, that you can always control, if you exercise ordinary tact."

"But, Sarah, the amount of the whole business is this—and I may as well tell you at once. I do not love, and I never can love, William Broadhead. I have been persuaded or influenced into this engagement, in some way, contrary to my judgment, and without my heart being in the least affected by his advances. He is a fine fellow, I am sure, and every one speaks of him as an excellent business man; but I have become prejudiced against the whole family; and moreover, Sarah, I be

lieve I have a heart which is capable of loving truly and passionately. Now don't you laugh—I am not romantic—this is heart and truth; and that is not romance by a long jump."

"Why in the name of goodness did you not tell me this before?" said Mrs. Neaton. "William is a good match for you, and I supposed from your acceptance of him, that you had some heart in the matter. John has called him a very promising young man, and with his long head for business you can know that is a good endorsement, and that William will maintain you handsomely. I have always hoped you would marry some one like him, who could keep you in my neighborhood; but you know, my dear child, I would never urge you to any match which I believed could endanger your happiness for life. But how can you now escape it creditably to yourself—the whole family are expecting it, and I understand William has already contracted for a house?"

"I don't know what to do, I must say," replied the young girl thoughtfully, as she leaned her forehead upon the cold window glass, and peered into the darkness which now rapidly obscured external objects. After a few minutes' silence she said gaily, "Here is John!—I've faith in his advice—let's ask him."

The individual, whose advent had occasioned the young lady's change of tone, requires a somewhat extended notice, as he is destined to appear prominently in many of the remarkable scenes which we design to unfold during the progress of this narrative.—He was no ordinary man, physically or mentally considered. A stranger would have called him nearly six feet high, and well-proportioned. But the first glance of a

casual observer, would inevitably have been attracted to the expression of firmness and resolution, which characterized the principal features of his countenance, and betrayed the existence in his soul of an indomitable will. You could not, in contemplating the large, hard features of his manly face, divest yourself of the idea, that you were looking upon one of Nature's noblemen—one born to look well, to think well, and to act well, and who would perform his allotted part in the great drama of life thoroughly and judiciously, while health and freedom were propitious, and reason held her throne.

Mr. Neaton was a cotton manufacturer. Not one of the narrow minded class, whose struggle is to accumulate for no one's good, and upon whose contracted souls the beautiful stars of science and humanity are never dawning; but an enlightened, educated man of trade, to whom the history of cotton fabrics, and all their nice relations to the necessities and happiness of man and nations, were as familiar as the common terms of trade. To his ear the clash and hum of machinery betokened, not only coming wealth and luxury, but they spoke to a human heart of regular employment for indigent men, of huge establishments where thousands would earn abundant bread for the hungry by their daily toil. He was descended from a renowned New England stock, possessed of all their virtues, and encumbered by as few of their peculiar faults and pedantries as one could ask, or hope for from the lineal descendant of those early emigrants.

His hair was brushed back carefully from his brow, and was sprinkled with a few gray indications of the approach of his fiftieth birthday; and the same indications were in the small side-whiskers which he wore.

His keen, full, gray eye was ever restless, and denoted the earnest, interested, daring speculator that he was. His dress was well selected, of the best material, and well put on. He was above the ostentation of the fop and the affected slovenliness of the conceited man of letters. His only ornament was a single diamond stud. His walk and manners, and the fluent style of his address, tended to make him in the eyes of strangers neither more nor less than what he was—a polished, earnest, worthy cotton manufacturer.

Twenty-five years of careful and constant industry had accumulated for him affluence and influence. The world recognized his talents under the title of shrewdness; but his honor remained unimpeached. He was associated in business with one of the most successful manufacturers of the age, who, though having an immense interest at stake in trade, placed in Mr. Neaton implicit confidence. This was the gentleman to whom the sisters turned for counsel, as to the best means of escape from a love-trap.

As Mr. Neaton entered the drawing-room, his wife arose quickly to send for lights, as the darkness had come suddenly upon them, and the grate, too, needed replenishing, for the October nights were growing colder, and the frost king had already once or twice laid his hand lightly upon the lawns and shrubbery about the dwelling. Drawing a chair toward the fire, Mr. Neaton said to his sister-in-law,

"What are you speculating about, pet, all alone by yourself there? Do you feel sentimental to-night?"

"No, brother," replied she; "I have been waiting for you to come, to ask your sage advice upon a delicate matter."

"Well, let's have it—make a clean breast of it."

"I can't marry William Broadhead."

"What!" said Neaton, with surprise, "not marry him? How are you going to avoid it? I had a long talk with him a few minutes ago on the dock, and he told me he thought himself the most fortunate man in existence to secure so fine a girl as Lou Brandon. He told me all his plans and expectations, and said, moreover, he was coming here to-night to see you about them. What has happened, Lou, to occasion such a change in your views?"

"My views are not changed, John, but the fact is, I never cared enough about him to marry him. He is well enough, I suppose, but I feel every day more and more opposed to marrying into that family; and then, I tell you candidly, I can't marry a man out of mere respect."

"You are, or ought to be, the best judge of that, Lou," replied Neaton, thoughtfully; and after gazing into the fire a minute, he added, "but what is the advice you wished from me?"

"I want you to advise me how to break off this engagement," she answered earnestly. "There will be a tremendous excitement about it I know, and his mother will be revenged on me in some way."

"I can't, I'm sure, tell you how women manage such matters; Sarah can advise you better than I can. If I had such an affair on my hands, I'd take the shortest cut, and send him a note stating that my views had changed, or something to that effect, and that I wished a release. No sensible man could fail to be thankful to escape in time from marrying a woman who cared nothing about him."

"I believe that you are right, John," replied his sister-in-law, "that plan suggested itself to me among others, but I had intended to go away soon, and pay no further attention to his letters or any communications from him. I know your plan is the only fair and honest one, but you see how we are sometimes influenced by one word from another, to undertake what our own common sense should have indicated. The only proper way to discard him is to send this note—and I shall do it at once."

Mr. Neaton seemed for a few moments after this reply to be absorbed in intense thought; then, turning to his wife, who had returned while they were conversing, and taken a chair near him after brushing up some specks of dirt which he had brought in on his boots, he said, "Sarah, this marriage affair will certainly occasion a great deal of mischief. Lou has very properly concluded to change her mind about William Broadhead, and, to tell the truth, I am not sorry. I am becoming more satisfied every day, that our intercourse with that family and our business relations with their establishments are detrimental to us in more ways than one. The old fellow is meditating mischief against our firm, in regard to those patent spindles. I believe this family matter has prevented him somewhat from precipitating matters, but this unfortunate affair of Lou's will be a glorious opportunity for him to launch out—and now look out for squalls."

"It's always my luck," exclaimed his sister-in-law, vehemently, "to be the occasion of trouble to my dearest friends! John, I'll postpone doing anything about this affair of mine—I'll procrastinate and make excuses, until you can ascertain how your business matters

stand, and after you have settled everything securely, then I'll break this chain which galls me, forever."

"Oh! no, no!" replied Neaton, "you go on and act according to your sense of right and propriety, Lou, and leave me to manage this old reprobate. He may occasion us considerable expense and litigation, but we have him fast on his agreement, and in the end we'll pay him off for all the trouble he has put us to.—There's the door bell—that's William Broadhead. I told you he was coming to-night."

"I can't see him to-night," said Lou Brandon, resolutely. "Mary, tell Mr. Broadhead I'm sorry that I'm engaged this evening."

When the disappointed lover had started homeward, his betrothed exclaimed,

"This is the first rebuff, thank God! I'll be free."

The next minute the tea-bell rang. And thus commenced the great war of the spindles, amid the ringing of door bells and tea bells.

Oh! woman! woman! how many of Earth's contests may be traced to thee!

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSULTATION.

A FEW weeks subsequent to the events recorded in the preceding chapter, in the streets of a neighboring city might have been seen an elderly man walking rapidly in the direction of the lower or business portion of the town. The night was dark and cold, and the wind whistled dismally along the deserted streets, for the hour was late, and no indications of human existence were abroad to cheer the solitary pedestrian, save an occasional sound of noisy mirth from the few cellars or restaurants which still remained open. But the old man was apparently indifferent to the loneliness of the hour, and walked steadily on toward that part of the city which is usually entirely deserted by midnight. As he paced briskly on his way, the occasional stream of light from a gas-lamp fell full upon his countenance, revealing an expression of intense anxiety and trouble. A passer-by would have taken him for a person belonging to the upper circles of society, for his flowing cloak was apparently of fine cloth, as the flash of gas-light fell full upon it, and a gold-headed cane which he carried under his arm protruded several inches from its heavy folds.

He soon paused before a long block of four story buildings, and for a moment seemed to be reading carefully the names upon the small tin signs which were wired around the stone columns of the lower story. At length he discovered by the aid of the street lamp the words, "S. Levins, Attorney and Counselor at Law," and pushing back a door which admitted him into a narrow hall, he groped his way along it by the uncertain light which glimmered through the ventilator over a door at the extreme end. He knocked at this door, but without waiting for a reply, opened it and walked in. A medium sized man, who was sitting at a long table covered with loose sheets of paper and writing materials, looked up quickly, and said with a look of astonishment,

"What brought you here, Broadhead, at this time of night?"

The old man, throwing off his cloak and hat, and seating himself with his gold-headed cane beside the cheerful blaze of the coal fire in the grate, and looking everywhere but in the lawyer's face, said nervously, while his feet and hands and head performed every description of extraordinary evolutions, "I knew you worked late, Levins, and I expected—that is, I didn't know but you might have considered—I mean, I supposed you had examined that paper sufficiently to advise me as to its effect. However, there's no particular hurry for a few days. How do you think I can get out of my engagement with the company?—that is, how far am I bound by the contract?"

"How in the devil," exclaimed the lawyer, shoving his chair backwards and sidewise until he had worked himself around to the fire and facing Broadhead, "how

in the devil am I to answer such a string of lingo as that? Which suit are you talking about? The one the Vernon Company has commenced against you, or the one you wish to commence against Fornell, Horton & Co.?"

"Oh, I mean the contract, Mr. Levins," replied the old man, holding up his right foot to the fire, and brushing back rapidly with his large, coarse hand, the remnant of hair which remained on his skull, "is there anything in it to deprive me of the exclusive use of my improvements in spindles? That is what I want to know, Mr. Levins," exclaimed Broadhead, emphatically, at the same time laying his cane on the chair behind him, and glancing hastily upon the scattered papers on the lawyer's table. "I want counsel, sir, as to my rights in my own patented invention. Is my horse my property, or the property of any man that chooses to claim him? No, Sir! God knows I wouldn't take a pin that belonged to my neighbor, without paying him for it. A man's invention, Levins, is his property, and no court of justice—of fair and equal justice—would allow any man to pirate my invention. Yes! pirate, that's the word the law uses, Levins, pirating an invention. Why, the idea of these people pirating my invention—my own, patented invention—is simply preposterous. Yes, Levins, preposterous!" Saying which, Broadhead sprang up from his chair, and, turning his back to the fire, spread his coat tails for additional caloric.

"Well!" said Levins, highly entertained at the old man's method of stating his case, "your first point covers the whole ground of the matter upon which you desire my advice—which is briefly this: does that con-

tract executed by you and Fornell, Horton & Co. give them a legal authority to use your patented improvements in spindles? I was examining the matter when you came in: now, if you will sit down for a few minutes, and not interrupt me, I think I shall be able to answer that question for you in a very short time."

"I'm glad of that, Mr. Levins," said the old man, with evident satisfaction. "I shan't interfere with you," and he resumed his seat, while his lawyer turned again to the table, and continued the investigation which had so unexpectedly been interrupted.

While Levins and his client are occupied in their respective meditations, we will take the opportunity to scan the features and peculiarities of the two men, and detail some of the peculiar causes or motives which led to this midnight interview.

Alexander Broadhead had commenced life as a poor mechanic, destitute of friends, and with a very limited fund of information on matters not connected with his work-bench. But in this country, industry, frugality, courtesy and attention, coupled with a determination to improve every opportunity to acquire information on useful subjects, are, in the majority of instances, precursors of success in the acquirement of an independent property and its consequent influence. Broadhead, by a persistent application of these principles, had acquired affluence, and had been entrusted with the agency of a cotton manufacturing establishment in which men of wealth had invested heavily. His friends claimed for him inventive talent of a high order in all that related to the developements and improvements in machinery, while those who had been associated in business with

him, or had otherwise become prejudiced against him, denied emphatically these pretensions to originality, and asserted that his only ability in matters of improvement consisted in the peculiar tact with which he appropriated the principles evolved by other minds and made them appear as his own discoveries in machinery.

For several years he had been involved in litigation with various cotton manufacturing associations, (and particularly with the firm of Fornell, Horton & Co.,) arising out of conflicting claims as to the invention of machines which yielded immense profits to the manufacturers of cotton. He had several years previous to the events recorded in our last chapter, commenced a suit in the Circuit Court of the United States against the last mentioned firm, for the infringement of a patent right to make the improved form of spindles. In their defence to this suit, the firm of Fornell, Horton & Co., denied that the other party was the inventor, and claimed that the discovery of the improvements in spindles was made by a member of their own firm. After a protracted legal controversy between them, both parties arrived at the sensible conclusion, that the Courts were poor places for cotton merchants to coin money. They accordingly agreed to bury the hatchet, and in future to live on good terms with each other, and occasionally to give one another a slight lift in the way of sharing the execution of a fat contract. After they had talked over and considered the preliminaries of peace, they both executed an instrument in which the use of the patented spindles was left open to both parties. And then they all shook hands, and smiled upon each other, and complimented each other, and all their ladies smiled

too, and their children smiled, and all their clerks and employees smiled, and every body around smiled, and even the lawyers, whose pockets their long litigation had stuffed, smiled a little—rather sadly, however.

And then, with lightened hearts and confident expectations of coming wealth, they turned their attention to speculation, and devoted their energies to business.

Years rolled on, and the firm of Fornell, Horton & Co. and the firm of Broadhead & Co. were rapidly gathering in golden harvests from the monopoly of the patented spindles. Their names became famous among the cotton men of all the cities of the United States, and their credit was established even across the Atlantic. But one day the spirit of surprise glided into the counting room of Broadhead and tapped him quickly upon the shoulder. Broadhead looked up with a start, and was at once informed that he had been sued for a breach of contract by the Vernon Company, which claimed to recover damages of him for conveying away to Fornell, Horton & Co., under the last contract, the use of the patented spindles. Under a former conveyance to them, the Vernon Company claimed an exclusive right within the State to the use of Broadhead's patented machinery. Then trouble came into the counting room of the manufacturer, and sat down beside him, and whispered disagreeable suggestions in his ear of coming loss and probable disgrace. And when trouble had exhausted all her unpleasant ideas, deceit stepped in and made a long call, and seemed to be a welcome visitor. While Broadhead was entertaining deceit, another spirit, not sufficiently known to cotton dealers, denominated conscience, walked boldly in, but received very decided evi-

dences of being unwelcome, and was not even invited to take a chair.

Hour after hour the manufacturer sat in his counting room, devising plans to avoid the impending misfortune of a defeat in this untimely suit, which like a spectre stretched out its bony hand to him for gold, gold. The darling pet, aye! the life-blood even of his existence, had been the acquirement and accumulation of gold—and how could he now, after such toil and anxious care to gain it, relinquish the precious dollars by tens of thousands into the hands of this detested Vernon Company. But how was the payment of their legal claim to be avoided? The idea flitted across his brain, that he might urge successfully some reason, why the exclusive use of the patented spindles was not intended to be included in his contract with the Vernon Company—and the thought drove him instantly to a search among his papers for a copy of the contract. He found it, carefully folded up and tied with other documents of similar character; but when he had opened it and glanced across its carefully-written pages, he knew full well there was no hope for him in phrases ambiguous or loosely worded, for that fatal word “exclusive” gleamed repeatedly upon the page, and blasted the last faint expectation of an exception in his favor. Yes!—there was no escape from the conclusion which for years had dwelt within his mind, that he had transferred to the firm of Fornell, Horton & Co. the patent right to use those very spindles, which he had promised above his name and seal to reserve in one State, exclusively, for the benefit of the Vernon Company. His avaricious soul made no distinction between the firms to

whom he had conveyed the right to use the spindles.—He hated equally the one which claimed a compensation out of his coffers for an injury done, and the other which had baffled him in his designs to have the exclusive benefit of a machine designed and modeled by another man. A vague idea had existed in his mind for months, that he would in some way endeavor to wrest from Fornell, Horton & Co. the vast profits which he believed them to have made since he put his hand to the agreement.—And now, with a law suit threatening his property on the part of the powerful corporation which claimed exclusive use of his invention, he was driven to a more attentive and scrutinizing consideration of the instrument by which he had authorized Fornell, Horton & Co. to set in motion the patent spindles within the State. He could, from his supposed extended acquaintance with the technicalities of litigation, imagine difficulties in the construction of his agreement with the latter firm; and his conceit was amply sufficient to induce the belief that these difficulties were legally profound; but still he feared the judges on the bench might perhaps be too shallow to appreciate their weight, and therefore deemed it advisable to consult a lawyer, simply for the purpose of ascertaining what line of argument was suited to the calibre of the particular judges who might be called upon to decide his case. Broadhead felt, as he sat thoughtfully in his counting room, that the suit of the Vernon Company would indeed have precipitated matters with the firm of Fornell, Horton & Co. but for one single consideration. His son was to be married to the sister-in-law of Neaton, a prominent member of the latter firm; and believing the match to be, in every sense, an advan-

tageous one, he disliked exceedingly to hazard his son's interests by a controversy with that firm.

A few days after the commencement of the suit against him, Broadhead was informed that his son had been discarded by the young lady, in a note of substantially the import recommended by Neaton in a former chapter, and instantly the purpose was formed in his mind to ascertain how far the law would sustain him in contesting the right of Neaton and his partners to use the patent spindles. If a flaw could be discovered in the agreement by the aid of the ablest lawyers in the State, he resolved to compromise with the Vernon Company, and win a fortune from the great house of Fornell, Horton & Co., and at the same time secure ample revenge for the mortification of his son.

He had left his papers, with a statement of his case, in the hands of the astute Levins, one of the ablest counsel of the New York bar; but the restless character of Broadhead's mind would not allow him to retire to rest on the stormy night in which we find him in the streets of the deserted city, until he had seen his lawyer upon the all absorbing topic of his contemplated suit.

Broadhead remained as quietly by the side of his legal adviser as his peculiarly nervous temperament would allow; but the hasty glances which he cast upon the industrious little clock upon the mantle, and then upon the thoughtful countenance of Levins, as he slowly turned over the pages which contained the history of Broadhead's former litigation with Fornell, Horton & Co., were evident indications that his restless nature was struggling with impatience, and that his talking artillery would soon be obliged to open. One moment he

stood up with his back to the fire, and then reversing his position, he looked down into the glowing mass of coals, and kicked the lowest bar of the grate, till the ashes and cinders showered down upon the hearth; and then, as if startled into recollection by the hubbub his boots were making, he sat down, with a heavy sigh of fatigue, and crossing his legs and folding his arms, gazed in the professional style of a lawyer toward the ceiling, and then in the professional style of a physician, down upon the carpet. And then, as some intense emotion swept over his features, his heavy eyebrows lowered, till they almost concealed his black eyes, which glowed in the red light of the fire with the sinister look of a fiend. He was certainly a singular looking and acting individual, and a stranger would have been puzzled to determine from his physiognomy whether cunning or malice predominated in his character, or indeed whether he was possessed of brain sufficient to entitle him to the odium attached to either. He was apparently about sixty years of age, judging from his general appearance, and his hair was gray and exceedingly thin. He was not more than five feet and four inches high, and yet he had the appearance of strong, muscular development; and his hands and feet were large and coarse. His large, staring black eyes were often gloomy, and a sullen fire played in their dark and forbidding depths. His cheeks were sunken, and his brow deeply furrowed with care; but when something pleased him, his long, coarse mouth would extend to a wonderful length, and his pale lips grow thin and almost transparent, and an exceedingly hateful light glare in his eyes. His forehead was rather high, indicating thought and

ability, and was his best feature, though traversed by many deep lines. His nose was unusually long and straight, and was almost as livid as a corpse, as was also the whole of his complexion. Old as he was, he nevertheless displayed activity and muscle enough, even yet, to earn his bread by manual labor. His rough, bony hand had not yet become soft and white enough to seem at home with fine broadcloth, and his white shirt bosom and emerald pin contrasted strangely with his rough, coarse skin. But the genius of America stamps her sovereignty of thought, and dress, and action, and the ideas of European aristocrats are fortunately of little value here.

The lawyer, for whose opinion he was waiting so impatiently, was one of that remarkable class of able men, whose physical formation furnishes no clue to the powerful intellects they possess, and whose keen logic and persuasive eloquence startle that class of listeners who have learned to look for talent only in fat, round heads, and high-reaching foreheads.

Levins was dumpy in his figure, bullet-headed, and without any remarkable indication in his face of wit or shrewdness, except a clear, penetrating eye, which served to make his low forehead more conspicuous. But the calm, earnest, discriminating mind was there—and no counsel who had ever contended with him once before a bench of judges, ever cared to oppose him a second time without a thorough preparation.

After Broadhead had seen the hour hand of the little clock indicate the hour of two, Levins suddenly turned his head, and said abruptly,

“Why didn’t you sue these parties before? Why did

you permit them to infringe your patent, year after year, without making any effort to restrain them?”

The manufacturer started at the sound of Levins’ voice, and his great black eyes glared in surprise at the sound of a voice in the quiet of the room, but he replied after a few seconds’ hesitation,

“I thought it would not be advisable to sue them, that is—I mean I had no opportunity.”

Levins looked keenly into his client’s face, but it was impossible to catch the roving eyes of Broadhead.

“What I mean,” continued he in a firmer tone of voice, “is this. Of course, I don’t mean to say there was no opportunity, ha! ha! Levins, you lawyers are great fellows to find opportunities; but you see I thought it desirable to arrange my affairs, and pay my honest debts, before I entered into litigation again. These parties are rich, you know, and they would be willing to spend considerable money to defeat me. Why, Levins, these men must have cleared nearly a million of dollars out of my patent. Yes,” continued he, with a burst of virtuous indignation, “these men—these pirates, Levins, have stolen the result of my labor and my anxious care, and have made themselves rich out of it. And, Levins, I want to make an example of them—I want the world to see that such theft cannot be committed with impunity. It is due to society that such outrages should become publicly known and publicly punished, and I earnestly desire that you should assist me with your advice. You have a great reputation, Levins, for the skill with which you ferret out fraud and rascality, and it is a duty which you owe to society to aid me in bringing these wrong doers to justice. But you were talking

about suing these parties—do you think they can use that paper—that agreement I mean, against me?”

“I can discover no authority in that instrument,” replied the attorney, “for their setting up your patented spindles in their mill, provided your statement is correct, that the controversy between you in the Circuit Court related only to the use of another form of spindles, which they denied was covered by your patent as an analogous device. You saw fit to relinquish your supposed claim to this other form of spindles to them for a consideration; but your patent spindles not being in controversy, you of course retained the exclusive right to use them as between you and Fornell, Horton & Co.; but you are bound to the Vernon Company by your contract with them, unquestionably to give them the benefit of your invention in this State.”

The eyes of the cotton manufacturer gleamed with triumph as he replied eagerly, “Do you really think so, Levins? Oh! of course there can be no other construction given to it. Now I will make them pay well for the manner in which they have treated me. I want you, Levins, to take charge of this case of mine, and I will pay you handsomely for it. What a surprise it will be to them—ha! ha! Justice is slow, sometimes, Levins, but we’ll make it sure this time. Why! it’s almost three o’clock. Are you going home now?”

“Yes,” replied the lawyer, “I’ll go now,” and after placing all his papers in a small iron safe, he gathered up his out-door garments, and turned out the gas, and locking the door behind him, followed his client into the silent street.

CHAPTER III.

THE PIC-NIC.

It was the gala night of the stars. Every celestial lamp burned with unwonted brilliancy, flinging its silver rays along the path of the crescent moon, which like a young queen, had assumed the sceptre of the night’s great empire, and wandered forth with joyous retinue to view the limits of her new domain. Faintly and gently her timid smile beamed amid the latticed branches of the ancient oaks, whose purple robes were nearly torn away by the autumnal blast, to form a mantle for the old mother earth which nourished them.—While yet the moonbeams were playing lovingly upon the green-sward by the road side, and glancing from the fallen and the falling leaves, the measured tread of horses’ feet echoed along the grove of oaks and pines which bordered the highway, and the graceful figure of Lou Brandon, on a snow-white steed, moved slowly beneath the interwoven branches of the trees, which cast upon her and her noble bearer, fantastic webs of glancing moonlight and tremulous shadows. She was not alone, for beside her rode a manly form on a spirited charger, which impatiently obeyed the rein, and swept

each moment with his long and glossy tail the scattered leaves which carpeted the highway. The young lady's companion was a younger brother of Neaton, the manufacturer, and had recently returned from Europe, where he had acted in the capacity of agent for the firm with which Neaton was connected. He had seen the flight of his twenty-seventh summer, and the bold, dashing character of the young man was rapidly transforming into the firm, energetic character of the man of business and experience. He was already master of the arts and intricacies of trade, and the American traits of self-reliance, and contempt of all authority and precedent, were largely developed in his mental organization.—Polished and witty in his conversation, graceful in every limb and movement, and possessed of noble and generous impulses, Clarence Neaton was the very man to draw out all the fine and womanly points of Lou Brandon's character, and keep her wild and romantic nature in a constant state of excitement and enjoyment. She had been acquainted with him but a few weeks, and already she imagined herself thoroughly informed as to all his peculiar ideas and sentiments, and regarded him as the most congenial being she had ever met. Together they had hunted out every strange and wild locality for miles around, and raced their horses over every country road, and through every purling brook in the neighborhood, till they had created a decided sensation among the country people, who imagined they must be escaped fanatics from some Water Cure establishment, who were applying the hydropathic treatment of water and exercise to the breed of horses. They had read poetry, history, and the newspapers to each other, and laughed at the ridiculous points of every unfortunate in-

dividual, with a long or pious-looking countenance, who chanced to come in their way. They had tormented poor Mrs. Neaton almost out of her life, by pointing out to her, long cobwebs on her parlor chandeliers, which they had hunted out in the barns, and brought in for her especial benefit. They had practised boat-racing on the river by moonlight, and had filled their portfolios with sketches of every prominent object in the neighborhood. And now, in company with a gay party of ladies and gentlemen, they were riding by the light of a young autumnal moon, to visit a sulphur spring, a few miles back from the river, which bore the reputation of being haunted.

The two were about a mile behind their party, either through inattention, or lured by the beauty of the evening to walk their horses through the fairy-like groves of pine and oak trees, which seemed to shower silver arrows upon them as they passed the occasional openings in their interwoven branches. They were engaged in earnest conversation, and Clarence Neaton thought his beautiful companion had never appeared so lovely as now, with her animated features flooded with moonbeams, and her classic figure draped in the velvet folds of a short cloak, which she had thrown over her riding habit as a protection against the night air, which as yet was remarkably soft and balmy for the season of the year. The white handkerchief, too, which she had tied carelessly about her throat, gave an additional effect of purity and pale beauty to her blonde face, which seemed to her admiring companion almost angelic. Familiar as were beautiful faces and graceful forms to his eye, and accustomed as he had been to gaze upon them without emotions of tenderness, the young man acknowledged

to himself, that for this night, at least, his habitual indifference to the witchery of sweet faces and gentle voices had deserted him, and that the spell could not be broken, except by the more sober realities of daylight.

"So you believe," he continued, "really and firmly in the actual presence of spirits about us, including ghosts, spectres, hobgoblins and fairies, with all the peculiarities the world has at different periods assigned to them; for if you adopt one class of them, I can't see how you can logically refuse to acknowledge the existence of them all."

"Indeed I do, Mr. Neaton," she replied, earnestly, "and I believe as truly in the presence of evil spirits, as of good. To me there are moments, when the consciousness of being the object of an evil spirit's attentions and allurements is so vivid, to me, that I actually call upon the angel guardians, to deliver me, by their dear presence, from the evil influences; and I sometimes know that prayer is answered. I have seen the forms of my lost friends glide in, and gaze so tenderly upon me, with their gentle, lustrous eyes, and smooth my brow so lovingly with their soft hands, and whisper so earnestly to my trembling heart, 'Oh, no! Oh, no! Do not, for our sake, sin; do not forget us, your dear old friends, and drive our devoted souls away, by cherishing the evil. Do not forget our lowly graves, and our lost tenderness, but vow again and again, by the clear stars of Heaven, and their holy Ruler, to cherish the noble, the pure, and the good.' Oh, Mr. Neaton, I would not exchange this beautiful belief and its consolations, for the brightest earthly diadem."

"I have charged you once, Miss Lou," replied her companion, "with being a little given to romancing,

but now I am certain you will not dare deny the impeachment. As for myself, I am right glad my faith in such things is very weak. Why! the idea of being encompassed by such a crowd of remarkable personages, with wings and horns, is sufficient to make me squirm all over—and then I like sometimes to have the satisfaction of thinking I have some little private reflections of my own; and there is no saying how far these philanthropic intruders into the private corners of the heart, can be entrusted to keep a secret. I am sure I wouldn't even now be willing to confide my secrets to some of the friends I have lost. Good old souls they are no doubt—but they would find some particular friend to help them keep the secret, as formerly. No, no! Miss Lou—it won't do in practice, this hobgoblin theory of yours."

"I shall never be able to raise your ideas from the material to the spiritual, Mr. Neaton," replied the young lady, slightly annoyed at the coolness with which he had tumbled over her castle of sentiment and enthusiasm. "You are a confirmed Yankee, and have no higher appreciation of what heaven is than the majority of your race. You suppose heaven is a place where high protective tariffs on cotton goods prevail, and where agents receive a hundred per cent for their services. One would think, such a night as this would stir your very soul to the contemplation of the ideal. Look at that clustering army of stars, arrayed before your vision, for the noble purpose of elevating your thoughts to a future home, the present realization of whose splendor would blast your senses like the lightning's touch. Why is this coronet of stars pressed upon the brow of night—or rather, why are our mortal eyes permitted to enjoy its wondrous loveliness, if not to teach us that there is a

power beyond the reach of mortals, which no inventive genius can ever grasp, or chain down to the use and wants of men; a power which sends the elements on alternate missions of peace and war with us, and which we know rules spirits with equal facility, because all men recognize an eternal ruling power beyond the clouds. And, pray tell me, Mr. Neaton, why may not the same influence of one soul over another, which we recognize in daily life, be permitted by this omnipotent power to operate after death? The counsels of the pure and good move us often to noble deeds; the crafty insinuations of the unprincipled may sometimes rouse to life and action, noble principles which otherwise might have remained dormant in the soul. Tell me for what good reason you can refuse to admit that such influences may act through the agency of disembodied spirits?"

Before the young man could reply, Lou Brandon suddenly reined in her horse and exclaimed, "Listen to that fearful cry"—

Clarence Neaton listened an instant, and then burst into a loud laugh.

"That's one of your hobgoblins, Miss Lou—you're in for it this time. The wild huntsman is abroad to-night, and you will very likely have an opportunity to see the imp, hoofs and all. Hark! the cry grows louder—they're coming towards us. Now, my eloquent romancer, tell me, if you please, what beautiful design Providence has in our regard in sending the wild huntsman and his infernal pack plump down upon us."

His merry tone reassured her somewhat, but she involuntarily drew closer to his side as the low, mournful cry was repeated—and then another and louder voice joined in. The sound was entirely new to her, but

seemed to her startled imagination like the distant howl of some wild beast. "Do tell me, Mr. Neaton," she exclaimed, "what it is." But he only laughed as he leaned forward in his saddle to listen, and said, "A real hobgoblin, Miss Lou—it's the wild huntsman—now bring out your spiritual armor." After listening attentively a few minutes, he added, "They're driving a fox, Miss Brandon, and I think he is heading this way. If we can reach some elevated point in time, I would like you to see the sport—come, let us get out of this wood," and quickening their pace, the two soon passed the arm of the forest, and emerged upon the open plain, which stretched away a mile or two before them, with no tree or bush to intercept the view of the bright heavens which gleamed with new constellations as they proceeded. At their right, the waters of the Sarago lake reflected the loving gaze of the stars; and far, far away on their left extended the dark outline of the forest, till it was lost behind the range of barren mountains which guard the entrance to the wilderness.

The deep baying of the hounds, which for a few moments had appeared to approach nearer and nearer, now grew faint and fainter, till the practised ear of Neaton informed him that the fox had doubled on his course, and was probably making again for the distant mountains.

"We shall lose the sport," he said, with evident disappointment, "but we ought to ride on at once, for our party will be anxious about us—and then, perhaps, you wouldn't enjoy seeing the race after all. We sportsmen in our excitement sometimes forget that every one is not equally interested in such matters with ourselves."

"Oh! I would be delighted to witness the race, I'm

sure," replied she; "I have a peculiar relish for any kind of excitement—but we must be disappointed, it seems, at the very time when I could have desired most to see a hunt.—Well, let's have a race, any way. We can't be cheated out of that." Then applying the whip to her beautiful horse, she said, "Come, Snow Flurry, away with you!" and dashed along the highway in a wild race with Neaton.

Away they swept over the star-lit plain, and the crescent moon smiled gently upon their flight, for heaven has placed a premium upon joyous exercise and rapid movement in the pure autumnal air. Happy—happy moments of young life, while care remains an exile from the heart, and the coming realities of the life struggle are yet afar off.

In a few minutes they had passed the gurgling brook which formed the boundary between the open plain and another arm of the forest, which extended closely down to the lake's shore, which had gradually been assuming a more precipitous character, and now at the junction with this arm of the forest became so steep that the utmost attention was required to guide the horses safely down the sudden and frequent curves of the road, which wound around irregular strata of slate rocks quite down to the waters of the lake. The two reined in their horses suddenly as they discovered this unexpected barrier to their race, and cautiously picked out their way among the ragged rocks and fallen trees, Clarence Neaton leading the way. Already the voices of their friends arose from the beach in noisy mirth, and in a few seconds the whole pic nic party burst upon their view, comfortably encamped upon the lake shore, between two large fires, which lit up the surrounding forest with

the brilliancy of day. A large tent had been pitched between two stately elms. for the accommodation of the ladies, and their protection against the night air, should any sudden change occur to render the star canopy of heaven more romantic than agreeable. The two Irishmen who had brought out the provision wagon and built the log fires, came forward to take the horses of the new comers, and the merry crowd of ladies and gentlemen gathered round them to welcome their safe arrival—for their long delay had already occasioned uneasiness, and one of the servants was just preparing to ride back to see what had befallen them.

"Ha! ha! Mr. Neaton," exclaimed a dark-eyed beauty of seventeen, "what did I tell you this morning about the danger of riding by moonlight with Miss Brandon? and you only laughed, and said your heart was ossified. Do you realize the important fact that you have been so overcome by her fascinations, that you have loitered for a full half hour by the watch, and frightened your friends 'most out of their wits?—this is one of the stern facts you talk so much about, and now I'm determined you shall explain it."

"Yes, and here is another *stern* fact, Neaton," said her gallant, a roguish-eyed youth of nineteen. "Just look at my pants, will you? Miss Howell was enthroned upon that lofty pine stump, and in my humility I took a lowly seat at her feet, upon a most romantic moss bank—and now just look at my pants, will you?—wet beyond all precedent; and after all my efforts to elevate my idol to the summit of that stump, the wicked little divinity only mocked at my frantic leap out of that soggy seat, and called me her knight of the *mossy spring*."

"Served you right," said Neaton, laughing. "Why did you set up a *Howell* before you were hurt?"

"Hurrah for Neaton," cried several voices—"best pun yet."

"I wish some of you gentlemen would help me lift this kettle of coffee off," screamed an excited maiden from one of the fires—"it's all very well for you to be moping around and manufacturing miserable puns, but when your coffee is ruined through your neglect, you'll be nicely *pun*-ished. Now there's a practical pun for you, and more *pun*-gent too than some of you men will be when you get a *pun*-cheon of *punch* in your head.—Come, hurry up, some of you *pun*-chinellos, or I'll *punch* some of you with this spoon," and she brandished the long ladle with a tragic air at the group of gentlemen about Miss Brandon.

Several gentlemen sprang to her assistance, but a young man with a juvenile face, who stood nearest to the fire, and only answered her summons by coolly slapping his boot-leg with his riding whip, exclaimed, "See them run for fear of a ladle—regular *spoon*-eys."

"Is it possible you have perpetrated that pun without assistance, Mr. Bumsteed," said a married lady near him, peering into his face with a mock expression of surprise.

"Oh, don't force Bumsteed to dwell on it, Mrs. Peters, I beg of you," interrupted a medical student; "the effort has already been too much for his mental organization, and may lead to very dangerous results—I would recommend the application to his head of lumps of ice, or cold water cloths."

"You are more of a sufferer than I am," retorted Bumsteed, whose naturally sluggish intellect appeared

to brighten under the keen lash of the young doctor's remarks.

"How so?" said the medical student.

"I'll tell you how so," replied Bumsteed. "Your conceit proves you to be the victim of a very unskillful surgeon, for you are a limb of the healing art *set* in your own way."

This unexpected hit at the proverbial obstinacy of the young doctor in maintaining medical opinions novel to the profession, called forth shouts of laughter from the party, and two gentlemen grasping Bumsteed in their arms, bore him in triumph to the fire, where he was rewarded with the first cup of coffee as the author of the best pun of the evening.

"But where is this famous haunted spring?" inquired Lou Brandon, who had been carefully pinning up the skirt of her riding habit, in imitation of the other ladies of the party, in order that she might be prepared to assist in the preparation of the pic-nic supper, or to ramble among the surrounding rocks and bushes.

"Oh, it is just around that ledge of rocks," replied one of the party, pointing in the direction of the precipitous descent down which the two had ridden a few moments before. "We thought it would be more romantic for our fires to be on this side the ledge, that the spring might be viewed only by the light of the moon and stars. You can't miss finding it—keep close to the hill-side, and you will come to it in half a minute."

"Come, Mr. Neaton," said she, "you must pilot me into the dominions of the water spirit."

"With pleasure, Miss Brandon," said he, "but you must pardon me if I should happen to speak irreverent-

ly of your hobgoblins in the spring—you have a good idea, I believe, by this time, of my views on that subject—but follow your true knight, Sir Clarence Neaton, of the grey armor, and he will shield you from all foes, ghosts included,” and catching up a carving knife from a log, he strode away with tragic air in the direction of the spring, followed by Miss Brandon and the shouts of the merry party.

The two followed a very narrow and ill-defined path, which wound around the face of the precipice, but a few seconds' walk brought them abruptly upon the spring, and they both uttered sudden exclamations of delight at the beauty of the scene. The broken masses of rock which had fallen from the ledge formed an amphitheatre some hundred feet in diameter, of which the spring was the centre, and a few large elms, which stood within this circle of rock, extended their leafless branches over the bubbling water. The deposits of sulphur were spread for several feet about the spring, and appeared in the moonlight like masses of pure white coral. The light of two brilliant stars danced upon the moving waters, which gushed up in the centre of the spring, and then circling around a rocky basin a few feet in diameter, glided away under cover of the dead grass and leaves. The witchery of evening and of solitude was upon the spot, and two human hearts, warmed by the magic power of beauty, poured forth the emotions of the soul in words which revealed to each the existence of those congenial sentiments which form the bonds of lasting friendships and devoted loves. They stood as yet upon the threshold of life's temple, and the confused voices of the worshipers within seemed to their young imaginations to be uttering hymns of praise to all that purifies the

heart and ennobles the intellect. They yet hoped to find on entering only altars reared to purity and truth, and they still dreamed of finding there men unselfish and divine. And thus their hearts still responded to the sweet language of nature, and their eyes beheld the silver net which the Eternal had flung upon the branches of the overhanging elms, and the stars were angel eyes peering at them through the trees. The mournful face of the Future was looking towards them, but they saw it not. Death waved his sable banner towards them, but they saw it not; for their souls were too intent upon the study of that sweet picture which the Great Artist was holding before them for a holy purpose.

At length their conversation wandered to the scenes of beauty which Neaton had enjoyed during his visit in Europe—and as his brilliant description of events and places seemed to be gathering new force from the intense interest with which Lou Brandon was regarding him, his quick ear caught the faintest sound of a breaking twig—and glancing hastily into the thicket beyond the spring, he caught a glimpse of two bright eyes gazing directly at him, and which instantly disappeared.

“Miss Brandon,” said he, quickly, “some one has been watching us and listening to our conversation.”

She sprang to her feet instantly, and felt a warm flush overspread her face, which the night shadows fortunately concealed from Neaton's eye, as she exclaimed nervously,

“Impossible, Mr. Neaton—no one could be so rude. Why do you think so?”

“I saw a pair of human eyes in that bush yonder,” replied he, pointing towards the thicket—“but whoever it was, the feet that belong with those eyes must be

cat's feet. I am very quick to hear slight sounds, and my first impulse was to spring into the bushes after the intruder, but I dared not leave you alone in such a place."

"You did perfectly right in not noticing such an impertinent intermeddler," replied she, with evident mortification in her tone, for she knew full well that any spectator must have seen her sitting beside Neaton, and gazing earnestly into his face, and she feared her position and manner might have occasioned suspicions in an observer that she felt more interest in Neaton than she cared to acknowledge, or to have another notice.

"She must have been a little fairy," said Neaton, "to steal upon us so silently; but she had mighty pretty eyes. Who do you imagine it was? I think she wore a jockey riding cap."

"That will not enable us to identify her," replied Lou—"for more than half of the ladies wear those caps.—Did you observe any particular colors about her neck or shoulders?—some few of the ladies wear bright colored scarfs, and light colored cloaks over their riding dresses."

"Oh, the glimpse I had of her was too brief to identify anything," replied Neaton, "but I should say she was dressed in dark colors. I may be mistaken, however. It was some one of our party who wished to have fun at our expense, and we shall probably hear more of it when we go back to the fire."

"Very likely," said she, thoughtfully, and her tone indicated that her mind was busy with something beside her words; "hark! some one is calling us," she added.

A clear rich voice echoed among the hills—"Mr. Neaton, I say, hurry up—supper is ready—hot oysters

—cold turkey and muddy coffee—hurry up if you want any supper, for we are all going in—particularly the ladies."

The two cast lingering looks upon the spring before they started back, for there seemed a sweet fascination about the spot, and the sparkling waters uttered a low, gentle murmur at being left alone. They felt, as they slowly wended their way back to their companions, that their hearts were nearer to each other in sympathy with the pure and beautiful, than when they mounted their horses at sunset.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEGEND.

WHEN Lou Brandon had taken the seat proffered to her by the young man who had the amusing reminiscence of the moss bank, she said to him with the familiarity of an intimate friend, "Harry, bring me a cup of coffee, and then sit down beside me, for I want to say something to you."

The young man quickly secured the coffee, and a heaping plate full of the oyster stew, for his friend, and then carefully examining the ground beside her log seat with an anxiety which called forth the shouts of the lookers-on, spread his handkerchief upon the earth for a seat. When the attention of her neighbors was diverted by some sally of fun from the opposite side of the fire, she said to Harry Carter in a low voice,

"Who came in to supper from the direction of the spring just before Mr. Neaton and myself?"

"Miss Howell," replied Carter, "was the last, I believe. She left me sitting alone on that flat rock yonder, under pretence of being provoked at me for some nonsense we were talking about. You know what an artful way she has of pretending to have some misunderstanding with gentlemen, in order to keep them running after her, that she may engross all their attentions

by having lengthy explanations. She walked off into the woods, thinking I would follow after her—but I am sick of her tricks, and she might have walked on till she came to the renowned city of Halifax, before I would have tagged after her. Presently she came back, and passed the rock where I was sitting, without even looking at me—and when I said I was sure she could have no just cause of offence in anything I had said or done, she only replied in a childish way, 'I didn't expect that of you, Mr. Carter.' I know what she wants—she thinks I will be so anxious to have an explanation with her that I will spend the whole evening trifling about this quarrel with her, which is just nothing at all but something she has conjured up to keep me away from Mary Fornell this evening. But why did you ask the question?"

"Don't you say anything about it, Harry," she replied, "but Mr. Neaton detected some one lurking in the bushes near the spring, to listen to our conversation. He was unable to identify the person, but thought it was a lady, with a dark riding habit and jockey cap."

"Oh! it was Miss Howell, of course," said Harry—"there was no one else but us two walking in that direction, and she probably made pretence of being offended with me in order to steal away to the spring, knowing that you two were there. She seems to be anxious about all Mr. Neaton's movements, and in fact she made many inquiries of me about his affairs when we were riding out here—and I suspect, from what she said, that she had expected Mr. Neaton to be her escort. I am under the impression that she hinted something about you having taken possession of him after she had

made a partial engagement to ride with him, but Mary Fornell, who was riding just ahead of us, turned and made some remarks to me about that time—and you know, Lou, that was enough to put all other ideas out of my head.”

“Taken possession, indeed!” said she, contemptuously. “The other evening, at Mrs. Fornell’s party, when the ride was proposed, she hinted to Mr. Neaton that she would like to ride with him, after he had said in her presence, ‘Miss Brandon, would you like to ride some clear night to the haunted spring, if we can make up a party?’ I think Miss Howell had better be more choice of her words in my regard; and if she was really the individual prowling about the spring, I am strongly tempted to lay my whip about her shoulders. I despise eaves-dropping.”

She spoke emphatically, and the expression of her eye indicated that it was fortunate for Miss Howell that she was not at that moment in the immediate neighborhood. Her earnest tone, however, attracted the attention of two or three persons—and one of them, a beautiful brunette, with her raven hair cut short like a boy’s, and arranged in the most coquettish little curls, brushed forward and flattened upon her forehead, exclaimed, “I could not avoid over-hearing that remark about the whip, Miss Brandon—it sounds spicy—please do whip somebody for something—it’s growing remarkably dull here, and this champagne has no more life than water.”

“Take a brandy toddy, then, Miss Lena,” said Harry Carter, springing to his feet—“there’s tip-top brandy in the wagon—shall I have the pleasure of mixing one for you?”

“Yes, if you please,” she said with animation—“let’s

you and I stir these people up. My blood is cold as ice, notwithstanding all those pretty things Mr. Neaton has been saying about the exhilarating influences of moonlight. As for me, I think those moonbeams resemble long icicles poking their cold fingers at us through the trees, and that crescent moon looks as if he was shaking his horns at us and saying, ‘You had all better go home, or you will take violent colds.’ Mr. Carter, mind you don’t make that too strong,” she called after him, as he was moving off, delighted at having an excuse for visiting the demijohn, “or you will have me making extraordinary propositions to you—perhaps insisting upon having that crescent moon launched upon the lake as a canoe for me to ride home in.”

“Bring me one, Harry,” shouted Neaton, “I’ve only had one horn, and I want to be even with the moon.—Wouldn’t it be odd to be even with it?”

“*Even* so,” said Bumsted, who was vigorously pulling away at a turkey-leg with his small beautiful teeth.

“Mr. Bumsted,” said the medical student, “your wit is evidently on the wane—indeed, I may say its sun has set.”

“Well,” replied the young man savagely, “I hope when your son *sets* he will ignore his father’s practice.”

This caused another laugh at the young doctor’s expense.

“Better leave Bumsted alone,” said Lena, “he has made a dead *set* at you twice. Ah! here comes ‘the glass of fashion and the mould of—the mould of’—”

“Of delirium tremens,” suggested the medical student sullenly.

“You’re right,” retorted Lena, fixing her keen black eye steadily upon him, for she recalled some severe re-

marks of his behind her back, "I begin to see snakes already." Then raising her glass gracefully to the company, she proposed the health of "Mr. Carter, spirit medium and toddy-mixer extraordinary."

Several gentlemen and ladies who had filled their glasses with the toddy, which Carter had brought in a pail, drank to their Ganymede, but in an instant the expression of their countenances changed to a look of extreme disgust, and a tremendous sputtering ensued.

"What have you been putting in this toddy, Mr. Carter?" asked Lena, showing her teeth with the expression of a sick tiger.

"It tastes like ruined eggs," suggested a very particular young lady on her left.

The guarded nature of this last remark caused an intense titter around the whole circle—and Carter, who had been carefully experimenting with his lips, exclaimed, "I must have made a mistake, and poured the brandy into the pail of sulphur water, which Mike brought from the spring to water the horses with. Well, I'm nicely paid off for laughing at the poor fellow. Never mind—there's something left in the demijohn," and off he ran to the wagon, pouring away the villainous compound as he went.

When the new pail of toddy had arrived, and the stimulating beverage began to loosen the tongues of several of the party, Clarence Neaton exclaimed, "Some of you are growing so eloquent over there, I propose that one of you tell us a story about the haunted spring—give us a legend, Miss Lena. What do you say, ladies and gentlemen—shall Miss French repeat a legend of the spring for us?"

"Yes, yes!" cried twenty voices, and in spite of her

entreaties and resistance, they placed a camp stool on their rude supper table, and lifted the beautiful girl into it amid shouts of laughter and applause.

When silence had been restored, Lena, looking around with mock gravity upon the company, said, "Ladies and gentlemen, since you seem determined to have a legend about this execrable sulphur water, I will endeavor to conjure up one for you, but upon certain conditions."

"Well, let's have them—we'll do anything—only give us a story about this ghost in the spring," cried several voices.

"Well then," said Lena, "we must all go in procession to the spring—and the ladies must take their shawls and cloaks, and I must have another toddy, and Miss Brandon and Miss Howell must exchange partners."

The conditions were all assented to, and Miss Howell's eyes fairly blazed with triumph as Lou Brandon was obliged to yield up Mr. Neaton, who was standing apart with her, engaged in earnest conversation, and take in his stead a stupid young admirer of her own, whom she had been for several minutes striving to get rid of.

When the party had all seated themselves on the moonlit rocks about the spring, Lena, who had contrived with the assistance of some of the gentlemen to make for herself a seat of some fallen rocks and dry branches near to the water, looking up for a moment to a lofty hill which reared its rocky summit a few rods from the spring, and whose precipitous side was washed by the silver waters of the Sarago lake, commenced her story thus—

"LEGEND OF THE SARAGO LAKE AND SPRING.

"No one who is familiar with the beautiful drive around the Sarago lake can fail to remember the crystal spring at its south-eastern border. The romantic character of the locality, and the secluded spring, with its almost snowy deposits of sulphur, have induced repeated visits from the young and lovely—but how few of these know the wild and mournful legend of the spring, and the adjacent hill which attracts the stranger's eye at first view of the lake.

"Where now the children of song and pleasure tread, have flitted other footsteps, and the dreamy voice of music oft hath swelled and died away in spirit whispering. There was a time when stately elms encircled the lake like watchful sentinels, and their rich, green foliage drooped closely to its bosom. And the spring, too, sparkled in the moonbeams for eyes as pensive and as beautiful as the loveliest that now honor it. The daring hand of mortal had not here presumed to improve the model of the first Great Artist, and the melodious murmur of the bubbling spring was breathed in nature's ear, and responded to by fluttering wings of emerald green from the o'erhanging boughs. Here came the airy footed fawn to gaze in the polished mirror of the lake, and wonder at the charms of its own gracefulness, while the mellow warble of the woodland songster blended with nature's music in untaught unison. The traditions of the red man give to us faint glimpses of a race long since extinct, and traces of refinement, art and culture, identify them as superiors of the Indian hunters found by Eu-

ropeans on our shores. Of stately height and noble mould, their dark eyes flashing meteor-like, they swayed the sceptre over hills and mountain valleys with the port of princes. Their strong castles crested the hill-tops, and their banners dyed in human blood unrolled their red folds over blue and slumbering lakes. How long their mighty clans were leagued, or when relentless feuds unlinked their brazen chain of conquests, tradition tells us not; we only know they vanished from our shores before the gathering night of barbarism, leaving to their savage conquerors the legacy of mystic legends, and faint glimpses of their wild, entrancing spirit lore.

"From yon solitary hill looked forth the lofty towers of a great chieftain, and the rising moon cast lengthened shadows of the battlements over the dreaming lake.—When the time of the new moon arrived, the chief, Costel, recalled his followers from the chase, and led them away by night toward the west for battle and plunder.—At these times he left to guard his castle, a bold warrior of his clan, with strict charge to keep the fair-haired Azel within the walls, and at the approach of danger to loose the chief's favorite hound toward the west. His cup-bearer was a graceful youth of twenty summers, a captive from the far south-west, who had borne the chieftain's cup for twelve long moons, but never spoke save to address his master. He would sit for hours in the moonbeams, gazing into the lake, and motionless as marble. The chief feared not his escape to his distant country, and only in his own absence required him to be confined in a corner room of the tower.

"The beautiful Azel was Costel's only child, a gentle creature, who moved noiselessly as a spirit through the castle, and seldom dared to kiss her stern father's hand.

But when the forms of her father and his warriors vanished from sight in their war march, the courage of Azel was restored, and she slid from her window by a ladder of woven twigs, and lighted by the silver lamp of night, roamed the lake shore with the elasticity of freedom.—The hound trained to watch for enemies from the summit of her tower, only raised his head when she descended the ladder, knowing familiarly her gentle footfall.—Thus free from the fear of detection, she traversed the woodland glades, and sat for hours watching the musical play of the crystal water, as the struggling moonlight fell upon the spring. But oftentimes as she wandered, shades of sorrow would steal over her sweet face, and though the dancing water laughed merrily; her deep blue eyes were dropping fast, fast tears, which sparkled in the glancing rays like precious pearls. Why did she weep these bitter tears, when the moonbeams were woven in most fantastic figures on the spring, and fringing each quivering leaf with silver threads? Ah! the young, blue eyed maiden with drooping lashes, from pitying the Aztec youth in his lone captivity, had learned from her beating heart the tremulous story of love. She knew full well the captive youth never remarked her presence—but his only joy seemed to be gazing upon the lake with longing looks.

“One quiet night, Azel had watched the long array of warriors filing away into the western forest, and her eyes had caught the last flash of their steel armor as they disappeared under the foliage, but she hastened not as usual to drop the ladder, and leaning from her window, gazed mournfully into the sleeping lake, which glistened like molten silver. Her thoughts were following the tramp of the distant warriors, and striving to identify the

armor which concealed the graceful figure of the mysterious captive; but never had she been able to distinguish him among the similarity of visors and waving plumes. As she leaned thus from her window, the long suppressed tears came swelling once more to her gentle blue eyes, and fell drip, drip, down the castle wall,—when, to her amazement, a silver pencil of moonbeams moved slowly from the narrow loophole beneath her window, and extending downward to the waters of the lake, formed an arch of dazzling light. While she trembled with mingled fear and rapture at the sweet vision, a strange pageant of water spirits, robed in snowy garments, with their long dishevelled hair woven with moonbeams, issued from the opening in the tower, and tripped lightly down the bridge of beauty into the lake, and disappeared, while a musical whisper, strangely like the captive's voice, floated to her ear, ‘We shall meet, we shall meet.’ Azel drew her tiny hand across her eyes to convince herself she was not dreaming, and looked again, but beheld only the quiet lake and its fringe of drooping foliage, and thought her fancies had deluded her.

