

256  
BLACK-EYED BEAUTY;

OR

ONE OF THE LOST.

A BRILLIANT PICTURE OF

THE FOLLIES AND FRAILTIES OF FAST LIFE.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Gay Life in New-York," "New-York After Dark," &c.

*[Henry Bevellyg Willems]*

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ROBERT M. DE WITT, PUBLISHER,

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# BLACK-EYED BEAUTY.

## CHAPTER I.

"SOME ONE TO LOVE YOU." "LOOK WHO SASSSED THE PEELER." "I GUESS NOT. WARMING FOR A WATCH. BEAT OUT OF THAT. IN THE OLD MELODEON.

It was a while ago, and in New York City.

It was "a great day" about something or somebody or other, and there was going to be a big procession.

The sun was shining so pretty that you could not think of staying in-doors. So clerks, and most of the other fellows that could slip out, knocked off work for that day and turned into Broadway.

And wasn't that star of the streets of this world some?

Keep on thinking so, and you won't be wrong.

All the upper windows full of faces, some ladies' who had friends that kept photographic studios, more work-girls in the umbrella and artificial-flower "biz." And there was a pretty hard pull as to which looked best, she in the hat of the latest-out style or t'other with her hair anyhow all around her head with the "dollar-jewelry" in her little ears.

On the curb-stone a double row of people, all sorts like broken crackers at Wilson's Bakery.

From Canal-street up to Waverley Place, the easy pieces, the girls of joy, were "kinder thick," as the western hunter declared the arrows were when the Sheyennes and 'Rapahoes chased him.

In the streets, which the "blues" had cleared of the stages and carts, a double set of contrary streams of people, looking up at the windows and scanning the features of those on the curb-stones.

On the walk, a more aristocratic set of loungers, going up and down. Nearly all young bucks who had a fancy that hoops banging against the legs keep off rheumatism.

We'll select a couple of these (the youths, not the hoops.)

One is good-looking of the regular American style and shape. A trifle tall, and looks slender until you notice that he's in good condition for a race, a row, or anything that a man has to plunge into or dash around or away from.

He is young, not yet above two past twenty, and he thinks wonders of a faint moustache that he first felt the ice on a winter or two before.

He carries himself like a good-goer, all from the hip and the body firm.

On his arm is a companion not so agreeable as he.

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He has a flat, round face, and tries to come the English side-whisker with his light-brown hair. He has as good clothes as the other, and sports a neck-tie of a costlier make, but he moves in the clothes as if they never would fit him: he is a queer sort altogether. At first you would pronounce that his plain face meant simplicity, but then, as his lip curls in secret anger because a mechanic brushes his elbow, you would see that he was hard in evil feeling. It might slumber, but there was the latent motive power of a bad man in him "all over and through both ways."

The first looks at the men quietly as he passes them, not envying the best or richest among them. He feels he is equal to any of them, making up in one thing if he don't in all.

The second eyes the men as if he fears a master in each, and when by chance a cripple or a wretched-looking creature crawls by, he smiles slightly, not thankful that he is not such, but glorying over the fact as if he had made himself.

As for the females, he first notices the old ones not at all, unless he involuntarily gives them free passage with a truly American respect. The younger he regards as he would tempting flowers—they are too many to pick, but that is no reason he should not let them know he has the eyes to admire them and remember them in case they come together again. This he tells them by a glance or a meaning smile.

As for his companion, his observation of the beauties is so secret and so quick that it scarcely is visible at all. But it is of that detestable nature, seen above all in the higher classes, among those who find a relish in standing by the piano player, and looking down on her neck, shoulders, and what the lace affects to conceal. Near the corner of Canal-street the two got off the pavement, and went into a druggist's store for a cream-soda and a dash of hock.

In the place were several customers. All the drug-clerks, (you know how "heavy" they get up their hair, in the trade, and how they use perfumes!) were deeply intent on a lady patron.

Judge how they stared when she whirled round her ample dress (Arnold, Constable & Co., or Stewart, and not any common stuff) and came over to our two strollers.

"Why, Mr. Forster!" said she, squeezing up her lips to make the words finer, "what a pleasure to see you brightening the day with your presence!"

With that she gave the latter of our acquaintances her hand.

I tell you she was all there.

Lilac gauze dress over a white underskirt, a little short in front to let foot come out and show about an inch of fine white above the temptingest boot that ever created a commotion when she got out of a car and the crinoline was bent out of shape in the door-way. A red shawl worked with black, with a black and gold fringe. A white bonnet with a whole hot-house of flowers atop, and about an Atlantic Cable in length of ribbons cherry color. Imagine a fancy face, making up in a "wish you could, eh?" expression for lack of charm, and there you have her.

"You've said just what I was going to tell you, Miss——"

"Howard," whispered she, like a stage prompter.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Howard," said Lawrence Forster. "The fact is I have bad memory for names, though first-rate for faces—but who could forget yours!"

Oh, didn't her face break into a smile—of the best kind?

The poor apothecary clerks felt like drowning Forster in sulphuric, muriatic, vitriolic, or some other kind of Sa-tannic acid.

At last, Miss Howard, pressed Lawrence's hand most endearingly, let her

eyes glance all around the room, stowed away the bottle of perfume she had purchased (we'll go ten to one the fellow that served her was too tickled to make the right change) and floated out of the room in a way that made the policeman open his eyes on the corner and caused the glazed-capped news-boy to exclaim:

"Hey, Bill! one of No. 27's—I don't think so!"

Miss Howard sailed down past Allen's window and across Lispenard street on her little expedition.

Meanwhile, Forster and his friend came out and went their way towards Bleeker.

"Look here, Lon," said the other, "why didn't you introduce me to that lady?"

"Look here, Nathan Getchem," replied Miss Howard's friend. "Last Sunday I wanted you to come see the fun, on Staten Island with Black Joke's excursion, and you wouldn't come."

"I didn't dare!"

"'Fraid of the old man. And you said because it would ruin you if it got around that you were in company with what you call 'bad girls.'"

"Well, Miss Howard surely isn't——"

"Miss Howard?—Miss anything?" cried Forster. "Why, the worst bit of calico that ever an engine runner knew would be an angel to that woman! Bless your green spectacles, she's been on the make ever since there was a Spring street, and I don't remember them times!"

"She looked so——"

"Get out! You ought to see her picture when it hasn't Gouraud's Medicated Bloom, or Phalon's Paphian Lotion or flour on! I tell you what, Nate! if I'd lived all my life in York and not have known more'n you do, I'd have jumped off a Union Ferry boat and fed the Fulton Market eels long before this! That's me!"

In this manner the knowing youth lectured his companion.

At Amity street they stopped.

"I've given you a good walk," said Lawrence laughing. "It will stretch your legs a bit. Here's my stage. I've got to take Carrie a riding on the Bloomingdale to-night. Take care of yourself, old boy!"

And he jumped into a stage turning the corner, bought a newspaper of the boy who was cutting behind, and was on his way to Seventh Avenue before a foreigner could wink.

Young America, you know.

In the meantime, Nathan Getchem reflected.

"I won't go up to Christern's to buy a Spanish dictionary, as I told Lon," muttered he. "If I do, I'm——"

It wasn't a Sunday School word that he spoke, under his breath.

With that he turned down.

After a few steps he went into the marble hall of the Winter Garden.

The photograph, "imperial by Frederick's," of Lucille Western or some other star equally attractive, comprised the present bent of Nathan's mind.

He bounced out of the hall.

"I'll have an ice, and cool off," thought he.

But luck took him into ——, and who should be at the counter but that delicious brunette.

So he stayed at the counter and bought some candies that he did not want to have the chance of pressing her finger tips as she handed him the packet and took change.

But the curly hair had "been there before," and he did not make much by that move.

"Dash it!" cried he, pacing the flags hastily. "I don't see how all the fellows do it. I never have pretty girls stopping me in the street and making everybody envy me. I'll have a night of it, no matter what the old man says!"

Nathan Getchem was an only son of Habakkuk Getchem, banker in William street just off Wall, and so near the Custom House that a stone could not be dropped out of the window without injuring an U. S. official.

The old man possessing a son precisely a chip of the aged block, in describing the latter we hit the predecessor more or less fully.

Nathan had been brought up first in a collegiate institute over in Jersey. But, one night the boys raided into an orchard extensively, and he, the only one having ready money, bought the surplus fruit with a single eye to his play-mates' good when they should get over their present belly-aches. Unfortunately for the promising spec, the teacher was so bothered by the farmers that he instituted a search, and as Master Getchem's trunk was found chockfull of apples, their quantity ruined him as one deprived Mother Eve of ground-rent in Paradise. Nathan was expelled, a rattan representing the flaming sword.

On returning to the parental domicile, he was sent to public school. He got along pretty well for the time, getting waylaid and whaled after school because he had a way of "boning on fellers"—(more plainly, tale-telling)—and currying favor with the master. In Fortieth street school he thus came to grief.

One morning, the teacher of the first class, of the name of K— by the way, asked the boys generally to lend him an atlas.

"Here's a g'ography," said one boy.

And he handed down the "Morse's." It wasn't his own—catch a schoolboy lending a teacher his own—but Master Getchem's.

The latter could not stop the delivery.

The teacher reached down his arm, when the atlas slipped between his fingers and sprawled out on the floor.

The boys laughed, Getchem howled, the master said:

"Pick up the book!"

The spoils were laid on the table.

There were one or two caricatures, a song about the teacher with chorus:—"Drive the monster from our school!" a drawing of a man letting slip the dogs of war and exclaiming "K—, Towser!"

The teacher's face grew red as fire.

The rest of the papers were a lot of slips.

All were, though with varied names, to this purport:

"Please excuse John Ryder for been absent. He was sick with tooth-ache. His mother, Sarah Ryder."

Master Getchem had been lining his pocket with the proceeds from selling the excuses that had so often got the truant and "late" scholar off.

Nathan was sent out into the big room. And of all the tannings that ever a boy received, from the days of King Nim-rod to those of Rod-erick of Spain, this was one.

Mr. Getchem vowed that the bruising of his son should cost the inflictor heavy. He went to law about it, and got the Daily Scarifier to give an editorial each day on the American Rugbiensis Etonian flogging-place of a ward-school.

But Mr. F—, the principal, locked himself up in the book-room with a dictionary and penned such a letter about "forgery" and "inclining twigs" to the Triboons, which printed it, that the case never came to court.

To come back to the Russ of Broadway, knowing now all that Getchem ever did celebrated, we continue with him to promenade.

He had just got down to Grand street when music was audible, above great cheering.

The procession was coming up.

Nathan took a look around.

There were plenty of pretty girls in the mass that the police were pressing back.

But as he was on the walk, their faces were from him.

At all hazards, he plunged in, and soon found himself within three of the front.

He felt that he had got beside a mass of loose folds of a dress, redolent with scent, but he did not like to look at her until he had recovered a little equanimity after the struggle to get so placed.

At length, as he had to glance past her to see the procession, he took a survey.

"Miss Howard!" ejaculated he.

It was the acquaintance of Lon Forster.

She had gone down as far as Stewart's old store, but had failed in catching any flats that time.

In desperation she had ventured into the throng, under the "go it, lemons" principle.

She graciously recognised the merchant's son.

He went on to explain why his friend had not made him known to her, and all that.

By the time that the detachment of police had marched by, heading the columns, Nathan found himself quite at home with the woman.

When the first band had let everybody know that "under the willows the golden-haired child was reposing," Nathan found that it there was so little room that his foot rested all its length against the not too-large-one of Miss Matilda Howard. That was the full name she traveled under.

By the half hour that the soldiery had marched past, "Matty Howard," found that the heat of the throng and the fear of having her apparel injured, compelled her to lift her dress pretty well around about her.

When a sudden surging of the populace induced Nathan to lean in towards his neighbour, he trembled like a leaf, when he found that his knee was pressing hers!

She did not draw back, because she could not, and he soon had the satisfaction of judging whether her limb was approximate in length to his own.

When the Father Matthew Benevolent Society straggled along, Nathan found that his fair charge could only be steadied by his arm under her shawl around her waist.

And when the Stevedore's and Longshoremen's Mutual Assistance Association went by, Nathan wished to his ideal heaven of Wall Street that the procession would be prolonged by torchlight!

Or that like theatrical ones, the head should join the tail and solve perpetual motion by coming round again!

At length, the carriages that the city has to pay a trifle for, to give the the Aldermen and Common Councilmen an airing, appeared. There was a movement in the crowd, the police resisted.

A girl, having one of the force tread on her toes, began to exercise her tongue in Water Street style, on her assailant.

She heaped him with abuse from the glaze of his cap to his boots, from locust to brass buttons. He tried to arrest her. Half a dozen fellows put in their appearance, and gave her a chance to clear out.

A number of the officials ran to their brother's assistance.

A voice cried out, in the most taunting tone imaginable:

"Look who sassed the peeler!"

They made a charge in the direction of the speech.

That was where Nathan and Matty Howard stood.

The crowd broke away from them right and left, and left them alone in an open space.

Oh such a roar of laughter as went up.

"Some pantalettes!" yelled a boy.

"Ain't it warm, down there!" cried a man in a window over the way.

Nathan let the woman evaporate her own route, he struck for the side walk and dived into the first oyster cellar he found.

When he had simmered down sufficiently to feel about him, he discovered that his watch, chain, seals and all, had not accompanied him in his flight.

Of course, Matty Howard had not seen anything of it. But if Nathan had gone down Canal Street, he might have seen her "fancy" man pawn a timepiece at Moneypenny's, that had an unpleasant resemblance to the juvenile banker's chronometer.

This sobered the latter. The oysters weighed so heavy on him that he had to drink a brandy-smash before he left the "Oyster Bed."

He had taken too much pepper-sauce with the bivalves, or, at all events, something was wrong with him. He found that he had to lounge about, in accordance with his vow of making a night of it.

Once he was going down to Barnum's (unconsumed, then) and pretend to be a countryman and let himself be captivated by some roving paper-box-making girl who might be in there alone, by a miracle. Only he was afraid.

Once again he was about taking a hack and bidding the Jehu set him down at the door of the liveliest kind of gayest house that he knew. Only he was more afraid.

It came on dark, and the gas was being lit.

"By——ahem!" said he, catching his breath as he almost swore. "I'll go and see the pretty female waiter girls!"

These were a new institution at that day.

So he glanced at 485 as he strolled. But a group of dusty-looking boys at the doorway, quizzing the photograph of Zoe the Cuban Sylph and Marietta Zanfretta, frightened him. They might be "bold gamboliers" and his pocket might suffer as his fob had.

The awful stories of the Gaieties kept him off the "shilling side."

Bound to go somewhere, he went up the steps of the dark fronted Chinese Museum.

The Melodeon.

Barnum's at present.

Nathan put on the nearest approach to a jaunty air that he could pluck up, and pushed up to the ticket-taker's box.

"Ain't you going to pay me in, Charley?" said a girl at the place to him.

She was so homely that he pretended he hadn't heard her, got his card and went in.

No use saying much of the smoked-filled hall, ugly as sin compared to its prettiness when the Buckleys' Serenaders had it.

The usual train of long-legged ballet-girls, tenth-rate nigger minstrels, Irish, Dutch and sentimental songs, and plenty of drum in the orchestral music.

Nathan got a cigar and a bottle of heaven knows what, though it was called wine, and let the insinuating girl keep the change, which she wouldn't have given him any how.

He even caught something of the general feeling and found himself hammering on the table for the Queen of Song to encore and have another rush-in and drag-out of Annie Laurie, a ballad in which she ably illustrated what Maxwellton's brays were.

In the midst of his "enjoyment," he suddenly noticed that all eyes were turned towards one of the private boxes.

"Whew—ew—ew!" whistled a fireman near Nathan. "Ain't we Spring-streeters coming out!"

"Knocks spots out of Green and Mercer," coincided another of 21's, Old Fult's crew.

"Who's it with that girl?" asked the first of the red shirts.

"Don't remember? He's that muff that wanted to wear one of our hats in the last Triennial Turn out!"

"Oh I know. The feller that Little Redney licked at the 'false alarm,' in Duane Street awhile ago?"

"Aha—that's him."

Getchem was staring, as well he might.

The private box occupant was Mattie Howard. She had another bonnet on and a bran new shawl, but there was no mistake.

Getchem was all aboard.

How could he cut out her companion? If "Little Redney" had punished him, might not he be able to affect the man on his muscle and bluff him off if he tried to talk beg on intrusion.

But a sneaky style of thing was more to the banker's taste.

He noticed that the partition was frail between the boxes, and that the next to Matty's was vacant.

The bad liquor he had imbibed had flown up into his head.

He called one of the waiters, distinguished by a bunch of ribbons, largest size, on back shoulder and said:

"Hire me that box there, take a bottle of something a fellow can drink to it, and fetch a tumbler for yourself!"

In a little while, he had the desired quarter to himself. The waiter girls gave him up as a beat and let him alone.

With his ear against the partition, he could hear all Miss Howard had to say.

She was not deep on conversation.

But perfidious woman! what friend Nathan heard was a startler.

"I think you're coming the double over me, Bill," said Matty to her mate. "You must have got more'n sixteen dollars for that watch! It was heavy as a paving-stone!"

The width that Getchem's eyes opened to!

"If you don't believe me, better go ask the ticket-giver yourself or got of my rooms and look in my box for the pledge," responded the amiable Bill.

"Come, don't you get the steam up only just on that, Bill," said Matty. "You're wrathful all the time now! are you jealous, or what?"

"I'd on'y like ter know how you warmed up to a fellow so he'd let a watch go so easy as all that!"

Matty laughed, as "fond recollection recalled to her view," not a moss-grown iron-bound bucket, but a "spoon."

Getchem moaned.

"I might have taken the eyelids off of him," said Matty. "You never set eyes on such a flat in all the days of your life!"

"Let's hear."

She told him all, and with all the particulars, as the paper reporters say.

Every time she dilated on her gaiter against Getchem's patent leathers, and a little higher against the banker's knee, the listener felt as if a red-hot poker was preparing him for a Son of Malta.

At the conclusion thereof, he emitted a groan so terrible that Bill and his girl jumped up.

Bill drew breath first.

"Thunder! somebody sick in the next box!"

As he laid his hand on the partition, aboard, imperfectly set up, tumbled down.

The pale, disconcerted face of Getchem appeared to Miss Howard like a reproachful phantom.

"The bloke with the thimble," whispered she to her pal

On which the two dashed out of the box, quick time. And off they went, not stopping till they had got well down Spring Street without any pursuers being seen.

Meanwhile, Lea's head waiter capped the climax by making Nathan pay for knocking down the plank and scaring away customers.

Poor Getchem got out on the sidewalk amid a roar of laughter.

He jumped into the first uptown stage that rattled up.

"I'll go home," muttered he. "I can't have worse luck there."

That was all he knew about it.

## CHAPTER II.

THE BLACK-EYED BEAUTY WITH HER EYES SHUT. THE COST OF A KISS. THE KNIFE. THE MIDNIGHT FLIGHT. THE HARBOR.

A rich parlor, filled with all the things that the upholsterer, could think of to add to the bill.

The hour being late, the guests had departed.

The furniture was uncovered though, and its mahogany face gleamed on piano, what-not, writing-desk, and chair.

On the largest table, the only light burned.

It was a bronze figure of an Hour, the torch being the jet of gas, led by an india-rubber tub from the chandelier overhead.

The shade was one of those figured composition ones, and let a pale tint diffuse itself around.

She chief thing that it fell upon was something so fascinating that you would let your eyes rest on it to the exclusion of all else.

She was about eighteen, this girl.

She was in the rocking chair, and fast asleep.

The book had dropped from her hand which itself hung over one arm of the seat.

Her limbs had been negligently thrown one across the other, and the lower had been on a foot stool.

But the latter had slid away under her gentle pressure, and extended the arc that the outline traced.

This accident had also disarranged and held back the folds of her dress, of a dark warm red.

On her feet were light blue silk gaiters, which had lately been moving in the waltz like fragments of clouds over the sky.

They fitted exquisitely, as if they were trying to render their little prisoners still more slender and lithe.

As the line ran upward from the ankle, it disappeared in the shadow deepening under the curving sweep of the robe. There was the least hint of a lace cloud, and there the graceful contour hastened to disappear.

But by the attitude, unconsciously assumed, and by what we are going to see further on, the marvel of beauty that this creature was, will be imagined.

Around her waist was a brief circling ribbon, whose broad ends fluttered in the slightest breath.

She had let down her gauze shoulder ruffs so as to protect her arms, but their meshes hid not at all the full, finely finished, rounded arms, only matched in plumpness, delicacy and alluringness by the shoulders they melted into.

The neck was the one alone for the head above.

Now it lay back, so that the refined rays glanced along the countenance instead of upon it.

She wore her hair in Grecian curls, as that style of headdress is called. Not that it mattered, for she was one of those that are themselves the attraction like the love birds who need not bird-of-paradise plumage.

Her breath came through the two lines of teeth as peacefully as a child's.

Her complexion was of that warm darkness that America possesses to vie with Spain or Italy. Compared to the milk and roses, this is living, loving woman beside the statue under the icicle in Dian's porch.

Involuntarily, your hat would come off now, and you yourself, noiselessly approaching, would bend the knee to take up that pendant hand by the finger tips and leave a kiss of homage on the velvet smoothing down from the dimpled wrist.

Deep was her slumber.

She had returned to the parlor after the usual comment on the departed guests had been uttered, to take a book up to her room with her.

But another book had attracted her; she sat down to finish it, and—here she is at rest over it.

So profound was this repose that the door opened widely without a movement on her part.

"Oh!" said Nathan Getchem.

It was he who put his head into the parlor.

How came he there?

No mystery.

It was his father's residence, Madison Avenue, about three blocks from where his friend Lawrence Forster's parents had a mansion.

When Nathan had entered the front door, and hung up his hat, he suddenly remembered something.

He was a little unsteady for he had got out of his reckoning on the way home and been compelled to look in at a saloon 1001 Broadway for a gentle stimulant to prepare him to cross the Square.

"It was a party to-night," mused he. "Good! all the folks are tired and a-bed. They generally leave the wine on the side-board till morning, I'll have a smoke and a drink before I go to bed—before I go to bed."

He was not equal to going up the gorgeously carpeted stairs, shining with brass rods in the beams of the hall lamp.

As he opened the parlor door with a caution that was inherent in him, he started.

"There's a light! is the old man up a-waiting for me?" he wondered.

A glance re-assured him.

And he uttered that "Oh!" which we, with reckless expenditure of paper and ink have set down at full length.

"I never saw Cousin Belle so lovely in my life!"

That was what Mr. Nathan Getchem, Jr., would have said if his emotion at the belle vue presented would have let him speak.

Now, Isabelle Marten was not a cousin of young Getchem. She was a relation, but Mrs. Getchem had adopted her because she wanted a girl in her family, and Nathan's early exploits had not made her very proud and delighted with her son.

We have said how Belle's figure, even though so bewitchingly in position at this time, would have made you or us, dear reader, act towards her.

But Nathan wasn't of our stamp, thanks be given.

The fume of the liquor were driven out of his head by another fire. The incitements of that afternoon in Matty Howard's proximity, the latter ones of the waiter girls and the stage-dancing, recurred to the banker all in a mass.



His eyes scarcely saw at all the sweet face, placid with innocence. Or the pendant arm and the open hand, like an infant's stretched out to pick the carpet's flowers from the woven ground.

They were debased indeed.

All they gloated on was the foot, too good to be set upon his neck, and seeming to spurn the ground that it had to touch to assure you so much of the angel was human.

He crouched down to the ground as he made a cat-like advance.

Had she beheld it, even her bold spirit might have been cowed, it was so horribly determined.

He drew his form to its height, a little stooping even then, and hung over her recumbent body, as it were.

So the forest spider over the butterfly, so the snake on the bough above the pretty bird.

Instinctively he paused and picked up the fallen book.

To his mind, her chance attitude had been intentional, and, consequently the book that had caused it.

When he looked on the title-page, he let it drop in vexation and rage.

Annoyance, because it was merely Lady Fullerton's Lady Bird, and anger because he saw in pencil:

*"With the compliments of*

*LAWRENCE FORSTER."*

Overpowered with his jealousy, if that was the name for it, he gave loosened reins to his passions.

One all-comprising gaze with his bloodshot eyes, and he flung his arms around the sleeper, and his dried lips, which his hot tongue strove vainly to moisten, pressed Belle's luscious ones so forcibly that her cry of alarm was stifled in its birth.

The contact of the form maddened him.

But she had all the power of the aroused woman.

You may possess the rose, but you must take it when it bends towards you, and let your fingers snap the stem tenderly if cruelly. But grasp the stalk and try to wrench the blossom away, and you'll need iron gloves if you don't wish a bloody hand.

She dashed the face against hers, back with one hand on his throat.

She sprang to her feet, as you may have seen a race-horse do after a fall over the hurdle.

Furious, he grasped the hand that had struck him, and ran his other arm round her waist.

"Don't! Belle! hush! I love you! It's the first kiss ever I had!" gasped he, brokenly.

Her right hand had caught at the table to steady her. It's suddenly flushed surface encountered something cold. It was an ivory paper-knife. She clutched like Lady Macbeth the daggers, and gave her assailant two quick stabs in the chest.

"And it's your last!" screamed she.

At the first blow the rounded end of the knife had glanced, run into a button-hole of the vest and snapped unevenly, leaving a jagged point.

Hence the second blow was as severe as a stiletto would have dealt.

She released her hold for she could not pull the splintered bone out of the wound so deep.

Oh! that elephant, whose tusk was separated from his other bones, to furnish that knife, might rest easy now. He never felt such agony when the rifle ball or native's spear laid him low as Nathan, writhing as he swooned on the carpet.

Belle stood over him.

Her dress had been torn in the strife. But his eyes were closed and what they exposed of perfectioned limb was not for their sight.

Her gaze was on that dark stream that bubbled up around the white bone in the perforation, and ran down his side on the floor.

There was a variegated bird woven in the carpet. Its long bill seemed to drink greedily of the pool of blood.

Not a sound in the house betokened an alarm.

The only noise was the ticking of the clock on the mantle, and of the little watch which had been pulled out of the pocket in her ribbon girdle in the struggle.

She thrust it into her bosom nervously.

Then she turned away from the ghastly carrion at her feet.

"Poor dependant on these people's charity!" murmured Belle. "Their guests laugh with me, chat with me, hear me sing and play, but don't think of marrying me—because the old man will leave his son all the money!"

Bitter was her tone.

"There's only Lon Forster ever gave me a good word from school days up. He'll be sorry when he hears of this! That's all!"

She looked down at the motionless.

"You cur!" said she between her teeth. "I'm glad I've paid you for what I've suffered before this through you."

She put her hands to her eyes, but they were as hot as her feverish face.

"I won't cry!" said she, trembling all over.

And she stamped her foot.

Quickly she felt her pockets.

Nothing in them beyond her handkerchief.

"I daren't go up to my room," murmured she.

She hesitated.

Then she hastily bent over the fallen wretch, knelt beside him and turned his pockets inside out with a celerity that Miss Howard, all professional as she was, might have envied.

Nathan hadn't been cleaned out.

Even his little spree had left his pocket-book not so bad as that that the elephant trod on.

"Enough!" said she rising.

She lightly but swiftly travelled over the room.

Only a woman would have taken the things she did.

First a heavy India scarf that kept the dust off a costly curiosity.

Folded as she knew how, and tucked in all around, it made her dress seem a high-necked one.

A large shawl that had been brought in to be lent to a guest who had rejected it, she swung into the air and let fall upon her shoulders. She could pull it up on her head or bonnet.

With a few pins her skirts were taken up into a walking dress.

All this change in a moment.

As she paused after it, a sound caused her a start.

It came from the floor.

Belle set her teeth.

"Not dead yet—I'll—"

Then she stopped in her advance.

"Let him live! it's no good end he'll come to!"

She picked up the book on the floor. She tore out the leaf that had the writing on it, folded it up and put it in her bosom.

"The only present Lon ever made me," murmured she.

She went to the door, pausing there to listen.

The only sound was behind her, a gurgling in the throat of the wounded man.

It might be the death rattle or the renewed breathing of life returned.

It spurred her on.

She swung the door to, darted down the entry, and opened the front door as quickly as she could.

The moon was shining.

She rushed over to the opposite walk where the shadow lay.

As she reached it, a cry behind her arrested her steps for a space.

"Murder!"

The parlor window of Getchem's house was flung open and the startled face of a servant who had chanced to be up, had heard the door close, and had ventured into the room, now appeared in the square.

"Murder!"

Belle caught up her dress and, flew over the flags like Atalanta.

But the cry, the third time, found echoes.

Belle heard the halloo after her as if the stones were calling out against her.

She turned the first corner at hazard.

As she did so, she saw that four or five men, though a full block behind, were in pursuit, a policeman in their midst.

Belle was a finely made woman, we have said.

She would have laughed at anyone who might have feared she could be "danced down" by any of her age. She had been first of the foremost among the women climbing the Catskills or the White Mountains.

But she found it hard to run at the pace forced upon her.

Still she kept on, not straight ahead as a male would do, but taking every turn like a fox or a woman.

The hue and cry increased.

She could judge by the clatter that more than a score were hunting her.

Only one or two persons had been in the deserted streets in her route, fortunately.

They conceived her mad and, anyhow, she was past them before they could think of checking her.

Her breath was coming thick and short now. She felt no longer that joyful freedom as she stretched her limbs that almost made the race a fierce pleasure at the outset.

She was bounding down a street.

All her chasers were round the corner in the avenue.

Before her the moonlit side was untenanted.

But she dared not keep on that.

She crossed the roadway in three magnificent sweeping springs, her hair loose, her shawl flying behind her.

We'd have kissed Belle's hand when she was in repose—we'd kiss her feet now that she is in motion.

Poor little feet, too!

The thin silk had not long resisted the contact with the bluestone and granite.

If they who ran after had been Indians or blood hounds, they might have run her to cover by the red marks she left. Suddenly she saw on a doorstep, the high flat stone capping the stoop of a brown stone house, a man.

Her strength was failing her, it was almost as if life itself were running out.

She collected the little power remaining.

She rushed on, turned, and ran up the steps two at a time.

The man was in the shadow, and just putting his night key in the little hole.

She fell on her knees, the rest of her person lengthened out in pure exhaus-

tion, and only kept her head erect by resting it on the arm that caught at the man's coat.

"Mercy!" moaned she, unable to speak loud. "Save me!"

The man gave a great start, and his hand was drawn back from the door to support the girl.

But it had already done its work, for the turned key lifted the catch, and the door opened.

A flood of light from the lamp in the passage deluged the whole stoop.

"Oh!" burst from Belle's throat as if her heart were in it.

"Good God!"

"Oh! Save me! Lon, Lon Forster! Save me, and I'll be your slave!"

At the end of the street, a loud clamor of fifty voices:

"Murder!"

Here a hoarse whisper.

Lawrence did not hesitate an instant.

He caught Belle in his arms, dragged her, carried her, bore her somehow into the passage, and softly but swiftly set the door ajar.

