

**BOB BRIERLY ;**

**OR,**

**THE TICKET-OF-LEAVE MAN.**

**A ROMANCE OF THE PRESENT DAY.**

[FOUNDED ON THE GREAT PLAY OF THE SAME TITLE BY TOM TAYLOR,  
ESQ., PLAYED WITH IMMENSE SUCCESS IN THE LEADING  
THEATRES OF AMERICA AND GREAT BRITAIN.]

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## BOB BRIERLY.

### CHAPTER I

IN THE NEW CUT. THE 'BULL-DOG.' THE CONTEMPLATED 'CRACK.' THE JEWEL-  
ER'S AT PECKHAM. THE MURDER. THE DETECTIVE'S FATE.

In the mammoth City, where many a misdeed, long shrouded in secrecy, has the veil still to be lifted from its dark features.

Instead of the free, clear air, the sulphurous atmosphere of a factory chimney. Instead of flowery meads and pastures, the parched and blistering flag-stones, or the sun-burnt park. Instead of the sweet chorus of woodland warblers, the loud execrations of the cabmen, or the bronchial cry of the itinerant vendor.

It was Saturday evening in the plebian locality known as the New Cut, Lambeth; all the transpontine world was astir, and throngs of marketers passed in continuous streams along the streets, courts, and alleys leading to that great mart of low-priced goods.

There shopkeepers and shopmen were in the height of their business; shops were jammed tight with articles of trade and crowded by customers; piles of cheeses, hams, and pieces of bacon were propped up in the cheesemonger's window, or spread on shelves or boards; the grocers had their various goods displayed to the best advantage—sugar fresh sanded, raising redolent with molasses, and tea that had never grown in China or Japan, were spread in wild profusion; the fronts of the butchers' shops were obscured by joints of meat of all sizes and of every quality, and bespattered by huge tickets; and before these arrays of legs and shoulders stood, greasy-haired, ruddy-faced butchers, dressed in blue suits, and armed with long bright knives, which they flourished wildly as they ejaculated furiously and incessantly the monotonous and peremptory demand of "Buy, buy!"

Furniture shops had their goods well furnished up and arranged to the best advantage, and hatchet-faced touters rushed furiously at any whom they detected glancing at their displayed wares, and dragging them by main force into the shops, so overwhelmed the victims with bargains and marvels of cheapness, that they were fain to purchase some gimerack article before they had time to recover their breath.

Nor was the business confined to the shops; all along each side of the road stalls were posted up with every conceivable article of consumption, ornament, use, or useless. Side by side with the vendor of combs was one who sold

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sweetmeats; then came stalls of fish, of fruit, of vegetables, of incongruities; in short, of everything which could possibly be brought there, or for which there could be found a customer.

Little boys, with dirty faces and large mouths, were perched on the top of pyramids of cabbages, or ensconced behind barrels of fresh herrings, where a lamp-post intervened. The sellers of flash jewelry or port-monnaies took up their position, and along the curb, where a foot of space was available, stunted men, with unshorn chins and begrimed features, arranged their stock of patched-up boots and shoes, or gentlemen of unmistakably Jewish countenances entrenched themselves behind a rampart of caps.

The evening was progressing and business flourishing, and the dense throng squeezed between the shops and stalls, or forced their way in and out of public houses. The lively members of several itinerant bands "tuned their footsteps to a march" of peculiar and disagreeable discordance.

A perfect Babel of sounds rent the air. Shopmen and shopboys shouted, touters persuaded, children cried, women joked, men swore, and the costermonger colony kept up their discordance of hoarse yells and multitudinous cries, with a persistency that showed that whatever might be their real grievances weak lungs was not to be reckoned amongst them.

The usual crowd of apple-munching boys stood before the entrance to the twopenny show, listening with open mouths to the cadaverous man with a whip in his hand, who was energetically holding forth upon the wonders to be seen inside, and of the astounding performance, "Never before witnessed," that was now about to commence for positively the last time that evening.

Numbers of women and men walked in the road to avoid the crowd or the pavement; but even here the throng was dense, and the horses and carts that occasionally passed had much ado in forcing a passage through the multitude of marketers, of all aspects, and dressed in every variety and style of costume were they; some slovenly dressed, others smartly attired; women with anxious care-worn faces, inwardly calculating how to obtain the greatest currency for a shilling; dissipated creatures, hurrying to the crowded gin-shops; working-men, tidily dressed men, and men out-at-elbows, all helped to form that living stream of people in search of Saturday night bargains, and goods that were more renowned for cheapness in price than for quality.

It was near eight o'clock when a man, turned sharply from the Westminster-road, and diving amidst the throng, passed squalid children, half-drunken mechanics smoking short pipes, a blue policeman, a red letter-carrier, then those vultures of poverty—pawnbrokers, in their shops with the three avuncular balls—and miserable dirty half-clad women crowding around those glittering thrones of "the foul fiend—gin palace."