“But an undefined fear stole over her, so that the forest stroll was for the first time neglected—and at length she fell into a long and fitful slumber. When Azel awoke, the sunbeams were already gilding the lake, and she heard loud and excited voices in the hall. Enquiring the cause of the unusual excitement, she learned for the first time that the long-haired captive had never gone with her father, but was confined beneath her own room during the chieftain's absence; and the keeper, with the prisoner's food, had found the door securely locked, but the captive mysteriously gone—for

the only aperture in the wall was the narrow loophole. The keen-scented hounds were loosed, and the forests scoured till sunset ; but no trace of the fugitive appeared.

"She now felt assured of the reality of her vision, and for many nights feared to roam the whispering woods. But at length, when the accustomed time of her father's return had passed, and he emerged not from the western forest, she once again was tempted to let down the little ladder, and rove once more in her accustomed haunts.—The moon peered lovingly at her through the sighing pines, and the thousand tiny wings of stately elms fluttered above her head, as if welcoming her advent. The dreamlike stillness of the forest was soothing to her troubled heart, but in her ear the spirit tones seemed ever sighing, 'We shall meet—we shall meet.' Descending the hill toward the spring, she paused to watch awhile the unceasing play of the little murmurer—and then, sitting upon the glittering sand of the shore, broke the polished mirror of the lake with pebbles.

"Then a wild strain of exquisite music was wafted over the listening water ; now low and silvery as the tiny waterfall ; then gushing forth as the gathering melodies of *Æolian* lyres. The heads of clustering water nymphs arose from the lake, bearing toward her resting place a car woven of their own glittering tresses, in which reposed the spirit form of the captive youth.—Then drawing away their tresses from the braided car, they disappeared, leaving the graceful youth before her. Gently he spoke, and his tones were musical as the distant tinkling of silver bells—'Azal, I am the child of a water king, and for a fault was doomed to atone in mortal form until a tear from beauty's eye should

fall upon me and release my spirit. As my hand lay unconsciously without the loophole of my prison, thy precious tears dropping upon it set me free. When thou hast worn out the thread of mortal life, I will take thee as my spirit bride. But thou hast listened to the voice of a water spirit—and now, unless thou wear this ring, all spirits will assail thee—and beware above the rest, the evil spirit of the spring. But while the ring is on thy hand, no spirit of the earth or air can harm thee.—Fare thee well.' Grasping a moonbeam, and twining it in the form of a ring, he placed it on her tapering finger, and then vanished. Bewildered by the apparition, Azal remained motionless upon the beach, watching the extending circles where the beautiful being disappeared. Looking downward, her eye caught the sparkle of the mystic ring, and she knew herself to be the betrothed of a water prince. At this instant she heard her father's voice along the shore, and springing up she darted away into the forest, while an arrow whistled swiftly after her. She flew on unharmed, and leaping across the spring, another arrow cut the magic ring in twain—and the evil spirit, ever on the watch, grasping her slender form, sank slowly out of view.

"When the chieftain reached the spot where this unknown fugitive had seemed to dissolve in air, he found only a sparkling spring merrily playing in the moonbeams. The affrighted warriors hastened to the castle, and found the gentle Azal gone, with no trace behind save the twig ladder hanging from her tower, and the hounds tracing her footsteps to the lake's shore, and then back to the spring, were baffled in their scent, and bayed furiously around the spring. But the chieftain's daughter never more was seen in her father's halls ; and it

was whispered for ages that an evil genius stole away the fair-haired Azel. And it is said that at every full moon, the blue-eyed maiden, issuing from the spring, arrayed in flowing robes of sulphur crystals, which glisten in the moonlight with pale, unearthly hue, traverses a narrow circle round the spring, seeking for the talismanic ring whose possession shall destroy the evil spell."

The party had maintained perfect silence while Lena was speaking; for the fertile imagination of the young girl seemed to be singularly in accordance with the wild beauty of the spot, and her flowing words and graceful gestures charmed many who had never made her acquaintance until this day. She had, it is true, contributed largely to the mirth of the company during the ride, by her droll way of pointing out every comic feature of the people on the road, and by her excellent talent of converting every thing beautiful and romantic into ridicule—but the manner in which she related her legend of the spring, and the rare beauty and elegance of her dark classic features, as she sat so erect and queenly in the midst of that charmed circle, called forth an involuntary murmur of admiration as she concluded her story. Several gentlemen gathered around her, eager to secure the pleasure of escorting her back again to the fire, and a lovely woman of twenty-five, who was one of the married ladies of the party, and who was known among her friends as "Annie the Superb," exclaimed,

"Lena, allow me to remark, without any nonsensical effort at flattery, which I know you would ridicule, that you would make an excellent actress. Your voice is admirable—your features are of a decided tragic cast. Oh,

girls! wouldn't we all go every night to hear her? Yes! we would take a box for the whole engagement. I'll tell you what I will do—if you will agree to take parts, all of you—no! not all of you—yes, you can, too, for we'll invite some of our own set to be spectators—I'll have a stage made, and hire dresses at the theatre, and we'll have a regular dramatic entertainment at my house,—We must restore the old system of acting—we'll be the patrons of the standard drama in this country—we can do it—Kate Estelle did it. Did you ever hear Kate Estelle? Splendid—perfectly splendid. She went to school with me—she and I roomed together two years. Frank knows her—Frank was in love with her—I know it, for she showed me one of his letters. Well, girls! what do you say? We can have a bill printed, too—Lena shall be the star—we'll print the handbills 'Benefit of Madame Lena Frenchichi, assisted by Clarenzo Neatoni,' &c. &c. Here, Mr. Neaton, we want you—where is he?"

"He's non est," said Bumstead—"he and Miss Howell walked off towards the camp while Miss French was talking."

"Well, let's all go," said Mrs. Frank, "it's growing mighty cold here. We must have the theatricals, though. If you will all come to my house to-morrow evening, we will make arrangements—what do you all say?"

Her proposition seemed to meet with general approval; and the gay party, as they filed back in the narrow path toward the camp fires, were discussing the respective qualifications of each other to assume the characters delineated by the great Shakspeare. As they were making their way through the bushes, the clear, rich, and prolonged barking of dogs rang out upon the still air,

and echoed back in wild music from the surrounding hills.

"Those dogs are after coons," said Harry Carter—"this is a splendid night for a hunt. By Jove! they are coming this way," he exclaimed, as the voices of the hounds pealed forth in more rapid and eager cries, and apparently very near at hand. "Oh, give me a club," he added, nervously, catching up a dead branch, and breaking it in the middle against an oak, and flinging one piece to Bumsteed—"there, Bumsteed! take that piece—we'll have a crack at the old rascal if he comes this way—don't be alarmed, Miss Fornell—it's nothing but a coon, ladies—come, all you gentlemen, get clubs, and spread yourselves along this path. We may have a chance for a trophy to-night—here, Bumsteed—where in the dickens is the fellow going?"

The individual addressed was rapidly mounting into the top of a great elm tree, with the agility of a cat.

"I want to get a good view of the hunt" shouted back Bumsteed from the tree-top.

"You miserable coward!" said Carter, contemptuously, "I have a great mind to heave a stone at you—do you think there is a lion in the woods?"

While he spoke, two hounds crossed the path between Carter and the camp fires, with their noses close to the ground, and uttering at regular intervals their peculiar mournful cry.

"There's game near at hand," said Harmon, calmly; "those hounds have had a long run—did you notice with what difficulty they clambered over that pile of rocks? I'll bet you a bottle of wine, Carter, they've been run-

ning steadily for twenty-four hours. There's something larger than a coon ahead, you may be sure."

"Come, girls," said Lena French, "these gentlemen are anxious to be in at the death—don't let us keep them back—for my part, I think those hounds are the very same which traced Azel into the sulphur spring.

"Oh, yes, yes! we'll go too," exclaimed several ladies, heroically, and away they all ran pell-mell, leaving Bumsteed in the tree.

Such a race was probably never witnessed before.—The gentlemen, with their clubs under their arms, assisted the ladies over the fallen rocks and trees as best they could; but many a riding dress was unpinned and torn by the rude bushes, and its sweeping skirt trailed in ridiculous length over the rocks.

"Never mind the pieces, my brave Amazons," shouted Carter, as he saw a full yard of dark merino dangling from a thorn bush—"we'll take up a subscription for them, won't we, gentlemen?"

"Aye, aye," exclaimed a dozen voices.

"A subscription to improve bad *habits*," said Lena, nearly out of breath, dropping upon a seat at the camp fire. "Oh dear, I'm nearly dead—you gentlemen go on, and leave us here."

"Oh mercy! what would mother think of such romping as this?" gasped the precise young lady, as she vainly strove to gather the torn ends of her skirt into a respectable train.

"I'm going on—once in a life-time," said Lou Brandon, resolutely, as she pushed forward with nimble step and unharmed skirts in the direction of the confused sounds, which appeared to come from the ravine where the horses were fastened. The gentlemen cheered her

on, as they pushed aside the bushes for her—and in a few seconds they came upon an excited group, consisting of the two Irishmen, and Neaton, and Miss Howell, gathered about some white looking object on the ground. As Miss Brandon came up, Miss Howell, lifting up by the fore paws a noble silver-gray fox, said exultingly—“See there! I gave it the death blow—didn’t I, Mr. Neaton?”

CHAPTER V.

THE DEFEAT.

THE moonlight scenes of the last chapter occurred nearly a year after the midnight interview between Alexander Broadhead and his lawyer. The suit instituted against the great firm of Fornell, Horton & Co. had, after mature preparation on the part of Levins, been brought to a hearing before the distinguished Judge of the United States Circuit Court. The great wealth of the respective parties, and the eminent abilities of their counsel, were ample guarantees that the judge would have presented to him every nice point of the case, and every pertinent precedent necessary to aid him in rendering a correct and satisfactory decision. A careful examination of the instrument by which the parties had adjusted their former difficulties, and a knowledge of the history of their previous litigation, constrained him to decide, that not only in a moral point of view, but also in a strictly legal sense, the agreement executed by both parties bound them to allow each other the full, free, and uninterrupted use of the patented spindles.

Broadhead had been a constant attendant at the court during the elaborate and tedious argument of his cause. Day after day he had ruffled the dignified bird of justice as she was setting upon the eggs of law, by his in-

cessant comments upon the dilatory character of legal proceedings, and by his extraordinary methods of illustrating the immense number of sitting and standing postures the human body is capable of assuming when suffering from fatigue. He had exhibited gratuitously to the opposing counsel certain innate dramatic qualifications in the way of incredulous stares, French shrugs, and very effective contemptuous half turns of the body, coupled with that great annihilator, "preposterous." His own counsel, the thoughtful, nervous, astute Levins, had come in for a share of delicate attentions during his argument, for his client was ever at his ear whispering timely suggestions and profound reasons; till at length the irritable attorney obtained a respectable cessation of the annoyance by saying to him shortly, "Broadhead! sit down! My ear must resemble a beehive, when the queen bee makes her first appearance in hoops."

Broadhead's pale countenance grew more livid as he retreated rapidly to his chair. However, the spirits of the manufacturer were of that fickle character which do not long retain the pain of an insult, and in a few seconds his anger moderated, and placing his huge feet upon an adjoining chair, he folded his arms upon his breast with intense dignity, and sought to study out in the physiognomy of the judge the probable effect of his counsel's argument. The examination of the jovial features of the distinguished jurist did not appear to be very satisfactory to him. There was something genial and frank in his countenance; something which conveyed to the mind of an observer the idea that the magistrate had not forgotten the existence of a searching Eye above, and a large deposit of heated sulphur below.—And this style of face was rather suggestive of a decision

in favor of parties who had acted in good faith; and the manufacturer turned to the papers of Levins, which lay upon the table, in the hope of being able to discover some material which might be framed into a species of woolen cap to draw gently over the keen eyes of justice. But the broiling summer sun was decidedly unfavorable to the plaintiff, for wool would only have aggravated the glowing features of justice, which seemed to obtain considerable relief in the undulations of a large palm leaf fan.

After a prolonged contest between the heated and excited counsel, the calm, clear tones of the magistrate pronounced a decision, which fell upon the brain of the plaintiff like a blow of one of his own great water wheels. For a few moments it fairly stupefied him, and a spectator would have believed from his vacant expression, that his reason had fled with his hopes. But soon that ever faithful companion of his existence, unbounded impudence, returned; and opening a choice collection of billingsgate which he treasured up for great occasions, he poured the whole of it with most munificent prodigality over judge, counsel, and parties. Every person present expressed himself perfectly well satisfied with the bounteous character of his entertainment—but without waiting to receive the formal acknowledgments of the Court, the infuriated plaintiff dashed through the door on his return home. Levins sprang after him into the hall, and grasping his arm, sought to detain him for a moment's conversation. He might as well have attempted to pin a grizzly bear to the floor with a darning needle. The indignant cotton dealer shook him off with some allusion as to the propriety of his visiting the kingdom of Pluto in company with the rest of the legal pro-

fession, and dashed along the public thoroughfare, swinging his gold headed cane with a vehemence wholly at variance with the sultry condition of the July atmosphere. He was just in time for the cars, and springing upon the platform with the agility of a hunted cat, he was soon flying away from the scene of his torture and humiliation. It seemed, however, as if the demons of ill luck followed the unfortunate plaintiff into the noisy train, for the first newspaper he purchased to divert his thoughts contained a notice of his own suit, pending before the United States Judge. He flung the paper through the car window, and bought an orange from a boy who was passing through the train, and gouging out a piece of the rind, commenced sucking out the juice. At this instant, he heard some one in the seat behind say, "How does that patent suit of Fornell's come on?—he's got himself into a bad scrape there—hasn't he?"

Broadhead's hands pressed tighter upon the orange as he listened for the reply, and a weak part of the peel which had escaped his notice giving way under the nervous strain, burst out, casting a decided stream of the yellow juice upon the gay vest and coat of a young man who sat beside him.

"There, sir! you have spoilt my coat," exclaimed the unfortunate recipient of the yellow shower, with a look of intense dismay, as he applied his white handkerchief to the moist spots upon his vest.

"Very sorry, sir—very sorry," replied Broadhead, at the same time striving to accomplish that most difficult feat of sucking an orange with two holes in it. "Everybody has his trouble, sir. I have just had a valuable suit spoilt, too. The orange—that is to say, I mean the bub-

ble, which burst and spoilt my suit, was a lawyer's opinion—it looked to be very sound, just like this orange—but still there was a hole—that is, I mean a flaw, in it. Young man, let an old man give you some wholesome counsel. Lawyers have flaws in them—don't trust them—they all look sound, but they won't stand squeezing."

"Such a bungler as you can't *suck* 'em, that's clear," growled the young man. "If you squeezed your pocket book like you squeezed that orange, it's no wonder you lost your suit."

This last remark occasioned a titter at that end of the car, but it suggested to the manufacturer an idea which cast a faint ray of pleasure upon the night of his bitter disappointment. Levins had as yet received no compensation for his professional services—Broadhead concluded it was best—he never should. The meditation which this economical conclusion occasioned, served to divert the thoughts of the defeated plaintiff during the remainder of the ride; but when the lights of the great city began to loom up in the distance, the consciousness of his defeat in the patent suit pressed upon him with renewed vigor. He feared to meet the reproaches of his wife, to whose boldness and energy he was, in a great measure, indebted for the conception of the plan by which the tempting treasures of the great firm were to be transferred to his own bank account. However, she must sooner or later be informed of the result, and he determined to make her acquainted with his defeat at once. And then he had always found her prepared with some expedient for relief in his times of difficulties and losses, and she might not, even now, be wholly destitute of consolation. Before the train had fairly stopped, he leaped

from the platform, and with rapid steps made his way towards his dwelling.

His wife was seated at an open window of her mansion, endeavoring to secure the benefit of some stray breeze to refresh her throbbing temples, as she portrayed to her son, William, the pleasures that were before them in a prolonged visit to Europe, when the necessary funds were secured by the successful termination of the suit against Fornell, Horton & Co. But this "midsummer night's dream" was suddenly brought to a disagreeable awakening by the unexpected entrance of the defeated plaintiff, dusty, hot, and crest-fallen.

"Well, Hester!" he exclaimed, flinging his hat and cane into a corner with the air of a man casting off his upper garments for a prize fight, and then attempting to drag a chair with rollers towards his wife and son over a piano stool and a huge Newfoundland dog.

"Well, Alexander," she replied, "what has brought you home this soon?"

"They're all asses, Hester—there isn't one of them that's got brains enough to float the tenth part of an idea—yes! unmitigated asses. I know more law, more legal principles, than that Judge Tilsen—pshaw! William here, can make a better argument than that pot-bellied Willard. William, bring me some brandy and sugar. Why, he stultified himself twice—perfect nonsense—miserable trash—well, it's no use, we must go to work and economize—how is every thing at the factory?"

"What in the name of goodness do you mean, Alexander?" said his wife, gazing anxiously into his face—"has the decision gone against us?"

His black eye turned quickly away from her earnest gaze, as he replied bitterly, "Yes, he decided in favor

of that rich firm. Their great name was too much for him. I told you we could do nothing against their power and influence—I told you we would be defeated."

"But I tell you, Alexander," said Mrs. Broadhead, drawing her fine figure to its full height, as she swept past him to the table, to prepare his punch from the materials which William had brought from a sideboard—"we will not be defeated; they shall not have so easy a victory as this, I can tell you. Do you think, Alexander Broadhead, that I will allow William here to see you succumb so quietly, at such a trifling obstacle? No, indeed! We will defeat them yet, or my name is not Hester Broadhead—here's your punch."

"But I tell you, Hester, the case is decided against us," said he, staring at her in amazement.

"What of that, simpleton?" said the fearless woman. "Appeal, man! appeal to the Supreme Court—that's our next step; and mind you," she continued, with the tone of one accustomed to have her commands obeyed—"I shall manage this matter myself hereafter. I ought to have done it before—I might have known you would bungle it."

"But, Hester," remonstrated the excited manufacturer, stirring his punch into a violent whirlpool, "think of the enormous expense of an appeal; why, why—I should be obliged to neglect my business, and spend weeks—yes, months, in Washington. And those lawyers—those land pirates—more money, more money—my factory would be stopped, my property going to decay. You know how hard I have struggled, Hester, to accumulate a little property for my family; and the Supreme Court would decide against us, I tell you. We stand no chance against that firm. Fornell's connection

with the railroad lobby gives him unbounded influence against us. And they will use it, Hester; yes, they'll use it. I tell you we'll be defeated. And then the ruinous expenditure—we can't afford it—it's madness, sheer madness," and draining the glass at the last word, he placed it quickly upon the table; and turning again to his wife, who was regarding him with a calm and steady gaze, ventured to look up as far towards her eyes as about the point of her nose—and then, as if frightened at the awful idea of his eyes encountering those of another human being, he looked down at her hands, and repeated in a tone a trifle fainter, "sheer nonsense." Then his huge paws, which were clasped together over his knee, parted company, one to attend to the smoothing of the thin locks of gray hair on his head, while the other commenced feeling around for his gold-headed cane, which was not there, by some fifteen feet. This hand, being unable to discover the gold-headed cane, waved irresolutely in the air, and then concluded to travel after hand number one, which it found on the top of his skull, undecided whether to come down or scratch. Finally, both hands determined to come down and mix another brandy punch, which they did very rapidly; and with equal rapidity, they assisted in showing the punch the way down into the old man's brandy receiver.

Mrs. Broadhead appeared to reflect cautiously for a few seconds, and as the train of ideas swept through her mind, her large gray eye, a moment before so calm and gentle, began to brighten, and then at length blazed in the splendor of aroused intellect and daring purpose. Turning to her son, who was seated at the open window, listening eagerly to his father's conversation, she

bade him kindly to leave her alone with his father for a few moments. As the door closed behind William, she drew her chair very close to her husband, and said calmly,

"Alexander, this suit shall be carried to a higher court, if it take every cent you have in the world. If it require me to sell my diamonds, and you your gold-headed cane, that appeal shall be made, and it shall be successful. If you prefer to stay at the factories, and conduct them, stay; but whether you stay or whether you go, I shall go to Washington, and see the matter through. Have you any idea of William's feelings in regard to that impudent girl? Do you know that he feels exactly as if he had been disgracefully whipped, and he as innocent of blame as a lamb? Do you remember that his blood is my blood, and his feelings my feelings, and that either of us would die even to be revenged on her, and those who have incited her to that outrage? You may talk of economy and money; but, Alexander, there is something which includes all these, and is better than all these—yes! a thousand times better—and that is—*triumph!*"

Broadhead had listened eagerly to hear what that glorious article was, which so far surpassed in value his own beautiful gold; but when the last word fell upon his ear, he looked as incredulous as if she had said "pudding." However, he dared not at that moment to discuss with her the relative cash values of hard dollars and feelings of triumph. So he looked as submissive as a man whose hands and feet are tied while a thief is searching his pockets.

After a few seconds' pause, however, he ventured gen-

tly to remark that a cheap lawyer might be employed to advantage.

"What! and give up Levins?" exclaimed his wife.—
"No indeed! Why Levins is the shrewdest, ablest, most prudent counsel you could employ—there isn't another like Levins in the State, Alexander. Levins would have succeeded if you had followed my advice, and used some of your money—and you must not commit such a grave error another time—no, no!"

The cotton manufacturer was too well acquainted with the character of the lady who was detailing the means of his future success, to dare openly to refuse the funds for her corruption purposes—but he secretly resolved to deceive her in regard to the sums which he might advance to her emissaries and tools. She had decided that his case should be carried to the Court of dernier resort, and from her decision there was no appeal. But he conceived the absurd idea that he might withhold the payment of the adorable cash, and conceal the falsehood from her keen senses. Experience should have taught him better.

When the subject of the appeal had been carefully discussed, and it was decided that he should accompany his fearless wife to the seat of the General Government, to aid in procuring a successful termination of the suit, the old man declared himself exhausted with the excitement and labors of the preceding week, and after stowing away a third glass of punch, marched off to bed.

His wife, after securing her dwelling for the night, seated herself again at her open window, and was soon buried in a profound reverie. She had turned off the gas, to avoid the annoyance of the insects, which in

warm weather collect in the neighborhood of lights—but the moon was already silvering the tops of the shrubbery and trees in the garden beneath her window, and soon the gentle rays found their way to her thoughtful features, revealing alternate expressions of vindictiveness and triumph. She was evidently brooding over the subject of her conversation with her husband; but the calm, quiet guard over her emotions, so habitual to her in the presence of others, was relaxed, and each varying thought and feeling produced some visible effect upon her attractive features. On ordinary occasions, a glance at her countenance would have suggested the idea of strong character and generous heart. The first impressions upon a stranger's mind would have been decidedly favorable to her—and those early impressions would, probably, have continued through a long acquaintance, provided the individual was careful to avoid all attacks upon the property or character of herself or family. But when occasion demanded, those fine features could assume a wonderful variety of expression—and that appearance of self-denial and discerning intellect could change into such a dejected, helpless, God-forsaken cast of countenance, that one's heart would yearn to render her assistance, even at a sacrifice of time and patience. If the current of your thoughts ran in the channel of great piety and self-denying philanthropy, you had only to hint your predilections, and the most submissive, humble, and yet zealous manifestations of holiness would settle upon her face, so that your eyes could not avoid glancing around the room in search of a large pair of wings and sealing-wax, to clap upon her back, and send her flying up. Did your tastes and inclinations introduce the subject of the painter's studio,

or artist's chisel, how bewitchingly she raved about the divine arts, and the enthusiastic tears glistened in her beautiful gray eyes, as she spoke of the unutterable bliss of an eternal home beneath the inspiring skies of dear Italy. Were you the victim of some cruel, miserly parent, whose views did not accord with your own, on the amount of pocket money proper for a young man, how eloquently she discoursed upon the high intelligence of the young, and the amazing stupidity and contracted views of the old. Were you possessed of the romantic notion that true love was a delicious compound of moonbeams and sea-shell whispers, how ardently she dwelt upon the remembrance of that day when she chose poor Alex., and rejected Fitzgerald's gold mine. Were you a representative in the councils of the nation, how adroitly she alluded to that novel and effective imagery you employed in that thrilling effort, during which a dozen pins were heard to thump their metallic heads upon the floor. Were you devoted to the excitement and style of the fashionable world, how refreshing were her ideas upon the absurdity of your husband devoting such immense sums to foreign charity, which never reached their destination, while his wife possessed such exquisite taste in dress, and could by her influence in society secure him so many and such wealthy clients. Were you inclined somewhat to the ancient style of adjusting personal difficulties by the interchange of leaden pellets, how congenial to your excitable nature was the flash of those beautiful gray eyes, as she assented with such cogent reasoning to your proposition. Were you infatuated with some immensely ridiculous theory which secured you a general laugh wherever you advanced it,

how encouragingly she mentioned that future day, when you would be worshipped as a benefactor of the race.

She was one of those gifted creatures who can fascinate nearly every man who is not forewarned against them, and her influence had contributed largely to her husband's success in business. Her tall, majestic figure, draped in the costliest habiliments of fashion, was an ornament to any drawing room—and her favorite coronet of garnets and diamonds, in the crowded ball room, was emblematic of the sway she exercised over the young and beautiful. She has been detained in the moon-lit window, gentle reader, that you may have a hasty glance at her classic features, full bust, and raven tresses, and may peer for a moment into that brave, earnest, scheming heart, which beats so grandly in spite of the decision of a United States Court. When you are informed that her years exceed two score and five, you will know that she is old enough to estimate the world at its proper value.

We shall take leave of her for the present, for that yawn, which gives the moonbeams entrance into her rosy throat, reminds us that Morpheus calls her.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR HERO.

ABOUT thirty miles from the city of New York, on the sea coast of New Jersey, stood an old-fashioned frame dwelling, commanding a noble view of the ocean. The house was located upon the side of one of those lofty hills which extend for miles along the shore, and which announce to the sailor's eye and heart the vicinity of the harbor of New York. The main building was two stories and a half high, without piazza or portico to mar the stateliness of its front, and the front door opened directly into a large saloon, with bay windows looking out upon the sea. Two commodious wings answered the purposes of family sleeping rooms, and the broad piazzas extended along their fronts communicated with the saloon by sliding sash doors. No trees or shrubbery obstructed the front view of the sea, but the open space between the dwelling and the precipitous shore was carefully laid out in grass plats and broad promenades. On either side of the mansion, and also in the rear, extended long rows of peach trees, and this delicious orchard was encircled by an arm of the forest, affording a delightful retreat during the oppressive heats of summer. Rustic seats were placed at intervals beneath the forest trees, and laughing brooks leaping down the precipitous side of the hill, cooled the

air, and cheered the solitude. There was no other dwelling within a mile, but scattered along the sides of the adjoining hills might be seen the cottages of retired gentlemen from the cities of New York and New Jersey—and occasionally the long white piazza of a summer hotel appeared in beautiful contrast with the dark green foliage of the hills. This sequestered mansion was near enough to the beach for one to hear the wild music of the surf, and from its front windows the eye could detect the steamers and sailing vessels bound to the commodious harbor of New York. Indeed in dark and tempestuous nights, the inmates could hear the heavy booming of cannon, as some belated vessels fired signal guns for the pilot boats, which lay behind the Hook; and the blazing eye of the ever faithful, revolving light of Neversink, cast cheering glances along the adjacent shores.

The property belonged to the Honorable Judge Carter of the United States Supreme Court—and here he passed those months in which his duties did not require his attendance at Washington, or at the Court rooms of the neighboring Circuit. The retirement and healthfulness of the spot was peculiarly adapted to those long habits of profound study, and that careful reflection upon the principles of his profession, which had already procured for him prominence among the able jurists who constituted the highest Court of the nation. Judge Carter was one of the many able men who acknowledge the rugged hills of Connecticut to be the home of their infancy and childhood. From a condition of indigence and obscurity, he had, by the force of a strong will, and by constant application to the business of his profession, raised himself to the highest judicial offices in his native State. The great abilities as a jurist displayed by

him during the course of a long life, had attracted the notice of the federal authorities—and at the age of fifty, he had received that noblest crown of an American lawyer, a place upon the United States Supreme bench.—But in addition to his unquestionably merited reputation as a jurist, he had by a large circle of acquaintances, been denominated a philanthropist—a title regarded by many as of very dubious honor, when considered in connection with the popular idea of the term. If philanthropy is limited to the donation of great sums of money to popular institutions for reforming the manners and morals of people at home or in foreign lands, he was a philanthropist. But if the term includes that warm, affectionate sympathy for all men, and particularly the miserable, hungry, and suffering, which leads to the sacrifice of an occasional dollar, or the gift of a loaf of bread, Judge Carter was not deserving of the title, or rather he might have been styled a limited philanthropist. His favorite theory in regard to applicants for charity, was, that in this enlightened country every one can obtain employment at all times and seasons—and consequently no one is ever forced by want to beg, except in rare instances the sick—and for the latter, a judicious State system of county houses had been provided. He regarded the poor-house system as entirely superseding all Christian precepts in regard to alms. He appeared to think that when the county tax had been forced out of his pocket by the law of the land, he had performed a remarkable act of benevolence, which the recording angel had credited him with in the great book of life, with an approving flutter of his wings at the pious disinterestedness of the gift. With such views in regard to the ample provision which the State had made

for the indigent, it can be imagined what reception the unfortunate poor met with who chanced to fall in his way during his circuits. No matter what plea might be urged for assistance by man, woman, or child, he was always prepared to refute their arguments, and in a tone which made the old rags upon their backs fairly tremble with fear and mortification. He treasured up in a corner of his memory a brief account of every impostor that had ever come in his way, and indeed of every one that he had ever read of—and when a spectator was present to witness the exemplary method in which he disposed of a suppliant, he delighted to narrate the whole history of imposture, probably to prevent his listener from ever turning a kind ear to a beggar. But this distinguished jurist might have appeared to a casual observer to possess the most sensitive nature in regard to the poor—for when he read in the papers of the day some pitiful tale of an unfortunate woman who had gone supperless to bed, the convulsions of his agonized features, and the strong tendency of water to the eyes, was painful to behold. Perhaps the next instant the hard, weather-beaten visage of some luckless fisherman of the coast appeared at the door, and the coarse voice requested a trifle to aid in the purchase of a new boat to replace the one lost in the storm. Listen to the response—"What do you want to tell me such a lie for about your boat—I know better—you haven't lost any boat—and if you have, why don't you go to the poor-house?" Sometimes his delicate little wife would venture to remonstrate with him upon the impropriety of censuring the applicant without some previous knowledge of the character or history of the individual, for which she was generally rewarded by some savage remarks upon encouraging imposture. The poor

little woman, overcome by the sound rather than the force of the argument, would quietly slip into her son Harry's hand a trifle, and send him after the retreating steps of the unfortunate. Thus it became a saying along the coast, that no beggar ever left the Judge's door without being both mad and glad.

The Judge had but one child—a gay, talented youth of nineteen, remarkable not only for his rare manly beauty, but also for an indescribable charm of manner and conversation, which gained for him many admirers, and when he chose to exert himself, secured for him life-long friends. Of a delicate and sensitive nature himself, he was extremely careful to avoid injuring the feelings or wounding the prejudices of others. No human being was too abject, or too despised by the community or society in which his family moved, ever to render him forgetful of those kind words and sympathies which are due between man and man. He might avoid the society of those whose principles, or whose lack of principles, were distasteful to him—he might maintain constant guard over those who excited apprehensions of ill will, and meditated injury towards him—but he never allowed himself to be betrayed into a cruel or harsh expression to any one, except upon a clear and intended provocation to himself, or an effort to disparage his acknowledged friends. He despised mean actions from the bottom of his heart, but he rarely addressed the perpetrator, unless some remarks were pointed previously at himself. Then, however, that long-restrained tongue was loosed with a vengeance, and the bitterest reproach and keenest sarcasm flowed forth with astonishing facility from those beautiful lips, and his bright hazel eye, full and expanded with excitement, was glorious in its wrath.

Born in this wild and romantic locality, his infant ears taught to listen for the dash of the heavy waves upon the shore, his childish eyes learning by experience to detect the character of the distant vessels spreading their white wings over the blue sea, his youthful imagination stimulated by the strange sounds of the night tempest struggling with the mighty ocean, the expanding character of the boy partook in a degree of the grand and noble peculiarities of the great expanse before him. Like the broad ocean, he too was calm, and beautiful, and attractive, when left alone. Treat him with the courtesy and manners due to a noble and generous being, and the thoughts of his being moved evenly and calmly on, bearing faithfully to their destination the duties confided to his honor. But vex his honest bosom with rude tempests of malice or unreasonable opposition—and he too, like his watery prototype, revolted at unjust exactions, and in his haughty pride, defied the hurricane, and overleaped his barriers in white rage. Like the far-reaching sea, his heart, too, was broad enough to love the world, and discover beauties in every clime beneath the sun. No contracted views of birth, or lineage, or race, fettered his mind in the gloomy dungeon of a blindly-idolized locality. For his mind, there was beauty, and health, and science, and purity, and nobleness, on other shores than the one beneath the home of his childhood. Like the ocean, his soul too possessed deep, deep recesses, and weird caverns, where delicious melodies stole soothingly along coral aisles, and beautiful thoughts were stranded like sunken jewels on golden sands. As the years of the noble boy approached the verge of manhood, the heaving bosom of his loved ocean friend, whereon his graceful boat had learned to move securely, began to throb

with deeper meaning, and strange voices spoke from its depths of a higher life and a nobler idol. And the bright hazel eyes, which so long had reveled in the mysteries of blue waves and moonlit surfs, began to gaze more frequently towards the starry heavens, and peer more anxiously into the awful space where human imagination is wont to locate the Deity.

Harry Carter was known and loved by every family of fishermen for miles along the shore. His tall and graceful figure, clothed in duck trousers and shaggy pea jacket, was constantly seen upon the beach, hunting for snipe, or exploring the frequent coves in search of the wild ducks and other water-fowl which at certain seasons settled down in immense flocks upon the arms of the sea, or the river which flowed into the sea just beyond his father's residence. He often accompanied the hardy fishermen in their distant expeditions to the fishing banks—and leaping fearlessly into the surf, aided them to launch their long and narrow whalers' boats, a feat requiring no trifling amount of skill and muscle, when a heavy sea was rolling in. In the warm days of summer he had often labored hard to assist them in boxing up their fish and ice, preparatory to their transportation to the great markets, and then danced upon the hard beach in their rude merry-makings, to the music of Black Charley's fiddle, till wearied out by the moonlit revel, he had fallen upon the sand, and slept all night with his face to the starry heavens, secure in the balmy, salt air, from danger of cold or sickness.

When his advanced studies required his attendance at a distant college, the rough but warm-hearted denizens of the coast parted from him with profound regret, and the charm of his collegiate life was never allowed to

erase from his mind the delightful memory of his ocean friends. A few miles from his father's mansion, was a large village, where the family attended church, and where the society of the educated and refined, suited to his father's condition in the world, was the nearest to be enjoyed. In this country village the young man learned those inevitable lessons of life, which in a greater or less degree chill the young and generous impulses of the soul, dispel the illusions of youth in regard to the pure and disinterested motives of men, and make the sentry experience keep vigilant guard at the gate of the heart. Here he learned of the existence of the bitter and everlasting jealousies and rivalries of religious sects—the contests and slanders of cliques in social life—the violent animosities arising from political strifes—and that personal ambition which haunts the dreams of one man or woman, determined “to put another down,” even if the contest rages till the striking of the death clock.

When the realization of the dangers of society began to dawn upon his noble heart, the heavenly sentinel appointed to guard every human soul, sounded the alarm. As the din of the approaching battle fell upon his ear, Harry Carter's eye brightened, and he looked out upon his dear, beautiful ocean—so calm, lovely, strong.—“Yes, glorious old friend, wreathed in the smiles of a summer's noon—heaving in the fullness of an honest heart, scorning to be agitated by trifling causes, and blue, true blue; performing thy duty well when unmolested by the provoking storms; and ever carrying the burdens men lay upon thee faithfully to thy destination, as far as thy power can—thou shalt be my model! Yonder miserable little village, which men call Tattletown, shall not possess the power to rank me in any of those

uncharitable cliques—shall not ruffle my good temper by their subtle slanders—and shall never make me act or speak unjustly against any human being, not even against my enemies. Yes! even that subtle, scrawny, mischief-making wife of Deacon Roundhead shall have her just dues at my hands. Like that jagged, ragged rock which makes thee foam sometimes, but which thou glidest by forgivingly at present, she, too, must have some good points.”

The broad ocean gave a broad grin at these words, but said nothing. Harry was unable to comprehend the exact meaning of that smile; but then we know the ocean is so deep.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR SET AND THE OTHER SET.

THE profound significance of that venerable proverb, that birds of a feather flock together, is daily realized in our important village of Tattletown. No stranger who chanced to stroll along our carefully-swept sidewalks, in gazing admiringly upon the long rows of substantial white-painted dwellings, would ever imagine that each house contained a garrison devoted to the cause of one or the other of two rival factions in society, bearing the respective appellations of the “Reds” and the “Blues.” Such, however, is the solemn and momentous fact, which sooner or later must be announced to every newcomer into our town. Our set are enrolled under that brilliant banner whose hues resemble very nearly those of a boiled lobster. Of course no person with the slightest amount of taste, or the least penetration, could hesitate an instant on which clique to bestow his sympathies and his support. We—that is to say, our set—are the worthy representatives, in an unbroken line of succession, of those distinguished founders of the human family, Mr. Adam and lady. We are the worthy representatives of the distinguished couple when they were indulging in the luxury of eating forbidden pippins, and snapping the black seeds at each other. While the other set only represent them as they went sniveling out of

the orchard. We are in favor of fine linen, brocade silks, diamonds, turkey and oysters, dancing, whist, champagne, and a spirit of fun. They go in for calico, plain black silks, cameo breast-pins, veal pot-pies, the game of fox and geese, tea parties, lemonade, and a spirit of prayer. We don't monopolize all the learning and intelligence by a long jump, nor the beauty either; but then we are the charitable without doubt—and we don't cant about the *worthy* poor. We have a mighty fine opinion of ourselves, notwithstanding their mean way of gossiping about us. They say we are leading young men to drunkards' graves, by mint-julep straws—but even if that were true, it isn't half so bad as blasting some poor lady's reputation. Our set have no faith in the slander about the Pope of Rome having horns and hoofs, and they do believe it.

Well! we must say they have some queer specimens in that set. There is Doctor Pole, the most remarkable prolongation of humanity that you ever witnessed. He was evidently designed to be a giant nearly seven feet high; but the material gave out after the pear-shaped cranium had been elevated to the summit of the narrow bone-work, and consequently his legs were not finished out, but remain to this day, long, slim bones. His eyes were completed, however, and from their immense circumference, some idea may be formed of the stupendous plan originally devised. Like two huge lanterns at a mast-head, they startle by their height and brilliancy—and probably from this cause he is styled “a bright and shining light.” His style of announcing some great truth in a religious meeting, is also startling—and when the eye has strained itself, following him as he rises from his seat—up—up—and still up, until the whole length

is unfolded, you will see his wonderful orbs begin to roll about in astonishment, as if he had reached a strange country up there. And then some remarkable preparatory illustration will march solemnly out of his lips. He never prefaces any announcement, so you have only to sit as deep as you can in your seat and hold on. Wicked John Barker said a good thing once. Doctor Pole rose as usual, and said slowly and seriously, “Amanda May has gone away, and left a dollar.” Irreverent John whispered to his next neighbor, “A good swop, by jolly!” In the same set, and connected with the same Calvinistic congregation, is the jolly merchant, John Denton, whose rotund figure, and broad, smiling countenance, afford an agreeable contrast to the Doctor, whom he might with ease, if he chose, handle as a substitute for tongs. His cordial greeting, and unvarying courtesy and good humor, have secured for him the good will of the entire community, and our set are highly entertained when he assumes his Calvinistic Sunday face. A lugubrious and subdued expression upon Denton's good-natured visage, appears as ridiculous as would Doctor Pole's long figure in a roundabout.

Then there is Mrs. Ladkins, short and pulpy, who prides herself upon her thorough orthodoxy, and declares that the longer she lives, the more she is convinced of the correctness of the regular old blue Presbyterianism. She is certain that the only effectual cure for dissenters from the “indigo synagogue,” is to present them on all occasions with an ample budget of impudence concerning their dogmas and their clergy. She pronounces the Episcopalian church to be the nursery of popery, and their priests disguised Jesuits. She steps quickly, or rather bounces along the side-walks, plant-

ing her feet down upon the earth with peculiar force, as if she were thinking—"this foot stamps on a churchman—that foot stamps on a papist—crush 'em, both feet—down with 'em—down with 'em!" She considers herself to be entrusted with a peculiar duty in the church militant. She has been detailed as a high private, or sharp-shooter, to pick off the officers of the enemy; and she endeavors to keep herself in a proper frame of mind for the discharge of this high trust by a frequent use of such warlike provender as corned beef, cabbage, and vinegar. Fortified by such sharp stimulants, she lies in wait for the clergy of the apostolic succession, and on the first appearance of a lighted candle, or an evergreen cross, in their church, away flies a cabbage and vinegar shot.

Then there is Mrs. Roundhead, the pope of the other set. Harry Carter calls her "Pope Innocent," on account of her humility and expression of resignation. She is the wife of Deacon Roundhead, a bookseller in comfortable circumstances; and when she was made, Pluto gave a congratulatory supper to his friends. She makes no pretensions, but she contrives to have a circle of acquaintances who make them for her. Her head is carried meekly inclined to one side—like a bruised reed, bent but not broken. When some keen slander has been tracked to that final but insurmountable barrier, "the authority of a highly respectable lady," make no further enquiries, but persuade your brother to whip Deacon Roundhead or his sons. Mrs. Roundhead wears the honors of the pontificate with becoming gravity, and sense of her unworthiness. She never appears in her seat in St. Indigo in costlier vestments than striped green silks and cashmere copes. The adjustment of the cash-

mere shawl, when she takes her seat, consists of three distinct motions. One hand throws up the point behind, to prevent her sitting upon it. Then she drops placidly into her place, and immediately she pulls slightly at one shoulder, and then slightly at the other. Then she turns a trifle sidewise in her seat, that like a watchful shepherd, she may keep one eye on her flock and the other on the preacher. Then the calm of unaffected piety steals over her features, and her head inclines toward her right shoulder, to meet the slow and composed undulations of her fan to and from her devout breast. When the preacher speaks of the white robes of the saints, the eye so faithful to the flock is diverted for an instant to the white figures of her own shawl. When he pours forth those feeling exhortations against the pride of life, that eye wanders sadly till it rests upon those new bonnets in that left hand pew. If the mother who purchased those beautiful bonnets should chance to pass through the church door with Mrs. Roundhead, she will be very likely to hear some gentle rebuke like the following—

"What a fine sermon on extravagance! Well! we all need it. How gay Amelia looks in her new hat—it must have been *very* expensive."

This highly respectable lady, like the other ladies of that set, is shocked every Sunday afternoon to witness the ladies of our set promenade after evening service. At each dwelling of the Blues along our thoroughfares, you will find the blinds closed, but the slats open, and in each window will lurk the horrified but curious visage of Zion's look-outs. But we only laugh and walk on, and let them peek and talk on.

However, we must not forget the humble and unassuming pope, for her responsibilities are numerous, and her

duties increase as she leaves the church. She is fully aware that luxury abounds in our degenerate village, and that too much beef, and too little sup-pawn and milk are consumed in the community. This, of course, every well-informed mind knows is not conducive to a spirit of prayer, and occasions hardness of heart. To remedy this unfortunate tendency to extravagance requires her constant attention and advice. From house to house, amid the scorching rays of a summer noon, or enveloped in the drifting snows of winter, she meekly glides—hoping by some friendly counsel—some financial hint—or some reference to her own self-denying example, to avert that impending catastrophe, a peck of green peas, or a pair of fowls. It may be that one of the other set is engaged in the wasteful process of rolling out pastry for an apple tart;—then in what a respectable manner this highly respectable lady discourses to her Christian sister upon the high price of apples, and concludes by leaving one of her own economical recipes for making cracker pie. Ah! the noble influence of example—who can estimate it? Nearly all of the other set, in loving compliance with her illustrious course, now starve the body to preserve the soul. And perhaps when Tattletown and its colored factions shall have passed away—when its rival churches shall have crumbled into one common dust—some solitary apple tree will stand above the head of the weary traveler who has here pitched his tent; and gazing at an ancient recipe in his hand, and then at the lofty branches above him, he will exclaim, “Apples is so high, I think I’d better make a cracker pie.”

Mrs. Roundhead is strenuously opposed to the doctrine of the apostolic succession. She believes in a succession of Yankees, ofasty puddings, and of slanders.

In her school days she must have read some fascinating history of the Jesuits, detailing the arts and stratagems by which they gained access to great secrets, and the immense numbers of wires they laid into the bosom of the human family. She probably believed the book, too—for a race credulous enough to swallow the Salem witches, and modern spiritualism, need have no scruples at crediting simple acts of human management and intrigue. At all events, she resolved to learn from her foes—and she manages to have servants, mechanics, gentlemen, ladies, clerks, seamstresses, and agents of every description, from whom she gathers daily hints as to the internal affairs of every household. When she has accumulated sufficient to start a plausible slander, she broaches the subject to some confidential and prudent friends. Prudent friends mean those who can fly around the village fast, and who under no circumstances would expose her as the author. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether these prudent friends in an emergency could recall any direct charge she had circulated, for she in her unpretending and humble way, left so much to the imagination.

She is decidedly opposed to mingling her set and our set together—and although she says no rude or provoking words to any of us, she induces others of that set to do it. Thus she maintains landmarks of the faith, and retains the convenient practice of dropping in occasionally to see some of us herself. About once in every two years, she sends her snake-eyed daughter to one of our great dancing parties, to report our misdemeanors. She might send her oftener, perhaps, if the expense of party dresses was a trifle less. But the daughter has a chaste silk, which comes into fashion about every two years,

and thus periodically we behold chené silk playing wall flower in the very room with a sinful band of fiddlers.—Everybody, but the Blues, condemns old Roundhead for not buying some evening dresses for Miss Betty, but the old miser is resolved to train her up in his own straight and narrow way, which leads to affluence, and he means to be one of the few that find it. However, the golden moment for Miss Betty Roundhead has long since passed, for between age and a steady diet of sup-pawn, with cracker pie for desert, her personal attractions would compare unfavorably with those of a consumptive flamingo. But as the jockey would say, "blood will tell," and the mantle of Pope Innocent is destined to cover Miss Betty Roundhead. Already that sweet simplicity of character, that submissive deference to others, and that utter disclaimer of all pretensions to learning or position in society, which have secured for the mother that irreproachable appellation, "a highly respectable lady," have rapidly developed in the child, and in due time must inevitably result in the elevation to the pontifical chair of the first unmarried pope in the other set. How edifying is the sight of a lady who has passed the first quarter of a century, returning to the simple manners and ideas of childhood. Miss Betty has curtailed the ostentatious braids of shining hair, and now short, unstudied curls supply their place. She has a charming pet, too—a snow-white kitten, whose smooth fur she strokes in such childlike simplicity, and calls with such a winning voice, you must believe she is only sweet sixteen.

There is another in that set, whose great distinction is its almost fearful daring, and presumption for one of the wicked, dancing, worldly-minded set to speak of

in description. There is something so placid, and yet so great in all his bearing—something so velvety in his tread—something so majestic in his great paunch, and something so serene in his approving smile, that the other set have unanimously surrendered to him the palm of great intelligence and sainthood. He rarely honors mankind with else than common-place remarks, but this reserve has secured him the credit of being a profound thinker. His industry has gained him an independent living, but the absence of wealth only serves to prove his devotion to the more noble pursuits of learning. One so great as he, if not affluent, must be learned. His friends are fully acquainted with the fact that he has never filled the gubernatorial chair, or spoken from the Supreme Bench—that he has never made an eloquent address, or agitated in the halls of Congress; and yet, with true and zealous discernment they have announced that Deacon Roundhead is a very distinguished man.—Yes! he is distinguished, because so many men who have been honored with preferments were inferior to him—he is distinguished, because he was too sensible to seek to be distinguished—but above all, he is distinguished, because he has a head like Fillmore.

Yes! thoughtless, narrow-sighted young men of our set, who have imagined that mental toil, rewarded after long years of perseverance by the highest honors in the land, is true distinction, learn to remove at once such fallacious fancies from your minds, and stuff, and swell, and cram sup-pawn until your heads are round and fat, like that distinguished man.

Grace Lawrence is the star of that set—and if they are not successful in breaking her proud spirit, she will be one of the most attractive women in the land. Her rich,

clear eye beams with intelligence and spirit, and the heavy masses of her dark hair wave in luxurious fullness back from her snow-white brow. Her model bust and erect figure gather frequent murmurs of admiration as she sweeps so queenly by on her graceful pony, and there is a strange witchery in the scornful expression of her mouth as she dashes by the meek Mrs. Roundhead. The sly pope sent some one to her father with intelligence of a steady and gentle horse that could be obtained in exchange for Grace's darling; and the proud girl found it out, and sent word to the intriguer that when she desires to ride a bob-tailed pony, she will expect to borrow Mrs. Roundhead's curls to aid her in cutting a ridiculous figure; but that for ten years to come, she will ride no horse without a mane and tail a dozen times longer than the longest face that a female hypocrite ever put on on a long Sunday. A few days afterwards a dog so frightened Grace Lawrence's pony, as to cause him to throw his rider, and break her arm. And little Jim Weston says he never allowed his terrier to run in the streets during the daytime until Mrs. Roundhead told him on the morning of the accident, that if he kept his dog tied up afternoons, the pup would get sick.

There is a married lady in that set, whose gentle manners and refined address are not appreciated by those with whom she is associated. Her laugh is never loud or coarse enough! She never utters harsh denunciations of the faith of other sects, nor is the force of her bright intellect directed to the injury of her neighbor's character. Satisfied to pursue evenly and calmly the course dictated by her religious views, she instinctively shrinks from those daily conversations of her set which derive all their interest from the sarcasm bestowed upon

the advocates of immersion in baptism, or the Book of Common Prayer. The hand of time has pressed the silver crown of age upon her brow, but the lustre of a noble and womanly intellect is not dimmed, and the flowing accents of an accomplished tongue reveal the purity of the fountain where they originate. Such a woman, firm in her own religious belief, yet gentle and considerate to the feelings of those she chances to meet, seems to be left occasionally on earth, that the dream of an ideal life may never be entirely dissipated. She is not of our set, but we covet her.

There are a few in this queer village of Tattletown, who by education, habit, or religion, properly belong to the other set—but who, by the impelling force of a fun-loving nature, and an independent character, very often join our set in a game of whist, or in the distractions of a wicked evening party. One of these is Judge Ryder, who has recently doffed the judicial ermine, and retired to private life laden with honor, and leaving in the world such lasting memories of his abilities and integrity as seldom fall to the lot of jurists. His mind in its clearness and purity reminds one of the wonderful waters of Lake Horicon, and many poor widows and orphans have laughed through their tears at his decisions against human fiends. His obstinate gray hair, like General Jackson's, refuses to be put down by scissors, brush, or comb, but stands erect on his head, strong and defiant, and fit emblem of the constancy and boldness with which for nearly seventy years he has stood up for the civil and religious rights of the emigrants wafted to our shores by the winds of fate.

Endowed by nature and Jefferson with the principles of fair play, he wonders why people find it so difficult to

leave each other alone in religion and society. Claiming the privilege of selecting his own religion, he demands that our set and every other set have a similar franchise. His deliberate opinion, founded upon the experiences of a long life, in regard to the clergy of all denominations, is that about one in every thousand possesses that undefined quality, "common sense." He believes the only method of securing happiness and prosperity is to mind your own business, and have regular employment. Consequently he labors steadily, day and night, does more than his share towards public enterprises and charities—and when he wants relief for his mind, steers clear of the other set's game of fox and geese, and comes into our set and takes a hand at whist, after dropping in to see if the other set are well, and have enough cracker pie to keep them smiling, and plenty of cabbage and vinegar in the ammunition wagon to keep them amused in firing at the target of clergymen's gowns and the observances of churchmen. Whist does not perceptibly abate his industry, tighten his purse strings, destroy his religious or political principles, or bury him in any set.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR SET AND THE OTHER SET.

THE other set would scarcely be willing to acknowledge the fairness and correctness of the brief sketch of a few of their leading characters contained in the last chapter. They would unquestionably contend that some unfortunate traits of character were exaggerated, while other good qualities were ignored. * Or they might consider the individuals by no means the leading and fair representatives of their set. But what is the use of having sets, if we are not allowed to magnify the faults of our enemies, and extenuate the failings of our friends? And then the idea of any one being fair and exact in the village of Tattletown! Why, if any one should be so insane as to sit calmly down and give each citizen his just dues as regards merit and demerit, he would be overwhelmed with execrations from both sets. Yes! he would be swallowed up, body and boots, with greater rapidity than the stragglers from the other set gobble down the refreshments at our dancing parties. Oh! if you only had seen Doctor Pole at Mrs. Maston's party stow away the wicked luxuries of life, surely nothing but a sewing machine could have repaired the splits in your sides. • The party was evidently more worldly than the ethereal Doctor had anticipated, and nothing but the

preparatory indications of the fleshpots of Egypt stealing up in such savory clouds from the basement, could have detained the saint in that light-footed crowd. When the sound of the lively violin broke upon his astonished tympanum, his great startled orbs of vision actually advanced an inch out of their sockets. His long neck and head stretched in an alarming manner upward, and twisted about in every direction, like a surprised sand-hill crane. His bone legs became very uneasy, and one of them inconsiderately abandoned the other, and commenced describing an evolution upon the carpet which resembled very much the fourth and fifth steps of a dancing master. Shocked at the glaring impropriety of the limb's behavior, the Doctor drew it quickly from the vortex of fashion, and remembering the scriptural recommendation in regard to refractory members, he laid it across the other leg, and endeavored to saw it off with the back of his hand. But this handsaw effort proved to be a very tedious process—and in the mean time the foot of the other leg was beating time upon the floor to "old Jingle Foot's" music. Springing up from his chair with pious indignation, he stalked away towards the corner of the drawing room most remote from the band; but his walking bones were evidently possessed with an evil spirit, for they kept his feet bounding and springing along with the elasticity of india-rubber. Mortified beyond expression at his unavailing efforts to triumph over the flesh—he called his legs flesh—he thrust the elastic feet into close confinement under a piano stool, and discovering that his hands began to be infected with the spirit of twitching, he thrust them into his breeches' pockets. Alas! alas! his head, that thoughtful laboratory in which he had so often analyzed the deleterious compounds of

worldly pleasures—that pious head began to bob to Satan's fiddles. Mrs. Maston, observing his peculiar motions, said, "You seem to be very fond of music, Doctor."

"Yes," he gasped through his clenched teeth—"it's very—very stimulating."

A smile of grim delight stole over his features when supper was announced—for though the conflict with the powers of darkness had not left him wholly un mutilated, the genius of his appetite had stood faithfully by his side in the battle, and now reminded him that the soldier of truth must eat as well as fight. Shaking the last wicked kink out of his backsliding legs, he marched rapidly but grandly to the presence of roast turkey and stewed oysters, luxurious food of the Gentiles, but rendered proper for his palate under the injunction of asking no questions for conscience' sake.