He pressed her close to his breast.

Her nerveless arms fallen over his shoulders, too weak to clasp his neck; her bosom heaving slowly, her heart leaping a hundred times a minute, her limbs almost twined round his to support themselves.

These formed an appeal that he could not resist.

Outside a hundred voices shouting, and a dozen windows rattling open.

"Poor Belle! it's all right!" said Lawrence.

But there was a stir in his house at the disturbance without.

They must not remain there.

Lawrence lifted the girl in his arms, and mounted the stairs.

Two pair of feet on them would have told all.

His heavy tread was single; that was the important point.

As he reached the second floor, his father's and his mother's voice in their room there arose.

"Who's that?"

"You, Lawrence?"

Belle pressed her lips to her bearer's ear.

"For God's sake——"

"Peace!" said he in the same tone. "All right?"

Then he lifted his voice.

"Yes, father! only me, mother."

"What's that noise in the street—a fire?"

"No, sir! a crazy woman or something or other, I think."

"Good night!"

"Good night."

He passed up the next flight, and entered his two rooms, or rather one of them.

He deposited his burden on the sofa, and lit the gas.

It was his sitting-room.

A few pictures, a few books, a thick carpet!

Belle had not fainted. Lawrence had brought the cologne bottle to her, but she put it aside with her hand.

Then he pulled a footstool to the ottoman, and sat down by her head, his elbow on the couch that she rested on.

"Will you tell me all now, or shall it be to-morrow?" asked he.

After what he had done, he might easily expect no half-way confession.

She told him the whole.

We would that we had the power to narrate a story as clearly and yet as modestly as she did her turning-point in life.



They spoke in the lowest of whispers for fear of being overheard.

"Poor Belle!" said Lawrence, taking her hand in his and stroking it softly as a girl might have done. "I wish I'd been there, and I'd have given friend Nate such a punch in the eye that—I beg your pardon, Belle. There, don't fret! he won't die—they'll hush it up. You're all right!"

Disjointed as his consolations were, Belle was charmed to hear them.

There was a strong spell in their strange conversation.

She lying at full length on the cushions, her head, heart, bruised feet throbbing.

He by her side, his face very close to hers, to let each lose no words in the faint whispering.

"Belle," said he at length, "do you remember our going to school together and the singing-days when the girls came up to the boy's room and you and I always found a way of getting the same desk together."

The inexpressibly entralling smile that was hers.

He could scarcely refrain from kissing her just to drink that smile off her lips.

"Who'd have thought this, then, eh?"

"How I used to look for those days to come round, my only friend Lon," murmured she earnestly. "If the rules would only let us know more of one another!"

"Ah!"

In one of their pauses, the clock in the parlor below, and those in other rooms, struck two.

Lawrence rose.

He could have talked broad to Matty Howard and her class till all was blue, but he hemmed and hawed in broaching the subject on hand.

"You must need rest," said he. "Your shoes are all torn, too. And your hair down. You'll find my toilet apparatus quite complete in that other room."

She rose to her feet.

They pained her now that the excitement had gone.

At the door she stopped.

"You'll find matches on the table straight before you," said Lawrence.

She crossed the room on tip-toe.

"Thank you. Good night!"

Her voice was so low that the sounds came like a fairy's breath to his eager ear.

In another second, the door was closed between them.

Lawrence flung himself upon the sofa and kissed the cushion where her cheek had warmed it and where a tear had fallen.

"Poor girl! what the devil will I do if she's killed young Getchem, the rascal!" thought Forster, preparing himself for slumber where he was.

But, tired out though he had imagined himself, he never was more wide-awake in his life.

Cousin Carrie that he had taken out for a moonlight drive, and whom he was almost engaged to, was nothing compared to Belle.

Belle had been a princess when she was all dressed up for a ball at the Academy or to go to Gottschalk's concerts. She was an empress when torn dress, tags of rent lace, disheveled hair let her natural beauty spurn aside art.

Lawrence heard the clocks ring out four and his reverie had been unbroken.

Nor had the tenant of the next room been less wakeful.

When she had entered the bed chamber and lit the gas, her first emotion was one of gratefulness at her deliverer's delicacy.

"Ah!" thought she, "I recal once how I was reading romance and I thought that the picture of the good knight Honor was like Lon Forster's self."

She would not insult him by locking the door. She saw that in one of his

unaccountable movements, he had put the key on her side. "The dear!" murmured she. "How can I repay him for this?"

She lay down.

One would have thought her sure to rest.

Not so. The violent passions of enmity had gone, but a stronger one had reinaugurated the strife.

She, too, heard the hour of four sounded.

She stepped on to the floor.

She knelt down, buried her face in her pillow as if to cool its burning surface, and to drown her words from human ear.

"Oh! Heaven hear the last prayer that I with a pure heart may address thee. Bless Lon Forster, spite of wicked me, spite of all!"

A few minutes after, Lawrence, dropping off into a cat's nap, heard a faint voice.

"Isn't it cold there, dear Lon!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh, Cleopatras that destroy the pearl!

Had Belle Marton waited, waited only a few hours, she would not have blasted her whole career.

In the morning Lawrence would have said to her:

"Belle, I have loved you dearly since I can remember.

"In school, the only pure pleasure I ever knew was when you and I got together.

"Afterwards, I never tasted such sweets as the few times a month we met, in a friend's house, our own, in the street or theatre.

"And if you could have delighted me so with such little bits of your company, now and then, what mayn't I expect if you're mine for life?

"I know you're poor, so to say, and lonely, but I've been thinking of you all night and have found your good qualities outnumber every hundred dollars I could hope for.

"I've got a kind father and a still kinder mother, who are letting me do as I like, and they won't refuse my owning a treasure in you.

"Will you be my wife?

"If not, say so. I'm off to Washoe or down south, wherever there's busy life. I won't look in on York again, though I love it, unless you want a fellow that will go at any man of my size or over that offers to harm you, Belle."

When he woke up the next day, she was sound asleep beside him.

He gently disengaged her embrace, and raised himself at arm's length and gazed at her long and steadily.

"Poor thing!" muttered he. "I thought you who could kill a man for laying finger on you would have made a wife beyond temptation!"

"What are you saying, Lon?" Belle asked, as she awoke blushing.

"That you're a darling, you Black-eyed Beauty!"

### CHAPTER III.

BULLY BILL'S NEW GAME. "PALE-FACE" BEATS THE RED. A GLIMPSE OF THE PANEL GAME.

A couple of years have past.

In a room in a house in Prince, just below Broadway, are a man and a woman.

Both are a little the worse for wear since we last saw them.

One is Bill Roves, the consort of Matty Howard, and the other that individual herself.

Bill looks hard.

Well he may. He is only three days since released from Moyamensing Prison. He had been caught passing counterfeits in Philadelphia.

Matty has been ill for the last half year and all her money went to bring her round.

Her sickness and poverty have kept her out of liquor and, wasted as is her face, it looks better than in other days.

"Bill," said Matty imploringly. "Don't you have anything to do with Eldridge Street Sarah?"

"Oh, bother! She's a good sort. I'd been 'spotted' over at the ferry, only she twigged and decoyed the 'cop' up the platform to point her out Newark Avenue.

"Well, go on, then, Bill," said Matty angrily, "and I'll leave my mark on her if I get Sing Sing for it."

Bill chewed his cigar nervously.

"Curse it! I'm played out. You'll never get well, and where the blazes is the 'dough' to come from?" said he brutally.

"I don't know."

"Well, then, you ought to. You gals spend enough to know something about earning cash."

He let some moments pass in silence as he was thinking.

"All your things gone?"

"Long ago, Bill. I tell you I would have died if Mr. Forster had been too proud to answer my appeal to him and come see me."

"Well, won't he come down with any more chink?"

"I wouldn't ask him, now that I am better."

"Trying to come the 'Ledger' sort of virtue, eh, you crazy moth! what's the reason you won't ask him?"

"Because I can't lie to a man like that. I can't say the money is for me when you'd have it."

"Mighty good all at once't, ain't you? Better go to church every Sunday regular!" growled Bill, throwing away his cigar.

"Look here, Matty," said he suddenly. "Do you remember that greenhorn that you lifted the watch from a good while ago, the procession day?"

"Yes, well. I was asking Mr. Forster about him. They're old friends, or rather they were. Forster's down on him now."

"What is he?"

"Rich. He's with his father, Wall Street banker."

"Go away!"

"Yes. Forster pointed me out their advertisement in the Tribune."

"Got a paper? Show me!"

"I think there's one on the window sill. Don't mind upsetting the medicine bottles."

Bill snatched up the paper, turned it inside out and rapidly ran his eyes over the columns until they stopped on:

"NATHAN GETCHEM, SON & Co., Bankers. Government Loan Agents, etc. buy and sell all classes of Government securities at market rates. Gold and stocks bought and sold on favourable terms."

Bill opened his eyes in ecstasy.

"Do you think he was sweet on you, Matty?"

"Shouldn't wonder," returned she.

She'd have been a poor hand at her profession if she had had so little vanity as not to believe what she said.

"Bless you, Matty, its better than striking ile in the Pit Hole Creek!" shouted Bill. "I'll go out and hunt that young beat's name up in the D'rectory, and if we can't rake his pile, I'm only fit for kindling that's all."

"Going to leave me, Bill?" said Matty, rising on her elbow with an effort.

"Rather. Gess you put on the 'pooties,' for you'll have a visitor in the course of to-morrow."

With that, the bully left the house.

\* \* \* \* \*

About seven o'clock the next day, as Nathan Getchem, Jr. was leaving the house to stroll towards the office, the servant gave him a note that the postman had just brought.

Nathan opened it as he walked up the street.

Nathan has not improved since we last saw him.

His dress was a half-way compromise between fashionable and the old merchant of New York cut. His countenance, broadened, close shaven except a sickly moustache, looked cold at first glance, but an evil warmth was under the surface. His dull eyes, too, were shiny like a torpid snakes.

He opened the note carefully. The address was in a handwriting unknown to him.

He was astounded by what he read.

"RESPECTED SIR: You may guess how wretched I am, how lonely, when I appeal to you, one who has suffered by me in the days of my evil-doing."

"You may not remember, it's so long ago, that I was guilty of a crime towards you."

"It was a day of a procession, and you lost your watch."

"I swear to you it dropped into my hand when you were kindly saving my shawl from being torn by the crowd. My sin was in keeping it."

"They tell me I will never leave my sick bed again but the grave is too good for such as me."

"I would be easier with your forgiveness, sir."

"You won't refuse me."

"I—thought by the little I saw of you that you had a good heart."

Yours respectfully,

MATILDA HOWARD.

(3rd floor back. No. — Prince Street.)

"Mr. Nathan Getchem, Jr."

Bully Bill had gone around to the "De Soto," picked up a newspaper reporter who was hanging round the "theatricals" there, and got him to compound the above.

You will notice it is a bit of a "crib" from the sensation novels.

Then Bill had made Matty copy it, and had dropped it into a lamp-post box with his own hands.

"At first, I believed it was something about being seen last Sunday at the Fishing Banks, when I told the old folks I was to Beecher's over in Brooklyn," muttered Robert.

He very clearly recalled the day when he had measured his height by the courtesan's.

"She did look sorry," thought he, "when she saw me at the Melodeon. Perhaps she was only laughing the way she did to throw that jealous companion of hers off the scent. 'Third floor back.' It's plain she's in a poor way now, anyway. Laid up after a fast life, I suppose."

He got into the stage, still meditating.

"I wonder how she looks this day?" continued he. "Worn out or still as dasy as she was then?"

If he was very eager to know, why didn't he go see her? he has the invitation in his pocket.

"If I am caught at it," thought he. "I can vow that I had an idea that she was penitent and might be led back into a moral career!"

That excuse settled it.

It was not the fear of committing wrong, but the dread of being discovered without a cloak.

At Union Park, Nathan got down.

He was too cunning to ever go straight to his own destination.

There were a dozen boys at the hotel corner.

One of them was willing to take a walk down to Wall street, especially as the half-dollar promised inside it was only to be given to the bearer on delivery.

"There!" said Nathan. "I've excused myself to the governor. We'll see Miss Howard now."

In half an hour, he was ushered into the bedroom.

Matty had some experience.

If she had tried to look better, she would have looked worse.

So she let her pale face alone, only flouring it delicately, and sat in the rocking-chair, with pillows behind her head, in a most die-away manner.

As soon as she had dextrously smoothed away a little awkwardness that was natural at opening, she began to tell Nathan the story of her life.

She had judged what species of man he was by this time, and she let him have it spiced hot to the full of his guage.

She knew that such men as he would not care a cent for the girl that had only dipped her foot in the stream, while they would come down heavy to one that had waded into her neck and swam clear over to the other bank.

When she came to the epoch of the meeting with Nathan, Matty spread herself, and grew quite eloquent for the prize she saw glistening.

After she had *accidentally* become possessed of the watch, so confused as she was by Nathan's arm around her, she had been greatly pained.

She would have returned it, but her friend Bill had unluckily met her and forced it away from her.

"Oh, yes, sir, when you heard me talking so gay at the Melodeon, I was only doing it for fear of him. He was a dreadful fellow and very jealous of me!" said Matty.

She glanced at her hearer to see how he would take it, and added:

"I don't see what there is in me for a man to take notice of!"

Nathan surveyed her.

Her loose dress, without crinoline, showed the not bad outline of her figure.

Her lips were rather red (she had been biting them) and she had twisted them into a pout peculiar to her, a sort of "jump into the car with me and see me home!"

"You wrong yourself, Miss Howard," Nathan hastened to say, and he hitched his chair closer hers.

Then Matty went on to hint that her remorse for having taken advantage of Mr. Getchem's confidence, almost introduced to her by the mutual friend Mr. Forster, was what had really made her go on the tear during the previous year or more.

That torpedo blew up the last ship in Nathan's fleet of defenders.

He did not notice a twitching pain in his breast, where the wound the Black-eyed Beauty had inflicted, was warning him that he was not born to shine among the sex.

In short Matty played her cards like a regular sport.

It came on dark before Nathan was tired of the dialogue.

Though Matty persisted in remonstrating, Nathan would go out and order a supper at the nearest restaurant.

"You want a hearty meal to set you up again," said Getchem. "You shall drink a bottle of wine with me."

So they had supper together.

Truth to tell, Matty did get upset by the drink, which she had not had for so long.

She met Getchem's advances quite in the old style.

The "lawyer" found the difference between such as she and Belle Marton.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the middle of the night had any one been awake, they would have seen a man cautiously open a small door in the wall, and listen to the sleepers breathing.

Assured of safety, the intruder ventured into the room and, with the celerity of an expert, sounded the pockets of some clothes on a chair.

Securing a book he left, as he had entered.

In the adjoining apartment, where a light burnt, he examined the contents and picked out a couple of papers that seemed of value. He unrolled the bank bills, but stopped while selecting some, observing that a slip of paper among them was a copy of their numbers.

"The cautious rogue," muttered Bill Roves, putting all the money back. "Well, I'll make him shell out yet, before I've done with him."

As secretly as he removed the wallet, he replaced it, and went away.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE BLACK-EYED BEAUTY VENTILATING A NEW BONNET AT THE PARK.  
RAISING. AT THE TABLE. A NIGHT SCENE.

It was one of the bright days at the Central Park.  
The brilliant equipages were rolling about among the riders.

But the excitement of the day was one turn out.  
It was a fine carriage and a costly pair of horses, but it was not them alone that people stared at.

On the cushions was an occupant.

Belle Marton, looking her best.

She held her parasol with an all-alluring air, as if to set off the fineness of her hand and the delicacy of her wrist.

The black curls that showed themselves each side of her bonnet front, set off her face, warm with its own richness and with the sun.

She lay back with that air that few ever hit exactly—a little more, and it would be indelicate and look like sleeping, a little less, and one might as well sit upright.

Her lace veil floated back, and her features were exposed so clearly that spectators by the railings could mark the partings of her full lips when she ordered:

"Take the left!" or "John, straight on!" to the driver.

Belle drove some of the equestrians frantic. In vain they rode beside her, as close to the wheels as they dared go. She was very busy studying a tree top or a distant rock.

And when one of the young "squirts," attache of the British Embassy at

Washington and on leave, tried to overpower her by a "Lady's Mile" style of approach, she made his babyish pink skin grow redder than a boiled beet's by the firm, steel-like glance she let him have, straight in his eyes.

He couldn't begin to stand the radiance of those ebony orbs.

Thus she performed the circuit, animated yet calm, observing all but seemingly enwrapped in self.

Only once did she put her handkerchief to her face to conceal emotion.

It was when a carriage passed hers in which she recognised Lawrence Forster.

Two ladies were with him. He saw Belle, but on their account did not notice her.

"Turn round, John" said Belle, sighing. "To the hotel, quick!"

As she let her veil down, and lowered her parasol, she murmured to herself,

"I must have some fun somehow or other. I never see Lon Forster without being clouded. If he only would be with me more!"

Lawrence was not that kind.

He would amuse himself with a woman now and then.

But the only one that he could accept as a constant companion would be a wife.

Belle had thrown away her chance at that.

Forster was not going to make his people shudder by seeing his initials in the Saratoga or Cape May correspondence along with the Black-eyed Beauty's description.

Belle reached the Sainte Royal Hotel, a neat elegant establishment on Broadway not far from Wallack's Theatre, in good time for dinner.

She attired herself with more taste than ever.

She had already startled the hotel by her showiness.

She was given out as a Cuban widow or heiress or something of the like, by the highly respectable gentleman who had introduced her to the proprietor.

But the wicked talkers had wondered at her ignorance of Spanish of that tale were true, and the chambermaids could have made the Court's ears open to marvels if a clever lawyer had cross-questioned them as to what was visible "that morning when you opened the door without knocking, under the impression that the lady had gone out?"

The consequence was that all the married ladies and their daughters kept aloof from Belle.

But then she had their husbands, brothers, and all the bachelors for her.

The wicked devil used to delight in letting her grand eyes rest on Mrs. Smith for a moment just before she would ask Mr. Smith how he had liked the new piece at the Olympic.

"She was there and had seen him, she believed," she would say, in the most honeyed tone.

And poor Mrs. Smith would be compelled to imagine that her good master was a lost sheep.

This evening, Belle "let herself out regardless of expense."

She took wine with everybody, making the females wild at the view of her jewelled hand curved around the thin stem of a fancy glass, while the sleeve, in the act, drooped down gracefully and revealed the arm widening up into the round continued past the dimpled elbow.

She kept up a ceaseless fire of chat.

All that varied modulation on endless themes, in a melodious voice, that the American woman alone excels in.

The French are sketchy, the English dare not leave the few subjects they learnt of in school, others countries' fair are more or less like these.

But Belle rose from this to that.

It was not the butterfly of unequal flight, but a bird of steady wing.

"Yes, Mr. Simpson, I fully agree with you, the ocean is too large for a woman ever to be in place upon!"—"True, Mr. Loudon, I never heard the feeling better explained. As a favor, do write your words down and I'll be so happy to keep them in my portfolio."—"I don't know, sir, truth to tell, whether I like No One to Love better than Under the Willows—they're both pretty! but as the former is by an English composer, of course, love of country forces me to believe the other cream to milk compared to it!"—"General Sherman not a great soldier? Oh! now! when he makes so poor a picture! I've always noticed that the men who look well in photographs never do much in the world!"—"Yes, horrid; that railroad disaster! I shudder to read them after the thrilling event that good Mr. Smith was so kind as to narrate to his lady and myself last evening!"

The gentlemen were overjoyed.

Those who had appointments for the night, put them off.

The hotel proprietor, a Frenchman, was delighted. He might have been heard felicitating himself in some such terms as these:

"It put me in mind of the Quartier Saint Germain, by blues! She-to-the-black eyes so bright make the gentlemen drink wine like water! I don't care for Meeses Smeet and her frien's, what they say. No! by ten thousand names of a pipe, no, no, no!"

In the meantime, the guests had adjined to the parlor.

Belle had kept quiet for a little while, playing the five and six-spots, and holding back the face-cards.

Miss Melinda Smith thrummed the piano and let the little world know her musical ideas upon the subject of some rosebud that preferred to die on the bush to being snipped off with scissors and being flung in a bouquet to an actress.

Miss Dora Ginkings sang her opinion of one of those Drummer Boys who are supposed to expend their lung-power in singing about home on the battlefield, instead of hollering: "Hay, you bloats with that ambulance, come over here, won't yer? and don't be all night!"

At length, Mr. Simpson stepped out of the window, where he had been conferring with half a dozen gentlemen, under pretence of looking out on Broadway.

He came over to Belle, who was occupying the whole of a sofa and bowed as a hatchet falls—that is, "first chop."

Would Miss Marton be so overpoweringly gracious as to get up from where she was sitting so comfortable and sit on the piano stool where she might have the pleasure of the gas in her eyes, and the cold pedal against her thin shoes?

He did not use those self-same words exactly, but in truth it was the same thing.

Miss Marton would.

Rather.

It was all that Belle had been waiting for.

First she had to send a servant to her room for the particular music she wished.

Meanwhile Miss Dora Ginkings was pleased to go in once more on the War Lyrics.

Belle liked that, for it was like giving a person a cooking apple to eat before he should have the Morris' White peach.

The sheet of music was brought to her.

It was a piece that had a history of its own.

Composed for a favourite and celebrated foreign vocalist, a musical American who had heard it in the select circles of London, had been so impressed by it that he transferred his impressions to paper. The copy crossed the Atlantic therefore a unique.

One of Belle's admirers had made her a present of it. She could play well, but her voice was so splendid that it drowned the piano, as it should.

Only to see her and hear her revel in her power.

At first she began softly, and there were even smiles between Mrs. Ginkings and Mrs. Smith at that bold thing putting herself in comparison with their daughters.

But gradually Belle gave herself full sway.

It was like the brooklet expanding into the sweeping river.

She indulged in no prolonged trills to break that evenness which is far more powerful.

She even ran off the set down score and let her thought, whatever it was, translate itself into melody.

Insensibly, the tones effected her, and speaking of love as the composition did, she involuntarily thought of Lon, seen that day.

On touching that key, she ascended from her excessive sweetness to a flow of highest enchantment.

We who know, could have traced all the emotions of that woof of joy tracked by the warp of dishonour, its price, of that night of her past.

But the listeners could not dream of this.

They were filled with surpassing music.

Tears came to the eyes of some; all thrilled as if the ivory slats she pressed were keys of an electric battery.

As she let her breath expire in one swelling note, and her hands fell by her side, they could have fallen at her feet and, at her command, tossed Mrs. Smith, Ginkings and the rest out of the windows on the awnings and people below.

The usual compliments were felt to be unequal, and the rediest speaker in the group stammered as he led Belle to her sofa.

"You were too good, Miss Marton," observed her cavalier, "You are actually weeping."

A tear was glistening on her cheek.

"All stuff!" whispered Mrs. Smith to her neighbour. "I'm sure now that the wretch has been on the stage!"

This triumph routed Belle's enemies horse and foot.

The married dames trotted off with their mates.

The bachelors supped in the parlor with Belle.

There were four of them.

With her feet she, at the head of the table, touched the two farthest from her, under it.

With her hand she kept those nearer her in delight.

The fact was that she was long in doubt which should be her favourite.

She had determined to throw over the person who had the permission of paying her hotel and dress bill.

"Tired of him," was her reason.

Finally she determined on Mr. Felix.

A merchant of Beaver street.

She was surer of his amount of wealth.

When the party had to break up, Belle whispered to Felix.

"My room—about two—careful!"

But another had heard the invitation.

\* \* \* \* \*

A lace shrouded couch in a purfumed darkened boudior.

A stealthy foot fall approaching it.

And suddenly a man laying his hand on another man!

An oath.

"For her sake quiet!"

But the latter corner, furious with the double thought of a woman's faithlessness and a rival's victory, had grasped the earlier rival by the arm and so forcibly that the latter could not refrain from a cry of pain.

And he up fist and struck the other back.

Mr. Felix, trying to steady himself by the curtain, drew it and the canopy above with him in his fall.

Belle leaped to the carpet, and huddled on her attire.

She dashed the drawer of her bureau open and rapidly turned the jewelry into her pockets.

"Curses on you that enjoyed me! and on you, spoil-sport!" screamed she as she thrust aside both the assailants and, shawling herself as she descended, ran down the stair.

The two men were rolling on the carpet in a fierce contest.

The whole house was alarmed and all that were up, hastened to the scene of noisy strife.

When Belle had reached the private room below, she saw, with gladness that the porter was fast asleep there.

She pulled back the catch by instinct rather than from knowledge how to work it, and boldly stepped out on the flag stones, chilly even that summer night to her naked feet.

"Curse them again!" murmured she, looking up and down the street.

She dared not go up on Broadway where she would be stopped, but glided, crouching close in by the railings, down towards Washington Parade Ground where she could likely find a hack.

She found one round the first turning.

The man was asleep on his box.

Belle stepped lightly in.

She meant to finish dressing and then reveal herself.

She opened the bundle of things she had caught up, and with all expedition, completed her toilet.

"I'm lucky off," said she, "I couldn't stand their looks in the morning when I'd have had to go."

Ready to confront the driver, she was about to arouse him, when she stopped and shrank back.

Out of the house, at whose door the coach waited, came a man.

"Nathan Getchem!" she exclaimed.

It was Nathan. He had been fighting the tiger in that aristocratic gambling house, and, for once, had won.

And, for once again, his prudence was so strong as to make him leave with his gains.

He was slightly intoxicated.

Belle tried to open the door and slip out, but the catch would not work.

Nathan gave the driver a prod with his cane, and jumped into the coach.

"Madison Square!" said he. "The devil——"

Belle was in his arms.

"Belle Marton!" the Black-eyed Beauty.

"Let me go!"

Nathan never forgot.

The wound on his breast, that had nailed him to a painful bed for weeks, smarted as if a red-hot iron was searing it.

He wound the shawl quickly around her head, shoulders and arms, little caring if he did smother her.

She sank exhausted on the cushions beside him.

Nathan stopped the hack-driver?

"No. — Houston Street," said he. "East side of Broadway."

"By jingo!" muttered the whip. "The gent's going to keep it up to-night!"

## CHAPTER V.

BILL TRIED BLACK-MAILING ON THE WRONG CUSTOMER. LON. FORSTER "LET THE SUBJECT DROP." WHITEWASHED! "GO IT." ESCAPED.

BILL ROVES felt bad one week.

The whole of it passed without Mr. Nathan Getchem "humming around his Matty."

Bill put on his best coat, gave a twist to the new mustache that had superseded the one that the Pennsylvania state prison barber had deprived him of, and strolled down Broadway.

He turned off at Duane Street, and went on until he saw the gold letters of Forster & Co.'s sign.

"A man who says he's a gentleman wants to see you, sir!" said the office boy to Lon. Forster.

"Very well."

And Lawrence had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Roves stand before him in his private office.

"Is your father in at this hour?" asked Bill.

"Yes. In the next compartment. Do you want to see him?"

"Not yet," returned Bill significantly.

"Well? your business?"

"Strictly private," responded the "saucy man," closing the door behind him.

"Take a seat —"

"I was going ter," said Bill saucily.

Lawrence was accustomed to a good many queer fish in the business, so he set Bill down as an eccentric.

"Look here," began Bill roughly. "I know that a couple of months ago you went pretty often to see a young lady of the name of Howard — Matilda Howard, Prince Street."

"What of that? Is she dead?"

"No!"

"You needn't be so short about it," said Lon, riling up. "She was sick when I saw her last and how did I know but that the fever had taken her."

"Never you mind that."

Bill was not entertaining a high opinion of the slightly thin young man before him. He was of the stout build himself, and, often as he had been polished off, stuck to the roar 'em under principle.

"How much will you put in my way to stop me going to tell your old man of your visits to such a veteran moll as Matty? There, that's my say."

"I see. So you'll tell my father, will you, if I don't bribe you?"

"You're on the point."

Now Lon, in earlier days, had fallen in with a rough crowd up town around Mackerelville, and when he liked he could be the "dusty boy, you just bet high."

"Do you think you'll go talk to him while I'm in the store?" said Lawrence, taking his hands out of his pockets quietly, and unfolding his legs, which he had crossed previously, on thinking that the affair was more of a business one.

"What's that got to do with it?" said Bill, rising.

Lawrence got upon his feet calmly.

"In the first place, I only went honestly to the girl. I ain't a goat to touch such when they're sick. But—I don't care for that, you've been a good bit too loud in your blowing!"

"S'pose I have, what'll you make out of it?" said Bill, rudely.

"I'll show you!"

With that, Lawrence caught the other by the throat and by the bottom of the hem of the vest.

The store was on the second floor, lighted by large windows.

Lon put all his muscle in the act, and ran Bill Roves straight backwards at one of the sashes.

Crash! jingle! the whole burst out, and Bill tumbled through.

A large, new awning received him.

He bounded from its elastic surface like a man tossed in a blanket, and rolled to the edge.

He might have cracked his thick skull if he had fallen on the pave.

The corporation had woke up that day, and, preventive of the cholera, a cart half full of chloride of lime, was slowly rolling along by the gutter.

Bill executed what the circus men call a clean head and heels summerset, and landed in the bin.

A white cloud arose all around him.

All the windows in the neighborhood were slammed up.

And a roar of laughter resounded from basement to roof, as Bill scrambled out of the box.

He was converted into a man of snow.

He was as white as a baker, as the albino at the Museum, as the white fish of the lakes, as a new marble building, as white as white can be—there.

He was half blind and three quarters choked.

Maddened by the merriment, he sprang for the sidewalk, accelerated by a blow in the seat of honor from the cartman's shovel!

Bill gave a howl and "streaked" it, not knowing whither he sped.

He took Broadway.

He upset an apple-stand first thing, then two old women, then an image-vender, then a basket of peanuts as he rushed across Canal street.

The people divided before him as if an embodied snow storm was coming.

He left a perfumed smoke behind him like a floating limekiln.

The shouts around him were terrific.

"Stop that man in the white hat! D'ye moind the white coat? Hi, hi! The Limekiln man!"

Twice policemen had tried to check him, but he had avoided them or upset them.

His skin was smarting as the perspiration slaked the lime, and he smoked like a heap of mortar.

Bill was what is popularly called, "runting-a-muck," and never did furious cattle, dashing through crowded streets, create a greater commotion than did he. It was but a moment that he seemed to be in their clutches, and then he had passed away, leaving all opposers far behind!

The American Deer was nowhere to him and Deerfoot might as well pale his ineffectual fire.

Bill's pace reminded one of ancient Lady Suffolk, or later Flora Temple and Lantern.

He got turned off towards Centre Market, and among the streets there in a back alley, he suddenly gave them the double by dropping into a theatrical outfitter's. The door was a little way open when he reached it, but he quickly shut it to, and stood breathless and perspiring inside.



As soon as he could look around, he found himself confronted by a little man, a Jew, the proprietor.

Spite of the fugitive's queer appearance, the latter took it calmly.

Besides, the run had shaken Bill considerably, and the hands laid upon him had dusted his jacket.

The little man in a soft tone, said—

"Your pleasure, sir?"