He was a man of twenty-two to twenty-four, and, besides being well built and not too fleshy to "go" well, far from ill-looking except for a "hard" air that was distinguishable about him.

He elbowed much bigger men than himself, and if they turned on him, he eyed them in a way that showed him to be a man whose disposition was not to be trifled with.

Muttering many an execration on the crowded street, he pursued his way till he arrived at a narrow dark turning near the Victoria Theatre.

He paid no attention to the flaming announcement of "First Night of the Lemon Girl; or, the Frozen Stone of the Brogan Torn," but let his glance at length rest upon a man who was attending a fruit stand, and apparently satisfied that he was the man he wanted, he, not without some difficulty, forced his way through the crowd to him.

The individual whom he thus appeared to recognise was a short, thickset man, dressed in corduroy trousers and fustian jacket; a fur cap adorned his head, and his bull neck was encircled by a yellow handkerchief spotted with white. In

appearance he was repulsive and ruffianly. His hair was cropped short to his ears, which were large and flat; not a vestige of beard or whisker appeared on his sallow features; and as he hoarsely cried his goods, or uttered some coarse witticism to the owners of the stalls contiguous, his rolling, cat-like eyes seemed to express a brutality of the most coarse and determined kind.

The name of this interesting personage was Bill Simmons; he was, however, more popularly known as the "Lambeth Bulldog"—an appellation bestowed upon him in honour of his having once, in a street encounter, bitten his opponent's ear off, as well as on account of his tenacity and persistence, as displayed in the prize ring, where his prowess was both cherished and admired; for though now pursuing the peaceful and honest occupation of a vendor of fruit, this worthy was a noted pugilistic hero, and a notorious ruffian, combining the profession of costermonger with that of bird-fancier, dog-stealer, smasher, and housebreaker.

His friends were justly proud of him, for he had travelled as far as the antipodes, at which place he had resided for some time, and had besides sojourned in several of the London prisons, where, to use his own words, "he lived like a gemman." Besides his travelling propensity, he was known to have kicked a policeman to death, for which playful amusement he received a short imprisonment for manslaughter, had beaten in the face of a "swell," and knocked silly the last man he fought in the P. R.

He was also reputed a good runner, having at one time been seen to double at a remarkable pace when hotly chased by two policemen, he having unconsciously put his fingers into a gentleman's pocket, extracting thence his gold watch, which, in the hurry of the moment, he forgot to replace.

To this gentleman of many acquirements the traveller advanced, and passing by his stall into the road beckoned him to follow.

The visage of Bill Simmons fell somewhat on beholding the stranger, and he looked suspiciously round before he ventured to leave his stall. No active and intelligent officer in blue being near, and seeing no one with a detective cast of countenance anywhere by, he consigned the care of his fruit to a long, thin, cadaverous seller of cured haddocks, and hastened to join the individual who had summoned him to follow.

"I wonder wot's up now, Meg," said the vendor of haddocks, addressing himself to a poverty-stricken, dissipated wench, with a discolored eye, who occupied the next stall.

"Can't say," rejoined she, "who is the queer buffer?"

"Never seed him afore," rejoined the long cadaverous party, who was known amongst his intimates by the not inapt sobriquet of "Long Tim."

"May be it's some copper toggled out to nab him."

"No fear," returned Long Tim with an expressive grin, "Bill's too fly for any one to nab like that."

"Well, they're having a long confab," said Meg.

"Yes, rather; chap wants him I s'pose; as Bill's a lucky one, I dessay he'll be flash with the shiners now."

"And flush of simsiess," returned Meg. "Ponny a lot." The latter observation was addressed to a passer-by, and bore reference to sundry lots of vegetables arranged on the board before her.

While this colloquy was taking place, the "bulldog" had joined the stranger and now stood awkwardly before him.

"You don't seem to know me, Bill?"

"Hullo! the devil, 'Tiger!' How your 'soup-strainer' being off has altered you!"

"I hope a 'close shave' will get me off. I hear Joe Skirrit is looking after me," said the "Tiger." "But, are you ready for the job to-night?"

"I'm all ready, Jen."

"Get the bag ready."

"Here we are."

They turned the corner, and entered an old overhanging house. The windows were mostly broken and repaired with old newspapers, the oak-painted door was warped and blistered, and plainly told the test of many's a year struggling sun. The window-sills were decorated (if we may use such an expression) with boxes of withering wall-flowers and parched mignonettes; a dead thrush, actually starved to death, lay in its wicker prison outside the house; while around a herd of half-clad children revelled in the fetid, smoking gutters.

Bill and Jem went boldly through the taproom and descended the stairs in one corner.

The room they entered was well lighted up by candles set in sconces fastened to the rough slimy, and green, stone walls.

In a huge grate burned a fire of coal that failed to dispel the dampness of the vault, though it emitted a powerful heat.

Tables of various dimensions were set out all over the floor, around which were gathered ruffianly groups of men, mixed with boys and women, all intent on eating or carousing.

Here a savage-bearded fellow, half famished, was cutting off huge slices of bread from a big loaf, with a knife that might have been used for more terrible work.