To say that Doctor Pole ate heartily of the delicacies on Mrs. Maston's table, would convey a very inadequate idea of the execution done upon the viands. He devoured—he desolated—he undermined—he vanquished, yea! he obliterated from the sight of men mountains of provisions, and oceans of coffee and cream. Our set were rather disposed to laugh at his depredations upon the substantials, but when the course of conquest led him in the direction of the ice cream and jellies, a desperate rush was made to intercept him and secure an allowance for the ladies. The hostess, alarmed lest her guests should be unable to secure sufficient for their supper, endeavored to divert his attention, by reminding him that on a side table was an abundance of confectionery, some of which he had better take home with him for his little children. Unfortunate but amiable lady! how

faint was her conception of the magnitude and number of Dr. Pole's pockets. He turned with an approving smile, and in the twinkling of an eye, transferred to the linen pouches inside his coat and pants, enough candy and fruit to ruin his two children's appetites for a month. Then unfolding a red silk handkerchief, he quickly heaped upon it another supply, probably with a prospective eye to his children's children. Not content with this allowance, he sought for his long beaver hat, and filled that entirely full, as Harry Carter said, "for his children's children, even unto the fourth generation."

But we have unintentionally wandered off into a long description of this long individual, when we should have confined our remarks to a delineation of the beloved personages of our set. When we enter upon the delightful but delicate duty of sketching this varied and animated circle, a blush of pride naturally finds its way to our features at the recollection that these are "our jewels;" and we are disposed to spread ourselves, somewhat like a hen showing off her first brood of chickens. Not that we would wish it to be inferred from this fowl simile that our set are all of the tender age of chickenhood. O no! such a deduction from our words would leave the minds of our readers in an immense fog of error and misapprehension. For we are of all sizes, ages, and descriptions, from the neat and unique bantam, in its simplicity and white pantalots, to the dignified brown hen and the lofty Shanghai—from the modest young fowl just on the eve of leaving her maternal to the dressy topknot and the red-featured old cock—from the spruce little rooster who has just won his golden spurs to the advanced pullet whose limbs begin to look gaunt, and whose feathers are coming out in spots. We are a gay, prosperous looking brood, and

we lay plans daily, and hatch up fun every few weeks. But there is one weakness of the domestic bird to which we never give way. We never consider ourselves grand enough to rise with the sun. We regard this luminary as a glorious and exalted philanthropist, and we give him due precedence.

Mrs. Maston, one of the leaders of our set, will never see her fiftieth birthday again, but a very large number of persons, of every station in life, in Tattletown, hope that she will see her hundredth. The other set regard her quiet and easy manners, and the rarely varying expression of her features in society, as indicative of mental weakness, and lack of decided character. She sits quietly and apparently unconcerned at the whist table, sufficiently attentive to satisfy her partner, but seldom suffering herself to exhibit symptoms of excitement when all others are aroused and talkative. Her expression at such times is suggestive of long suppressed and almost vanquished suffering. It may be the faded memory of a death—a wayward child—or physical uneasiness. When she smiles, she reminds one of a gentle and loving mother—and her attractive, self-possessed manners, and her quiet but perfect method of suggesting and carrying through every variety of contrivance for rendering the young society about her happy, and the poor comfortable, have gained for her the bitterest resentment and reproach of the other set. They cannot endure the cool and constant habit she has of giving to every individual who applies for alms. She does not possess their ingenious style of disposing of the importunate beggar under their cant phrase, "I don't believe in giving to any but the *worthy* poor," and then without a word of inquiry, or a moment's examination, deciding authoritatively that

the applicant is unworthy. No! She gives something to *all* who apply; and if she dare not trust a particular one with money, she bestows food or clothing, or bids him bring to her his wife or children. If at any time, through excess of heart and sympathy, she may have given alms to the injury of the applicant, it has never been recorded in heaven against her; for the radiance of that Christian love which actuates her, forms a holy shield about her, through which the recording angel cannot see her possibly misplaced charity. The other set, pompous in the assumption of keen penetration, and heart-searching discernment, decide with the assurance of omniscience, that ninety-nine out of a hundred of the poor are unworthy. But this poor soul, reared amid the delusions of episcopacy and worldly pleasures, cherishes that absurd and unthrifty idea that the whole hundred are Christ's poor. What a misfortune for her that her education was not accomplished in the seminaries of New England, and her charities regulated by the rules of St. Indigo! Then all this bread and all this clothing might have been converted into cash, which judiciously invested at seven per cent, would soon have accumulated to a sufficient sum to enable her to found an institution of learning in the wilds of Africa, where some poor native might learn to wear patent leather boots and swear in English. Then she would never give her countenance to that rapid and sinful movement of the feet, called dancing, but would devote her leisure hours to that delightful pastime of the other set—running from house to house, and detailing all the glorious qualities of her neighbors and their children.

It happened once in the history of Tattletown, that Mrs. Roundhead, in her wonderful discernment, discov-

ered in the pinched features of a woman at her door, that rare bird—one of the *worthy poor*. After a rigid examination into the important statistics as to what church she attended, and who had given her assistance, she pondered for some time over the contents of her pantry. At length she raised her pontifical figure upon a chair, and taking down from the topmost shelf a white parcel, informed the starving creature that it contained food for herself and children. "And now," said the exemplary donor, "be sure and send your children to Sunday school." The gratitude of the suffering beggar was acknowledged by an edifying elongation of the pope's countenance, and a reference to the prophet and the ravens. Away walked the grateful creature toward her home and her hungry little ones. When she reached the door-step of Mrs. Maston's dwelling, she could restrain her curiosity no longer, and seating her emaciated frame upon the step, she proceeded to unroll the paper. When she discovered the contents, an expression of astonishment swept across her haggard features; and then, placing the gift upon the step beside her, she burst into tears. Mrs. Maston, who had been watching her from a window, came out to see what excited such emotion.

"Mrs. Roundhead gave me that to feed my starving children with, ma'am," said the woman, laughing once through her tears at the absurdity of the gift.

"What in the world is it?" said Mrs. Maston, peering curiously into the black, crumbled mass in the paper.

"It's old, dry, blackberry sass, ma'am—she said the ravens fed the prophet in the same unexpected way, ma'am—it seems to me, ma'am, like the ravens didn't do no great things—no how."

"Come in the house," said Mrs. Maston, laughing at this depreciation of the miraculous birds—"and bring that stuff and throw it in the swill-pail—perhaps I can improve on the imitation ravens."

One of the wildest, gayest, and bonniest birds that flutter their pleasure wings at the opening strains of music from the darkey minstrels who make a living out of our dancing parties, is the charming blonde, Mrs. Frayter, a niece of the hospitable and charitable Mrs. Maston. Her laughing brown eyes and plump features, radiant with smiles, and the witchery of her rosy mouth, and ever-changing dimples, are conducive to anything but that vital piety of which the other set are so vain. When she was born, a fiddle must have been playing the liveliest and *wickedest* waltzing tunes in the room below—and it is said that at her first appearance in church, on the occasion of her baptism, when the organist by mistake commenced a dancing tune instead of a grand prelude, she turned her infant eyes, beaming with fun, upon her godmother, and clapping her tiny hands with animation, exclaimed "good!" However this may be, it is certain that when her school teacher asked her for the first time to spell *red*, the little girl did so with facility—but when it came to pronouncing the word *blue*, she first said *beau*—but upon being further urged, she struggled convulsively and almost strangled to death in her abortive efforts to enunciate the detested syllable. The result has been, that the prejudice of her childhood has gained strength with her advancing years—and she avoids blue ribbons, blue people, and the blues, with wonderful persistency and adroitness. Arrayed in the snowy folds of Swiss muslin, embellished with a profusion of cherry-colored bows, and displaying enough of

her full and beautifully-moulded bust and arms to satisfy the most skeptical that consumption would have a long struggle before it found its way to her bones, she dashes with the enthusiasm and spirit of a cavalry charge down the long lines of the Virginia reel, conscious of the beauty of her dark lashes drooping so charmingly over her roguish eyes, and conscious, too, that her partner is some other woman's husband. Mrs. Maston frequently employs her as almoner for her numerous charities, or as an assistant in church festivals for the parish; and though she proves an excellent coadjutor in such enterprises, yet the expression of her countenance indicates that her heart is in other scenes, where nimble feet avow dissenting dogmas from St. Indigo. The cerulean minded who worship milder colors, regard with horror the scarlet shawl she wears so fearlessly along the streets of Tatletown; and the young ladies of the other set have learned to shudder at the bare idea, that they, by craving too strong coffee, and indulging in the dream of more than two pair of kid gloves in one year, may become like to those dreadful worldlings, party-giving Mrs. Maston and her scarlet-shawled niece. When these two gaily attired ladies sweep by in their stylish carriage, the watchful pope of the other set peers out from her high window, and longs for that happy day to arrive when extravagance shall have exhausted the Maston estate, and these two contemners of the New England Primer shall be enveloped in green blanket shawls and faded hoods, and only too happy to be admitted to her pontifical checked apron conferences, to study the domestic economy of manufacturing cracker pies and hasty puddings.

Gentle reader, have you ever noticed a solitary turkey walk heavily past your window during a long-continued

and drenching shower of rain? Have you observed the ludicrous and yet forlorn appearance of his long body, to which the wings have been plastered by the water, and the decidedly drooping tendency of his tail feathers? If you have, then your mind may be able to form some idea of the remarkable effect in society of Miss Wilson's hoopless skirts. She insists upon appearing in the streets, at church, and at our whist and dancing parties, with nothing to prevent her skirts flapping against her slight figure—and the general effect of her style, though savoring of independence, is really wonderful. She is tall, unusually tall, and from her waist up, her figure is graceful and classic. Her pale features only serve to render more conspicuous her keen black eyes, sparkling with wit and intellect. Her mind is an extensive and well-selected library of ancient and modern lore, and a day's social intercourse with her leaves an impression of many accomplishments, coupled with an agreeable and unassuming style of address, in pleasing contrast, as Harry Carter says, with her other *style of a dress*. In her soul, heaven and the world maintain a bitter warfare; but the majority of our set are inclined to "hazard their cash" on the side of heaven. Many a poor soul has rejoiced at her footstep, and her footstep has rejoiced at cotillion music. When fashion changes, Miss Wilson's mermaid style will probably be stylish *in the end*; but until that happy day, her friends will never cease to pray, that her skirts may be distended by some kind of a hoop—if nothing better, at least by the wind of a war whoop.

Beautiful Fanny James! how exquisitely delicate is the touch of her fairy feet upon the waltzing floor. The eye eagerly follows her graceful and slight figure, whirl-

ing away among the dancers; and the heart yearns to know if the honored mortal whose manly arm will some day encircle that slender waist, will be gentle, kind, and true to the loving blue eyes which glisten with purity and affection. You must, in spite of yourself, observe the bewitching grace with which she draws on that white kid glove, preparatory to the dance. How, in the name of all that is attractive in womankind, did she learn to move her tapering white fingers with such beautiful effect in so simple a process as putting on a pair of gloves? Her partner touches that graceful hand as carefully as if he thought he had been deputed to lead forward a sunbeam. But Fanny is no sunbeam, unless a figurative one, but real flesh and blood, with a dear little heart within, which will pass into somebody's possession one of these days, like a diamond with a graceful setting. The other set have remarked, with their accustomed charity, that if she does not quit dancing, and attend at St. Indigo, she will some day be slid into an envelope of yellow sulphur, sealed with the mark of the beast, and stamped gratis by the down train post-office department. But our set contend that all the tickets to future happiness are not to be purchased at their gloomy depot.

We have a philosopher in our set—a natural-born stoic, whose independent style of action and conversation has at times occasioned an immense amount of uneasiness to some of the female portion of our set, who have endeavored to reform his manners by judicious counsels—but all to no purpose. He will astonish his auditors by repeating some of the most exceptionable portions of Byron's poems, and in such a droll way, at the same time, that displeasure evidenced by his listen-

ers would only make them ridiculous, and they are all compelled to laugh in spite of themselves. When our set get up pic-nics to some romantic locality, he is always ready with his purse and helping hand, and his coarse jokes; but woe to the unfortunate young man who dares to affect a show of sentimentality on such occasions. The philosopher pounces upon the gentle sentiment—and what an instant before seemed to be a fairy lake, is transformed into an unromantic goose-pond. However, no one ever thinks of indulging in anger in consequence of his dry remarks, for he sheds opprobrium as a duck sheds rain; and our set regard him as an incorrigible but privileged bear and good fellow. When he dances, he moves off in such a nimble, startled manner, that it reminds one of how he would look if Mrs. Spitfire, who is the unmitigated tigress of the other set, were pursuing him with a broomstick through her back lot, for his last cutting sarcasm on St. Indigo. He is partial to taking short cuts in the quadrille; and never for an instant would he be guilty of the unnecessary labor of giving his vis-a-vis ample space to pass him. If the opposite lady does not choose to deploy a little to one side, then she must expect a collision—that's all. He once attempted a novel manoeuvre to avoid a collision in a crowded set, by raising his arm quickly for the lady to pass under; and the limb not attaining the requisite altitude, the unfortunate lady received a blow just at the top of her forehead, which gave her a passing view of stars and other fragmentary planets. He apologized with an air of "good joke," and turning to his partner, said, "What a pity for Tattletown I didn't knock that old maid's head clean off." He is a lawyer of unquestionable talent, and our

set, in consideration of his unpolished manners, call him "Count Bruin."

Then there is Lucy Seymour, the gay, and beautiful poetess, who can dance as gracefully as she writes, and whose gifted soul reveals itself in flashes of constant wit and repartee, or in the occasional poem stealing quietly into print.

We have a bank clerk, too, with long yellow beard, like clusters of sea weed, and light blue eyes, which look as if their color would run in washing. He moves so rapidly along the streets or across the floor of a drawing-room that he must be a monomaniac, possessed of the idea that an everlasting honey bee is everlastingly following in the wake of his pantaloons, watching for a chance to sting.

A dozen or more old maids clink their dry bones at our dances; and in times of unusual excitement and reproach from the other set, these energetic partisans are sent forward as a forlorn hope. At the command "unloose tongues! take aim! retort!" they belch forth the private histories of our foes for thirty years back, and amid the confusion our set rush into the legions of St. Indigo and conquer an honorable peace. So useful to us are these church biographers, that we guard tenderly their slight persons and generally succeed in marrying them off at an age when matrimony finds two colors in their hair.

Judge Carter belongs to the other set; but his delicate little wife sympathizes with us, and when her health permits it, joins us in a game of whist. Her son Harry claims to be above belonging to any set, but he nevertheless attends *our* parties, and ridicules *their* slanderous sewing societies. He thinks, moreover, that any set who will deliberately slander young girls ought to have their

tongues cut out, and be set to washing windows. So we contend that the other set have no claim, legal or equitable, upon him, and that he is a regular out and out "*Red.*"

Doctor Lane we regard as one of the finest fellows that ever won a patient's heart by the judicious exercise of a flowing tongue and polished manners. His dark, heavy beard, compact and muscular frame, keen eyes, intellectual cast of features, suggest at once the remark—"there goes a fine looking man!" Remarkably skilful in his profession, he has won the reputation of being both firm and gentle. His office is a receptacle of choice literary works and gems of art gathered during a sojourn in Europe; and his conversation upon the beautiful and scientific galleries of the old world, and the histories of Europe, charms by its chaste English and unassuming delineation. The severe and ungenerous criticisms of the other set upon our extravagance and amusements never provoke him to rude replies; but with a quiet smile he turns away, or calmly and learnedly discourses upon the utility of the healthy exercise of dancing as it does exist among us, in the absence of "more rational exercise" which does not exist, except in theory, among them. When the "Blues" claim to possess all the education, intellect and refinement of Tattletown, our set cite Doctor Lane to disprove their pretensions. Then there is John Staid, a young lawyer who will not suffer by comparison with the most talented young man among the "Blues." He is not thirty yet, and though some of our old maids complain that his brightness is not made manifest to *them*, the young ladies might be inclined to differ. His smooth round face and rosy cheeks give him a younger character than he is fairly entitled to; but his

walk is slow and dignified, and to some extent rectifies the misrepresentation by his features. The young lawyer is extremely sensitive in his nature, and this feeling in a true gentleman leads to that careful and kindly manner to all men which wins esteem and gratitude. He never is disposed to force his ideas upon others; and when he is cornered by some ancient specimen of the female sex, who is destitute of a large magazine of sense, it sometimes happens that conversation lags. An apt style of carrying along the small talk of society is not the only indication of intellect; and a great portion of our prominent men would appear to disadvantage in the society of Tattletown. But suggest a topic of conversation, from art or literature, or the exquisite wit or sarcasm of a master, and see if John Staid will not appreciate and add to your fund of information. A young man who can sustain a reputation for intelligence, and a young lady who can be deemed beautiful by the old maids of Tattletown, must be gifted as angels.

Now, indulgent reader, you have been allowed a glimpse into our respective sets. After this brief inspection, will you not say candidly, that our set is infinitely superior to the "Blues." If a lingering doubt harasses still your mind, please delay your decision until you have some of our roast turkey and oysters, and see us dance "all hands around."

CHAPTER IX.

THE SEA-SHORE.

A FEW weeks previous to the moonlight ride to the haunted spring, Harry Carter had left his home at the sea-side, to enter the office of the distinguished counselor Levins, who resided in the city of Dutchhold, in the State of New York. The precise location of this renowned city must be determined by the reader's experience in regard to the social manners and peculiarities of society in certain portions of New York State. If this limitation is too broad, or too vague, or if the same style of life and manners is common to all the cities of the State, or indeed to all the cities of the Union, then the indulgent reader may locate the ensuing scenes wherever he pleases. If he has never chanced to behold such scenes, or to hear such conversations as may be introduced in the following pages, he may then regard Dutchhold and its inhabitants as a pure myth.

Judge Carter had discovered in the clear mind and varied talents of his son, the materials upon which might be reared in time a distinguished legal reputation. Upon the completion of Harry's collegiate course, he suggested to his son the idea of entering the legal profession—and to his great joy discovered that his views were heartily endorsed by Harry. He then recommended the city of Dutchhold, and the law office of his old

friend, Levins, as a desirable starting point in the race for legal attainments and distinction. The latter proposition being received favorably, the young man soon made his arrangements for leaving home and his native State. He traversed the streets of Tattletown, looking for the familiar faces that had smiled kindly and sympathizingly upon him in those years of a boy's life, when kindness sinks deep in the heart, and when cruelty or contempt leaves a sting in the soul which is never wholly eradicated. He found many in both sets who regretted his departure—for his frank and generous ways had won the hearts of even the "Blues," whom he had never allowed to escape when they laid themselves open to ridicule. He saw Mrs. Roundhead walking on the opposite side of the street, with her pious head bent to one side, and meekly looking around for some "Red" heretic to send a circulating anathema after. He made a solemn bow at her across the street, and muttered to himself, "how like the deuce that cheap diet of hers conduces to longevity—I wish roast beef and plum pudding would become cheaper than sup-pawn and milk—she might possibly then make way for a successor. Confound her, she keeps like parchment."

When he had bidden farewell to all his friends in Tattletown, he walked in the direction of the fishermen's huts, upon the sandy ocean beach, having taken his fowling-piece from the village gunsmith's shop, on his way. He was determined to have a few shots at the wild ducks, which had already appeared in straggling parties upon the river, and arms of the sea, on their southward journey toward their winter home. Then, too, he wished to say a parting word to some of the rude fishermen of the coast, whose hospitality he had so

often experienced, and whom he had found to be in nearly all emergencies, true and brave men. Descending the familiar slopes of the hills, which in the neighborhood of the water are covered by dense thickets of trees and blackberry bushes, he came to a deep and narrow valley, or gorge, worn in the red earth by the constant washing of some mountain stream, now dried up. Pushing aside the bushes, he made his way along this shady hollow, down to the river, which now moved silently and unruffled on toward the ocean. Shoving his boat out from under the thick bushes, where it lay concealed, he launched it upon the glassy surface of the waters; and calling his beautiful black-and-white spaniel, which had followed closely at his heels, panting with the heat of a September sun, to the bow of his boat, he made him lie down under one of the seats, and shoved off. Keeping as much as possible under cover of the woody shore, he pulled slowly and quietly up the river, watching narrowly every object floating near the shadows, which the foliage of the hills cast upon the gliding waters. He had proceeded thus nearly a mile, without having a shot, but seeing occasionally a startled duck skim swiftly over the river far ahead of him, when the sudden report of a gun from the shore rang over the water, and some of the stray shot whistled by him in rather disagreeable proximity. The water was agitated close under the bushes by the last struggles of the unfortunate game, and then the unharmed remnant of the flock bore down in the direction of Harry's boat.—His ready fowling-piece dropped two more of the surprised family—and then, turning to the lurking-place of the strange shot, he shouted, "I say, old cock, don't shoot this way again—I'm not anxious to die at present

and when my time comes, I'd rather prefer a rifle-ball to being peppered all over, like a spoilt porgie. Come out, there, and show your face—I'll let you off easy."

A tremendous thrashing of the bushes along the shore followed immediately upon this salutation—and presently a tall man, with sunburnt features and much-abused white felt hat, appeared at the water's edge; and a voice with a decided Plymouth rock accent, answered back—

"Judas Iscariot, King of the Jews! I wouldn't 'ave kilt you, Harry Carter, for all the fish they ever landed on Jarsey beach—but I swear, when I sighted under them bushes at them duck, there wa'nt a thing in range."

"I suppose, then, you shot those ducks by accident," said Harry, laughing, at the same time rowing toward the floating victims of his shot.

"There you are agin—pickin' at my words. I guess you ought to be a lawyer—you're so pertickler—but I tell you, Harry, I'm tormented sorry when I think of how careless that are shot was—Judas Iscariot! if you'd bin hurt, I'd never pulled a jolly oar agin."

"There, that'll do for an apology," answered Harry, lifting the dripping game into his boat, and looking over the river, for the fisherman's ducks. "Where are your birds? How did you calculate to pick up your game after you had shot it?—strip and swim after it, or sing it ashore like a siren?"

"I kinder guessed your boat lay ashore here," answered the fisherman—"but who in thunder's Syren?—I never heard tell of him afore—there's my ducks, jist ahead of your boat."

"Why, Blake Eastman, don't you know what sirens are?—an old fisherman like you. Well! sirens are a

fascinating species of women, that sing sailors' brains out of them, till they run their vessels on the rocks," replied Harry, gathering up the remaining ducks, and then rowing in toward the fisherman, who was re-loading his gun.

"Oh! that's your new-fangled name, is it?" said Blake; "them's what we call mermaids—flesh upper works, and fish tails. You know Jim O'Brien, down to the cove—well, Jim's a Cath'lic, and ses I, 'Jim, kin Cath'lics eat mermaids on Fridays?' and Jim said they couldn't, 'less they'd stronger stomachs than he had.—Darned hard work to corner an Irishman. But there's a big flock, Harry, setlin' down on the other side—right there by the nets. Let me git in your boat—I'll lie down, and we'll give 'em thunder—that's the biggest flock that's come along yet, but they'll be along pretty thick in about two weeks."

"I'm sorry to say, Blake," replied Harry, running his boat close to the shore, so that the fisherman could get in—"I'm going away to-morrow to York State, so this will be the last hunt for me in a long time—perhaps a year."

"Judas Iscariot, King of the Jews!" exclaimed Blake, at the same time stretching himself on the bottom of the boat, but keeping his eyes as high as the gunwale, that he might watch the game—"why, what are you going to do, Harry?—a year, you say?"

"Yes, Blake—I expect to be a lawyer. I'm going to Dutchhold to study law. Oh, there's one thing I would like to have you do for me, Blake. I want you to take care of Fanny—they don't know any thing about her ways up at the house, and I am afraid she'll be neglected. She may be of use to you, too—she's the most faith-

ful creature I ever had; and my guns—will you keep them at your house, and oil them well? I let Ray Smith take my double barrel to hunt snipe, and he left it in his boat till the salt air rusted it like the dence. I'll tell them at the house to let you have it, and the rest of them, and I'll leave this one at your house as we go down."

"You can rely upon me to do the fair thing, Harry," said Blake. "I'll keep all your huntin' traps, and Fanny shall be kept as careful as a watch—but I guessed likely you'd be a sailor, and go into the navy—what's changed you so?"

"Oh, father thinks I'll make a lawyer, and I'd better gratify him. Perhaps it will be better in the long run—by Jove, what a lot of them!—just look beyond that bar—those you saw were only the tail end of a big flock—keep still now, and I'll load up."

While the two were conversing, Harry had pulled along quietly and carefully under cover of the shore of the river, until he was opposite the little bay which nearly connected the waters of the river with those of the ocean. It now became necessary to load up his fowling piece, and lie partly down in the boat, and by the aid of one oar, endeavor to scull the boat close enough to the ducks before he was detected. The little party now moved stealthily down upon the unsuspecting game, scarcely leaving a ripple upon the polished mirror of the water, upon which the afternoon sun poured down with unpleasant vehemence. The nearest ducks had already begun to exhibit signs of uneasiness, by turning their dark heads and necks quickly to discover the direction of the noise made by the oar upon the stern of the

boat, when the two hunters levelled their guns at the animated mass of graceful swimmers, and fired. As the report of their heavily-charged fowling-pieces died away, a confused mass of unfortunate birds strewed the waters; and some, wounded severely, struggled fiercely to rise into the air, only to fall back into hopeless captivity.—The startled survivors, still true to duck etiquette, rose in successive parties, and flew heavily away—while a few, in their terror, skimmed along the surface of the river, dragging their awkward legs through the water.

“Judas Iscariot, king of the Jews!” exclaimed the delighted Blake, as he gazed for a moment upon the tremendous execution inflicted upon the shiny flock by the storm of shot—“that’s somethin’ to tell on when you git to York State. Harry, I’ll bet there’s fifty clean dead. See! how that chap kicks!”

The hunters were indeed in luck this time, and their boat certainly looked full enough, when they had picked up all the victims, to satisfy the most fastidious marksman. Harry, at least, was content with this result of his last hunt; and after bestowing the whole of the birds upon Blake Eastman, he pulled away for the low sandy beach, which separated the river from the blue ocean. A few minutes’ rowing brought them to the beach, and after tying their birds together with a fragment of fishing line, produced from the ever-ready pocket of Blake, the two shouldered their guns and game, and walked slowly towards the fishermen’s village. The group of dwellings, which was visible in the distance, and which was about a mile from the point where the two had left their boat, was a mere collection of rude, unpainted huts, tenanted only by hardy fishermen, whose ideas of architectural beauty were limited to the securing of

waterproof sleeping places for their families. The location of their dwellings was desolate in the extreme, being a mere sandy flat, with no green thing in sight save an occasional tuft of sickly looking grass, long and coarse, which grew up apparently for the sole purpose of maintaining the dignity and fertility of unmitigated sand.—But if the exterior of their homes was uninviting, the inside was by no means uncomfortable—for in most of these huts, extreme neatness prevailed; and as Harry and his companion paced slowly along the sandy street, their eyes caught glimpses of well-scrubbed floors, and tidy dressers, covered with white and blue earthenware. Some few of the more pretending huts had painted doors and window sashes, and before some, the sand was paved with shells or pebbles carted from the ocean beach.

As Harry passed slowly along the street, he was saluted kindly by young and old—for his face was familiar to all, and many knew him more intimately from dangers shared together on the sea, or from kindness shown in hours of sickness and death. He bade many a warm-hearted farewell, as they paused to speak with him, or to admire the load of ducks which he and Blake bore with considerable difficulty upon their shoulders. At length, however, they reached the end of the long street, where stood the home of Blake Eastman, and entering the open door, dropped their heavy loads upon the floor with unmistakable expressions of relief.

The two hunters were greeted at the door by the pretty and graceful sister of Blake Eastman, who rose to meet them, after placing her sewing upon the table beside her. She was just budding into womanhood, and might have seen fifteen summers. Her keen black eyes sparkled with fun, and interest in every passing event

was evidenced by the hasty glances she cast, first upon the persons of the hunters, and then through the window upon a passer-by, and then again through an inner door, upon the figures of two old women in fantastic garments, who were rocking a heavy table between them, and appeared to be completely absorbed in the contemplation of the ideas contained in some wild verses they were singing to each other. Placing a chair for Harry, she said, smilingly—

“How do you do, Mr. Carter? We are glad to see you again. Nice ducks—aint they? You see the old women are going it stronger than ever. Blake, you look hot. Oh! there’s Bayton going by. Well, Mr. Carter, I suppose there’s no hope of them now,” she added, more seriously—and pointing through the door at the old women who were thumping the table up and down with increased vehemence. “The elder’s been here but he was no good! they kept on thumping and rocking all the time he was here, and shook their heads at him not to interrupt them. I’m most afraid they’ll get me in soon. The school teacher says it’s all humbug—it’s some kind of magnetism he calls it, but they tell queer things sometimes, and I don’t understand it; just two weeks to night Gennet’s boat was swamped and mother saw a boat going down, she said, two or three hours earlier that same night. She seems gentler to me than she used to be—but she is losing flesh for some two months now, and I don’t like it, indeed! I don’t”

“Oh! dry up, Kate!” said her brother impatiently, at the same time taking Harry’s gun from him and placing it upon a rack, secured to the ceiling overhead, which was filled with a medley of oars and fishing lines, bacon, nets and dried herbs; “don’t let Mr. Carter see you’re sich a

fool as talks ’bout beginin’ to b’lieve sich trash. Mother and aunt Sue’s crazy—Judas Iscariot, King of the Jews! what’s the use b’lievin’ sich trash when it don’t help a feller’s luck fishin’; what’s reason they don’t put me on the right track for doin’ suthing lucky—I’m no better off for all their spirit larnin.’ Here, mother, come and see Mr. Carter, he’s goin’ to leave us right off, he’s goin’ to York State.”

The individual addressed paid no more attention to her son’s call than if he were a thousand miles away, but kept on rocking the table back and forth, and joining her aged sister in the same wild, singular chorus as before.

“What, *you* going off, Mr. Carter!” exclaimed the young girl, fixing her bright gipsy eyes upon the young man’s countenance with a look of intense interest, “you going off. That’s too bad, we’ll miss you dreadful in the village. Every man, woman and child will miss you, though we have seen you here very little of late, it seems to me: you used to come through the village once a week any way, and now I hain’t seen you here this month,—I hope none of us have offended you, have they? Hark! aunt Sue’s singing about you, do you hear *that*?”

Harry Carter started at the mention of his own name by one of the old women in the other room, and involuntarily arose from his seat to listen. Blake too moved nearer the door out of curiosity, for something peculiar in the tone of the voices thrilled the hearts of the listeners. The rays of the summer sun flooded the room where the two old women sat rocking the table, and their pale, haggard features and gray hair were lighted up with a weird light as the golden rays fell upon them. They both were dressed in some simple bright blue chintz, fitting so closely as to convey the idea of discom-

fort in breathing, and about the shoulders of each hung loosely a broad scarlet cape curiously embroidered with a cord formed of braided sea weed of a bright yellow hue, and secured at the throat by a loop of the sea weed and a pink colored sea shell for a button. The hair of each was entirely gray, and was gathered in a simple knot upon the back of the head; but the mother of Blake Eastman was evidently several years younger than her sister, who appeared to be close upon seventy. A faint smile lingered upon their features as they sat gazing in each other's eyes and might have suggested the idea that they were humbugging, except that the smile was too fixed and uniform in expression. Harry Carter had frequently before witnessed their performances and had been disposed to regard them at such times as laboring under temporary insanity. His natural inclinations would have induced him to laugh outright at their grotesque appearance; but in their first verse he had caught the mention of his own name, and then the words of their rude song related to his dear ocean, and seemed to touch some strange and novel chord in his heart, and forced him to listen in spite of himself.

Born by the Ocean
And hearing its wail;
Oft feeling its throes
When swept by the gale;
Proud and beautiful;
Generous and true;
The wings of its love
Shall flutter o'er you.

Rocking in silence
And peace on its breast,

Gazing devoutly
Upon its calm rest;
Loving its music
And loving it true,
The wings of its love
Shall flutter o'er you.

Driven in terror
Far over its waves
Child of its mercy
It tenderly saves;
Then quelling the storm
That ruffles its blue,
It shows once again
Affection for you.

In desolate hours
When darkness has come
When fiendish powers
Send terror and gloom;
Thy heart proveth true
To thy chosen friend
And its loving wings
Shall o'er thee extend.

Child of adoption!
The Ocean to thee
Shall send a token
Of love and of glee.
Distrust not thy friend
If this token fail
Which first comes to thee,
Sad, trembling and pale.

Harry Carter had moved unconsciously forward towards the table in his eagerness to catch every word of the strange song; and when the last note had died away he started to find tears swelling to his eyes. Turning to

Blake and his sister he discovered their eyes fixed upon his countenance with an expression of that intense interest, which the songs of the sea never fail to excite in the minds of those who hold daily communings with its mysteries and whose imaginations are wont to associate human sympathies and hidden meanings with the sighing of the surfs.

The old women immediately took up another song, and Harry resumed his seat. But a feeling of approaching calamity had settled upon his heart; and Blake, too, seemed for a time to be awed out of his accustomed ridicule of the table rockers. "Ah, Mr. Carter," said the young girl, "if you had been here weeks and months, as I have, and heard all the strange things they sing about, you wouldn't wonder at me thinkin' there might be spirits, sure enough, in this business."

"Yes," said Blake, "it's queer enough—for she's the best mother I know; and it's only when their spells is on that it kinder seems as if she's not right in her mind.—Ah! well, Harry, we'll have a partin' horn any how to old acquaintance. There's no tellin' when we may see you again, for this life we lead is chock full of perils, and a fisherman's luck's hard sometimes, as you well know;—poor Gennet, he went sudden. But what's the matter, Harry?—you're lookin' serious like. The old women's song seems to bother you. It seemed to favor you, though, all but the last line; cheer up, my hearty, here's a stiff horn for you! and may you live well to die happy, says Blake Eastman!"

Blake had produced some glasses and a square black bottle from the cupboard while he was talking, and now handed Harry nearly a tumbler full of the raw gin.

"Thunder and lightning, Blake!" exclaimed Harry,

holding up the glass bottle to the light, "there's enough here to knock me endways. I'll never be able to row back home—here, let me pour some back."

"Judas Iscariot, King of the Jews! don't back down on the last horn with old Blake. 'Tain't goin' to harm ye a mite, here's a go."

The two glasses met in a hasty crash for the last time, and then the two friends passed a few moments together in that sporting conversation so dull and uninteresting to the uninitiated into the mysteries of guns, dogs, fishing-tackle and game. Then Harry, glancing through the window upon the sky, and seeing that the sun would soon disappear behind the hills of Neversink, called the spaniel to his side, and said, "Now, Blake, here's Fanny, take good care of her for my sake; you'll have to tie her for a few days. Good bye—good luck to you all; tell your mother and aunt, when they get over this, that I called to see them, will you?"

"Never fear but I'll see to her, Harry; we'll miss you here, my hearty, God bless you," replied the honest fisherman, grasping the outstretched hand in his horny fist, and circling the other arm about the spaniel.

Harry bade brother and sister a warm farewell, and then stepped quickly into the street; not, however, without first casting a glance upon the two old women in the other room, who continued to thump away with the old table, unconscious that another soul beside themselves was in the house. The last sound that fell upon his ear from the house of his friend was the fierce yelping of poor Fanny, as she struggled desperately in the arms of Blake for liberty to follow her young master.

Without passing again through the fishermen's village, Harry Carter turned his steps toward the Ocean beach.

He longed once more to walk beside the murmuring sea and gaze for the last time upon its blue expanse. It seemed to him as he paced slowly along upon the hard, firm promenade formed by the surf, that his noble old Ocean had never appeared so blue, so calm, so majestic.

Slowly he paced along the shore in the direction of his home, and slowly faded away the rich coloring of the sunset behind the hills. The distant sails heading for the harbor of New York gradually became indistinct in the gathering twilight; and the white surfs which washed his feet seemed to sigh that they would miss ere long the presence of the proud brave heart that loved them. The lone wanderer at length seated himself upon the beach and gazed mournfully out upon the waves which grew each moment darker and more indistinct. The thought of his departure from the scenes of his childhood weighed heavily upon his heart, and the memory of the rude song seemed to haunt him; and his mind was full of foreboding of coming sorrow and misfortune. How long he remained by the sea in his sad reverie he knew not; but he was recalled at length to recollection of the lateness of the hour by the passing remark of some belated fisherman, that there were indications in the sky of an approaching tempest: springing to his feet, he waved his hand in farewell to the ocean, and hurriedly regaining his boat on the river, pulled away rapidly in the direction of his home. The gleaming lights of his father's house soon met the eye of the wanderer; but he was unable to shake off the depression of his soul, and the last evening passed at the home of his youthful joys and sorrows was a sad and cheerless one.

CHAPTER X.

THE RESCUE.

A BRAVE soul slumbered and a loving soul watched; a manly form gifted in that graceful outline which delights the eye, and noble in that cast of feature and expression which attracts the soul, rested upon his couch. The lonely midnight was approaching and the stars were shrouded; for the spirit of the storm held sway, and the beautiful and the gentle in the elements had bowed before it. The sound of the surf upon the shore was no longer music; the voice of the wind in the forest trees was no longer harmony, and the face of the heavens was no longer holy. As the roar of the tempest grew each moment more fearful the loving mother clasped more tightly the hand of the sleeper and gazed more tenderly upon the calm and beautiful face of her boy. Never had his small and exquisitely moulded mouth appeared to her so beautiful; never had his classic features seemed so full of character and nobleness, and never had she seen so plainly the marks of generous and precocious intellect upon his marble brow. On the morrow that precious sleeper would awaken for the last time beneath her roof, for the last time would those lips meet her own, for the last time would those glorious eyes beam in their hazel light for her. Before him lay the

treacherous world and its dangers, and her feet could not follow him into its mazes; alone was he to fight the battle of life and nought of her but a remembrance would shield him. She knew that in his impulsive heart she had been the light of his life. She, alone, of all the world, knew the almost woman's tenderness of his love, and how that generous nature, fearless and impetuous before men, still yearned for human love and sympathy; still craved that heaven of the heart, something pure and true to love devotedly. She shuddered at the thought of those keen throes of anguish which would rend his heart when the falsehood and deceit of men were opened to him, and she knew in those deserted hours how his eager heart would look in vain for her and her lost tenderness. And the reflection seemed to madden her; for she leaned over him and pressed holy kisses on his lips, and her moans mingled with those of the rushing blast and the struggling sea. She had come in her loneliness to gaze upon him as he slept; and the shrouded rays of her lamp still revealed enough of his glorious beauty to chain her to his bed side and rivet her soul to his calm features, so gentle in repose. A sudden light flashed upon the ceiling of the room, where the true mother watched. Hark! the booming of a heavy gun, from the sea, jarred the glass in the window. The sleeper turned uneasily upon his bed, and then slumbered quietly again. The startled watcher turned an anxious glance toward the sea, but impenetrable darkness concealed all external objects, and the howl of the gale waxed louder, and the surf fell heavily upon the shore. Ah! she sees it again, far away over the deep, lighting up the gloom of the midnight storm for an instant; and then the window panes rattle again with the sullen booming of the

signal gun. This time the sleeper awakened and rising partly in his bed gazed in surprise upon his mother.

"Why did you waken me, dear mother? What are you doing here so late? Oh! what an awful storm! ah! mother, there are tears on my hand—you are sad because I am going away—see that! a gun for a pilot!"

Again the signal gun boomed heavily over the waters, and was hushed again by the sweeping gale.

"Oh, my God, no pilot will venture out from the Hook such a night as this!" exclaimed Harry, straining his eyes in vain toward the sea, to make out the direction of the vessel. Then, moving nearer to the side of his bed, he threw his arm about his mother's neck, and laid his head lovingly upon her bosom and murmured "oh! I will never leave you, mother, if you grieve so; it were better to relinquish all my aspirations for fame and honor than wound the heart of such a treasure as you, mother."

"No, Harry," she whispered, as the nobler nature at length gained the mastery, "such true hearts as yours have a mission in the selfish world, for they become the models for the encouragement of those who struggle to be noble and self denying in life, and your talents are given to you by the eternal God, to be developed in the cause of right and justice; go forth to the study of your profession manfully—be a true, honest, uncompromising lawyer—defend the honest, the poor, the struggling, the downtrodden, the outraged; counsel the widow and the orphan and shield them by all the talent and all the energy at your command, and the blessing of God and your mother shall go with you. Ah! Harry, you will be so deceived in men; but I entreat you do not give yourself up to suspicions. If you do, you will be in torment

all your life. It is far better to be wronged sometimes than to cherish constant suspicions of the motives of others. Believe that some men and some women are true and noble and good; for that thought will make you a better and a purer man yourself, and nerve you for the life struggle."

"Ah, mother!" he replied "can you ask me to cherish the beautiful ideal of human truth and purity when I know in the depths of my soul what you are, and I know that I shall love women because you, mother, are a woman—while you have watched by my side I have dreamed a beautiful dream. Look! mother, there! that gun was fired close by the double reef; that ship is certainly out of her reckoning or unmanageable. There goes the revolving light, but it's no use now. She must come ashore unless the hand of God takes the helm. It's the most awful storm I ever knew; another gun! God help them—mother, I'm going!" he exclaimed leaping to the floor and throwing on his clothes with the celerity of a madman. Mrs. Carter rushed to the window and peered forth into the horrible gloom of the storm.

"Harry, there's a fire on the beach, yes, there's another farther down," she exclaimed, pointing him in the direction of the fishermen's village.

"I see it mother, the fishermen are striving to warn her off. Call James, I must have help to get my skiff across the river. There goes another fire in front of the Ocean house. That's right, my brave Charley! pile it on!—too late, too late!"—he muttered to himself as his mother ran to arouse the servant. "She'll never keep off in the teeth of this infernal gale."

Down the stairs flew the excited Harry flushed with the noble hope of being able to render some assistance to

the unfortunate stranger. As he opened the door which faced towards the sea, the fury of the blast nearly prostrated him. Alas! it smothered the faint glimmering of hope which had arisen in his heart that the vessel might be able to lay to till morning; for the wind was blowing directly in toward the hills of Neversink, and its violence must soon force the unfortunate ship upon a lee shore. The voice of his mother followed him into the darkness with entreaty not to expose himself unnecessarily; but her words were soon drowned by the fearful roar as he hastened on in the direction of the warning fires which each instant blazed higher and higher, as the brave fishermen piled on the combustible sea-weed and driftwood thrown up by the sea. As he neared the precipitous bank of the river, Harry thought he could detect out upon the sea the faint glimmer of the ship's lights; and in a few moments this opinion was confirmed by the flash of the cannon just beneath them, which lighted up for an instant the white sails and black cordage of the vessel with startling distinctness. Then all was dark again save the beacon fires and the intermittent flashes of the revolving light, which swept for an instant a long train of intense brilliancy over the darkness of the night. As he plunged into the thicket which skirted the river, the branches above him shrieked with the wildness of demons; and the darkness gathered about him in a horrible pall, which misled his footsteps from the accustomed path, and bewildered him even within a few rods of his own home. However, he groped his way finally down to the river side—and the fires of the beach came again into view, and revealed to his astonished gaze a broad channel, which the violence of the sea had forced across the beach into the river, and through which the

conquering waves rushed in their frantic course. He dragged his boat out from under the bushes, and shoved it close down to the river, and then waited impatiently for the servant to come. He dared not hazard the passage across to the beach alone; for the wind and the waves from the sea lashed the waters of the river into fury, and rendered it extremely hazardous to attempt the crossing, even when two more powerful hands should grasp the oars. He could see plainly that the doomed vessel was being gradually forced ashore; for the lights at her mast-head showed more distinctly every moment, and the booming of her cannon seemed frightfully near. He knew how feeble were the chances for any of the souls on board of her to gain the shore when she should strike. But he also recollected that brave and ready arms sometimes were able to grasp the floating spar with its precious freight before life was extinct;—and the thought rendered him wildly impatient for the servant to come to his assistance. At length, the glimmer of a lantern in the thicket informed him at the same time of the approach of help, and the servant's thoughtful prudence; for the light would aid them exceedingly in finding their way, and effecting a safe landing on the other side, amid the profound darkness of the hour.

"Come, James, we've little time to spare," exclaimed Harry, snatching the lantern, and lashing it to the bow of the boat—"we've got to row up stream some ways to avoid those waves. Do you see where the sea has broken through? Come now, in with you—and we'll pull directly for the eel-flat—that's our quickest course—for this infernal breach must cut us off from the cove by the Ocean House. Steady now, old fellow, for the first

hundred rods, and then we're all right—now pull away!"

Right nobly did the little boat bear her burden over the river, in the teeth of a horrible gale, which lashed the waves over her sides, as they hugged the shore, and over her bows when at length they were far enough up stream to avoid the influence of the sea rushing through the breach, and had steered directly across to the beach. Wet to the skin, and almost exhausted, the two rowers, after nearly a half hour's struggle with the infuriated elements, struck the low sandy beach—and dragging the skiff high up on the strand out of harm's way, ran eagerly toward the fishermen's fires. As they neared the maddened leap of the roaring surf, the appalling grandeur of the scene was unfolded to them by the wild and unsteady light of the warning fires. A confused mass of men, women, and children were huddled about the fires, in the hastily arranged toilet of the midnight alarm; straining their eyes in the direction of the doomed vessel, or heaping drift-wood upon the flames, which swayed back and forth in the rush of the wind, or licked the sand before the prostrating power of its fury.

A few of the long fishing-boats had been turned right side up and dragged close to the beach ready for launching; but the folly of the thought had quickly become apparent, and the brave men who stood beside them looked sullen and sad that no opportunity of a heroic deed could occur, when that leaping and roaring wall of foam reared its annihilating front before them, and rendered efforts at rescue sheer madness. The unfortunate ship could be seen at intervals by the flash of the gun, which to the last kept up its despairing roar; and the

quick eye of Harry discovered in the rigging black swarms of men clinging to the sails.

"She's a man-of-war, James," exclaimed Harry.—"See! how she carries sail to the last. One word of command, and those sheets would disappear like lightning. There! don't you see how many men are on the yards?" he added, as the flash again illumined the ship.

"Yes, Master Harry," replied the man; "but what's the use—there lays the worst breakers between here and the Hook. Do you hear that?" he gasped in terror, seizing the young man by the arm, and detaining him to listen.

Harry listened a moment, and replied "No."

"She's struck, Master Harry—I heard it. I heard it once before when the Neptune went down. They're lost—they're lost. Don't you see that stir about the fires?—they've heard it too."

The last words of the speaker were nearly smothered in his mouth by the fierce rush of the blast; and the two hastened on to the nearest knot of anxious fishermen, with beating hearts and pallid cheeks.

"Judas Iscariot, King of the Jews!" shouted a familiar voice. "Is that *you*, Harry Carter? She's struck—jest now. Oh! I'd give my life to save that brave sailor what commands that ar' ship. I never seen a craft handled so masterly since I was born. She's one of Uncle Sam's ships, and she'd oughter come ashore an hour ago. It's an awful shame, I vow, for that capt'n to be lost at last. Harry Carter, there's luck where you go—I've seen it—the old sea likes every bone in your body. Now, I know what you'll risk without the asking—you'd rather die nor see a brave sailor go down—wouldn't you?"

"Aye, aye, old boy, I'm with you," replied the intrepid youth, his large hazel eye blazing in an instant in the warm impulse of a noble purpose. "Two more volunteers and we're all right," he added, gazing eagerly around upon the assembled fishermen—"two more oars will carry us to that ship, for God will be with us—who'll go?"

"Count me in, Mr. Carter," said an old weather-beaten fisherman, stepping forward—"a Navy officer saved my life once; may be he's there—I'll go."

Some one pulled at Harry Carter's elbow, and caused him to turn quickly around. It was Blake Eastman's gipsy-eyed sister.

"Don't go, Mr. Carter," she said, excitedly. "Blake's always crazy at such times. Remember your poor mother!"

"Judas Iscariot, King of the Jews!" said her brother, "brave men never have any mothers sich nights, 'ceptin' to pray for 'em. Don't you s'pose that bold seaman commandin' that ar' ship's got any mother?"

A young gentleman, apparently a guest from the Ocean House, dressed in deep black frock coat and pants, and a slouched black felt hat, stepped forward and said with spirit, "I can pull a tolerable oar—will you have me?"

Blake Eastman quickly surveyed the young man from head to foot, and then extending his hand, said, "You're a bold chap—you know the risk's 'bout equal to death, I reckon?"

"Damn the risk," said the young fellow, contemptuously, and his keen black eye flashed under the slouched hat with intense brilliancy in the wild, fire light.

"You'll do," exclaimed Blake, admiringly. "Now

let's see," he added, shading his eyes from the fire with his broad, rough hand, and peering out upon the sea.

In a moment he called Harry to his side, and pointed nervously toward the ship. "Do you see there?—she's fast on the reef, and the sea's makin' a clean sweep over her. She'll break up afore we git to her. Hurrah lads, for the red boat—that's mine. Now don't be discouraged ef she's pitched back fust time—as likely she will—and I charge ye, by Judas, ef we ever git nigh that ship, save that ar' captin. Look here, Mister Devil-may-care," said he, turning to the strange young man, "you jest watch our motions, and copy—when the big wave breaks on the beach, you push the boat out till you're up to the middle in water—then jump in and row 'bout two minits like you was mad. Steady with me, though—d'ye understand?"

"Yes—go ahead," replied the young stranger, with the same quickness and brevity of tone as before, and moving rapidly at the same time with the others down to the boat.

The brave little band were followed by several of the fishermen and their wives, who entreated them to desist from their mad attempt.

"Ef you want to help us, git outer our way, and go to prayin'," roared Blake, as he assigned the rowers their places, and then waited calmly for that huge wave to break which inevitably follows several smaller ones. The violent rush of the water up the strand after the fall of each successive wave, nearly took the four brave fellows off their legs, and the under-tow nearly accomplished the same result several times. But they managed, by desperate exertion, to hold on to their boat, and an unseen power assisted them.

"Here it comes!—steady, lads, steady!" muttered the fearless Blake, as the enormous billow, black and fearful, reared its gloomy wall before them—and then, with frantic leap, broke into foam a step in front of the bow of their boat. The struggle was fearful to the horror-stricken crowd of fishermen, but the brave fellows gave an impetus to the long fishing boat, which, together with the force of the receding water, floated it quickly away from the strand, and the four brave rowers quickly leaped in. Instantly bending to their oars, they drove the sharp bows through the black water, and in another moment were far enough away to escape the inward pressure of the next wave. The bewildered crowd on the beach gazed in wonder upon the receding boat, which in a few seconds went down into the trough of the sea—then shortly appeared again on the summit of a great wave—and then disappeared again in the trough of the sea, and was seen no more. The anxious fishermen strained their eyes again towards the spot where the gallant fellows disappeared; but no sign of their boat appeared again—for the wild fury of the gale increased, and the surf rising higher for the final leap, was blown into showers of spray, and blinded the anxious eyes peering out upon the sea. All traces of the stranded ship had also disappeared; and the howl of the wild wind and the struggling sea called again for noble victims. Mothers gazed upon the children in their arms to reassure themselves that the dear ones still lived amid the horrors of that awful night; and hardy men, accustomed from their infancy to the perils of the sea, clustered about the beacon fires, and spoke with pallid cheeks and trembling lips of the fate of their lost friends. But the voices of the storm mocked their sorrows, and

the roar of the great ocean waxed louder, and the pall of the night grew darker, and the beacon fires bent lower before the blast.

The friendly offices of the rude fishermen had proved unavailing, and their fires were no longer seen from the sea. Useless now was the blazing fire away up the shore, lighted by the few remaining guests of the seaside hotel—and useless, too, were the great lights of heaven, hidden behind the storm clouds.

But see! yon emblem of the Eternal Deity! away up there to the westward, apparently suspended in empty space between the earth and sky. No! it was an illusion—it is gone—ah! it comes again—the blazing eye opens in its matchless beauty; wider and brighter, and clearer and holier, flashes out upon the gloom of the sea, the glorious—the undying revolving light of Never-sink. And the watchful mariner sees it miles away upon the great deep, and blesses its faithful light as he rides out the fearful storm. But other and nearer eyes are bent upon its cheering flashes; and noble hearts are beating yet down deep in the trough of the sea because they see it—and because it guides them onward. The little fishing boat is laden deeper than when last we saw it settle down behind the waves; and some of the daring oarsmen have changed places. Blake Eastman and the old fisherman still tug bravely at their oars; but the young man from the Ocean House is lying exhausted on the bottom of the boat, and his place is supplied by a sturdy blue jacket wearing the naval button of the United States. Harry Carter is no longer at his oar, but is sitting in the stern, and grasping with experienced hand the slender handle of the rudder. A young sailor handles Harry's abandoned oar, and supports upon his knee

the head of his beloved captain, insensible, and bleeding from a deep cut on his forehead. Harry Carter's bright hazel eye is often directed toward the revolving light—but sometimes his clear glance is turned upon a slender form which crouches low in the boat, and has flung her white arms tightly about his waist, and leaned her pale cheek on his lap, and gazes with horror-stricken eyes upon the mountain waves rearing their white crests above the boat.

The four heroes had succeeded nobly; and Blake Eastman's honest heart was gratified, for "that ar' cap-tin'" was saved.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GEM FOUND.

HARRY Carter and his daring companions had succeeded, after a terrible struggle, in reaching the reef where the ship had broken up, before the waves dashing over her had entirely removed every trace of human life on board. But they found only the four unfortunates clinging to a remnant of one of the masts—and with the madness and self-sacrifice of heroism they had contrived to bring their boat four distinct times sufficiently near to the wreck for these survivors to leap in. The captain had persistently refused to take the leap until his daughter and the two sailors were in the boat—and then, springing after them, had struck his head upon the gunwale with sufficient force to render him instantly insensible. The remainder of the officers and crew had been swept away into the sea, or swamped in the boats which had put off from the ship immediately upon her striking the reef—and which boats contained also four ladies who were officers' wives.