Bill stared at him, but could not speak.

"Aw—may I have—"

"Keep the door shut," exclaimed Bill falling down to the floor in terror, as some of his pursuers came rushing by. "Don't let them in; they'll rob you—they will."

The little man thought his visitor scarcely looked altogether honest, but he said nothing.

"I can serve you," he said, when the other rose.

"You can?" He grasped the little man's hands affectionately. "Be my friend—disguise—I'll pay—disguise me so that nobody won't know me."

The little man smiled, and said quietly—

"We can do that."

"My friend—"

"What style would you like?"

"Anything—anything. Make me a cart-horse—anything."

"We won't make you that," said the little man quietly, and he moved away.

In a very short time he returned, with the suit of an officer of volunteers, complete with sword, moustache, and everything requisite for the character.

"Now," he said.

"Eh?"

"Undress."

"What—put them on?"

"Yes."

"Make me an officer?"

"Yes."

"Why, I shall look like h——!"

"Yes."

"But I ain't to wear them things, then?"

"Yes."

"Won't suit me."

"Yes."

"Well, if you think they will, of course—but I don't."

The little man quietly helped him off with his coat.

"Suit you well, when we get this heavier moustache on, and a little color on the face."

"Oh, thunder!"

"Yes."

The trousers and coat were by this time on, and the little man stood in front of Bill to put on the moustache.

Now, Bill thought this a very good opportunity of making up for his recent failure, and as there was a profusion of gold lace and ornamental weapons lying on the counter, he helped himself to a few of them.

"That's just your fit," said the little man.

"So you say."

He was fumbling for the pocket.

"Just the thing."

"Oh, no, but it ain't," thought Bill, who was fumbling in vain for his pocket.

Just then the little man turned for the powder-box and paint.

Bill's hands went instantly behind him, when the whole of the booty found its way into his trousers.

He looked the very picture of innocence when the little man turned again to apply the color to his face.

"There," he said, "you'll do now."

"Yes," said Bill, who had just then lifted the handkerchief out of his pant's pocket.

"Capital!"

"Glad to hear it."

"Quite distinguished."

"What's to pay?"

The little man named an exorbitant sum. The other pulled a long face; but instantly recollected himself, pulled the purse out of the little Jew's pocket without the little man being aware of it, and with mock honesty paid the amount.

Bill glided to the door.

The little man bowed him out.

He had charged him six times the value of the articles, and so he thought he had made a good bargain.

Bill on his part, was well satisfied. He had the better of the suit, and a purse of money by his visit to that store.

The pair of quiet rogues bowed adieu to each other, and the Hebrew, went inside to his little room, to count over the profits of that little performance, to his Rachel.

The last seen of Bill, who had emptied the purse in saloons, was when he was discovered by a policeman, trying to get into a recruiting booth in the Park, and asking everybody:

"When does the boat sail?"

They sailed him off to the Beekman Street Station.

## CHAPTER VI.

POOR BELLE! THE OPIATE. THE STRUGGLE. THE SHOT.

NATHAN sent the cabman to the corner for change of an X., and, meanwhile got Belle into the house.

The establishment was a bad egg, almost as bad as its neighbor, that used to connect with the Gaieties.

The poor girl was almost stifled by the shawl that muffled and disabled her.

Nathan sent out for some tincture of laudanum, and gave her a dose, senseless as she was.

When Belle came to, she found herself fast sinking into a dreamy, listless state, which she believed to be weary drowsiness, but which, instead, was the effects of the drug.

She had not consciousness enough to know what occurred when another hand stole over her face. She was too far under the stupor of the drug to be aware of the cool villany that was being perpetrated towards her. She sank into a dreamy, calm rest; and did not awake till the morning light was peering into the room.

Awoke to find another by her side—to know how foul a wrong had been done against her.

Awoke to realise that she was a prisoner there.

Awoke from her swoon to find Nathan Getchem leaning over her, and regarding her with a look that showed too plainly, his infernal triumph.

She was horrified to find his inflamed countenance so close to hers.

She was in a room rather well furnished, but only dimly lighted. Gazing rapidly round at the walls, she saw, nearly opposite her, a large mirror, the reflection of which showed her herself, with her dress disarranged, and her breast partially exposed.

She leaped up to find herself firmly held by the constraining arm.

"Don't think of going yet," Nathan said, with a leer and mocking laugh; "we've got to be very happy together. You need only fancy me Lon Forster or whoever you've been living on ever since, Miss Belle!"

Belle drew her dress tight, and struggled from his arm. All the energy of her disposition was called into action by his evil intents, and when she spoke it was in a tone whose firmness astonished him.

"You have brought me here; but don't you think I'll be anything to you," said she proudly, with the pride of the fallen angel. "I've been on the gay life that your wrong pushed me into, but I never let a thing like you kiss the hem of my dress that swept the pave of cigar-ends and store-sweepings!"

Nathan felt uncomfortable under so much scorn.

"We're alone here, wherever it is, I can see by your coward eye. You had to chloroform me to get the best of me, eh? You're a shame to your sex! I thought I was a bad one, but seeing you, sets me up proud as ever!"

"Just you lay hand on me again! I'll have your eyes out or tear your jaw asunder, by heavens!"

When a woman swears, it's something horrible.

When a refined creature like Belle was, rips out an oath, look out for squalls, if it was leveled at you.

Nathan was very much taken down by her words and bearing. Her arm seemed to take firmness of iron as she pushed him off, and away. His sullen looks grew more malicious, he answered, scoffingly:—

"See here, Belle, I like to here a woman talk like that, especially when I have her so completely in my power that I could carve her limb from limb without interference. I do not think I have taken my measures badly."

"I tell you, my dear girl, that you've got to give your promise to me to let me parade you round for six months to come. I'll lay out the money, Belle; you shall shine beyond anybody at the Springs or in the city. The bank's got a big thing on Uncle Sam, and I can have a big pile to sport on if I want."

"Nathan," said she in a dull voice, like a mere translation of her thoughts. "Once we were looking out the window of your father's, and I asked you what was one wretched woman, bag on back, hook in hand, by the curbstone. You laughed, in your evil way at every one poorer than yourself, and said it was a gutter-snipe. Nathan, I'd rather be the slave of such a miserable than yours!"

"Do you mean that? Look out! I tell you fairly, Belle, that you're such a woman that I can't feel unmoved near you! Be willing, or I'll try the knife this time! and you'll not go out of this house except in pieces, like Quimbo Appo served the sailors!"

Belle laughed in his face; but he flung himself upon her.

She felt something in his breast and wrenched it away with the pocket. I was a small pistol.

She thought it was a knife, having grasped it by the barrel, and she struck with it, as if the butt end was a blade.

The blow took Nathan in the centre of the forehead, raising on the instant a blue, big bump, and knocked him back.

Having struck for her liberty, Belle, in a wild state of excitement, seized the lamp, and hurried out on the entry and down the stairs.

But Nathan made one or two stupid clutches at the air, and finally leant against the table for a few moments, to consider whether he was standing on his head or his heels.

The room was swimming round, and, though Belle had taken away the lamp, there were many lights flashing in his eyes.

But, after a bit, Getchem recovered. He heard the fumbling about down stairs, and, with a bitter curse followed her.

There was some excitement in several of the rooms.

The girls feared that the Broadway squad were making a descent, and not one dared to show her face at the doorway.

Nathan was after blood now, and he drew his only weapon, a large penknife, out of his pocket, and went down the stairs two or three at a time.

Belle heard him coming, and her nimble figure flew the faster. There were a number of fastenings in the door.

English Moll had her house double blackmarked in the "precinct books."

These fastenings now threatened to be the fugitive's destruction; for though she had removed two or three, there yet remained others, and Nathan, with the knife open in his hand, was already on the bottom flight of stairs.

Belle heard him mutter a fearful oath; she heard him leap to the floor of the passage, and her heart gave a great bound as he flew towards her.

By an instinct or accident she got back the last fastening, and as Nathan, swearing by many an oath that he would kill her, took her by the shoulder, and pressed the gleaming knife to her throat, she uttered a wild scream, and dashed the lamp full in his face.

Then, with a dash she had the door open, and flew out into the street.

The brasswork of the lamp struck Getchem just above the bridge of the nose, and besides causing him exquisite pain, made the blood spout out in a torrent, as if he had been in a mill with one of the "big 'uns."

He was deluged also with odoriferous kerosene.

Belle would have been safe on the street.

But a woman barred her way on seeing what house she came from, and who was her pursuer.

This was English Moll herself.

She had been "delayed" coming home last night.

Now Moll was a big woman, about the size of that relation of her, "Big Mary," whom a drunken sailor shot in "444."

Belle saw that there would be no chance in a struggle with her.

So she presented the pistol at her and fired.

The bullet went into the woman's broad throat.

The next breath she exhaled came out bloody at the wound and her mouth.

She clung to the railings of the area a moment, and then sank on the flags.

A crowd assembled.

Nathan stopped.

There was "sich a gittin' up stairs" in No. — when the police knocked at the door.

And Belle was taken to Wooster Street Station-house.

## CHAPTER VII.

BELLE IN THE CAGE. A STRANGE DIALOGUE. "HARK, FROM THE TOMBS."

AFTER the preliminary examination, Belle was lodged in the Tombs.

She would say nothing herself, and gave a false name.

The evidence of those who saw her kill English Moll was sufficient.

Nathan had got safely off, and, naturally, he kept a still tongue in his closed mouth.

Belle shrank from the idea of revealing her injuries although it was a clear defence.

The newspapers were foiled in all their searches, and the gleanings were daily ticketed, "The Houston Street Mystery!"

Belle's good looks led to a couple of lawyers paying her visits to offer their services.

One went away abruptly because she had no money.

And she would not pay the other the corporal price that he suggested.

She would have been compelled to face Oakley Hall without any defence, but for an unknown interpositor.

This person sent a lawyer to her, and money with him to procure such delicacies as she required.

"You *must* look well on trial," said the lawyer. "Just look how that plump-faced woman got off in Washington, and that other, the actress, out West!"

Belle rightly conceived that the gift was due to Lon Forster alone.

He had guessed who she was by the cut in "Frank Leslie's" and had, on seeing her in court, been confirmed in his surmise.

Belle sorrowed more than she had done before at this trait of remembrance on his part.

Often in the night, a murmur had been heard in her cell by the warder passing down the corridor, and he would mutter to himself:

"It's that black-eyed girl in No. 7 A. Pity she's so. She'd be a gay card if she'd brighten up a bit."

If Lon Forster would only come and see her once. Only tell her that *he* wished her to be in the world once more. Then she would boldly tell the truth that shamed her, and no doubt be released.

But days passed, and he was never announced as bearer of an order of admission.

One night, very late she was awoke from her grieving by a tap on the wall.

She remembered how she had read of prisoners corresponding so.

Involuntarily, she struck her heel against the stone.

A signal from the adjoining cell told her that its occupant understood that he had "twigged."

Belle drew her stool up against the wall.

A low and cautious whisper came through it.

"You, Ned?"

"No," said Belle. "There is no man here."

"A moll! h——!" said the voice. "Taint you Edwards, for the pocket-dipping on the Third Avenue car?"

"No!" said Belle again. "I'm in for that Houston street affair."

"Oh! you peppered the big Johnny Bull of a moll! Good for you! Bully!" said the voice, which was a husky and queer one. "Hold your horses a bit!"

By the faint sound, Belle could conjecture that the neighbor had gone to the wicket of his door, and listened for the turnkey.

"All hunky!" said he, returning. "Will you do me a favor, old gal?"

"If I can," said Belle. "I owe the prison keepers no good. I'm getting desperate here, myself, and would have fired the place if there was more wood to burn!"

"You're an A. 1," said the stranger. "But I want you to say to-morrow that you heard no noise in my St. Nickolas parlor here!"

"What do you mean? oh, don't kill yourself!"

"Not so green! not in these boots! I'm going to break out!"

"Oh!"

"Anything to say to a pard outside?" went on the voice.

Belle could almost have fancied that there was a tremor in the voice.

"Oh, yes!" cried she.

"Lower, lower!"

Belle was all of a tremble.

"Yes, yes! Mr. Lawrence Forster, — Duane street. Tell him that Belle Marston must see him, or she'll go mad!"

"Take it easy! I can't get that all down through this wall. Pull up a bit! I'll see if the locks ain't all alike!"

In five minutes, Belle saw her door open, and a muffled up form enter.

"What's this! the gas ain't on!" cried the new comer.

"I didn't have it lit to-night," said Belle. "You don't mind the dark!"

"Not much. Ain't you afraid of me?"

Belle smiled; but he could not see that.

"No!" said she.

She came to the stranger and laid her hand on his arm.

"If there's anything in this world you hope for, let me beg you by that to carry my message."

"Well, I will. Let's hear it again."

Belle repeated her desire.

"What is he?" said the stranger. "Relation?"

"No!"

She paused.

"I'll tell you. It won't take long."

"Never mind that. I'm all right."

"If you ever had a woman ready to die for you, you may know what I am towards him. He don't think so. He's only seen a dashy, showy girl in me. Don't you tell him I spoke this way though, for I couldn't bear to think how he'd laugh at me!"

"No, he wouldnt!"

"Eh?"

"I don't know him if he would!"

With that the stranger flung his arms around her.

"Hush, you little goosey! Don't you know Lon Forster?"

"Lon! ah! You ain't a prisoner here?"

"In your arms that's all!"

At last, Lawrence spoke again.

"We can kiss after we get out," said he laughing cheerily to encourage her.

"I came to save you anyhow, but now that I know you love me, I'll go at it with a will."

"Do you mean to try to escape?" asked Belle, amazed at the boldness of her companion.

"Well, I *should* think so!" responded Lawrence. "Give me a kiss I won't take another one till you and I stand in Franklin Street together!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

NATHAN RECEIVES TWO STARTLES. BULLY BILL BEGINS TO SQUEEZE THE PURSE.  
THE HOTEL MULLIGAN. THE WILD SCENE ON THE CLIFF.

THE young banker had been dreadfully weary during all the investigation. He had been afraid to take up a paper in dread that his name would be seen, at last revealed by the Black-eyed Beauty. He could not understand how she

who had been mistress of a dozen men, throwing them over for a whim and choosing a successor at a caprice, could hesitate to tell of the drug and the tussle with him.

He had several times been on the point of leaving the city. But no substantial excuse presented itself.

The punishment he endured amid such ceaseless terror would have satisfied his worst enemy.

One morning, at the office, he mechanically opened the paper. He saw a heading of unusual length.

"THE TOMBS. Somebody to Blame. 'The Black-eyed Beauty' on the Loose. Who was the Philadelphia Detective? Rope-ladders and Skeleton keys!"

He eagerly read:

"The historical prison of our city last night was the theater of an evasion drama unequalled since the mystery attending the Colt tragedy.

"The chief performer is the accused in the late shooting affair in Houston Street, fresh in the minds of our readers.

"She gave her name at the examination before Recorder Hoffman as Mary Leigh, but, it will still be remembered, we long ago pointed out the immense likeness between her and a dashing Anonyma who created a sensation in our public places by her wondrous brunette loveliness and culminated her showy career by a scandalous boudoir episode in Sainte Royal Hotel.

"This assertion of ours has never been denied, but, on the contrary, has been confirmed by various letters from our subscribers.

"Since she has been imprisoned, she assumed a penitent air which may well be believed fictitious.

"Last evening, a gentleman with all the requisite documents, applied to Mr. Stewart, acting chief-warden of the Tombs, for permission to accomplish his intended design.

"The papers were real, and set forth the bearer as a Philadelphia detective, W E, Mason. He had a note from the Board of Police Commissioners here, also.

"This man said that the two prisoners, arrested on separate charges, and confined in cells 1 and 3 B; were suspected to be escapes from the Moyamensing Prison.

"He suggested that if he could be shut up in the cell between them, that he might glean important information by being the medium of their intercourse.

"It is well known that thieves and bad characters generally have a mode of telegraphing by raps on walls, etc.

"It is inconceivable to those ignorant of the mode, with what facility these operators can communicate their messages.

"Justice has often been baffled by this means.

"Naturally Mr. Stewart, seeing the credentials were correct, gave full authority to the proposal.

"The corridor containing the fifteen A. and B. cells facing one another, was left in charge of the pretended detective.

"The turnkey left him locked up in Cell 2 B. at nine o'clock. He was not to be disturbed until he should signify his own wish.

"No unusual sounds are said to have been heard during the night.

"At two o'clock this morning, some policemen taking a drunken woman off a cart at the Franklin-Street doorway of the Station-house, saw a ladder swinging against the wall from the cornice above, where our readers may have remembered to have seen pigeons domiciled.

"Search was instituted, and the particulars found out.

"The Philadelphia detective, it appears, must have gone to the cell, where in was 'Miss Leigh.'

"They went up the stairs to the top galleries, where they forced out a skylight after bending the bars.

"The woman was probably lifted up by her confederate, as there are no marks of a ladder (if such could have been there) against the whitewash.

"It is a miracle that they reached Franklin Street by the roofs.

"It shows that she was as spirited a woman as previous accounts have portrayed.

"Once there, taking advantage of the street being so lonely, they descended by a fine but strong rope-ladder.

"Up to our going to press, not a trace has been discovered of the direction of their flight.

"LATER. 'The Philadelphia detective,' Simon pure, has turned up. He tells a wild story of having been drugged while drinking with a supposed acquaintance at the Lafayette House, Jersey City.

"The watchman of the New Haven R. R. reports having seen something white on the Franklin Street wall last night at about one o'clock."

"Belle has got clear," cried Nathan. "Who the deuce can it have been that helped her. By heaven, if it was Lon Forster, I'll ruin him!"

He rose and called the office boy.

"Run up to—Duane street, and ask if Mr. Lawrence Forster is down this morning. Ask some of the boys, d'ye understand, and don't tell who you come from," said he.

The boy was a regular New Yorker, sharp as a needle.

"All right, sir."

Nathan gave him the 25-cent slip that he was evidently waiting for, and off he went, then.

In about an hour he had returned.

"Came near being caught, sir," said he; "Mr. Forster was right by the doorway as I asked the young gentleman that shuts the door after people."

"It wasn't he, then," muttered Nathan annoyed.

It was though.

But Lon wasn't going to run. He had stowed his rescued friend away safely, and, removing his false beard and washing his face of the paint he had worn, he came down the next day, fresh as ever, to read the papers himself.

As Getochem chewed the cud of his bitter fancy, he was informed that a note had just been left for him.

It was a half-command, half invitation, that he'd better go up the street to the saloon near the Post office and see the writer, Bill Roves.

"It's the Black-eyed Beauty, going to torment me," thought Nathan. "I won't go."

But the postscript then met his eyes.

"If you do not come, I shall see your respected parent about the Prince street girl."

Nathan shifted the paper into his pocket.

"Bowyer," said he to the head clerk, "I shan't be long. Must see about those 7-30's at Vermilyeas."

And out he went to see Mr. Roves.

Bill had pretty well judged this man that he was going to "work." He had failed so lamentably in trying to "exploit" Mr. Lawrence Forster, that he was naturally cautious.

At all events, he chose his ground.

In the restaurant, on the cellar floor, he could not have a very deep downfall!

After the first few words, it was easy to see that the bully was in his element.

Nathan would give anything rather than have himself shown up.

Bill opened performances with depicting with gusto sundry drives out of a

Sunday, several walks under the willows, and under the Jones' Wood foliage, many a gambling scene, more of midnight carousals.

"Wouldn't the governor be per-rôud of his boy?"

"I don't think so!"

Then it came to the hush-money question; Nathan only had twenty dollars he could spare about him.

Bill accepted them eagerly.

Then, said Nathan:

"I was over at Weehawken some weeks ago —"

"I know," interpolated Bill, winking.

Nathan very nearly blushed.

"There's a first rate place to have a quiet arrangement like ours. You see I'm too well known hereabouts. Nobody goes over there except on Sunday. There's a house called the Hotel Mulligan. I'll be there between three and five in the afternoon, it'll depend on my catching the boat."

"When?"

"To-morrow."

"All right."

And before Bill let his "catch" go, he made him pay for a shilling oigar at the bar.

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On the following evening had not the setting sun been intercepted by the trees, two men might have been discerned in the shadow, on top of the high bluffs overlooking the Hudson.

The five o'clock boat had gone up the river.

The darkness kept thickening. Still the two were in discussion.

Lights began to twinkle through the mist gradually clearing from over New York.

To the right two of the illuminated dials of the City Hall clock were like two moons.

Straight over the city, half a dozen pillars of fire marked the chimnies of the Morgan, Allaire and Novelty Works.

The whole lines of the Bowery, Hudson Street and Broadway, with their continuations by Avenues up to the far Harlem River, were visible, and most brilliant and remarkable. We are at such a distance from these roads that they appear like lines of brilliant fire, assuming a more imposing appearance when the line separates into two, and most imposing just in the ring around Tompkins and Union Square, which are like the golden hub of many fiery spokes of Apollo's car.

It was like looking down from a balloon.

In Broadway, but more clearly in the streets straight in line with the vision, the two thickly studded rows of brilliant lights are seen on either side of the way, and a dark space between them, but which dark space is bounded, as it were, on both sides, by a bright fringe of frosted silver. One at first could not account for this, but presently at one point more brilliant than the rest, persons are seen passing to and fro with their shadows on the pavements, and at once it is evident this rich effect is caused by the bright illumination of the shop-lights on the pavements. All the principal streets assume this appearance of beauty.

The rivers and harbor being threaded by the ferry-boats, like jewelled nautilus, add to the starry spectacle of such brilliancy as to transcend any dream you ever had of Venice on a holiday.

"We don't get on at all," said Bill Roves. "We'd better have supper at the hotel and settle then, Mr. Getchem."

"No!" replied Nathan, cutely.

"Well, I don't want to stand here splitting hairs," said Bill, tossing his cigar-stump over the edge when it took a long leap into the water far beneath. "What will you give?"

"What'll you take in reason?"

"Any thing — there! I can't say fairer."

Nathan put his hand into his breast-pocket.

"Oh! no!" said Bill, suspiciously. "Bless you, though they can't see us from the house, a pistol shot would be heard here, easy!"

Nathan drew out his hand nervously. His lip was quivering.

"You can't get the better of this child that way," said Bill.

"Then I will, this!"

So saying, Nathan put out both hands and rushed at Bill.

The latter's back was to the edge of the cliff, and his face to his assailant.

But Bill was more than half on his guard.

He was of a nature inclined to dodges, and to drop on his hands and knees came in as if he was born to it.

Nathan fell clean over him, and rolled forward.

Bill was carried with him, for the banker had seized his arm.

The two went to the bank, and Nathan went over.

Bill made a desperate effort and caught at a sapling hemlock with both his arms.

He felt an awful wrench, and he almost howled as a great weight made his thighbone snap in the socket.

The weight remained at the end of his leg.

Nathan had grasped him by one foot, and by this human rope, he hung over a hundred feet of empty space.

He was too horrified to breathe. His eyes shut to, as he believed himself a dead man.

At the first moment, Bill would have kicked himself free with his other foot.

But his enmity gave way to his avarice.

"The price now?" said he, tightening his embrace, and speaking through his teeth, set tight to bear the weight.

Nathan's voice was such a corpse might use. It came up, hollow and faint, as though out of a grave.

"Anything?"

"Will you sign?"

"Anything?"

"If you can climb up me, do so. If you jab your nails into me, by G—, I'll let you go."

How Nathan clambered up till he had a grip on something firmer, by that body, he could not have told.

He did it with his eyes shut, and it must have been sheer instinct.

When he had got over the edge, he fell forward and dragged himself farther in, and swooned away.

Sometime afterwards, Bill, with Getchem on his arm, entered the Hotel Mulligan.

"You ought to to put up a railing on the bank," said Roves. "My friend here nearly went over to Eternal smash! It's worse than a railroad ticket, a moonlight ramblé here."

"Very sorry, sir, any accident to the gentleman, he does look shaken, begorra! What'll you have, gentlemen?" said old Mulligan himself, flourishing a napkin around Ketchem's earth-stained knees.

"The best supper you can rake up, old top—fried oysters in it!" said Bill,



"And come you in with that head man of yours, Mulligan, I want you to witness a little paper my friend's going to sign."

"All roight, surr-r-r?"

All right it was for Mr. Roves.

## CHAPTER IX.

"ON THE RUSH," TIGHT AS A DRUM. MATTY IN HER GLORY. HOW SHE LOST HER MAN. A BIT OF ROMANCE.

THE people passing through Green Street, on this certain night, could not help stopping to look at a house.

All knew what kind of thing it was, with the blinds always shut and the inner curtains or shades always down.

The policeman would join the crowd every time he came round on the beat, and say if he caught a sympathising eye:

"There'll be some of them locked up before the broke of day!"

Though sound was deadened as much as possible; the piano could be heard as if the player had a commission to "to keep it up."

There was loud laughter, too, pretty often.

In the "parlor," the two rooms being thrown into one, there were some thirsty people.

All the men were young or trying to be young, and all the women were girls or tried to look it.

Nathan Getchem was "standing champagne" for the crowd.

Then there was a waltz, without the least attempt at decency.

When a couple tumbled on the floor, the rest set up a roar of laughter and "let 'em went" over and over until they could recover their feet, after appearing to have endeavored to display an answer to the garter problem above or below the knee?

Matty had a new dress, "loads" of jewelry, and a bonnet that was a roarer, little as there was of it. She sat in the rocking-chair beside Getchem, who was too drunk to take her on his knee, as seemed the universal practice among the gents not dancers.

Matty had swung one leg on the arm, sitting sidewise, and exposed a pair of garters, made of that gold bronze silk which looks fire under gas light.

"Look at Matty," said an envious gent at the other end of the room. "I've a mind to gibe her on her gay booties!"

"Yer'd better not!" said a friend of hers. "Matty's bloody proud of them, and she's on the fight ever since she's wired that flat."

"Who is he, Maggie?" said a red-haired girl, joining the other two.

"Burn me if I know. He's soft as cheese, anyhow. Mrs. Brown says that she was eyeing him t'other night rather hard as much as to say: 'Oh, my little sport, I know you like a book. You never don't get your 'paper' honestly, by much! and the beat turns red and walks over to her, and gives her a roll—body o' 'ine if I know much too keep dark."

"The h— you say!"

"Ye—es."

"D— if I wouldn't look at him all night if he'd money out for me!"

They laughed and separated.

"Come back, Matty!" said Nathan, all of a sudden.

Miss Howard had thought she could rouse her innamorata by taking his hat and running away with it. She was a little the worse for a drink herself.

Nathan rose to his feet after dire reflection with his drunken self, and gave chase.

It was more amusing than a dance down, to see him trying to catch her.

She would turn just as he had got headway on, and the way he floored himself over a chair and with a silly smile and a muttered "all right" was a caution.

At length, by one of the changes usual in the inebriate, his mood changed into a savage one.

Matty got behind the table loaded with glasses and bottles.

"I'll jump over on you!" said he.

All laughed.

He could not have leaped to the other side of a stick laid on the ground.

"Think I can't?" said Nathan. "I'll bet you!"

He retreated, made a desperate run and—

"Don't! you'll break the things!" screamed Mrs. Brown.

"I can pay!" cried Getchem, rising about ten inches in the air.

Matty shrieked and jumped out of the way.

Nathan went slap on top of the table, clearing it of everything on it, and laying on top of them immediately afterwards.

The laughter was not louder than the crash and jingling of the broken stuff.

Mrs. Brown turned like a fury on Matty.

"I told you to take the drunken fool away two hours ago," said she. "I knew well that he'd do something like this!"

"What of it?" cried Matty, unbanking her fires and getting her engine clear for motion. "He can pay; he can!"

"I want none of your lip, Miss Howard!" returned Brown, who was no more sober than her guests. "Suppose I don't want to touch his money! I keep an honest house. I never put up young chaps to tap tills!"

"What do you intend by that, 'Snuffy Brown'?" said Matty. "I'll slap you in the 'press if you ain't careful!"

"Think I never heard of your being the piece that got the Maiden Lane fellow to hook three watches a-week for your benefit?"

"Who did?"

"You did! You was only a waiter girl at the Melodeon, there, and couldn't run up the bills for gaiters then!"

"I'll lift you in the jaw with one of them!" said Matty, swinging her foot promiscuously.

"Come, come," interposed one of the girls. "Don't you kick up any muss, Matty!"

"Who told you to shove in?" said Howard, turning round on this new antagonist. "You always had more cheek than was good for you. I'll knock it off you if you say much!"

"Much!"

Matty slapped the speaker's face in the most ferocious manner.

The girl's cavalier interfered, and Matty knocked his hat off and then "bust in" the crown with a kick.

The whole room was a scene of confusion from Getchem crying maudlinly as he sat on the splinters of glass to Matty plunging in and around half a dozen girls with bonnets she had spoiled.

As this row was occurring, a woman, all in black, with her veil down, accosted a boy who ran down the stoop of the noisy establishment.

"Where are you going?" demanded she.

"Corner—for a hack."

"Who for?"

"Matty Howard's flat, as we call him," replied the bouquet boy.

That is, he ran on errands for the girls of the house and sold nose-gays at the



theatre. The latter came in handy when there were new acquaintances to be picked up by the girls.

"Good," said the woman in mourning. "Let me go with you. Here's a dollar."

"Oh, yes!"

The result of which manœuvre was that the cab that drove up had the woman within unseen.

A crowd came over to see the hirer of it come out of the gay house

In a few seconds the door opened.

Three or four men were carrying Nathan down the steps.

They dropped him into the coach, glad to get rid of him, covered with blood as they were.

"Hold on, driver. There's a woman coming."

They went in to help their friends who were pulling Matty down the stairs inside.

"Driver!" said the woman in black, showing her head on the street side of the vehicle. "Twenty dollars fare! To Union Square."

"All right. Get up!"

And away rolled the coach, just as Matty, in a crowd of men, appeared on the stoop top.

The police interfered at this juncture.

Luckily for Matty, Mrs. Brown and her ladies did not want to enter a court even as witnesses.

So she was released.

When she got home, she found that Nathan had not gone there, at all events.

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Nathan, semi-unconscious as he was, was not so to that degree as to be totally incapable of imagining.

He very dimly recalled the neck of a small phial being forced into his mouth, and an unknown liquor entering his throat.

When he awoke from a sleep that he rightly judged to have been long, he found himself in a place utterly unrecognized by him.

It was a small room.

The window was of little, old-fashioned panes, mended with discolored paper and bunches of rags. The walls and ceiling had given way in many places so that the laths were bare.

The floor was rotten, cracked and full of rat holes.

The only furniture was a table and bed of undressed straw, and a broken chair.

Nathan looked about him in deepest confusion.

He, with a father so rich, he who had regarded a poor man (to whom this shelter would have been a Godsend) as something impossible among his family and him, now on a miserable pallet.

He sprang to his feet in vexation.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed he.

"Nathan Getchem!" said a voice. "I'll tell you what this means.

It was Belle Marton that filled up the narrow doorway with her superb form.

"I'll tell you.