There a girl, once beautiful, was fast obliterating by deep potations every semblance of softness and intelligence from her besotted countenance.

Boys of tender age, but with features as hard and stern as men of fifty, candidates for the gallows, were drinking "blue ruin" in the company of remorseless men.

It was the undisguised saturnalia of crime.

One brawny ruffian, satiated with bread and beef, and saturated with brandy, was sprawling on a bench, with his back against the wall, recounting the details of a murder in which he had participated, pausing to add, by the aid of a short pipe, to the clouds of tobacco-smoke which formed a dense canopy overhead.

At a rude counter, a muscular, fiery-faced woman, dressed in a blazing red silk, with a flaming turban, gold eardrops, and a mass of rings upon her hard, short fingers, dispensed the burning liquids which formed her stock in trade.

Her vigilant eye noticed the new comers, and she called out:—

"Do you want it, now, Bill?"

"Yes, missus. And look alive," replied Simmons.

She stooped behind the bar, and lifted up a small but compact bag, which the Bulldog received.

"All well, Dalton," said he, stowing away the implements under cover.

"Here, missus," said he to the bar-tender, "lend me a billycock hat, will ye, if you've got one of the old man's under the counter."

He exchanged his head gear, by no means improving his appearance.

"Think it's all right?" he asked, presently.

"Right as H—ll!"

"How are we going to get in?"

"I will tell you. At midnight all the inmates of the house will be asleep. At the rear of the house is a large garden. There is a watch-dog, but he's spiced. A ladder will be placed there; by its aid we can, with a little skill, mount to the back drawing-room window. All the fastenings will be unscrewed so that a little force only will be required to gain an entrance. We will be able to pick any locks that may be in the way."

"Rayther," muttered the Bulldog.

"There's a young whelp there," said Dalton; "we are to throw a handful of gravel against the window of his bed-room, and he'll come down to point out the rooms."

"Hope he'll be spy."

"I'll wring his neck if he's the least bit of a sleepy head," said Jem fiercely.

"Come on," said Bill, sallying out into the street.

\* \* \* \* \*

Abraham Amanuel, jeweler to the Duchess of Litchfield-super-conduit, had perhaps the most valuable and compact stock of any in his profession.

Jem Dalton had discovered by his mott, *i. e.*, female familiar, who worked as one of the Jew's head saleswomen, that the old gentleman had a habit of keeping extremely valuable diamonds and other gems at home.

Hence the descent.

Amanuel's house was a large so-called Elizabethan structure.

The height of the exterior walls differed very greatly, and on the side on which the burglars was now looking, it was little more than ten or twelve feet to the ground. Within a broad greensward extended, perfectly level. On either side rose the overarching foliage of the ash and maple, casting a chequered shadow upon the grass, and screening the place from the rays of the feeble moon. It was a spot formed as if by design for seclusion.

It well suited the Jew, whose family consisted but of a lovely daughter, one so beautiful in fact that she was of great anxiety to him.

Carefully as he concealed her, the aristocratic persons with whom he associated, fished eagerly for a chance to see the girl.

The two robbers mounted the wall, merely laying their coat on the top to blunt the spikes.

Jem spoke but few words to his comrade, and the two proceeded along till they came to the dwelling.

The Bulldog went in advance, and threw a few grains of gravel up at the window. That was the signal to the confederate.

The latter, a half fed young Hebrew, a page, who had been easily bribed over, was awakened and frightened by the sound.

He was sometime now before he recovered from his terror, and then he listened again to see if he could find out what had caused his fear.

He was not kept long in suspense; the Bulldog, skillful though impatient, softly threw up a little more sand.

"Oh, it's him," young Isaacs thought; "how shall I get down?"

He opened the door gently and crept out.

The landing and stairs were dark, and Isaacs felt anything but disposed to venture down. Nothing but the remembrance of the Bulldog's threats induced him to make the descent. When he got down one or two of the stairs, the heavy weight on his conscience, became very uncomfortable to bear.

Opening the door was a work of time and labour, for the Bulldog had sworn to wring his neck if he made any noise, and, as he did not wish to have his neck wrung, he went to work silently and slowly.

At last it was opened, and the burglars stepped in.

Bill gave the Jewish youth a look that made the treacherous boy feel his skin creeping over him.

He was white as a sheet, and trembling all over.

Jem laid his fist on the boy's nose.

"Make a row, and I'll smash you," was his mild admonition.

Isaacs merely opened wide his mouth, and the three stole softly up the stairs.

"You get in your room," the Bulldog said, "and don't move till the job's done."

The Israelite glad to get away from the proximity of the robbers, stole to his room, and, creeping in, began to put on his clothes.

In the meantime, silently the night marauders went to their work.

They were on the first floor and at the door of the old Jew.

"What's the word, Jem?" whispered Bill. "White or yellow?"

Steel or fire?

"The knife if he cries, I'd as leaf have murder as a crack 'buffed' to me," replied Dalton.