There was now no hope for the little party except in the possibility of being able to reach a small bay which, a few miles to the northward, puts back into the low

slender flat which for a considerable distance below the Horse Shoe divides the Shrewsbury river from the ocean. Hope nerved them to steady and desperate exertion;—Providence protected them; and the glorious revolving light of Neversink guided them; and before the morning light had dawned, the heroes and the rescued were cast ashore in the little bay, exhausted in mind and body, but with consciousness sufficient to lead them to struggle on to a clump of trees remembered by Blake Eastman, which would shield them from the violence of the wind till morning. The captain of the lost ship had gradually returned to consciousness, but he appeared to suffer extreme pain—for he moaned almost constantly, and entreated the party to leave him to die upon the shore, so that he might not exhaust their strength, and prevent their reaching a place of security for the night. But they bore him in their arms by turns, and finally reached the shelter of the trees, where most of them sank down exhausted upon the earth, and waited for the morning light. The sea had washed up timbers from some old wreck against the trees, and the drifted seaweed had wreathed itself about them, affording a partial protection from the violence of the wind, which rendered their dripping garments exceedingly cold and disagreeable. The wonderful pocket of Blake Eastman furnished an unexpected comfort in the shape of a few matches, with which the young gentleman in black succeeded in lighting up a large and cheerful fire from the drift wood. The two young men were fresher than their comrades from the temporary respite they had enjoyed in the boat—and while the others slept, they gradually formed a circle of fires about the sleepers, which soon caused the steam to rise from their wet clothes, and cast a warm at-

mosphere over them, which served to counteract in a measure the ill consequences of the night exposure. The two young heroes, excited by the cheering blaze of the fires, and elated at the thought of their salvation from the sea, gradually assumed the elastic spirit of youth, and conversed hopefully of the prospect of attracting attention from the opposite side of the river in the morning; or at the worst, of being able to travel down the shore to the Ocean House for assistance. The congeniality of a common age, and of brave hearts, soon established a friendly interchange of thought between them—and Harry learned that the strange young man resided in the city of New York, and had intended leaving the sea-side hotel for home on the ensuing morning. However, the strength of the stranger to keep up finally gave out, and stretching himself on the earth, within the circle of fires, he slumbered heavily, with his black slouched hat drawn low over his dark and delicate features, and his arms folded closely over his breast. But our hero, (for he has now fairly won the title) could not sleep. Weary and uncomfortable as he was, he could not join in that death-like sleep of the poor souls who were prostrate around him. The wild scenes in which he had participated for the last few hours—from the heavy booming of the signal gun which waked him on his bed, to the thrill of delight when the boat was thrown upon the beach of the little bay in safety, were too much for his impulsive and excitable nature. He gazed for some time upon the blazing fires, whose flames rocked to and fro in the violence of the storm, as if he was under some strange stupor. Then his eyes wandered over the sleeping forms of the rescued beings, so helpless and death-like in their rest; and then his gaze rested upon the fa-

miliar revolving light now far away to the southward—and he started at the recollection of his mother, and the anxiety of her loving heart at his long-continued absence on this fearful night. A moan from the wounded officer, who had been sleeping for some time with his head upon the lap of his daughter, as she leaned back against the drifted timbers in her exhaustion, called Harry to his side. But the sufferer was wrapped in sleep, and the beautiful hand of his child rested upon the bandage which she had bound around his forehead to staunch the blood. So dark had been the gloom of the night, that Harry had not noticed how thinly and scantily the poor girl was clad. But now the increasing brilliancy of the fires was bringing out clearly and startlingly the features and the garments of all the party; and he saw that the young lady was dressed in a dark merino dress, close fitting, and revealing the exquisite proportions of her figure, and the rounded symmetry of her bust. The scarf which had been wrapped about her head and neck, had fallen upon her shoulders, and her partially averted face resting upon the rough timber, was beautiful in the snowy whiteness which fatigue and fear had cast upon her features. The dark and well-defined eyebrows, and the long lashes folded in the profound slumber, contrasted in singular beauty with the snowy pallor of the brow and cheek; and the nostril, thin and curved with exquisite grace, seemed ready to quiver in the intensity of passion. The lips were thin, too, and the delicate corners of that pallid mouth faded away into lines of grace thin and undefined. The forehead was not of that high, masculine proportion which detracts from womanhood—nor of that low and sensual cast so frequently combined with beautiful features, but of that rarer type where in-

tellect and spirit are blended with curved lines of grace and beauty. The dark brown hair was parted evenly and smoothly, and concealed, almost, the beauty of the shell-shaped ear. The heart of the noble and manly being who gazed in rapture and bewilderment upon that matchless form, became in an instant stamped with the indelible picture of that face, and the memory of it never was effaced or dimmed on earth. For the first time in his life, his heart was entirely full. Other faces had left pleasing impressions on his mind; other forms of beauty had won his admiration; and other beings had inspired in his soul sentiments of self-sacrifice and devotion. But now a new life was dawning upon him; and his heart was full—full almost to the degree of pain and oppression; and in the new sensation, all other external objects became dim and powerless to exercise their former influence.

Upon some hearts, the power of female beauty is utterly despotic—not for an hour, a day, but for a lifetime. In the souls of some men, the ideal of all grace and beauty, of all purity and loveliness, is a woman. By that standard they estimate the angels of heaven; for they cannot conceive of an angel, unless that angel is a woman, and such a woman as they cherish in the ideal, and wander about through the mazes of life, seeking for and hoping to find on earth. It may be an unconscious reminiscence in the heart, of the low, sweet music of the cradle hymn. It may be the result of an impress on the heart of the child, of a sweet picture of loving eyes, beaming in beauty over the dawning hours of life. It may be the far-off memory of a gentle voice, lulling the throes of childhood's suffering with holy accents. But whatever may be its origin, the stand-

ard exists there, and all the disappointments of life cannot destroy it; all the shocks inflicted by contact with unwomanly women cannot eradicate it; and it clings to the heart on the confines of eternity, saying, "Ah! soon, soon shall you see her yonder."

And there beside her in her loveliness the impulsive heart of the brave child of the sea bowed down. For his ear the howl of the storm was hushed—for his eye the wild rush of the flames before the blast, was a heavenly light, calm and beautiful—and for his memory the bitter thoughts of experience were as if they never had existed. He knelt beside her, and clasped one lovely little hand—so small, so white, so graceful; and the touch thrilled through his warm veins. But she slumbered on—poor, weary one—and he wrapped his heavy coat, now almost dry, about her wet shoulders, and fastened it securely about her lovely neck and waist—and then shuddered at her exposed resting-place, and longed for the daylight. Bye and bye her helplessness, and her profound slumber, emboldened him, and he gently moved her head from the hard pillow of the timber, and laid it upon his own breast, and wound his arm about her, and sought to share with her the warmth of his own generous blood. And then her lips moved, and the voice was low and gentle—"Oh, father! hear them call!—they're coming to save us—life! life!"

She was living over again in her dreams the horrors of the wreck; and as the pathos of her accents came in broken accents to his ear, Harry's arm clasped her tighter, and the tears gathered in his glorious hazel eyes.—How grateful was he to the Eternal Father that this dear life had crowned his generous impulse in the hour of death and drowning men. And then for the first time

flashed upon his recollection the wild song of the table rockers. And his skeptical mind was awed as he contemplated the loveliness of the token sent by the sea.— His strong arm clasped her nearer and firmer as the recollection of the last lines struggled into his mind—

“Distrust not thy friend ;
If this token fail,
Which first comes to thee,
Sad, trembling and pale.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE GEM LOST.

THE morning dawned, and the storm was subsiding. The hills of Neversink gradually assumed their commanding shapes ; and the white porticos of the summer hotels again appeared on the hillsides embraced in the rich setting of the green foliage. The surf rolled heavily along the ocean beach, and the great waves crested with snow-white plumes, were like a gallant army of knights contending with the spirits of the storm. But the strength of the hurricane was broken, and the forces of the wind were retreating rapidly after the routed demons of darkness. The curving line of the agitated river came slowly into view ; and the long stretch of the sandy beach grew each moment more distinct, in the gathering light of the morning.

The bivouac fires which had surrounded the shipwrecked party had all smouldered out, save one, which had just been re-lighted by the considerate hands of those who had gone down the beach, toward the Ocean House, for assistance. The arm of Harry Carter still encircled the sleeping form of the beautiful girl, and her lap still supported the wounded head of her father. They all slept profoundly, and the remainder of the party had

decided to leave them at rest, till they should return with some vehicle, to bear away the wounded officer.

Ah! the mysterious associations of life. How strangely do we meet in this changing world of ours, beings true and brave and loyal, a knowledge of whose characters and an intimacy with whose daily virtues and reflections, would be to us gems of priceless value in the struggle of life. We meet them for a moment in the whirl of pleasure, in the bewildering changes of a journey, or in the beautiful retreats of summer fashion; and a glimpse into their souls occasions a pleasurable emotion, and we fancy their acquaintance would be delightful. But in an instant they are torn from us, and thousands of miles hide them from us, often, forever. We are brought for a moment in contact with a noble intellect, rich in the gift of deep thoughts, and appreciating all the exquisite beauties of art and science; skilled in detecting the hidden charms of nature's apparel; and communicating all its own beautiful and curious discoveries with an earnestness and clearness which charm our souls. The idea takes possession of our minds at once, that such a being would be the delight of our lives. But in an instant the congenial soul flashes away from us, and we see it no more. There remains a faint light in our hearts, but it is only the light of memory and the past.

A warm and generous man meets us in one of the beautiful vistas of life, and an earnest, impulsive sentence, a whole-souled deed of self-denial clasps the heart to his with the grip of a vise. He is gone in a few hours, and our hearts yearn after him, but all in vain.

A beautiful face beams upon us in the wilderness of toil, exertion, or depression, and like an angel's smile fills the heart with joy and song. But while yet the

peerless eye is bent upon us in tender sympathy, and the exquisite lips breathe melody, the rare creation of divine power is swept away to a distant place, where we may never come. Theologians tell us that this yearning after the fleeting friendships and society of others, is an unconscious yearning after the centre of all beauty and intellect in Heaven. That the occasional glimpses into the faces and hearts of men are designed by the Eternal to divert our hearts to him and his perfections, and that these sudden disappointments in the enjoyment are the work of good angels' hands diverting our eyes to Heaven. It may be so. It must be so. But oh! how these visions of passing beings sometimes cling about the heart, and how the parting from them tears those sensitive tendrils which reach out toward the congenial one their tiny hands.

Alas! poor, noble Harry Carter, why did you sleep? Why did you suffer that exhaustion of body to close your glorious eyes upon that peerless star which rested on your bosom? Ah! had you known the fearful separation soon to come between your arms and their precious freight, how would you have seized each priceless moment to store your brain with enough of that rare beauty to furnish the coming midnight of your heart with alleviating tapers of light. You fondly thought, before fatigue had forced you into slumber, that the exquisite face which leaned upon your bosom might in some future hour be called your own. You saw in its expression, and detected in its style of beauty, your own long dreamed of ideal of woman. You were clasping with your arm a beautiful heart, like your own, true, loving, and impulsive! but the mysterious fate of life

was soon to part your congenial souls wider than the sea.

How lovingly they slept like old well-trying friends, the father and his child and their manly rescuer by the roaring sea. At length, the young girl opened her eyes, and feeling the pressure of the arm about her waist, raised her head quickly from its pillow and turned a rapid glance upon our hero. Then the rich blush mantled her cheek to find herself in the arms of a stranger, and she struggled to release herself, but found it no easy matter to do so at once, because of the wounded head of her father and the stranger's manly grasp. But she soon moved her father's head and shoulders to one side; and then, resting them for a moment upon the sand, she applied both of her small hands to Harry's arm, and moved it away from her. The movement did not awaken Harry, but it did the officer, and he said, in a feeble voice, "Lulu, darling, where am I?"

The young girl, placing her arms beneath his head and replacing it on her lap, said, "We are saved, dear father, and we have been sleeping on the sand; but every one is gone, except this young gentleman who is sleeping against the timbers. He must be one of those who saved us from the ship—but I don't know."

She turned once more, and gazed eagerly into Harry Carter's sleeping face; and her woman's keen eye brightened as she detected his manly beauty. She hesitated to awaken him—for she saw at a glance he was a gentleman by birth; but her father's groans overcame her delicacy, and she shook Harry's arm to awaken him. Our hero finally opened his eyes, and sprang with his accustomed energy to his feet.

"Where is Blake?—where are they all?" he ex-

claimed, looking in surprise around. "Only you two here! This is strange. Ah! Blake has gone for help—I know him. Ah! poor lady! I have been neglectful of my duty, to sleep while you were exposed in this place. Do not fear; Blake Eastman is true as steel—you'll see him return soon with assistance. We are not far from the Ocean House, thank God! Do you think the officer is seriously hurt?" he added, moving around to the side of the wounded man, and raising carefully the bandage now soaked with blood. Finding that the cut on the captain's forehead had not penetrated the skull, he replaced the bandage with the gentleness of a woman, and taking the brave man's hand in his own, said cheerfully, "Keep up your courage a little longer, sir—we are not far from shelter and medical assistance, and our friends will soon return with help."

"Who are you, young man?" whispered the officer, looking up into a face which inspired confidence in every human being that had ever gazed upon it.

"I am a son of Judge Carter, Sir—one of the Judges of the United States Supreme Court, who lives very near the locality where your ship stranded."

"Ah! a son of Judge Carter. I have heard of him often. And was you one of the bold party that came to us in the hour of death?"

"Yes, thank God! I was," replied Harry, looking toward the young girl, whose eyes were bent eagerly upon his countenance as she waited for his reply.

"Well young man, your party are the bravest men I ever met. You have saved my poor life, perhaps for my country's service, and what is dearer to me, you have saved my child. I am Captain Rogers, of the United States Navy, my gallant ship is gone, with as brave and

noble a crew and with as accomplished a body of officers as ever trod a plank. If I live, my life is at your service. Your father's influence will be of more value to you in life than mine; but here is my heart, young man, and no one can offer you a warmer or truer one. Lulu, darling! they're all drowned but you! I'm alone in the world with you, Lulu, but we won't forget young Carter—will we? Oh! how my head swims. Is there no water here, Carter?"

Our hero took the oil silk cover from the officer's cap, and brought it full of water from the river, and felt delighted to find how much relief it afforded to the wounded man. He bathed his temples with it, and his hands, and washed away the blood-stains from his brow and cheeks, and his heart warmed at the exquisite taste of the compliments the young lady showered upon him for his goodness and gentleness. Occasionally he would look up into her beautiful face in his earnest, ardent way, and then the pupils of those rich brown eyes of hers would expand in his gaze; and then she quickly averted her face as if that glance was a forbidden pleasure. But when he bent over her father in the offices of kindness, she would steal glances out of those deep deep eyes, at his features, and the interest in him appeared to deepen, the oftener she gazed, and the moments flew by unnoticed, save when a sigh from the officer drew her attention away from Harry Carter. Her voice was low and musical as she spoke of her friends, and her hopes, and her gratitude for the rescue; and her features lighted up in the beauty of expression as her awakened interest in objects about her increased; and then she smiled at some cheering remark of Harry's, and his heart grasped it and treasured it, and in after time it lighted

up the darkness of his reflections like the flash of the revolving light of Neversink. He remembered too well, in after time, the secret dimple which stole then to her cheek and the pearl brightness of her teeth and the beauty of her thin lips.

The star which had arisen upon his path beamed brighter each instant, and the other constellations of his life were fast growing dim. The true and the tried, the gifted and the lovely were passing from their thrones in his heart and this graceful creation thrown to his hands by the sea was already grasping the sceptre of supreme control over his earnest soul.

At length voices sounded along the shores, and the noise of wheels and the accents of congratulation. But Harry Carter's mind was not attentive as heretofore, and his movements had lost their accustomed elasticity. Mechanically he assisted his friends in placing the wounded officer in the carriage, and carelessly replied to the enquiries of Blake Eastman. When he pressed the little white hand of the officer's daughter in an ardent farewell and received the full earnest look of kindness from the peerless brown eyes, his soul was there in her look, and in her hand and there alone. When the carriage passed away down the beach he followed with Blake on foot; but with the receding wheels passed away the light and the beauty of life. He walked slowly along the hard promenade of the beach and the roaring surf had lost its wonted majesty. His old, his well known friend, the great Ocean, like a faithful dog, licked his feet with its white surfs to attract his attention; but in his reverie, the great sea, too, was no longer remembered. Blake told him that his mother knew of his safety and was looking eagerly to welcome the coming

of her hero child. And the words for a moment possessed a magic power over the spell which had settled upon him, and his eye lighted at the glimpse of the boat which her true love was sending down the river to meet him. And he turned his steps from the ocean beach to the river beach to meet it; and the thoughts of her and home and safety crowded upon him as the boatmen answered his hail and came ashore to take him to his home on the hill side.

He gave the honest hand of Blake one of his old, accustomed grips of friendship and bade him assure the officer and his daughter at the hotel that he would in a brief time come to them with such additional means of relieving their distressed condition as he could find at home. And then he buried himself in the absorbing reverie again, and the rowers imagined that his changed manner was due to exhaustion and excitement prolonged through the fearful horrors of the past night. But he dreamed on and on till he was clasped once more in his mother's arms.

* * * * *

Harry Carter was so worn out by the excitements of the past night, that he slept long and heavily. His mother passed in and out of his room at intervals, but the silent form of her son rested for hours upon his bed without awakening. At length, when the afternoon was nearly spent and the approach of evening was beginning to be seen upon the western sky, Harry Carter awakened with a bewildered start, and looked around upon the familiar objects of his room. Recalling gradually the connection of events, his interest in the shipwrecked strangers at the seaside hotel returned upon

him with renewed strength. He dressed himself carefully and looked out upon the sea. The Ocean had nearly assumed its wonted calm, and the river now glided serenely on beneath his window. He glanced quickly toward the reef where the ship had stranded, but not a vestige of hull or spar remained to mark the location of the disaster.

While his eye roved over the familiar view, the white bows of a river steamer came out from behind the trees of the shore and moved rapidly down the stream toward the city of New York. He started at the apparition, and turned a quick glance upon the clock. The faithful herald of time informed him that he had overslept himself, and that this was the night boat for New York. He regretted the occurrence because he had expected to see once more the brave young man who had accompanied him in the boat, and who had expressed his intention of leaving the seaside in that steamer. Then the memory of the beautiful face which had filled his heart by the bivouac fires again lighted his being with the bewildering glory of a new passion. His eye brightened, and his blood warmed in his veins, and he longed to be near her once more to gaze upon her loveliness and be intoxicated again with the rich melody of her voice. And then the faintness of heart and feeling of desolation which attends the lover who is cherishing an uncertain idol, and knows not yet whether his affection will be returned, came over him, and for a moment he hesitated to see her again. But his courage and resoluteness of character soon gained the ascendancy, and he turned to look for his hat, when a servant appeared at his door and announced that Blake Eastman was at the front door and anxious to see him. He hastened to meet the brave

fisherman, but the first glance into Blake's weather-beaten face informed him that unpleasant news was in store for him.

"Well, Blake, what's the matter?"

"Ah, Harry, they're gone," replied the fisherman, looking steadily into the face of his young friend.

"Who's gone—what do you mean, Blake?"

"I mean that ar captain and his daughter; they're gone in the night boat to York, and her husband's gone with her," replied the fisherman, turning away his eyes from Harry's face as he pronounced the last words.

"Her husband? Blake," exclaimed Harry, in accents scarcely above a whisper.

"Yes, her husband—he was one of the officers and he came ashore last night on a spar, nigh a mile below the double reef. He come to the hotel and made 'em go on the boat with him to York. I reckon he was right, too, that hotel's no place for a wounded man. Don't glare so at me, Harry. Judas Iscariot, King of Jews, you're white as a sheet; here's my arm, lean on that."

Harry Carter motioned him off, and with pale, compressed lips, bade him tell all the facts connected with the officer's escape, and his claiming his wife at the hotel.

The brief and accurate account of the fisherman was listened to with a yearning sensation at the heart, to hear something about the star of his soul, even if the news of her galled him to madness.

When the story of Blake was completed, Harry Carter's features had resumed their composure, except that his eye burned with a strange light which the fisherman had never seen before; and extending his hand to Blake he said calmly, "We've done a good deed, my old boy, and we've something cheering to think of in after life.

Come to the boat to-morrow morning, and see me off. I must go in now, this excitement has been too much for me. Good-bye, Blake, God bless you." He wrung the rough hand of the fisherman with all the strength of his right arm, and then ascending the stairs again to his room, flung himself upon his bed and buried his face in his hands.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WEDDING.

THE reader may recollect, that it has been stated in a former chapter, that our hero had left his home for the city of Dutchhold a few weeks previous to his appearance in the wild scenes of the pic-nic party. At the time of that rural festivity he had already formed many agreeable acquaintances in Dutchhold and its vicinity; and the strangeness and desolation of heart, which possesses the young man who commences the earnest business of life away from home scenes, were gradually wearing off, amid new and interesting friends and employment. He had commenced the study of the law with energy and determination; and the advice and assistance of the learned Levins were proving of immense benefit to him in pursuing his studies. He devoted himself diligently and regularly to his business, not only on account of his father's wishes and his own ambition, but also because he found in it relief and temporary oblivion as to his unfortunate and sudden attachment to the beautiful being whom he had rescued from the sea. Regular and constant occupation proved to him an efficient friend, and gently soothed and sometimes lulled to sleep the heart throb inflicted by the hand of beauty. He

could not forget, for his soul was stamped eternally with the beautiful creations which had passed before his eyes in the life gone by; and to him anything fair and exquisite enough to be worthy of intense interest and admiration at one time must remain worthy of interest and admiration forever. Not that his affection for the forbidden one was unchecked by the stern voice of principle; for in his heart reigned a loyal devotion to the immutable barriers of society, in all civilized lands, and his character, though never moulded in the dogmas of religion, was right to the extent of his information and in the purity of his intentions. But his noble heart was human nevertheless; and the calm surface of his every day life and duties was sometimes interrupted by the coming of the unbidden storm. Moments of reflection and reverie must come, comparison of one beautiful object with another is a necessity of life; and his nature, earnest, impulsive and devoted, was not the one to prove the strange exception to this rule. He sought relaxation in the pleasures of the society with which he was surrounded; and often did a look, a voice, an eye or a movement recall with lightning rapidity the memory of Lulu by the sea. And then his brave heart trembled, and others remarked the unwonted expression on his fine features and the mysterious light gleaming in his hazel eye. Then the wild vehemence with which he flew to the dance or wine-cup swept away from his face the traces of his hidden passion and his hopeless yearnings after the distant star, which he knew he must never contemplate, even through the unsatisfactory telescope of memory. But when the shadows of the coming night were sadly obliterating the glories of the setting sun, and the gathering darkness seemed to summon his active

mind to recollection and meditation in silence and loneliness, then arose in the gloomy sky before him the gentle star of her loveliness, and from those rays his eye could not turn away, and he acknowledged in the face of reason and principle that his love for her was beyond his power to control. Life and honor, aye, even the light of reason, would he quench to know for one moment that her heart throbs were in unison with his own, and her dreams were of him, and the mocking friend of the hour allowed to torture his true heart and goad to madness the earnestness of his disposition, traced before his eye the fair outline of Lulu's beautiful hand and the witchery of her deep, deep eyes. And then a mellow voice, gentler and sweeter than all the other harmonies of happy memory came distinctly to him over the widespread darkness, and he moaned and prayed that death might come to him in his despair.

Weeks and months had hastened by him since he entered the law office of Levins, and his intellect was expanding and maturing under the influence of the legal principles daily stored in his mind, and the familiarity he was acquiring with the practice of the courts. He had learned the difficulties attending the litigation of Alexander Broadhead with Fornell, Horton & Co.; and his interest was soon awakened in favor of the unfortunate manufacturer who had been deprived of the benefits of his patent right by a powerful and scheming company. The quick perception he had displayed in mastering the principles and grasping the strong points of the case had attracted the attention of Levins, who had consequently placed every facility in the way of the young student to acquire information regarding the case which might eventually be of service to himself, when he should be

called upon to argue the case before the appellate Court.

Not many months after his arrival in the city of Dutchhold he received an invitation to attend the wedding of his friends Lou Brandon and Clarence Neaton, at the house of her sister, Mrs. Thompson. Ever eager to drown the anguish of his reflections, which invariably came upon him when he was not engaged in the study of his profession, he embraced the opportunity to mingle again in festive scenes and strive in the charms of some new face to bury the recollection of the peerless Lulu. He found the splendid mansion brilliantly illuminated, and entering the gay assembly was soon engaged in the contemplation of scenes and characters which we beg leave to portray in the following pages.

The bride had been planted directly in front of an enormous mirror by her considerate friends, in order that her white satin dress might be seen to advantage, and that curious eyes might be satisfied that the three broad flounces were certainly of real lace *all the way around*. This arrangement was certainly judicious, for the full point lace veil extending nearly to her feet, and her berth of the same elegant material were thus fully revealed to the inquisitive eyes of the spectators, who were prevented from passing behind her by her proximity to the glass. Harry Carter, who stood near the door of the hall, was highly entertained by the remark of one of the Irish servant girls, who from her position on the hall stairs commanded a fair view of the ceremony.

"Bridget, dear, do you know is there something in the Protestant religion that makes them be married afore a looking-glass? Sure the weddin's lately is all so, and it bates me to know the reason."

Harry Carter whispered to the young lady on his arm:

"I've a great mind to tell them it's intended to give the *backset* to all who might be disposed to examine her behind."

"Hush! Mr. Carter, these people are of the solemn grandeur style, and puns would be elegantly frowned down—but do look at that dress next to the bride—white lace puffed and pink rose-buds between the puffs—they say there are two thousand rose-buds sewed on that dress."

"Why, don't you make a grand story while you are about it," replied Carter, "and say two millions? but my taste is for the rose-bud on her lips—I'd give the two millions for that one."

"Why do *you* think she's pretty, Mr. Carter?" exclaimed his companion with that perplexing emphasis on the word *you*, which either wounds one's self conceit as to having good taste or moderates very materially the compliment which would otherwise be bestowed upon the third party.

"Oh!" replied Carter, "I am only a beginner in the art of criticising female beauty and I must be allowed more familiarity with the belles of Dutchhold before I can fairly be called upon to settle so important a matter—but who is that immense lady with the straw colored silk?"

"Oh! that is Mrs. James Morrison, the great leather dealer's wife—she is immensely wealthy—it is said her neck and bust are the most regular in Dutchhold."

Harry Carter laughed, in spite of the ceremony which was proceeding before the great looking glass, and thought to himself, "She is a regular *buster*, sure enough

—I trust, however, her hooks and eyes are destined to win the battle against the bust."

His attention was soon called to a conversation which was being carried on in a most animated manner just in front of him, by two elderly ladies. The confidence of one of their tones indicated that her companion believed that she spoke by authority.

"No, I think this match a very unfortunate one, I assure you. This young man has not a cent in the world! and the idea of a poor girl like her throwing away her beauty when she might make such an advantageous match through the influence of Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Neaton, is a perfect shame."

"But," interposed the other, "he is called a promising business man, and you know what fortunes are made in that business."

"Fiddlesticks," replied the authority lady, "for your promising young men and your promising business—I've known hundreds of them fail and become beggars for life—give me a fortune and I'll not exchange for a million of your promising men and your fortunes in the future."

"Oh!" said the other, "how sweet that white silk is with two skirts—the upper one is real lace—it must have been very expensive."

"That one Mrs. Clarke has on?" said the authority lady—"Oh, pshaw! I've seen that before often. Why that upper skirt is nothing but her old bridal veil, fixed up for the occasion. I tell you, Mrs. Paxton, this set are up to all such games as this—more than half the dashing head-dresses here are made out of old bridal veils, and the flounces and scarfs too.—Why, they have

bridal veils made three cornered now, so they can wear them for shawls."

"But see that shawl of Mrs. Eaton's," said Mrs. Paxton, "they say that lace cost ten thousand dollars."

"It is very beautiful, no doubt, my dear Mrs. Paxton; but you can never rely on what they say about the price of those things. I priced one, exactly like it at Gilbert's in New York, and it was only nine hundred dollars—but see! that atrocious Thompson is going to kiss the bride! Poor thing! he'll muss her, as sure as the world."

The proprietor of the dwelling designated as "that atrocious Thompson" was indeed approaching the statue-like bride with kissing intentions, but the precise nature of the bridal arrangements had been so accurately defined before the ceremony, that the authority lady's apprehension of the bride being mussed was apparently without proper foundation. As Thompson moved his awkward figure in front of the bride, the watchful bridesmaids held out a semicircular piece of wood covered with white velvet, just far enough in front of her to protect the lowest extremity of her satin skirt in front from being crushed by an unlucky foot. Upon this velvet bound semicircle the proprietor of the mansion placed both of his gloved hands; and leaning forward at an angle of about forty-five degrees, touched his lips to the slightly inclined cheek of the bride. This simple and unique contrivance proved effectual in preserving the spotless integrity and inaccessibleness of the bridal dress and position. All the privileged individuals having gone through this semicircular kissing process, the invited guests were at liberty to roam through the elegant suite of rooms, and amuse themselves as best they might

during the reception which immediately succeeded the wedding in the same style of immovable, unapproachable grandeur. Most of the ladies were dressed in the excess of fashion and magnificence; but the conversation of the lady who appeared to speak by authority, and her friend, would furnish a fair sample of the depth of ideas touched during the evening. The various ornaments with which the saloons were furnished were indeed little calculated to inspire other topics of conversation. Not a painting, a statue, a book, or a curiosity, relieved the everlasting richness and monotony of the enormous staring mirrors and the heavy, sleepy looking window curtains. It is true, a conservatory of rare exotics existed at the extremity of the long suite of apartments; but it could only be viewed through a fine cord screen several feet distant from it, which gave the graceful leaves and the gorgeous colors of the flowers the appearance of having been laid out by speculators into squares and regular streets, like city property. And there for hours was the poor bride compelled to stand before the huge mirror to receive the tide of callers which flowed past her in the hasty formality of a second's congratulation. With her young heart swelling with the emotion of a new tie which bound her to the eventful scenes of the future, which were glimmering before her in the undefined and hazy beauty of a dream, she stood a poor dumb figure in a show-case, to be coolly viewed and criticised, without a light and pleasant jest to relieve the burden of her emotions or the privilege of a friendly chat for a moment with an old sympathizer or relative. And this was the genteel substitute fashion had introduced for the old revelry of the bridal night, where generous and whole-souled outbursts of feeling

and congratulation made the memory of a wedding one of the choicest garlands drooping along the vistas of the past; where the inspiriting notes of the violin blended with the sweeter breathings of the harp and made the hearts of young and old thrill with delight and ease and exultation: where the blushing bride led the dance, and cheerful faces and happy smiles ushered her into the inviting and untried life of the heart. Alas! natural mirth and joyousness are fast dying away from our festive assemblies, and fashion is tolling their knell.

Notwithstanding the intense formality and stupidity of the reception, a small group of congenial beings was finally collected in a corner of one of the parlors, determined to amuse themselves in discussing the strange scene.

Conspicuous among this little group was Mrs. Frank, who, the reader may recollect, figured at the picnic party. She kept up a running fire of criticism upon the manners and dress of some of the stupid magnificents who circled through the drawing-rooms apparently possessed of the sole idea that they were "the style" of all the world.

"Girls! girls! look here! here comes the interesting Miss Pine—she's in a decline, you know—that tall lady in white silk, embossed in bright colors—see! high neck and long sleeves, that means consumptive—see the hectic flush? I declare to you I saw her at the supper-table eat three plates of oyster soup and four biscuits—Frank told me he helped her three times to chicken salad and sandwiches, and twice to ice cream and jelly! and Mary says she saw her eating boned turkey, and afterwards fruit cake and coffee. She says the doctor recommends pitch lozenges, but positively the pitch is so

distasteful to her. What are you laughing at, Mr. Carter?"

"I was thinking," he replied, "how you are *pitching* into her, and how *distasteful* it must be to her."

Shaking her finger at him in mock anger, she answered, "has it come to such a *pitch*, then, that you turn upon me, too? oh! Mr. Carter. Girls! Mary! see that old black thing in white, with that astounding low neck dress—that's old Meeker's wife—he used to be our shoemaker—see her bow to Judge Mains—that's rich! They say she is very much ashamed of her husband's former occupation—I'm sure I wouldn't let such a matter trouble me, one man in this country is as good as another if he succeeds in making money—that's our true test—money is what we live and fight for and prize here above everything else, and he who excels in what his countrymen deem the highest good should rank as the best. What do you say to that, Mr. Carter? What do you say to the man whose industry has won the golden prize?"

"What do I say to him, Mrs. Frank? Why, I say, Sir, you have made a *capital* hit!"

"Alas! alas!" said she, solemnly, "punning again, *capital hit*—that pun was so atrocious and so uncalled for, it deserves *capital* punishment."

"There! Mr. Carter," exclaimed Mary Fornell, "you have caught it on your own ground—own up that you are beaten—be frank now, for once."

"Alas! alas!" he replied, "I can never be *Frank* to her."

The faintest blush appeared upon Mrs. Frank's beautiful cheek as she laughed at the play upon her own

name; but she answered quickly, "You wouldn't prize the *Franking* privilege."

This last occasioned an outburst of laughter that startled the propriety of the magnificents who were circling through the long saloons with the ease and expression of well-trained peacocks. Before our hero had time to reply a lady sailed away from the line of promenaders with a movement of her neck and head intended to represent the grace of the swan, but which rather in connection with her long steps, suggested the stalk of a flamingo. She accosted Mrs. Frank with a "how *do* you do, my dear?" and extended her hand, taking care at the same time not to incline her head, lest the effect of the swan attitude should be destroyed.

"Ah! this is Miss Fornell, I believe—I had the exquisite pleasure of meeting you at the ball. Well—I heard unmistakable evidences of hilarity in this section of the apartments, and my spirits being of an excessively juvenile cast, I hastened to participate in the exuberance of entertainment you all had conjured up." Then followed a peculiar cackle, probably designed to express her idea of a swan's laugh. Her white moiré antique silk, with low neck and long train, was profusely decorated with swan's down—swan's down on the skirt—swan's down on the waist—swan's down on the short sleeves—swan's down around her bare arms—but particularly profusely and lavishly swan's down on her breast and around the neck of her dress. Here, in this favored spot where pure white silk instantly faded into decided red neck and shoulders, the graceful bird had apparently nested for years, "shedding," as Harry Carter whispered to Miss Fornell, "*down* upon her unmitigated *down* with *down* right profusion."

"I have come, my dear," she continued, as her long neck and small head waved from side to side, but never forward, "to enquire if your animated group have viewed the gifts provided for the bride with truly regal extravagance. If you have not, I may be allowed the intense happiness of conducting you to the upper apartment, devoted exclusively to the contemplation of the bridal presents."

The swan neck and head and the white feathers on top ceased waving for an instant as she paused for a reply. The little party in the corner were but too grateful at the prospect of being able to vary the monotony and stupidity of the reception, and they willingly followed the swan as she sailed away with Mrs. Frank under her wing. But Harry Carter could not avoid saying to Mary Fornell, who had accepted his arm,

"Our leader has mistaken her own character, when she assumed to be the swan; for she is nothing but a regular goose."

"You are very severe upon our sex to-night, Mr. Carter," replied his companion, "you have done nothing but make fun of us for an hour—there is no telling what you may say behind our backs."

"That is a cruel remark, Miss Fornell," he replied, with feeling, "there is no lovelier object in the wide world to me than a true woman—but I must confess I do despise an assumption on the part of any one of an unnatural character or quality—you never heard me during our brief acquaintance speak disparagingly of any man or woman whom you deemed worthy of your own regard—have you now, candidly?"

"No! I must admit that I have heard you often express admiration of persons who were high in my esteem—but don't look so serious about it—I was only quiz-

zing you a little—do you know that you were speaking of a very particular friend of mine about an hour ago?

“Who was that, pray?” he asked, with a startled expression which made her laugh. “I hope I said nothing to wound your feelings—I love the few friends I possess with the energy of a tigress for her young—I feel like tearing those who speak ill of them—I sincerely trust I have not hurt your feelings as mine have been hurt sometimes.” He looked down into her beautiful eyes as he spoke; and the eager expression with which she was regarding him bewildered him.

Her eyes fell as they encountered his, and she said almost tremulously,

“They must be a happy few who can claim such ardor in their defence as you speak of, Mr. Carter.” Then she added quickly, “but you have been praising to-night one who has within a very brief period of time completely fascinated me—do you know that Miss French is my especial admiration?—her fearlessness and originality of character are really refreshing amid the insipidity and insincerity which characterize three-fourths of the women in Dutchhold.”

“There, Miss Fornell,” he exclaimed, “I have you now—three-fourths of the women of Dutchhold—in that one sentence you have slaughtered more of your sex than I know in the wide world—but do you really fancy Miss French? I supposed it was reserved to such perverse imps as myself to admire a lady who laughs at the conventionalisms of society, and lives up to the rule of doing just about what she pleases. But I tell you, Miss Fornell, there is more devotedness of character in that individual and more traits of nobleness than you can find in nine-tenths of those who call themselves your friends.

Give me such a woman to stand by me in times of real trouble. Do you know there is something mysterious to me about her features? I have certainly seen them before I met her here in Dutchhold—the same keen black eyes—and the same classic precision of the eyebrows and the upper face—but where it was or when it was I have not the slightest clue in my mind to enable me to recall it. But see the swan going up stairs!—there’s grace for you.”

The individual referred to was mounting the stairs with all the ease and elegance which she imagined the graceful swan must display, if ever it should be placed in a similar trying position. Her downy bust still retained its prominent and advanced appearance, and her long neck and diminutive head extending backward at an astonishing angle with her body, waved from right to left in inimitable curves of beauty. But unfortunately for the swan, just at the moment Harry Carter made his last remark regarding her, it occurred to her that she would withdraw her arm from that of Mrs. Frank, and turn to see what had become of the remainder of her party. Some evil genius, probably the spirit of some unfeeling hunter, whose life had been dissipated in pursuing the innocent bird, at that instant loosened the stair rod of the step upon whose edge she stood, and away went the swan down in the direction of the drawing-rooms. Her feet went first, and then followed a sound similar to that occasioned by throwing a stone into a pan of dough—a regular unmitigated *squash*. The serene expression of the swan changed immediately into one of unquestionable astonishment; but when she continued to slide another step, her features assumed the expression of intense disgust. It probably hurt some.

"There!" exclaimed Harry Carter, unable to restrain his propensity even in this tribulation season, "the bird is all *down* now."

With the assistance of Mrs. Frank, he succeeded in raising the inimitable lady from her fallen condition;—and discovering that she had sustained no more serious injury than the ruffling of her plumage, suggested that the sooner she was off the stairway, the sooner the spectators below would be off the *stare*-way. Following his *pun*-gent advice, as Mrs. Frank called it, the swan and her laughing supporters were quickly at the top of the stairs—and followed by Mary Fornell and the others, soon forgot the lady's mishap in the contemplation of the bride's presents.

An elegantly furnished parlor on the second floor was devoted to the exhibition of the munificence and taste of the bride's friends. A long table, covered with white silk velvet, whose edges were elaborately embroidered and heavily fringed, was resplendent in the blaze of jewelry, and richly chased gold and silver dinner and tea sets. The purest porcelain and the most expensive forms of cut glass were mingled in singular confusion with diamond set watches, silver fish knives, strawberry spoons, Bibles, prayer books, toilet articles and riding whips.

"My dear Mr. Carter," whispered the swan, whose long neck had at length shaken out the kinks made in it by the fall, and was now serenely floating again in air, "how spontaneously have the relatives of the blooming bride portrayed before us in this apartment their exquisite consideration of the bride's necessities, and the irreproachable delicacy of their taste. Do you agree with me in my sentiments?"

"I am sorry to differ with so excellent a lady," he replied; "but what in the world is Lou Brandon going to do with all these expensive gifts? It will probably be many years before she will consider herself authorized by her husband's circumstances, to keep up a style commensurate with such a display of dishes and jewelry. To be sure, it is a very comfortable sort of feeling to know that your friends have been kind enough to present you with such fine things; but I'll venture to say, that if Lou were to express her own views on this matter, she would say, 'Why in the world didn't they give me a check for the value of these articles on the Dutchhold Bank? Why, the interest of this money would be a perfect Godsend to a young couple just beginning life.'"

"Girls—girls!" interposed Mrs. Frank, "Carter's turning old sage and philosopher. Just hear him—interest of the money! Why, Mr. Neaton would put the check in the bank, and draw it all out in a month to pay his segar bills and his club bills; or it would go into some cotton speculation bubble, that would burst up—and then away goes silver soup tureen, cut glass, diamonds, prayer-books and fish-knives. Do you see that pie-knife? Isn't it a treasure? I wish I had it—you ought to see me cut pie. No! no! Mr. Carter—hold on to the nice things when you get them. Why, if I'd had that silver tureen last summer, I tell you what I would have done with it—I'd have made them baptize my baby in it—you needn't laugh, I would!—it's just like a font—put flowers around the edge, and you wouldn't know the difference."

"Ah! my dear," the swan interposed, "the originality of your conceit, and the entire reliability of your statements, are perfectly refreshing, and form a most

delicious contrast with the unaccountable want of animation which seems to pervade this festive occasion. Ah! here come the Allbone family. I desire, Mr. Carter, that you should particularly remark the eldest sister—the one with the crimson silk—she possesses attractions rarely combined in one individual—rare beauty, wonderful intelligence, and a very adequate fortune. Her conversational qualifications are of the highest order: you should cultivate her acquaintance, by all means. Possibly my statement regarding her worldly possessions may not be interesting to you”—and the swan, throwing her divine head and neck backward almost to the strangling point, fixed her eyes enquiringly upon our hero. Harry Carter detected a peculiar nod from Mrs. Frank, and instantly interpreting it, said, with the most admirable nonchalance:

“Not in the least, madam—indeed I have always been so amply provided with affluence that I really cannot appreciate the perfect frenzy of the society of Dutchhold after wealthy marriages—particularly when the mere matter of five or six hundred thousand is considered a desirable prize to secure. The fact is, madam, wealth is a burden to me; and if I could only obtain the consent of my friends to give away all but about a million, I should feel very much relieved, I assure you. But family pride is very powerful, you know, and we must sometimes be martyrs to circumstances,” and he sighed deeply.

Mrs. Frank and her friends were convulsed internally at his resigned expression, but propriety triumphed and corked the laugh. The effect, however, on the swan was magical. When his first sentence announced to her that he held control of the great keys to the Ameri-

can heart, her eye grew gentle in interest and admiration. But when he spoke of the burden of wealth and the hardship of being unable to reduce his possessions to a mere million, the neck and head made a tremendous dash forward, as if to recognize by a bow the awful supremacy of his condition. Recollecting instantly, however, the impropriety of a swan sacrificing her gracefulness even at the stunning report of great wealth, she quickly regained her self-possession and her attitude. The shock, however, for an instant drove from her mind the recollection of the Allbones, who had approached the table and commenced a rigid and thorough examination of the bridal presents. But she soon sailed away towards the sisters who rejoiced in the euphonious but famine suggesting appellation, and was observed by Mrs. Frank to whisper something into the ear of the sister who combined in her person the wonderful qualities.

“There, Mr. Carter, you have got yourself in a nice scrape,” said Mary Fornell in a low tone, “that woman will report you to the whole city as immensely wealthy, and you will be annoyed out of your life by the attentions of all the old maids and their fortune-hunting mothers in less than a week—what in the world possessed you to tell her that? Wasn’t it rich, though, to notice her neck? It leaned forward for the first time in years. Mother says she never sleeps with a pillow under her head, but always puts it under her shoulders, and lets her head fall back, so as to preserve the position—you all had better quit laughing so or she will suspect something.”

“You put me up to this, Mrs. Frank,” said Carter, “and you must help me out. I don’t mind a week’s fun with the young girls, but the old maids—Gregory! the

idea of tenderness from those tough things! You may all laugh, but I tell you the devoted attentions of half a dozen old damsels like those yonder would authorize the undertaker to stretch his measure over me in about six days. Oh! the deuce—here they come—positively, I hear the bones rattle—I'm counted out of *this*. Is there no way of escape, Miss Fornell?—you stick by me, won't you, please?"

"Tell them you're married," she whispered quickly, as the swan sailed up to them with an Allbone under each wing.

Miss Allbone, allow me to present Mr. Carter—Miss Julia Allbone, Mr. Carter—how do you enjoy the view of the gifts, Mr. Carter?—have you observed the exquisite flower-basket presented by an old admirer of the bride?—there, in the corner by the window."

"Oh, certainly!" he exclaimed, determined to beat a retreat at the first opportunity by following Mary Fornell's suggestion; "it attracted my attention immediately—do you know I am passionately fond of flowers?—indeed I may say it amounts to a perfect mania with me. My wife, fortunately, shares my taste in this respect, and she contrives to surround herself with the most beautiful exotics the whole year around. I was particularly struck with this basket of flowers—it resembled so much the one my wife was presented with on the evening of our marriage by her father. Ah! I beg your pardon, Miss Fornell—I believe you expressed a wish to speak with your uncle before supper—shall we go now?—farewell, ladies for the present—we are going to the lower regions—farewell," and drawing the willing arm of Miss Fornell closer in his own, he marched away with

her, not, however, without first giving a sly wink to Mrs. Frank, which said,

"Carter's death and funeral are indefinitely postponed, I reckon; the undertaker need not measure me at present." Could he have witnessed the extreme dismay portrayed on the bony features of the Miss Allbone, who combined the rare qualities, he would have laughed outright. She had resolved upon making at the wealthy young man what is called a dead set; but his sudden announcement of his marriage made her dart at her friend, the swan, a look in which astonishment was blended with contempt of that want of discrimination which had nearly placed her in a position to make a complete fool of herself. But our hero lost this ludicrous effect of his words, for he was moving away as rapidly as his companion could walk, and expressing to her his unbounded gratitude for her timely hint.

"The fact is, Miss Fornell," he continued, "I am acquiring a perfect horror of the female fossils which modern society is forcing upon our notice. We promulgate the atrocious doctrine that a lady who marries a poor man is an idiot; and at the same time we afford such a limited education to females, and consider accomplishments of so little account, that when a girl has outlived in a few years that bloom and beauty of feature which our severe climate so soon blasts, she has nothing to fall back upon, to fascinate the heart of man. That magic power over the soul which an exquisitely cultivated voice wields, that contagious enthusiasm which a learned and polished conversation kindles up in the intellect, that admiration of the artist which a sculptured gem or a faithful painting arouses, are not for her—she possesses no such attraction; and a man who has nothing

to choose from, but a fresh blooming cheek and a bundle of bones, must take the former, if he possesses an atom of brains himself. I know it is urged that man is so blind as to prefer a pretty face to a rich intellect, but that intellect does not and will not endeavor to make itself attractive. I will not believe that music has lost its power to move and agitate the soul as in the olden time. Nor that the beauty of the eye, which kindles up at the touch of the fine waves of thought rolling in from the boundless sea of intellect, sways no more the sceptre over man. It may be that I am mistaken, and that the power of female mind is broken. If this be true, then it is so only because a shallow and indiscriminating mother makes superficial and undiscerning offspring. It is only because the standard of manly character and manly sense depreciates in the same ratio as the character and intellect of the mothers depreciate."

"Mr. Carter, bad taste, bad taste that," exclaimed a voice at his elbow, just as he and Mary Fornell were passing into the drawing-room. "Ah, Miss French! is that you? I'm right glad you have come—but what is the bad taste?"

"It's very bad taste," she replied, fixing her black eye upon his handsome face, with the faintest expression of admiration in it, "to be talking wisdom amid such an assembly of geese. Mary, I am going to appropriate half your partner to myself; that is, I am going to take his other arm, with your and his permission, for I have been here a half an hour with nobody to entertain me. Now I am all right. Drive on, discriminating man, with your two unaccomplished and depreciated women. Where were you going?"

"Going?" said Carter—"why we were going to see

if we could find some of the spirit of the times—that is to say, the spirit of such times as this—a little champagne. The fact is, I have just had a very narrow escape from death by old maids, and I feel the need of a little refreshment. What do you think was thrust directly at my heart a few minutes ago, with the intention of destroying my life? I'll tell you. It was a thing with a little head, but which was full of the deadliest venom imaginable. The body and legs were long and slim—the front and back of this animal had become perfectly flattened by time; and its waist you could span with your two hands. It looked as thin and wasted as the consumption itself, but there wasn't the least possible hope that it might die with such a disease soon. Its voice was a peculiar whine, which seemed to increase in violence whenever any beautiful young girl was mentioned. And when it spoke, it made you believe that rosy cheeks were rouge only—that golden hair was a dirty yellow, and a heavy head of hair was only thin hair puffed out to imitate abundance; that a blonde face was only an unhealthy complexion; that the most beautiful girl in the room wasn't half as pretty as her sister, whom nobody else thought pretty at all; that the most graceful dancer had awful large feet—that a pretty mouth only concealed bad teeth; that an elegant lace was only cotton; that an heiress was only the daughter of a gambler. The expression of the thing's face was a die away and dying-calf look, and its laugh very high-toned and distressing, like the notes of a lunatic rooster. It cast anxious eyes on widowed clergymen and broken-down old sinners, and all other specimens of mankind which young girls would be little liable to take up with. Its comments on passing beings dried up your enthusi-

asm, and made you afraid or ashamed to praise anything or anybody. This thing was shoved directly at my heart, but fortunately Miss Fornell warded it off; and here I am, to my great surprise, alive and unharmed. Now, what do you think it was?"

"Miss Allbone?" inquired the lady addressed.

"Yes!" said Carter. "But how did you guess? Mind you, I was only describing her by her looks. I had no conversation with her; but she looked just like an old maid I have seen in Tattletown."

"Oh! your description was so accurate," replied Miss French, "I thought you knew all about her—you have made a narrow escape from torture, I can tell you. But here comes the bridal party—they are after supper. See! they have a body guard of ladies before and behind the bride, to keep people from walking on her dress. Everything is horribly stiff here. Never mind, we shall be in order then, if we make our horn of champagne rather stiff. Poor Lou! I pity her. She looks like a martyr. I hope she will take some wine. About three good glasses of champagne would make that train of hers fly around to the intense horror of these inflated noodles. This is an elegant supper room, isn't it? See there—that girl with the rose-bud dress is actually sitting down—she will ruin it. She must be dreadfully fatigued, poor thing, standing up so long with the bride. She's right pretty. Who is she, Mary?"

"Senator Birdly's daughter," replied Miss Fornell. She was one of Lou's schoolmates. She is a very lovely girl, I am told. How puzzled she has looked the whole evening! I don't believe she ever saw anything quite so formal and stupid in Virginia."

"Who is that gentleman making himself generally

useful among the ladies?" inquired Miss French—"that awkward individual, with such an agonized air to all his movements. The girls in that corner are actually laughing at him. I wonder what he's saying to them. I thought some of them couldn't laugh. You may know they are breaking the rules of the house by the expression of Mrs. Morrison's face. It's the wine, after all, that has done it. It is good—thank you, Mr. Carter—I *will* take another glass. Who is he, Mary?"

"He is the son of Caleb Jones, the banker. Now, there's a fair sample of the young men of this would-be aristocratic set I was speaking to you about the other evening. You see how he looks and acts. Well, his conversation is just on a par with his actions—rude and extraordinary—he lectures the lady he dances with on the impropriety of her movements, and uses the most vulgar expressions with reference to trifles committed in the height of fun and dancing; and he does it with such an air, too, of awful and profound superiority. You know him, don't you, Mr. Carter?"

"I have met him two or three times at parties," replied Harry Carter. "At Mrs. Holden's party, he came up to me at supper, and with the importance of an emperor he says:

"I presume, Mr. Carter, that you are qualified to advise me on a matter of some considerable interest to me at present. The fact is, the wine I have taken has flown to my head, and I'm apprehensive that some of the ladies have observed it in my conversation. I was advised that a tumbler full of raw brandy would counteract the effect of it; but I thought it might be best to consult you before doing so—not that the effect is at all unpleasant to me; I rather like it than otherwise—he! he!

he! I wouldn't wish you to infer that I am intoxicated, that is to say, druk—druk—I mean drunk—but as a natural precaution, inasmuch as the ladies were disposed to laugh at my remarks, I deemed it prudent to take something. Would you recommend the tumbler full of brandy?"

"I hope you told him," said Miss French, "to take it by all means. Wasn't it rich?"

"No! I did not," said Carter. "I waived the fun of the thing for the sake of the lady of the house, and told him if he took a tumbler of raw brandy on top of all that wine, he would be blind drunk. It was a great temptation, though. But I must go home—it is late, and I have a great pile of papers to copy to-night. I am going to Washington on Monday. Levins wishes me to go and assist him in that suit in which you are interested, Miss Fornell."

"Well, let's all go home—this is the stupidest affair I ever witnessed," said Miss French. "Will you go, Mary?"

"Yes. But I want to speak to Lou a moment, if I can find an opportunity. Come—and then we'll go home together."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OTHER GIRL.

THE pale moon peering out at intervals, through the irregular windows formed by the passing clouds, cast feeble and cheerless rays upon the dark and indistinct figures which thronged the broad sidewalks of Pennsylvania Avenue. Occasionally the broad glare from a shop window revealed with startling effect the whole figure of a passer-by; and then appeared also in gloomy contrast with this sudden brightness, the long and stealthy shadow of the person, moving on before like a conducting fiend. Wherever a light glistened to cheer the uncertain steps of the wayfarer, there, too, were mocking shadows; and the leafless trees had lent their mysterious arms and tapering fingers to aid in weaving the gloomy web which covered the avenue. The damp night air and the uncertain rays of the moon were not suggestive of a pleasant stroll, and the crowd of pedestrians was rapidly thinning out, and the street was being left in the possession of the dissipated and the abandoned.

A tall figure, muffled against the chill atmosphere, and wrapped in the ample folds of a cloak, and wearing a small flat cap, with a certain military precision of manner, was leaving the more animated portion of the ave-

nue behind and approaching the neighborhood of the President's house and Lafayette Square. His step was firm but slow, and with the deliberate manner in which his segar was burning away, indicated his utter disregard or contempt of the hazards of night exposure. When the moonbeams struggled through their snowy barriers and feebly illumined his regular and youthful features, one might indeed marvel that a being so nobly moulded by nature, and so perfect in beauty of face and intellect, should be doomed to wear so fearful an expression of unrest, and even of anguish. Slowly moved the muffled figure along the fantastic carpet of woven shadows on the pavement, and slowly the cruel hand of thought traced on that young and noble heart the checkered shadows of a deep and hopeless passion. Sadly the bright and faithful watchman of the skies struggled on its beat to perform its duty amid the opposing clouds; and sadly did that earnest heart struggle, without the power of a divine religion to aid it, to remove a passion which stood defiant between a creature and his Creator. The silver bells of conscience were tinkling in every avenue of his strong intellect, but the gentle music of Lulu's voice filled his heart, and the melody in the heart was more perfect to him than the harmony of the intellect. The engrossing cares and occupations of the day had all stolen away from his mind, and he was again alone with the often suppressed but ever recurring memory of the beautiful being who had possessed the magic spell over his existence. From the shores of the great sea white hands seemed to beckon him back to the scene of that eventful night, and her graceful figure was again revealed in its marvellous loveliness against the white background of the foaming surf. His segar was at

length thrown away, and leaning his back against the trunk of a leafless tree, which stood near the corner of the square, he wrapped his cloak closely about him and gazed long and thoughtfully at the drifting fragments of white clouds, as they passed slowly and at intervals over the face of the moon. There was a depth of feeling and a sense of desolation in that generous heart which gave to the dazzling objects of ordinary pursuits the frightful hue of death and decay. The alluring prize of honors and distinction in his chosen profession could never concentrate his energies and chain his powers to the long contest, while that loneliness of heart for her affection was chilling the wild fires of his ardent nature and yielding to despair the sceptre over his impulses. With her to share his enthusiasm and cast loving looks of interest upon his pursuits in life, he knew he could accomplish mighty ends and twine his name with laurel, that she might rejoice. But the right and the power to chain the love-looks of her beautiful eyes to his career might never be; and the thought itself, cherished and dreamed of was sin. "Ah, Lulu!" he muttered, "how strange that thoughts of you and yearnings to follow with my eyes your gentle footfall along the shores of time are all forbidden to me; and there can be no act of innocence in your regard but the unavailing struggle to forget. Forget *you*, Lulu: never, never, while a heart throb is disinterested in the wide world—never while sunshine is more charming than the storm—never while affection is the balm of life and the mother's regret for her lost child is a holy sin. But away, dreamer, she is not for you.—Drive your maddened footsteps along these lonely streets—crush the heart the Eternal God has planted in your breast, and make it a sere and blighted thing. Pause

not here, but walk till you are weary, and sleep shall drown all care. Away!"