"When you tried to rob me, but failed, I almost forgave you," said she.

"When you did rob me of the same spoil, tempting to less gross minds than yours, I vowed I'd make you pay for it dearly!

"Since then, I let my purpose sleep, for I had a dream of love and joy.

"That dream I broke, when I heard how you were placing yourself in my power.

"Nathan, you have little to fear of such people as Matty Howard and her man. They will never tell of you as long as the fountain is not dry.

"I will ruin you though.

"By the same means as you rendered me a log to be carried whither the holder would, I made you a drugged and senseless body.

"I bring you to this place in foretaste of your doom.

"Nathan, Monroe Edwards, the greatest forger Old New York ever knew, was in this room years ago.

"On that ruined chair he sat, afraid that every step was the officers coming to end his days.

"On that bed he tried to snatch some sleep.

"Nathan, that man was nobler than you! he governed the wretches that hung around him and did his pleasures.

"But he would have money, and he would not break open a house.

"He wanted to live in society, do you see?

"He wrote names of others to papers and coined money like a government!

"You have begun practising—I have marked it! little as you thought.

"You are not the man to hang back, or to recoil from the easy slope.

"You are lost, Nathan!

"The day will come when you will hide from the face of man and sigh for a hole like this to be in.

"You will be afraid to attempt escape to a distant shore, you will not dare go near the depots and ferry-houses where the detectives will lurk.

"You may avoid them, you may elude me for a time, but I will point you out, for the hand to be on your shoulder!

"Plunge into dissipation now, lie, lie every day to parent, friend and foe, rejoice when a paper passes the keen scrutiny because you, so respectable, present it!

"Think of this den ever! a greater than Monroe Edwards in sin, be loathed more than he was by all who have honest hearts!"

Nathan had listened spell-bound.

It was like a Pythoness speaking. Her hand extended in denunciation seemed to point out the disgraceful future to him.

He shut his eyes before such a prospect.

When he opened them, Belle had gone.

## CHAPTER X.

ON THE INCLINED PLANE. "GOING THE WHOLE HOG." THE GOLD CHECK. THE BAR TO EACH LOOPHOLE.

NATTY kept pace with Bill Roves in her demands on Getchem.

They were real money-leeches.

Matty dressed so gorgeously that he disliked to go anywhere with her.

As for Bill, he might have been seen any day on some of the corners between Canal and Bleeker, in the most resplendent of new suits, with watch chain like the cables that held the Winsooki and Algonquin from towing the wharves into the Hudson. His moustache was positively appalling, and a fox head ring he wore on his right middle finger was so heavy and large that he could hardly double up his fist.

There was not a gambling den from the Hotel de Blois to B—A—'s that he hadn't had a shy at, taking his losings with the greatest coolness.

"Another man pays," he used to say as he saw his roll of fives swept away, and planked down another bundle.

If Nathan excused him for a couple of nights, and kept quiet, away from Matty, "she gave it him hot" the next time they met.

She vowed that if ever he went off spreeing with any girl but her, she would come down to the office some morning and raise Tartarus before the spectacle'd eyes of Getchem, senior.

Nathan gave up the idea of breaking the coupling.

He took the other mode.

He was in so deep that a little more could not injure him perceptibly.

His very audacity in "carrying on" appeared to save him.

One day, he, for once, called Bill Roves to him.

They met in a low eating-house down in Greenwich street.

"You have let out on me," said Nathan, sharply.

"No! why should I, while you're so generous?" returned Roves.

"One of the young members of our firm has spoken to me, saying that he knows what I'm up to, and will reveal if I don't stop."

"O, ho! you have been sinking your well into the ledger, eh?" said Bill.

"No!" said Nathan. "It is my own money that I have been throwing away. But you do not know that if one of a firm is off the track, business men imagine the whole train is shaky."

"Can't help that," muttered Bill.

"It wasn't you that's told him?"

"Not such a flat! He has seen you at some of the theatres, that's it."

Nathan was nervous.

"It maybe. But this sort of thing can't go on much longer."

"Stuff! Why the deuce don't you make a big haul and shoot off! Look at Winslow and a lot more. If they had been as cautious and business-like as you, Mr. Getchem, they would not have been caught abroad at all."

Bill watched the other's face steadily as he sounded him.

"Just to think of a gay time on the Continent. I've been to England myself. If ever I raise a pile big enough, I'll do London as a tip-top figure. Lord! think of an American like me, that knows how, waking them up there! Alhambra, Weston's, the 'Paw,' and showing 'em how its done with a skeleton wagon in the Park!"

Bill's eyes fired.

"What will you take down, to leave for London?" asked Nathan.

"Do you mean that?"

"Yes!"

Bill slowly took out his pocket-book, and from it a couple of papers that had evidently been folded a long while in it.

Nathan glanced at them with surprise.

"Oh! Those are the deeds of my property up town, that father made me a present of the day I came of age. I thought I had lost them!"

"So you did. The time that you had 'Maggie by your side.' Matty or Maggie, it's the same thing," said Bill.

"I gave them up as irrevocably gone long ago."

"More fool you. You ought to know that nothing is lost in this world. Come, I'm tired of New York—it's just about played out with me. Transfer this property to me, and you won't be blessed with my company never no more!"

"But there's a large sum of unpaid rents on those houses," said Nathan. "I could not sue for them without those papers, though they made me pay taxes."

"All the better. Transfer these, and I have a friend who will come down with cash to me for them."

"You will go? sure?"

"D— if I'll lie to you," said Bill, affected by the brandy and by the prospect of foreign travel. "Take my advice, will you? You're in with a set of bummers, and Matty's the best of them, and she isn't worth shooting. Make a ten-strike if you know how, and out! Now, hurry up and finish your coffee. We'll go round to my lawyer friend and get the 'doc's' fixed."

The transfer was quickly settled.

"Good-bye. Hope I'll see you again across the water! I take a ship off to-day," said Bill.

Did they ever met again?

Nathan returned to the office in a brown study.

For half a week, he was not seen in his old haunts.

One afternoon, he went, by a round about route, to the far end of Grand street, and after passing many druggist's store, entered a "Deutsche Apotheke."

While he was being served, a boy ran into the same shop, and got a penny's worth of wood liquorice.

This boy was met at the corner of the street by a veiled woman.

"Well?" said the woman, "what is he buying?"

"Some oxen's acid," returned the boy.

"Oxalic acid," corrected the woman.

She rewarded the boy.

"Lucky I met you in East Broadway, Nathan Getchem," said she. "You are not going to poison yourself, but going to stain paper, or my name's not Belle Marton."

\* \* \* \* \*

On a day which was to be a marked one, Nathan Getchem was standing on the front door step, between the two stone pillars bearing the names of himself and his partners.

"Now for it," muttered he, diving into the crowd.

His first essays with "gold checks," altered so clumsily in some part that only his being the unsuspected hand that presented them was the reason of their successful passing, were only too easy.

He handed in several for a far greater amount at one bank.

The cash formed a large bundle.

"You'd better let me give you the bills in larger sums, Mr. Getchem," remarked the cashier. "These are rather awkward."

"Oh, no. We want the small bills, as there are some 'Shee-kah-go' men in town," answered Nathan smiling.

"Very good."

Nathan adjourned to one of the shelves at the window to count his bundles.

As he finished, happy to notice that the cashier had hardly glanced at the papers he put in the safe, it seemed to him that the voice of Belle Marton floated to his ears:

"To have, not to hold, Nathan!"

He looked up.

Beside him was a mud be-draggled gown and a ragged shawl and large black quilted hood of a stooping old woman, reaching up for a few dollars:

"Wan, two, three, four!" with decidedly Milesian accent.

As Nathan made for the glass door, he was unable to see her face.

"Nonsense!" said he to himself. "I'm nervous as an old woman."

He stepped into a trunkmaker's and got a valise into which he crammed the bills.

They almost filled it.

He walked up Broadway, made a couple of curves, and at length took dinner in Fulton street.

"I can catch the Boston steamer," thought he, as he studied the paper.

He found himself wondrously cool, and almost applauded himself for having done what made him a great villain.

He had just time to catch the 3 P. M. train for Boston.

He went up by the Fourth Avenue Cars, and sauntered into the depot.

He was about to join the half dozen people at the pigeon-hole of the ticket sellers' box, when a light hand tapped his arm.

He turned quickly.

A young man was beside him.

To any other but Nathan, it would have been believed a man.

But he recognized Belle Marton.

She had confined her breasts by some broad band to conceal that revelation. Her hair had been sacrificed for the disguise. By ingenious make the pants were doubled and creased so that her purely womanly and shapely limbs were not indicative of themselves. She had put on slippers, too, inside her boots so that even there the smallness should not betray her.

She looked at Nathan, straight in the eyes,

"No, you don't!" said she, darting the words at him point blank.

He let his eyes drop, turned away and, finding he was not followed, quickened his pace on leaving the station.

The money he carried began to weigh on his arm like so much lead.

He returned down town.

He branched off to take the Hudson R. R., but a shadow was in the gaslight of Chamber Street corner, and he knew that it was Belle still again.

"She is the devil!" muttered Nathan.

Not to be seen by her, he glided into the grocer's, and got a few raisins to chew on, for excuse, while he looked through the glass door and marked the calm, assured smile on her face.

She had added a moustache to her disguise.

He slept in French's Hotel that night.

First thing next day, he went down to Kunhardt & Co., to take a state-room.

As he approached Exchange Place, where he was so well known, he kept his face down.

"I could have sworn that was Lon Forster," muttered he, as he brushed by a man in the shipping office.

"Very sorry, sir," said the clerk, "but all the berths are taken. We had two left, but a gentleman just took them—you must have passed him as he went out.

"Ah," said Nathan, "a young gentleman, with light grey overcoat?"

"Yes. Handsome man."

"No, second cabin, then?" asked Getchem, as a matter of form, ere leaving.

"There was one, but the same person took it, for his servant."

If Getchem had seen the message that "*Your B. B.*" sent to Lawrence Forster the eve before, he could have divined the mystery.

"DEAR LON:—If you ever loved me, and don't mind money, pay forfeit for all the disengaged passages on all the European, Cuban and other steamships that sail this week. I swear to God I'll pay you. B. M."

Hence, Nathan lost his labor in seeking a vessel, for Lon went into the strange task with a relish, to oblige the darling sinner.

As if sure that he would not try either Northern or Eastern route, Belle went and posted herself patiently at the depot of the Southern road.

Nathan had thought to reach Washington and then go out West.

But he found her by his side.

Footsore with useless plodding, nervous, full of rage, Getchem would have grasped at her throat then and there.

But Belle quietly eyed him and only whispered:

"Is not that Lon Forster at the end of the platform?"

Nathan slunk away, to the tune of the newsboys' cry:

"'Ere y' are! full 'ticklars of the great Forgery! More'n a Million! Ex-tree-e!"

Nathan's fever went from him. He was like a man on whom a cataract had poured, dull, deadened in feeling.

He wandered up town, entered the first house whose board of "Apartments, Inquire Within" was espied by him, and engaged a room.

Once only he went out of doors. The air was ringing with the surmises on his whereabouts.

They had arrested Matty Howard, and were seeking Bill Roves.

Nathan turned back to his retreat.

In a hack that drove past him, he saw Belle Marton's face.

It wore a triumphant smile.

"Curse her!" muttered Getchem. "She didn't see me, though! I wish I hadn't left my money behind. I'll go get it and quit for a den in the Five Points or up town till I can get my chance to slip away."

He returned to the house.

Two men stepped into his room after him.

"My name's John Degilmann," said one of them. "I arrest you on suspicion of forgery in the third degree, Mr. Getchem."

The game was up.

The other officer searched and found the unused gold checks in the room.

"You need say nothing, sir, that may criminate yourself," continued the detective.

Nathan had heaved one deep sigh, and was thenceforth reserved.

"Can you tell me who pointed this place out to you, sir?" inquired he.

"Well, it cannot do any harm. It was a young woman, dressed in black, dark complexion. She seemed to know you very well!"

"She does," Nathan might have said.

His capture was the item of the papers next issue of them, those that had proven he had departed for abroad, none the less loudly asserting that they had assured their readers of his presence in the city.

## CHAPTER XI.

BULLY BILL OFF SOUNDINGS. A NICE ACQUAINTANCE. THE LARGE PORT-HOLE, CHIP OF A SHIP'S LOG.

THE City of Chepultepec steamship was steaming along over the Atlantic, just clear of the fogs of the Banks.

Bill Roves, so disguised by a shaven upper lip and a heavy beard, besides a staining of the skin, was leaning on the rail, under the captain's bridge, warming himself at the boilers.

The rest of the cabin passengers were nearly all below, listening to the singing of an American actress who was going over to start the eyes of John Bull's cranium.

One alone of them, like Bill, seemed too rough a customer to appreciate squallings from the Opera.

He was a long bearded chap, looking like a miner from the West, as his slender stock of conversation corroborated.

Bill was looking up at the rattling shrouds and humming:

"Proudly our banners floats o'er us to-day——"

"Only it don't float just this moment," interrupted the Californian bringing himself up to a standstill beside Bill.

"That's so! These rummy boats—they're some with flags when they're in port, but they're all English when they're on the sea. I'm down on 'em! Curse me if I wouldn't have come over in the steerage if I'd known what a cabin full of beats we have!"

"That's me!" cried the other. "Only the other day, I tried to slide in on the captain's table, and he said that seat was engaged for the actress. She be blowed! I remember her out in Leavenworth three year ago, when we put her off the stage, she was was such a looney piece!"

"She'll make her fortune in England," said Bill, sneering. Talking of the 'Adelphi' and 'Olympic'! I'll bet she'll be right glad to get on to sing at the Oxford, Canterbury or Pavilion!"

"You know London, don't you?"

"Ought to," said Bill. "I spent more'n I know there, eight years' ago."

"Did you know Crookford's mother—the big bug that kept the hell?"

"Rather. I remember her keeping a fried fish stall, by — somewhere on the Strand!"

"I forgot 'most, myself. I started the concert hall biz in London," said the Californian.

"No!"

"Yes. A Frenchman and me. That's what broke me! I had to clear for California!"

"Oh! I see! Horsemonger street——"

"Aha! Queen's Bench, and all that. Lawyers get too much money in England."

"So you've been to the diggings?"

"Rather. Done 'em all from Washoe to Sonora. And I come home not much the better after six years' of it."

"You ought to have stayed on this coast, and tried your hand at 'ile' like me," said Bill.

Roves wanted to hint that he had no end of money.

They got quite thick together from this out.

They adjourned to the steward's and punished some liquor, "stiff" as was the price.

Then the Californian would have Bill come into his state-room to see some specimens of ore.

And next, Bill would have his new friend come into his state-room, while he changed his coat to go on deck again.

Bill was in this act when it chanced that he saw, out of the corner of his eye, his companion replacing the false whisker that had got loose.

Instantly there recurred to Bill the difference in his acquaintance's tone, and his particular remarks on the "Getchem Forgeries."

Moreover, the "Californian" had swiftly peeped inside a spare hat of Bill's which hung on a peg.

Bill saw that his lips were reading:

"Knox, Fulton street and Broadway, N. Y."

With an air of triumph.

"Who are you?" cried Bill. "You are Old the detective!" said he himself instantly.

"Yes. And arrest you as receiver of part proceeds of the Gold Check Robbery," said the detective in his natural tones, and putting out his hand.

"What?" exclaimed Bill, to gain time.

The officer had been so accustomed to have every thing his own way after

he announced himself, that he no more expected resistance than a Czar of Russia.

But Bill was not going to cross the ocean only to be brought back in the next homeward bound steamer.

He flew at the other so fiercely that the latter's head knocked against the iron bulkhead and he was stunned.

Bill forced him back against the bunk, and throttled him scientifically.

Bill was once under arrest for attempted robbery during the Garotte Excitement a good while ago. Any of the jurymen who could have seen him at this moment, would have reversed their "not guilty" verdict.

The insensible officer would have fallen to the floor but that his conqueror sustained him.

He held him with one hand until he had shut the spring-locked door with the other.

Bill opened the port-hole softly.

By chance he had been given a state-room, the only one on that side of the ship that was of a large diameter.

It had been left unlatched, through some reason.

The City of Chepultepec had been built on the Clyde for the African trade and therefore had had all the air-holes of this dimension, quite unsuited for the Atlantic.

As the detective had been completely paralyzed by the blow against the iron bulkhead, Roves had no difficulty in launching the lifeless form of the detective through the port-hole. His plunge into the sea had not been witnessed by any one.

As the wardrobe and effects of the vanished man, very scanty, truth to tell, were in tact in his room, the unheralded departure was set down to accident.

The actress, sure to have her name mixed up in everything that was going on, was ready to affirm—no, she did affirm for the next three mornings—that she had heard a splash in the water as she was in her room.

"You must have heard it, too, Mr. Hudson," said she to Bill, to whom she had rarely spoken, but she needed "confirmation"—not religious, "you must have heard it, for you were in your room next mine at the time."

"I don't know as I did," replied Bill, a little flushed under his mock complexion. "Anyhow, the poor fellow's gone for good now!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Ah, Master Bill!

You happened not to read the English papers this morning when the following was in print:

"Southampton. The barque Edwina reports: Lat. 52, Long. 34 48, picked up a man, who fell overboard from the American ship Red Jacket, and was clinging to a red buoy with the red flag, marked 'TELEGRAPH NO. 4.' The man states that the buoy was detached from the cable when he reached it."

Detective Olds was not going to tell all he knew and scare the bird already on the wing.

\* \* \* \* \*

For a few days after the summary disappearance of the detective, little else was talked of. Bill Roves, wherever he saw a few sailors grouped together, was always on the alert to hear what was going on. During one of the watches he saw three or four old salts in close confab, he drew near—offered his 'solace,' and took 'a hand in' at listening to the following yarn:—(glad to find it had no reference to the startling incident in which he had been so prominent an actor.) The story was being told by a broken-down gentleman, and Bill heard him thus continue his interrupted narrative:

My blood ran cold as I listened to the following short dialogue, for I was in the shadow and could not be seen by the speakers.

"Sink the customs! It's of no use, Nance; I'm fairly a-ground, and you ha'n't strength enough to shove me off again. So here I must lie, old rotten hull as I am, till they find me, and then I swing for it."

"But try, father; only try; lean on me."

Again she endeavoured to drag or rather support the old man forwards, and her efforts were really wonderful for a creature so slim and lightly made. For a time I stood still like a fool!

I must have been bewildered—stunned by what had passed.

But I was now awake again, and cursing my own dullness, that could waste so many precious moments, I dashed down into the dyke, and waded knee-deep through the mud and water, and with infinite difficulty calmbred up the opposite bank, where I was instantly observed by the old smuggler.

"Sink the the customs! They are here, Nance."

In another moment I was at his side, but in that moment, the pistol was discharged, and he dropped into my arms mortally wounded, exclaiming—

"Sink the customs! You are too late to hang me, messmate. Nance, my girl, they cannot say your father was hung; you're a wife now for any man—the best in the land, let him be who he will. Sink the customs!"

"Tis I, Harry—your friend, George Seymour."

"What, the master! Give us your hand! You're a brave lad, master—fought better than any six king's blue jackets, though it was against myself. But, master—"

But I replied to the sign, for I understood it well—too well.

"She shall not want a home, Harry, while I have one."

"God bless you, master. Nancy, my girl, where are you? The night grows so dark—or something is coming over my eyes—kiss me, Nance?"

And Nancy moved towards him with a calmness that was truly frightful.

As she stooped to kiss him, something like a smile passed over her lips.

May I never see such a smile again!

In the same moment Harry was slightly convulsed, and with a groan that was scarcely audible, he expired in my arms.

By this time, the lieutenant and his party, who had been alarmed by the report of the pistol, came up to us, and explanations were asked and given in less time than it has taken me to write or my readers to peruse them.

Frank carefully minuted everything down in his pocket-book, and having given the dead body in charge to a party of seamen, attempted in his rude way to comfort Nancy.

The poor girl, however, was not in a state to need, or listen to comfort; the blow had stunned her into insensibility, and there she stood a thing of life, but without its functions.

After many fruitless attempts at consolation, he exclaimed in a tone that under any other circumstances had been ludicrous—

"The poor thing has gone mad or stupid. I tell you what George, we'll have her home with us, and put her in Bet's hand; she's a better doctor than half our old women in the navy."

This was no sooner said than done, and without either thanks or opposition from Nancy, who seemed to have lost all power of volition.

The lieutenant's wife, however, feeling that such a case was something beyond the usual range of her practice, begged the ship-surgeon might be sent for, and immediately sank into the subordinate situation of nurse, to the sore displeasure of Frank, who hated the very sight of a doctor.

Yet neither the skill of one, nor the more than sisterly attention of the other availed anything.

The morning came, and she was evidently mad; a second, and a third day followed, and still she was no better; the idea that her father lived, and was to be hung, had got firm hold of her mind, and nothing could root it out.

All we could say was in vain; she brooded on this one thought with a sullen silence, much worse than any violence of frenzy could have been; and I

now began to feel myself placed in a most awkward situation by my promise, so unwittingly given to the father.

It could not be expected that Frank would trouble himself many days longer with a maniac, and what was I to do with her?

One moment I wished the poor thing might die, and in the next was angry with myself for my selfishness—then again, I cursed the hour that brought me on such an unlucky visit; when, as if all this was not enough, I was summoned to the coroner's inquest, sitting on the body of Henry Woodriff.

I was not a little surprised at such a call, but it seems I might have spared my wonder; for however the smugglers may perish, this ceremony is not omitted, and the inquest had already sate on the others who were found dead near the beach.

Internally vowing to leave this abominable place within the next four-and-twenty hours—never to return,—I set off in obedience to the summons of the law, and found the inquest assembled in the parlour of a little public house, divided only by a field from the rest of the village.

Here too was Frank, with a party of his sailors, either as witnesses or accessories.

The foreman of the inquest was a short stout man, with a round face, and a short nose turned up as if in scorn of the two thick lips that opened beneath it, and a pair of yellow, flaring eyes, though destitute of all expression.

He looked full of dignity of his office, and, as I entered, was in the high tide of discussion with a stout young smuggler, who by his tone and manner seemed to care very little for anybody present.

This proved to be the son of poor Harry; and he spoke out his mind as plainly as his father would have done, though not quite so coolly.

"Burn the law. I say, whoever runs a stake through my father's body, I'll send a bullet through his head. So now you well know my mind, and let him try it who likes it."

With this he burst out of the court, to the great dismay of the foreman, who, when he recovered from his surprise, said in a tone of grave importance—

"This is contempt of the court, and must be punished."

The Lieutenant, however, put in his veto; for with all his roughness he did not want for feeling, and the gallantry of the young smuggler had evidently won his heart.

"Psha! the poor fellow did only speak up for his father and he has a right to do so."

"Yes, but with your leave, Lieutenant E——"

"Come, come, Master Denton, I know you are too kind-hearted to hurt the lad for such a trifle."

"Trifle! Do you call it a trifle to damn the court?"

"Well call it what you will, but let the poor fellow go scot free. He has had enough of it already, I think; his goods are taken, his father killed, and his sister is run mad."

"Why, as you say, Lieutenant E——, I am not hard-hearted, and—oh, Mr. Seymour, I beg your pardon for detaining you. We want your evidence as to this business, merely as a matter of form. You were present when Harry Woodriff shot himself. Administered the oath to Mr. Seymour."

The oath was accordingly administered in due form, and I was reluctantly compelled to tell the whole business, which still farther authorized the little foreman in his darling scheme of burying a man in the meeting of four roads, and driving a stake through his body.

I do not really believe he was of a bad disposition, but this ceremony flattered his importance, besides that it gratified the appetite of horror so common to all of vulgar minds.



To have been present at such a sight under any circumstances, would have delighted him, merely as a spectator ; but to have it take place under his own immediate auspices, was too great a treat to be given up for any consideration that Frank or myself could offer.

In addition to the mere pleasure of the thing itself, his persistency gave him in his own eyes all the dignity of a man resolute in the performance of his duty however, unpleasant, and in spite of the most earnest solicitations.

We were, therefore, obliged to yield the point, and leave the field to the little man who instantly selected half a dozen of stout peasants to keep watch over the body.

In coming out we saw a knot of smugglers in earnest conversation at the end of the street, about fifty yards from us.

Among them was young Woodriff, whose gestures spoke pretty plainly that the council was not a very peaceful one, and the lieutenant was not slow in guessing their purpose.

"Do you see them, George? Just as I thought, they'll have a haul at the old smuggler's body before night is over, and I'll not stand in their way for any coroner's quest of them all—not I. It's no seaman's duty to look after corpses."

As he said this, we came close upon the little party, who were silently eyeing us with looks of scorn and sullen hatred, that made one expect a fray ; Frank, however, was too brave to be quarrelsome.

"You need not scowl so, lads ; I have only done my duty, and mayhap I may be sorry to have it to do, but still it was my duty, and I did it, and will do it again, if the same thing happens again. But that's neither here nor there. All I meant to say was, that I'll keep a sharp look-out on the water to-night for any boat that may be coming over ; and in case of the worst, I shall have all hands aboard. So good-bye to you."

"The lieutenant's a brave fellow after all," said one, as we walked off.

"I never thought worse of him," replied young Harry : "but if I find out the scoundrel who first shot my father, on my soul he's as dead a man as any that lies in the churchyard."

"Come on, George," cried the lieutenant ; "if I seem to hear what these fellows say, I must notice it, and I don't wish that, if I can help it—poor devils!"

It may be easily supposed that the day did not pass very pleasantly, with me at least, who was not used to the trade of murder, though on Frank the whole business made very little impression ; he was too much accustomed to such things to be much affected by them, for a sailor's life is one of occurrences, while that of a studious man flows on so equally, that a simple thunder-storm is to him a matter of excitement.

My brain seemed to reel again, and I was heartily glad when eleven o'clock gave me an excuse for retiring, for I was wearied out—mind and body, and wished for nothing so much as to be alone.

It was a dark and stormy night, though as yet no rain fell ; the thunder, too, rolled fearfully, and the lightning leaped along the waters, that were almost as black as the clouds above them.

I was too weary for sleep, and feeling no inclination to toss about for hours in bed, placed myself at the window to enjoy the sublimity of the tempest.

At any other time this splendid scene would have been delightful to me, but now it awoke none of its usual sympathies : it was in vain that I tried to give myself up to it—my mind was out of tune for such things.

Still I sat there, gazing on the sea—when my attention was diverted by a gentle tap at the door, and ere I could well answer, it swung slowly back on its hinges, and Nancy stood before me, with a lamp in one hand, and a large case-knife in the other.

I thought she was asleep, for her eyes, though wide open, were fixed ; and

her voice, when she spoke, was subdued and broken, exactly like one who talks in her slumbers.

Something, however, may be attributed to the excited state of my fancy.

"I must pass through your window, it opens upon the lawn—for the front door is locked and the key taken away by the Lieutenant, who is out at sea to-night on the watch for smugglers."

As she muttered this indistinctly, she glided across the room to the window, and, undoing the button that held it, walked slowly out.

Still impressed with the idea of her being asleep, I made no opposition, fearing that she might be seriously affected in health or mind by any sudden attempt to wake her.

At the same time I resolved not to lose sight of her lest she should come into peril from the cliffs or the dykes, and accordingly I followed her steps at a short distance till we came to the public-house.

Late as the hour was, the people had not yet gone to bed, for lights were shining through the kitchen-window, and from the room immediately over it came the glimmer of a solitary lamp that stood on a table by the casement.

Hitherto Nancy had gone on without taking the least notice of my presence which had served to confirm me in the idea that she walked in her sleep,—but now she turned round upon me—

"The Lieutenant's wife, told me truly ; he is here ; but not a word ; follow me softly,—as though you feared to wake the dead."

I saw not that she was really awake, and my first impulse was either by force or persuasion to take her back.

And yet to what purpose ?

If her madness should grow violent I could always overpower her, and at any rate we were going to, and not from, assistance.

I did therefore as she bade me, and followed her in silence, while she went cautiously up to the window, and having examined what was passing within with all the deliberate cunning of a maniac, then gently lifted the latch of the door, which opened into a narrow brick passage to the left of the kitchen.

At the end of it was a short flight of stairs, and these led us into the room where I had before observed the lamp was burning ; in the middle of the chamber was a plain deal coffin on tressels, in which lay the corpse of poor Harry, all but the face covered over with a dirty tablecloth.

I now saw plainly that the peasants had held their watch below from pure fear of being in the same room with the dead, and a state of partial intoxication might account for their having left the door open—but to what purpose was this visit of Nancy's ?

She did not leave me long in doubt.

"Now, Mr. Seymour, you will call yourself my father's friend ; you have eaten of his bread!—will you see him hung like a thief on a gibbet?"

The strangeness of this appeal startled me so that I did not know well what to answer.

She repeated the question, while her eyes flashed with fire.

"Will you see him hung?—hung?—hung?—You understand that word I suppose."

"My dear Nancy—"

"By the heavenly light, coward, I have a mind to put this knife into you. Don't you see he is their prisoner,—in chains?—and to-morrow he will be tried and hung. Yes, my poor father will be hung."

And in her changing mood she wept and sobbed like an infant ; this, however, did not last long—

"But they shall not—no—they shall not. Here, take this knife—plunge it into him, that they may not have him alive—'tis a hard task for a daughter, and since you are here, take it and stab him as he sleeps—mind you do not wake



him, though—stab home—no half-work—home to the heart—you know where it is—here—here.”

She placed my hand upon her heart as if to show me where to strike—I drew back shuddering.

“Coward! But you shall do it—it is a task of your own seeking—you came here of your own free will—I did not ask you to follow me: and you shall do it!”

I knew not what to say or do, and for a moment thought of flinging myself upon her to force away the knife, when I heard a scuffle below.

A few blows were exchanged, a single pistol-shot discharged, and immediately after was the tramp of feet upon the stairs.

Nancy uttered a loud shriek:

“They are here!”

Scarcely were the words uttered than she rushed up to the coffin, and ere I could prevent her, plunged the knife twice or thrice into the dead body.

In the same instant the room was filled with smugglers, headed by young Woodriff, who was astonished, as well he might be at the extraordinary scene before him.

“Mr. Seymour!—Nancy, too!—Poor girl!—But we have no time for talking, so all hands to work, and help bear off the old man to the boat: we’ll soon have him in fifty fathoms water out of the reach of these harpies.”

“My father!—You shall not take my father from me!”—shrieked the poor maniac.

“Be quiet, Nance! Gently, lads, down the staircase: look to our Nance, Mr. Seymour: gently, lads: I’d sooner knock twenty living men on the head, than hear one blow given to a dead one.”

So saying, and having again briefly entreated me to take care of his sister, he followed the corpse out, while the unfortunate maniac, quite contrary to my expectations, made no further opposition.

She leant for a time against the window without speaking a word, and, when I tried to persuade her to return, very calmly replied. “With all my heart. To what purpose should I stay here since they have taken my father from me! They’ll hang him now, and I cannot help it!”

“My poor girl, your father is dead.”