They opened the locked door but had to wrench apart a link of the chain inside.

The jeweler had fastened himself in like a rat in a trap.

Bill was smiling broadly at such new-fangled things being more than a devourer of precious time.

The two stole into the chamber.

Bill stood guard over the sleeper, whose rest was like a child's in profundity.

Jem quietly cut away the curtains which came down from the canopy, and set to work at a small press that was in the wall behind, at the head of the bed.

By feel alone the burglar proceeded. But then his fingers were practised ones.

The loudest sound of all, when he had to put his strong little crowbar to the door and force the lock looser, was unheard by the sleeper.

Jem tore open the first packet, weighty and carefully enveloped in wash leather and paper.

He could hardly repress his joy when he felt the circles and points of rings, earrings, half-hoops, signet and others, the care with which they were packed leading it to be supposed that they were extremely precious.

The body of the press, however was filled with a chilled steel casket of considerable weight.

"Bill," said Jem, "let the old buffer be a bit, and hold this firm. 'I'm afraid none of my *turrls* (skeleton keys) are small enough."

The Bulldog knelt on the box and held it down on the floor while Jem made an attack on the scientific lock.

Now Elise Amanuel, the handsome daughter, had had a great outbreak with her parent that evening, consequent on a harsh censure of her dashy way in Hyde Park. Like many young girls she looked upon herself as extremely ill-used, and let her temper have full sway.

Weeping or in fierceness, she had spent the hours, now about to "write ten inviting letters to ten ardent admirers" but ever restrained by her better sense.

The only consequence that affects our story is that she could not sleep.

In this state, she thought she was dreaming, or fancying at least, when the two burglars passed her door almost in complete silence. Presently she heard the handle of the door slowly and cautiously turned, but not so cautiously as altogether to prevent the lock from uttering that shrill, sharp cry which seems to him who causes it an inevitable larum to all the sleepers in the house. It was not so, however, on this occasion, for no one apparently heard it but the Jewish girl. The robbers had slowly opened the door, released the lock, turned the handle on the inside, and once again sounded the same piercing cry; the door was then closed, and the lock went back with a dull, grating noise, as if it grumbled at its warnings being disregarded.

It was impossible for the girl to remain still.

Although strict silence had followed, she was compelled to rise, draw a shawl around her and go to the room, as if attracted by an influence completely irresistible.

As she had thrown herself upon her bed half attired, the jewels that her race so love and which she had outshone the aristocratic carriage-people with, still glittered on her.

She was about to call out as she lifted her hand to knock.

But the door opened widely at her gentle touch.

Luckily for her, the robbers did not see her.

Their whole attention had been turned to old Amanuel, who had aroused.

The Jewess stared.

In the darkness she could see all, all the more horrible because the outlines were dimly defined.

The old man was springing off the bed with a rapidity of which he had before seemed wholly incapable, when Bill made a snatch at something that lay beside him on the floor: the girl's eyes fell on a glittering blade, as quick as light itself, it flashed across the old man's bare throat: there was a gurgling sound—his head sunk on one side, and his body fell heavily to the floor.

It was an awful moment. Pale and motionless did the Jewess stand, gasping for breath, and her eyes fixed with frightful stare upon the corpse. She essayed to speak, but her lips refused to obey the impulse, and her efforts only served to distort her countenance, and to bring forth a gibber, unearthly sound, and in that single instant, so intense were her emotion, that the veins and muscles of her throat were swollen until the diamond *riviere* which encircled it, seemed tightened almost to bursting, and she clutched at it convulsively to tear it away.

The passive terror with which, like one fascinated, the Jewess had witnessed this appalling scene, at last gave way to a feeling of frantic desperation. She dashed herself with violence forward, and the next moment she was on her knees by her father's side, dabbled in the blood which flowed like a current from the fatal wound the Bulldog had inflicted.

"Gaine's up!" cried Jem, giving the casket a wrench, and stuffing the contents at hap-hazard into his pockets.

A loud and thrilling scream had gone from the daughter's lips.

"Down with her, Bill. I've nailed the swag!"

The Bulldog grasped the mourner, without regard for her sex.

But fiercely she struggled with frantic gesture and with passionate grief. The star of brilliants at the bosom of her dress, earrings, the necklace, the agrafes of rubies down the stomacher, were torn with such rude violence from among the showers of rich lace which they were destined to hold that it was rent in all directions and hung in tatters about her person.

"This won't do!" cried Jem. "The crib's alive!"

"She's bit my hand!" said the Bulldog.

"I'll settle her!"

As he spoke Dalton sprang on her.

The Jewess was in the flush of the outcry, when the burglar glided to her side, and with no more compunction than if he had been knocking down a bullock hit her full on the forehead with the jemmy.

It was a frightful hit; though given so easily, it told instantly. The iron end seemed to sink through flesh and bone; and as the crashing sound arose from the blow, the poor thing fell bleeding and insensible to the floor.