He turned quickly, and following the long line of beautiful residences which extends along the north side of the square, walked away with the vehemence of a madman. His attention was soon attracted, however, by the enlivening notes of a harp from one of the dwellings, and drawing near the windows of the mansion from which the sound proceeded, he listened for a few seconds. The accomplished fingers of the musician swept lightly from the strings of the harp the notes of a popular spirit waltz. And then all was still again, save the faint whispering of the chill breeze in the trees of the square. Hark! the gentle tones of a woman's voice thrill the attentive ear, and the sweeping wings of the wind cannot drown their cadences as they reach the hidden depths of the soul and then melt away in exquisite sweetness upon the blast. Thus whisper to each other the holy voices in the Eternal choirs of the celestial city. Again the delicious melody steals out upon the darkness, and the excited heart trembles in the fullness of its rapture as the listening ear receives the full gush of mingled joy and tenderness. The pride of intellect bows down, and the illusions of life fade; the flood of childhood's innocence rolls back in all its freshness upon the heart, and the gathering tears in the eyes are sweet and soothing as an angel's kiss.

Entranced and motionless was the listener; and his brilliant eyes raised to the heavens, glistened in the intensity of his appreciation and delight. But suddenly a fearful change passed over his features. Intense bewilderment was quickly followed by an expression of unbounded eagerness, and he planted one foot upon the

lowest of the door-steps, as if to spring up them to the entrance. Then he listened earnestly again, and pressing both hands tightly against his forehead, as if in sudden pain, "Yes! yes!" he muttered, "she is here—I must see her one blessed instant—my eyes crave one glance at that dear form. It cannot be wrong for once, and for the last time, forever, to speak with you, beautiful Lulu. Oh, my God, tell me, I entreat you, that this once will not be sin—to see her—speak with her—hear the heavenly music of her voice once more. No! no! no! I am hardened in my heart to the influences of heaven, I know too well—but never this—never can I approach that lovely angel of my life when I know—yes, my soul you know too well that the sight of her would goad you to wildness, recklessness, wild passion—oh! angels of Heaven, my impulse to fly from this spot is holy—is right!—aid me in my struggle. Yes! I am strong again—I will do right. Oh! Lulu dear, beautiful, darling Lulu, you are not for me—but I love you—I must love you till death—there! demons! you have your way now—I love her—I am not ashamed to say it—I love her—for she is worthy of love, and passion, and devotion—but no! I will go—she shall never know it. Farewell, dear Lulu. I have conquered—I have conquered."

He kissed his hand toward the window, and then, pale and trembling with the intensity of his emotion, wrapped his cloak about him and walked rapidly away. He paused when he reached the corner of the square, where the angle in the street would hide the view of the dwelling, and looked back. A light streamed from the window as before. He pressed his lips tightly together and turned again down the street; but he was praying in his heart that he might be permitted to speak with Lulu in

Heaven. Along the broad avenue sped his flying footsteps, and the moonbeams trembled upon his dusky figure as if in sympathy with his emotion. But around him, unseen by mortal vision fluttered strange waves of holy light; and an angelic face peered lovingly into his hazel eyes, and a voice taught to sing in accord with heavenly harps whispered, "you have made the angels of God smile, for you have triumphed over yourself and your passion—my own beautiful charge."

Away, away—firmly and rapidly moved the resolute soul. Men turned to glance again at the unwonted pace of the stranger; the voice of noisy revelry reached his ear from the haunts of vice; the chill breeze whistled past him, and the skeleton trees rattled above his head their interlacing branches, but he heeded them not. Onward, past the gay hotels and the music of the ball rooms sped that brave heart, and none knew that a hero passed them on the avenue. Yes, a hero in firmness, in self sacrifice, and in principle, was leaving behind him an idol whose influence was with him and in him by day and by night; an idol exquisitely lovely and gifted. He was foregoing the happiness of meeting in her own home, surrounded by those who cherished her, the beautiful Lulu whom he had saved from the very jaws of death. He had relinquished that overflowing cup of gratitude, which was prepared for his lips by those who loved her. He had denied himself the delicious draught of her sweet thanks renewed with quivering lip and moistened eye. And he was fleeing from these, lest he might be overcome and powerless to do right in her presence. And in this triumph he possessed that quality which makes the greatest heroes on the stage of life—an eager long-

ing, it may be desultory if you will, but a sincere longing to please the Eternal Ruler of the Universe.

Pale and excited, he finally reached the door of his hotel, and mounting the stairs with nervous step, passed along one of the long halls till he reached a door near the extreme end. An impatient rap brought a young lady to the door, and he entered with the familiarity of an intimate friend.

"What, all alone! where is aunt?" he enquired.

"She has gone to the ball at Willard's," replied the young lady, looking in surprise at the ashy paleness of his face, and his ill-concealed agitation, "what ails you, Harry? are you sick? Here, give me your cloak and lie down on the sofa. What is the matter?" she enquired again, following him to the sofa and sitting down beside him.

"Ah! dear Bess," he replied, taking her plump little hand in his own, and endeavoring, at the same time, to avoid the anxious gaze of her keen grey eye, "my heart is broken, and I am utterly unhappy and tired of life. I am lonely and blue, and I came to you, Bess, because I knew how dearly you loved me, and you would sympathize with me. I am glad I found you alone, but you mustn't ask me what the matter is—for I cannot tell you as long as I live, no! never, not even you, Bess."

She looked intently into his face for an instant, and then said, "I know, cousin Harry, what has made the trouble; there is a peculiar expression in your eye—it's a woman."

"I told you it was utterly impossible for me to tell you what the matter is, Bess. I only want you to pity me, to sit close by me and talk to me so that I shall forget it. I wouldn't tell any one in the world but you, that any-

thing was the matter. No woman has slighted me or said or done anything to displease me in any way. Now are you satisfied, Bess?"

"No, I am *not*," she answered emphatically, "if any one had died you would tell me—if you or any body else had lost money, you would tell me *that*; if your friends were in trouble you would say so; if any one had insulted you, you would have knocked him down and been over it long ago; and I know you wouldn't do anything that one need be ashamed to tell, so I know that some girl has caused the trouble. Own up, Harry!"

She drew her plump little form closer to him and presented her cherry lips to his in a dainty sip.

"Well, I declare," he exclaimed, "there isn't such another pair of lips to win a man's soul in the wide world. Bess, you are an angel; you can soothe my heart if you can't mend it; you are so beautiful and so lovely I will tell you all some day, but not now. Do not ask me, I entreat you."

The lovely girl saw from his manner that he was determined not to reveal his secret to her at that time, and suppressing her curiosity for a future occasion, she endeavored to amuse him and divert his mind from the subject, which she discovered by the peculiar compression of his lips, must occasion him excessive torture. Devoted to her cousin with the earnestness of a sister, if the sentiment was not even of a more tender nature, she had studied every varying expression of that changing countenance for a long time, until she had become so familiar with its manifestations of feeling that she could recognize and classify his thoughts when he imagined his features to be a perfect disguise to them. She had studied his character so faithfully that its many noble traits were

all known to her, and appeared, indeed, overpowering to her loving heart, beside the faults into which she also knew his impetuosity sometimes led him.

She was staying in Washington with her father, who was a member of Congress, and her heart leaped with exultation when her cousin informed her that the suit in which Levins was engaged would probably detain him some time in her society at the same hotel.

She said to him, "Mr. Levins was taken very sick to-night; did you know it, Harry?"

He knew of his indisposition at dinner-time, but supposed it to be trifling, and her words occasioned a feeling of self-reproach that he had not been interested enough in his friend's condition to visit him before this.

"How did you hear, Bess?" he enquired. "I supposed it was nothing serious."

"Father told me before he went to the ball," she answered, "and I remember now he said Mr. Levins had a few minutes before asked to see *you*. But don't go now, Harry, there will be time enough this evening yet, and you look so deathly pale and exhausted that I believe you are really sick. I would like to get hold of that girl who has occasioned my own noble Harry so much trouble. She must have poor taste not to prefer you and your wishes to everything in the wide world. Is she pretty, Harry? No, I will not annoy you; don't look so distressed. Here, I will move along so you can lie down and put your head in my lap. Do you remember that summer when we used to sit in the shade of the trees a little way from your father's on that nice point where we could look out upon the sea? I never shall forget that as long as I live. Do you remember lying on the grass and resting your head in my lap, while I

read to you Mrs. Hemans' Records of Women?—and the white sails glided so beautifully by, out on the calm bosom of the sea, and when I spoke of them you said, with your face looking towards the sky, that you saw other and more snowy sails floating by on the blue sea of heaven. That was a dear summer—you were so happy and light-hearted—but now you are so changed; ever since you came here you have been uneasy and restless, and your eyes appear to yearn and seek after something you cannot attain. Oh! If I could only make you happy now as you said I did then. How beautiful your hair is, Harry; it's as soft and silky to my hand as mother's. Hark! there is some one at the door."

He raised his head quickly from her lap and said, "I will go to the door."

It was a summons to the sick room of Levins.

CHAPTER XV.

SOME ONE TO LOVE.

HARRY CARTER followed the servant, who had been sent to summon him to Levins' bedside, with a sensation very much like relief. The unrest of his mind for months, coupled with the shock of his unexpected discovery of Lulu's home and exquisite voice, had filled his being with overwhelming passion; and the utter hopelessness of that passion was crushing his intellect to the verge of madness; at least his ardent nature induced him to think so. This apprehension, therefore, being uppermost in his mind, the idea of a diversion of his thoughts from the absorbing subject, by the call to the sick bed of his friend, afforded him a certain measure of relief. He moved through the ill-lighted halls of the hotel with the expression of a man determined to concentrate all his energies and actions upon some object just ahead of him. Vain delusion! The true heart once possessed of the great passion, for a lovely and accomplished woman, can only drown her memory in the discovery of her unworthiness, or in the supernatural oblivion afforded by religion. The latter of these means our hero knew not; and the former could never be. For of all the pure and irreproachable women who exist amid the corruptions

and withering influences of modern society, the being who had chained his affection was the last to subject herself to the charge of unworthiness, except the charge might come from her own gentle and unselfish heart.

The servant at length conducted him to an apartment on the lower floor of the house, where a piazza enclosed for the winter with glass, shut out from the tier of small rooms all the cheering influences of full and flooding sunlight. There was an air of sadness and dungeon-like obscurity about these rooms, which occasioned in the mind of a stranger, feelings of apprehension that dampness and consequent sickness might lurk in these secluded and dusky corridors. As the young law student glanced along the piazza, gloomy enough in the daytime to give a man the horrors, but now enveloped in the uncertain folds of night, and aggravated by a sickly-looking lamp, he shuddered and muttered to himself, "Poor Levins! No wonder he is sick in such an infernal pit as this!"

He sent the servant off with a shilling, and knocked lightly at the door of Levins' apartment. An Irish servant girl admitted him with a "Hist, Sir—the poor gentleman is jist aslape. There's a sate be the bed—an' I'll go to me work, for the boss is worried wid the crowds of people that's cum this night."

Harry Carter took the chair pointed out, and the poor girl, who had been in the room to look after the "sick gentleman" many times during the afternoon and evening, hastened away to attend to the swarms of strangers who were pouring into the hotel, in expectation of witnessing in a few days the inauguration of a new President of the United States.

The lamp had been shaded for the benefit of the sick

man; but the young student discovered at a single glance in his face the too familiar evidences of his unfortunate malady. Levins was in a stupor from the excessive debauch of the previous night. That mighty intellect which had blazed like a meteor through the courts of his native State was lying a helpless victim to some infamous compound, which had established an everlasting sway over his system and his soul. It had required but a few days' sojourn in the city of Dutchhold to reveal this weakness of the great lawyer to the young student; and he had already on several occasions been forced to witness the degradation of the friend whose intellect and generous heart he so much admired. This prostration of mind and body, from the excessive use of stimulants, had, however, only pained and mortified him, without ever suggesting to his mind the idea that his own indulgence in the genial influences of the cup might some day lead to similar effects upon himself. For it appears to be the impression universally entertained by those who occasionally pay their respects to the jolly god, that intemperance only fastens on a certain class of persons of constitutional predispositions to the unnatural appetite, and that they are not of that unlucky class.

Anticipating every moment that Levins would awake, he sat by his bedside and listened to his heavy breathing for some time. Weary at length with watching for his awakening, he moved his chair up to the table, which was covered with the lawyer's scattered papers, and sought to discover in the disarranged manuscripts some clue to the matters of business as to which he supposed he had been sent for. The loose sheets of paper generally, were devoted to the arrangement of the legal points, and

the notes of the authorities by which they were to be sustained, in the matter of the important argument soon to be made before the Supreme Bench of the United States in the case of Alexander Broadhead versus Fornell, Horton & Co. Familiar as he had become with the law pertaining to this case, he discovered nothing new in these papers to interest him or to induce him to think that Levins desired him to hunt up additional authorities bearing upon the suit. Carefully placing the documents relating to the patent suit by themselves, he discovered a few loose sheets of paper containing fragments of somebody's last will and testament, in the handwriting of Levins. He started in surprise to find his own name in the following clause:

"Tenth.—I give, devise and bequeath unto Henry Carter, son of the Honorable David Carter, one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, and a resident of Monmouth County, in the State of New Jersey, who nobly hazarded his life to save my beloved niece Lulu Rogers, and her father, Captain Rogers, from the wreck of the frigate Union, the sum of ten thousand dollars, if he shall be living at the time of my death."

Then followed similar bequests to the other rescuers of the Captain and his daughter, and then provisions as to the disposition of the several sums if any of the rescuers should not survive the testator. As his excited eye glanced over the other fragments of the unfinished will it came upon the clause bequeathing large sums to the testator's niece, Lulu Rogers, and then a bewildering clause giving to the said niece a particular property in the city of New York, until such time as SHE SHOULD

MARRY, and then followed a bequest to her sister Mary, wife of an officer in the United States Navy.

Harry Carter's cheek was blanched with excitement, and his hands trembled as he turned over the scattered leaves of the will. Then, as the full force of the facts burst upon his reason, he sprang to his feet with one wild thrill of delight in every vein. "Lulu's not married—not married—thank God!" Nervous with excitement he glanced over the papers again, for he feared something was wrong in his mind; and that the oppression which had been upon his heart for months had unsettled his reason, so that he saw unreal objects, and the connection of his ideas was broken. But no, the ink was fresh upon the leaves, and the testator described her by her maiden name; and gave her the use of property until her marriage, and all this subsequent to her rescue from the sea. Blake Eastman had evidently confounded Lulu with something he had heard at the sea-side hotel concerning the daughter of Captain Rogers having married the officer. It was evidently Lulu's brother-in-law who had escaped death. Strange mistake this, which had filled his soul with unnecessary pain, and given to the angel Hope the fearful drapery of despair. Then lifted the heavy cloud from his existence, and the stars gleamed out again in the firmament of his young life. The yearnings of his heart and its gushing tenderness for her were now pure and holy; and to cherish and indulge these emotions became a pleasure and a balm to soothe the asperities of life's onward march. The wintry desolation of his heart burst forth into the midst of an entrancing summer, with its mellow music and its luxury of balmy air; its singing birds swinging between earth and heaven; and its rich

green mantle woven with flowers. And far away in the green sward the exquisite figure of Lulu was coming towards him with her eyes gentle in a new found love, and blushing because she must rest her head upon his tremulous heart. Then a shudder passed over his frame. "Will she love me? Is her heart engaged with another? Is there hope, indeed?" Unrest again stole into the chambers of his heart; and while it tarried face to face with hope, Levins moaned and called him to the bedside.

"Is that you, Harry?" he muttered, raising his head partly from the pillow; "here, sit down—here, by the bed. I've had a devilish hard time. I can't stand much, lately. It seems to me the brandy about this place must be doctored with some infernal drug—it makes me so feverish and nervous. I wish I could give it up altogether. It's ruining both mind and body. Poor Syl—I wish I could gratify her gentle heart by shaking off this habit. But Harry, I can't, positively. The iron claws of this appetite are tightening about my vitals. I am conscious of it this last month more than ever before. But Harry, I can't do without it—I tell you solemnly, before my God, I have not the moral force to stop this craving. Come here, close to me, and give me your hand. There now—I will say one word to you which will save your prospects in life to you, if you will follow my counsel. Harry! there is not on the face of the earth a more insidious and yet despotic master than this same liquor. No man is certain for an hour that he may not become some day its slave. I used it for years without apparent injury to myself; but it was gradually undermining my constitution, and now I cannot abandon it. Listen to me, now—I am your friend—you know it—you

have legal talents of a high order, and you will win distinction in the profession if you will apply yourself steadily to it, and forswear rum. I call it brandy when I'm dry, but when I hate it as I do now, I call it by the odious and vulgar designation of *rum*. How the cursed habit has blighted my reasoning faculties. Do you doubt it? I tell you, there has been to me the greatest fascination in tracing out the course of a legal principle through the obscurity in which successive modern courts have enveloped it, till I reached it in its purity away off at the fountain head. This legal study has been my paradise on earth, and I love it now. But this infernal rum has weakened something here in my head, Harry, so that I have been sometimes almost impelled in open court to announce the most startling propositions in law and equity to the judges, that the wildest maniac could advance. Nothing but my habit of backing up a proposition with the authorities before me has restrained this—nothing but the sheer habit of keeping in the old track of the law has saved me from disgracing myself. I have made arguments to the court sometimes when I was actually unconscious of what I was saying; but I have fortunately on such occasions only talked what I had studied when I was sober. I tell you, give it up, entirely, unqualifiedly, if you desire happiness in life. You will find the requirements of society gradually losing their power over you after a few steady denials of the glass, and these refusals will save you, mind and body both. My head feels as if it was under the wheels of the car of Juggernaut."

The last word suggested to the mind of our hero that

in something less than an hour's time, the lawyer's dry throat would call for *jug-or-naught*, but he restrained himself from uttering this reflection, for his friend was evidently intensely miserable from the previous debauch.

Levins turned uneasily upon his bed, and directing his blood shot but piercing eyes upon the student's countenance, continued,

"I sent for you, Harry, to find somebody to assist me in conducting this suit. I am growing so weak and my nerves are so unsteady, that I think it best not to risk the interests of my client on the day of the argument upon so uncertain a basis as my health, and competency. The fact is, I distrust myself. This appetite is gaining such power over me that I apprehend something may happen when I am most needed in the court room. Oh, my God! the bitter disgrace of such an admission. But, Harry, you must hunt up one of the most reliable and competent lawyers in this city, to aid me on the day appointed for the argument. Don't say anything to Broadhead about it; he is such a penurious scamp, that the idea of an assistant counsel would drive him into a tremendous rage. Harry, I tell you, that same client of mine is the greatest rascal that ever went unwhipt of justice. Here—I will tell you a secret. I have never received my pay from him for my services in this suit."

Harry Carter exclaimed in astonishment, "What do you say? you have received no pay for your services, why! you have devoted the principal part of your time, for more than a year, to this business alone. Didn't he pay you anything, for conducting the case, before the circuit court?"

"No! Harry, he claimed that I had not fulfilled my part of the bargain with him. I agreed to take charge of his case, and not to leave it, until it was decided, either for or against him, by the court, for the round sum of fifteen thousand dollars. I meant, the circuit court, and so did he. But when he was defeated there, he pretended, that our contract only related to a final decision of the case, on appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. I was not disposed to quarrel with him when he was so depressed by the adverse decision of the circuit court; and then, he promised to add five thousand more to that amount, if I would come on here with him and see him through. But what do you think the villain has done? I received a letter from my poor wife at home, asking for a few dollars, to keep her and her children, from actual want; and to-day, while I was broken down by drinking, and incompetent and powerless to resist his importunity, he compelled me, for her sake, to sign a relinquishment of my claim upon him, for past services, for the miserable sum of two hundred dollars, which I have had sent to her. Barker, from Ohio, came to see me after I was better, and told me that Broadhead had shown him my relinquishment, and he obtained the two hundred from him at my request, and sent it to my wife. I really cannot say what I shall do when that money is spent. I hope and expect to have that decision of the circuit court reversed here, and then even, I shall have a conflict to secure my compensation for services on this appeal. Oh! rum, rum, this is the terrible fix into which you have led me. Harry, I entreat you to take the sneers of society about abstinence manfully, and by unqualified temperance save your self respect and your control over your

faculties. Oh! my poor wife, my poor Syl! would to God I could resist for your sake; but I cannot. I'm a dog and a beast, and my moral power is gone forever."

The unfortunate man buried his face under the cover of the bed, and sobbed like a child.

Harry Carter watched his agitation and distress of soul with aching heart, and strove vainly to comfort him and present arguments to prove his ability to forswear the cup even yet. The unfortunate lawyer, however, refused all encouragement, knowing too well the mighty and unconquerable influence which was rapidly driving him to the grave. At length, before Harry could detect his purpose or raise an arm to prevent it, the lawyer threw himself to the opposite side of the bed, where an unseen chair was standing, and snatching a pitcher from it drank eagerly and copiously of the contents.

It proved to be *raw brandy*.

It was too late to grasp the pitcher and drag it away from him, for he had imbibed as much as he cared for then, but Harry opened the window and poured the remainder of the fiery compound out upon the piazza.

The brandy immediately began to work on the brain of Levins, and in a few minutes he was sitting bolt upright in bed, and imagining himself before a bench of Judges, in the full tide of legal argument.

"May it please the Court," he began, "the argument adduced by my learned opponent has not even the honor of being sophistical—it is merely silly;" and then followed an outburst of his famous and withering satire upon the opposing counsel which lasted for several minutes. The fumes of the brandy, however, were performing their

mission rapidly upon his exhausted system, and he soon dropped his head upon the pillow and went off into the deep slumber of inebriation.

Our hero, with an air of intense sadness, arranged the coverlet of the bed over his unconscious form, and then examining every corner of the apartment which might possibly conceal a bottle or jug of the vile stimulant, and finding nothing, rang the bell for a servant to come and watch with him till morning. A man soon answered his pull at the cord, and Harry bribed him to come after an hour and keep watch by the bedside of the lawyer till daylight should arrive. Then locking the door upon the unconscious lawyer, he gave the key to the waiter and moved thoughtfully away towards the room where he had left his cousin Bess a few hours before.

CHAPTER XVI.

ANOTHER ONE TO LOVE.

WHEN our hero arrived at the apartment of his cousin, he found her, as he had surmised, still sitting up, and awaiting the return of her parents from the ball. Indeed, she had occupied, during his absence, the same seat on the sofa where he had left her—except that once she had left the little parlor for her bed-room, which opened into it, to take down her hair. And when he entered the apartment, she was gazing thoughtfully into the glowing coals of the grate; and her soft, silken hair, of a yellowish hue, almost golden, was flowing in unconfined gracefulness around her plump little shoulders, and upon her flushed cheeks. Her careless and unstudied attitude gave additional beauty to the fair picture which presented itself to Harry Carter's view, as he opened the door. So absorbed was she in her reverie, that she did not move at his knock, imagining it to be the servant, and carelessly, and without raising her eyes from the fire, said "come in." Thus he had a full view of her loveliness in this strange attitude and toilet before she turned towards him, and his quick and appreciating eye reveled for an instant in her veiled beauty. The

roses on her cheek deepened as her eye met his; and she started instinctively towards her own room—but he detained her with his pleading eye and voice—and she consented at length to remain, with her hair down, to gratify and enjoy his ardent admiration of this unexpected and lovely effect.

"Ah! Bess! I knew you were beautiful and charming before; but this style is angelic. Are you my own dear little Bess, or are you her guardian angel, come to watch over her while she sleeps?"

"No angel, Harry," she said, looking archly at him through her flowing hair, "but real flesh and blood—but where have you been since you left me, and what made you think I was up at this hour?"

"I was a good guesser," he replied, throwing his outdoor garments on the table, and sitting down again beside her on the sofa. "I knew you would sit up till the ball was over, so I thought I would come and keep you company in your vigils. I have just come from Levin's room. He is sleeping now. I think he will be up tomorrow. But, Bess, what makes you so beautiful tonight? I never saw you look so well. Why, I have always stolen a kiss from those lips when I felt inclined; but now you are so lovely you fill me with awe, I'm afraid to kiss you—what's the matter with you, Bess?" He gazed so long and earnestly into her blushing face, that her eyes fell, and the dimpled hand which he had taken in his own, trembled just perceptibly enough to bewilder him. When she raised her eyes again, there was an expression in them which was unaccountable to him; but she laughed and said quickly, "I am the same, Harry, as ever—but where has your trouble flown to?—you had the blues when you were here before."

A brilliant gleam of happiness swept across his features at her last remark, and an exultant light shone in his beautiful eye. Bess detected it in an instant—and the gathering tenderness of some emotion which was flooding the rich hazel of those soul-eyes of his, shot like an arrow into her heart; and she pushed away with her snowy hand the silken hair which enveloped her face, that she might study again that expression which seemed to wound her.

"Oh, my beautiful cousin, I have a world of news to tell you about that," he exclaimed, not noticing the sad, misty meaning which the tremor of the young girl's heart was sending to her grey eyes; "I am so full of joy I can scarcely contain myself. I know you are interested in all that concerns me, and I will make you my only confidante in this matter. It is a sacred secret, remember. Now I will tell you all."

Then he unbosomed to her all the anguish and trouble of his heart, since the occurrences at the wreck of the vessel—his struggle to forget, and his ever-recurring affection for the rescued girl. Then he informed her of the happy discovery of that evening in the apartment of Levins, and of the new-born hope which was rising in his soul of a treasure yet to be won. He could not but observe how eagerly Bess was listening to him, and how the increasing interest of his story was sending the fluctuating ripples of thought over the pure surface of her blonde face. But he was so absorbed in the contemplation of the incidents of his tale, that he failed to notice the gloomy fire which occasionally burned in those grey orbs which were fixed so intently on his countenance, and which portrayed so plainly the suppressed dissatisfaction of her heart at some of his re-

marks. When he had concluded, and turned to look full in her face to read her sympathy with him in his love, he discovered that she had suddenly become pale as death, and her beautiful lip quivered with emotion, which she vainly strove to suppress by pressing her pearly teeth so deeply into the flesh that the blood almost started.

"Why, my darling little Bess," he exclaimed, "you look grieved. How in the name of all that's unintentional, have I wounded your feelings? Here, come close to my heart, and tell me that you know I wouldn't, by thought, word, or deed, harm a single hair of your beautiful head."

He passed his arm impulsively around her slender waist and drew her closely to him, and with his other hand pressed her pale forehead against his breast, with the gentleness of a mother toward her child. This exhibition of tenderness was too much for her full heart, and she sobbed upon his breast long and passionately. Her pure young heart had not yet learned the bitter lesson of life; to conceal the emotions of affection and grief, and give to pride the key to the secrets of the heart. Her gentle life was just blooming in the summer of sixteen; and the passing sensations of her heart came truthfully out in her fair features, and her grey eyes were readable like a book. There was a recklessness in her grief, and a sincerity so much purer, better, and nobler than the constrained, diluted, and lie-tinged tears of older girls who have learned the mean dictates of prudence and common sense, that Harry's heart was touched. He had always cherished this lovely girl in his inner heart, and given to her the affection of a brother; but he had never dreamed of the intensity of her regard for

him. But now he surmised the truth; and strangely did the fact appear to him, that with the absorbing memory and affection for Lulu in his mind, he should still experience such a thrill of pleasure to discover that Bess loved him. The beautiful heart which was before him in all its freshness and loveliness he contemplated with the eagerness of one who finds an immensely precious jewel unexpectedly offered to him, and for which he has often longed. He was surprised that the discovery of her secret afforded him so much pleasure; and a generous impulse swept through his soul to tell her that now, in the twinkling of an eye, he found his own understanding enlightened, and knew for the first time the secret of his own heart; and that Lulu was supplanted by his own little Bess.

The conviction has been gradually forcing itself upon us, gentle reader, that during the progress of events in the preceding pages, we have been creating a hero of wonderful perfections, and possessed of intensely diminutive faults. Now, as that class of human beings in this fluctuating world, which attains the standard of perfection is extremely small, and as in our opinion it includes none but females, we must nail some failings fast to our hero to render him natural. We confess to a great disinclination to do this; but as the artist remarked to the lady, who desired him to paint her picture of a deer with a *flowing tail*, "Nature will curtail elegancies." If, then, you have been waiting for some fault in our hero to creep out into the broad daylight; if you have patiently expected that his firmness of purpose and his loyalty of heart would in time of need fail him, you can be gratified now, somewhat, by peering through the key-

hole of the room where he sits on the sofa, with the beautiful Bess in his arms.

While yet the passions and purposes of his heart were in the most beautiful state of confusion, and his soothing tones had failed to check the tears and trembling of poor little Bess, his eye had detected every point of beauty in the graceful attitude and outline of her plump little figure; and the view may have heightened the charm which her tearful acknowledgment of affection was weaving over his heart. Her closely-fitting merino dress, plain and of an exquisite shade of dark blue, revealed to advantage her slender waist, full rounding shoulders and bust; and a perfect little foot, cased in a dark gaiter boot, appeared stealthily from under its blue folds, as if stealing a brief glimpse of the fire light during the distraction of its dear little mistress. One fair hand was striving to restrain the tears from leaving her grey eyes. But this he could not see, for she bent her head low upon his breast. Its plump little mate, however, in the forgetfulness of grief, rested negligently upon his knee; and its fair dimpled loveliness seemed to him a prize in itself worthy of a long struggle to secure.

Which charm, of all those he saw by his side, it was that exercised the most influence over his subsequent action, or whether he was actuated solely by considerations of commiseration and loveliness of character, we will not venture to decide. We only know that his heart had long been craving the nourishment of affection; and now, when an unexpected banquet of this delicacy was placed before him, he very naturally sought to appease his hunger by indulging freely in the tempting viands. If this was a fault in our hero. thus to bring the memory

of the ideal in the fruition of the real, the reader may make the most of it, for he did it.

Impulsively raising her head from its resting-place, until he could look full in her sad eyes, now red and swollen with weeping, and taking both her dimpled hands in his own, Harry Carter said, with an impetuosity which startled her and dried up her tears in an instant,

"Bess, dear, dear Bess, your tears are to me the gate of Heaven; I have opened my heart to you about this girl, whose love I had hoped to win with the insane purpose in my mind of using it as a deep grave in which to bury my own first love, who I supposed could never be mine. Now if I am not presumptuous in interpreting these strange tears, you love me, dear Bess, too well to allow me to devote myself to this stranger. Oh! if you would only tell me those beautiful words which I have dreamed of as the words which of all others would make me believe in heavenly happiness, if you could only say to me, 'Harry, I will be your own dear wife,' you would see this strange girl's power roll up like a scroll and vanish like the lightning. Ah! I have loved you, but feared to tell you it was anything more than a brother's love, since the time we came to know each other so well by the sea-side. The idea that you were always thinking of me as your relation deterred me from daring to tell you how much I craved the possession of you as my wife. But now your tears fill me with a singular determination and daring to know now, before I plunge madly into some enterprise of idiocy and ruin, whether you can ever love me enough to trust your life and your guardianship in my hands. Oh! tell me now, Bess, that such a prize as you, can be won by a lifetime of exertion and

devotion, and you will make my heart quiver with wild delight. Bess, look me in the eyes, while I tell you a truth which has been crushed in my heart, but which lives still and forever. I would rather have you for my wife than the loveliest angel of heaven. You are dearer to me than light, and life and reason. Why do your eyes regard me so, darling Bess? Can you, will you consent to be my wife?"

He had become so excited that he trembled, and his hazel eyes flashed in intense eagerness and brilliancy. Beautiful, charming little Bess, fluttering on the verge of womanhood, like an uncertain bird losing its way amid strange orange groves and whispering woods, how his words thrilled through her honest, loving heart like a strain of melody from harps above. How the rich blood ebbed and flowed in her cheeks at his earnest language; and how wild were the tumultuous waves of passion which made her bosom heave and fall before his glance as he told her of his long-hidden devotion, and of his anxious wish to claim her as his own. A holy light swam in her eyes, and an unutterable tenderness illumined every feature of her blonde face as she whispered, "The angels of heaven are not worthy of such love as yours, Harry. Will I consent to be your wife? Yes, oh, ten millions of times I will say yes!"

She fluttered to his breast again like a bird, and an angel's laugh shone in her eyes.

How and by what arguments he satisfied the lovely girl, in his arms, that the confession he had a few moments before made of his love for Lulu, was consistent with his love for his cousin Bess, we forbear to detail at present. It is enough to know that lovers are often sat-

isfied with reasons which to others appear inadequate and lame. Moreover our hero possessed a ready flow of eloquence and a magic power of utterance which seldom failed to fascinate the being upon whom he concentrated his powers of persuasion. And Bess was too happy in the new and delightful tie which now was woven about their hearts to dwell long upon the charms of the absent Lulu; or indeed to reflect upon anything or anybody except her own proud, noble and fascinating lover. Her young heart, with its vigorous and beautiful tendrils, was a natural climber; and when his manly and lofty nature was voluntarily placed in its grasp, the ready fibres wound so tightly about him, and clung so tenaciously each instant to higher points in his heart, that he was a prisoner indeed in the arms of her affection.

After the two had gazed long enough in each other's eyes, to be satisfied that they were both in earnest, Bess requested that he would not at present divulge the secret of their engagement, on account of her mother, who was decidedly opposed to the marriage of cousins; and who might deem it prudent to separate the pair, while yet the star of management and policy was in the ascendant.

Having arranged such matters, to their mutual satisfaction, the lovers parted for the night, after a long and fervent embrace, and after one of those fresh dewy kisses from the lips of Bess, which seemed to possess a magic fragrance, over the warm and impulsive heart of our hero. The parting occurred precisely at the right moment too; for in the hall below, Harry Carter encountered his uncle and aunt, just returned from the ball.

As usual he was informed that he missed a glorious

time, in remaining away from the ball. He learned, also, that the most beautiful and charming girl of the evening, was a certain Miss Lulu Rogers, who had ascertained Harry's relationship to the father of Bess, and had enquired with manifest tokens of interest if her rescuer from death would not come to see her, and receive the ardent attentions of her family and friends.

With sensations resembling very much the twinges to which the reawakened intellect is apt to treat the man who has been guilty of precipitancy in love, our hero groped his way to his couch, and dreamed a long, fitful dream of a lovely woman with two faces, one which resembled the rosy countenance of his cousin, and the other that of the exquisite beauty who had slumbered on his breast, beside the foaming surfs of the Never-sink shore.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WAVERING HEART.

GLANCING back over the shifting scenes of the previous chapters, the fact comes upon us with remarkable force that the various characters which have been introduced, from time to time, either casually or at length, are scattered like leaves before the tornado. Now, as convenience and truth demand that many of them should be congregated in one city, and, indeed, in one hotel, we deem it prudent to announce at this time, what was the peculiar blast on the trumpet of curiosity, which gathered them, as if by magic, to the national city of Washington.

This unusual summons, which swept over the Union on the wings of the press, was the approaching inauguration of a new President of the United States. Those immediately interested in the suit of Broadhead versus Fornell, Horton & Co., had their own particular objects in spending a few weeks at the seat of the federal government. But a great number of the characters who have fluttered into view in former pages of this narrative, came, one after another, to the *National Hotel*, where our hero was staying, for the sole purpose of witnessing the inauguration, and attending its accompany-

ing ball. In the following pages will appear, from time to time, representatives of the renowned and ancient city of Dutchhold; familiar faces, which shone in the firelight of the pic-nic party; and deputations from the respective factions of the "Reds" and "Blues" of Tattletown; all pouring into the city, day after day, with the immense throng who sought the novelty of witnessing the elected Chief Magistrate assume his responsible trust.

On the day following the matrimonial arrangement, into which the beautiful Bess Stapleton had allured the susceptible heart of her cousin Harry, it occurred to him that propriety demanded his calling upon Lulu Rogers—particularly since she had requested a renewal of their brief and memorable acquaintance. He had received an admonition from Bess to make a brief call, and be sure to keep the torch of her memory burning brightly during the interview; but he had assured her that his heart was now cased in armor, which Venus herself would find it impossible to penetrate. However much this suggestion of her power over him may have consoled the affectionate heart of Bess, it is certain Harry Carter himself was conscious of a misgiving in his own mind that his engagement with his cousin had been too precipitately entered into; and that it might have been wiser to study the secrets of his own heart, before avowing his preference for her. But this nervous little doubt, which flickered up and out again, like an expiring lamp, during his walk along the crowded avenue, returned to him, with redoubled energy, as he approached the dwelling where his ear had revelled in the melody of Lulu's voice; and his heart, in spite of his resolutions and sense of honor, experienced a sensation

of faintness and uncertainty of purpose. When he stood at length before the door of the mansion, awaiting the answer to his nervous pull at the bell, his heart absolutely fluttered with excitement; and he wondered what strange power of bewilderment had suddenly taken possession of his faculties.

When the servant opened the door, he gave her his card, and, requesting to see Miss Rogers, was immediately ushered into a drawing-room, richly furnished, with everything in exquisite taste. While the fair Lulu was probably occupying herself in making an elaborate toilet, he had time to study the details of the apartment and the furniture, and speculate upon the probabilities of the arrangements about him having been made by the beautiful eye and taste of the girl whom he had saved from death. Curtains of salmon-colored silk drooped from the windows, and the covers of the chairs and sofas were of the same delicate hue. A soft and luxurious tapestry carpet, with alternate figures of salmon-color and blue, silenced the footfall; and the blue silken cords of the gilded picture-frames preserved the chosen contrast of colors, against the wall paper of salmon-color and gold. The room was large, and in the form of an octagon, and the windows looking out upon the square were each in an alcove, and beside one of them rested a harp, which recalled to the memory of our hero his last stroll in the direction of the square. Among the delicately selected landscapes pendent from the walls, appeared a hunting scene, which indicated the bold strokes of Salvator Rosa's pencil, probably secured by Captain Rogers in a Mediterranean cruise; and the occasional niches were gemmed with marbles and bronzes. Antique vases, and rare formations from the

prottoes of the deep sea, adorned the marble mantels; and the small tables of ebony, inlaid with variegated marbles, sustained portfolios, bulky, in all probability, with choice engravings. Through an open door, the eye caught a glimpse of book-cases, well stocked, and a small telescope stood beside them. In one of the alcoves of the windows, apparently in recent use, stood a lady's workstand, composed of white coral branches, gracefully united together, and sustaining blue silk baskets, filled with unfinished embroidery, and the accessories of female sewing. In the top basket was an almost finished gaiter of scarlet silk, to all appearances in preparation for some fancy-dress ball. Its lovely proportions and size attracted the eye of Harry Carter at once, and he approached to contemplate it with the interest of a foot connoisseur.

"This must be Lulu's foot," he muttered to himself daintily raising the unfinished gaiter from its blue receptacle, and turning it over in every direction studiously and admiringly. "That is a lady's two and a half if I am not much mistaken; yes! two and a half is the number I'm sure, and that is a mighty small foot for one of her height and figure—and such admirable proportions, too. Why, she must be a princess by birth, if small feet are any indication of aristocracy. My little Bess has a small foot, but it is too short and thick beside this. Ah! how slim and graceful it is; how the curved line of beauty is developed in the hollow of the foot and the high instep. I wish Bess had such a foot. Why can't all girls have these perfect developments of charms?"

His eyes fairly glistened with pleasure at the beauty of proportion in the little scarlet gaiter which he held in

his hand, and in his enthusiasm he pressed it reverently to his lips. What an act for the keen eyes of Bess to have witnessed on the part of her betrothed lover!

But another pair of bright eyes witnessed this fervent demonstration, and the faint rustling of a silk dress close beside him attracted his attention in an instant. The peerless Lulu Rogers stood before him.

Her gentle footfall on the soft carpet had not revealed the fact of her approach; and there she was before his startled eye in all the perfection of her loveliness, and in all the power of her bright, soft, hazel eyes.

Extending her fair hand to him with an air of ease and winning grace, in happy accord with her rare beauty, she said warmly:

"Oh! Mr. Carter, I am so glad you have come to see us. I told father you would come when we heard of your being in Washington—your aunt at the ball at Willard's told us you were here. How strange our meeting on the sea, and how strange our sudden and unexpected separation. Here, take this seat by the window; I must see the face of my preserver for this once, if never again. Why did you never acknowledge the joint letter of gratitude sent by my father and myself?"

Her earnest brown eyes dilated with interest as she watched his countenance, and she discovered with a woman's discerning glance over his person, how much his looks were improved now since he no longer wore the rough garments of the fisherman in which he had saved her from the sea. Her recollections of his noble beauty had invested him with peculiar glory in her eyes; but now she discovered how splendidly his features and character of face harmonized with his gentleman's garb of

black, and the elegant grace of his black silk neck-tie, knotted with a certain ease or literary effect gratifying to her taste.

Like one puzzled to discover whether passing scenes were realities or the mere formations of a dream, Harry Carter regarded the lovely apparition who had shown him to a seat in one of the alcoves and taken her seat opposite to him and was now studying his features, with undisguised and flattering interest. He scarcely remembered afterwards in what terms he expressed to her his astonishment at never having received a letter from her; and the profound interest her memory had always occasioned in his mind. He recollected, however, with remarkable clearness, how her beautiful eyes kindled as he spoke, and how the charm of expression fluttered again and again over her fair features like fitful flashes of mellow sunlight on a rare painting.

As the spell of her beauty and the charm of her conversation at length dissipated the thin veil of restraint, his fluent tongue regained its power. Then language with its indescribable influence revealed to her the deep enthusiasm of his heart; and his keen sense of the beautiful and romantic in life appeared to her each instant. She discovered the kindred fire which warms the meeting of two bright intellects brought in contact for the first time in the arena of taste and judgment. And as she read him truly and with generous quickness acknowledged him true and loyal, as well as powerful in mind, her interest deepened and lent a power to the magical brightness of her hazel eyes, which looked up to his face now and then from under the dark lashes, with an effect which thrilled him and sent the warm blood

bounding along his veins, and he forgot for the hour his betrothed and her admonitions to beware of the fascinations of the brown-eyed stranger. His discerning taste sent forth his roving eyes with commissions of enquiry, and from her person they brought back tidings of the grace, the ease of manner and the judgment in the selection of the colors and fashion of her dress, which entitle a lady to that appellation so full of sweet dignity—"stylish."

Her heavy silk dress of that hue which suggests in the glance of the sun both a drab and a pearl, was clasped high and smoothly around her fair throat beneath a small lace collar, and was fitted accurately to the outline of her round shoulders and swelling bust, and then truly narrowing in its descent, at her silken belt revealed a waist beautiful for a lover's clasp, but broad enough to dispel any suggestion of ill-health or discomfort. And then in ample folds the rich silk widened to the floor with two skirts flowered in admirable contrast with figures of the brightest, loveliest shade of blue. The same blue shade lingered about the trimmings of the loose, open sleeves which pressed lightly upon the undersleeves of gushing, snowy, misty looking lace. A blue lava bracelet curiously wrought appeared upon one arm, and a pin to match clasped her lace collar; and then, too, on one side of her head in the smooth backward sweep of her silken dark brown hair clung a ribbon bow in solitary blue loveliness. The heavenly color of blue was a favorite of his eye, and he glanced with perhaps a deeper shade of interest upon the fair girl when he detected this token of congeniality of taste. But the grace and beauty of her dress were soon forgotten in the deeper charm of her low,

silvery voice, and the spell of those speaking, witching eyes, which grew brighter as she regarded him, and as he gradually opened to her the hidden beauty of his reflecting soul. A confidence and sympathy of feeling were rapidly springing up between them; and Harry Carter felt that he had just begun to live, and that his new friend was destined to sway a powerful sceptre over his actions in life. Bess was forgotten; honor, reputation, and the interests of friends were forgotten, and he saw, heard and studied only the fair being before him. In his enthusiastic way he told her how he rejoiced to meet a lady possessed of taste and sentiment, judgment and love of study and research, so far beyond the class of female minds that he claimed acquaintance with. And the delicate odor of his flattery charmed her again, and developed the buds of thought which nestled against the nerve-lattice of her brain till they bloomed before him in all the fullness and richness of beauty in which only a pure and accomplished woman can present her ideas. And as their conversation in the rambling way peculiar to young minds and hearts came back again from the dreamy land of music and art, from the classic groves of the ages long passed away, and from the contemplation of great minds, to the present realities of the hour, he told her of his adopted profession. He told her of his aspirations after honors in the great forum of his own native land, and as he breathed to her the stern purpose of his heart to win a high place in the tribunals of the Republic, or meet an early grave, his glorious hazel eye asserted its power, and the enthusiasm of intellect gave it a brilliancy which Lulu could not resist. Extending her dear little hand, she said, archly but earnestly,

"When you win a place so far above us, Mr. Carter, as I'm sure you will, do promise that you will remember us, sometimes, kindly, though we cannot in conscience ask more of you since you have already sacrificed so much for us."

Fascinated beyond all control, he caught the little white hand in his own, and pressing it to his lips with a warmth which sent the rich blood mantling to her cheeks, he exclaimed,

"You beautiful angel—one word of friendship from you is dearer and more honorable than the sceptre of an empire. Remember *you*! I'll remember you when the memory of that beautiful sun which swings there in the blue vault of heaven like an angel's lamp has passed away forever. Remember you, beautiful one! Oh! my God! I can never forget you."

He gave one eager, passionate glance into the lustrous depths of her brown eyes; and then, as some answering light gleamed softly back to his gaze, he dropped her hand with a shudder, and sank back again into his seat. A sweet, rosy face in a veil of flowing hair was just then hovering over the surface of his dream, and an anxious grey eye seemed to call him away.

His strange and abrupt action seemed to cast a hazy expression of astonishment over Lulu's quick eye; but when a quick, intense flash of anguish gleamed across his face, she exclaimed,

"Oh, that was an expression of pain. Do tell me if I can get anything for you. You are in pain—I see it. Do let me send for something or do something for you."

She came close to him in the sweet majesty of her

grace and loveliness, and looked anxiously into his face, and as the rich folds of her dress brushed against him, an electric spark seemed to fly through him and bring back again the eager expression to his eyes. Then he started from his seat nervously, as if he would throw his arms about the lovely treasure which was cast in his way; but the painful reflection flashed back again, and he compressed his lips as he sank back and turned pale. A look of unutterable tenderness and sympathy beamed in Lulu's eye as she now insisted upon sending for something to relieve him; and her importunity afforded him a pretext to conceal the cause of his agitation, which he quickly took advantage of. Not for the gift of a world could he have revealed his emotion to her, so he requested her to bring him laudanum.

As her graceful form swept quickly out of the room, he muttered to himself,

"She is too lovely and pure to deceive in this way, but what can I do else? Alas! alas! the bitter, bitter cup of honor and duty."

She appeared and moved so like a ministering angel from Heaven, as she glided back again into the drawing room, with a small silver plate sustaining a dark vial and two glistening tumblers, one containing a silver spoon, and the other water. Harry Carter watched every movement as she arranged them all on a little table before him, and her attention and the evident anxiety of her manner cut him to the heart like a knife. It seemed so cruel to deceive that lovely being, and make her attentions so utterly useless and absurd. But he was now determined to play his part, so as to conceal his real trouble, and taking the proffered vial of laudanum, he

poured out about a dozen drops, and adding water drank it, as if he was suffering actual physical pain.

She stood beside him all the while, in the unstudied grace of her nature, and exquisite form, flooding his soul with her matchless glances, out of the depths of her dark brown dark fringed eyes; and he longed to clasp her in his arms, and tell her how wildly he adored her, above all the beautiful creations of God. But his soul was yet possessed of strength sufficient to endeavor to follow the hard path of what he deemed to be honor and truth: and after a few moments he told her it would be better for him to go to his hotel. As she followed him to the door like a sunbeam, and kept those matchless eyes of hers filled with such intense interest upon him, he felt as if life was a bitter gift, and yet beautiful, because Lulu's face had shone upon it.

He left the house with promises of coming again soon, which he knew right well, he intended to break. He could not avoid looking back from the opposite side of the square to Lulu's home; and there he saw her standing yet, following his footsteps with her earnest, precious, matchless eyes, glistening from under their long, dark silken eye-lashes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STRATAGEMS OF WAR.

THE servant was just lighting the chandeliers in the parlor of the National Hotel. As the light gradually increased at each successive touch of his wax taper, and penetrated into the obscurity of the remote window seats, two figures were revealed sitting together by a window, in earnest conversation. They were Hester Broadhead and our hero. A few of the guests of the house were seated about the rooms in small conversational groups; but none were near enough to this window to hear the low, cautious words in which the two were conversing. As the parlors at length were illumined with the full blaze of the chandeliers, and the assembly of persons in the rooms was being rapidly augmented by others coming in to be in readiness for the expected summons to tea, the two moved nearer together and turned their backs upon the assembled company, as if to discourage interruption or salutation until they had finished the business upon which they were communing.

"What is the matter with Levins?" enquired Mrs. Broadhead. "It is an unusual occurrence for *him* to request assistance—he is such a perfect host in himself."

"I am sorry to say," replied Harry Carter, "that his

indisposition, or rather prostration of his faculties, arises from excessive drinking—he is, at times, entirely incapacitated from attending to business from this cause; and I am afraid that he is in now, for a week at least, of this terrible debauch. I saw plainly that he could not attend to anything for several days; and I deemed it best to do as he requested, in order that we might be prepared for any emergency. Lewis is competent to take hold of this matter, I know; for father speaks highly of his legal ability, and then I know he is regarded as a leading member of the New York Bar. I left the papers with him, and told him I would consult Mr. Broadhead and you before he need consider himself retained in the suit.”

She replied cautiously: “But don’t you think his prominent political views might weigh against us before the court—you know they are nearly all Democrats, and Lewis seems to be the centre of attack in this bitter excitement against the anti-slavery party. These little things influence everybody, and we must have no weak points this time. Wouldn’t it be better to secure the services of some prominent democrat?”

“I would advise not,” he replied; “the very prominence of the man in the political world will draw a crowd of his political adherents and friends to hear the argument, and will secure an interest in our side of the case, and may very likely give us opportunities to gain an outside influence. I understand the court always give him an attentive ear, and he is full of expedients, too, for gaining his ends. He is decidedly the best lawyer here that we can secure now; and then, too, there is another consideration: He is here in Congress, and must

be here, and will attend to the suit, consequently, for a smaller consideration than some lawyer who must leave his other business and come all the way on here to attend exclusively to this. No. I would say, retain Lewis, by all means.”

“Well,” replied Mrs. Broadhead, “it may be just as well; and if you think best you may retain him at once. We can afford to lose no time, and Lewis will require time to study up the history of this case. You may tell him that I say we will spare no expense to secure a successful termination of this suit.”

Harry Carter reflected a moment, and then asked:

“Where is Mr. Broadhead? I think I will procure written authority from him to retain Lewis in the suit.”

“Never mind Mr. Broadhead,” she said quickly—“he will assent to whatever I do. Lean your head closer to me. I am very much troubled lately about my husband’s conduct. Don’t breathe a word of this to any one, I charge you—but he acts strangely, and talks incoherently, and I am concerned lest this litigation may have temporarily unsettled his mind. Why! formerly he was considered a model of generosity, and spent his money with a free hand; but now he absolutely complains of the amount he has to pay Levins for his services, and I think it best at present not to inform him that another lawyer is required to assist Levins; he would storm about it, absolutely. He opposes my extravagance in dressing for the balls here; and altogether is so changed that I am concerned about his mind. By the way, if you are not otherwise engaged, I would like to have you escort me to the ball to-night—or, if you are going with some one else, I would like to see you a few moments at

some time during the evening, for I want you to give me an introduction to Mrs. Judge Redden—and then, too, I must introduce you to one of the loveliest girls you ever saw. She is beautiful, and will have a handsome fortune left her before long. I am not going to gratify your curiosity now, so you need not look at me so anxiously. You shall know her, if you will first do me the favor to introduce Mrs. Redden. You can marry her, if you wish; she is heart whole, I know—and no woman can resist that face of yours, if you only let her know you want her. Do you know what Miss French says about you? She told me you were handsome enough for an angel, and looked like one, except when some provocation brought the smallest, brightest, most sarcastic little devil into your eyes!"

"There, there; that will do Mrs. Broadhead for one dose. Mrs. Neaton's remark about you seems to have some foundation in truth," said her companion, looking up into her face with one of his arch expressions of mischief.

"Ah," she said quickly, with a futile effort to disguise the interest which she felt in the remark made by the lady. "She condescends to speak of me after all that has occurred; well, poor thing, I feel sorry for her; she has suffered a good deal, and after all her husband is more to blame than she. But she said nothing exceedingly complimentary, I'm sure."

"No," said Harry Carter, "not very complimentary. She only remarked that your power and influence rested solely in the prodigal manner in which you dispensed your flattery upon everybody with whom you came in contact."

The faintest tinge of color appeared upon the cheek of Mrs. Broadhead as she replied with an admirably counterfeited warmth and sincerity of manner:

"Did she, indeed! It is her misfortune not to have discovered that among the few young men who honor me with their society are some whose rare beauty of feature and precocious intellect are beyond all praise, and yet elicit involuntary expressions of admiration which are natural, and in view of my young friend's strength of character and good sense, innocent too."

The artful woman had discovered in some way that Harry Carter valued the possession of intellect and good sense above all his other gifts; and this last shot brought the game to her feet, struggling, however; for he said with an unwonted glisten in his eye which revealed the agreeable sensation her remarks had produced in his heart:

"I fear, Mrs. Broadhead, in the warmth of your regard for others you overestimate their good qualities. I don't believe you would intentionally flatter, but you forget that qualities often appear less brilliant and features less attractive after more familiar intercourse has worn off the illusions of first meetings.

"I am not easily deceived, Mr. Carter," was the ready reply. "I have lived twice your years and I can read persons now with almost infallible accuracy. But you did not tell me about the ball to-night; are you engaged?"

"Yes," said Harry Carter, "I am going with my cousin, Bess Stapleton, and Miss French. I shall seek an opportunity with pleasure, however, to give you the introduction you request; but as to the fascinating stranger, it is no use. There is something here in my heart

that cannot be supplanted. There is the gong, and here is your husband come for you. I promised Bess to come for her. Farewell till the ball."