Nancy smiled contemptuously, and passing her hand across her brow as if exhausted, said, “I am ready to faint; will you be kind enough to fetch me a glass of water.”

She did, indeed, seem ready to drop, and I went down into the kitchen to fetch the water.

Seven or eight smugglers were there keeping watch over the peasants, and the sentinel, mistaking me for an enemy, levelled his pistol at my head; but the priming flashed in the pan, and, before he could repeat the attack, an old man, who had often seen me with Frank, stepped between us just in good time to save me by his explanation.

Upon telling him my purpose he directed me to the well in the yard, at the same time putting a lantern into my hand with a caution to “look to the rotten tackling.” A caution that was not given without good reason, for the wood-work round the well was so decayed that it would scarcely bear the action of the cylinder.

In a few minutes I had drawn up the bucket, and hastened back to Nancy with a jug full of the water.

To my great surprise she was gone, and I now saw—too late, indeed—that her request for water was merely a trick to get rid of me, that she might the better escape, though, what her farther object in it might be, I could not possibly divine.

It was not long, however, before I learnt this too; for on looking out of the

window, I saw her with the lamp still in her hand, pushing out to sea in a small skiff, that was half afloat, and held only by a thin cable.

How she contrived to throw off the rope I knew not, but she did contrive it—perhaps she had the knife with her, and cut it.

Be this as it may, she was pushing off amidst the breakers that burst about her most tremendously, and kept up a most violent surf for at least half-a-mile from the shore.

Was not this under the idea of rescuing her father?

In an instant I gave the alarm, and the smugglers, leaving the peasants to do their worst, hurried off with me to the beach.

Nancy was now about a hundred yards from the shore in the midst of a furious surge, for though it was too dark to see her the glimmer of the lamp was visible every now and then as the boat rose upon the waters.

“It’s of no use,” said the old smuggler, “no skiff can get through them breakers.”

“Well, but she has.”

“Not yet, master—see—the light’s gone—it’s all up with her now.”

The light had indeed gone, and not as before to raise again with the rise of the waters.

Minute after minute elapsed, and still all was dark upon the waves—and the next morning the corpse of Nancy Woodriff was found on the sands, about half-a-mile from the place where she first pushed off amid the breakers.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE OUTBREAK AT CHATHAM. BILL ROVES STRIKES OUT TO “SHOW THAT A YORKER CAN’T STAND IT.” THE GRAND SMASH. THE END OF HIS COIL.

THE trial of William Roves for the attempted murder of John Olds while in the pursuance of his duty as detective officer of the Metropolitan Police Force, of the City, County and State of New York, created great excitement in London.

The “*Times*” had a leader on it, and a romance came out in weekly penny numbers entitled “The Homicide on the Ocean Wave; or, the flight of the Forger’s Friend,” abounding in as many errors in attempt at Americanisms as an English author of even that class could have been expected to find.

Bill’s counsel fought hard for him, and came near getting his trial postponed on the ground of the alleged atrocity having merely been an “assault.”

The jury, mostly all the butchers of Newgate Market, were not to be cajoled that way. They came near to bringing him in guilty of the most aggravated murder.

The end was that Bill was sentenced to penal servitude for life.

He was sent to Chatham Dockyard first, to be blackguarded by the marines and sailors, and called “Yankee,” by his fettered mates.

He found it was vain to explain that an Empire Citizen is as big a remove from a Yank as a Cornracker or Egyptian himself.

The rows he got into led to his being set apart among the “refractories,” and put aside with the bad lot on St. Mary’s Island.

He soon, by the taking way that he had caught up in his Manhattanese life obtained an influence over his comrades.

With American quickness he caught up the ways of these fellows and added to that, his experience of Moyamensing.

At length, he got his set to swear “over the iron,” that they would follow their leader, even if the end should be punishment-jacket and stripes.

At the usual hour in the morning, about 400 of the convicts were marched

down to the island to commence work, about thirty wardens, all well armed being in charge of them.

The prison regulations, forbid any convict to be fired at, unless he attempted to escape, or assaults a warden, in which latter case he may be run through with a bayonet.

The convicts proceeded with their work all the morning until the hour for dinner. It is customary for 300 of the men always to dine on the island, in a large building provided for that purpose, the remainder returning to the prison. The dinners of those who remain on the island are always sent to them.

This day the convicts were in charge of a chief warden named Burton, and on the soup being served out to them many declared it was not "good enough" for them.

"Blast me," said Bill Roves, "if I'm going to eat Cattle Plague beef!"

"Hear, hear! hark to Yankee!" chorused all.

The warden asked Master Bill what he meant by that.

Whereupon, Roves gave his answer by dashing the contents of his basin into the face of Mr. Burton. This was a signal for a general uproar, and the contents of innumerable basins were thrown over the chief warden, who was drenched to the skin with the soup. The wardens who were looked inside with the convicts, in vain endeavored to restore order, but the ringleaders threatened to murder them if they attempted to interfere, and then commenced smashing the windows and throwing their cups and tins about. They also commenced tearing up the tables and stools, and armed themselves with the fragments at the same time hooting and yelling in the most horrible manner.

Bill jumped up on the table.

He recalled all he had ever heard of election times, and he made a speech in Captain R——er's own style.

"Let's see 'em in—first!" shouted he, "before we work for any Queen, and to keep the prince of Whales fat! I wish I'd dug him in the back of the left tooth when he was in York—the Dutch-looking hound! Stand by one another, pals, and lay out any of the turnkeys that interfere!"

"Hoorah, Yankee!" cried the rioters.

"Let's have a song!"

Then came the fun.

One shouted the history of the "Bold Butler of Belgraveyer" to the tune of "Slap Bang." From another, was to be heard a song which told a "Horrible Tale," of a teetotaler whose preference for water instead of beer had brought him to a woful plight, and there could be no doubt that the moral of the song was fully appreciated by those who heard it, for immediately upon its conclusion, the convicts banged their soup tins flat and swore they would roast before they should drink "slops ag'in."

The governor and his wife were commented on to the air of the "German Band," and the other officials received the general opinion in a song on the theme of the "Sugar Shop."

But Bill Roves roared them all down. They actually listened in rapturous silence to his medly composed of "Going to Coney Island," "Irishman's Shanty," "Girl of the Peanut Stand."

During the uproar, the wardens in charge of the men used every endeavor by entreaty and otherwise to bring them to a state of subordination, but without effect; and the comparatively small number of wardens on the island left them quite at the mercy of the infuriated convicts.

It is usual for the convicts to be locked in during the dinner hour; and immediately the outbreak commenced they demanded to be released. This, however was not complied with; but immediately the dinner hour had expired, the doors were unlocked, in the hope that the men would resume their work. Directly the convicts were released, a few of them went towards their work with the intention of resuming it.

But Bill and his gang rushed at the soft ones, yelling:

"Now a gay policemen came that way, With a big club in his hand,  
And marched that loafer off to jail, For upsetting the Peanut Stand."

And the delinquents kept quiet.

Prompted by Bully Bill who was quite in his element.

The convicts expressed their determination not to recommence work, and dared the keepers and wardens to attempt to make them. They were nevertheless, removed from their cells into the yard, when a gang of about fifty suddenly turned upon their keepers, whom they soon overpowered and drove before them.

The other convicts quickly joined their comrades who had commenced the outbreak, and a most appalling scene of uproar and destruction ensued. The keepers on duty about 150 in number, were all driven from the prison-yard with threats that they would all be murdered if they did not make their escape.

They were searched and all their keys taken from them. Their watches were smashed or pocketed. The couple of brandy flasks that were found on them were "turned over for the commissary department." In other words Bill and another chiefs drank their contents.

When the remainder of the felons had been let out, they immediately commenced a wholesale work of destruction in the interior of the prison. A large number of the convicts rushed into the office where they commenced destroying the books and papers and every other available article on which they could lay their hands; desks, tables, and chairs, everything which could be broken up being quickly destroyed. They then endeavored to set the prison on fire, and the building was actually fired in two or three places, from which the flames began to pour forth. The keepers and wardens, however, succeeded in getting the engines, which are always kept in readiness, into play; and the flames were extinguished, or there is no doubt the whole building would have been burnt down.

During this time other parties of convicts were still engaged in destroying everything on which they could lay their hands, the furniture in each of the cells being brought out and broken, the cell windows and nearly every square of glass which could be seen, smashed, while the large stove in the centre of the building was turned over by main force. The prison clocks, as well as the noctuaries, the instruments in use in the establishment to register the attendances of the keepers at night, were all smashed to atoms.

"This is the 'Eternal smash' that Yankee allers said were a coming!" shouted a big Whitechapel rough, as he knocked a desk into splinters with a bar of iron.

"You jess bet," answered Bill. "Come on to the East Extension, fellers!" He waved the club like in the old days when he had had the trumpet and "run'd wid der masheen to a Seventh District Alarm."

His followers smashed the windows of the adjoining building, tore down the spouts from the roof, and managed to wrench off the bars from the windows. A number of free workmen on the island were so alarmed that they rushed to their boats and rowed off into the middle of the river. Several men on the opposite side of the harbour hearing the uproar and making out the mutinous state the convicts were in, put off to the island, but the most fearful threats were used towards them which rendered it unsafe for them to attempt to land.

"You come ashore," said Bill, "and you'll think the Great Eastern had run over you!"

They pushed off in quick time as volley of a stones saluted them.

The alarm signal was hoisted.

The soldiers began to come over.

The convicts all this while were destroying everything they could find on the island, the regulation boards being broken up and thrown into the river, their tin cups and cans being also thrown away, and several of them taking off their serge coats and filling them with stones hurled them into the river.

After some delay the order was given for the troops to enter the prison, when about 700 men were marched inside, the remainder being disposed outside to prevent any of the convicts escaping. The moment the soldiers made their appearance they were received by the convicts with the most dreadful yells. The command was then given for them to charge the convicts and drive them into their cells. At this time the warders rushed forward, using their truncheons with the utmost freedom.

"Now, pitch in fellers!" shouted the half drunken Bill.

The convicts would not stand by him well, now.

There was one grand melee, during which some of the muskets were wrenched away and fired at their late holders.

Bill had a warden's four-barrelled revolver, and he emptied every chamber of it.

Finally, all the mutineers were bayoneted into the cells.

But two of the wardens died. One was clubbed to death. Bill Roves had shot the other, who had followed him into his cell to take away his second revolver.

"Curse you all!" screamed Bill as they pinioned him. "If it had been one of Colt's 'stead of your beastly British make, I would not have missed a bloody one of you!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Anybody who knows Raidstone knows that it is a quaint, picturesque, old borough—the county town, in fact, and worthy to be the town of such a county—as clean as a granary and as pleasant as a hop-garden. The broad-brimmed hats, ample white coats, and dusty gaiters of rubicund farmers and hopgrowers are known to its High-street; and the great number of greyhounds would seem to denote much coursing in the neighbourhood. The gaol at the top of the town is not so grim a donjon, outwardly, as might be expected. It has a Doric front, of a rather cheerfully sedate aspect; and the railed green space before it is really almost out of character with a prison.

Outside the iron railings is a wide public place, on which five thousand persons might stand, though scarce as many hundreds stood there one day, until just ten minutes or so before twelve o'clock, when the crowd increased, though not to anything like the dimensions that experienced officials of the gaol had looked for. Out from one of the wings projected the scaffold—a grisly kind of black balcony, with the drop in the midst, and a strong beam and chain over it, supported by two uprights. The sides of this balcony were draped with black cloth, and, being high, hid all but the heads of those who mounted the platform; though the floor of the drop was somewhat raised so as to exhibit more prominently the figures of the condemned and the executioner. But for the gallows, and for the open air preachers who improved the occasion, and whose voices had a hard struggle with the cries of "Walnuts, ten a penny," there was no appearance of a public execution. Two hours before the appointed time not fifty people together could be counted. The majority then were children, playing near a side-gate, close under the shadow of the drop. A few market carts, by and by, took up position, but there was still five times the room that the crowd of spectators on foot required for a good view.

By direct interposition of the Crown this out of the way country place had been selected.

It was feared what the effect would be if a crowd of London thieves and ticket-of-leave men should be able to easily reach the place of execution.

The prison officials had reported to Sir George Grey that the prisoner "with his American profanity and carelessness of life" would die even more than game.

Indeed, as the grey bearded hangman, Calcraft, pinioned Bill, he hummed "Gay and happy" and muttered:

"I wish Matty was here."

He refused the clergyman's aid.

"He wasn't Church of England not a bit. He used to go to a nigger church in Green Street for fun of a Sunday—that's all ever he cared for it!"

Then, where he was troubled again by the parson, he amazed that individual and the concourse of sheriff and undersheriffs by this speech:

"Tain't my style to talk on the planks and tell folks that they'd better leave off swearing and going to concert halls! I never would refuse a drink if I saw fifty men strung up for only shooting the hounds that watched us from cracking a stone too little in a day's work! Go ahead, I'm ready."

At noon the prisoner was led up on the scaffold, and placed beneath the drop. There was a fresh breeze at the time, but the weather was gloriously bright, and the landscape looked beautiful.

An extempore prayer was delivered with great fervour by the minister as Bill stepped under the beam. Calcraft quickly drew the cap over his victim's head, fitted the noose round his neck, and attached the end to the chain above.

He then disappeared, and it was not long before the drop went rattling down and the scaffold shook with the fall.

"I'd like Matty to know :—"

What he would have uttered more was unknown to the world.

His white-covered head disappeared below the edge of the aban barrier. Justice was satisfied on the body of the man who had seemed so strangely to have wandered to that quiet English town to be given death.

### CHAPTER XIII.

LON FORSTER BETROTHED. THE BLACK-EYED BEAUTY IN HER LAST CHARACTER. THE GLORY IN THE FAREWELL FLAME.

ONE morning Lawrence Forster was looking in at Schaus' Print store, when a friend accosted him.

"Why, Lon, old fellow, no one has seen you for ever so long!" cried this person.

"No, Charlie, the fact is I'm engaged to be married. A cousin of mine, may be you remember her, Carrie Field. You and me, and she and Isabella Marton used to go to 40th Street School together!"

"So we did—I almost disremembered it."

"Yes, and I have been steering clear of everybody for the last half year. Carrie's folks are strict and they imagine that every young fellow is as bad as young Getchem!"

"He was an old chum of ours, too, Lon," observed Charles.

"Yes, I never wondered at his game when I remembered his school doings in the way of manufacturing 'excuses' for the boys."

"Oh, by George! yes. Then, Lon, you have been under a sort of moral Quarantine?"

"You've hit it. Your theatrical business has sharpened you up, Charley."

"Happy to hear you say so. Look here—"

"Well?"

"Are you busy just now?"

"No! Didn't you see I was only idling—looking in the windows."

"Come up stairs to my place. You never was in here—since I moved Oh, it's gay."

Lawrence accompanied his friend up stairs.

Charles was a theatrical agent.

He had two rooms, neatly carpeted.

"I tell you what I really want you for, Lon. I've got a lady visitor coming, and she's so gorgeous that I am afraid to meet her alone."

"You don't say?"

"Yes—Have a cigar? don't be bashful! They're real Havanas. The rope dancer I engaged from Cuba, brought them over. But I was saying, this woman. Such a figure, such a face. Jeemeny! as the boys used to say. I had her photograph here!"

He looked about on the table.

"No, it's gone. I never can keep anything. Well, this woman is fresh from the South. She is well educated, speaks languages and all that. She is an orphan, family ruined by the war, loyal of course. I suspect some Federal officer was around them parts."

"She enclosed her photo to me, said she must go on the stage. I had a talk with her last week. On the strength of that one interview I went off and spoke to the manager of the Autumnal Conservatory."

"You see the Olympic has been doing huge with the English blonde, 'from the Haymarket, London,' woman of *straw*, only there one 'snap' season, got in with the *drum-crits* and they mumble of 'descended from Duke of York, royal blood,' all my eye, *et cet*."

"The Conservatory wants something fresh."

"And this woman, the Southern Refugee, is gigantic, positively mammoth. She puts me in mind of somebody I've seen, some of the European Opera singers, I can't think, though."

"If she can come out, and she has the cheek, not to be too mild, the Conservatory will have a seven years sensation."

"I see her already: 'Great American Actress' in red letters——"

Tap, tap!

A lady's signal, evidently with the tip of a parasol handle.

"This is she, Lon," said Charley, dropping his voice into a whisper. "Just you step into the other room; take the paper along——and I'll get her to sing for you! That's a good fellow."

Lawrence let himself be pushed out.

"Come in, please," said Charley.

Lon heard a sweet voice, nice and ripened as of a woman of two or three and twenty, in response to his friend.

They had a long conversation together.

Lon grew weary, inasmuch as the lady spoke in a low tone as if she had heard the two voices while she was outside, or it might be her natural timidity.

At last Charley, eager to have the treat himself, as well as to reward his friend's patience, begged his visitor to seat herself at the "Chickering" and display the capabilities of her voice.

As she ran her fingers over the keys in the prelude to what she intended to perform, Lon dropped the paper that he had become interested in.

"My God!" exclaimed he, "That tune!"

It was Belle Marton's "particular" piece. The same that we have heard her thrill the Hotel Sainte Royale with.

And Lon had often listened to it, as she let him rest his head on her lap, one of her hands in his, the other twining his hair round her finger, lightly stroking his temples.

When that rich and unrivaled voice pealed forth, sonorous and heart-touching beyond power of pen to tell, Lon could have no doubt.

Some time after, Charley bowed his applicant down the stairs, going all the way to their foot in honor of her.

When he returned, he dashed into his rooms with a——

"Hip hooraw! What do you think—hullo! Lon! Lon! Deuce has taken him! he's gone!"

\* \* \* \* \*

On a brilliant night, the Autumnal Conservatory was pretty well filled with a curious audience.

An actress, native, reported to be handsome and with talent, appearing for the first time on any stage in a three act play of American City Life was a novelty.

Suffice it that the introductory scene went off passably.

The scenes were drawn back to show the "Rich Drawing-Room in the Millionaire's Residence, Murray Hill."

A woman's figure, in a dress that the most critical lady had to acknowledge perfection, was discovered seated at the table, on one side.

The applause was great, begun of course by the hangers-on of the theatre who knew it was the debutante.

"It is Belle," murmured Lon Forster, in one of the side stalls of the parquette, hiding his features.

It was Belle Marton.

At first she was supposed to be stage frightened, but her words speedily informed all that the intention of the piece was that she should be supposed weeping.

Hence the handkerchief up to her averted face.

As she warmed in a pretty long speech, she gradually let her voice strengthen from the tearful one, and disclosed her countenance. As she concluded the sentence with a proud gesture, the plaudits were universal.

"She'll do," said the manager to Charley, in their private box.

"Yes, Black-Eyed Beauty you never looked fairer!"

The unavoidable feeling which her great courage could not surmount, caused a glow to mantle her features and add to the natural brilliancy of her deep complexion.

Her large eyes, full of fire, seemed to expand when she talked of love or assumed the fierceness of hate.

Her form, not in the least altered since Lon had seen her last, was redolent with her peculiarly enchanting roundness.

Her arms seemed to have been moulded but to embrace men.

Her limbs, as if appreciating the hungry desire in the thousand eyes striving to pierce the folds, marked their outline against the robe at every one of her floating steps.

The least sound on the part of an auditor, set his neighbors eyeing him as if they would murder him for the interruption.

As for Lon, his feelings were countless.

Now he felt jealousy of a strange kind, that she who had been "his," should be the feast to so many.

He felt a scarcely resistable temptation to call out to her, merely to show the audience that Belle loved him alone.

Then he blushed with shame.

Was he not engaged to a beauteous girl, with the pearl of price that the Black-eyed Beauty had wantonly cast away?

Was this the spirit of his intended farewell look at Belle?

He would have fled from the place. But his first move occasioned a loud "Hush! order!"

He let his eyes rest on her like the others. She was so entrancing that he could hardly pluck them off.

He forced them to wander around.

To view the other tenants of the stage, mere dressed-up puppets beside her.

To glance at his friend Charley, gazing, overjoyed, as he leaned out over the cushioned edge of the box.

To scan that sea of faces, the lips of all desiring to murmur:—"Oh! you love of a creature!"

To survey the decoration; the gold, less bright than her glances; the white! less bleached than her teeth; the roseate, incomparable to the flush on her brown skin.

By an instinct, then, such as we experience at times and cannot in the least account for, Lawrence looked up straight over Belle's thick curls, whither her voice was floating.

Then one might have seen his eyes fasten on the spot in horror, and his tongue clave to his suddenly dried mouth.

He sprang to his feet to break the weight of his terror, and shouted, amid the complete stillness, the only stage words he could think of:—

"Belle! cross O. P., Belle!"

Mechanically, Belle started to the direction Opposite the Prompt Side.

The whole house rose at the strange interruption.

At that moment, a man's rough voice cried out, from the top of the proscenium, on the first entrance bridge.

"Good God! Stand from under!"

A great square block fell swiftly down on the stage.

It turned once in the air separated in two, as it were, and the heavier portion sunk, with a crash, in the gap it itself created in the splintered boards.

The other part, a heavy box on wheels, had fallen on Belle Marton and brought her to the planks with it.

It was a car of ballast, to be used in a forthcoming scene as a counterbalance to a "set tree to work." It had been forgotten in the confusion, always existent with a new piece, and a man had just been ordered to wheel it over from one side.

It had noiselessly been pushed to the centre, when Lon Forster had chanced to espy the peril.

The wheels had caught, the bridge had swayed, the men had worked awkwardly—it was never explained exactly.

The car lost its centre, and descended!

Among the first who clambered on the stage was Lon Forster.

Or rather, he had run down the side aisle, luckily unencumbered, and leaping up on the orchestre rail, bounded on the stage from thence.

He lifted up the car and rolled it aside in fury.

He knelt down by the motionless form, from which the bloom had faded.

His touch seemed to be magnetic over her.

She thrilled from head to foot and opened her eyes.

She had been pillowed on his breast, Belle had, and had wound her arms round his neck. She had clung to him, toyed with him, exercised all such a super-woman's wiles.

But never had so profound a look of love beamed in the eyes of the Beauty as, still gazing, the eyelids were compelled to curtain them by the spasm.

"Is she dead?" said Lon Forster, spreading his handkerchief over Belle's face. Blood was coming to her lips from the inward wounds.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER XIV.

It was on a most beautiful September's evening when the steamship *City of Lisbon* cut through the last wave going into New York Harbor, and began to plough through the rougher waters, that the passengers had made up their minds to have their night of it on the Atlantic itself.

A keen wind was rising, and so rattled the swivel-chains of the smokestack and so creaked the air funnels, let alone its freshness, that almost all the cabin passengers said their adieu and were lost to sight below.

Three or four men cigar alight, leant on the rail or walked up and down as much like seamen a sthey could imitate at short notice.

One woman had not gone down. She had drawn the hood of her cloak up over her head and around her face, the eyes of which could be seen to shine, either from natural brilliancy or from tears standing in them. In any case, she seemed to be gazing steadily astern, as if vanished Trinity steeple were yet visible to her.

It is "Belle Gayard" (the name ——— took to "travel" under), leaving the *Empire City*. If she had uttered her thoughts, they would have been worded thus:

"Good-bye, says my cold heart that your brightness cannot warm. You have had my maidenhood spent with you. May whatever joy you gave return to you, Manhattan dear, a hundred times a hundred fold. No one I love, no one I hate, no one I care for, left behind. Before me the old, old world the market where I'm bound to fetch high! God-bye, Manhattan! if ever I get my name up for cutting a shine, they shall know it's a New York girl that did it! I'll be proud to say so, even if you'd be ashamed to take pride in me. The last of the land goes down into the deep just as the last peak of my chastity and modesty sank under the deluge of despair when my heart broke. Broken and cold oh, heart of mine, would you were dead! Well, I'll heat you by the big chandelier of Covent Garden Opera House, and the lobby-lights' of the *Theatre Francais*! Farewell, Gotham, you won't know me, I'll be such an A-1 when you see this daughter of delight again!"

\* \* \* \* \*

AFTER three days out, things began to settle down to rights, the usual number were sick, the same old quantity unaffected, and an identical percentage so shaky as to be afraid to eat for fear of suffering and afraid to fast because that's a quick way of being retching: ie wretched.

Somehow or other, perhaps because she was determined not to give in, Belle, (as we'll call her throughout) was hearty as the captain himself.

What made her particularly "good" was that several old ladies with marriageable daughters, who had looked forward to trapping some passengers were laid up, daughters and selves, and their games dominoed before they'd so much as led off.

Except a couple of homely ones, the Black-eyed Beauty had the men all to herself. She kept cool, until she had carefully made out their "figures."



Putting aside the married men and the ones not rich enough to meet her mark, there were five persons whom she spotted on her mental tablet.

First was a young Englishman, only twenty, but with a beard and moustache in the "volunteer" style much beyond his years.

Probably his brains had contributed to nourish them, for a brighter youth could have been fished up alongside.

However, he could talk aristocratically in a falsetto voice, affectedly soft and faint about "the Carnardian gels look fawn aun the awce, in the—aw—the—aw what the doose? oh, aw—rinks, thawts the wawd—rinks." He was chief pen-sharpener to the British Legation at Washington, was now on leave, and, besides his general outfit and costly crystal-case watch, and Albert-chain, the fact of his companion being a real lord set the stamp on his standing.

This noodle was Charles Orde-Fellowes Gidling, Esq., and though he could not have laid his small unroughed hand on his father or mother (as a wise child can), there were a number in his "sett" who would point out the Countess of Flotherington as surely the dame whose steward paid a certain sum into Coulter, which Charles O. F. Gidling, Esq., more or less irregularly drew. "If that ain't motherly conduct," said these pointing-out people, "we should decide upon desiring to be better informed on what is."

Now, as for the other of his progenitors, (for even a Charles O. F. Gidling, Esq., has to share with "common folks," the inevitable fact of having two immediate ancestors,) there were doubts.

Sundry names, to be seen in the "Court" pages of the London Directory, were mentioned, among, which was that of Lord Strafford de Regamnoor.

This latter was his present companion, a man of good presence, some forty-five years of age, slightly bald, lofty without being too haughty, his reserve somewhat worn off him by his travels to the East in the Crimean trouble, and most recently to Omaha on the buffalo-paths. In returning from the West, he had passed through the City of Magnificent Distances, and picked up Mr. Gidling. The English of the wealthy classes are so follow-my-leader-ish in good or bad habits of both conduct and clothing, that the tolerably close likeness between the young scion and the elder trunk of aristocracy might not mean anything.

The senior displayed no parental feeling except in one way.

The Black-eyed Beauty, as chance and her wits brought it about, settled down at the top of the table, the captain to her left and Mr. Gidling on her right. Her plenteousness of charms had its usual effects on the weak-pated youth. He might have withstood the emotion occasional glances out of the tail of his eye gave him of the splendid woman's bust and the full length of her arm's outline. But when he came to get accustomed, from a leg and brace of the table forcing him towards her, to feel her dress all along his thigh, (aye, and the limb under its folds giving it gently resisting power) and her foot measuring its length against his—no use talking! he knew he'd be wretched if she missed coming to table one meal.

Opposite Bella, sat a Frenchman, a fine physical portrait, wanting nothing of six feet two, and super-developed in muscle. No "frog" about him. He had a handsome face, too, only for it being coarse, but then his flowing moustache and beard concealed much of that.

His length of limb compelled him to spread a little under the table, especially after Belle's left foot (her right playing with the Englishman's) came into contest with his patent leathers.

The Frenchman's title in the books was Leotard Le Sauvage. He could pin Chevalier before it when he liked for he wore the red tape of the Legion of Honor at his best-coat's button-hole.

His neighbors usually was Mr. Athole, a Toronto merchant, rich to the white of his eyes. He drank as only those trained upon whiskey can drink, and if his wine-bill did not roll up to a higher figure than his passage money, why

what the *City of Lisbon's* steward calls Roussillon was far cheaper that trip than memory of man knew of before.

He was a round-faced man, with a beard that would have continued straight and stubby though all the precious oils that oiled Aaron's beard had run down it. He did not spend money foolishly, he kept out of the "pool" on the ship's running, he made no brag, but Belle knew first shot that he could make the mare go with gold shoes, at that.

Lastly, there was a young New Yorker there. About one over the score, yet old from life seeing, plain yet showy in tone and manner, with that notable blending of the red Manhattanese's stealthiness with the Parisian's dash, grave as a New Englander at times, at others gay as a saddle-hue of New Orleans. One of the sharp, knowing sort, making no parade of his intelligence, but bringing out argument after argument like the charges of a repeating rifle.

Thin of feature, bright of eye oftener curling his lip in shadow of deep inward scorn than laughing, looking straight at any man or woman, bold or beauteous, who spoke to him, fearless of earthly or devilish thing too busy of brain to dream, setting his foot on the past, getting a good grip on the present, only to leap up into the future.

What was he? only he could have told.

Chevalier Le Sauvage set him down as correspondent to some American paper! Benighted Frenchman? As long as a man in the States can clip out of London journals and hash up those scraps, a real "foreign correspondent" don't expect to make his salt.

Mr. Gidling had a row with Mr. Valentine Vaneagle (the Gothamite in question) the second day out. They were both forward, and Vaneagle was amused on seeing how intensely Gidling was disgusted when a seaman, chalking a circle around him where he stood, held out his hand for deliverance money. The aristo "came down" grumbling at the imposition, and attempted to relieve his vexation by pointing at Vaneagle, who, planted on the chain-cable box clear forward, was old-salt-like regarding the clearing of the waves.

"Lor' bless yer sir," replied the sailor chuckling, "that gent's been free of the fo'k'sel these four day' or more. Fust thing he did was to stand a half sov to the crew and by a ticket in the raffle for the bos'ain's fiddle! Would you like to try *your* luck, sir, English 'shillin' a ticket and a real SCREAMONER, as the eddicated say?" But the victimized Gidling resisted the temptation, and felt much spite against the New Yorker because the latter had had more cuteness than he.

However, they still stood in the bow after this, when a sweet wave rose just as the prow dipped. "Consekens," a ton of water came in board.

Vaneagle, at whom Gidling made a frantic dash, gave him the slip, and made a leap to windward. Scarcely five drops fell on him. The other, for whom the "swell" had a fellow feeling, perhaps, had grabbed at his bystander, (as related) in his natural impulse, missed, stumbled, and half-drowned, was left in the lee scuppers till the ship rose and the brine was satisfied to leave him.

A melancholy mass of dripping he got upon his unsteady feet, and, clinging to the iron rail just over the Carpenter's workshop, he sputtered out to Vaneagle—

"Sir! sir! if—f—f you'd only let me take your arm, then, I would not have been so deluged!"

The New Yorker, not a twitch of the lips, or a twinkle of his eyes revealing his real mirth, answered sharply—

"A pretty greenhorn you are for a traveled Briton! Rule Number One: *Never* lay hold of a man when a sea tumbles inboard—stick your nails in the planks and shut your eyes till it's over—"

"Over!" said the other dolefully, for the seawater made him queer, "I was near over myself—"

The watch, who had viewed Vaneagle's escape with pleasure and the English-



man's immersion with delight, grinned their approval, while the sufferer crept forward, vowing it all came from his going where only the steerage Irish and common sailors should be.