"Now," said the cracksman, "she's got her dose, and its no more than she deserved. Come on."

To come on was not so easy a matter; the outcry had been raised, and there was trampling on the stairs.

A policeman's rattle rang on the morning air. The noise of the burglars showed that they were preparing for a precipitate retreat.

Through a parcel of amazed servants, the two burglars rolled, rather than ran down the stairs.

Bill was lighter laden as he was.

As they reached the door by which they had entered, a strong hand grasped Bill by the shoulder, and as a policeman's light was turned upon him, a strong, hard voice exclaimed:

"Don't try any games on me; I've got you safe enough."

A policeman's rattle sprung.

He felt that he was taken.

The policeman held him fast, and turned the light of his lantern in his face.

Bill knocked him down off hand.

Jem had just come up.

One more policeman and two more in plain dress but evidently of the force from their business-like movements confronted the burglars.

The two parties instantly became greatly "mixed."

The whole seemed to be on the ground at the one time.

Three rose.

The two detectives holding Jem.

Jem tried to draw pistol. He lost it. He got hold of his knife. It was dashed out of his hand. But he did get his arm free to brandish his "life-preserver."

One of the detectives dropped, with a dull groan.

Between Jem and the other a fierce contest continued.

Jem kicked, tore, bit, more like the tiger he was nicknamed than a man.

At the end, he ran away, leaving his assailant with a wounded leg to continue the fruitless chase limping.

The Bulldog was dead from the clubbing on the side of his head.

The detective who had fallen, seemed to be nearly lifeless. The two policemen bound up one another's heads, and helped carry the officer into the house.

The police who came running up, said that they had not met the fugitive.

Jem Dalton had got clear—not to live in remorse a hermit, as these pages have to reveal.

## CHAPTER II.

CREMORNE AT ITS CLIMAX. THE GAY GIRLS AND THEIR FRIENDS. ONE OF THE LANE PRETTIES. THE SINGER. THE FLIMSIES.

THE Cremorne is well known to be (to a certain class of enjoyment seekers) a highly valued Elysium of grassy lawns, crystal platforms, flowers, shrubs, fountains, and arbours, on the road to which the cab which took its fare in Piccadilly is followed, in the wake, by the humble tax-cart of the sturdy yeoman, who is giving his faithful Joan a trip. The natural triumphs of beauty, blended in sweet mellowness with the lovely tints of fashion, mingled with sterner pictures of vice. The peer and the yokel, the "black leg" and the parson, and beauty and the beggar, all seem endued with one common spirit, and all upon one errand—enjoyment, when in this "Garden of the World"—ahem!

You will see some swell of a soldier—young Mars, perhaps, appearing in the blue undress coat of his regiment, with huge brass scales, while the disciple of the law adorns his person with a green tie with yellow fringed ends, solid Mosaic studs, and a green cut-away coat.

Then there's Mrs. Silvergrab, a coarse-featured, masculine woman, with a Jewish cast of countenance, and her pawnbroker lord, and Miss Silvergrab flounced and furbelowed in all the combined colors of the rainbow, with a geranium and a sallow, plain complexion, resembling a badly-boiled chicken in hue.

Silvergrab likes to feed his vanity by having swells who raise money by him, give him a nod.

On the Crystal Platform the dancers are chasing the hours with many twinkling feet. There were at this gathering, swells of the "howling" category, in the correctest of evening dress. The ladies were dressed, if indeed dressed by the fit expression in the style of robes making up in the train for what the neck is dispossessed of.

The music rose with its voluptuous swell, and one sees a middle-aged gentleman with spectacles turning heels over head while he is doing "cavalier seul,"

the partner the while sitting on the floor and gesticulating, nay, even the vis-à-vis, when his turn comes, advancing like a cray-fish, which are not novelties in the graceful art of quadrille dancing.

If you cannot bear this come along to the "Grand picture of Florence on the golden Arno, as seen from Coney Island."

Or to the Rotunda, where the facetious Mr. and Mrs. Fico set forth in one of their duets that they "know their way about," and another asserts they are both perfectly "wide awake." In the latter, while Mrs. Miles performs a very original *pas seul*, her liege lord expresses his extatic admiration by various ejaculations, and repeats the word "sugar" with great emphasis.

As we retreat, they are still in the chorus to another ditty, describing the extraordinary attractions of some beautiful lady, which is simply a howl, reducible to no kind of orthography, but which is taken up with immense spirit by the frequenters.

In the theatre is an immense piece, in which as usual, the points are to have young pretty ladies, with dishevelled hair, who are being constantly tempted by libertines, for no apparent or probable reason except to carry out the *morale* of the play; the greatest "hit" is always to have these libertines rich, as if wealth was a sort of cardinal water-proofing against every redeeming quality which we poor sinners enjoy, and, by the same theatrical ratio, poverty is always persecuted virtue, persevering energy, and implacable heroism.