Harry Carter turned to leave her just as her husband came up to them, and was accosted by him in his wild, nervous, disconnected way. "Ah, Mr. Carter—you here. I've been looking for you these two hours. Dreadful business this; this will never answer. Levins must be discharged—why the man is incompetent—he'll ruin us. Hester, this will never do; Mr. Carter; I'll be bankrupt in a month more of this extravagance. Dresses, silks, board, fees, lawyer raving drunk. Hester, I can't stand it. I told you this appeal would ruin us. Going, Mr. Carter; well, some other time. Ah, yes, tea is ready. Well, Hester, what shall we do now? We had better go home; these charges of this house are enormous. Miserable man! why I was astounded to find him so; he was perfectly—that is I mean—however, it's no matter now; I'll talk of this after a while. Yes, you're right; it won't do here. Did you make anything out of Judge Denver to-day. I spoke to his wife; egad, but she's a fine woman. Monstrous—yes, that's the word—monstrous fraud on the plaintiffs, she called it. Why this Fornell is understood here, I find. Great scamp—but they tell me Neaton is busy here though—spending money by the bagful. William's wife says Neaton keeps every kind of liquor in their private parlor, and has members of Congress and friends of the Judges drinking in there at all hours. They'll beat us, Hester, I tell you. That firm has too much money. Yes, we'll go to tea now. Ah, Colonel! how do you do?—great jam this; poor place this for business men. Colonel. All consumers

here; no producers. Well, this taking men away from useful employments is a shocking business—somebody will have to answer for this some day. Right will prevail. There's justice in heaven yet. What did you remark?—oh, the ball. No; I don't attend balls. I'm a producer; I don't attend balls; I leave that for the consumers—the drones of the hive—ha! ha! What did you remark, my dear?"

The crowd was just emerging from the narrow and crooked hall into the supper room, when Mrs. Broadhead whispered in her husband's ear,

"Don't you say another word about the ball. Don't you know the Colonel is one of the best dancers in Washington? You must go to this ball to-night with me. I must see some persons who have influence with the Judges—and I expect some of them will be there to-night. Do you hear me? Now mind!—right away after tea, you go and buy a nice white silk cravat, a white silk vest, and white kid gloves—put on your best suit of black, and sit in the drawing room till I am dressed. Not a word about economy this time. You are going among ladies and gentlemen, and I want you to bridle your tongue to-night about your troubles—not a word at the ball to night but compliments. Every lady that I place you with I expect you to devote yourself to, and compliment her and her husband's talents and influence. I want you to win a reputation to-night as being the most gallant old gentleman in Washington. And another thing—don't you be so unwise as to talk about slavery, as you did to-day at dinner, before all those Southern ladies and gentlemen. Why, after you went out, I tried to undo the mischief you had made by tell-

ing them how much I admired their institutions, and that I would be delighted to own a plantation of their great, lazy, nasty niggers. You must court up these people, I tell you—you must court up every man, woman, and child you meet in Washington. Now remember what I told you about your dress—you get the best quality of silk for your vest, &c. If you get cotton, or any cheap thing, I'll choke you to-night in your sleep, as sure as my name's Hester Broadhead. Now remember—ah! here's the servant that I gave the dollar to at dinner—George, here! you bring us a cold chicken and a bottle of Heidsieck—that's a good fellow—down at the far end of that table, next to Senator Smith—you know him—the gentleman with the blue coat and gilt buttons, and a young wife. Good heavens! what a crowd!"

The daily accession of guests to the Washington hotels was rendering the difficulty of obtaining supplies for the inner man by no means trifling. The summons to the dining room was fast becoming a signal for a rush and a struggle for provisions—and on this evening it required the judicious expenditure of money among the servants to secure any thing like a sufficient supper.

Mrs. Broadhead had just formed the acquaintance of the young wife of Senator Smith—and having ascertained her relationship to one of the Judges, determined to improve every opportunity to secure her good will. When the guests at her end of the table were becoming really impatient for some of the servants to wait upon them, and began to express their dissatisfaction audibly, Mrs. Broadhead managed to have the cold chicken produced. She contrived also to make it appear that the choice bits of the fowl which she passed over to Mrs.

Smith were held in very high esteem by her own palate—and when Senator Smith ventured to remonstrate with her for not retaining more of the breast of the chicken for herself, she whispered something to him in such a tone that Mrs. Smith must needs insist upon having it revealed to her. A smile, and a faint blush on the cheek of the young bride, told plainly enough that there was pleasurable emotion conveyed by the lady's whisper—"Don't prevent me—it is only the faint tribute of a New Yorker to Southern beauty."

When the servant appeared again with the wine which she had ordered, and the genial warmth of the grape began to establish an agreeable and friendly interchange of ideas among the four, Mrs. Broadhead ordered another bottle, and sent it across to the opposite table to Harry Carter, and his cousin, and Miss French. The three were within speaking distance of her, and her quick eye had discovered that they labored under the prevailing discontent of a short allowance of provisions. The flow of the wine, coupled with a few well timed remarks, which she boldly passed across the room to them, was sufficient to start our hero and Miss French in an animated race of repartee and fun upon matters in Washington generally. This served the double purpose of gaining the gratitude of the young people, who somehow imagined that the amusement occasioned around the table by their own spirited conversation was caused by Mrs. Broadhead; and at the same time informing Senator Smith and wife that those stylish and brilliant young talkers were on intimate terms with herself.

With her ever-ready tongue, during the whole time consumed at the supper table, she diverted the conversa-

tion into those channels and upon those subjects which she deemed most agreeable to a young southern bride; and this tact, which, after all, is only pure conversational courtesy, seemed to win the gratitude, or rather the interest of the young stranger, and pleased also the fond pride of her husband, who was gratified that his bride should appear to advantage upon matters and scenes with which she was familiar.

Thus, when they separated, on leaving the table, Mrs. Smith whispered to her husband,

"Charming, isn't she?"

As Mrs. Broadhead was slowly making her way amid the crowd toward the drawing rooms, she again encountered the Colonel, who said to her, in a tone inaudible to her husband, who seemed flushed and bored with the conversation on plantation life, to which he had been compelled to listen without dissent,

"From what I hear, *you* do not share Mr. Broadhead's views on the utility of amusements and dancing."

"Me!" she exclaimed, "no, indeed! I consider dancing a very essential accomplishment for every gentleman. I notice that the best and clearest intellects have always patronized the graceful amusements. By the way, Colonel, I hear that you excel in lightness of foot, and accuracy of step. I suppose I shall have an opportunity of witnessing your grace on the ball room floor to night—shall I not?"

"I shall be there, madam," he replied, bowing his acknowledgments to the pleasant incense of her words, "but I shall be inclined to distrust myself in the presence of so competent a critic as yourself. It is not every day, or rather night, that one has the bewildering honor

of dancing for the criticism of a lady whose figure and bearing recall the courtly days of royal dances."

It was her turn now to acknowledge the omnipotence of the power of flattery, which she did, by looks and words containing in themselves the essence of fresh adulation.

"I see, Colonel, that you are master of an art, more subtle and refined than dancing even."

In a minute more she was in the hall, and said to her husband in a less polished tone,

"Now, stir yourself, and get the things for the ball. I shall commence dressing in half an hour, and I want to see you rigged before I begin. Remember now—no cheap things. There's a nice furnishing store a few steps down the Avenue. Now, hurry up."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BALL.

THE mellow lights of the ball-room poured their golden, misty-looking rays upon an assembly of beauty, elegance and talent rarely congregated in the federal city. No city of the Union can claim a society so promiscuous, so novel and yet so refined, as gather weekly in the drawing-rooms or festive halls of the Capitol. Other places boast their sumptuous and select assemblies, where congenial souls of elegance and style may revel in the dance or interchange of sentiment and learning; and in a settled and unvarying society such gatherings require little effort or discrimination in issuing cards of invitation, for every person of suitable position is well known. But in Washington, strangers from distant States, and unaccustomed in many respects to the habits and modes of thought of each other, meet in festive life, and mingle in social gatherings with the ease and familiarity of old acquaintances. And there is an indescribable sense and air of nationality in the assemblies of the city which seem to harmonize for the day the conflicting ideas and education of remote sections, and the antagonisms of warm and cold blood. One would naturally imagine, from the promiscuous nature of the throngs which gain admittance

to the festivities of the city, that a refined sense of the pleasures of society might often be shocked by contact with the rude and unpolished. But although such persons sometimes are met, we incline to the opinion that gentlemen and ladies in the true and unmistakable and broad sense of the term, leave the federal city with the impression that they have been benefitted and honored by contact with the beautiful, the cultivated, and the noble of the land. Of these latter classes at least, the great ball to which we refer was, in an unusual degree, composed. Stars and ribbons granted by the hands of royalty glistened and fluttered on honored and trusty bosoms; and near them shone on manly foreheads and in searching eyes the great and noble stamp and emblem of thought, independent, unfettered thought, which alone designates American sovereigns. And beauty, with its diverse and mysterious developments of blonde and brunette, lily and rose, angelic and voluptuous, Northern and Southern, cast its witchery and its refinement over the scene.

But listen for one instant to the inspiring, whirling notes of that exquisite waltz. The strains of melody fairly quiver and tremble in the beautiful feet of a hundred dancers, and when the eye has lighted again and again upon more graceful figures, and more nimble feet, there still comes another couple more beautiful and more fairy-like. Ah! there they come at last, the matchless waltzers of the night. That graceful brunette, who plays the part of gentleman so well, with her wild, dark eyes, glistening with excitement, and a rare flush of rose color on her cheek, we have certainly seen her before this night. She is the girl who told the legend of the haunt-

ed spring. How beautifully becoming to her style is that dress; it must be tulle of rare texture, and puffed from top to bottom in innumerable little ripples, such as the faint breeze sometimes spreads over the calm lake. Crimson flowers and bright green leaves on her breast, and also circling the dark, clustering curls, which still refuse to grow out long from her classic head. Her white satin boots would certainly do little damage on a carpet of natural roses, she flits so lightly on her way. But she holds slightly in her circling arm a form which has sent a wild, eager light into the eyes of a young man who stands at one side of the ball-room with Bess Stapleton leaning on his arm.

"Oh! peerless, darling Lulu," he murmurs to himself, "is that you again?"

In the fascination of that dear sight, he forgot himself, and his tell-tale eyes betrayed him; for Bess pulled energetically at his arm and said, "Who are you looking at so intently, Harry?"

Before he replied, the voice of Mrs. Broadhead whispered in his ear,

"Isn't she lovely? That is the one I want to introduce to you."

As her quick eye detected the half suspicious, half annoyed expression in the eyes of Bess, she contrived after a few seconds to whisper to her, that Miss Rogers, the lady dancing with Miss French, was very "soft looking."

Bess turned to her at once with an expression half grateful, half sympathetic, because she had admirable good sense in discovering some flaw in the beauty of the fair girl whose charms were diverting Harry Carter's attention from herself, his own betrothed. Then finding

that her lover's eyes still followed the whirling figure of Lulu, she drew him into a waltz to divert his attention.

Mrs. Broadhead gazed after their receding forms for a few seconds, and then, with the air of one bracing herself for some necessary exertion in despite of physical suffering, she turned to speak again with Mrs. Judge Redden, to whom she had succeeded in getting an introduction.

The wife of the distinguished judge received her again kindly, for she remembered yet the grateful flattery Mrs. Broadhead had given to her and her daughter in the early part of the evening.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Broadhead," she said, extending her hand, and looking out from her short gray curls with an anxious expression, "for criticising your personal appearance—but it seems to me that you have changed very much within an hour—you are certainly paler, and there is an unnatural brightness in your eyes. You are suddenly ill,—*do* let me do something for you."

"I do not feel well," she replied. "My tongue feels swollen and parched, and my throat is raw, as if I had eaten fire. But it will pass away soon—no doubt it arises from over-excitement and anxiety about this suit of my husband's. You cannot conceive, Mrs. Redden, how much mental anxiety this suit has occasioned me. To see my poor husband wasting his remarkable inventive talent, which would be of such value to his country, in other circumstances, by devoting his time to defend himself and his patents against the rich and powerful—it is enough to make me sick and weary, and exhausted in mind and body. But I rely upon a higher power than man to right my cause. He that cares for the op-

pressed and the weak, will bear me through this struggle, and justice must prevail."

She raised her eyes above that dazzling throng of the gay and the beautiful, as if she saw through the ceiling and the night clouds a sure and a final deliverer from the troubles of the patent suit. She was ill—and she knew her indisposition was increasing upon her. But she knew also the necessity of allowing no opportunity of producing an effect to pass by; and she felt confident that if her cheek was really pale, it must add wonderfully to her trusting, heavenly expression of reliance upon a Divine Power.

She suffered Mrs. Redden to take her arm and conduct her to a seat, and bring her water to cool the burning, feverish sensation in her throat. And though she could flourish her magnificent form no more that night, prominently amid the revelers, she contrived, during the few moments Mrs. Redden sat beside her, to induce her to speak with the Judge, upon the hardships attending that side of the patent suit on which Mr. Broadhead was interested. When she at length succeeded in attracting the attention of her husband, who had so faithfully obeyed her instructions to make himself agreeable to every body, that half the ladies in the room were puzzling themselves to account for the remarkable pallor of his complexion, and his probable origin, she left the ball-room for her bed, with sharp pains darting through her stomach, and burning sensations through the entire length of the alimentary canal. She sent for Harry Carter, before leaving, however, to fulfil her promise regarding the introduction to Miss Lulu Rogers.—Finding that he was already acquainted, she smiled

kindly upon him; and then, leaning heavily upon the arm of Mr. Broadhead, left the ball-room. She never entered another.

It was not many minutes after her departure, that by one of those unaccountable arrangements of destiny peculiar to festive scenes, Bess Stapleton was dancing with a young dashing member of Congress from Kentucky; and Harry Carter found himself slowly promenading through the crowded hall with the lovely Lulu leaning on his arm. Our hero was unquestionably pleased to be in such company, for every word of his beautiful companion was listened to with as much interest as if the sounds of her voice were pearls, which he must grasp as they fell, or lose them forever. There was a tremulous tone in his voice, as he replied to her; and her quick woman's instinct told Lulu that his self-possession was somehow destroyed by her presence. The color in her cheek deepened, and the laughing witchery of her eyes gradually gave place to an expression of deep interest; and she looked up less frequently into his face, and bent her head just a trifle lower as they walked.

How natural and appropriate it seemed for that couple to be walking together. There was a harmony of style and step—a congeniality of thought and expression—an indescribable something about the pair, which seemed to respond to nature's demand that all things beautiful should be in unison. He looked, in his manly height and muscular development, as if he was designed to be the natural protector and guardian of the graceful flower twined on his arm, and bending slightly towards him—and then her deep brown eyes expanded with interest every time she dared to look at him, and grew more

beautiful in expression; as if heaven had intended her to develop all the beauty of her person and the loveliness of her character, in the possession of him as her own peculiar charge in life, to render happy and better day after day. And his step seemed firmer and prouder as she leaned on his arm—as if he acknowledged the honor of her presence and the enchantment of her touch. And thus, in the charm of each other's interested conversation, they paced slowly and for a long time amid the brilliant crowd of dancers and talkers; heeding none of the brilliants which flashed on the bosoms of the beautiful; hearing none of the merry sounds of wit and humor sparkling around them, and seeing none of the elegant and magnificent dresses sweeping by on forms worthy an artist's study. Beautiful faces glanced knowingly upon the pair, as they passed by, completely absorbed in each other; and appreciating eyes acknowledged the beauty of the two. But Harry Carter's eyes were blind to all else than Lulu; and he might have wandered with her about the ball-room another hour, had not Bess suddenly encountered the pair in the corner where she was seated. As she called him, he raised his bright hazel eyes to her own—and that glance caused her to utter an exclamation of surprise, so quick and earnest, that Lulu Rogers turned her eyes in a startled manner upon her companion's countenance.

"Yes! there it is, in his eyes, too—just like all of them—don't you all see it? don't you all see that wild, unnatural glare?—look at mother's eyes, and Senator Smith's. I'm sure I saw it in Mrs. Broadhead. Oh! dear—dear, something is wrong; and you are pale, Harry; what is the matter? oh, tell me! tell me, if you are not sick." Her tones were too earnest and wild to

pass off her apprehensions with a light word or jest, and several of the group turned anxious looks into Harry Carter's face. Yes, 'twas too true—an unnatural brightness, or wild light, or maniac glare shot from his hazel eyes, and rendered his expression fierce or gloomy, or distressed or agonized, or all of these combined. And as they turned their startled, enquiring gaze upon each others' faces, the group of friends and acquaintances discovered the same mysterious, unaccountable glare, in the eyes of several, standing or walking near. It was in the eyes of Bess and her mother, without question, but not in the large brown eyes of Lulu Rogers.

In a few seconds, the acknowledgement came out from several, that during the day they had suffered violent pain or griping; and that their tongues for hours had been swollen, and their throats parched, with a raw or burning sensation extending down into the stomach. In some instances the hair had come out from their heads in tufts, and the skin had peeled or scaled off from the backs of their hands, and from their faces. And then came the startling information from a by-stander, that he had suffered intense agony through the afternoon, and that several persons in the National Hotel were at the point of death and were impressed with the idea that they were *poisoned*. Oh! that horrible, frightful word *poison*! how it blanches the cheek and sends the wild blood coldly back upon the heart. How the mind recalls every minute sensation of pain for hours before, when the announcement is made that a large number of persons have become victims to a hellish plot of poisoning. Oh! the torturing fears of that group, on that ballroom floor beneath the full blaze of a hundred lights,

and with the swift notes of gentle music floating around them. The anguish of mind to know who would be the unfortunate ones, who had taken enough of the poison to die, and who would live. Away from home, in a distant city—away from dear faces and warm hearts to die; die the death of a dog; die among strangers. The wild rumor travelled slowly that night amid the whirling figures of the dancers, for the story was too horrible for credence; and many who heard it laughed and danced on. Yes, many who were conscious of strange pains and burnings in their own systems, laughed at anxious faces of their friends, and sought to drown apprehension in the idea that some trivial impurity in the water of the Hotel had occasioned them temporary inconvenience. Aye! many of those gay ones, who danced on, and ridiculed the idea of death, went, at a later hour, to their beds, from which they rose again, after weeks and months, emaciated in form, and broken down in constitution; and some, after months of suffering and anguish, laid down at last to die. But still, in despite of the mysterious rumor, the dance went on; the music echoed louder and faster; the stars, and the ribbons, and the diamonds, and the silks glanced brighter in the golden haze the yellow lights seemed to pour over every object. Smiles and flattery, and bows and love glances appeared on every side; and amid them all still glared the strange, wild light from many eyes, as if demons in fair and noble forms had mingled with the dancers. The fair girl, with her snowy neck and shoulders bared to the mellow light, with smiles lighting up her innocent, dimpled cheek, and with her graceful figure and fairy step winning admiration and kind words from all,

still carried in her sweet eyes beneath her dark lashes, that mysterious, startling glare which accompanies the many remarkable effects of mineral poison. One noble, intellectual man, moved in joy and merriment amid the mazes of that dance, who held high legal preferment in his native State; and there gleamed from his clear eye that same mysterious light, that same maniac glaze. In a few short days his manly form was stretched on the bier of death, *poisoned*. But the revelry went on, and the feet of many were dancing close on the borders of the grave. The sparkling wine flowed freely, for a burning thirst, raged in many a feverish throat; and, the genial influence of the grape caused the merriment and the dance to wax louder and wilder.

Harry Carter, though conscious of pain and unrest, refused to listen to the entreaties of Bess and Lulu Rogers, to go to his room and consult a physician. The delirium of Lulu's presence was upon him, and it seemed like death to tear himself from her. But when she volunteered to go with his cousin to her room, and see that she was provided with proper medicine or advice, he consented to follow whatever direction a physician should give his cousin, remarking that "it is all imagination, and you will frighten every one into a fit of sickness."

The father of Lulu accompanied the party, and also Mr. Stapleton and his wife, to the private parlor of Bess, while our hero hastened after a physician. The hour was late, and the sidewalks of Pennsylvania Avenue were almost deserted. As Harry paced with his accustomed rapidity along the street, his incredulity regarding the inmates of the National Hotel having been poisoned, was somewhat shaken by certain sharp pains which were

entirely new to him ; and he experienced a soreness in his throat, and a fierce thirst. He recollected, too, that during the whole day he had found his food to be without taste, and that his abdomen was swollen, and at the same time unaccompanied with that sensitiveness to the touch which is one attendant upon ordinary disorders of the bowels. He began to be alarmed for himself, and if the thoughts of the beautiful Lulu had not been constantly hovering over his mind, that alarm would have given additional impulse and activity to his pace. But his soul was full of that sweet face, and her image made him forget his illness as it made him forget his betrothed, poor little rose-bud Bess.

But when he had awakened the doctor, and conducted him to the apartments of his cousin, his eyes for one instant, just one instant, turned away from the lovely, but anxious countenance of Lulu, to the face of the physician, who was quietly remarking "there is something wrong about the food in this Hotel. I attended a man here to-night, who died mysteriously."

CHAPTER XX.

LOSS OF THE COMMANDER.

IN a private parlor of the National Hotel, a few evenings after the great ball, sat Neaton, the manufacturer, and his wife, conversing earnestly with each other, and in a low tone. The lady was occupied in that delightful female accomplishment, known in common parlance as making tea. Upon the table by which they were sitting, a very dainty-looking tea-kettle was simmering over a spirit lamp ; and near it was a tea-cup and saucer of slenderest pattern and purest porcelain, with a solid-looking silver spoon marked "Neaton," resting near them. We say "Neaton," not because the letters were apparent, for the concave side of the bowl of the spoon was laid with characteristic neatness next the cloth, to prevent the circulating dust from settling in it before it became necessary to use it. But we insist that "Neaton" was marked on the spoon, by a process of reasoning based upon the neatness, the sense of propriety, and the carefulness of the lady's character. In the first place, Mrs. Neaton never could be guilty of the impropriety of using a hotel spoon while she was the owner of spoons of undoubted purity of metal, and which she knew were *properly* washed. And thus all *her* spoons being marked, and

this being one of her spoons, this spoon undoubtedly bore the neat brand "Neaton." Harry Carter once told her that she should mark everything a second time, because every article in her possession was so clean and nicely marked that it was worthy of *re-mark*. But he was a young man, so this suggestion of his must be passed by leniently and as nothing *remarkable*.

There was a small plate of toast, also, cut very thin, and of a rich brown hue, indicating that the servant who made it must have had very explicit directions in regard to it. The tea-pot of solid silver, and the sugar-bowl and cream-mug of the same metal were very small, so that Mrs. Neaton's trunk might conveniently carry them in her journeys. They bore that suggestive brand "Neaton," and were polished so that objects were reflected in them like so many little mirrors. Then she had, too, beside them, her own little choice package of tea, selected with great care and regardless of expense. The lady had experienced too much of the deceitfulness of the world to rely upon the beverage which hotel-keepers called tea. And then we must make all due allowance for Mrs. Neaton's particularity, for she was thin and delicate in appearance, and had unquestionably long been an invalid; for her cough was hollow and distressed. She evidently was determined, however, not to make her ill health any unnecessary cause of annoyance or pain to others, for she was dressed very tastefully in a light blue merino wrapper, and her short curls were surmounted by an elegant French cap of blue silk and lace.

She was listening attentively to her husband's remarks, but all the while peering into the tea-kettle to see that the water did not rise above the degree of temperature,

which she deemed the proper one for good tea. And when she thought any of his suggestions particularly worthy of interest or remark, she made some reply, and then went on with her attentions to her little tea-pot.

Her husband remarked at length:

"I feel an unaccountable misgiving that we are going to be defeated before the Supreme Court. I think I can detect in the conduct of some of the judges toward me evidences that they intend to decide against me as a patent pirate. This woman has played her cards with untiring perseverance, and with a lavish use of money worthy of a better cause. She has won the sympathy of almost this entire Hotel, and I hear on every side desires expressed for her success. I am told that some of the judges are open to corrupt advances; but, upon my word, I cannot credit it. I am more ready to believe that some of them are weak enough to be governed by that insidious, and yet with some minds, irresistible influence, which friends, cunning friends, can exert."

Mrs. Neaton paused in the act of pouring hot water from the kettle, and her thin, earnest face seemed for an instant to grow paler, if that was possible, as she stole a glance into her husband's anxious and serious countenance. She detected unusual depression in that determined, manly face; and replacing the tea-kettle quietly in its place, she went to her husband's side, and seating herself, placed one hand on his arm, and looking up, said:

"If we are defeated, what then? Life does not end with the determination of this suit."

"No," he replied, bitterly; "life does not end, but the property accumulated by years of mental and bodily toil

ends. I shall be a beggar. You in your poor health cannot do without the conveniences to which you have been accustomed. Oh! it is too bad!—too bad! I think we shall have the decision of the Court to-night or to-morrow, and then all will be over. I cannot hope for a happy result—indeed, I cannot. We are betrayed—we are betrayed in an American Court of Justice. I prophesy it.”

Neaton compressed his lips for an instant, as when he studied a bold speculation in times past. But his firmness soon deserted him, and under an overwhelming sense of coming misfortune, he trembled with anguish, but shed no tears. His wife laid her thin face in his lap, and burst into tears, uncontrollable, sympathetic tears, to see him so moved, whom nothing ever seemed to daunt before.

A few moments the two sat in silence, and bowed down with the sense of their probable defeat and ruin. But the storm which hurls the wild waves over the rock seldom destroys it, and the receding water exposes it again firm rooted to its place and again defiant. So passed away the first fury of the storm from Neaton's soul. Raising his fine form to its accustomed bearing, he said, calmly:

“This weakness is a disgrace to the ancestry from which I came. They triumphed in spite of fate, and so will I.”

There was a hasty rap at the door, and Harry Carter entered, unbidden.

His face was pale, and his eyes burned with a more unnatural light, even, than on the night of the ball. He had evidently passed through a severe struggle

with the mysterious sickness which was gradually gaining the mastery over all the inmates of the hotel. But with the determination and hopeful spirit of youth, he was still resisting all advice to give way to his disorder, and seek his bed for repose and medical attention.

On entering the room where Neaton and his wife were sitting, he addressed them rapidly and nervously:

“Oh! do come with me, some one, and see Mrs. Broadhead. She is very much reduced by this singular malady, and I fear she may die. She is alone, and I do not know what has become of her husband. Do come for a little while, Mrs. Neaton, in the name of humanity. You can no longer cherish resentment towards her when you see her condition.”

Mrs. Neaton turned to her husband an enquiring look, and he said frankly, and at once, “Yes! go—this business is fearful, and I think for the last hour or two I have felt some of the symptoms myself. Go! you may do good. Harry, have you heard anything from the Court yet?”

“No, sir,” he replied, “I have not; but I think Mr. Broadhead is hunting up some of the judges to ascertain if they have come to a decision. Lewis thinks we shall know to-night.”

Mrs. Neaton was hastily preparing herself to accompany Harry Carter, and requesting him to assist her in carrying some of the articles with which she was preparing tea, thinking the sick woman might find them acceptable. In another minute she was ready, and the two passed into the hall, carrying the hot water and tea,

and walked rapidly through the dimly-lighted passages of the house, until they reached a room on the floor above. In answer to their knock, an Irish servant girl opened the door, and Harry led the way into the room.

The unfortunate woman was bolstered up in her bed with pillows, as if resolved to maintain her courage and independence to the last. But oh! the fearful ravages of the poison upon her frame. Once large and fully developed, with a bearing and manner calculated to inspire the admiration and envy of any ball-room, she now presented the emaciated, tremulous figure of one who had suffered for long months intense agony, and wasting disease. Her hands were clasped on her lap, and between the pale, thin fingers the corners of a note or letter were seen clenched tightly in her grasp. It might be a note from her absent child; but those sunken, glaring eyes seemed little able to read in the gloomy light which made the dark paper of the room look like the dismal walls of a dungeon.

As Mrs. Neaton's slender figure passed between her and the light, Mrs. Broadhead turned feebly towards her and said:

"Who is that come to see me now? I thought all my friends had deserted me. Oh! Harry, is that you. You have been very kind to the old lady. I shall never forget it. But who is this lady?"

Mrs. Neaton stepped timidly forward and said in an apologetic tone, "Pardon me, Mrs. Broadhead, for intruding upon you; but I heard that you were very ill, and I hoped that I might be of some assistance to you. I will do anything in the world to relieve you if you will allow me."

At the sound of that voice, the eyes of the invalid seemed to take back again their wonted fire, and an expression of intense hatred swept across those poor haggard features, as she realized that her enemy was indeed before her.

"You, you come to mock me in my agony, you who have blasted the happiness of my son forever, you who have clung to the infamy of this accursed suit, until my health is ruined, and my husband plundered, you come to mock me, now. Oh! you precious wretch, I scorn your pity, and I defy you. Yes! and all the thieving crew, called Fornell, Horton and Co."

She gasped for breath, as the most agonizing, darting pains seemed to thrill through her stomach; and she fell back helplessly on the pillows, clutching with her bony hands at the bed covering as she fell. The servant raised her again, after the first violence of the pain seemed to pass away, and adjusted the pillows about her. Then she appeared to realize how weak and broken down she was, for she burst into tears and moaned pitifully. Then, recollecting the paper or note, which had fallen from her hands, she called for it, and, grasping it firmly, muttered, "This is too admirable—too admirable a meeting, and just at the moment of all moments. Oh! where is Mr. Broadhead. I'm dying—I'm dying, surely—No! No! not dying. Hester Broadhead cannot die, in the hour of victory. Here, sweet, loving, untiring foe, see what a sweet morsel I have in this paper for your kind consideration. Hester Broadhead wins always, mind you. This sweet little note, from my magnificent lawyer, Lewis, says the Court have decided for us; and your husband is a pirate—a patent pirate! I am very weak, but

I can whisper that clear little word triumph! Do you hear it? Tri—tri—*triumph!* tri”——

The dying woman fell back in convulsions. Oh! the most frightful, fearful, dying convulsions. Harry Carter and Mrs. Neaton sprang forward to the bed side, in terror; but the last arrow of death had reached her, and in a few seconds she was dead. Another victim of the cruel poisoning, was now calm and still, in the repose of death.

Mrs. Neaton wept bitterly, and, placing her hand on the forehead of the dead, sobbed forth, “May God forgive you! may God forgive you, my poor dead enemy.”

Harry Carter turned towards the door, trembling with horror and excitement at the fearful death scene. His impulse was to find Mr. Broadhead, and he dashed open the door, which led to the hall. As he stepped over the door-sill, the husband of the poisoned woman stood before him.

“Why, Harry, is that you? Glorious news, my boy. Glorious! glorious! The Court have decided. Eh? What’s this?—something wrong? Where do you say Hester is? Who’s this? I mean, is she better? I’ve something to revive—that is—rejuvenate her. They say it’s only the drains under the house. All right in a few days. Hester—Mrs. Broadhead—ah! what’s this? sleeping? I declare, this looks strange.”

The unsuspecting husband walked quickly, nervously to the bedside, and leaning over the calm, still, lifeless body of the poisoned woman, gazed in bewilderment upon the rigid features, as if he saw some strange, unearthly vision. Then the full tide of blood rushed wildly to

his brain, and he fell down upon the carpet in a fit. The spectators of this dreadful scene flew distractedly about the rooms and the halls of the hotel, calling for assistance. Their wild cries summoned the inmates of many rooms, and the unconscious man was borne to a sofa, and medical assistance sent for. In time consciousness returned, and the lonely man was spared to life and hope. But she, whose fearlessness, and resolution, and wonder-working skill and tact, had won the favorable judgement for him from the Court, rested there in a lasting sleep, poisoned to death by an unknown hand. And over her corpse the dark angel waved his sceptre, and demanded more victims. And at his summons the malignant gnawing poison worked deeper and more firmly into the stomachs of the sufferers, and their throats grew rawer and their tongues larger. And from the dim halls and corridors of the National, the moans of the victims grew each hour louder, and their eyes glared more fiercely. And the number of scoffers was hourly diminished, and the crowd in the drawing-rooms was daily growing smaller. The bloom was rapidly fading away from the cheeks of the beautiful, and the forms of the robust, and the manly were dwindling away into shadows. And still many refused to feel alarm, and laughed and danced on as merrily as before. And while the gay waited and prepared for the great presidential inauguration, the grim angel of disease and death walked with them, and ate with them, and laughed with them, and danced beside them. And day after day another face was missed from the crowd of revelers; and the strange, mysterious report passed around through the dining-halls and the drawing-rooms that another sick

bed was occupied, and another friend tossing in agony. And yet the same unaccountable, reckless, unthinking indifference and unconsciousness held sway in the halls of the National, and new crowds rushed in to await the great day of the Inauguration; and as the new comers entered the doors of the fatal house, disease watched for them, and singled out here a victim, and there a victim, until at last more than seven hundred human beings had taken the foul poison into their systems, and trembled in the balance between life and death. Oh! the strange fascination of excitement and pleasure when the feet of the revelers trip lightly over new made graves.

CHAPTER XXI.

ONE GIRL LEAVES.

THE sun shone auspiciously upon the day appointed for the inauguration of President Buchanan. The golden rays flooded the avenues of the Capitol; and before the clocks of the city had marked the hour of nine, the broad walks of Pennsylvania Avenue were crowded by an eager, excited throng, gathered from the various States and Territories of the Union. The street was brilliant with the gay equipages of the foreign ministers, and of the wealthy residents; and every few minutes the sound of martial music rang over the multitude, as company after company of citizen soldiery swept by, collected from the great cities of the Union, and from the adjacent States, and from the District of Columbia; and societies of every name, and robed in regalia of every hue, marched by with banners and music, and flags flying, to join the great procession in honor of the new Chief Magistrate of the Nation. The balconies of the hotels, and the windows of every house which looked upon the Avenue, were crowded with beautiful and curious faces; and the excitement and the tumult waxed greater each moment, and the crowds in the street grew denser and larger.

While the great multitude wait impatiently for the coming of the President, we turn our attention to a room in one of the upper stories of the National Hotel, whose windows command a fine view of the Avenue. Bess Stapleton sat up in her bed, which had been moved near the window, for her to look out upon the excited mass of human beings; and around her upon the bed, and upon the window stools, were the forms of many of her friends, who had come into her room to have a good view of the procession, or to cheer her up from the depression attendant upon long illness. Harry Carter, pale and haggard, but still defiant of the effects of the poison, sat beside her on the bed. His arm encircled her waist, and his shoulder supported her head, as her weak eyes roamed slowly over the excited scene in the street. Poor little soul! she was very much changed by the infernal influence of the poison upon her for several days. One would scarcely recognize the gay, rosy plump little Bess, whose beautiful appearance had so excited the admiration of her friends, in the frail trembling figure which rested in her lover's arms. She was no longer a rose bud, but only a poor, white drooping lily. When Harry turned his face down to meet her look, the tears would gush to his eyes, in spite of his utmost exertion to conceal his emotion. And then her dear little gentle voice would plead with him to forget her wasted appearance, and think only of recovery and hope and happiness in the future. But her eyes were so full of woman's undying, unutterable tenderness for him, that he was completely unmanned, and dared not trust himself to speak, but only held her more closely to his heart, and looked out upon the crowd below in silence, and

with a burning sensation in his eyes and heart. Mrs. Stapleton sat on the other side of her daughter, holding one of her little white hands, and now and then pointing to some unusual stir on the Avenue, to divert the attention of the two from their sad thoughts. She looked ill herself, as did also her husband, who was talking in the other window with the vivacious Miss French. But Mrs. Stapleton was one of the self-sacrificing order of mothers, and no word or sigh betrayed her own suffering from the inward working of the poison.

"Look! Harry," she said spiritedly, as a new military company came into view, "there is a noble body of men, from my own native city—the unequalled City Guards. Many a banner have I worked upon when a girl to decorate their ball room; and many an evergreen wreath have I tortured my fingers in twining for them—now that is what I call marching."

"Oh, that is the company cousin John Seymour belongs to," said Bess, vainly striving to identify him among the compact uniforms of the soldiers, "I have never seen him since the summer we visited you, Harry—how crazy he was to be on the ocean all the time; do you remember the night we all danced on the hard beach, to Charley's fiddle? Oh! I wonder if we shall ever see the beautiful old Ocean again. I want the fresh, pure air of the country once more, this hotel air almost stifles me. Harry! I feel very drowsy— but please, dear Harry, don't ask me to lie down, let me sleep on your breast, till the President comes—I feel so easy and so happy here."

The little sufferer nestled closer to the heart she loved above all human things, and her wild, sad eyes closed in a calm sleep, as her cheek rested against his noble breast.

When he felt assured that Bess was unconscious, he

said to Mrs. Stapleton, in a low tone, "Do you know, aunt, that Buchanan is scarcely able to go through the exertion and fatigues of the day? This mysterious malady has completely prostrated his powers, and at one time this morning it was doubtful if he would go from his room at all. Seymour says that when the President came here a second time to this Hotel, he received an anonymous note, warning him that his sickness before was the result of an attempt to poison him; and that if he persisted in coming to this house a second time, he must not eat or drink anything prepared in the hotel. The consequence is, that he has kept to his room altogether, and his meals have secretly been brought to him from outside. It is remarkable, that when he came here a few weeks ago, he and many others were taken very ill; and after he went away no new cases occurred until he came back here again, when we all were suddenly taken sick. The girl who attends to my room says she has watched it from the first, and is convinced that poison has been put into the flour; for that food which has flour in it seems to be the occasion of all the distress; and since she has abandoned the eating of anything with flour in it, she feels that the cause of her own pain is taken away."

Mrs. Stapleton replied, "There must be something of the kind. Old Dr. Jarvis, who is staying here in the house, said to me, that all the report of the committee about the impure drains under the house being the occasion of the sickness, was pure nonsense; and that he had studied medicine long enough to know what the effects of mineral poison were, and that we were all most assuredly poisoned, and had better leave the hotel as soon as possible. He would stay until he detected the partic-

ular article of food which contained the mineral poison; but we had better leave at once."

"I shall go," replied Harry, "to-morrow. I am perfectly exhausted with this strange gnawing and burning in my stomach. When will you take Bess away? She is very weak—too much so to travel."

"We cannot go in several days," she replied, "you do not realize how sick she is. I should almost be afraid to remove her to another room, even, and yet I fear to stay. Mr. Stapleton is very sick, though he keeps up well. I fear we are all only increasing the disease by remaining in the house, but I cannot move her now—that is out of the question."

As the two continued their conversation in a low tone, to avoid waking Bess, Lena French left the window where she had been standing and watching the crowded scenes of the street below, and came to Mrs. Stapleton's side, and whispered to her that she felt very sick. She was just beginning to experience the effects of the prevailing malady. The mother of the sleeping girl glanced anxiously into the face of the beautiful brunette, and saw at once that her dark eyes were assuming that unnatural glare which seemed to be manifested in most of those who had been taken sick. She at once administered to her some of the medicine which the physician had prepared for her own daughter; and advised her to retire to her bed when the procession should have passed by on its return from the inauguration scenes on the steps of the Capitol.

"It will never do for you to be taken sick, Miss Lena," said Harry Carter, looking up into her alarmed countenance with one of those bright, animated expressions of his, which had been strangers to his face during the trou-

bles of the last few days, "we need you to cheer us up, until we have passed through this unfortunate sickness; and then we want to have one of our good old-fashioned sprees together. By the way, it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a small "nip" now. I can't leave Bess—but here are my keys, if you will go to my room—forty-two—you know, in the far hall—you will find a flask of the real simon pure, on t' e table—"

"I'll bring it," said Lena, with animation, "of two evils choose the least. I'll let the poison go, and take the brandy. I'm sure you need it. You look as if you had been fed on Lent soup for a month. Is this the key?—all right—I'll find it. I pride myself on being a great medium. When I say *come*, good spirits always turn up. See if I don't find them this time."

The gay, thoughtless girl always prepared to adopt any suggestion to drive away depression of mind or solemn faces, hastened away down the long hall. And Harry remarked, "Poor girl; I hope she may not be tortured as some of them have been in my part of the house."

While she was gone to find the great stimulator, the shouts of the populace from the streets and tops of houses gave notice that the President was returning. The distant music of the military bands was just rising upon the air away down in the direction of the Capitol; and the heavy booming of the cannon which hailed the new Chief of the mighty Republic, was vibrating in every patriotic heart, and sending the wildest excitement and enthusiasm over the immense throng. Thousands leaned from the windows to catch the first glimpse of the glorious procession; and from the crowded masses in the street, rose deafening cheer after cheer, mingling in wildest confusion with the roar of the cannon and the in-

creasing, thrilling strains of martial music. On they came with dancing steeds and waving plumes, company after company, and regiment after regiment, and society after society; and each with their own band of music sending hot blood to the brains of the young, and tears of joy and patriotism to the eyes of the old. And as the glorious pageant moved slowly through the packed masses in the street, the excitement waxed wilder and the cheers more frequent and louder. Ah! here at last he comes! the old man elected to the Chief Magistracy, by the suffrages of a nation numbering its people by tens of millions.

He sits in a carriage drawn by six superb horses, and the excited crowd press forward to see his face. Ah! how pale the old man's countenance appears in the flooding sunlight. He has passed through the sufferings and the horrors of the National, and the people know it; and cries of exultation are uttered on every side, "Thank God! they couldn't kill the President with their infernal poison. Old Buck was too much for them."

As the enthusiasm and wild cheers and the confusion increased, a little pale emaciated face raised itself from the manly breast against which it had been sleeping; and a low, whispering voice asked,

"Has he come, Harry?"

"Yes! my little bird, he has come—but do not get excited—I will hold your head so that you can see him as he passes."

"Never mind, dear Harry, it is no matter now," she whispered, and turned her pale lips up to his face for a kiss—"no matter now, darling, I'm going to leave you—God has sent for me, and you will be alone in the world—I'm dying with this poison—here—oh! here! it hurts me so. I thought I should be so happy when I be-

came your little wife—but it can never be—you will come to me some day where the stars live, and claim your own little Bess—kiss me Harry, darling, for everything grows dim—kiss me mother, dear Harry.”

They supported her dying form between them as she struggled for breath, and in a few moments it was all over. A flower had folded its leaves at the voice of the Eternal.

The wild pageant in the Avenue swept by, bathed in the flooding glory of the sunlight; and thousands of souls passed on in excitement and joy to the home of the new President of the United States. But a dear little soul passed upward; and a new name was registered in the Eternal home: and sweeter music than the harmonies of Earth, swelled on golden harps, to this pure soul an everlasting welcome.

Ah! there was no more cruel death than this, registered in the annals of the National Hotel Poisoning.

CHAPTER XXII.

TWO GIRLS YET.

WHEN our hero had retired to his room, after the sad death-scene recorded in the last chapter, he threw himself upon his bed, and indulged for a time in the most profound paroxysms of grief. He knew full well that he loved another more than Bess Stappleton, and that his whole soul was bound up in the idea that the beautiful girl whom he had saved from the sea was the only being worthy of the affection and devotion of a life-time. He knew that Lulu Rogers was superior in mind and body to the little rose-bud which had just faded and died on his breast; but there was a purity and freshness of love beaming forth from that sweet face now numbered with the dead, which it seemed the greatest misfortune to part with forever. Would he find in the beautiful stranger the same truth and sincerity, and unselfish devotion? Would the accomplished Lulu afford him the same real happiness in life that the earnest love of the dead girl had promised? These questions arose in the intervals of grief, and extorted from his quivering lips the confession “Oh! Bess, dear, dear little angel of purity!—would to God I had been as pure in heart as you, that I might have died with you.”

After a time he sat up on the bed, and pressed his forehead tightly with his hands. A dizziness came over him, so that the furniture of the room seemed to go about him in wild confusion. And then the most acute pains darted through his system, followed by overwhelming nausea. Then he felt that he was fainting, and he whispered, "Mother, mother, I am dying." Then he fell back again upon his pillow, and all was darkness and unconsciousness.

* * * * *

When he recovered again the use of his faculties, he raised his head quickly and looked around the room. Everything appeared strange and unfamiliar to his eyes; but he found his mother sitting beside the bed. "Oh! are *you* here, mother? When did you come? and where am I? This is not my room. Everything is strange. What does it all mean?" The effort of raising himself exhausted the little strength he possessed, and he fell back again upon his pillow. His mother leaned over him affectionately, and pressing an eager kiss upon his forehead, desired him to lie quite still and not allow himself to be excited by the strange locality in which he found himself.

"You are in the house of Captain Rogers, of the Navy. He went to the National Hotel and found you in your room insensible from exhaustion and the effects of the poison, and he had you brought here, and then telegraphed for me. You cannot conceive how grateful I am to him for his kindness. The doctor thinks you would have died had it not been for his finding you as he did, and having an antidote administered to you at once.

Ah! Harry, he is so grateful for the rescue from the wreck; and he has saved your life now, I firmly believe. There, don't get excited now—lie still and speak low, for you are very weak, and the doctor says you are in danger until every particle of the arsenic is removed. You have been partially unconscious for many hours, and have not known me or your father at all. He has been here every moment he could spare. He is so devoted to you, and he will be so delighted when he finds you yourself again. There! don't talk again, but wait patiently for me. I am going to have the doctor summoned, according to his request."

The fond mother smoothed the blankets about her noble child, and pressing another warm kiss upon his cheek, left the room. Harry's eye followed her retreating footsteps as if he had caught a glimpse of a heavenly being who was now flitting away again forever. Then his eye roved over the ceiling and the furniture, and he discovered that he was in very comfortable quarters, and quite unlike those, from which he had been removed, at the National. The room was not large, but of that size for a bedroom which is known by the vague and yet satisfactory designation "cozy." Adjoining it was another bedroom, occupied by his mother, and communicating with his room by a door; and a door led from Mrs. Carter's room into the hall of the lower or main story of the house. The light which streamed into the room between the partly closed curtains of red damask revealed distinctly to his eye, as it rapidly regained its wonted power, the elegant furniture and ornaments of the apartment. His bedstead was of carved rose wood, with high gothic pointed headboard, and very low footboard, over which last, as he raised himself again in bed in despite of his

mother's admonition, he beheld himself in a large mirror extending nearly from the ceiling to the floor. He started at his own likeness, so haggard and ghastly was it now become under the influence of the poison. He glanced at himself again, and then shook his head deprecatingly at the sad image, and muttered, "Hard looking subject that." But an undoubted sense of satisfaction and relief took possession of him as he realized the cleanliness of his quarters, and that his dearest friend on earth, his mother, was guarding him in his prostration and hopelessness. His eye wandered complacently over the snow white counterpane of his bed, and then upon the marble top washstand and white bowl and pitcher, and clean towels on the rack. He saw, too, the polished salver with its solid-looking silver pitcher and glistening tumblers which stood on the marble mantle near his bed, and his eye detected the door of a closet where he imagined his clothes must be hung, which had been taken from him so mysteriously. The carpet was a rich Brussels, and had the same comfortable, warm look as the red window curtains and damask covered chairs. As his eye took in rapidly the comforts and conveniences of his apartment, an involuntary expression of gratitude came to his lips.

"Thank God, my life is spared, and I have fallen into such good hands."

He dropped back upon his pillow, and the memory of the dying girl's gentle words came to him suddenly; and the tears gushed to his eyes.

"Oh! my, little bird! my little bird; gone forever."

His mother returned again, and seating herself on the bed, held his hand between her own, and soothed him with those sweet low words of tenderness which only a

mother's tongue can pour upon the ear and soul of the invalid. She spoke of the struggles of life, and its many sorrows, when compared with its consolations, and pointed to him the favor Heaven had extended to little Bess, in taking her from life in her innocence, and purity of character; and she recalled to his mind, that his mother still lived, whose devotion to him was broader and deeper than the river of time, and reaching into Eternity. And as her tones, rich to him with the returning memories of childhood, poured in holy music upon his ear, his spirit was soothed as a child, and like a sick, weary child he fell asleep upon her breast. She laid his head upon the pillow gently, and then sat watching his calm, beautiful face as he slept, with the love and pride of one who knows that she is mother of a man, noble and gifted in mind and feature; beyond the ordinary fortune of the race.

As he appeared to sleep a calm, refreshing sleep, she stole in and out of the room with careful tread, preparing nourishing food, and arranging it on a little table near him, with tempting cleanliness and comfort. Once the physician came in, and glancing at the sleeper, smiled, and whispering words of cheer and caution, passed out again. Then another figure stole cautiously and timidly into the room with her. It was a beautiful girl, with rich brown eyes, and silken, dark brown hair. A dark merino, fitting itself accurately to the symmetry of her figure, made her appear almost slender; and a plain linen collar and cuffs, were the only relief to the dark shade of her dress. She came in stealthily, and with a timid yet interested expression, approached the bedside of the sleeper, and peered into his face. Her look spoke volumes to the mother, who was watching

her. It seemed to mingle the deepest sympathy, with the most passionate tenderness; and as she looked, she appeared to tremble slightly. But it might be only the natural agitation, at seeing one who had saved her life, so helpless and under her own roof too. But a calm quiet smile, just lurked in the corners of that mother's mouth, which evidently had some connection with the young girl's expression as she bent so timidly over the handsome sleeper. But she dared to look only a moment, and turning away from him, glanced intelligently at the preparations making for the sleeper's comfort. She saw at once what was deficient, and with a whispered, condensed sentence to the mother, glided away out of the room, and then returned again after a few seconds, with the needed articles. Her footfall made no noise, and as she displayed the readiness and efficiency which might be imagined of an angel nurse, the mother recognized her qualities, by a species of nursing instinct, and mentally acknowledged the propriety of her being in a sick room.

Oh! the diverse manifestations on the part of friends, as they enter the apartments of the invalid. Some of them appear to be possessed of or intrusted with a special mission by Providence, to touch a class of nerves which escape torture in the ordinary health of human beings. They are heralded to the invalid, before they are fairly in the room, by a certain ominous, long continued and grating turn at the door-knob, which suggests the idea to the poor nerves, "How awfully he tries to be quiet, and what an awful failure." Then comes a long, stifled squeak from a shoe; a poor, outcast, murdered squeak, which brain, body, leg, foot, and soul, all disown

and cry *hush!* to. Then comes an inopportune phlegm in the throat, which must be cleared out in kindness to the invalid, by a series of frequent, low, disguised *hems!* which don't fetch it, when one good, fearless *hem* would. Then comes a sympathetic stroking of the sick man's forehead, with a hand which fairly bounces with nervous excitement, and makes the invalid wish the hand was in Jericho. Then the same hand attempts to put aside a table spoon, and is sure to rattle it down on a marble top washstand, or in a saucer, or anywhere else than on a soft table cloth, or a towel. Then the same hand travels down stairs after sugar for the tea, and is certain to bring back *brown* sugar, so as to have the additional excitement of going a second time, squeaking down stairs. When that hand is requested to close the door, it moves the door so slowly and considerately that the squeak of the hinges, instead of an inch, is just about a yard and a half long.

But there are others, who, by an innate sense of refinement and gentleness, by a certain inimitable quietude of manner and step and quickness of perception and action, seem peculiarly adapted to the office and wear the title of "Angels of the sick room." There is no flurry or excitement in their movements. If they are anxious about any delay in preparing food or medicine, the invalid never sees it. They never annoy the poor, weary ear of the sufferer by all imaginable questions as to his feelings and symptoms; but they are sure to find out how he is at the very time and in the very way in which he is pleased to communicate it. They find out by instinct where everything is, and the quality of it; and know the exact time to seek it or send for it. There is more of a charm in their movements than there is of ex-

citement; and the poor, weak, weary eye follows them as they glide through the apartment and wonders that they can be so quiet, and gentle, and good.

They establish confidence, and the most obstinate patient will learn to listen to them. This mysterious charm may be in some instances the result of experience and education; but we incline to the belief that it is innate or constitutional in the majority of cases.

Such a gentle, effective attendant in a sick room, was Mrs. Judge Carter, and such another was the beautiful, charming blonde, Lulu Rogers. The fair girl busied herself for a few moments in assisting Mrs. Carter; and then finding that the invalid still slept, she seated herself near his bed in a large arm chair, and watched while his mother laid down to rest in an adjoining room.

She sat a long time silently, in the arm chair, with her exquisite little white hands clasped before her, and stealing timid glances at the sleeping figure, whose face was turned from her, and resting with one pale cheek upon the pillow. The mellow sunlight struggled hard to gain admittance to the room through the red window curtains, and one successful ray coming in through an opening, fell partly upon her face and hair, and dark dress, and gave her brown eyes a weird look, as if she was some enchantress watching the effect of her spell upon the prostrate form on the bed. She was praying inwardly that the precious life of the sleeper might be saved. Then her mind traveled back to the wild scenes of the wreck; and her memory recalled every look he had given her, and every word he had spoken down to the time he bade her good night at the National Hotel. She wondered how much interest she had excited in his

mind, and why his looks and actions appeared so different on different occasions.

Sometimes he had seemed to be perfectly infatuated with her society; and then, again, his interest in her appeared to change suddenly upon some impulse or reflection in his mind. His eyes had sometimes concentrated all their hazel light and beauty upon her face, and then, again, they had avoided her, as if he feared to look at her. His words had always been kind and considerate to her, and sometimes she had fancied they were even gentle and tremulous. But on several occasions when their conversation had assumed a personal turn and he had spoken of the passions and impulses of men, in the full interchange of feeling and sentiment, he had paused as if he had gone too far and might say too much if he continued in the same strain. He had turned the conversation into other channels, apparently without motive, or at least without motive which could be fathomed. His manner toward his cousin, Bess Stapleton, had never seemed to justify the idea, that he loved her more than with a cousin's affection for a very lovely and affectionate girl. Lulu was certain in her own mind, that he did not love Bess Stapleton—she was too discerning a woman not to know that. But what made him appear to herself half of the time, as if he were in love with her, and half of the time as if it was improper for him to take so much interest in her?

As she sat there in the arm chair with that constant gaze upon the sleeping figure, and with that puzzled expression on her features, as she reflected on the past, Harry Carter moved in his sleep, and turned partly over toward the side of the bed where she was sitting. A

quick, warm flush shot through her cheeks, and she placed one hand quickly upon the arm of the chair, as if she would rise from her seat. But he settled quietly down into his profound slumber as before.

She sat quietly for a few moments longer, and then she murmured to herself:

"He is handsome as a picture, and I have a mind to steal a good look at him while he sleeps—there can be no harm, certainly."

Her heart fluttered a little at the idea, but she smiled to herself at her timidity, and moved cautiously near to the bed. As she stood close beside the sleeper, she looked for an instant behind her at the open door which led into Mrs. Carter's room. Why she did so, it would be difficult to say, for the most perfect silence reigned in the apartment. But whatever may have been the reason for her turning so cautiously in the direction of the door, it is certain that she did so, and there she beheld a sight—oh! such a sight as made her blood curdle with terror. Standing directly in the doorway and gazing upon her with wild glaring eyes, was a figure with one hand resting on the door frame, and the other clasping some garment tightly about the throat. It was the pale, thin, emaciated form of *Bess Stapleton*.

The unnerved form of Lulu Rogers stood trembling beside the bed of the sleeper, uttering frantic screams of terror at the apparition.

CHAPTER XXIII.

USELESS LOVE.

THE screams of Lulu roused the sleeper at once, who, starting up in his bed, saw his cousin standing beside him, and in the act of leaning over him to put her arms around his neck. He trembled from head to foot, and pushing her back convulsively, with both hands, exclaimed, "Oh, my God—how terrible it is!—how terrible it is! Poor little spirit—she could not rest away from me. Take her away—take her away. It is her ghost." Then feeling the resistance her body offered to his hands, he gazed earnestly into her face again, and said more doubtfully, "It cannot be—it cannot be. This is flesh and blood."