*Mem:* Down on the New-Yorker thenceforth.

Out of this half dozen Belle sought to find one on whom at least to practice her wiles.

She gave up the Caledonian first; she had been using his field-glass one moonlight evening, and made such a dead set at it that any gallant man would have willed it over to her on the spot; but Mr. Athole said, taking it from her hand: "Ee, ma'am, it shu'd weel be a guid glass—it cost me the price of three first quality Mackinaws only the lost weentare in Not-a-dam' street o' Moontre-hall."

She threw him over at once.

She gave the New-Yorker a whole afternoon, but he fairly frightened her. It was like talking with Cagliostro; young in looks, his speech was that of an ancient. She began to prate theatricals, and he gave her the whole life history of all she named, from black-curved Madeline Henriques to light-tressed Maggie Mitchell. She boasted of a friend of hers who had gone to three places of amusement in one night; whereupon he smiled in his quiet way, and said: "One 'Fourth,' I went at ten to the circus at the Old Bowery; twelve to one to Barnum's (unburnt then); at two to Niblo's; at five to the Stadt Theatre; at seven to Laura Keane's (she had it then); left at ten to Wallack's Old House; crossed over to Four-forty-four, went up to the Melodeon, and—it must have been two in the morning—finished off at Miller's Rooms in the Valley Forge Twenty-six's Ball."

"How fast we go along," said Belle, to turn the conversation, "what a nice night it will be!"

"Superb!" exclaimed chevalier Le Sauvage, who had his camp stool close by, "The wind's softening, too."

"Breeze freshening, you mean," said Vaneagle, looking in the very opposite quarter to that whereon the Frenchman was gazing. "There'll be plenty of roley polley work to-night!"

Even as he spoke, the boatswain was heard to cry.

"Dick, clear away those idlers in the gangway. Bear a hand, Jack, to let go the main to-sel. Let go, Liverpool! 'Way aloft, Jack, and help t' lookout to stow away—shant want a rag shown above the trees for a day."

Belle who could just comprehend this, and who felt the vessel roll her screw out of water as the sudden increase of wind took her on the stern quarter, almost stared at Vaneagle as if he were a prophet.

"Brou!" said the latter, shaking himself, and addressing the Frenchman, "that breeze makes it as cold here as in the very damp-walled houses of the Rue de Breda!"

"Tis true! How! you know Paris?" said Le Sauvage, a little astonished at the simile.

"N—no!" returned the New Yorker smiling, as if implying that he was not going to tell everything he knew.

"He speaks French well, don't he, Mr. Le Sauvage?" said Belle.

"Very well."

"So do I speak Italian and Spanish for that matter," said Valentine calmly, "but I've never been on the Queen's Square of Madrid or in the Place of the people at Rome, I can write *u* in labor, honor, broaden the *a* and drop *h*'s like fun, but that don't say I've slept in the Adelphi Arches or been an M. P.'s secretary in his Hampstead Heath Lodge."

Le Sauvage had gone round in the heat of the smoke-stack.

"Do you know, sir," said Belle earnestly, "that you, though younger I think, show more knowledge than Mr. Gidling, and he comes from Oxford."

"He says 'Sardanap-alus,' for which I dare say he's been corected time and

again. That's nothing. What I know, I thank the Free Schools of the Empire City for! But come, a lady with eyes like yours, sees little interest in what I'm talking of. Do you notice that star?"

"A beauty, red colored?"

"Mars, I rather fancy."

"Is not that Venus then? the fairer one, so close to it, seeming to be an eye gazing softly up at him?"

She looked at Valentine with all her witchery, and he, after one glance at the stars, turned his view on her.

Ah, little of love in his look. She had fancied that he would have been confused, if only a little, by her impassioned vision.

But, his eyes, eloquent but steady of lustre, met hers, fastened on them, seemed to study her anticipatory raptures as something curious, and Belle felt that her gaze drooped before his spite of all her power, as before a master.

It was a master.

The fiercest passion must ever pale its fire under the clear ice-brook of mental sovereignty.

Belle felt vexed. It's confoundingly hard on a woman who is in the habit of overcoming, to encourage a desirable man who don't meet her halfway. She had not cared so very much for Vaneagle so far, especially as he did not seem to be a moneyed man, but, now that he was so cool, she made up her mind he should yet be glad to kiss her.

To affect him, she smiled on Gidling that evening, played chess with him, let him drink from the glass she had touched her lips to, etc. She upset him altogether. The chess-table was small, in a corner, where a bulkhead cast much shadow.

The people playing cards and reading at the long cabin table could see Gidling's face, but Belle's was turned from them. She therefore did not hesitate, to let her features assume their most adorable expression.

Hers and Gidling's knees touched (the folds of her dress and the crinoline between, of course), because of the table's smallness; their feet were together; this was below the table-top. Above their hands met in making moves, and their glances were all the time crossing.

If it had gone on much longer, the poor deluded fly would have buzzed into the gay spider's arms then and there.

Luckily a diversion came.

The chatterers at the main table had fallen to talking high, as men will do when backgammon and dominoes grow wearisome.

Lord Strafford deigned to relate a marvellous narrative of how he and another hunter had been snowed up on Bill Williams' Peak for nine days, till they had come down to eating their game-bags. Mr. Athole told a dry cold story of a man on snow-shoes racing another on skates from Toronto to Chemiserougeville up the *Sa' Lauren'*, as he in the Cannuck fashion styled it. Vaneagle recited the duel in a Spring-street haunt between two doubtful girls, with soda-water bottles.

"Gentlemen," began Le Sauvage, smiling on the company politely, "I will tell you of a feat I myself saw. It was at Grenoble. Fine town Grenoble!"

Lord de Regamoor nodded as much as to say he could own half the city if he willed.

"It was fete time, a glorification each day of the week, gentlemen, there was an equestrian exposition which had its canvas domicile erected in the square——"

"Eh?" queried Athole, half asleep.

"Oh, he means a circus came to town and rigged up a tent," translated Vaneagle.

La Sauvage nodded.

"Well, a cirque, imperial, grand, very fine. Two lions, gentleman, and

more than five-and-twenty horses, including the trick-ponies and performing donkeys."

A slight smile appeared on one or two of the listeners' faces.

"Now then, to this exhibition, inaugurated by the visit of the mayor's secretary's wife, flocked the people, in masses, in swarms, in conglomerations of multitude!"

The speaker's eyebrows working up and down as if they were false and were trying to come off.

"The amusement was at its altitude. The crowd danced with joy as the Hercules of a clown took up the naughty Shetland who would not eat the apple-pie, in one hand, and carried him, even as a terrier of England a rat, around the arena. Gentlemen, at that moment, a storm which had been thickening all that afternoon, broke over the city. The furious winds fell upon the tent, tore the stout canvas here and there and not only snapped the centre-mast in halves but tore out many of the guys. Well, gentlemen, the laughter of the audience turned into screams of fear and for aid. Little children and great men, women and maids, all shrieked as they saw the enormous mass of wet canvas sink slowly down upon them, extinguishing the lights and upsetting the cages of the two lions and the apes and the hyenas. The roars of these beasts, the neighs of the horses, the women's *sauvez mois*, all, all unnerved the stoutest heart.

"Then, gentlemen, one man showed himself equal to the occasion.

"Alone, he lifted up his hands, embraced the shivered end of the broken mast, and checking its down-coming, held it steady, and with it prevented the vast roof enfolding the people in fatal confusion."

"Strong man!" ejaculated Vaneagle, "even if it was the smallest tent ever held out under."

"Samson!" said Athole, with that aptness to find everything in the Bible which Scotchmen possess.

"Ah! at Grenoble?" said Lord Regamoore half-interestedly. "Why I remember that incident as having been told me. Let me see. Must have been in (lifting his head thoughtfully) in '53?"

"Januar, year fifty-four, my lord," said Le Sauvage smiling. "Pardon me."

"Yes, true—it was winter. They gave the—(hesitating whether to say 'hero' or 'fellow')—the-a-man something—"

L. Sauvage laid his right forefinger on his ribbon of the order.

"The Emperor," said he, "sent down M. de Grandtaille express from Paris to decorer me! I—I was the man."

All started, Lord Strafford more than the rest, and his look changed from indifference to a species of horror.

"Why—it all comes to me now; the fellow who held up the tent was the clown!"

"The clown!" ejaculated all.

"The clown!" cried Gidling leaping up, spilling the chessboard into his opponent's lap.

"Monsieur!" returned Le Sauvage, to the latter, as his tone was even more offensive than Regamoore's. "What? I was the clown—an Auriol, *eccentrique*!"

"Well, I'm d—ahem!" said Gidling coming over to the main table. "Your *eccentricity* leads you far, when you sit down to meals beside gentlemen—"

"Mort d'ema mere!" yelled the Frenchman. "Chevalier of the Legion, so insulted! There!"

And the book he had been reading, flew like a bird of prey into the young Englishman's face staggering him and all but knocking him down—literature always was too much for him. It happened to be a volume of Voltaire open at the "one should strike aristocrats only on the head," so that it was very

However apropos, the blow was likewise stinging, and as much from the pain as because Belle was looking, Gidling flew at the assailant.

The *City of Lisbon* was not the *Great Eastern*, so that the battle-ground was too restricted.

The two men had no sooner clinched than a lurch of the ship flung them both down and under the table. The passengers, already risen, leaped aside from their seats. Vaneagle thrust his hands under the board, and tightening his grip on what first came into his hold, dragged out Gidling by one leg, spite of his outcries and resistance. Indignant, for Belle had her handkerchief to her mouth, she was laughing so, he turned on the New Yorker, but the latter, whose, rather too tight grasp he still felt on his leg, darted a fierce look into his eyes and said curtly: "Better be quiet!"

Poor Le Sauvage fared still worse. The plunge of the ship, the roll on the floor and a punch in the stomach that one of the Englishman's elbows had given him in the fall and scuffle made him render unto Caesar (i. e. the table-cloth, pulled down with them) what he had taken at dinner-time from our said Caesar. Pale as a nun, he scrambled out and do his best to appear conqueror; he presented a lamentable example of how suddenly Neptune can change "towerers in their pride of place" into ludicrous objects.

Gidling had been led away to his state-room by his Mentor. Vaneagle prevented the Frenchman attempting to follow them, and, as he still resisted, made a sign of a peculiar nature: a frown and a momentary closing of the eyes. Belle saw this, but would have attached no weight to it, but that Le Sauvage started, let his hands fall, appeared to desire a repetition of the token, and, upon that being scarcely perceptibly given, yielded to the young man, who led him to the lee door, and took him up on deck with him.

Athole looked cannily around him, called to the steward to get him another "tumbler of that same, with not so much hot water," drank it, and went up on deck himself.

The rest of the passengers turned in or otherwise disposed of themselves.

Belle sat thinking for awhile and then went out herself; on going up the ladder-stairs so that her head was on a level with the hurricane deck, she espied Valentine and the Frenchman in close conversation. Unhappily; they were not only at the extreme stern but well to leeward so that by no means could their words reach an outsider's ears before they were blown out to sea.

Shaking her head, Belle returned into the cabin.

"No use talking," thought she, "that young fellow's too sharp for me. Hang it, I'll know more of him—why not this very night? Come now—eh? Yes, he's a fine fellow, American, thorough, and maybe they'll be all foreigners that I'll have to play my cards on hereafter."

In about an hour's time, Vaneagle came leisurely into the cabin. Belle, sitting at the table, all alone, beckoned to him.

With that ease of his, arising from his complete fearlessness of queen or peasant, he drew a chair up beside her, sitting with the ship's line and swaying with her motion.

The sea was roughening, and the lift of the steamer now and then drew sudden groans from the dozing miseries in their berths.

"Mr. Vaneagle," said Belle, in a whisper, "you'd better be more careful. I saw you make a sign to Mr. Le Sauvage—"

"Did you, indeed?" returned the other, without the least emotion.

"I saw that same sign made by many people in the July riots of New-York."

"Oh! why, you're clearer-sighted than I thought you," said Valentine, smiling pleasantly.

"Is it masonic?" inquired Belle, with that silly eagerness that the most sensible women evince when secret society is the word.

Valentine laughed, not impolitely but quite convincingly.

"I'm not a Mason," said he.

"No?"

"Never. My mission is not to build up——"

"Ah!" said Belle, with feminine quickness to be right or wrong in a rush, "rather to pull down!"

"What the de——"

The beautiful woman put her finger-ends against the speaker's lips. He gently pushed her hand away.

"I beg pardon. Don't let us talk nonsense. What's your shawl? — Cashmere—It well becomes you, by color, I mean——"

"No, no, dear Mr. Vaneagle. Burn the shawl! I see I can't learn anything from you," for she noted that the young man's countenance was returning to its habitual gravity.

"There's no need of fair women knowing anything of stern ideas," said he, "no need of their learning anything. For why? Because they cling to their own ideas, spite of all teaching. Look here—deny if you can. You've some queer idea in your head now. If I was to tell you the truth on it you would not believe me. If I agreed with you, you'd be sure I was fibbing, and if I keep silent, you'd be proof positive that that confirmed your notion. What's the good of a man answering a woman's inquisition? Inquisitiveness is a habit of hers. She asks, and asks, but never makes use of what she gets."

"Goodness! how hard you are! I could teach you something perhaps——"

In the half-light, the pupils of her eyes were uncommonly dilated. All that they usually had of fascination and effect was heightened now. Certain of her power, she daringly laid her hand on the table.

Vaneagle met her glance fairly, and his own began to kindle.

"Do you mean——" began he.

"Sh?"

She held up her finger. There was a footstep near the door.

He pointed to his stateroom.

"You can't come there?" whispered he, laying his hand in hers, surrendering himself utterly.

"You to mine!"

At this moment the captain entered.

"What! you young folks up still! Going to have a rough night of it? Warm my squawster and overcoat. There's wet in the moon."

As the steward brought forth the modern sea-armor of oilskin, Vaneagle and the lovely adventuress retired to their opposite dormitories, exchanging a sign which was much more potent than whatever was the one Valentine had quieted Le Sauvage with.

About three in the morning, a fierce blow came on from the nor'-east for about an hour, and betwixt its howling and the jar of the machinery, sound sleep was not an easy matter for the inexperienced in nautical journeying.

Lord de Regamoor was awake and kept in disagreeable state. He fell into a doze as the gale lessened, and the ship's motion became more reasonable. But repose was unattainable; hateful as it was he determined to get up, open his trunk, pour out a nip of cordial from the flask in his traveling case, and see if its composing effects would not show themselves again.

Old traveler he, of course, had made Gidling take the upper berth. So he had only to throw his legs out, resting on his side as he was, sit forward, drop to the deck, and open the trunk.

The cup-stopper of the flask in one hand, filled up, his other on the door-knob, he was just going to imbibe, when, the ship heeling over, the port-light was lashed by the wave rushing by and the deck sloped down at a fine angle for a geometrical study.

My lord, hanging on to the knob, for a moment did not know where his centre of gravity was. Before he could decide the counter-dip of the steamer

made him fall against the door very much as if a sledge hammer was trying to knock him through the panels.

His hand had turned the spring knob unawares. The door opened, as the ship, righting, darted on, on her even keel, and Lord Strafford, looking straight before him, into the opposite stateroom saw—that door being likewise opened—another form than the Black-eyed Beauty's standing by her couch's side.

The next moment, as the cry rang out amidships: "Hold hard, for'd, star-board watch!" The *City of Lisbon's* heels were kicked up high in the spray-weighted air, and her representative effigy at the prow buried itself in the roller which burst over the fore-castle, as if a torpedo had been exploded at the ten-foot mark on her cutwater.

Two stateroom doors slammed, and Lord De Regamoor was ignominiously impelled forward so that his head and shoulders were buried in his open trunk.

Cursing Guardsmen's oaths, fruits of Household Brigade duty (don't they swear, "them Gyards" at Windsor, though), he extricated himself, dived into his berth heaven knows how, pulled the clothes over him nicely twisted, with the sheet gone and the hairy blanket next his skin (of course), damned Gidling, (who woke up and asked him "were they going down?"), and, truth to say, little variety as there is in it, swore himself to sleep.

The vagaries of *Æolus* that night swept the sky perfectly, and, as the screw bored her way over the long swell which had smothered the fretting whitecaps (like a multitude of chief engineers at a fire), a splendid sunrise was given to the eyes of early risers.

Whoever else was, Vaneagle was not one.

Belle put in no appearance at breakfast, like all the ladies. Hanged if a man looks well after his head's been knocked against a bulkhead for hours, so you can't expect the fair sex to have better fortune. Athole came up to the scratch, punctual as ever. He had paid too much for his passage to miss a meal. Gidling came out of his room, to show he was ready for the Frenchman, as hostilities were naturally expected. His guardian was with him. He was remarkably anxious about Miss Gayard, and begged the Steward to inform him how it she appeared to agree with the rest of the ladies, for the first time, in keeping cosy.

To the relief of all Le Sauvage did not breakfast with the company. It must have been some powerful influence of Vaneagle that had induced or compelled him to resign the fighty mood that Frenchmen and especially of his unusual stature for that nation, are rather fond of an opportunity to fall into.

The sun ascended so brightly that, one by one, most of the ladies consented to their liege lord's wishes and went upon deck.

At noon, the cabin was deserted, except by Lord Strafford. He was seated at the table with writing materials before. He did not seem to get on very fast with his letters, or diary, or whatever it was. His fingers were engaged longer and oftener in stroking his beard than in holding the pen.

"Beautiful girl, she! A most splendid woman?" muttered he. "I wonder who the deuce it was with her last night. It was surely her room, and not Mr. and Mrs. Abrams. Oh, surely, yes traveling all alone, and those great eyes she's fair game, or I'm much out. But then, she's one of the kind that pick out her own taste. Wonder what she thinks of me? Those great black eyes, of hers have been on me more than once a day. Daresay she'd like to have my little house in Albemarle rent-free, and the ponies and basket carriage thrown in. "Must look sharp—a couple of days and we'll sight Ireland."

As he resumed writing a shadow fell on the table.

Looking up, he started, much like Aladdin, when he beheld the genii for the last time.

In the centre of the cabin roof, that is, on the hurricane deck, a large and long skylight ran. It was canvassed over on top, and each side of thick glass was al-

so barred with iron. But, on this very fine day these windows, as they may be called, had been let down on the sunny side, to air the cabin.

Now, when Belle went on deck, she found several of the passengers reclining on this raised hatch. One of them was Vaneagle chatting with the Frenchman. She went directly to them, smiling graciously to the latter, and sitting down beside the New Yorker, entered into lively discourse with him. They were presently left to themselves as *Le Sauvage* went away to the aft rail to look at the "whales."

There's some chap on board ship who always sees whales or icebergs or strange vessels in the horizon, though no one else does.

The result was that when Lord Strafford looked up to see a new Diogenes, who robbed him off his sunlight, he beheld something that took his breath away.

The beams rushed through the front folds of Belle's rich dress, which turned its golden tint into a sort of rosy cloud. In this color, appeared her legs, seen up to the bend, and a little above, for the dress behind was drawn up under her.

Lord Strafford had been about this naughty world of ours in his time. His memoirs would make Waterford wince. But he now acknowledged to himself that never had he seen the silk of a fine stocking so firmly filled out into the most elegant of shapes, whether examining the pretty dimple each side of the knee, the cup under it, the expanding lines rounding out into the plumpness just within bounds and then lessening impalpably into a fine ankle and a foot as small as comported with one of Belle's stature. For she was no fairy, but a woman of beauty from sole to crown.

The blood had not flown so into the gazer's head this many a day.

For a space, fascinated, the image of that limb, perfect in symmetry, in its assurance of belonging to a creature perfect in all other respects, became engraved on his mind.

He forgot himself.

Suddenly he bit his lip in shame.

"Almost wish I was a cad," muttered he, "and I'd stare a bit longer. Well, I'll have her if I have to have her arrested on a false charge and break her pride that way!"

So saying, he put the paper he had written on in his pocket, and went out.

What a mockery! Too much of a "gentleman" to abuse the chance given him, but not to resolve to possess the woman, for mark, he was not so sure that she was the thing for anybody's arms, spite of his awkward discovery of the last night.

On going on deck, he went straight to her.

"Miss Gayard," said he in a low tone in her ear, and looking down significantly, "the windows of this—a—whatever it is, are down here and there and the steward or some of his men are constantly passing in and out the cabin."

Before she moved a thread, she looked at his eyes steadily, and seeing him actually confused, she, "knew what she knew."

Women are dull in many things, but on some points if they are not sure-fire, no body is.

Then, without a blush, she rose, shook her dress, smoothed it and sat down once more, in the same place.

"Thank you, sir—I mean, my lord," said she, smiling. "I must really get into the habit of using titles, if I'm to stay in England."

"If you frequent the society that you no doubt have introduction to, a lady of your intelligence will have no difficulty in learning how to use 'your lordship' and 'your grace' at every so many sentences."

"Ah!" sighed Belle affectedly, "I'm afraid I have no such friend."

"Then you may—one never, during life, leaves off making friends——"

"And enemies," said Vaneagle abruptly, with something of acerbity in his tone which nothing apparent justified.

"And enemies," repeated Lord de Regamoor, looking up from his watch which he had been examining. "A deep remark for a youth to make," added he, placing the American after the style of an ancient pyramid looking down with its forty centuries.

He turned slowly away, and, leaning on the left rail while he lit a cigar, thought:

"That's the man who was with her last night, I'll wager. She seems rather willing. I must think *how*."

Dinner passed, and yet the nobleman had not found out the "how."

Once more on deck, Lord Strafford was lounging astern on a camp stool, looking out over the waters.

Oh! if such men's minds and hearts would only be quickened into real life. As it is, doing nothing with their ample means in youth but feeding the demands of college life; a soldier, for the sake of a rank in young manhood, a statesman, as far as chatting at a council-board with those who are really the workers for the state, in prime; their holidays spent in seeing much but weighing little, by all that's good, it would do the empire a service if duels were allowed again and they were set to killing one another at the age of twenty.

What you or I see on the boundless mirror of the ocean, room enough for our lives, is not like what this man listlessly beheld.

Taking faces alone, there was a lady's, the mother of his child, a child which, being their shame, must never know either. A pretty house-maid in his father's town house, who had played with him when he was a little one, too young to go to the opera with his parents, but Mary (all the good-hearted, moon-faced simple girls in England get that for name) taught him the vulgar amusement of cats-cradle, ball, and all of that branch of education. A dancer in Berlin, evil remembrance, she stole a necklace once his mother's, over and above the money he too liberally gave her. The sculptor's model, who traveled from Rome to London with him, a "guileless thing," who had a descendant born to her as the flight "from her happy home of innocence" ended, just five months from when he first knew her.

All of them, or very nearly, cheats on him. Able to lose, he never had exercised his intelligence in studying his associates and servants. So he bought everything, and say what you will of merchandise, there's no enjoyment can be given by the woman whose mouth is a purse, comparable in the least degree to that flowing from the poor dear girl who, influenced by love, or a strong liking, throws herself into one's arms to her own destruction, but to her seducer's deep pleasure as long as one does not let her see one truly without one's mask. To pursue Belle, Lord de Regamoor made up his mind on another course.

"Now then," mused he, "it's six—well, ten to. Say six. If she speaks to me before seven, I'll do it to-night, if the devil stands at the door."

About three quarters of an hour after that, he felt a hand laid softly on his shoulder. Turning, the Black-eyed Beauty was standing by his side.

"Oh, my lord—they're all looking at the steamship away off there—and they're so mean about their telescopes, you have your field-glass—that tasteful aluminum one—up here?"

He usually carried it by its sling over his shoulder, and she saw well that he did not have it. He started to his feet with an impetuosity which she did not half guess the reason for.

"It's below. I'll bring it to you at once."

"Oh, no!" said she letting her hand glide down from his shoulder to his forearm, "If it's going to be all that trouble, I won't ask you——"

"Pshaw? my dear Madame! If a piece of the Cable would make you happy

I would leap over the side with a cannon ball to each foot, in hopes to succeed in so gratifying you!"

And down the side-stairs, he went with considerable briskness, for him.

In the cabin, the steward was counting the plate.

"Warrin?"

"Yes, my lud."

This steward was an Englishman, more than that, a Londoner. He approached.

"I've heard you express opinions that seem to imply that sea life is not to your taste?"

"Yes, my lud. There are so many first-class passengers who are only third-class on shore. Think of that French clown having his seat at the head of the table!"

"Ah! you seem well U. P. in your line of life."

"Seven an' twenty years of igspериuns, my lud."

Twenty-seven years a steward—that's Old World for you. An American to stick to any trade twenty-seven months would be lynched by his relatives or requested to emigrate for Japan.

"Indeed! A friend tells me in a late letter that we are going to establish a new club, the Western Members Conservative Club. Rooms in Wellington street, or Piccadilly by the Park, of course."

"Of course, my lud."

"If you should really *intend* to leave ship, I'd recommend you, with *gratitude*.

"My lud!" his knees bending under him, and the spoons ginged like sledge bells in his hand.

"In fact, I may say, if you *leave* ship, I'll give you a note to the Committee."

"My lud!"

"In short, now I shall probably be on the Committee myself (as I return three members from my estates of Wyberton, Effing-super-pond and Shellouton), and I can promise to put you in the stewardship!"

"My lud!"

Rattle went the spoons again.

"I left some of my papers on the table here——"

"Yes, my lud. I recognised the crest seal on it. I was butler to Lord Fitzrine, your ludship, in '57, and we saw a deal o' your ludship's pa-aiper then!" smiling smugly.

"Dessay. This is the paper. Shocking pens you have here. Ah, this will write, thank you."

Scratch, scratch, dot, dash, plash, blot, and a Regamoor inside a monstrous De, all with a monogram in azure and gules and or a top, made the note-paper quite official.

"There's my pledge. At the foot, please see."

He pointed the pen at the lines:

"In case of any cause whatever preventing the above agreement being carried out, I promise to pay, for value received, *on demand*, the sum of two hundred pounds, as reparation of the disappointment.

The same splurging signature beneath. They may have put Scaliger into my lord's head at Oxford but they got his *catig(e)* raphy.

Mr. Warrin was all of a flutter, his neck-tie losing its starch perceptibly.

"Oh, my lud!" he kept saying, as he glared at the signature much as the editor of the Autographic Mirror would look if I would let him have out of my collection the sign-manual of Pontius Pilate authorizing the raising of the "First Royals."

"By the bye," remarked Lord de Regamoor, "I think I have remarked that Mr. Vaneagle does not take tea."

"No, my lud. Chocolate. He brought some of his own on board, my lud; and I make it for him especially."

"Ah!"

"Anything else, my lud? I am so obleeged."

"Ye-es," said the noble, taking out his tablet, and from a loop in the case, a tiny phial not larger than those perfume quills one breaks in a handkerchief. "This is some ten drops of essence of (he used a Greek word, to which Warrin bowed) ——"

"Yes, my lud."

"I like Mr. Vaneagle, very much. I'd like to play him a little harmless diversion ——"

"Certainly, my lud——"

"Suppose you put half this in his chocolate to-night?"

"Hem! hem!"

"If you should even put all, no matter."

He looked steadily at the steward, whose lips trembled.

"The flavor will be so improved." He let one drop of the opal fluid fall in to a spoon, which, at his sign, Warrin hastened to hold out, and let it rol, thence upon his tongue. It gave out a rather pleasant aromatic odour. "Taste if you like ——"

"Thank you, my lud," said Warrin, recovering his spirits, for he had feared that Murder had entered by a porthole.

"I'll put it in, as you wish."

"Very good. I am obliged."

And, waiting nothing more, he hurried to his room took his valuable field-glass fast and ran up on deck.

The Beauty was pouting at his delay.

Luckily the sighted steamship had only come the nearer, and she did not lose her scrutiny.

Supper as usual, chat after it, and turn in.

It was near midnight.

The ocean was calm, and steadily the screw bit each time, and fairly hurried the mass before it out through the element.

It seemed to be warmer.

At all events, Belle felt so. She lay on her pallet completely unarrayed, except that a thin sheet was drawn over her. Her hair loose and massed upon her shoulders—those round, swelling shoulders, with the red blood shown through her sunny complexion,—her treasure-full bust, her body so free and elastic of motion at the hips, her long limbs worthy of admiration in repose and of high delight when changing posture. To say nothing of her visage, so faultless of its kind, she was a beauty and nothing shorter.

All was silent, save the rush of the water past the side, and the grinding rattle of the wheel-chains as they obeyed the steersmen's hands bearing on the spokes.

Suddenly a faint tap came at the door.

Over Belle's face instantly spread a glow of desire and a smile of passion, capable of—of inducing Satan to be an honest angel!

She sprang up lightly, turned the knob, and opening her arms, fell into the arms open to her, embracing and embraced.

The door closed fast behind the new-comer.

Belle, instead of a smooth face, almost girlish for softness, felt the side-whiskers and moustache of a man.

"Oh! It's Lord ——"

"Sh! I love you better than that boy knows how to do!"



## CHAPTER XV.

LIVERPOOL—WAITING OVERNIGHT—SHOCKING MURDER ON GENERAL PILLOW—RATHER AWKWARD DISCLOSURES.

BELLE showed herself from the next morning forward, very sweet on Lord de Regamoore.

Vaneagle took it very stoically. He could not help but have suspected that some trick had been played him. However, he went among the steerage passengers the following evening to participate in the boatswain's raffle. "Unlucky in love," of course he was fortunate in this. He "tied" off with a man first, then won the fiddle.

After showing by playing "Tramp, Tramp" on it, that he had taken some steps in the art, he sold it back to the boatswain. This was a usual course; in fact, the fiddle was quite an old stager in raffles on the passage.

The money was applied to purchasing bottled beer for all concerned. They went wild over the treat, and had Vaneagle proposed they should take the ship, make him commander and go pirating, it's ten to one that their enthusiasm for him would have made them consent.

Happily, the young New Yorker had no Semmesian intentions.

In due time, steaming up the Mersey's pea-soupy stream, so different to the Hudson's clearness.

All were on deck to see the Old Land, new to nearly all.

Lord de Regamoore went up to Belle to give her good-bye. He brought some packets from H. B. M. Minister at Washington, and was, as *quasi*-queen's messenger, going ashore in a waterman's boat.

They shook hands warmly.

"I leave you Mr. Gidling to see you on to London," said he. "I trust you'll have a pleasant journey, and hope for a speedy meeting with you myself."

In a lower voice, he added:—

"Don't lose the direction—If you should, write to me, Western Members Conservative Club. Charles, I recommend Miss Gayard to you. Good-bye again!"

And over the side he went.

Several Americans began grumbling.

"Hello! who in everlasting is he to be let go ashore afore enny of us, 'like to know," said they. "Guess our money's good ag'in as his, and p'raps more of it!"

"My friend," said Vaneagle to one of them, "money's a good horse to drive here, but a *title* takes the inside of the track."

"Right air!" remarked a full-blooded Yankee, "some tho'se buyin' one afore I come home this way!"