After the play the "Slap Banger's Waltz" in which is a young female in the costume of a shepherdess with frizzed and powdered wig looped and banded with wreaths and roses, sky-blue skirt and velvet bodice, pink petticoat, and high-heeled shoes; the whole adorned with jewels in profusion, and lace and ribbons, too, wherever there was room to place them.

She would have been slightly more attractive, but that the calves of her legs, according to a spectator, had been put on hot and melted into her ankles, after various lurches and jumps, more like the gambols and frolics of a porpoise than the graceful and sylphlike steps of a *danseuse*, she threw herself, in an exhausted and beautiful manner, into the arms of Signor Barritoni, the ballet-master, which graceful attitude was rewarded by a round of applause from the audience.

In the midst of this medley, we, for relief, pick out two figures.

One a long whiskered fellow with the true simper of a pink Englishman with red hair, displays a most correct evening dress, and a cane in the hand that is not devoted to his companion.

She, in dashiest of pink bonnet and fancy dress, with a parasol calculated to astonish the Chinese, who had a patent for that article we believe, floats along with a motion that would be graceful—only—

Only—

Well, if we must, Emily Traddles (stage name, Emily H. Evremond) is one of the ballet girls at the Drury Lane Theatre Royal, shortly the "Lane."

And the regimen of turning toes too far out leads to a gait that don't bar out criticism when the sylphs sink to everyday life.

She was clever at something else than her feet, though, as any one would have acknowledged on seeing her acuteness in manageressing her cavalier into the refreshment hall *al fresco*.

"I—I can't bear the Rotunda," said she, spreading her skirts each side of the chair they hid.

"Nor I, Emily! Anything but the Rotunda. If your mamma likes the music, let her enjoy it!"

"I'm sure the music's very nice, but then I hear so much of it, Mr. Jones!" said the dancing girl playing with her parasol on the table to attract a waiter.

"Mr. Jones," said the escort, "Mr. Jones, Miss St. Evremond! What have I done," moaned the swell, "to be kept off at arm's length by that che-



vaux de freeze of a 'mister'! Oh, was it for this that I thawed the thick-ribbed ice of Mrs. Traddles—I beg your pardon, Traddles!"

The ballet-girl fired up.

"Thick-ribbed ain't a proper word to use to any lady, sir," said she, "and I tell you that my ma's name is not Traddles. It's the same as mine, Mr. Jones—St. Evremond. She changed it at my wish."

"I beg pardon of your stern parent," said Mr. Green Jones, signalling a waiter to her delight at last.

"But, I repeat: Was it to be called Mr. Jones that I treated Mrs. St. Evremond's child to the Star and Garter Inn and her child without Mrs. St. Evremond to the Trafalgar Tavern, where—from the moonlight balcony that overhung the fragrant river, we watched together the sunset over the Isle of Dogs?"

"And wrong it was," returned Emily, "very wrong of me to go to that whitebait dinner without ma——"

"Oh, no!"

"Oh, yes. Precisely she blew me up about it, though I told her that you couldn't have treated me with more respect if I'd been a countess instead of a core-of-feet——"

"Coryphee, my dear! it doesn't matter, though. Emily, you only did me justice. My intentions are honourable—honourable are my intentions!"

He began to twist the links of his Albert chain nervously and his pink face tried to approach the hue of the festive beet when served up blushing at its "violent" treatment, as the gentleman with the cold in his head observed.

He tried to speak, but deferred that till he had absorbed the contents of the liquor brought him.

The draught gave him some courage.

He tilted up his chair so as to lean nearer the figurantine.

"Emily, if you are in the ballet, that's no reason you shouldn't be a dear good girl——"

"My!"

She remembered having heard that sentiment in some play in which the author had tried to flatter the performers.

"Emily, you've been a trump of a daughter, I don't see why you shouldn't turn out a trump of a wife. Emily—my hand—my hand—my ha——"

He broke down.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the ballet girl, used to such stuff, and not imagining even so green an individual earnest, took the proffered fingers.

The swell considered his fate as settled.

"Why," said Emily, placidly, "what a splendid brilliant you wear on the little finger—a *solitaire* worth—allow me to examine it more closely."

Jones drew the diamond from his finger and presented it to her with maudlin gallantry, begging her acceptance of the trifle as a small testimonial of the pleasure he had experienced that evening in her society. The girl slid the ring over her glove and looked round with a toss of triumph.

Green had to order supper on that.

The richness of it assisted both to understand one another.

The wine gave the once-foiled suitor strength to offer his hand again, ringless, however.

"Nonsense, Green, you don't mean that?" cried Emily.

"I'm perfect—feeling serious!" said Jones, rattling his glass with unsteady hand. "My hand an' heart—my fortune an' future! Don't stare, Em'ly! It's as true as I'm Green! I'm quite in earnest! am—indeed!"

Emily's ribbons fluttered as if a breeze had sprang up.

"Oh! Green dear. I'm in such an agitation!" she said rising and letting the parasol drop.

"We will spend a rosy existence!" said the other. "You like life, and I flatter 'self I 'derstand it!"