"Oh! do not push me away, Harry," she said, pleadingly, "it is your own little Bess. I could not stay away from you. When I came to, they told me you were dangerously sick; and then the first chance I could find I stole away from them to come to you. No one can nurse you and love you as I do, Harry. Poor sick darling, Harry—how weak you look." She reached out her thin, emaciated hands again towards him. He did not resist her this time. Her words dispelled his alarm, and he knew that she was really alive, and restored to con-

sciousness. She wound her little arms about him, and cried like a child till his mother flew to the bedside, and grasping her arm and gazing into her eyes, exclaimed, in joyous accents, "My dear child—my dear child—you are saved. What does it mean? They said here that you were dead. You poor little wasted sufferer—what a wreck you are. How did you come here? Where is your mother?"

Bess clung to Harry's breast as if she feared they would tear her away by main force; but she replied through her sobs and in broken tones, that she had left her mother at the National Hotel, and had stolen out of her room when her mother was absent for a few moments. She had enquired of this one and that one the way to the house of Captain Rogers, and when she had found the door of his residence her impatience would not allow her to wait for the servant to summon the inmates. She had found the room, and rushed in unbidden. It was, indeed, a fearful but happy surprise to them all to see her so reduced by suffering, and yet restored, as it were, to life. As she recounted to them how long she had remained in a condition resembling death, and then suddenly reviving and finding herself stronger and better, had gradually lightened her parents' hearts by regaining her strength and animation, her auditors began to recover from the startling effect of the apparition. They saw, too, that she had overstrained the little power her anxiety about her cousin's illness had imparted to her; and that it was necessary she should be at once restored to her parents, and to their nursing attention. Captain Rogers, who had been summoned to the sick room by Lulu's cries of terror, sent for a carriage to take her to the hotel, and also dispatched a servant to her mother, to inform her

that her daughter was safe and would soon be with her. Bess yielded to their entreaties, and consented to leave Harry, when she learned that he was probably recovering from the effects of the poison, and by remaining quiet and in his present quarters would increase his chances for life. She was like a true woman, unwilling to believe that any one could devote as much attention and gentleness to her betrothed as herself. But finally she listened to the request of Harry to go, as her presence only agitated and distressed him, and he would feel relieved if he was conscious of her being in the nursing arms of her own mother. She leaned over him, however, before she was taken away, and whispered so that he only could hear, "You will not forget, Harry, while you are so much with this beauty—this Lulu Rogers—that you are promised to me. Will you?"

"No! no!" he said, feebly, "my word, Bess, is dearer to me than life. What I have promised I never forget—never." She sealed this renewal of their engagement by a kiss upon his pale forehead, and then was led away to the carriage by Captain Rogers and his daughter, who both accompanied her to the Hotel. When they were gone, Mrs. Carter, who discovered that this remarkable interruption of the silence of the sick room had completely unnerved her son, and made him move uneasily from side to side, endeavored to quiet him again and compose him to sleep by darkening the room and soothing his brow by the gentle touch of her soft hands.

"It is vain, mother," he said, "I cannot sleep. All these occurrences are so strange that I am bewildered. Life and death, consciousness and stupor, succeed one another so rapidly that I seem to exist in a transition state, balancing between time and eternity. Oh! where

will this end? I thought I was about to follow Bess into the land of spirits; but no! she follows me in the land of mortals. Mother, do you think I could ever learn to follow a path of duty for the pure love of the right and the good, unflinchingly, eternally, without happiness or hope to reward me? Why do I rave? Honor demands constant sacrifice. There is no compromise with honor—it is pure satisfaction to be honorable in deed and word—but it seems sometimes to be so bitter, so bitter. Mother, tell me why I was created with powers of enjoyment, and denied the right to use them because duty and honor stand defiant in the way? I am engaged to my cousin Bess, mother. Do you think that wise? She seems now like a child to me—a pure, innocent, beautiful child. But I feel struggling within me thoughts and aspirations, views of the intellectual and the beautiful which she can never know or sympathize in. She can be loving and serviceable in life to me—but will she ever be a companion of my soul? Mother, I am telling you everything, as I used to when we were at home. No! not everything, mother. No! I have met lovely beings in this world who excel in what Bess is not possessed of—in appreciation of the fire which burns in my brain and heart. Shall I marry my cousin if my life and hers is not destroyed at last by this gnawing poison?"

He paused from exhaustion and pain, and then whispered, "Shall I?"

She paused for a few seconds, and stroked his beautiful brow before she replied; and there was an expression of uneasiness upon her features, as if a memory was striving in her mind to dictate her answer. But she guarded her secret, whatever it may have been, and said, calmly, "If you are not satisfied with your cousin, I do not think

you are bound by any immutable law to marry her, unless it should prove that her happiness is really and permanently to be destroyed by breaking the engagement. She is very young; and young people deal immensely in mere fancies. It may pass from her mind that she loves you, if you give her time, and then you will be free. But these young girls sometimes love once and forever. I cannot advise you, Harry, on a matter of right and duty until I have seen and known more than you have told me. But, my dear child, I cannot talk more with you now. You must sleep; you look like a spirit. I will watch by you—but don't talk for a half-hour. Let me see, it is four now, by the watch. I will not speak with you any more until half-past four."

She glided quietly away from him, and taking a seat in a far corner of the room, remained in a state of perfect silence and darkness. For a time, she could hear him turn uneasily upon his bed, and once or twice he sighed heavily in mental or physical suffering. But as the moments stole away, the movements of his body gradually ceased, and all was still in the direction of his bed. Thinking he was probably asleep at last, she gave way to her own fatigue and drowsiness, and fell asleep in her chair. She could not have slept more than an hour, when a slight rap sounded at the door of her own room adjoining. Not hearing any response, the person pushed the door quietly open, and asked after the patient. This last request meeting with no reply, Lulu stepped quietly into the room of Mrs. Carter. Finding no one there, she entered the apartment of Harry Carter, and, groping her way about in the darkness, discovered his mother sleeping in her chair. Then she turned to leave the occupants of the room to their repose; but paused on the

door sill as she fancied she heard her name pronounced by the voice of Harry Carter. Her curiosity prompted her to turn back, and listen to what he was evidently saying in his sleep. She came slowly and cautiously to his bed side, and heard distinctly these words, "But I tell you mother, I will love her, I must love her—dear, dear Lulu."

The young girl trembled like a leaf in the breeze, but woman like paused an instant to hear more. But the sleeper was silent then, and she heard only his low breathing in the darkness. She turned quickly then away, and stole silently out of the apartment. Ascending the stairs to her own room, she removed her bonnet and outdoor garments, and putting them away in her closet with her habitual neatness and promptness, she arranged her beautiful brown hair for a minute before the glass, and then sat down thoughtfully in her small rocking chair by the window. The night was stealing rapidly upon the earth, and a few moments after she had taken her seat, external objects were almost entirely shrouded by the darkness. But the gloom which had fallen upon everything with the coming night, accorded well with her melancholy reflections as she sat so quietly in the little chair resting her fair cheek upon her closed hand. The other hand rested carelessly upon the other arm of the chair, and upon one of its tapering fingers was an emerald ring of rare beauty, the gift of her mother, who was resting now beneath the sods of the valley. She would not light the gas which was close beside her on her toilet table, for there was a feeling of sympathy with the gloomy night, in her soul; and the deeper the darkness lowered the more sad and desolate became her

heart. There was something discordant in her rare beauty and the depression which brooded over it. Fashioned by the Eternal in symmetry and grace, with soul, real earnest soul, beaming forth from her brown eyes, and giving to her features, all that radiant beauty which expression can impart, she was nevertheless bowed down as one from whose cheek age and suffering had swept the bloom, and freshness of youth. She loved with all the energy of her character, with all that abandonment of heart, which a superior woman oftentimes gives to her affections; and she had until this day cherished secretly in her heart the belief, or rather the hope, that she would some day be happy in the reciprocation of her love. But while she had been standing beside him, in her own home, and dreaming in her heart that manly form might some day be her own treasure, another had come, from the grave almost, to fling her wild arms about him and claim him as her own betrothed husband. Aye! even while she sat with her in the carriage, and waited for her father to come down and carry her up the steps of the National Hotel, she had spoken of their engagement as an excuse for the abruptness of her visit to the house of Captain Rogers; and Lulu knew, oh! how faithfully her heart told her, that Bess Stapleton was not loved as she wished and imagined she was loved. His manner, his tell-tale eyes, his every action, told her, that she herself, and not Bess, was the loved one. Scarcely a moment before, in his sleep, he had whispered his love; and she had heard it; and knew that his thoughts and his dreams were of her. But he was engaged, and he would marry another. She was sure of it. She was certain his keen sense of honor would bind

him to whatever promise had been gained from him. No matter, if it had been given under excitement or misapprehension or impulse, he would abide by it if it destroyed his happiness, his life. It was this consciousness of his nobility of character, his earnestness of purpose in abiding by his word and his integrity, which at the same time made her love him, and blasted her dream of life.

She had cherished in her thoughts, and moulded into her ideal image for years, one who would outrank most men in warmth of affection and sincerity of word. She had looked forward to the time when she might win the heart of such a man, and lavish upon it the swelling tenderness of her nature, the gushing, undying waters of a pure woman's love. The time had come. She had found him and won his love, and yet he was lost to her. But the fire once lighted in that beautiful being was an everlasting fire. No storms of disappointment, no tears of anguish, would extinguish its steady flame. Religion might restrain its wanderings and its outbursts; but only then to be the guardian of its purity, and the witness of its duration. "But he loves me," she murmured to herself; "that noble soul loves me." Ah! the exquisite sweetness of that thought. How it stood by the sepulchre of her hopes, swinging its golden lamp. "And yet he loves me; and his voice trembles when he speaks to me, and he dreams of me as the dearest being on the face of the earth." She buried her face in her hands, and wept sweet and bitter tears together. After a time she raised her figure from its crouching attitude, and, wiping away her tears, looked forth again upon the night. A star had been rising in matchless loveliness upon the gloom of the sky, and until now unseen. Its silver glory fell upon her eye, and she felt its heaven-sent light was penetrat-

ing through the shadows of her heart. Her quivering lips whispered devoutly, as she gazed upward, "Oh! Mary, Star of the Sea, Mother of my God, pray for me in Heaven that I may not bear the burden of this hopeless love unaided and alone," and the incense of that prayer in its purity reached the portals of the Eternal City, and the great bells of Heaven, announced to waiting messengers the answer they should return.

Lulu sat for a few seconds longer by the window, with the star looking down into her beautiful eyes, and she felt that she was stronger, and that her actions were now more under her control. The tinkling bell soon summoned her to the tea-table below, and washing her eyes with water to hide the traces of her tears, she hastened down stairs.

Mrs. Carter was not in the tea-room; she preferred to remain with her son until he was out of danger. But Lulu found her father there, and a cousin of his, Miss Lancaster, whom he had met on the Avenue and brought home with him to tea. This lady was one of that unfortunate class of damsels who have lived so long that they have absolutely forgotten how many years old they are, and who are willing to be urged into the marriage tie with some man of means who can sport some title of about the degree of major.

She was a person of medium height, and very slight figure. Her mouth was large, and her nose very thin and straight. She owned a pair of light blue eyes, which might have been called pretty had she not been everlastingly striving to throw into them an expression of most remarkable sweetness when she addressed any one. She would turn her face sidewise and upward toward the person she was addressing, and endeavor to make her eyes

look winning or arch. And at the same time her short, stunted looking curls would dangle over one eye and away from the other, giving her an appearance irresistibly ludicrous and absurd. This winning style might have appeared very well in a young child with long ringlets; but in this antiquated specimen with her brown bob-curls, it was exceedingly funny. Her matrimonial net had been spread many years for men-fish, but she made no hauls except a few poor-devil-fish and worthless, untitled suckers. She threw these away speedily, and with undying hope always spread her net in some new stream. At this particular time she was fishing amid the tumultuous waves which rolled about the federal Capitol; and she determined to add to her other charms the reputation of being a relative of the newly-elected President of the United States, and an influential whisperer into his executive ear. When Harry Carter had afterwards become acquainted with her and her pretensions to influence in the White House, he was accustomed to style her "the power behind the throne."

On this evening, which became memorable to her from an acquaintance with a certain gentleman, she was remarkably agreeable and communicative. She sipped her tea with an air of extreme satisfaction, and praised the quality of the peach preserves made by the skillful hands of Lulu.

"I hear you have a very handsome young man under your care, Lulu," she said, ducking her head-sidewise for the arch look into the young girl's face; "you must be careful, my dear, in such circumstances—you know an invalid is very apt to fall in love with a young and beautiful nurse. Am I not right, Captain Rogers?"

The Captain laughed and said, "You are right, for he

is one of the finest looking fellows I ever saw. It wouldn't do, Lulu, would it, to tell about a young lady sleeping on his arm one night?"

His daughter colored up slightly at the allusion to the night of the wreck, but she said quickly, "That was an accident, father—but you are a great hand to treasure up little trifles in your memory. It was nothing to be ashamed of, though. He is a noble fellow as ever walked. I hope he will recover soon. A dearer life than his was never crushed by death. You will say so, too, Mary, when you know him."

Miss Lancaster put on one of her remarkably knowing looks, and ducking the bob-curls again at the young girl's face, remarked, "Ah! Miss Lulu Rogers—Miss Lulu Rogers, what has become of your indifference to gentlemen that you used to tell me of? You thought they were all selfish, if I remember aright, and that women would be happier if they recollected that quality of theirs. How is it that you make use of the word 'noble'? You are not accustomed to use such strong language in their regard. I must see this young man who seems to have wrought such a miracle in that doubting heart of yours."

Lulu laughed outright at her comical, knowing bows and duckings of her bob-curls, but said, calmly, "You are too discerning, altogether. He is engaged to a young lady now in Washington. Is that sufficient to allay your suspicions? You will hardly charge me with interfering with the peculiar property of other girls in gentlemen."

Miss Lancaster was not in the least disconcerted. She replied at once, "No! you never sought attentions from other girls' admirers, I'll admit. But, Lulu, the mischief

is, their lovers run after you when they catch but a glimpse of those brown eyes; and this poor young man will have an unusually faithful heart if he does not forget the old love while you are nursing him. I'd like to have the charge of another girl's sick lover about two weeks. I tell you, I'd soon find what kind of steel men's hearts are made of, that they call true as steel."

She bobbed her curls energetically, and neither of her auditors had the slightest doubt but that she would like the opportunity of trying it.

Captain Rogers laughed heartily at her earnestness and comical bows, and said, "I would give the world to see you at it. It would make a good scene for a painting—the lover's temptation, or, pills versus affection." He added seriously, however, "Poor fellow—he is very much reduced by suffering, and this poison is very uncertain in its effects. I hope he may throw it off from his system before it eats itself any deeper. Has the President recovered entirely, Mary? You were up there to-day."

The "power behind the throne" felt her importance at once, and appeared to "speak by authority" when she replied. Bowing her head slowly, and with wonderful dignity, as if delivering an executive message, she said:

"His Excellency assured me that I could with safety tell his friends that no apprehension need be longer felt on the subject of his indisposition—in fact, he expects to be entirely well in a day or two, and then will enter at once upon his important duties."

Lulu could scarcely restrain the smile which struggled to her face at the magnificent assumptions and manner of the owner of the bob curls.

Before she could make a remark which arose to her lips, a servant announced that "Major James" wished to see the young gentleman who was sick.

After a brief consultation between the father and daughter, as to the propriety of disturbing the invalid or his mother, the servant was directed to inform Major James, the cousin of our hero, that it was not best at present for him to see the invalid; but that if he would join them at the tea-table, he would have an opportunity, after a time, to see Mrs. Carter.

When the servant had departed with his message to the parlor, Lulu said, jestingly, "Now, Mary, prepare yourself for a grand effort—Major James is unmarried—about twenty-five years of age, and wealthy. He is of good family and good looking; now everything rests with you. You have been trying to tease me—now it is my turn. Here, Belle, run to Mrs. Carter's room, and ask if she is ready for the young gentleman's tea to be sent in, and on your way back, bring a cup and saucer and plate for Major James."

The colored girl hurried off on her errand, and Miss Lancaster nervously adjusted one of her stray bob curls as she heard the heavy step of the stranger approaching the door. The thought was dancing up and down in her mind, "What a combination of good things he must be, and a Major, too!"

The next moment he entered.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RHYME FOR BOB CURLS.

MAJOR JAMES was a portly, good-looking southerner, with an open expression of good nature and generosity. As his tall, manly figure entered the tea-room, Miss Lancaster's blue eyes dilated with astonishment and delight, at the discovery that he was actually such an individual as she had always cherished in her ideal dreams. Her old dried up heart palpitated and flapped against her side, like a strip of parchment in a gale. She bowed when Lulu introduced her to the Major, with all the sweetness of a sugar-cane before a tornado; and gave the gentleman unquestionable looks of admiration. He observed the peculiar interest in her manner of receiving him, and ejaculated mentally, as he sat down beside her, "I wonder what that old maid is so frisky about—perhaps there are breakers ahead here for bachelors."

After many enquiries, as to the condition of the sick man, and the history of the National Hotel malady, the Major entered into an animated conversation upon society in Washington. He soon found himself quite at his ease among Harry Carter's friends, and chatted and laughed with his jolly laugh till the whole party roared in sympathy and appreciation with him. He knew nearly everybody of note in Washington, and was full

of jokes and incidents of his encounters with ladies and politicians. In the course of the conversation he alluded accidentally to the occasion of his being in the city this time. He was desirous, for certain purposes of speculation, to obtain a mission to South America. Lulu Rogers, full of fun and mischief, exclaimed at once, "Why, Major, you have certainly fallen into good luck to-night—there is the very lady to obtain this appointment for you. She is a relative of the President, and report says she has the confidential ear of the Executive."

The Major turned a look of intense amazement upon the lady beside him, and met that upward gaze of sweetness through the bob-curls, directly in his eyes.

With ineffable charm of manner, Miss Lancaster remarked:

"*You*, Major, shall have full use and benefit of any trifling influence I may possess with the President. It rarely falls to the fortune of any lady to exert influence for so worthy an aspirant for office as yourself—you may count with absolute certainty upon any word or act of mine which you may deem necessary in relation to appealing to the President."

She gave him another of her condensed sugar expressions, and then modestly dropped her eyes, and the bob curls together.

He said, gallantly, "No office seeker ever had so powerful an advocate as Miss Lancaster, if such beautiful eyes, and such fluent tongues as hers, have their due influence in Washington."

The old damsel was in ecstasy, and her dried up heart flapped tremendously, as she exclaimed, "Oh! Major, oh! Major, you are a gay deceiver, I fear."

But Lulu imagined she detected an after expression in

his countenance, which seemed to say, "Hang the old fossil. I pity Buchanan if he is ruled by such advisers as that old female rag."

Whether the Major's suppressed thought was properly interpreted by Lulu, or not, it is certain that he was too well acquainted with the singular influences which often surround an executive officer, to throw away the old maid's proffered services, until he had ascertained how much they were actually worth. He smothered his comical inclinations to "run" this sweet specimen of advanced maidenhood, and gave her, with frank and accurate confidence, the names of prominent personages who were working together for his political advancement.

Lulu could scarcely restrain her mirth at the farce, and as she caught the merry twinkle in her father's eye seemed on the point of laughing outright. But he shook his head at her to let the fun go on.

After a prolonged conversation, in which Miss Lancaster exerted her fascinating powers to the utmost, the party adjourned to the drawing-room. The major found himself seated again beside the President's powerful friend, and before he knew precisely what he was about, he found himself engaged in a long discussion upon the subject of matrimony in general, and his own private matrimonial expectations in particular. He began to surmise, that if he was to receive the full benefit of Miss Lancaster's intervention in the matter of the foreign mission, it might be necessary to sacrifice some of his romantic notions regarding young girls with rosy cheeks, and consent to bind the dry parchment heart of the old maid about his own. Lulu was soon summoned away from the drawing-room, and her

father was soon buried in the evening newspapers in the library.

When the prudent possessor of the bob-curls discovered that she had the elegant major all alone to herself, she speedily, to use a common expression derived from the praiseworthy efforts of the hen to cover an unusual number of eggs, "spread" herself. She moved just a trifle nearer to him on the sofa, and gave her dress one of those adjusting flings which sent about one-third of its folds over his lap. It seemed eminently proper for her in the presence of a major to observe the military precision of a "right dress." Then she raved of constancy and devotion—of the happiness of mature affection—of the delightful pleasures of two united hearts beneath a southern sky. Aye! a serene sky, such as might be found in a South American clime. The major thought that South American mission began to wear a hue totally unlike anything in his mind when he came to the federal city.

As Miss Lancaster proceeded, her theme seemed to take entire possession of her whole being, and as a necessary result of an earnest advocacy of an exciting theory in words, her subject at length took on the form of actions.

"You see, my dear Major," she said, looking up through the bob-curls with the intensified expression, "how powerful affection is, to control our worldly happiness. There is a certain electricity in it, I believe, and it works singularly through the touch. Let me take your hand. There, if I was your wife, for instance," she looked so sweetly conscious when she said this, "I would take your hand as I have it now, and I would say, 'my dearest Major, I adore you, I perfectly adore you.' Now I maintain that my hand in such an emergency or supposable case,

would convey to you a certain electrical confirmation of my words, and would make you eminently happy. Do you agree with me, my dear Major? Oh! you have a queer expression on your countenance. I fear you do not coincide with me."

"Oh yes, most assuredly," he replied, withdrawing his hand from her clasp, and jerking out his watch with astonishing earnestness of manner, "I agree with you entirely; but the fact is, I have an engagement at this hour with a gentleman from New Orleans, and I must beg leave to postpone the pleasure of hearing you expound your theory so beautifully until another occasion. Please present my adieu to Miss Rogers and her father, and tell them I will call soon on Harry again, and hope to find him entirely restored under their kind attentions. Good night! Will I shake hands? Oh, certainly, with pleasure."

Miss Lancaster seized the out-stretched hand of the portly major, and gave it one of the real old maid clinging grips; at the same time looking up so charmingly through her bob-curls, and sighing, "You are so elegant—so truly elegant, Major."

He gave one frantic cars-start-in-five-minutes jerk away from her, and dashed out of the house. When he had fairly left the door-steps of Captain Rogers' dwelling, he muttered, "The devil take the South American mission, and the President's female advisers."

While the infatuated old maid was sitting on the sofa where the major had left her, and indulging in dreams of matrimonial felicity in the future, Lulu was occupied in the grateful duty of assisting Mrs. Carter in waiting upon her son, who was now awake and sitting up in bed. It seemed in many cases during the terrors of the poison-

ing excitement, that although one instant or one hour the patient seemed perfectly helpless from suffering, the next minute or the next hour his strength returned to him as at first, and he walked about the Hotel firmly and confidently. In one apartment a family of five persons were absolutely rolling on the floor in torture during the morning; and in the afternoon most of them were down stairs at the dinner-table, in humorous conversation; and a few hours later were worse than in the morning. So with Harry Carter when he awoke late in the evening; his strength returned rapidly, and he sat up in bed with ease.

Lulu had come at the request of Mrs. Carter, and was but too happy to assist in aiding that noble sufferer whose beauty of face and character had woven love's magic spell over her life, as she stood beside his bed holding the bowl of water with which his mother was bathing his face and neck. Harry looked up into her eyes with the look which might be imagined of one who was permitted to gaze into Heaven, but never enter, and said with a sigh, "Ah! my poor life is not worth the trouble it is causing two such angels as you."

Lulu discerned the intense brilliancy and fire of the glance which he threw at her, and she was silent; but his mother said cheerfully, "you are no judge in your own case, we must determine how much your life is worth—not you." He glanced at Lulu again, and her eyes unconsciously said plainly, "I think it is more precious than the light of the sun."

Both of those beautiful beings were striving to repress and conceal the waves of emotion and tenderness which were rolling over the sea of their hearts. But their eyes were traitors to the purposes of their souls, and when-

ever they met flashed words of meaning. One acknowledged the restraining, guiding power of honor; the other bowed to the dictates of a religion, which flings the halo of sanctity around a betrothment. And both were unhappy, and their pleading eyes declared it; and as they heard each other's breathing, and with averted eyes endeavored to dissolve the charm which linked their hearts, a gloom like the shadow of death's wing was upon them; and yet a secret satisfaction would gleam out from their eyes when the reflection swept across their minds, "oh, we are together yet, we are not yet parted; 'tis separation and absence that wrings the anguish from our hearts—but now they beat side by side."

After a time the invalid seemed refreshed by the coolness of his partial bath, found that his appetite was returning, and he indulged freely in the delicate fragrant tea, which Lulu's hands had prepared. The toast which she had ordered he saw her butter with her own dear little hands; and he thought it the most delicious entertainment that had ever been provided for him. His mother sat on the bed beside him, watching him and his returning strength and spirits, with happy eyes and lightened heart, and Lulu stood at the little table which had been placed near him, passing at intervals over to him, tempting morsels, which he received with the reverence due to an angel who was dividing her heavenly supper with him. He thought those white narrow linen cuffs on her wrists, and the small linen collar encircling her throat, in contrast with her dark merino dress, the most exquisite simplicity of taste and style he had ever seen. And then every motion of her arm was so graceful, and every touch of her tapering fingers so gentle and elegant, while, at every motion, the rays of light

glistered and flashed from the large emerald in her ring. He could scarcely at length forbear grasping one of those fair hands which came so frequently near him, and raising it to the ardent pressure of his lips. The wild delirium of her dear presence was in his brain, and his throbbing heart worshipped her in her loveliness and purity; but his mother's presence restrained his tongue, when he forgot for the moment the claims of another upon his devotion and his thoughts.

When at length the tea was removed, and he declared himself absolutely well enough to dress himself, and dance a polka, Lulu informed him that there was a cousin of her father in the house, who had expressed a wish to know him, and see him when he was able to sit up.

"Bring her in," he said gaily, "I am ready to receive now—angels have ministered to me, and I am proud enough to receive the homage of Kings. Is she pretty—gifted with genius, or in common parlance gifted with a fluent tongue, or wonderful in style, or immense on the matter of news, or what are her qualifications?—you must post me up in regard to her; for I declare my spirits are growing so light, (and my heart too, for that matter,) that I feel just like producing a favorable impression on somebody."

Lulu replied, "You will just suit her, if you will maintain that style of enthusiasm which you indulge in sometimes when you are interested in the discussion of some matter of art, or oratory, or something of that kind. If you can rave about the moon, and quiet couples pacing slowly under the interwoven boughs, you will be certain to delight her—but are you really able to see her? I warn you she is a persistent talker."

"Certainly I am," he replied, "it would do me good, I am tired of being sick, and you and mother have done me more good than fifty doctors. Oh! yes, tell her I'd be delighted to see her."

Lulu hastened to the parlor after Miss Lancaster, and found her sitting on the sofa, in a sentimental reverie. After the departure of the Major, she had obtained a volume of poems, in which she wished to find some appropriate verse to send to the Major, describing her first impressions of his noble appearance. She had failed to discover anything exactly appropriate to the subject, and had flung the book aside, and was trying in vain to recall to mind one of those descriptions of a man of superior acquirements and beauty of person, which she had either read or dreamed of in the course of the past twenty years.

"Never mind," said Lulu, "you come now and see Mr. Carter, and I think likely he will recall what you have in your mind; he is well read in the poets, and will be apt to remember, if any one can."

"And will this young man," she asked, "talk to me about my dear Major? Oh! that will be too sweet."

"Certainly!" Lulu replied, "why, he is the Major's cousin, you know; and they are very intimate. So he can tell you everything about him—come."

Lulu conducted the infatuated old damsel to Harry Carter's room, and introduced her as "Miss Lancaster."

Our hero was somewhat astounded at the apparent age of the lady and her marvelous bob-curls. But he fulfilled his promise to produce a favorable impression, and succeeded in drawing the enthusiastic maiden into an animated conversation. After a while she thought the

time had come when she might with propriety and modesty introduce that all-absorbing subject, the major.

"I understand from Miss Rogers," she said, "that you are familiar with the poets, Mr. Carter, and I would like to have you recall some quotation from one of them for me, as to a man who surpassed in height and bearing, in beauty of feature and of intellect, the majority of his race. I am certain I have read it somewhere in some of them; but I really cannot tell when or where I have seen it."

"Perhaps this is the quotation to which you refer," said Harry Carter.

"than whom
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state: deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies."

"Is that what you allude to?"

"Oh! mercy, no! Mr. Carter; that is one of those horrid devils that fell from Heaven. I want the quotation of a jolly, portly looking gentleman, so handsome and sweet. Can't you think of that?"

"Oh!" said Harry, "it's about a fat fellow that's sweet—is it? Then I remember it."

"Round as an apple,
Busy as a bee;
The sweetest little thing
That ever you did see."

Mrs. Carter and Lulu roared with laughter; but Miss Lancaster said, seriously,

"Alas! alas! I fear I shall find no appropriate verse for my dear major. But after all, there *is* nothing like him in prose or verse."

"Oh!" said Harry, apologetically, "if it is a friend of yours, of course you desire something more elegant than any of those old authors were in the habit of producing. Is your friend about six feet high, and fully developed? I mean does he protrude a good deal in front?"

"Yes!" she replied, sweetly, "he is of admirable height—about six feet, I should think—and he *is* rather full in front."

"And what kind of an eye has he?" enquired Harry.

"The sweetest shade of blue," she said, "and such a dear laugh, it does me good to hear it. And then his hand is small, too—not too small—just such a hand as a lady of good taste likes in a man; and then he is so sweet."

Harry Carter appeared to reflect a minute, and then said, "I believe I have hit upon the very thing you want, Miss Lancaster. Now if you will be kind enough to get me a sheet of paper and a pencil, I think I can recall, after a little reflection, the very verses you are trying to recollect. A small piece of paper will do."

The writing materials were provided for him in a few moments, and placing a book under his paper, he paused a minute in deep thought, and then wrote rapidly for her the verses he supposed, or rather pretended he supposed, she was in search of. When they were complete, he read them aloud as follows:

"In the forest of life,
As I flit up and down,
I discover no prince,
Like my own Major Brown.
He is jolly and stout,
And so stately and grand,
With a merry blue eye,
And a sweet little hand.
Twit twee—twit twee.

"In wonder I study
His magnificent charms;
His ponderous belly,
And long muscular arms:
While my poor heart flutters,
I'm so anxious to see
If that dearest of majors,
Loves a small bird like me,
Twit twee—twit twee.

"His laugh is so merry,
And his heart is so good:
His broad chest is heaving
With affection and food.
Ah! I think I could perch
On that breast without care,
And so tangle my wings
In his beard of brown hair.
Twit twee—twit twee.

"On that noblest bosom
I would fain build my nest,
And nourish my young ones
On his velvety vest.

To that final Elysium
 I'll direct my swift feet!
 Always striving to win
 My dear Major so sweet.
 Twit twee—twit twee."

"Oh! Mr. Carter," exclaimed the old maid, in raptures, "where did you find that exquisite piece? I must have it—indeed, I must. Will you give me that copy in your hand, or shall I copy it?"

Harry replied, but without daring to look at his mother or Lulu, who were almost convulsed with laughter when they discovered what he had been scribbling on the paper, "I would prefer that you should copy it, Miss Lancaster, for I would not care to see such writing as this pass for my hand-writing. I have endeavored to recall it as accurately as I could, but you know it is very difficult so long time after seeing a piece to quote it with certainty."

"Well, you are very kind, indeed, Mr. Carter," she said, taking the paper with evident satisfaction and delight, "I shall never forget it—but you will overtask your strength for the first time sitting up. I will retire now, with Lulu, and leave you to rest. Good night—I will come to see you, and cheer you up, often."

The two left him with expressions of sympathy and cheer, and when the door closed behind them, he said to his mother:

"What did you shake so for when I was reading? You nearly upset my gravity, and spoiled all. I would give anything to see cousin Tom James when he receives

that stuff. I know she means to send it to him, for Miss Rogers said he was in the parlor with her."

The idea of the Major's expression of feature, and his dismay when he should read it, delighted him, and he fell back on his pillow and roared.

CHAPTER XXV.

FAREWELL FOREVER.

TIME flew rapidly with the invalid at the residence of Captain Rogers. He soon found that he was able to walk about the house, and anticipated in a day or two, being able to leave Washington, for his studies in the city of Dutchhold. He heard that Levins had returned home very much elated by the termination of the law suit, in which he had, at the last day of the trial, been well enough to make a capital argument, and retrieve in part his reputation as an accomplished, and astute lawyer. He heard, also, that he left Washington in miserable health, in consequence of his unfortunate propensity to indulge in the excitement of the wine-cup; and he feared that on his return to the office, he would be compelled to witness still further scenes of his friend's degradation and ruin. Bess Stapleton, had also gone home with her mother, very much reduced in strength, but still with the probability of a speedy and entire recovery. Her friends, for some reason, had taken her away without allowing her to see her cousin; but she contrived to send him a little note, breathing her undying constancy and devotion for him. It was simple and fervent, like the letter of a child; but this very frank and unstudied

style touched his heart, more than the most elegant and sentimental note could have done. He kissed the words at the end of the note, "your true little Bess," and thought to himself that after all, he was to marry a dear little rose-bud; and a thousand times more desirable, than most of the wives that had fallen to the lot of his friends. As he read the note of Bess over again, he said:

"Well, you little darling, I will love you any way—I cannot help myself; I would give any thing now that you are away, to have one sip from those beautiful lips of yours."

And Harry continued of this mind, just as long as he was alone, with this note of his cousin. But the very minute the charming Lulu Rogers came into view again, with her lovely soul eyes beaming with intelligence and heart, and her exquisite figure swept into the drawing-room where he was seated, draped in that elegant pearl colored silk, with blue trimmings, and with that wonderful blue bow clinging in her brown hair, he forgot that any one in the wide world had any claim upon his attention and admiration, save the peerless Lulu. It seemed that every part of her character happened to be exposed to him, while he remained in that house. He saw her annoyed, and vexed, and angry even; but even when she said quite sharp things, he could not but admit that she was justly provoked, and said just enough, and no more. There are unquestionably characters among the female sex, that have an immense number of virtues, and the most pardonable and diminutive number of faults; and Lulu Rogers was one of that class. Gifted with a warm, earnest heart, and a clear perception of the duties and proprieties of life, she endeavored, through

the innate loveliness and purity of her nature, to do right always. And in this endeavor, she was aided and sustained by the practice and the teachings of her religion. She was a devoted Catholic, and she had learned from her faith and its teachings, that in every act and thought in her life, the Eternal God of all things was first and always to be considered. Thus, to her own natural loveliness of character was united that principle of acting and thinking in accordance with the wishes of a Divine Being, which is, to a reflecting mind, one of the greatest conceivable charms in a woman's character.

No wonder that a young man, with the elements of enthusiasm largely developed in his character, and the ideal of a pure woman forever in his mind's eye should love Lulu Rogers. Harry did not intend to love her. He meant, honestly, and faithfully, to abide by his engagement to marry his cousin Bess. But the presence of this charmer, and her hourly developing qualities of goodness and taste, and appreciation of the intellectual and the beautiful, were weaving a net over him that promised effectually and forever to imprison his mind if it did not his body.

And she, the earnest loving woman that she was, could not restrain her impulse to be with him, and hear his ardent enthusiastic language, and drink at that fountain of precocious intellect, which seemed to purify, and render clear, all subjects of thought, which she brought to it. She, too, as a matter of duty and principle, desired to crush that passion, and that yearning of heart for one who seemed to be destined by the Eternal Regulator of events, to be united with Bess Stapleton.

But no matter how much self control each of them aimed to carry out, during the brief time they yet were

to remain together, they would still unconsciously linger together when they met at meals, or in the drawing-room, or on the stairway, or in the hall; and the passing word would invariably be prolonged into the half hour's conversation.

At length that last evening came which both looked forward to with eagerness as an occasion to be desired by each of them; as a time when the charm of presence was to yield to the more doubtful power of absence. They knew it was better to separate soon, and trust to time to destroy what duty plainly forbade them to cultivate, and in their minds, unavowed and concealed from each other, was the resolve to bury a useless and a hopeless love.

Judge Carter had just bade his son farewell, and left the house, and Mrs. Carter had left that day for her own home.

Harry Carter's trunk was standing in the hall, ready for departure; and his hat and cloak were lying on a chair, as he paced up and down that beautiful parlor, of salmon-colored, gold, and blue hangings and furniture, in which he first met Lulu in Washington. His heart was like a ball of lead, painful and oppressive; and his lips quivered at times as if he could not suppress his agony. The beautiful lamp of life seemed flickering in the storm of his emotions, as if it would every instant go out entirely, and leave him in the darkness of the grave. He whispered to himself, "I'm coming away from her, sweet little Bess; but wait one moment, one precious moment, one last moment forever."

He raised his eyes quickly to the door. There stood Lulu, pale, excited, but beautiful. She had come down from her room, to bid him farewell forever. He had said to

her that morning, that he admired so much the color of blue in a dress. There it was before him; an exquisitely beautiful mazarine blue silk, showing those matchless shoulders of Lulu to the best advantage, in their curved beauty, and giving her waist an unusually slender effect; then flowing away in a train to the carpet. It was high necked, with a small lace collar; and flowing under sleeves of lace of web-like texture gave it effect, and revealed partially her fair rounded arms. There were traces of tears in her eyes, which she had failed to conceal, as she held out her hand to him.

"It is so hard to say good bye," she said, with a laugh which her heart discarded as profane. "Oh, we shall miss you so much—you do not know how dear you have become to us; you may be certain when you are hundreds of miles away, and when years have rolled away, that warm hearts beat for you here, and prayers are breathed daily for your happiness. Do not forget us. I know you will remember us, but I mean do not fail to think of us every day." She looked courageously at him with her deep brown eyes; but her look, that look of love suppressed, of frenzied love, which all the powers of earth could not crush, smote like an arrow through his very brain. He tried to utter cheering words, but they failed him, and he could only whisper, "May God bless you, may God bless you for ever."

He could not restrain that impulse as he held her little hand so tightly in his own, but bending his head he pressed one passionate kiss upon her hand, and turned instantly toward the door. He gathered his cloak and hat in one hand and passed quickly into the hall. Then a thought came to him like lightning, and he looked back at her as she followed him to the door.

"Do you remember," he said, "the song you sang for me last night, when your harp string broke so suddenly, 'Oh never despair while kind angels are guarding?' That tune haunts me. There is more of hope and madness in that tune and words than any song I ever heard. If anything should ever happen so that I am free to visit any lady I please, I will come all the way to Washington to hear that song again. Don't forget it, will you?"

"Never, never," she said, with a look in her eyes that exceeded her words, and meant "Eternity." He opened the street door, and passed out; but Lulu leaned against the parlor door, pale and trembling, and whispering to herself, "Gone, gone. Oh, my God! gone forever."

Harry stepped quickly into the carriage at the door, and rolled rapidly around the corner of the square, towards Pennsylvania Avenue. At that same spot where once before he had looked back toward her house, he turned to the window of the carriage, and looked back again. There she was in the door again, in her blue dress, peering after him as he fled away forever. Oh, that fearful word "forever." How a mocking fiend kept whispering to him along the Avenue that soul's agony "forever."

As he passed the National Hotel he saw it was closed. No face appeared in all that front of that Hotel so gay a few days before with a brilliant crowd. The house was closed in fear, and the revelers were gone to their homes or to their graves.

He reached the depot, and took his seat in the cars for New York. The night was fast coming on, and the car, in the back seat of which he had taken his position, so that he might lean back and sleep, seemed to him unusually gloomy and cheerless. He recognized none of his

friends or acquaintances on board the train in the hasty glances he threw at the line of passengers as they pushed along the narrow aisle between the seats; and when the train started on its iron way, he drew his felt hat low over his brow, and muffling himself in his cloak, endeavored to sleep. But memory and desolation of heart were too busy with him; and a voice in his ear seemed moaning in wild harmony with the onward rush and roar of the train, "doomed to sorrow—doomed—doomed."

He sought to enliven his soul with recollections of the stirring scenes at the Capitol before his prostration and illness, scenes calculated to fire the ambition of a young man soon to enter upon the practice of his profession. He thought that application, industry and prudence might in a few years advance him to any of the high positions of the distinguished men with whom he had been brought in contact in the federal city. The reflection for a moment sent a thrill along his veins, and he longed to be back again at his studies, preparing for the race on the exciting course of ambition. But the power of an enthusiastic, ardent student of nature to fling aside depression and loneliness of heart, though effectual amid legal tomes and papers, is not always successful with a young heart filled with admiration for a lovely woman, rolling away from her in a dark railroad car on a dismal evening. He thought only that every minute was adding to the long, long miles between the matchless star of his soul and himself. Perhaps he would never see her again; never again behold in life those sweet brown eyes which had wept sad tears at his departure. The uncertainties of life were startling; another month or year might open upon the fresh earth on her coffin lid. Then he nerved himself to think of Bess and his betrothment,

as a subject upon which he was bound in conscience and honor to reflect. But the recollection of her childish freshness and blooming beauty brought him no relief. She could never compare with Lulu; never compete with her in those charms which had flung their witchery over his heart and brain. Thoughts of her only distressed him, and made him feel like a prisoner struggling with his chain.

At length, when the train had glided unconsciously to him far on its way, and the darkness of the night brooded sullenly over all things, he chanced to press his brow against the glass of the car-window and look out upon the sky. The exceeding charm of a lone star glancing in beauty its clear silver rays from the bosom of night, touched his heart. He thought it was there for an emblem to cheer him, and bid him hope in the power and goodness of Heaven to illumine the darkest and lowliest nights of the soul. He remembered then that only the Omnipotent Power, who had implanted in his heart ardor and capacity to love the beautiful and the good, could relieve the burden of his despair. It might be that changes and mysterious unravellings of the thread of destiny were preparing for him in the counsels of the Omnipotent. The thought enlivened him. It lightened his heart; and while the star glistened in the cold sky, he watched it and thought of future happiness and hope. While yet the silver lamp swung in the sky before him, he closed his weary eyes and slept.

CHAPTER XXVI.

STRUGGLES WITH THE FETTERS.

THREE years had flown past our hero since the time of his mental and physical suffering amid the scenes of the National Hotel poisoning. He had completed his legal studies in the office of Levins; and after being admitted to practice in the Courts of New York State, had finally decided to open an office for himself in the city of New York. He was just commencing the practice of his profession with ardor and the determination to make for himself a name among the foremost of a noble and distinguished band of jurists. He looked forward to long and laborious struggles at the bar before he could hope to win renown; but his ardent nature was not appalled at the prospect, and he resolutely settled himself down to industry and study.

The experiences and changes of the past three years had left him at this time, when we again introduce him to the reader, the same earnest, noble traits of character and heart which we have endeavored to invest him with in the preceding chapters. He had become more suspicious of the motives of men, it is true; but this caution in action and confidence had only ren-

dered him a warmer and more devoted friend to those he cherished in his regard and affection. The friendships of his heart were fewer, but his attachment to the true was more intensified.

His friend, the unfortunate, gifted Levins, had passed away to the land of the unknown and the disembodied.

Old Broadhead, too, had not lived to realize his dream of grasping the treasures of the great house of Fornell, Horton & Co. Singular and rapid retribution had fallen upon the nervous hand of that old man who reached forth to clutch the prize the judgment of the Court had given him. A few days after the termination of his suit, and before he could collect the damages awarded to him for the infringement of his patent, he and his son, in company with fifty others, had been cruelly murdered in a collision of two trains of cars, occasioned by the carelessness of a railroad conductor. Not one living soul who could claim relationship with the plaintiff survived to reap the benefit of the judgment in his favor. His claim became the property of the State, and a legislative act was obtained upon a fair examination of all the facts in the case, restoring or relinquishing to the defendants that which injustice and misrepresentation had nearly wrested from them forever. And Mrs. Neaton still retained her splendid mansion, with its conveniences and its rigid neatness, and its wonderful Yankee intact elegancies. And the energetic, polished, adventurous Neaton still continued his daring speculations, and rolled up his wealth in ever-increasing splendor.

Bess Stapleton had become a beautiful woman. The

effects of the poison had, after a few months, entirely passed away, and her rose-bud beauty had come back again in augmented brilliancy and freshness. Her figure had regained its plumpness, and her eyes danced again in mirth and excitement. But the truth must be confessed that she knew very little more after three years of contact with the world than she had known before. Her taste in dress, and her ability to display her beauty in its best light, was unquestionably improved. Every one called her beautiful who glanced upon her bloom of cheek and clearness of complexion. Young men who passed her in the street turned back to look at her again, and wonder whose good fortune it would be to win and wear such a lovely rose for life. And this favorable impression might continue for a few hours after an acquaintance had been formed with her. But when persons sought to pry deeper into her character than her beauty afforded them an opportunity to do, and looked for originality, or wit, or accomplishments, or appreciation of the artistic or the scientific, they returned invariably disappointed and disillusioned from the search. She was warm-hearted in her attachments, and defended her friends with a certain warmth of manner; but her really intelligent friends she was totally unable to appreciate, and consideration for them was a quality too refined and delicate for her mind to comprehend. In a polka or a waltz, or one of those shallow kinds of flirtations where an atom of brains and a child's power of utterance of the English language will be amply sufficient for a year's use, Bess Stapleton was accomplished without question. She always found plenty of dancing partners and gentlemen who liked to be seen walking on the streets with

so pretty a girl. But a gentleman who passed an hour in quiet conversation with her, would be very likely on his next meeting with a friend to express himself somewhat in this way: "Bess Stapleton is one of the prettiest girls in town; but I don't think she is very deep."

She admired her cousin Harry Carter above every gentleman of her acquaintance. Every one told her he was the handsomest man and the most intellectual man in all the range of her friends. And then he was so stylish and manly. (No mustache curled as elegantly as his.) No eye flashed with so much character and feeling as his brilliant hazel eye. No wit like his raised the laugh and animated the spirits of a festive assembly. And his ideas and expressions were in every mouth, and his praise was ever in her ear. And she had learned to consider herself the most fortunate person in the world, to secure so splendid a fellow for her betrothed. She saw him every two or three months, for he came punctually to fulfil his engagements to visit her; and they expected soon to be married, when he should have made a little further progress in his profession. He was always attentive to her slightest wish; and she thought him the best natured and most generous person she had ever known. She startled him sometimes by her absurd and simple remarks; but one of those delicious kisses of her full cherry-red lips always repaired mistakes and made him remark affectionately, "Well, Bess, you are the dearest little rose-bud I ever saw." But when her cousin had gone back to the city, Bess flirted and danced with every fine-looking young fellow that crossed her path; and sometimes hints and rumors reached the young lawyer of her

desperate intimacy with some young gentleman during his absence. But he only treated such reports slightly; and maintained that young ladies who were engaged were always slandered and misrepresented in regard to the attentions of other gentlemen.

But though he endeavored to magnify the good qualities of his betrothed, and persuade himself that he had won a gem to adorn his future married life, the consciousness that a more exquisite jewel had flashed across his path in life, and that a higher standard of happiness might in other circumstances have been his, would steal upon him in the intervals of his professional practice, and disturb the onward flow of his thoughts in that channel of duty and system which he had established for his guidance in life.

He knew that Lulu Rogers had been for two years residing with her uncle in Europe. Occasionally he had heard of her being seen at the principal places of interest to American tourists on the continent. And such straggling reports had always combined with them the intelligence that she was everywhere admired for her beauty and accomplishments. A keen dart of jealousy would glide through his heart as he imagined her, the peerless star of his many dreams, the ideal of all loveliness and beauty, the wife of some wealthy foreign lord in the land of o fart and history. And when at such times he allowed his mind to dwell upon the past; and in thought and memory lived over again the scenes of his illness beneath her father's roof, his heart would suddenly experience the oppression of a heavy weight upon it, as if that organ was diseased, and might, after a while, prove fatal to him. And then occurred to him the reflection, "How

can I be happy in married life, unless I can reveal to my wife all the troubles of my life and thoughts, and gain from her affection all the sympathy and consolation requisite to restore my mind to its wonted calm and content. And can I ever tell her this—this sad, wild, stifled yearning after that angel, that lovely being that my arms saved from the frantic waves of the sea. Oh! never, never."

One evening, as the hour for leaving his office, and going to his boarding house, approached, he had thrown aside some papers, which he had just completed, and was indulging in a reverie upon his future prospects. A quick, but somewhat subdued rapping, sounded at the door; and Harry, in rather abstracted tones, said "come in."

The person at the door seemed deaf, or reluctant to take advantage of his invitation; Harry extended his invitation to the unknown rapper, in a louder tone, and then, seeing no more definite manifestation at the door than before, started up from his chair and said, "mighty particular client, I reckon—must be a woman." He opened the door; and there, as he had surmised, stood a woman.

The night was near at hand, and the hall by no means well lighted, so that he found some difficulty in making out the features of the female, under the dark and singularly shaped bonnet or hood.

She said at once, and glancing the same time about the office, "Are you alone?—I will not come in unless you are. All right, I see there is no one here. Harry Car-

ter, don't you know me? Look close—I'd give ten dollars to have your opinion, as to whether I look most like a saint or a sinner; quick, what do you say?"

"Upon my word," he exclaimed, "that voice is familiar as my own mother's—but come in where I can see you, I don't recognize you, upon my word, but I feel that I ought—come in."

The stranger laughed a hearty, ringing laugh, as she entered the room, and witnessed his puzzled expression at not being able to identify her voice. As she came into the more perfect light of the office he discovered that she wore the peculiar habit of a Nun, or Sister of Mercy. He had occasionally encountered members of this order, at the visits he had made at the city prisons to his unfortunate clients. But he exclaimed in surprise:

"I recognize your voice, and your eyes—but I cannot identify you. I know no Sister of Mercy in this city, or elsewhere. Who are you?"

She laughed again, heartily, and exclaimed, "You, men, are so stupid about recognizing anybody—look at me—don't you know Lena French, that you've danced with, and carried on with fifty times, and drank toddy with, and last, but not least, was poisoned with you at the National, in Washington? Shame on you to forget a friend so soon—what are you staring at—don't I look gay in this religious pall?"

He saw that it was his friend Lena, indeed, and he muttered in amazement, "A Nun—Lena French—a Nun."

Then the idea seemed to flash upon him that she was imposing upon him, and he said:

"What, in the name of thunder, put such an idea in your head? What kind of a lark are you on now? where did you scare up that rig?"

She answered, seriously, when she discovered that he thought she was carrying out one of her old pranks of dressing up,

"No humbug about this dress, Harry, I assure you. I'm a genuine Sister—I came here for a minute to consult on business—I heard that you were practising law, and I thought I would hunt you up. I expect I shall get 'Jessie,' when I go back to the Convent. I didn't ask leave to come here, but came on my way back from the prison, where I've been to see a murderer, that Loveton, awful creature. I guess they'll let me off easy, though, for my business is pressing, and to-morrow would be too late. Now, to be brief, one of these proselyting emigrant Societies, have got possession of a poor woman's child, only about five years old, and to-morrow they are going to send it away, with a crowd of other children, to the Western States, to be given up to somebody, to do something wonderful for it. I don't know precisely what, but feed it, and whip it, and principally, and particularly, make it believe some religion, that its mother never heard of. They've some law, or pretense of law for it, and the mother is most crazy. Will you go to her and find out all about it, and advise her what to do—the poor woman got down on her knees in the street to me, and begged that I would do something to save her child to her. I promised I would send a lawyer to help her, if I could find an honest one in the city. Here is her direction on this paper—look out you don't break your

neck, if it is up stairs—some of these wretched tenant houses, are mere shells of decayed wood, and I have picked through the staircases more than once. Will you attend to this? If you will, I will find some of our patrons or benefactors who will pay you for your trouble."

"Most assuredly I will, Lena," he said, taking the paper from her, "but what in the name of all that's just and good, what made you become a Nun?"

She replied in her quick, spirited way, "Grace of God, nothing else—how are everybody, your mother, and Bess, and everybody. I saw an old friend of yours at the convent to-day, just back from Europe—Lulu Rogers, she's beautiful. Oh! so much prettier than she was three years ago; by the way, what did I hear—you were sick there. Oh yes! but I must not stay here. It's all wrong for me to be here at all, but that poor woman started me off, perhaps it was inspiration after all: good bye, there! don't seek to detain me, I can't belong to the world any more. We've parted company—good bye—God bless you."

Before Harry Carter could stop her she was at the street door, and then darted off up the street like an arrow, without once turning to look back at him, as if she was determined to avoid any further contact with the world than was absolutely necessary to help the poor woman to regain her child.

He turned back to his office like one bewildered by a dream; and putting his papers in his desk, took his hat, and locking the office, went off slowly and thoughtfully to his boarding house.

When he had finished his late dinner, he sought his room, and drawing his chair up to the fire, soon fell

a deep train of thought. There was no light in the apartment, save that from the coal fire in the grate, and its glowing and changing colors seemed to his imagination to be forming avenues in miniature, of his future life. He saw that the avenue between the dark coals in which his destiny appeared to lead him was sometimes penetrated by brilliant and golden lights from other paths at the side; and then when he would fain turn away from the dark and cheerless avenue to these more delightful and genial paths a voice in his conscience whispered, "That would be wrong, that would be false and unworthy the character you claim for fair and honorable dealing. No! you must walk with her to the hour of death, in his dark road, and leave these brilliant paths at one side, and this must be too without complaint and without a murmur;" and that voice sounded like a knell amid his thoughts of beauty and love and ambition, and struck a sensation of despair into his heart.

That casual word dropped by the Sister of Mercy that afternoon in regard to Lulu's presence in the city had revived that suppressed but constant fire in his soul. He longed to see her again, and listen once more to her beautiful voice and the beautiful ideas that floated upon its gentle tones. He was so weary of the everlasting and monotonous simplicity of Bess Stapleton, and the trivial conversation suited to her ability and tastes. She could talk with fluency upon the subject of ribbons, and the various qualities of lace and trimmings, and she could tell very prettily the compliments her admirers had paid her, and how adroitly she had managed to evade attention from some gentleman who was encouraged on, almost to the point of proposing, and then dropped. She could go off into ecstasy at the prospect of some dress in which

she was to appear at a tableau party or fancy dress ball. But she invariably knew nothing of the character in which she was to appear, and moreover could not tell in what author it might be found. Harry Carter would say, "Why Bess, I should think you would take some interest in studying your character and endeavoring to act it at the ball."

But she would only toss her pretty head, and say coquettishly, "If I only look pretty, I don't care for the character, gentlemen will talk to me just as well without any character as with it," and this reply was so true in point of fact, for her fresh blooming beauty always surrounded her with admirers, that Harry was obliged to laugh in spite of himself. He would have her by all means gay and admirable in society, but he was certain that there should be times when she could display qualities independent of balls, and parties, and admiration. He knew there were hours in the intervals of business when the intellect craves society of its kind; and the soul looks around for some one to communicate its secret reflections to and for some one to share its aspirations, its hopes, its glimmerings from the ideal, the intellectual, and the spiritual. He had discovered, alas! that Bess was only a pretty, unreliable, trifling girl. Her presence in a ball room seemed as appropriate as a lovely and rare bouquet; but her presence in a library, was as inappropriate as an elegant dressing table, and her presence amid a gifted circle of friends as unfortunate as that of a deaf mute.