Bella under Gidling's escort, went ashore in the tug. Detained by the Custom-house officials, Bella looked around for Vaneagle. He had disappeared. The sharp young man who was "on an egg" with the traveller for the "Globe Express," had got him to express his baggage through to London. Meanwhile passing the anchor-buttoned coats by simply walking past them, he had gone up the slope, had first pick of the cabs on the rank, and drove off to the steamship Co.'s offices to get his counter-pass exchanged for a railway ticket. This done (full half an hour before the very officers of the ship came in), he went out and, as if he had been in the City of the Liver all his life, reached the hotel he sought, after asking his way but twice.

To this same house (for he had overheard Gidling tell his servant where he would stay that afternoon and night) came Bella and her guard about two hours afterwards.

"The best room!" cried Charles Orde-Fellowes Gidling, Esq., as he entered the parlor of the St. George's Hotel, with Belle on his arm.

The ball of a landlady, with her head as rounded at her person, like the toy Mandarins on bowls rolled up.

He held out his card.

She rolled forward, as a courtesy, then backward in dismay.

"The best room is took, sir," said she.

"Taken!" ejaculated Belle, disappointed, as pretty women always are when they can't have the cream of everything.

"Yes, ma'am. An American gentleman, from the City of Lisbon fresh in."

"From her! Why, we came by her," said Belle. "I'm sure nobody could have come here before us."

"Yes, 'm, two hours ago. Wasn't it two hours, William?"

"Yes, 'm," answered the servant, who well remembered the date Vaneagle's arrival, for that gentleman had first thing put five shillings in his hand and asked him to tell him which, in every respect was the best apartment under that roof.

(Selfish? oh, no, only rewarding himself for being first to to fore, my anti-American friend.)

"Why, who—" began Belle and Gidling in a breath, then in walked Valentine as large as life, with a Cornhill, Temple-bar, Times and Telegraph under his arm or in his hands.

"Welcome to England!" said he almost in a tone of a man who had never been outside of the chalk cliff in twenty years.

Spite of his unmoved features, Belle guessed that he was laughing in his sleeve at how he had stolen a march on her chaperon.

After supper, who's for the theatre? "Byron's new nouse open—Madge Robertson in town—burlesque on," said Valentine, looking up from the "Porcupine."

"Aw," said Gidling, "only wait till you see London, Liverpool's very well for a *vis-a-vis* to Birkenhead, but beside London—it don't compare."

Nevertheless, Belle would go. Wasn't one bit tired, p'raps would never be in the town again, must really see what sort of a village it was.

As Vaneagle had proposed the party, the three went. It was rather flat, for Belle, a little pale from the voyage, did not look her best, nor had time to figure up much.

As they came out of the door and were hustled by the cabmen, a hand suddenly touched Valentine's arm. He turned carelessly and saw Le Sauvage. The latter had changed his dress totally, and with his moustache unwaxed, presented a different man from himself on the steamer.

Valentine lifted his right forefinger, said:

"Luivez-nior!"

And still walking beside Belle and Gidling we noticed nothing of this, or that the Frenchman was following behind them, he went on as if he, too, was unaware they were being dogged.

At the hotel entrance, where William was waiting, wanting his napkin and smiling obsequiously, Valentine half turned and held out his clenched fist, but with the thumb stuck out. The Frenchman, avoiding the light from a lamp, pirouetted quickly crossed the street and was lost in the shadows around the vast frontal, almost grandiose, of St. George's Hall.

To give Gidling justice, he was very attentive to his handsome charge. She acted queerly between their return and the hour for retiring, glancing ever and anon over at Vaneagle, who seemed not once to catch her eyes. In a fit of spite at his indifference, not real she was sure and hence more insulting, she showed herself more and more agreeable to Gidling. In brief, she nearly drove the latter wild by her tender and inviting looks.

She was prattling, almost like a girl, of what she meant to see in London.

the opera, theatres, and all that. By the same token, she had in her hand a part of Cassell's Bible, with the cut of a woman in purple and gold on the leaf where it was open. Glancing down, after in vain trying to catch Vaneagle's eye, which did not wear the expression she desired, her eyes fell upon a line.

She indicated that Gidling, who sat beside her, should look. And he saw what she was pointing to.

Vaneagle observed how pink the aristocratic cheek of the man turned.

"What!" said he bitingly, more in the voice of a man of thirty than in his natural one, "amid your talk of luxury have you hit upon: 'Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation!'"

The Black-eyed Beauty laughed scornfully, a laugh that revealed how far she had trodden away from those who may read the grossest passage in Holy Writ with eyes undefiled.

She had risen, and nodding to Vaneagle, who returned the salute carelessly, for he was writing something on a slip of paper, and giving the Englishman her hand, she left the room for her sleeping-apartment.

Gidling made a pretence of reading for a few minutes longer, and then departed in turn.

Vaneagle looked quietly after him. The door having closed, he rose, went to the window and glanced out through the curtains' interval.

"Inclined to fog," muttered he. "I think Le Sauvage is in luck."

With that, he was shown to his room. Hardly there he put out his light, went to the window, threw it up quickly to prevent it making a noise and tossed something over the balcony out into the street. Closing the sash, he stood in the darkness peering out. In about half an hour, a man cut straight across the square from the southeast corner of the pavement of the City Hall, and, evidently being on the alert, deviated but a few steps in his course to pick up the scrap of paper, wound round a penny which Valentine had flung there.

The latter, graver than usual even, turned round, undressed and sank to sleep on the really good bed.

Outside, the policeman's footsteps made the only sound on the deserted place. Within, at two in the morning all was quiet.

At that hour, a man coming leisurely up the side street, suddenly turned into a narrow lane leading to some stables behind the hotel, and walked with a noiseless step, thanks to india-rubbers he had on, and with one so confident that it betrayed that he had studied the ground recently.

With a strength beyond most men's as he stood close up against the railings behind the rear wall of the St. George's Hotel, defending the area of that establishment, he deliberately sprung the top bar connecting the pivots from its hold. It was by putting his shoulder under it and rising, that he did the feat.

Moreover the railing, enormously massive to look at, was one of the contract jobs, splendid in design but deficient in strength, the paint without an excellent black, but the iron beneath poor quality.

One of the picket heads grasped in both his hands, unloosed at the joining to the rod proper by his first attack, yielded to his wrenching and unscrewing as it were, presently came off in his hands.

"Good," muttered he, in Le Sauvage's voice, which he might very well use, seeing it was his own.

The picket bent in the middle, came out at the top from its hole in the bar.

The Frenchman forced himself through, replaced the rod in its socket, fitted the top ornament of a fancy spear-head in its place, and, glancing all around, said "Very good," this time.

He could now have dropped down into the area and no doubt entered the large basement, used for the cooking, washing, etc., But he perhaps feared that someone might be sleeping there, or even a watchman patrolling.

The night was beginning to have its darkness thickened by the fog, which Valentine had perceived.

Passing along the coping for some ten feet, the Frenchman came abreast of a window. The lower sash had panes of ground glass, effectually preventing the passage of a visual ray through it. The upper squares, however, were transparent. Through them, and by means of the gas, turned down but still burning within, Le Sauvage descried, upon the ceiling, wire strung with the variegated balls used in marking a game of billiards.

He held a paper, drawn from his pocket close to his eyes. It was in French, the writing on it, to the effect,

"He, No. 5, First floor, front window of billiard room, behind house, left of you, unfastened. (Then a mark like a cipher with two lines across the upper third of its loop, and the words:) This is a personal favor. Not on SERVICE. (Then where signatures are usually placed, only) 1502 N. Y."

The reader put the paper in his mouth. Then, leaning forward so that he suffered his body to fall across the space, between the railings and the house-wall, as only an acrobat would have dared to do, his hands met and seized firmly the window-sill, that to the left of the lighted room.

Lifting himself a little, but drawing his legs to him, he was the next moment hanging, by sheer strength of wrist and finger-grip, by the sill.

No possibility of his returning to his late foothold.

If his power failed him, he would fall clear down into the area, some fifteen feet. Stone-paved at that.

Nevertheless, relying on his proven force (for he had been clown, though: as for being the Grenoble hero of history, and a member of the Legion, it is another matter), he supported his whole weight by one hand, as we see done on a horizontal bar, while with the other, he lifted up the window, firmly, as if standing on the ground the while, and confidently as if the mysterious signer of that secret information could no more lie over that strange signature than a girl in '67 travel under any but yellow hair.

The window did open up, easily. He looked up and down the court, and scrambled into the deserted room quickly.

As he, standing within, closed what had given him admission, the heavy regular tread of the policeman was to be heard, passing by the street-head of the little lane, now untenanted.

Le Sauvage muttered a "good!" to himself, spat on the chewed-up paper, effectually destroyed, and proceeded to find the staircase.

The billiard-room opened into the reading-room. That upon the main passage. The foot of the stairway lay before the intruder, on his right.

Noiselessly he crossed directly to it and calmly, as if sure of not being interrupted, mounted two steps at a time, for he was vigorous and they were rather broader than high.

Not a sound throughout the vast building louder than the sizzling of the gas, eager to be turned on higher, and to spread a brighter flame.

Room 5, first floor, was between 7 and 3 on the north side. Its designation was painted in black on a porcelain plaque stuck on the oak-grained lintel.

The Frenchman took a picklock from his pocket and at first thrust, ascertained that the key was inside the lock.

He exchanged the probe for a pair of plyers, nipped the end of the key and turned it to the left.

There was a snap. He tried the back. The door was fast, and it was clear that the lock held it, and not a bolt. So he took a new grip of the key and turned in the opposite direction. A snap less loud. The door opened at the first touch to the knob. It had been unfastened before, and the burglar had locked it against himself in his premature essay.

However, he was in the bedroom whereto Gidling had been ushered the evening before.

Breathing still more softly, quite in the dark, which made him give great care to each step, groping with murderous hand (for it held a dagger-knife with the

ugly blade open and set for work), the Frenchman made for the bed in the corner beside the closely-curtained window, rather by instinct than by knowledge or guess where it was.

Suddenly, he paused, stone still, where he stood.

There was a step on the stairs overhead, and whoever made it was coming down. Indeed, he heard the person, treading so cautiously as to be audibly but to one as much on the alert as he, descend to the landing, pass that very door and, never pausing, go on down to the ground floor.

That was well, so far.

The Frenchman still waited. But the night-walker a watchman or whatever else, did not come up in full ten minutes.

Reckless whether his retreat was cut off or not, Le Sauvage took two steps in advance.

They brought him to the foot of the bed, and his extended hand touched at breast height, a mass of clothes flung on a chair.

That was conclusive.

"The snake is here—here in his skin!" he thought.

The merest shadow of a reflection of the paltry light was dimly reflected from the linen folded over the counterpane of the bed. By that vague whiteness might have been marked the pitiless sternness of the intruder; grooved into his forehead, engraved deeply in the line of his mouth.

Leaning forward in a curve from the hips, so that he seemed suspended over the couch, the knife in his hand gleamed like the sword of Damocles.

It fell swiftly and so forcibly that the thick clothes delayed not its passage. That blow was repeated no less savagely.

No man, however strong of frame, could have outlived such terrible stabs. No sound of existence arose from the heap of clothes, no, not a particle of life was there.

Leaving the weapon where it was last driven, the Frenchman went leisurely to the door. There listening, he could hear nothing ominous. He opened the door and stepped out. He had advanced to the head of the stairs and was under what light came from a half-turned-on jet over his head there, when, totally unsuspected by him, from their having good reason on their part for keeping silent, he perceived two figures at the foot of the stairs. Their backs were to him. He stopped, rooted to the spot, in spite of his strong self-command.

As his eyes grew more accustomed to the change from the unlit bed-chamber, he made out that those below him were a man and a woman. The nature of their communing was instantly exposed, for the former threw his arms about the woman, and she surprised by the suddenness of the assault (which did not vex her for she did not raise a cry), missed her footing on the oil cloth and fell back on the stairs. In this position, the man having accompanied her in her lapse, could not help looking up and the Frenchman at the top of the stairs was infallibly desecrated by him.

But before the call of amazement had left his lips, Le Sauvage made a great leap, and touching the steps but once, came to the very ground, clean over the heads of the chamber-maid and head-waiter (for such the amorous couple were) and dashed through the first door on the passage.

The woman screamed, the man, puzzled a moment, ran to the clerks' room, and, seizing a bell, rang it like an infuriated muffin-seller.

The house was alarmed, every soul in it, in three minutes.

Such a rolling out of beds, such a yelling of females in the attic, such a swearing of men who thought it had been fire when it was only a thief—well, the St. George had never known such a hubbub since Alderman Stallfed laid the foundation stone.

Out on the landings and down to the first floor everybody.

Hunt for the robber! he went in here! this room! here he is! no only the

bat's pulled the table-cloth over her! where is he! all the windows shut! By George, the fellow's drunk and been dreaming!

One testy old gent, to whom the being drawn from his bed and room had given a twinge of the gout, shied a candlestick at the head-waiter's caput, but he was not a capital shot and it was a miss.

"William!" said Valentine to the servant he had bound to him, "what are you all laughing at?"

"Oh, sir!"

"Is this a time to laugh, when your mistress might be robbed of her plate, and we guests of our money?"

"Oh, sir!"

"What is it?"

"Beg pardon, sir, it's about your friends—you wouldn't like to hear—"

"Wouldn't I? anything wicked? William, learn that there is a treat in hearing evil of a friend, for one's enemies are always spoken badly of," said Vaneagle, sarcastically. "Well?"

The waiter lowered his voice.

"If you must, sir! Well, only that gentleman and that lady ran out *together* from *her* room!"

The devil! ejaculated Valentine, "he's been *Boston'd* in his *coup* after all!"

## CHAPTER XVI.

IN NEW LODGINGS. THROWING OFF. A PRETTY ACTRESS OUT-CROWED IN HER TRIUMPH!

LORD DE REGAMMOOR owned some houses on Soho Square, one of which we believe was anciently in the keeping of "the knight of Soho Square," Sir Joseph Banks, the philosopher.

Plauguey little philosophy Miss Gayard showed when she found her footing under that roof.

It was a fine large double-house, with a most fashionable piano-forte ware-house on the ground floor, which brought stylish equipages before it for Bella to look at.

She could gaze over on the melancholy grove inside the square railings and wonder whether the lugubrious statue in the centre was not merely a scare-sparrow.

She *could* have done this, but she had something else on her mind.

Gidling had disappeared to haunt his club and, when a sympathiser exorcised him, hint of lady of surpassed beauty who was his but was not to be had for the present—"an inseparable barrier, my dear fellow—respect for friendship perhaps kindred, my boy!" all of which vaporing caused the old Sergeant at Law retired, ghosts of clients thankfully said to declare "Charles, has fallen in love with his—Grandmother!" mum mumming over his gingered glass.

Lord Strafford, dwelling in a half and half way with Belle, was delightedly her escort everywhere.

Not that she saw much of London out of the fashionably beaten track.

One night flashing diamonds at Covent Garden, the next at Her Majesty's. Another, creating an excitement thing unprecedented in the St. James, and making Miss Herbert's cold eyes warm up with a species of rival dreading spite.

And when she went to the smaller houses, why, the New Royalty, the Strand, the Prince of Wales' not one was large enough to hold her. I regret to say that her appearance in the stalls of the little Strand was a defeat. In this way,

A magnificent dress came to her from the court robe-maker, but abominably low in the neck. There wasn't a hand's breadth between the lace-edge and the

waist belt, Little enough for any woman, and, truth to say, Belle's sister's swelling semi-spheres were beautifully developed.

If she meant to make a sensation—she did!

First off, the ladies around her began to whisper and glance, or, trying the other tack, pretend that they were unaware that their cavaliers' eyes were feasting on her.

It went all well till the first piece was over.

Then, the gallery, being able to look right down and into that magnificent bosom, mockingly veiled by the thin lace, began to mutter.

They got show enough of woman's features on that stage in Raynham Simpson, "sassy" Elise Holt, the huge Swanborough, not to want a superior in that line in the house. So uprose the cries, louder and louder: "Go home and put 'em to sleep!" *Mee'yo!* (professional sounds for "Milk, ho!") "Cover her over, she'll catch cold!" "Put her out!"

Bella stood it like a Trojan.

Lord de Regamoor paled before she did, and there being no doubt whom the verbal slings and arrows were aimed at from their cries of "Her with the stripped shawl!" advised a cloaking up.

Not her. But, motioning him to follow, she, still leaving her opera-cloak hanging from her arms, marched boldly and proudly into the lobby. An unlucky swell, who stood there to have a close look at her, was wilted in his collar by the look she gave him. Then, carelessly half pulling up her cloak, she proceeded to her carriage. If a poor orange-girl had shown as much of her shoulders in pit or gallery, she'd have had a night's lodging free *grate-is*. But this offender had a rich dress on (what there was of it), and the policeman at the door briskly called out:

"Miss Gayard's carriage, directly!" with all the amiability of the world.

She, like the women who visit on men all the punishment their own missteps incur, warned her lord's ears that night, be bound to say.

Nothing daunted, though with a pinch more of decency in her display, she flashed on and about.

Splendid at night at a ball in the Hanover Rooms, beautiful the next day at a matinée concert at St. James's Hall, the pleasure seekers were hourly startled by her lovely apparition.

Mounting a fine chestnut, the humor took her to shine in Rotten Row, and besides exciting the Star "Flaneur" to panegyrise her unequalled charms, fairly drove "Miss Walters" to play "Skittles" in Paris again.

Sick of that, she took to driving. A military friend of Lord de Regamoor's who had purchased the span of blacks that Menken sported with in her sunrise in London, was happy to see Bella in their Victoria handling the ribbons in the Central Park fashion.

A rush to the rail as she moved by, and a "Who the dayvil's the lucky dog in the whiskaws beside her!" bursting from the snobs in uninitiated jabber of the 1865 higher class, gone to rest now for another strain.

Ah! how quick it palled. Born in the purple, or suddenly come to it, soon very soon does the wearer find it is so much weight of dyed threads after all.

Now, Belle was not a common "bonnibelle," and mere cutting a dash grew tame to her in less time than it would to others of her sex.

A species of diversion stepped in, just then.

As she kept her weather-eye open, she had not failed to have some speculation in it with regard to the person who occupied the other half of the double house. In the passage and hall common to each, she had even chanced to meet that individual coming out as she went in, or *vice versa*.

"A pretty young girl," she said to herself, and that was all at present.

When she came to have more time to spend at her home, she remarked that her nearer than next door neighbor kept very bad hours, being out evening by seven and a half and, though sometimes returned by ten, often out till midnight.

What! was another on the same voyage of pleasure as herself? was the day of the "White House" and Spring-heeled Jack and Queensbury and Jockey of Norfolk dawned anew?

"Mary," said she to her maid one day, "who is it lives in the rest of the house?"

"Miss Roome, ma'am."

"What is she?" looking at the girl significantly, as she paused with the cup of Epps' chocolate at her lips.

"Oh, ma'am! Miss Ellie Roome of the Haymarket—"

"Oh, to be sure. I *thought* I had seen her face before. Take away the tea-things, Mary. Wait a moment! Never mind! I'll ring if I want you."

Evidently, the Beauty did not care about letting Mary into her desires.

She wanted to know the actress. Why? a woman's fantastic notion. She had read in "Temple Bar," a humorous, or rather witty sketch about "Crossing from Castle Garden to Cork," the characters in which were to a hair, those of her fellow-passengers on the City of *Lisbon*.

Jumping at the conclusion and clinging to it, she, really, wrote a note to the "author of it, care of the editor, care of Bentley," etc. On the second day after she received this slap in the face; her note enclosed in a sheet with this brief spell: "Madam. Beg to return your favour. Being somewhat of a reporter, I have seen most of your public acts. They are not of a nature to lead me into your more intimate knowledge. VAL. V."

An Italian would have bought some confectioner to dose Valentine's soup; a Frenchwoman would have found out where he lived and driven past his door twice a day in her best bonnet; an Englishwoman would have cried like a great baby, washed her face and become more desperately flaunting than ever. But our girl was an American, and she simply made up her mind to have him again, if thunder or lightning came.

She reasoned: Vaneagle's on the press and he's young. He's just the man, though he is so keen, to be struck by a player. Hence, he'll know the actresses if he can. *Ergo*, if I know them, we'll meet sometime.

That same evening, as Miss Ellie Roome, a little late, was hurrying down stairs, her quick foot touched something which was impelled before her. She saw it glittering, picked it up, found it was a bracelet and, believing it hers, crammed it into her pocket with her handkerchief, her cornelian stoppered scent-bottle and the roll of new ribbon for her stage-hat.

But, on coming to look, she had her pair of bracelets secure, and the prize was an extra one. It was solid gold, too large for her, with its ornament a diamond-circled medallion, in which a small photograph head was set. Inside, above the stamp "R. & B., 1866," was engraved, "To Miss Bella Gayard, a faint token of respect. Strafford de Regamoor."

If it had been Russell or Grosvenor, Hamilton or Stanley, Ellie could not have known the character better. Regamoor was a name, as generally diffused as any of them. As for Gayard, Miss Roome had known that to be borne by her "co-domicilianist," (that's a better word than "fellow-house tenant.")

"O ho! is she beginning such high company. I don't have one too many lords' calling on me for tickets the days before my benefit," thought Ellie.

Well, bracelet done up in an ex-cologne box and sent in to Miss Gayard with "Miss E. Roome's comps. and happy to have found it. The servant returns with "Miss Gayard gone to Lord's with the Hon. Pembroke Fawnbrach to see the shooting-match between the Coldstreams and six gentlemen of the Star and Garter Club." Whew!

But Ellie had her consolation. Next day, about two p. m., as she was ready dressed for a promenade, up came Miss Gayard's maid with "If you please, madam, Miss G. was so sorry that she was out yesterday when you returned her that lost jewel, and could you let her trouble you for one moment to thank you for your kindness?"

"With the utmost pleasure!"

In three minutes, Bella, in all the glory of full walking dress, *sans* bonnet and parasol, came sailing in like a yacht. In two minutes more, they were chatting at ease. The Miss with the E. R. initials had left her timidity at the stage-door, and she with the B. Y. had forgotten that she ever had any.

"Going out?" said Bella, in her sweetest double-distilled. "For worlds! I wouldn't detain you a second."

"Oh, it's no harm," said Ellie, nicely; "I'm only going to walk around down the circus and up New Bond street. It's such a while since I was that way."

"No!" said the other, as innocently as she could come it at such short notice. "I am going out for a walk, I don't care where, and if—if—Pshaw! I'm taking too great a liberty from your kindness."

"Not in the least, if you mean to—to come with me! I shall be so (thirty adjectives in a row) —"

Thus, attired to arouse the natives, the two spent an afternoon in the streets together.

Now, true this fact, who dares to say women are incapable of friendship, suddenly conceived but fervently formed?

We dare not, only (in our mildest) please note: Bella was a large woman with eyes black and hair to match, sunny of hue and with rich blood ruddying her tint when she scared up a blush to enhance her attractions. Ellie, though too much under woman's stature, had, with a trim body, slender arms and slight limbs, a small head prettily poised on a child's neck and a maiden bosom. And her hair, light and flossy, made her, when she played the envoy's who steal king's daughters the "Goldyllocks" in verity of Planche's fairy lore.

Had both been blondes or both brunettes, and they been as close on short acquaintance, the case is granted, and I'd pay the costs.

From this out, nothing but running into one another's rooms, to see a new ring, a book, a fan, a shawl-pin. Ellie brought home her stage dresses just to show her new friend how they were by daylight. One night, Belle appears at the stage door in all her elegance, just as last act of "Dundreary a Father," had "quick curtain" rung down on it, and demanded a view of Ellie. "Miss Roome's dressing, ma'am," says the old doorkeeper. "My card in, please." Pause while half a dozen scene-shifters rub their "canvas slops" against Belle's skirts as they came out. Then! "This way, ma'am. Miss Roome is late changing—in her room." Into a not too-capacious box.

"Oh, my dear! you've found me!" "How frightful, with all those tall stretched sheets; scenes, are they? Wait a moment. I've got a private-box for us, and Sister Louey's keeping it. She nearly put me out in the dish-breaking scene—nice of a sister, isn't it? I'm ready, come in!"

So, eclipsed for a moment by Mrs. Chippendale's ample skirts and rustling by Miss Lovell (with her nose in the air at Belle whom she took to be a professional after her *sit*.) and Carrie Hill, the Black-eyed Beauty was navigated behind the scenes, to the admiration of those they haply encountered. By the proscenium side-door, they entered the box, where Ellie Roome's elder sister (an actress, too) sat waiting. Let us hope they enjoyed the after piece.

In return for this, Belle made Lord de Regamoore call together a dozen of his friends, every man of them titled, an officer of the Household or in the Service beside. One Sunday these dined at Belle's, confronted or rather sandwiched in with the two Miss Roome's and three or four more of their lady friends. They had a pretty good time, and Belle succeeded in her design of dazzling her young friend.

Ellie is a good girl, and felt a little remorse when in writing to her mother she dared not give full *parties* on her new "dear friend."

But, when you come to hear your hostess saying familiarly, "You don't wine, Captain!" or "my lord, you positively *shan't* make Miss Etoile eat oil with her

*œufs aux écrevisses!* Sir Hubert, stop him, won't you please, I don't mind how, and I shan't forget you!" It's reether sapping to the moral system, and the sinner becomes such a darling when seen through the charmed ring of a coronet.

This is a digression rather deeper into the soil, than becomes our light pen, which makes such heavy reading.

Unless you tried it, you wouldn't believe an actress's life is so downright dull. I don't mean the gay girls, who use the stage as her advertisement boards, but whoever more or less conscientiously studies and works.

All amusements are at the very hours when she is on duty. If she plays sick, or gets a relief for a night, she has the gnawing at her heart that whoever has been given her part is receiving *her* applause at *her* own points and pet hits.

I leave it to any man who's taken a performer around; ain't they *distract* far more than they could be, even if their escort was repulsive to them.

So Belle's companionship was a desirable thing for Ellie. Her stories of New-York were eye-openers. What the Greenhorn in the States takes for granted, simple Ellie marvelled at for the first time. One plum.

"Do they *hang* people there for killing their wives?" said she, with her eyebrows up, as Belle finished some high old story. "I—I didn't know—I thought they cut their heads off!"

At which Belle could not help laughing outright at little Blushet.

New-Year's day, Miss Roome had a sort of reception, to which Belle came. They closed the curtains tight and turned on the gas, for the better enjoyment—that tiresome old invention daylight is such a bore to revellers—it seems always to be silently breathing: "Is this the light to be idling in?"

Where was the tallish, long bearded, semi-foreign figure of Buckingham Lester, pale in the face from a late illness, perhaps brought on by the slaughter "Love's Martyr" received at rival critics' hands; Sam Willit, farce writer, the translator who all but plunged Alex. Dumas into a premature grave by not knowing how to English the "Suisses" of the Forty-five Guardsmen; Lord de Regamoore, shy of the company; Gidling sharing the red-plush sofa with wax-moustachio'd Henry Mortruth, more Frenchified than ever since a piece of his has come out at a W. C., if not a West-end house, and with a mysterious youth a Mr. Valentine Vaneagle (believed to be a *nom de plume*, it's so fanciful—what would they say to Vreederlandt, hein?), to whom is attributed those guillotine articles in Reynold's Paper signed MICH. OWIT, in which the bloated aristocrats copied an ominous "It will come!" but too apropos amid Reform agitation.

Yes, Bella had come upon Valentine at last, and he had surrendered at discretion.

They had a good dinner, and then fell to fun-making. But they were too "intelligent" (Lord ha' massy on 'em!) to be good at romps. Still, Ellie's little laugh was contagious, and Bella helped right and left.

Enough that the poor piano was made to suffer. Ellie can't sing like her elder sister and made but a poor show at it. Vaneagle helped her through "My love is as the lily," and sang alone "In the Hazel Dell," cunningly using "Ellie" for Nellie, to the little hostess's inward satisfaction.

Sam Willits wanted to maul "strangers yet!" but Vaneagle quoted: "Slight, I bring you no—*Claribels!*" which led to a literary discussion. Buckingham Lester doubting it being a citation, Mortruth fancied he had "read it in—in Pope," and Gidling, on being asked, stammering: "Ah, Milton's Hohenlinden, to be sure." And if Valentine hadn't shown it in Ben Jonson, they'd have been clapperclawing yet.

Meanwhile, Lord de Regamoore, proud to show off his mistress as he was when Grimshaw landed his Tippetty-witchet for the blue ribbon by a head and neck, whispered Bella to take the piano-stool.

There *was* something to hear, then!



She first sang "To-morrow it is *Valentine's Day*," rendering it with a pathos and a breath and depth of feelings which outranked Ada Clifton's in her prime.

Lester, prone to feeling when especially a woman occasions the emotion, could hardly see, for tears, to turn the leaf.

Instantly, she made her fingers dance on the liveliest keys, and, ere the last sad note of Ophelia's melody had gone from the ear, she rattled off "Mimi Pinson to her Daisies" in so Parisian an accent and such grisettishness of tastiness that Alfred de Musset's poetic bones would not have lain placid under the laurels, could he but have heard.

And then (all this without a line before her,) she changed the air, and, what with the monotonous touch on the base, and a roulade on the sharps, one could fancy the basque tambour and silver goat's-bells were thrummed and jingled, while her voice, artfully roughened like a gipsy's exposed to mountain air, sang: "Lo Zingaro has his gun, his girl and dog." This, Spanish to the bone in manner and utterance.

Then, sinking to the lowest pitch of her pure and comprehensive voice and assuming a tearfulness not much too foreign to her (light-heart though she seemed on the face of her,) she musically spoke:

"Weit in nebelgrauer Ferne."

They were hushed around her, yet the professionals had often and again chatted aside carelessly while famous vocalists had delivered their choice-bits.

Proceeding as if she were far from weariness, Bella's hands flitted over the ivory in a long prelude and clear as a branch of rock crystal, she poured forth that lament of another Traviata: "Addie! del passato!"

Unless she sang a Praise to Zous in Greek, there was little more for her to do.

Poor Ellie! completely in the background! Come, say what what you will, men are not so cruel as women to one another.

"Bravo!" said Gidling less languidly than usual. "Fine!" said Mortruth. Sam Willit attempted a pun, but he fetched it from so far that it lost its flavor on the long journey. Bella received all the plaudits as her right. She gave Lord de Regamoor her hand, let Vaneagle touch hers, and then Lester, who smiling under his moustache said meaningly:

"You are needed on our stage—if you would only——"

"Perhaps——" said she, and she was gone.

It was gloriously dull after her departure and the cloud was not lifted when they broke up.

## CHAPTER XVII.

FIRST TIME IN LONDON. A "BIG THING ON ICE." SOME OF YOUR GENUINE BALL'S UP, FANCY LICKS PUT IN BY THE BEAUTY. THE BREAK IN. LESAUVAGE HAS HIS REVENGE AT LAST. WHAT IS VANEAGLE WORKING FOR?

A cold snap in London which had lasted quite a time.