As he threatened to pitch under the table if he stooped, Emily picked up her parasol herself.

"Don't I understand life?" said she. "I call this life—music, company, singing, flying trapeze. I thought the man would break his neck—it was beautiful!"

Green had assumed a deeply profound aspect.

"Yes," said he. "I like to associate with all classes. Survey mankind, from China—to earthenware! you know, Emily! So, when Charley Pantes proposed a night at Cremorne, I sank the swell——"

On the contrary, he was half seas over.

"And here I am with my Emily—you are my Emily? and her mamma, I remarked," said Green, figuring up the cost of the entertainment with his cigar on the table, "that Charley didn't seem to see the parent—but says I: 'Propriety, Charley my boy,' and he submitted with a sigh. And now what are you looking at?"

"Nothing, only the girl."

"Bother the girls, now I'm a mar'd man," hiccupped Green, reaching for the bottle.

But Emily, a little tired of the figures that excited envy in her as better dressed, found relief in looking at the new comer.

It was a young girl of about her own age.

Set apart her worn and tired look, for she has evidently been but recently up from the fever bed, her soft blue eyes full of intelligence, bright in spite of her illness, and the feminine gentleness diffused over her small, but nicely out-lined figure.

But, thin, pale, she presented but a pitiful contrast to the bright-hued countenances and broadly developed promenaders of her sex.

Her attire, a plain dress falling in simple folds, with a poor black shawl over her shoulders, with a carefully dusted but well-used bonnet, looked like a speck on the background of the ribbons and silks that Misses Sinners can buy.

She was letting her wasted hand lie upon the strings of a guitar, afraid to strike them, as she shrank to the wall, fearful of being in the way.

"Halloa, halloa! what's this?" cried a rough voice.

It was the manager of the gardens.

"Oh, it's you, Edwards, is it?"

"If you please, sir," returned the guitar-player in a gentle voice, very touching in its weakness.

"Come, I'm glad to see you're about again, but I can't have you cadging here. Don't allow it, not on no account, never!" growled the manager.

Miss May Edwards had been a singer in the chorus of Cremorne, before she had been taken ill, through the open air entertainments. People with hats and bonnets on don't see the wind going on the bare necks of the stage people.

"Oh, Mr. Maltby," implored the girl. "If you'll let me try one song and go around after it. I'll stop as soon as ever they ring up in the Theatre."

"Well, well," said the man, pushing the waiter over to one corner. "You always were a well-behaved young woman, so—for once in a way——"

The girl thanked him profusely.

"If you should have an opening for me in the room, sir," continued she, "when I'm quite strong again——"

"Oh!" returned Maltby, shaking his head, "there's no chance of it, we're chock full—a glut of talent; still, let me see!"

He smoothed the bristles on his chin as he reflected.

"Yes, if I should be able to find room for you to double Miss Plantagenet when she's in the tantrums or going to the races, ten shilling a week and find

your dresses you know—I'm not the man to shrink from a generous action!"

"Thank you, sir!"

May tightened the strings of her instrument.

"There's a pleasant-looking girl yonder," murmured she. "Come along, old friend, you've to earn my supper yet."

"And now, Emily my dear, what will you have?" said Green, suddenly waking up and sitting upright in his chair as if he had not been nodding over the table.

"Well, I'll have——"

May began to sing.

"Hullo!" cried Green, "anything but that, my girl! Now, do oblige me by shutting up, that's a good thing!"

"No, no, poor thing!" said Emily, out of the spirit of opposition. "Let her sing—she has a sweet voice!"

"Flat," said Green, cocking his hat over one half-closing eye, "decidedly flat!"

"You're another!" retorted the ballet-girl contemptuously, "I ought to be a good judge when I've held the train of the Lady in *Comus* this many a night. My good girl, let us hear you, but only one verse, for goodness' sake."

"I—I only know ballads," faltered May.

Poor thing! she imagined from Green's look and his innamorata's that something in the flashy style would alone be to their taste.

"I'm very fond of them," said Emily. "And so's Green."

"Doat on 'em," muttered Green. "Oh? did you ask my opinion on shrimps?"

In a voice very faint but still not without effect on her listeners, May intoned: "The Cottage by the Brook."

"Where daisies blow and waters glide,  
My lonely cottage stands beside  
The willow brook that flows along  
Its rushing banks with murmuring song.  
And near the door there grows a tree,  
So thick that scarce the cot you see,  
And screens and shades my still retreat  
From Winter's cold and Summer's heat:  
And there, at eve, a nightingale  
Will sit concealed and tell its tale—  
So sweet, that all who wander by  
Are fain to stop, and listen nigh.  
Thou gentle child, with golden hair,  
Whom long I've watched with love and care,  
The wind is cold and rough for thee,  
Say wilt thou come and dwell with me?"

"Oh, wilt thou come and dwell with me?" repeated Green, setting down his glass. "Can't! Engaged to another lady!"

"Pooh, Green! Give me half a crown for her."

Emily held out her hand for more.