The longer Harry reflected upon the striking contrast between Lulu Rogers, and his betrothed, the more dissatisfied did he become. And then, too, the time was rapidly approaching for his marriage, and soon all would be

over forever. He would be irretrievably linked to one who might soon lose her blooming beauty, and then all he would possess in a wife would be the little stock of amiability, and sincere affection she might possibly retain for him after her crowd of admirers had enjoyed the opportunity of bearing away the first pickings of his little bird. As the reality of his marriage, and its consequences, at length gradually unfolded themselves before his mind, and that dreadful word, forever, danced up and down in his brain, he sprang to his feet, and exclaimed:

"I cannot, I will not, I dare not marry Bess Stapleton—I will go to her, and induce her to release me from this horrible, this foolish, this insane engagement. I have been acting like an idiot, and if this goes on, I shall live an idiot. Oh! Lulu, dear idol of my heart, I will make one desperate, one frantic effort to gain you before you are lost forever."

He dashed his hand down upon the marble mantle at the last word, and his muscular blow shattered the corner of the slab, which rattled down with tremendous noise upon the hearth.

"Good for you, old boy," he exclaimed in surprise at the effect of his manual emphasis upon the marble, "so may you shatter the chain, the galling chain of this engagement."

He reflected again, calmly, resting his arm upon the broken mantle, and then compressing his lips in sudden determination, said, "I will, indeed I will, and I will go to-morrow."

His bright, beautiful hazel eye shone with a brilliancy it had not known for many a day. Hope, and eagerness, and enthusiasm, flashed in those glorious orbs once more. His form was fuller, and better developed within the

past three years, and his look more manly, and the character of his face more noble. But now the slumbering soul was aroused from its lethargy, and those features experienced the glorious effect and thrill of a new life—a life of hope and cheer. Now the key of his nature was before him; the key to the beautiful thoughts and purposes of intellect; the key which brought to his lips eloquent words, and made him eager for the day of intellectual strife, and the hour when thousands stand breathless before the speaker's eloquent utterances. And he extended his eager hand for that key, which he felt was wanting to his success in life; that key which could alone for him, cause the brazen doors of the temple of fame to unfold, and give him entrance to the circle of the honored, and the gifted princes of reason and intellectual culture. That key was the pure, gentle, stimulating, powerful, wonder working love of a true woman. He extended his hand to grasp that key. Was he successful? Could he hold it? Was he worthy of it? Did he win it forever? We shall see.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CHAIN BREAKS.

ON the ensuing day, our hero, according to his promise with the Sister of Mercy, sought the home of the unfortunate woman who was about to lose her child. He found little difficulty in gathering sufficient evidence to satisfy a magistrate, of the ability of the mother to support her child; and he succeeded in returning to the arms of the poor creature, this little innocent, whom an unfeeling association had endeavored to wrest from her maternal care and affection.

When this charitable office had been performed, he experienced the quiet satisfaction of a generous nature, at having assisted a friendless human being; and he resolved to receive no compensation for the act, although the effort to secure evidence of the woman's ability to maintain her child, had consumed several hours. The remainder of the day was devoted to arranging his business matters, so that he might leave the city for a short period.

Everything having been carefully and faithfully provided for which might concern the interests of his few clients, during his absence, he went to the Shrewsbury

boat, just as the clocks of the city were striking the hour of four. Ascending the stairs to the upper deck, he went forward to the pilot house, and, drawing a stool to the front of it, leaned back against the little enclosure, and folding his cloak tightly about him, watched eagerly for the moment when he should catch the first glimpse of his old friend, the Ocean.

The golden face of the West was smiling upon the waters of the bay; and from the low, swelling waves were reflected purple and crimson and golden hues, amid which, as the boat neared the Horse Shoe and the Sandy Hook light, the clumsy porpoises rolled and tumbled at intervals. On the distant sails of the gliding vessels fell the golden shower from the setting sun, and on the summits of the Western hills lingered a misty fringe of yellow light in the tops of the forest trees. The eyes of the young lawyer revelled in the delightful change of view from the monotonous sight of city walks and walls; and the thought came to him, in his silence and his quiet enjoyment, that one dear presence beside him would fill his cup of enjoyment to the brim. Soon his familiar eye detected the land-marks and the objects along the hills of the Shrewsbury River, which were identified with his childhood and his youth. And the white, foaming border line of the old Ocean came solemnly into view. His eyes glistened with excitement and old recollections; and as the boat passed rapidly up the narrow river, his ear was intent to receive the first salutation of his old friend, the sea. Ah! he heard it then, the low, plashing roll of the surf, as it came gliding away to meet him, and then drew back like a faithful dog, for another and another rush to break the fetters which keeps him from his

approaching master. Nearer and nearer came the familiar objects of his home, and fainter grew each instant the departing lights of the day. But as the boat approached the landing, his eye discovered that new bays and inlets in the beach had been formed by the ever-laboring sea, and old, curving lines in the sand had been obliterated. When the boat reached the landing, the dusky shadows of the night were re-assuming their sway, and he found few persons collected to witness the arrival of the boat, for the season of retreat from the great city, and the time of summer recreation at the sea-side were yet far distant in the future. He nevertheless found rough, honest hands there, to give him the cordial grasp of recognition and friendship. And one old fisherman who recollected his intimacy with Blake Eastman, said, "Your old friend Blake has gone, poor feller. He was lost in a gale two weeks ago, nigh the Black Rocks, in company with Wild Dick, who urged him, agin his judgment, to risk the storm comin' up. A better hand never pulled at an oar, and we miss him in the village like a brother."

The memory of the hardy comrade who had shared so many dangers with him, and his untimely death in the full vigor of manly strength and resolution, weighed heavily upon the mind of the young lawyer, as he made his way up the hill towards his father's house; and the uncertainty of human hopes and pursuits induced him to whisper to himself, "What if Lulu should die in her ripe, blooming womanhood? What would there be to live for in the world? Oh! the thought is too fearful. God preserve her from death. There, there, by the double reef, she was saved; and she must live now, to make some poor heart know the joy a kind Heaven has

destined for it. *She* cannot—she will not die. But, Bess, what shall I do with her? poor, beautiful child.”

At this name of his betrothed, the purpose of his journey flashed again upon his mind, and he stepped more rapidly in the direction of his home. As the lights of the mansion came at length into view, his approach was challenged by the quick, sharp, ringing bark of a dog. It was Fanny, restored to her kennel near the front of the mansion, after the death of poor Blake.

“Hurrah!” he exclaimed, at the familiar sound, “there’s one friend left yet. Let’s see if she knows any difference between a lawyer’s whistle and a reckless young snipe hunter’s.” His shrill call was answered by a crashing amid the leafless bushes and shrubbery, and the next moment the spaniel was flying at his face and breast, in the wildest manifestations of delight. She had not seen her master for several months, and her tongue was busy with his face or hands, which ever she could first reach. Her unquestionable welcome warmed his heart, and he stooped down and circled his arm about her neck, and said, “Poor Fan, you may go it on the demonstrative, if you will only keep your tongue out of my face;—there, that will do for the present. Now we’ll see what kind of tenants they’ve turned the old house over to. Come, Fan, away with you.”

He pressed forward to the house, while the delighted spaniel described all imaginable curves and circles about him.

“What!” he exclaimed in astonishment, as he detected a female figure at the front window of the parlor, “can that be Bess? What in the name of thunder brought her here?”

He was convinced in another minute that his eyes did

not deceive him, for she came herself to open the door, as if she expected an arrival and had been summoned by the barking of the dog. When she saw that Harry Carter was standing before her, she started and turned pale, but he could not see her change of color, as her face was turned from the light. Her start, however, was palpable enough, and he said, “No wonder you are astonished, Bess. I am, too. When did you come here? What brought you from home? I thought I recognized your face, as you stood by the window.”

The paleness left her face, and a deep flush overspread her cheeks as she extended her lips to his greeting kiss. She nervously closed the door, and told him she was delighted at this unexpected meeting, and conducted him to a sofa, and took his cloak and hat, which she deposited on a chair. Then sitting beside him, she took his proffered hand in her own, and said, “You are astonished at this visit. I did not expect to be here myself, until yesterday; but Mrs. Sinclair and her two children are visiting mother, and both of her children are taken with the small-pox. Mother wanted me to come here until the danger is over, so I came to stay a week or two with aunt.”

Her manner was confused and flurried, but she added quickly, “Are you glad to see me, Harry? You look as if something annoyed you. Your eyes don’t sparkle and flash, like they always did. You look stern. What is the matter with you?”

“Do I?” he said, glancing at her partially averted eyes, “perhaps I have reason. Ah! Bess, I have heard of your flirtation with Henry Chambers in Newark. You can’t hide anything from me. I hear all the news.

How can you flirt so, Bess, when you are engaged to me?"

Her eyes assumed the expression of intense wonder, as she looked directly in his face, and said, "Of all the ridiculous things I ever heard, that is the richest. Why, Harry!—I have always liked Mr. Chambers, since I first knew him. You never said anything about it, or I would not have associated with him. Oh, mercy! the idea of my flirtation with Henry Chambers is too absurd. Well! I declare—how some people can amuse themselves slandering me, I can't understand. You may believe it if you please—but I tell you the thing is perfectly ridiculous—the idea. Pshaw! what do I care for Henry Chambers?"

"Do you mean," said her cousin fixing his bright, penetrating eyes full in her face, "that you have not been on the most intimate terms with him, taking long and mysterious walks with him both day and night, and occasioning repeated remarks from all your acquaintances; do you mean to say that you have not devoted all your time to his society, or nearly all the time you have been at public parties and balls? And have not your friends remonstrated with you upon the impropriety of your actions? Say, Bess, have I been misinformed, or have you been altogether right in your conduct during the absence of one, whom you have promised to cherish, and love above every one in the world."

She trembled a little at his earnest manner, but replied, evasively, "And who has been telling you all this, I should like to know; it was no friend of mine I'm certain. No friend of mine would betray me—I mean, would slander me behind my back. Who told you such nonsense?"

He replied, looking calmly but admiringly neverthe-

less upon her beautiful face which looked all the more wickedly pretty, from consciousness of the flirtations she had been carrying on, and her efforts to conceal her confusion, "But you don't answer me, Bess; you don't say you have not done any of these things: must I take it to be admitted that you have done so?"

She would not look at him at first, but turned her pretty head away, and murmured, "You are too hard, Harry, altogether."

"But," said he, "is it right for me to submit to it, Bess? Do you say it is right?"

She reflected a moment, with her eyes fixed on the floor, and looking as if she was ready to burst into tears; then a look of defiance swept across her beautiful features, and she looked boldly at him, and said quickly and fearlessly, "Well, suppose it isn't right; what are you going to do about it?"

He looked at her a moment in amazement, for she was displaying more character in that defiant independent expression than he had ever imagined she possessed. And then it heightened her beauty exceedingly to see her eye so bright, and her rosy lips compressed in such an unusual manner of firmness and spirit. An impulse came over him to let it all pass and forgive her, and attribute her weakness to her consciousness of her beauty and a desire to wield its power over the young Henry Chambers for some freak, or vanity in convincing her neighborhood that she could win him away from a rival beauty. Perhaps she loved him, after all, and would only maintain her defiant manner as long as her pride was wounded by his attempt to lecture her. He was irresolute for a moment, and studied what he had best say next. And in the meantime she had withdrawn her soft, fair hand, and

was arranging a stray braid of her hair which had fallen down. But the memory of the purpose which had sent him away from his professional business returned to him, and he said slowly and with an effort at calmness, which was entirely unsuccessful, for his voice trembled,

"Perhaps you wish to be released from this engagement, Bess; then you would have no lover to complain of you, and be distressed at your actions."

She had averted her eyes at his continued gaze again; and was quietly listening for his reply with heaving bosom and quickly beating heart. But when she heard him speak so seriously of the possibility of the engagement being broken, she started and looked at him nervously. He might be in earnest; and her power over him, in which she had always exulted, might be passing away forever. She seemed to feel that the world would ridicule her if she was not shrewd enough, and possessed of sufficient tact to retain so superior an admirer as her brilliant cousin, Harry Carter. As he concluded, she said, pathetically, while two little glistening tears trembled under her eye-lashes.

"Would you desert your poor little Bess, Harry?"

He could not resist this appeal to his gentleness, and he passed his arm quickly around her waist, and drew her plump little bust against his breast; she came willingly, and after a moment looked up in his face, and put out her lips. He could not resist this, either.

He found her cherry lips just as delicious as ever. That single kiss settled the matter of breaking the engagement for an indefinite period. She was too lovely to be given up without a more satisfactory reason than her having been detected in a flirtation. The two soon contrived to

forget their misunderstanding, and Bess escaped without being in the least inconvenienced in consequence of having engaged in a desperate flirtation.

Mrs. Carter soon came in to welcome her son's unexpected arrival; and in the pleasures of a cheerful fire, and an excellent supper, and attended by his elegant mother and his beautiful betrothed, he soon found himself very quiet and comfortable in his mind. They conversed very pleasantly for several hours, and he began to think Bess was a very lovely woman, after all. She was sometimes abstracted, it is true, as she sat so quietly in a low rocking-chair, manufacturing some kind of net, or covering for the head. She would lay down her long wooden needles in her lap, and look almost sadly into the fire, which danced its fantastic lights upon her face, and smooth glistening hair, and made her cheek bloom with unusual ardor. Once she walked to the window, and said, "I wish I could see the Ocean surf—when does the moonlight come, so that I can look out upon the water?"

She pressed her forehead for a long time against the cold glass of the window, and complained of the intense darkness that prevented her having a glimpse at the beautiful sea. Then she returned to the fire, and listened to the arrangements for her wedding, which would occur in a few weeks, and seemed to speak very calmly and sensibly of the preliminaries of that interesting occasion, for one so ordinarily rambling and trivial in her remarks. And yet Harry Carter detected in her manner, several times during the evening, an anxious, absent-minded expression of countenance; and once she appeared absolutely depressed and sad. But she rallied quickly when he remarked upon her mood, and ascribed it to her med-

itation, upon her mother's trouble with the sick family, under her care. After a time, Mrs. Carter announced to her son, that his room was prepared for him, and then considerably left the couple for a few moments alone together. Harry drew his chair close to his betrothed, and said, "You are certainly out of spirits to-night, Bess; do tell me why you look so sad—you are not at all like yourself; something has rendered you unhappy; do tell me what it is."

The beautiful girl extended her hand, and laying it quietly upon his knee, with its open palm up so that he saw the light of the fire through the clear, transparent fingers, and looking sadly at the glowing mass of embers on the hearth, said seriously,

"You hurt my feelings when you talk so about my flirting, and I cannot help feeling badly. You ought to trust me more, if I am to be your wife, indeed you ought." And she pouted so prettily at the idea of being distrusted, that he said:

"You look better, I declare, when you are depressed, than I ever saw you. But I will not accuse you any more, for I am sure you love me, Bess, do you not?"

She looked quickly, and with an eagerness of expression, at his handsome face as he spoke, and he imagined he detected something like sudden irresolution in her look. But then she relapsed into her quiet way again, and said, as she fixed her eyes upon the glowing coals, "Yes, Harry, you know I love you."

He held her hand, thoughtfully a moment, and his heart whispered to him, "there, dreamer, you have banished Lulu for several hours—but give up your cowardice now, and fulfil the mission on which you came; if you let this folly go on, you are doomed to misery," and

his reason assented to the promptings of his heart, but a gentleness of feeling and disposition, detained his utterance of words, which should have been spoken long before this hour. Perhaps little Bess would suffer deeply to lose him. Perhaps she would not; she was probably false to him, and possibly not. However, he never could love her, for Lulu Rogers owned his entire love and devotion, and he should tell Bess so at once. But he could not mention his desire to break the engagement then. Something restrained him, and Bess, in a few moments more, said she was weary, and must retire for the night. She kissed him affectionately, and taking up a little lamp from the table, said at parting, with something of her accustomed liveliness of manner;

"Good night—I am sure I shall not be so gloomy to-morrow."

She disappeared at the door, and after a few moments' meditation over the embers, he followed her example, and sought his bed. But in the silence and retirement of his room, the memory of Lulu came knocking at the door of his heart; and the calm thoughts of her which his reason heralded into his presence, came trooping in before him like knights wearing her token, all, all with a wonderful blue bow pendant from the points of their lances. All noble and heroic thoughts wore her color, and she reigned in the secret avenues of his heart supreme and alone. The illusion of Bess Stapleton ever being competent to render him happy, passed away with her presence and from behind the momentary cloud flashed forth the pure matchless star, Lulu. Then he acknowledged to himself how weak he had been. How

like a child had he been diverted from his purpose by a mere toy. He felt that he had bound another fetter upon his actions, and had virtually cemented and secured irrevocably his engagement to marry his cousin. The thought made him lie awake for a long hour, and then when he slept at last, his dreams were tortured with dreadful disasters and untimely deaths. Then he awoke and sat up in his bed, and wondered that daylight had not come. Then when he endeavored to sleep again, his dog Fanny aroused him with her howling and fierce barking, and he was obliged to raise his window and silence her. Then when he was settled down again, Fanny commenced her barking more fiercely than before, and he imagined some thief must be prowling about; he had become so nervous with the reflections of his having thrown away his last hope, and from his inability to sleep. He called the spaniel under his window, and there was just enough star light to enable him to aim at and hit her head with precision with a large book which lay on his table. The poor creature howled in terror at this unexpected salutation, but in a few moments laid down and continued quiet during the remainder of the night, undoubtedly acting from her brief experience in what Harry Carter called her "*book learning*."

After administering this quietus to his dog, he remained a moment at the open window, listening to the heavy fall of the surf upon the beach. The familiar sound seemed to inspire him, and he muttered to himself, "If I was only as persistent in what I undertake as that surf, I might be worth something. By thunder, I'll imitate that old Ocean in its struggles with the beach. I'll try again."

This resolution taken, he closed the window and went a second time back to his bed, and slept profoundly until daylight. But his resolution and firmness this time proved to be entirely thrown away. The rosy, fascinating beauty, Bess Stapleton, had herself unravelled the thread of destiny for him. While her betrothed was studying on his bed the heart troubles in which he was involved, she was stealing out of the house to her lover Henry Chambers, who waited outside for her, and quickly conducted her in despite of the fierce howling of the dog to the river-side, where a large sail-boat and two energetic men were waiting for him to convey him to the city of New York. The next day the youthful couple were married by a clergyman of the metropolis, and the news of the elopement was diffused with astonishing rapidity over the land. When our hero awoke on the following morning, he had not the slightest idea of his entire freedom to fall in love with any pretty face in the wide world. But intelligence is a fleet traveler in these days, and when he heard of it, his first remark was, "Sold, by thunder." Then, as the pleasant ideas associated with the event occurred to his mind, he laid back in his chair and indulged in a remarkable number of joyous manifestations.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE OTHER GIRL GOES TOO.

WHEN the excitement attendant upon the elopement of his cousin Bess Stapleton had, in a few days, passed away, and he had ascertained that she was reconciled with her parents, Harry Carter returned to the city to resume his business. His mind had been dwelling upon this unexpected termination of the engagement with feelings akin to mortification. It seemed to his proud spirit that the whole world must be looking upon him with sentiments of pity, and considering his character to be exceedingly weak, since he was so long devoted to a girl who had proved herself to be so silly and treacherous. He imagined the broad hints which he received sometimes in conversation, and the unfortunate allusions to the subject of the elopement which were constantly made, were intended to wound his feelings, and inform him that the neighborhood meant to consider him a poor, unfortunate, weak young man. But this suspicion at length passed away, and he could not but regard his changed relationship with his cousin as a delightful and glorious release. He was resolved at the first convenient opportunity to seek Lulu Rogers in her own home, and

offer his hand to her for life. With this anticipation in his thoughts, he returned to the city to make preparations for visiting Washington. He knew not what memories of him might still be retained by this lovely woman. She might be engaged, and lost to him forever; but he resolved to ascertain her views in his regard, and that immediately. He confided his intentions to his mother, and from her he received the encouraging intelligence that Lulu had acted during the time of the National Hotel poisoning as if she really loved him. The idea of this lovely girl having exhibited tokens of affection towards him, was always in his mind during his long engagement with Bess Stapleton. But to hear his mother state her reasons for the belief, filled his heart with joy, for he relied much upon her judgment in such matters, and in fact he believed women generally more capable to discover the truth in such cases than men.

When the boat reached the city, about the hour of noon, on a cold, rainy day in the month of April, he raised his umbrella against the drizzling storm, and directed his steps towards his office in the lower part of the business portion of the city. As he was about to cross Broadway, and continue on in the direction of the East River, he suddenly encountered Captain Rogers passing rapidly along the great thoroughfare. A quick word of recognition from Harry called the attention of the officer to the muffled figure of our hero approaching Broadway from the side street, and he responded to Harry's call with an exclamation of delight.

"Oh, this is luck indeed. I am so glad to see you; you must come and help me. Lulu, my darling child, is lost—disappeared mysteriously. She has not been seen since

she left the hotel last night, for the theatre. She went out with her cousin Frank Upsher, a young man about twenty—and since they left the hotel, about 8 o'clock last night, not a trace can be found of either of them. Suspicions of foul play are entertained at the police stations, as several desperate murders and robberies have been taking place for two weeks in the most public thoroughfares. I caused a search to be instituted at a late hour last night, and it has been continued up to this time by half-a-dozen detectives, who will trace the matter out, I am informed, if any one can. Oh! my God! my poor Lulu is murdered, I fear she is murdered in cold blood. I have great confidence, though, in Frank Upsher; he is a midshipman, and always goes armed. If the quickness and ferocity of a tiger could avail to save my poor Lulu the villains have had a desperate time with him. But come with me, for God's sake, to the Chief of Police again. I want a brave heart like yours to help me and stay with me to the end. Come—every moment is precious. Have you any weapon? we may need it."

Harry Carter's blood was coursing like fire in his veins, and in his excitement and horror he spoke rapidly, and nervously felt for his revolver, "All right, Captain, my revolver carries six lives; here, stop that omnibus, that's our quickest way. She's been gone an awful long time already—but fly! moments are worlds."

The two made a dash for the omnibus, and Harry threw away his umbrella as an encumbrance upon his speed. The seats were full, but they stood up and held by the roof of the stage, and it rolled rapidly on its way. After a half hour's riding and walking, they reached the office of the Chief of Police. But the information that

awaited them there was only calculated to destroy the glimmerings of hope which yet remained with them. The detectives had failed to discover any traces of the lost ones, except a broken bracelet of plain gold, with Lulu's initials upon the inside, which Captain Rogers recognized as the property of his daughter. It had been found on Broadway between the hotel and the theatre to which the midshipman had expressed his intention of taking his cousin Lulu.

Every effort had been exerted to discover in the neighborhood if indications of a struggle had been heard by any person during the night, or if suspicious and well known characters had been seen in that part of the street, at or about the fatal hour of disappearance. But every plan to obtain a clue to the mystery had proved totally unavailing and other officers had been requested to devote their attention to the matter until a reasonable time should have elapsed. The father and the lover were obliged to confess at length that every reasonable scheme had been exhausted to find the missing girl and her cousin. They went to the hotel together and awaited further investigations on the part of the police department, and made examinations of their own constantly in the vicinity of the theatre and the hotel and intermediate places. But all was in vain, and after a week's faithful search they agreed that the two must have been murdered for their money and jewelry. But they still, in the frenzy of desolation and affection, instituted new searches with the same unfortunate and maddening want of success. Weeks and months rolled away, and the silence of the grave rested upon the mystery of the mournful disappearance. Captain Rogers lingered

about the streets of the city, in his loneliness and his agony of heart; and the young lawyer went to his office and his business each day, in the silence and the wasting grief of a broken heart. Every night Harry Carter went to the hotel to unite his sympathy and his sorrow, with that of the unfortunate father, and the two soon became to each other a necessity, and were linked in heart to each other as a father and child. And the sweet face of Lulu was seen no more, and except in the undying hope of two faithful hearts the star of her loveliness had gone out in blood.

But we deem it prudent at this period of our narrative to relieve the minds of our too indulgent readers of the impression that true love never should be cultivated, because its course is so erratic, and because it "never did run smooth." We think the unfortunate events which thus far appear to have separated two congenial and noble hearts, have been sufficiently dwelt upon, and presented in all their remarkable succession and truth; and we would now gratify those curious hearts who have been striving through so many tedious pages to discover the author's plan of extricating a brave heart from the meshes of despair, by giving to their view our hero's course of love in the future, cleared of provoking obstacles and swept entirely of all complications. In furtherance of this charitable purpose, we shall only occasion our readers one more start of surprise and impatience by announcing that the beautiful Lulu Rogers had never disappeared mysteriously from the society of her father and friends at all.

When our hero returned to New York after the elopement of Bess Stapleton, Captain Rogers was not in the

city, but had returned to his own home, taking his lovely daughter Lulu with him. They were both enjoying the pleasures of a delightful home, and totally unconscious of any mysterious disappearance having taken place. The young lawyer, whose fortunes we have been watching in the pages of this narrative, was soon convinced also of the absurdity of anything wonderful having happened to the idol of his dreams. A sudden and careless crash of the Shrewsbury steamboat against the dock at New York awakened him in an instant, and he soon discovered that he had been dreaming all this mysterious disappearance during the profound sleep into which he had fallen as he reclined upon a comfortable seat in the cabin of the boat. His heart was relieved in an instant, and as he glanced through the cabin-window he discovered that the sun was shining beautifully upon the surrounding buildings and the interlacing cordage of the shipping.

He went ashore with a rapid step, and with the glorious hopes of being able to win Lulu, cheering the inmost recesses of his true, loving heart. And he intended soon, yes, as soon as a few trifling arrangements were made, to direct his eyes and his eagerness toward her charming home in the city of Washington. The thought of meeting her again, and with untrammelled heart which could now express in words the throbbings and the yearnings after her affection which had dwelt there deep in its hidden chambers for years, made his steps along the streets lighter and his gait faster than the steps of the busy crowds that rolled on their ways of joy and sorrow, and knew not what a happy heart throbbed

in the breast of that handsome young lawyer who walked so firmly and rapidly past them on his way to his place of boarding.

But as he hastened on his way, so occupied with delightful thoughts that he was unconscious of the busy scenes about him, he came suddenly upon two ladies who accosted him with evident manifestations of pleasure at the encounter. They were Mrs. Frank and Mary Fornell. After a brief conversation, Harry Carter turned back to walk with them, and proposed that they should enter an ice-cream saloon and have some refreshments, and a chat upon matters in the city of Dutchhold. His proposition meeting with favor, the three were soon seated at one of the refreshment tables, engaged in the discussion of matters and occurrences for the past three or four months.

"So your cousin Bess Stapleton is married, Mr. Carter?" said Mary Fornell, contemplating the improved beauty of his face within the past six months with keen interest, "she was a very beautiful girl, I hear?"

"Yes!" said he, laughing, "Bess is settled for life, and I am glad. I suppose you have heard that I came very near marrying her myself?"

"Hear it?" said Mrs. Frank; "I guess we did hear it. Everybody in Dutchhold was talking about it. Miss Allbone said she supposed Mr. Carter flirted so that his cousin broke off the engagement. Mary, you'd better take some of this wine. She never forgave you for pretending you were married. Do you remember that night? Oh! I saw Lou Neaton last week; she's got two bouncing great girls, and has grown so fat you wouldn't

know her. She asked about you. She lives in Boston now. Oh! Mary, did I tell you about my visit to her sister, Mrs. Neaton? Richest time you ever heard of. Turned her house upside down with my two boys. She never had a child inside the house before, and she most broke her heart chasing them about the house to keep things in order. She's so many closets they could hide from her in a minute, and they kept her flying up and down stairs like a cat. I couldn't do anything with them. Everything looked so tempting to pull down and upset, they couldn't keep still. I don't believe she'll ever invite another lady with children. They never behaved so before—but the very order and neatness of things seemed to drive them crazy. They upset a whole jar of lump sugar on her Brussels, and then pounded it into the carpet with tongs. She's so particular she made me laugh every minute with her preciseness. I went all over the house, from garret to cellar, and such order you never saw. All her tea-cups in the pantry had each its own little hook to hang it on, so that they shouldn't strike together and break. And there they hung in rows, so funny. Oh, I want to tell you. One day I was rushing up stairs with my cloak on my arm, and I happened to lean over the polished railing on the stairs to call a servant, and there she stood at the foot of the stairs, watching lest I should do something wrong. Bless you—she held up both her hands and said, 'Oh, mercy, that button on your cloak will ruin the railing—please don't let it scratch the varnish.'"

"But," said Mary Fornell, when she could get in a word between the unbroken links of that wonderful

woman, "she has everything so nice and fresh to eat, and she has such a variety of dishes. I never had such a good dinner as I had there."

"Oh, yes!" chimed in Mrs. Frank, "she had ten different kinds of preserves on the tea-table; and then I went into her jelly pantry—rows of little jars all around the closet, and reaching way up to the ceiling. I'll tell you what it looked like, Mary—one of these apothecary shops. Oh! Mr. Carter, how is your friend, Miss Rogers, in Washington? They say she is lovelier than ever, since she returned from Europe. Are you going to invite me to the wedding? I'll come."

"Miss Rogers is in Washington, I suppose; but I have not seen her since her return from Europe. What do you mean about wedding?" asked Harry, with an effort to appear indifferent; but his face colored deeply at the unexpectedness of the remark.

"Why," she said, "it is understood in Dutchhold that you and she are to be married very soon;" and then, noticing his increasing color, she added, "but I see you are the same old deceiver; you never would own up to your affairs with the girls. I declare, Mary, look at that complexion—it's very becoming, Mr. Carter, but it's unusual for you. Come now, tell us all about it, we're all old friends."

"Upon my word as a gentleman," he said, "I never offered my hand to Miss Rogers, or intimated by a single word that I expected her to marry me. Is that sufficient to satisfy you?"

She replied doubtfully, as she looked at him with her fresh, peach-colored face, and her keen, intelligent eyes,

"What do you blush for, then? Mary, I leave it to you isn't he blushing about it?"

Mary Fornell raised her lovely face to that handsome countenance, the memory of which had always lingered pleasantly in her dreams, and hoped or wished that there might be no confirmation there of his heart being engaged yet in the mazes of female idolatry. But she was forced to admit that there were some suspicious manifestations in his cheeks, that Cupid's arrow had reached his heart at last.

"But," said Harry, anxious to conceal his love from all eyes until he had learned from Lulu's lips if it were reciprocated, "you are trying to quiz me about an absurdity, and I want to hear about all the Dutchhold friends that used to be together with us. By the way, I was astounded the other day to meet Lena French, and what do you think she has done?"

"It's some wild caper, I'll venture," said Mrs. Frank promptly, "but tell us, I'm crazy; tell us quick, is she married?"

"No, not married," said Harry, "just the reverse; she's a Nun—a Sister of Mercy. What do you say to that?"

"I'm faint," exclaimed Mrs. Frank, "give me a fan. Well, such is the unfortunate termination of all my plans when I select a profession for any body. Oh! that's too good—you know I always insisted that she should become an actress, but where is she? I'll go and see her, and won't we laugh. Here, write her direction in my card-case, and I'll hunt her up. Well, I declare, a Nun! but come, Mary, we'll never get through our shopping if we don't leave this elegant young man; come, you

must come see us, Mr. Carter, we're at the Saint Nicholas. And my husband has learned to make superb punches. Will you come?"

Harry Carter assured them that they should see him again during their sojourn in the city, and then leaving them at the door of the saloon, made his way rapidly in the direction of his rooms.

He could not avoid realizing as he passed with a light heart on his way, how much the hope, even the faintest hope, of being able at some day to secure the affection of a woman, who appears to be worthy of all affection and praise, gives energy and perseverance, to the soul in every pursuit, and makes a golden halo of beauty to linger about every passing object. The reflection, that Lulu was probably free yet to bestow her hand, and the wealth of her pure zealous heart upon him, quickened the flow of his warm blood, and sent a thrill of his exultant passion through his whole system. He felt tempted as he passed through the crowded street to grasp every one by the hand, and tell them that he was the most fortunate being on the face of the Earth. And when he reached his room, and sat down again in that very chair in which he had suffered so much anguish of mind, and felt that now he was free, and that the star of his dreams might possibly even be waiting for him in undying constancy, he buried his face in his hands, and wept tears of joy, pure innocent tears of holy affection, which relieved the burden and the pressure of the excitement on his brain, and gave additional evidence of that warmth and devotedness of heart, which we have claimed for him in the pages of this tale. Then this shower of the heart which beautified the garden of affection and made

it fruitful passed away, and there came fearful doubt and jealousy of the unknown friends who might surround her, and who might already have won the key of Lulu's love. Like clouds these apprehensions came, and they darkened the features of hope, so that they became invisible; and all the years which the presence of Lulu had been lost to him as effectually as if she were dead, came moaning to his side, and whispering in his ear of opportunity gone, and another being standing in the place which he craved to occupy himself. And the fear and doubt became so burdensome and full of horror to him that he longed earnestly and frantically for the hour to come when his doubt should be removed or his heart crushed. And then he travelled back, far, far away to the scene of his first meeting with Lulu, and the pang which came over his soul, as he was misled in regard to her being married. And as he studied over again all the disappointments and discouragements and barriers which had ever seemed to spring up between himself and her, he feared there was a destiny which would ever sweep away his castles of hope and joy, and make the exquisite figure of Lulu always to be only a mirage in the desert of his heart. But while the cloud hung yet over his existence, his memory was flying in circles about the scene of the wreck. Everything connected with that remarkable day came up successively with clearness and interest; and he saw again the earnest honest face of the drowned fisherman as he stood beneath the little roof of his hut, watching so curiously the waving figures of the two old women as they chanted their rude song of the

sea, and its care for the young friend who stood beside him. And then the rude melody came back to him:

"Distrust not thy friend,
If this token fail,
Which first comes to thee,
Sad, trembling, and pale."

He leaned forward, and rested his head upon the table, and a superstitious feeling like that which he had experienced before, arose in his mind. Perhaps he was a child, committed to the care of the unseen guardians of his dear old Ocean, and they would bring him at last, for a life treasure, the precious being whom they had once before committed to his arms, amid the horrors of the storm night and the foaming rage of the surf.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SURPRISE.

It was the hour of midnight in the streets of the National city. The moonlight danced and quivered on the edges of the young, green leaves in the tree tops, about Lafayette Square; and it was the lovely season of early spring. There was a mellowness and warmth in the atmosphere like a Northern June, and many casements in the upper stories of the dwellings, were left open to catch the delicious gentle air, so balmy, and so sweet, which floated timidly amid the shrubbery, and then passed on to fan the cheek of the sleeper, and soothe his repose. And the ambitious moonbeams struggled at every point to gain admittance to the couches where beauty slumbered, and golden ringlets were twined together in unstudied grace. Sometimes they found a snow white hand wandering alone upon the coverlet, and glistened then in most fantastic play upon the jewels in the rings; sometimes they lingered on rosy lips, and stole their sweetness, and again they found dark lashes folded to fair cheeks, and kissed them as they slept.

The wakeful eyes, which still peered out upon the fairy net of silver on the trees, and saw the strange blend-

ing shadows on the walks, were filled with wonder; for the Eternal Artist seemed to revel on the canvas of the earth, with his silver pencils, and the shapes they traced against the dark back-ground of the denser leaves, and knotted branches, wore a mysterious look, and told of a power supreme, whose hand could form of rudest objects pictures beyond the skill of men.

While others slept unconscious of the scene, two figures were seated at an open casement of an upper story, to have the full effect of a view which rarely falls to mortal eyes. One in the bloom of twenty summers, held the other's head in her kind lap, and gently stroked her forehead with one snow-white hand, and spoke to her words of sympathy and cheer. And she who rested her sad, earnest face, upon the other's lap, and looked forth on the moonlight, was our old, yes, *very old* acquaintance, Miss Lancaster.

The passing seasons of three years, had left her the same queer, sentimental old maid as before, and the same stunted, comic bob curls still dangled on her sunken cheeks. Poor soul! She had passed through the sentimental Spring of love, and she was now watching her broken hopes through the keen, freezing Winter of its decline. With all her assumptions, and with all her old maid stratagems to win a lover's heart, she was, nevertheless, a kind hearted, true, and constant friend. She nourished the sick, and she fed the poor, and she defended her friends, and she loved the good, and prayed zealously for the bad. And if Cupid could only have been spanked out of the trick of shooting those mischievous arrows into her susceptible breast, she would have ranked among that substantial class of individuals who bear the appellation, "Most excellent persons." Unfortunately for her

spiritual development, she hankered after the possession of a large man, and a fat man, with an unmeaning title derived from some militia regiment. And the consequence was that all the tall shoulders, and aldermanic bellies, which crossed her path, had either to undergo a process of sweetening, or to run outright. Thus she lost every good natured gentleman who made her acquaintance, and became a very old maid.

On this lovely evening, she had come to visit Lulu, and hear an account of her adventures in Europe, but also, with the more interesting purpose to her, of talking over her absent Major James.

"Oh! Lulu," she said pathetically, "The Major deserted me, for a young face in Baltimore, and I hear he will marry her soon; my heart is broken, and I shall die like an unripe fruit that falls to the ground."

"But," said Lulu, kindly, "why have you cherished this idea of love so long? I never thought the Major, during his brief stay, encouraged the idea of love, at all. In fact, if I remember right, he never talked with you but once, during his stay in Washington."

"Ah," she replied, "that is too true, Lulu, dear, that he never called on me but once, but I am sure he meant at one time, to reciprocate my love. Yes! I feel that he did; such emblems as he sent, Lulu, were never sent to a woman's heart before—Oh! he was so sweet, then."

"Ah!" said Lulu, looking down with surprise at the antiquated face in her lap, "you never told me that you received anything from him. What were those emblems that made such an impression upon your mind, and enticed you into the belief that you were loved?"

The old maid raised her head, and looking mysteriously into Lulu's brown eyes, asked solemnly, while her

bob-curls hung perfectly quiet and motionless on her cheeks, as if in respectful awe of the secret which their mistress was about to communicate, "Will you promise me faithfully that these old reminiscences which I confide to you shall be secret, inviolably secret from every human being in the world? They concern the most tender sentiments of my heart, and I fear the cruel world might endeavor to wrest these emblems of past hopes away from me. I fear the world would say it was indelicate for me to retain the tokens of a lost lover. And you must promise that my secret shall never reach the unfeeling world. Will you promise?"

"Your secret shall never pass my lips," said Lulu, wondering what presents the Major could have given her to make such a lasting impression on her foolish old heart.

"Well, then," said Miss Lancaster, in a subdued tone, and glancing suspiciously towards the door, lest an ear might be lurking there to rob her of her treasured gems, "I shall trust you. Do you remember those exquisite little verses Mr. Carter quoted for me when he was sick in this house?"

"Certainly I do," replied Lulu, "and you remember, too, that I advised you not to send them to the Major. You were not foolish enough to send them after I advised you to the contrary, were you?"

"Ah! my dear Lulu," she said, pathetically, "I followed your advice for a long time, but when I saw that my dear Major came no more, I could not restrain my impatience to have some communion of soul with him, and at last I sent the verses to him, enclosed in a pink envelope, and scented the note with musk. And by return of mail I received a package enclosing the beauti-

ful emblems. The first thing I found in the package was an emblem of eternity, a simple India rubber ring. Then there was a little hour-glass filled with delicate grey sand—that was an emblem of the regularity with which the hours of our married life should be devoted to some useful pursuit. Then there was a little wooden sceptre, with a miniature straw bonnet covering it almost entirely from sight. That I took to be my female sway over his heart. Sweet and appropriate, was it not? But the other emblem, which was a little paper of Epsom-salts, I could not exactly define—perhaps, as salt is the emblem of hospitality, it related to the Major's desire that I should entertain a good deal of company in our cottage. But I am not quite certain of this, for common table salt would have been more appropriate. Don't you think, my dear Lulu, that I have reason to cherish these tender symbols, and keep them ever planted above the grave of my hopes? Why do you laugh so, dear?"

When the beautiful girl could compose her features, she said, as seriously as the subject would allow, "You poor, simple soul—this trash was only to quiz you for sending him those ridiculous verses. Now let me interpret the emblems for you. The India rubber ring was for you to cut your eye-teeth on. The hour-glass meant that your sands of life were nearly run. The sceptre and bonnet was to ridicule your influence with the President to gain him the South American mission. It meant that you were the 'power behind the throne.' And the salts must have meant that physic would cure your love. You must forgive me for laughing so, but the idea is too absurd," and she laughed again till her sides ached.

Miss Lancaster was a perfect picture of despair, and she looked at Lulu a moment as if she must be insane to

laugh so. Then as the truth worked its way slowly upon her sluggish brain, she gave her bob-curls an indignant toss which must have surprised them, and exclaimed, like one awaking from a beautiful dream,

"The wicked, cruel Major! to treat a poor little bird like me so. Who would have imagined such atrocious cruelty from such a noble presence? I declare to you, Lulu, that if I had the making of his apple dumplings, I'd make them so heavy that they would lie forever on his great stomach, and give him an eternal night-mare. I would—I would—I tell you," and she compressed her lips in the bitterness of her determination and outraged affection; and the bob-curls bounced up and down and kinked a little tighter in sympathetic rage.

"The corpulent monstrosity," she continued, as the new version of the emblems became still more evident to her mind, "does his fatness suppose there is no admirer of female charms in the wide world except himself? I've a great mind to go and marry a great big Member of Congress, that anybody can have for the asking, just to spite him; and then I'll make them both fight a duel, and I just hope they'll both be shot—that I do. The awful betrayer of female confidence, some judgment will fall upon him, sure; and then we'll see if birds are to be trifled with because they are innocent."

Her companion endeavored to calm her, and induce her to pass the matter by in silent and dignified contempt. But she would not be comforted, and vowed she would be revenged.

"It is vain to dissuade me, Lulu," she said, fiercely, "I will make a pile of his wicked emblems out in the square there, and I'll burn them ignominiously in a public fire—and all the world shall know his wickedness and

his deceit, and he shall be made to gnash his teeth in rage, and shall have no India rubber ring between them to save them from gnashing each other to pieces. The wicked old Major! he isn't sweet any more—no! he is bitter—bitter."

At last as she studied more calmly the subject of the gentleman's attentions to her, she was reluctantly forced to admit that after all she had never had any reasonable claim on the Major's attention and regard. After a quiet examination of her own indelicacy in sending the verses to him upon so imperfect an acquaintance, she finally admitted that her trouble was due in great part to her own imprudence. Then she relapsed once more into her sentimental mood, and looking out upon the beautiful night, hummed a part of the song containing the words:

"I know not, I ask not,
If guilt's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee,
Whatever thou art."

Lulu Rogers, who had succeeded in quieting her excitement by her sensible arguments, took the old maid's head in her lap again, and looked forth silently upon the witchery of the scene. The moon had gained at length a position where its silver loveliness fell with full effect upon her exquisitely chiselled features and gave her calm brow and cheeks the snowy whiteness of a marble statue. But silent and composed as were her features, they gave no true indication of her actual thoughts; and there was a gentle lustre in her deep brown eyes which told of love unfathomable and constant as the lamp of

life. She thought of one whose name had been a stranger to her lips for many months; but was whispered always; and she prayed in silence to the Eternal for the power, the gift or grace, only to forget. But that earnest, unspoken prayer was never answered; she was doomed never, never to forget.

Suddenly, and without a moment's notice, the death-like stillness of the moonlight scene was broken. The inspiring burst of martial music rang over the square, and the harmonious notes of a full naval band shook the listening air, and made excited hearts tremble with delight.

Miss Lancaster sprang up in an instant, exclaiming, "Glory, glory, there's a serenade. Lulu, it's Lieutenant Walton, of the Navy; I knew he would fulfil his promise to you last week, and there he is. I'm going to the other window to look through the blinds; he'll see me here."

She hurried excitedly to the other window, and peered for a minute through the slats at the group below. The moon shone full upon the band, but she declared herself unable to identify any figure other than those with musical instruments.

The strains of the enlivening air died away, and all was still again. Miss Lancaster came to Lulu's side and said:

"Do you see any one that looks like him? I can see no one but the band. I think there are twelve of them. Isn't it splendid?"

Lulu replied doubtfully, and gazing steadily all the time at the opposite side of the street, where the shadows seemed to concentrate,

"I have detected no person except the band, but there is something standing in that shadow next the square,

which I have been watching. It looks something like the figure of a man—do you see it? there."

Miss Lancaster studied the dark object closely for a minute but could not say what it was. Their attention was diverted by the music again. How gently now it stole away over the tree tops, fainting and dying away in spirit-like whisperings. The silvered leaves nodded gently to the trembling cadences, and the moonbeams seemed to quiver in its melting influence. Then swelling louder and louder again in exultation it poured rivers of melody into every corner of the square, and sent thrilling emotion into every listening heart. Now it dies again in gentle hopeless sighing, and whispers itself into exquisite silence. Tears gathered in Lulu's beautiful eyes, and Miss Lancaster was motionless in unutterable admiration and delight. Then as the music rested again they both groped about in the partial obscurity of the apartment for a bouquet or flower or anything by which to recognize the civility and kindness of their entertainer, the naval officer. They could find nothing but a small volume of poems, and the long arm of the old maid propelled it with such admirable force and precision that it fell within a few paces of the dense shadow where they supposed the officer was lurking. Miss Lancaster exclaimed in raptures as a dark figure emerged into the moonlight to secure the book, "There, I told you it was Lieutenant Walton, see his quick step. I should know him among a thousand. Now he has gone back into the shade again; but, Lulu! what makes you tremble so? I can feel your arm quiver like a leaf. Hark! oh, hark! what is that? I never heard that tune before, how full of passion it is, it is sweet as the harps of dear angels in this flooding moonlight. Listen."

Tremulous and subdued the mysterious melody gushed slowly out upon the silent night, and the fluttering leaves almost drowned the notes as the eager heart waited impatiently for them to tell the mournful story of a broken and desolate spirit. Ah! they are swelling out clearer and clearer still upon the listening air. There is light dawning away in the future—there is expectation. Aye, listen to the exultant escaping notes as they wildly peal out upon the air in triumph. Oh God, in thy goodness there is hope, wild delirious hope! come now sympathetic tears, flow you too in joy and triumph. It is too much, too much, for the overburdened heart to listen and live.

But she is crouching low upon the window-sill; you had better sustain her with your arm, kind Miss Lancaster, or she may fall, for something is the matter with her, and she trembles; and strange light dances in her beautiful brown eyes; and now she reaches forth her arms as if she would spring far away from the window down, down into the silver street. No! do not touch her—the angels guard her, and she is only peering wildly, eagerly, passionately upon the partly hidden figure of the dearest idol she will ever know on earth.

She knows him, she recognized his step; and that heavenly melody is trembling on her heart, for she wrote it herself, and only one in the whole world ever took the notes from her. And there he is standing with his noble, manly heart heaving, and his bright, hazel eye, flashing through the shadows, to see her at the window. And still the exquisite notes of passion tremble and breathe the exultant, hopeful story of the heart:

“Oh, never despair, while kind angels are guarding.”

“Oh, Mary,” she murmured, amid her tears of joy, “He has come back again, he has come for me, he has come for me. Oh, my God, I thank thy adorable goodness, he has come again for me—oh! give me something for him. No! no! here is the bow he always loved, that will do.”

She unfastened the bow from her brown hair, and loading it with her large cameo pin, to give it a long flight, she flung it with the energy of love and joy, far away towards the silent, motionless shadow. The blue messenger and token fell in the street, and in the broad glare of the moonlight. Again that quick, manly step advanced into the moonlight, and as he raised the little token, uttered an exclamation of joy, and pressed it to his lips. Then he fell back quickly, with military precision into the shadows of the trees, and walked quietly away with the band.

The two watched the departing serenaders in breathless silence, and saw the moonlight gleam at intervals on their brass instruments, and then listened for the last foot-fall as it died away in the distance.

Then Lulu Rogers, with an animation and with a spirit unknown to her for three long years, exclaimed, “Do you know him now, Mary?—the most beautiful being on the wide earth, the noblest heart that ever beat, the one who saved my life, and then struggled here under my father’s roof against the power of death, and conquered. He has come for me, and I am ready, and I will love him as the stars love their celestial home, *eternally*.”

And as their bright and joyful communings grew each

moment more cordial, and more confiding, the great joy bell of the future, began to ring; and over the silver tree tops came its chimes, and on the wings of hope, as she fluttered into the moonlit chamber, glistened the varied hues which a pure heart loves and wishes for, in the coming time.

The moments flew rapidly away, for Lulu's heart was for a long time too full for sleep: and she told freely and eagerly, all the silent struggles to forget him, and spoke of the threatening, approaching clouds of despair, which had already shown themselves in her sunless sky, and now had passed away in the mercy of God, forever. And after the city clock had struck the hour of two, and Miss Lancaster had retired to another room to sleep, there was a kneeling picture of a lovely girl, pouring forth to her Eternal Father, the first full, warm emotions of a child's early, thoughtful gratitude.

CHAPTER XXX.

FRUITION.

"YES! that is the door bell, but don't tremble so, Lulu, you make me nervous, so it is impossible for me to fasten your dress; there, that is fixed at last; now do compose yourself, pet, and try to meet him calmly. You cannot tell yet, how matters are arranged with him, so you had better be calm and self possessed, and prepared for anything—hang that hook! it has split my finger nail. Well, I declare, that dress fits you beautifully for a silk, I wish my dress would show off my figure so, but your shoulders are so round and pretty anything ought to set well on you. That black velvet ribbon, contrasts beautifully with your white neck, and harmonizes well with that drab silk; now you look sweetly, I would like to make love to you myself. I wonder if he'll kiss you this time—there, I said that on purpose, for I knew it would make your cheeks bloom, and so it has, now go right down stairs and see him before those roses fade away again. If I was like most old maids, I wouldn't have made you look so beautifully and given you the roses. Now you

can go, for I guess he is composed enough by this time to begin studying the furniture."

Lulu swept quietly out of her dressing room into the hall, and walked quickly to the head of the stairs. But there she paused with one hand resting on the polished rail, just one instant as a timid manner took possession of her, and she appeared to feel a little faint, at the prospect of meeting him, after three years' absence. But her hesitation was only for an instant, for she possessed great resolution of character in ordinary circumstances, and summoning it now to her aid, she glided quickly down the stairs, and turned at once into the drawing-room. The cheering rays of a warm Spring sun, were playing and dancing upon the bright figures in the carpet, and when Lulu entered they flooded over her face and bust, so that for an instant, she seemed covered with a misty, golden veil of sunbeams. They dazzled her eyes for a second, so that she could not find at once, where he was sitting so calmly, and expectant. But Harry came forth to meet her, and extended both hands; and then their eyes met. Whatever may have been their respective fears regarding the other, for the three long years of their separation, there was no mistaking the clear, overpowering language of their eyes, which now revealed to each the other's love and tenderness. And so evident was that mutual love, that Harry said at once and passionately:

"Do you see this blue token which I have fastened above my heart?—there shall it remain until I win a dearer token, yourself, to clasp there. I have come here, dear, beautiful Lulu, according to my promise. I am free to ask of you, the only being that has ever been able

to fill my heart, a priceless treasure—your own dear self. Have I come in vain? I love you. Oh, my God! I love you above all created things; and yet I feel that I am unworthy of you, because I suffered a fancy to fetter my heart for three lonely years when I loved only you. And when I ask your love now I tremble; for if you refuse me, I am lost forever, soul and body. I beg of you to love me. Will you?—can you?" His voice became husky with excitement and passion, and his cheek blanched in his eagerness, and his last words were whispered. And she, the lovely girl standing there with both her little hands in his, and looking all the while into his earnest, hazel eyes, in wonder exclaimed: "And does it require so many doubtful, doubting words from you to ask me this? Can I love you? Oh! I love you, Harry Carter, with all the love my poor heart is capable of, and if you do not take my poor, fluttering heart now, I shall die."

He dropped those little warm hands from his grasp, and taking her in his arms, pressed her fair cheek with the power of a lion against his breast, and his voice trembled as he whispered again, "I claim you now, forever—dear, dear Lulu, forever."

His voice failed him, and in his ecstasy of passion he pressed her to his heart and wept like a child. All the hidden agony of years, and the crushed feeling of his manly heart, poured forth in those tears, and his heart was light again. That wild, eager, impulsive heart that could dare anything which men called danger, and yet could love with the vehemence of a woman, now poured forth in broken accents, while his strong frame quivered, the most burning words of passion that ever came from mortal lips. And upon her

gentle heart they fell, and were so like her own true, constant thoughts, that she raised her face, and her head fell upon his arm, that he might take her yearning soul in a long, long kiss. And as her fresh, eager lips for the first time in her life yielded to a lover's kiss, they shot through every vein of his a thrill of pleasure such only as a pure woman's lips can give.

Then he bore her to a sofa, and she leaned her head on his breast, and her warm little hand lay lovingly in his, and he told her his life and its past sorrows and its now bright hopes. And before they parted, after two flying happy hours, the day for their marriage was fixed.

"Father is ordered off on a three years' cruise," she said, and then blushing added, "and we must be married within two weeks; for in two weeks from to-day he must sail. Oh, he will be so delighted when he hears of this, for he loves you like his own child."

One more of those exquisite, lingering kisses, and then Harry Carter was pacing with elastic step along the walks of Lafayette Square. The warm spring sun was shedding its genial and balmy rays amid the bright green leaves, and warming the hearts of the birds to sing as they wheeled their musical flights amid the tree-tops. The young, springing grass covering the Square seemed in the gentle breeze to be waving a welcome to the hero who had won the fairest flower that ever nodded its graceful head in worship in the Garden of God. And the fluttering young leaves above him whispered in his ear, "God, too, is love. In your joy and your gentleness of heart look up to the Centre and the Sun of all love, and this beautiful Lulu shall then prove to you the dear angel of life, to win for you an eternal and celestial love in the City of God." The voices of the Spring were hail

ing him on every side; and he stepped more proudly than ever to think how sweetly she, the peerless in purity and beauty, had yielded her happiness to his hands for life, in confidence and love. And over his grateful heart holy impulses fluttered, and he vowed in his soul to follow in gratitude and devotion through an earnest and a pure life, the wishes of a Divine Ruler, who loves the children that He has planted in the garden of life, and yearns for a generous and ardent return of an affection which sweeps its broad wings wider than the stars.

In a few days a beautiful bride left her home, and leaning on a strong arm, walked away with a smile far, far down through the vista of life. And in the air above them two heavenly and unseen angels attended upon them, and pointed eagerly the way for them to walk, and sang for them the music of Heaven, that their hearts might always be strong in following the right. They are passing now far, far away into the distance where light and shadow so strangely blend; and where their youthful forms are fast leaving our sight, and the music of their angel guardians is melting away into silence. And now they are gone to the battle of life, and their beautiful faces cheer us no more. But their gentle memory lingers with us yet, and we peer after them in earnest sympathy; but from the distance only floats back to us the fading, dying whisper, "Farewell forever, till we meet in the Eternal City, and revel in the glorious Vision of God."

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