Bella, was hardened by American life, the sleighing out to the Red House and Burnham's and the Ladies Pond, spread eagleing, was "all there." She went around like a snowball, everywhere. Was in St. James Park when the King-streeters snowballed the Park-keepers and the gentry's juveniles out of the square, was one of the first females on the Serpentine, and tired out Stratford de Regamoor.

On Tuesday, (15th January,) she thought of taking a turn at the ornamental water of Regent's Park. Lord de Regamoor was too lame to accompany her, and so she took Mr. Gidling, who found some "cards in the Gilards," to make up quite a part.

On reaching the edge of the frozen floor, they saw upwards of eight hundred people sporting on the surface, while there was no end of lookers-on upon the banks. The confusion was amusing of "Hot-taters! the Royal Albert hot cake! Hot pies! Teas or coffee! Try your skates on?" etc., from venders who had pitched their tents on advantageous sites.

"Ah, ensign," exclaimed Gidling to a pink faced boy in full red and gold, who sat on a camp stool on the water's edge, changing sixpences into half-pences and throwing these upon the dangerous parts, so that the ragged lads, in scrambling for them, went through every now and then. "Fine day!"

As the sun was shining from an unclouded sky, the young officer, in that squeaky voice common to too many English after they have even past twenty, replied:—

"Beautiful! How are you, lieutenant? And the lady? It's not Miss Strongshield, is it?"

"No, Miss Gayard——"

"Ah!" in a whisper, "Old Regy's, eh? He has taste—though she's heavy—"

Meanwhile Bella, who had remained by the carriage to have the footman put on her skates, had prepared her dress for action, and was carried down and was upon the ice.

The gentlemen had their irons put on.

The ensign refused the temptation. "Been on them all day yesterday—tired out!" said he, though the fact was, he had hardly put on a pair and been left to himself than his feeble legs had shot out from under him and the back of his head had come down upon the glacial marquetene with a force that would have stunned him if he had been gifted with brains, and render his caput a trifle softer than habitual; superfluous affliction.

There was a fine young lady, one of Bella's own stature, but light hair and chubby cheeks, thorough English, an acquaintance of Gidling's set. In passing that way, followed by a servant, she circled round to speak with the party.

Her skating was derived from parlor skates and one short season's practice in Rutlandshire. Not much, but it made her to the general run of English and especially her class, quite a marvel.

She recognized Bella, as one seen often at Hallé's concerts and all the operas, and hated almost. It's the thorn in the side for the upper classes of Great Britain that they owe so much to "new base blood" and plebeian recruits with money. Compelled to let in these poppies, they have an unearthly revulsion towards the very rich or very beautiful, woman's beauty being her wealth, you know.

Rumor had it that the Black-Eyed Beauty could make Lord de Regamoor marry her whenever she liked. She looked as if she could, too.

So, if Miss Le-Poer should outshine Bella at skating, why, it might shake the belief in the latter's superiority in everything, and be sure to bring the first one's name more prominently to Lord de Regamoor's ears.

Our heroine saw at once that she was challenged. Nothing loth, she hid her inward smile, and laid herself out for showing off.

I guess Miss Le-Poer had not calculated the full length of a pole required to knock down Miss Gayard's persimmons.

Bella had lots of power in her, and she knew how to do most things on skates, without being able to tell an inner circle from an outer roll.

Scarcely had she got warmed up and settled down into it than she made the ice-shavings fly.

From Clarence and Hanover-gate people began to flock that way.

It was a sight for a skater and—well, to have it out—a sight for the "stugent of natteral bootees."

Miss Le-Poer, unhappy to record, was a little thick in the ankle and large in

foot, or, at least disproportionably long. So she didn't show much to go in raptures over when her dress was whisked about.

But not so 'tother. Our girl, nicely made all over, with her boot of thin leather fitting like a glove and with a little crinkling at the top edge which charmingly broke the line where it closed on the stocking, and her robust and yet elegant leg showing the working of the muscles (something as you see Leo Hudson's sinews moving in the French Spy combat) through the fine silk hose, finer than was healthy on a winter's day.

Pretty soon Bella saw that her opponent was getting down in the books, and she saw it was the time to put in the gay licks.

There was a tremendous crowd around her, the hockey (shinny, *Americanise*) players, giving that up to see the "girl in the dark blue."

Her cap was a round fur, small, and her hair had got loose so that she had to keep tossing her head to keep it out of her eyes—those big, black, live eyes.

Oh, she did bend her supple body so!

Interested in her idea of display, drinking greedily in the exclamations of the spectators. "My-eyes, h'aint she a stunner!" "She dances like a fairy!" Look a' here, Jim! Why her with her hair in mourning is givin' Carrots (alluding disrespectfully to Miss Le-Poer's light hair) *turnips* (slang for "making a beat of her," a British version of our vegetarian simile!) Bella only looked for a chance of finishing off with something extra.

Chance aids those who aid themselves.

A stray organ-grinder had been tempted down to the ice's brink, and after other tunes, was just turning out the new Helena Waltz.

At the end of a minute:

"Crikey! she's a-dancin' on skates to the moosic—on skates, here's a woman dancin', boys!"

How lovely she looked in the sunshine. Waltzing with as much grace as a ballet-master could have shown on waxed floor, wheeling with a floating motion, darting forward and retiring equally attractively, that substantial fairy cast such a spell upon the numbers of beholders that not a high word arose, but all the sound was a murmur of delight, until a wild shout of "go on!" to the organ-grinder rent the air to induce a repetition.

Bella graciously smiled and, more touchingly than before, glided in upon the encored strains.

At that moment, an ominous gurgling was audible under the whole of the ice, and louder than all in the broad part, where Bella was thickly encircled by the curious.

Their weight had converted the surface into the state of a tessellated pavements. The ice appeared to have been previously broken and frozen together. The pieces varied in size and shape, most of them about three feet square. Between the cracks nearest the middle water began gently oozing through, farther off, approaching the larger islands it came up in sudden spurts and rose above to the distance of two inches, the ice not resting on the water.

Instantly, while all started with a sort of premonition, a voice rang out clear and imposing, a voice known to Bella as Vaneagle's:

"You—fools to—! clear the track! The ice is breaking!"

The lookers-on, on terra firma, were amazed. Like a flash, the broad sheet opened a thousand trap-doors, and man and woman, boy and girl, gentle and vulgar, were alike submerged.

Just as Bella, still intoxicated by the breath of praises, felt the ice crack under her, she saw the crowd cleft in the direction of the suspension bridge, and though the opening shot a young man towards her. Swift as all his strength could impel him, straight as love directs, Vaneagle glided up to her, seized her round the waist without stop or slackening, and forced her at the top of speed to a point a little east of where the ladder stood by the north bank.

Behind them, in their very track, people broke through. But Valentine, in

his New-York boyhood, had been daring on "paumpey" or "leather" ice, and, though he and she cut through more than ten times, they reached the ground un-immersed.

Not so fortunate all.

Three hundred or so went in when the vast carpet was torn so minutely for a square of six hundred square feet, and those that came up snatched at the splinters avidly, and shouted "Help!"

Paralyzed by so awful an accident the handful of the Humane Society's men were out of their depth for a time.

Meanwhile, cooler heads in the crowd broke branches off the trees and threw them in, as far as possible out. Some ran for the life-saving ladder, but the wheels it ran on were broken, the ropes were rotten, the basket-boats were too few in number.

The heads of the swimmers, hatless, dripping and dashed with vegetable rind, began to be interspersed with the floating scraps of ice.

On some of the larger pieces, one or two men were seen, lying at full length.

One, in particular, smoking a pipe which had not been put out, sat on his berg, puffing away, like Neptune gazing on so many Tritons at play.

One man, a tall one luckily, was able to find bottom, and his head only just above, held up a child in each hand.

Vaneagle had whipped out his penknife and cut the straps off his skates, kicking them aside, he left Bella to herself, and running to a party of the most energetic fellows, boldly put himself at the head of them.

Making them form a line, hand in hand, he walked into the water up to his neck, and, a living grapnel to the human life-line, caught hold of the nearest swimmers, to fish them out.

While these and other impromptu methods were being put in force for salvation, the work of destruction, in a way as ancient as Cain, had been set a-going by an old acquaintance of ours. When the ice had burst open into so many diamonds, Gidling, the officers and others by them, had been plunged under a great slab, like an unchaste nun hurled into a living tomb.

Miss Le-Poer had saved herself by going off the scene in disgust at Bella's signal triumph, a brief space before.

When Gidling rose, he instinctively, and like a man of feeble mind accustomed to rely on other's boughten help, roared out like a bull-calf.

"Fifty pounds to any man that'll save me! Fifty pounds!"

Close to him, a man was treading water and resting his hands on a cake of ice, which kept him up as long as he carefully forebore to trust too much weight upon it. His back was to Gidling, but when the latter called, he turned.

It was Le Sauvage.

The look on his face was one of wild and delighted astonishment.

"Mon Dieu! c'est cet Anglais! Sacre-r-r!"

"Hel—"

"I'll help you!" cried the Frenchman, letting go the ice, turning vigorously and leaping half in half out of the water, like a porpoise breaching upon the Englishman.

"You insulted me! I will have your life; d'ye hear, your life!"

And down they sank, struggling fiercely, to the entanglement of weeds at the bottom of that deepest part.

A week after, when Heinke's diver went down to search for the remaining dead to make up the full tally of forty, he signalled the men in the boat above to haul up. At the end of the drag they brought up two men locked in the tightest embrace. One was identified by his friends as Charles Orde-Fellowes Gidling, Esq., the other was unknown, and in vain he lay in the workhouse deadhouse, until it was advertised that he had on his left wrist these words pricked in in India-ink: "283, Paris." Then came forward a relation, who took him away and buried him as Hector Ledroit, late of Grenoble, in England.

on a visit, but he was the Le Sauvage of this faithful record none the less. Note, this interlocking of the two corpses was cited as the drowning man's proneness to seize a fellow sufferer.

In the meantime, all who showed signs of life had been rescued, and dark came on. Vaneagle, half dead with cold and exhaustion, changed his clothes in the workhouse, and came out to go his way.

To his surprise, he found Bella at the door.

"My carriage has gone home without me," said she, giving him her hand, ungloved expressly, "and I don't care how much alarm my absence causes. I waited to show you I was not ungrateful."

"I am glad you are safe," said Vaneagle slowly but eagerly.

"Truly."

"You are, I know, one of those who divert rich men's money from being spent on good deeds and good people—so you will help bring about—hem—Excuse, I mean no personal reflection on you. Do you wish me to see you out through the crowd?"

What a singular young Puritan he was?

Bella blushed, sighed, and took his arm. She was afraid to speak to him.

At York Gate, he paused, gently disengaged himself, and said:

"You live still in Soho Square? Shall I call a cab?"

She looked full at him with an indefinable expression, but at least one could see an excessive desire in her gaze.

"Valentine," said she in a deep, affecting voice. "I will go home to yours, if I can? You know (blushing exceedingly) *you owe me one!*"

He could not help smiling, and that encouraged her to say:

"So I may—may be yours all night?"

He signalled a four-wheeler and they got in. As they went down Welbeck street, they were surrounded at Wigmore-street corner, by a couple of score of boys and men, rough but not riotous-looking, who not in unison, were lamentably clamoring, as they looked hungrily into the bright windows!

"Hard working men! got no work to do! four hours a-day! got no work to do!"

Woe to the money-bags, the crozier and sceptre, when these men learn what work there is for them to do!

Vaneagle let down the window on his side, and looked out. It seemed that several of the clamorers exchanged a glance with him, but if so, they turned their eyes from him directly.

Bella, seeing the hanging heads and shrunken faces, remembered that recent phrase, "you are of those who divert money from the poor," and, leaning across her companion, she put several coins, gold and silver, in the nearest hand:

"For you all!" said she. "Remember your wives at home!"

"God bless you!" said several.

Valentine put his head out of the window and lifted one finger.

"My man come here!"

A fellow who was waving a "broadside" from the St. Giles' Press, stepped up.

"What's that?"

The fellow looked meaningly at Valentine and in giving him the sheet, touched his fingers under the paper.

The crowd parted, and hoarsely cheered the cab as it went on its way.

Valentine opened the roll; it was in large type and it could be read. But he seemed to know it, or to despise it, for he let it fall with a "pshaw!"

Bella stooped and picked it up.

At the head, a rude woodcut of Robin Hood and the sheriff (as usual with these cheap catch-penny, totally unconnected with the text), the letter press running:

"FAT CATTLE! STARVING MEN!—While the beasts once of the field are stalled warmly in Crystal Palaces, men are dying with hunger in the East and South-East. For the rich farmers who lose by the Cattle Plague, thousands of pounds from Government! For the working-man who loses wife and children by the Poverty Plague, half crowns and soup-tickets.

"LONG LIVE FAT CATTLE!"

"Oh!" said Bella, "this is treason, isn't it?"

"Let them make the most of it, if it be!" said Valentine, smiling.

What *could* have put the idea into her head; anything peculiar in his smile? At all events Bella threw her arms around the young man's neck, laid her cheek on his shoulder and gazed up into his eyes "as if there was no other heaven but in *his* smile."

"Valentine," said she in a low tone, "did *you* write that? *you did!* Oh, Valentine, I love you! and I hate my life with the lords!"

\* \* \* \* \*

For ten days, Regent's Park maintained its attraction for the inquisitive and for those, like Lord de Regamoor, who, from the disappearance of a friend or relative, believed they had there been lost.

Hope was well fed, for it is one of the most extraordinary features in connexion with this memorable accident, that persons having barely escaped with their own lives should so entirely disregard the feelings of their friends and families as quietly to disappear from the scene and not make their appearance for the space of a week or more. One working man's exemplary lodger, name unknown, who had never stayed out a night for two whole years, returned to his quarters; and a butcher, on whose account his sweetheart was uneasy, was not since the subject of any further representations. It has been suggested that one missing soldier might have been called away by "urgent private affairs," finding the Regent's Park accident a convenience rather than otherwise; nothing further with regard to him, or to his father-in-law, who disappeared at the same time, being ascertained.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

TAKING UP A CALLING. FRUITS OF VANEAGLE'S TEACHING. A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF. "YES, HER FIRST APPEARANCE IN SO MUCH CLOTHES." CURTAIN. THE ROW.

It was all very well for our girl to exclaim so romantically. "I hate the life with lords," but she had had a taste of the fire-water, and Vaneagle alone could not afford excitement enough for her.

She was out promenading one day when she met Ellie Roome, who cut her dead. Wounded to the quick, an idea of revenge, only to be imagined by the softer sex, came to her. She would realize the "may be an actress," if merely to overslaugh Miss Roome.

Valentine resisted first, but perceiving that she would "go it alone" if he held off, he yielded and entered with a relish into giving her a good send-off.

He had a pride worthy of him. Many Americans have shone star-like on the London boards, the latest being Bateman, Menken, Avonia Jones, Laura Harris, Adelina Putti, etc.

He might be glad to add his favorite to this roll.

Thanks to his manoeuvring "Miss Vincitrice," her first appearance on any stage, was announced one February Saturday, for that night, in Byron's new burlesque of "Arachne and Minerva."

During the previous fortnight the public had been set upon tenter-hooks by mysterious rumors. The debutante was a young beauty of fortune, whose love for the stage had induced her to relinquish an alliance with a Duke! No, she was a girl who had accompanied her brother, an officer in the Death lancers, through the last Polish Rising. Oh, not at all, old fellow, she's the girl that came out last year at the Lyceum, and failed. No, you're all wrong! It's another (oh, ye gods, another!) of Marie Wilton's sisters with her hair dyed with walnut catsup, to muffle the kinship!"

This all touched up theatre-goers.

Valentine personally labored like a Trojan. Everybody he knew he made promise to come; from veteran Planche to the juvenile Webster.

He went to a barber's in the Seven Dials, where the men who carry theatrical posters on boards, assemble, and, seeming to be on excellent terms with them, furnished an ample sum for them to pay their gallery shilling for self and girl, and have a bottle besides. Also, he knew lots of the Americans, hangers on the St. James' and other Christy's troupes, and induced them to attend.

That Saturday eve saw such a cram from orchestra stalls to gallery board-seats as never was witnessed in the Prince of Wales' since its first night.

Opening piece, a weak affair, impatiently slurred over. Then the overture on popular airs. The new performer not on in the first scene of the classical burlesque.

Scene second; Rocky View in Olymthia, a dance by ballet-corps, enter the Goddess and Jupiter, who talk lines of nonsense, two bad puns (sylvan these peasants because sylly and vane, for sample) per line. Lydia Maitland sings "Pal-o-Mine" and dances, Georgina Hodson sings "Ticket of Leave" and dances; Bella Goodall dances with Louisa Weston, "Japanese Juggler." Then all join in a walk around. They scatter right and left.

Comic march, enter, Minerva (Mr. Clarke), exclaiming:—

"She sw me in the act! she said 'I spied her!'  
Oh, I'll be revenged! I'll turn her out—no, *into*, a spider!"

upon which Hymen (Miss Vincitrice, Bella as large as life!) walks in and down stage, the worse entrance possible unless you've a splendid figure, she had.

One word: Undress is all the go now, and several performers had startled London before this, but Bella took the legs of propriety fairly from under her.

She had bare arms, thin close fitting tunic, taken in at waist by a diamond gold belt, and the merest thread of scarlet about her middle and around her thighs, hanging in scanty folds with a pearl button to keep the light down at every tag. Her legs in white fleshings, the best silk ever netted. Her boots pale blue with gold military heels.

But the walk of hers! not the stage walk of the practised performer, not the bold stride of most girls out of petticoats, but a firm tread, well becoming the Black-Eyed Beauty, unshaken because she was sure she was without a rival for graces and symmetry.

All was hushed, in depth of admiration, till, pausing in the centre, in full glow of the footlights, she smiled and let her eyes, full of anticipating thanks, dwell eloquently as its bright glance passed from quarter to quarter of the house.

As she bent her head courteously and her black glossy curls hung each side of her flushed face and swung forward, the two guineas of the boxes, the crown of the stalls, the eighteen-pennies of the pit clapped hands and said "bravo!" and from the "tanners" of the gallery there burst forth such a medley of roars, shouts, "brayvo!" "core!" and stamping that the tremor of the little house shook the fried-fish shop across the street and knocked the wall of the stage-door-keeper's room against his head far in the rear.

Not the least singular cry amid the numerous ones, was that of "bully gal with the glass eye, ha-yah! tiger-r-r!" which several Americans yelled from aloft.

Again and again the cheering and hullabaloo, keeping there Bella courtseying and making ineffectual attempts to speak.

At last came the hushes and when she opened her lips, it was the calm after the storm. She recited in her most melodious tone:

"Ah! I see that Cupid left me in the lurch,  
Has taught you to despise my piney torch;  
That Eros tries to get my lightwood for ar-rows—  
Like him, slight me, poor bud, I'll never be a-rose—"

"No, no! hooray! go in! 'sh! order! good! laughter," etc.

From that out she had it all her own way, was made to sing "Champagne Charley" four times, and "Our Willie dear is Dying," five, and was encored in the Whitehall Waltz, besides called on, dishevelled in hair, by her exertions and so excited that tears were in her eyes as they beamed her gratitude and satisfied pride over the house. The scene she was not in, passed without emotion. In the next she had to dance a breakdown.

Now there are vigorous dancers in England, but they can't do a nigger dance, 'cause they neber saw de brack face an' chaney eye at home.

Vaneagle, who was an amateur Dan Bryant, instructed his Beauty carefully.

Miss Goodall, (a capital dancer) did her walk around nicely, and the next went through it well enough.

Bella took her turn.

Without the least exaggeration at the beginning, she walked her ring, came to her chosen spot, put her foot down and went in for five minutes of such dancing as no Londoner had ever seen before.

All you ever saw at Bryant's, Wood's,—oh, from Gotham to 'Frisco or Crescent City, aye, to the fandangos of Taos, this girl did, putting a grace to the grape-vine twist, a finish to the snakefence touch, and a fire in the breakdown, that made 'em stare.

Encored as with one voice, she danced totally differently. Again and again she gave them something new, and at last, had not the scene been shifted, they would have kept her at it till she dropped.

After that, nobody else was cared for. The audience listened tamely to Lydia Foote, a lady they couldn't but show their regard for, but nobody else had a hearing. It was "Vincitrice" or nobody.

End at last, and the curtain went down to a hurricane of applause, one voice, an enthusiastic cockney's, being heard over all in a frantic "Good night, Winkitricks!" which capped the tumult with Homeric laughter.

The Sunday papers had a line of notice on it, but the Monday dailies had a full account. They could not help praising Bella, but they did hammer away at her "beauty unadorned," talked of where was the police, advised all fathers of families to stay away until the Society of the Unclothed should pay Bella a visit, and so on.

By consequence, at four in the afternoon, there was a crowd in Tottenham Street, in front of the theatre. It was a great throng by six, and at seven the street was impassible.

But if there was uproar outside, there was no calm behind the scenes.

When Bella had come early, as requested, she was told that if she did not wear another attire, she would not be let on.

She had made the whole of her sister artistes down on her, (which *down* means "hard"), except Lydia Foote, who, with her usual good heart and because she was a newish comer there herself, advised her to tie something more to it, and be a dear, please!

Belle was getting her steam up, and happening to hear something about "Yankee," she fired up. "Clear the gangplank!" about that time.

I can't write down all she said, but she let out all she knew about the goings-on of the principals in the assemblage, and she had been "posted" on the subject by some one who had "kept the books" carefully.

In brief, there was an immense row, ears burning and tongues clapping, oh thunder, if they could only *act* like that time! I don't know how it was, but come one said something hot, and Belle forgot herself so far as to want to strike out, Lydia Foote did her best to stop her, but she put her aside like a child, and let out her right, unhappily, a dresser (the female article, not a sideboard) was in the way and caught the box on her ear.

*Miaou!* Police! I'll have her arrested.

"Give you a sovereign if you will!" hissed a spiteful tempter into her ear.

And, by Jove, she did call the policeman, from the pit entrance, and Bella simply saying: "Somebody's got to pay for this," gave herself up and prepared to go.

Here arose a difficulty.

Bella positively would not go out by the stage door.

"If I belong to the company," said she resolutely, "and, Miss Wilton, you don't say I have done anything to be dismissed, I have a right here. If I don't why, the front way's my way out!"

Miss Wilton, all of a flutter at the idea of scandal on her establishment, could not say a word.

So, while a scene-shifter ran out at the rear to bring a cab round to the front, Bella went through the empty house to the box entrance.

In a moment while they heard the out-cries of the crowd kicking to get in, they also heard the scene-shifter knocking on the door to imply that he had the cab.

Bella was to be taken to Marlborough Street Station to have the charge entered.

There was a shout when the middle door was opened, it seeming to be a sign that the hour of admittance was come. Some curiosity was excited by the singularity of a policeman escorting such a well-dressed lady.

All of a sudden, Bella, whose anger was cooling (for, like all noble natures, her wrath was only steady towards great offenders,) thought she saw faces in the throng not quite unknown to her.

"Hullo! I say, Jem! vy, strike me lame, here's the pretty lady what give us the blunt tother day! don't ye know!"

They were the "froze-out men!"

They left their places, which were greedily taken by others, and surrounded the cab door. The policeman prepared to get up beside the driver.

"Stand back, there?" said he.

"Wait one moment," said Vaneagle, who made his appearance, from a Hansom that had just driven up. "Miss Vincitrice? what's all this?"

"I'm arrested on a silly charge—they're all envious—"

"Arrested!" echoed Valentine, in surprise, and, a natural action, lifting his hand up to his forehead.

As though he had, even if unconsciously, made a signal, the foremost of the sturdy fellows, bursting through the press, let his heavy hand fall on the policeman's stiff hat, and effectually bonneted him, to the detriment of his nose.

Another rushed round the horse's head.

A couple more helped Valentine to open the cab door, and let Bella out.

There were three policemen standing on the opposite sidewalk, on account of the assemblage being so numerous. They plunged into the serried ranks to rescue their brother. Grand confusion, in the midst of which, Bella was put into the cab in which Valentine had come up, and removed from the scene of conflict.

It ended in a couple of innocents being collared and walked off.

There threatened to be trouble on a more extended scale, soon after, when the burlesque came on. For, it had to be announced that, "in consequence of the sudden indisposition of Miss Vincitrice, the indulgence of a generous audience is invited for Miss Green, who takes the part at short notice."

If Miss Green had been all the Muses rolled into one, and the Graces added, she would fail to please, alongside Bella.

A good many come that night had only come because they had seen or heard of Bella on the Saturday.

There was lots of grumbling, but, with British nature, they gave in and bore it.

So ended Bella's theatrical flaring up in London.



## CHAPTER XIX.

BELLA IN PARIS. MAKES HER HIT. CUPID SATISFIES HER CUPIDITY. "IS THIS A SPIRIT I SEE BEFORE ME?" RAKED IN BY THE BLACK CROOK.

SHORTLY after the above had transpired, Valentine received the following letter from a friend of his, a young gentlemanly fellow (but English,) gone over to the emperor's City to examine French people, plays and the Great Exposition.

"Haven't written you for a week, have I, Val.? Been so busy with the youths connected with the committee of "Art and Science Dept"—gay cards.

"I've had one bit of luck, found a nobleman to dedicate my sporting novel 'Winning by the Martingale' to, Lord Strafford de Regamoore. I lent the Countess of Flotherington my rug on the steamer crossing, and she liked me so well (she's over the fifty, Val. don't fear for me) that I went on to Paris with her, and she introduced me all around.

"Menken was the last sensation performance. Got a stunner now. As I dessay, teacher told you in ancient days there were rites sacred to Venus—*Alma Venus*, (*crime a Venus* sometimes, eh?) the loved of gods and men. Last night we had a new rite, sacred—how the men who could not get in did '*sacre!*'—to the son of that goddess—to Cupid, who, by the way, closely resembled his mother Venus; the Venus of Paris, the Aphrodite of the Lake of Boulogne! Talking of Victrix, Athenæus, citing, I think, the 'Phædrus' of Alexis, tells us that 'it is impossible to represent Cupid to the senses.' Athenæus is an ass!—excuse my country's manners. Why, was not I last night at the Bouffes Parisiennes, and did not Cupid appear before my astonished senses in 'Orphée aux Enfers'?"

"Lord de Regamoore took me with him and the Countess. To play propriety keeper, I suppose; odd rumors about her and him in their first-leaf-putting forth days. We were early.

"The scene was very peculiar, striking, a caution. They began by playing a piece, something about a windmill I fancy, and when we got there Virtue was being rewarded to the edification of the emptiest house I ever saw; but at nine things changed. The stalls filled like magic, the boxes were as crowded as first-class carriages on the Great Northern of France, and the pit was a sea of heads, belonging to those, too, who do not usually 'go down into the pit.' It was, How goes it, Prince? 'How is this dear little Duc to-night?' 'How is the little health of this dear Charles?' and so on. Then there were duchesses and diamonds by dozens. I am certain as to the diamonds. All the Owls were there; we cannot even mention the class—they are so exalted and mysterious. All the diplomatists, the soldiers, the 'gandins,' there was nobody at any club; private society was a desert, and the Rue de Choiseul was so crowded with *coupes* that the 'circulation was arrested,' they don't cast Pearls before swine in this city, I can tell you.

"Debutante's name's Cora Pearl, the fast affair that Dumas, Jr. put into his *Clemenceau*, only he killed her there, and she's alive, unhappily for portemonnaie contents. I'll tell you who she is though, *really*, if you'll stop a bit.

"You know 'Orpheus?' by Planche's version at the Haymarket. Well, you'll remember that Love does not play so prominent a part in it as Love is said to do in the everyday comic-tragedy of life. The *debutante* of last night had to look like the God of Love, and, as I said before, she resembled his mother. She had two costumes, a faun's—fauns, you know, were sylvan deities—*les dieux du Bois*, and the proper costume, *a la Cupidon*, and both were admirable. All that Cupid had to say, or sing, or dance in real pearl buttoned boots, it did admirably. Impossible to conceive a better representation of the 'mischievous boy' who threw over his mother and behaved but queerly to Psyche, than was offered last night by Mlle. Cora. The verdict was favorable.

"When she came on, I saw Lord de Regamoore turn so pale, that I asked him in jest: "Is that a spirit that you see before you?" when he answered; "No! it gave me a start, for it is one whom I believed dead!"

"The deuce," cried Valentine, pausing, "he's come across her, has he?"

"Right," said I, "at least as to the seeing her before and wondering what had become of her. It's the beauty who came out at the Prince of Wales, and caught such a red-hot critique from Hollingshead, who had previously distinguished himself by plain-spokenness on Menken and by finding immortality in Tom Hood's poems, of all men's.' Miss Vincitrice, eh? the very girl you, Val., were so infernally sweet on.

"She is a beauty, old fellow, and has such eyes!

"You're no where though, in the race, for, the next afternoon, who should have her all to himself in her splendid turn-out in Boulogne *Bois*, but (over leaf) Lord de Regamoore!"

"Ah!" sighed Vancagle reading the last lines over again, "it's a pity I do not love her more—if my passion was strong for her, how *this* would increase my enmity to the noble and rich! Let's on again."

"I saluted, and, being by the cab, had a chat with her. She's a nice talker, Val., more of the lady than one could expect in her line. I mentioned you apropos of how you had written her up in London, and she asked how you were. 'Well,' said I, 'his last letter said: 'I am at work as usual.' 'His pet word,' said Miss Cora, 'I remember, he always *had work to do*.' She emphasized it, any meaning in particular to that, Val."

The reader smiled a sinister smile of his, one that seemed to bronze his face, not to gild it with a frank smile's sunshine.

"Rents going up like the devil. Nadar proposes to have an immense balloon moored over the city to hold up a platform on which huts will be erected. All the ground required then will be a spot to drive a spile in to fasten the anchor-rope to. De Launay says at the rate rents rise, they will be high as the balloon in next to no time.

"Well, remind me to A., B., C., and the rest. *Vale, Val.*"

The next letter from this correspondent had but the following paragraph of interest—

"Hear that Cora Pearl's going. Split with Lord de Regamoore, and signed an

engagement to go to New-York to play in the Black Crook, or with the Black Crook, whoever or whatever he, she, or it is."

\* \* \* \* \*

Reader thinks, well, here's an inartistic ending, and a half. Can't help it, this is a real life-yarn, and I must not snip it short where I please.

Lord de Regamoor leads his ordinary life, cherishing the hope he will have Bella his friend once more. They had quarrelled about a trifle: viz., he wanted to know where she had spent the night after being saved from the pond.

Valentine is on the move, appearing to be *earnest* as Jones himself for "Reform," and you'll see his name as a speaker at every meeting of the Kensington Workingmen's Reform Union, whether that does him any good or not.

We can hardly bear to think that we say here farewell to our wayward but lovely darling. You will see her, perhaps, in the States while we are far away, and as she is flashing through her new parts to the ravishment and amaze of audiences, she will never give a thought to the at least faithful chronicler of the BLACK-EYED BEAUTY!

THE END.

bex