"Two?" said Green. "Such a bore, have to get change for a note at the bar."

"You'll have to change a good many notes when we are married."

May received the few shillings gratefully.

But such success was not to be continuous.

At the next table, it was a counter-jumper's.

"Concerts quite enough without caterwauling between the acts."

Then a young quill, spending money hand over fist for the woman of thirty (twenty of them blackest vice) out of his master's till or cheque-book, bade May:

"Be off! No small change—waiter, bottle pale sherry! Now, what in h—— and all is the girl gaping at? can't you take 'no' for an answer?"

At the next, in the corner, an elderly man sat over his peppermint and brandy.

He was a queer fish to be seen in the casino.

An excessively thin body and weazen face.

His eyes gray, small, quick, and penetrating; his complexion very sallow, and his cheek extremely hollow; his mouth wide, the lips thin and very much drawn in; his teeth irregular and not over white, and his nose long and pointed. His figure unusually bent for his years, his body, as observed, exceedingly meagre, and his hands were large and bony.

His whole figure encased in rusty black, with a long skirted brown overcoat, all shabby to the extreme, only outdone by the far-gone stage which his battered hat had reached.

In a word, his whole appearance such that he would have been refused admittance but that he was well known to the establishment.

Indeed everywhere Mr. Melter Moss was known.

Ostensibly, he was a money-lender, but the police had prejudice towards him and marked him in their books.

He had never been caught at the least dishonest act during seven or ten years that he had come under the ban.

He refused May's timid request, not roughly but with a reptilish oily voice that she would have preferred a growl to.

"James!" cried he, pounding his ragged umbrella on the floor.

A waiter came up.

"Another four pen 'oth of brandy—and more peppermint! Ker—Ker!" coughed he.

He looked around searchingly.

Still he did not remark a man, at the other end of the room, in a quiet wide-awake and tweed suit, who stood by a table of two drinkers and exchanged this brief conversation with them, without any of the three looking at one another.

"Report!"

"Nothing," said one.

"All right," the other returned.

"Old Moss is yonder!" said the wide-awake wearer. "Keep an eye on him!"

And he strolled over toward the usurer and went out into the garden as if obeying Maltby's loud intimation:

"The concert bell, ladies and gentlemen—in the Rotunda! The first talent—selections from the best classical music, and original nigger melodists! This way!"

"Warm and comfortable," muttered Moss, stirring and sipping his drink. "Tiger" ought to be here before this!"

He looked keenly at the different groups and even listened intently to the strange medley of voices:

"Three shots with gentle Jimmy Gray!—And I'll go and fetch Johnny home, wherever he may be! Chorus: I'll go and fetch—Tea for four—shrimps and a muffin——"

And Maltby's gruff voice: "Coming! Pot of half-and-half for you, sir. Two sherry negus, two shillings."

"Now, James, three teas and a muffin in 5. Jackson, money in 6. Uncommon! If I might recommend a cobbler for the lady, sir, delicious refreshment for July. Now, James, look after them brandies in 3."

Moss shook his head in disappointment, took up the spoon and balanced it, apparently playfully on one finger, while he really weighed it to determine the value. Then he chuckled.

"Oh, no! it won't do! Uncommon neat article, though—might take in a good many people—plated, though, plated!"



As he held the spoon still, a voice in his very ear, whispered:

"Not worth flinching, eh?"

Moss started, and let the article fall.

A man of twen y-three or five, in a commercial traveler's suit, of drab hat and coat, and check vest and pants, had coolly taken the opposite chair at his table.

"Oh!" said Moss, putting on a really surprised look. "Did you speak to me, sir?"

The other lifted his hat and gave Melter a peculiar glance.

"What? don't twig me?" said he, in a voice different from that he had previously used. "Come, Melter, clear your eyes!"

"Why, Tiger!"

"Stow that!" said Jem Dalton, lighting a cigar. "There's no tiger at Cremorne. My name's Downy—queer you don't remember! ha, ha! John Downy, from Rotherham way, a—jobber and general dealer!"

At this point, Maltby who was soon going to call on the usurer for an advance on his quarter's "salary" (the demands of his ballet-girl being huge this week), edged up to the table.

"Now, sir," said he, "what can I have the pleasure of ordering you, sir?"

"My good friend, Mr. Moss here, insists on standing a bottle of sherry," said Dalton.

"No, no!" said Moss, in alarm.

"What, you will make it champagne? very well, I'm not proud," laughed Jem, none of your home-brewed," added he to Maltby. "I buy my rhubarb-juice at the grocer's."

"Come, Ti—" began Moss.

Dalton glanced towards the departing manager, and the miser took the hint.

"A joke's a joke," chimed he in a lower tone, "but a bottle of real champagne, its ten and six—"

"Serious, eh?" said Jem coolly, leaning back in the chair. "Well, I've taken a serious turn lately, I always do when it's low tide here."

And he laid his hands on his pockets significantly.

"Down on your luck, eh?"

Dalton shrugged his shoulders in a style to make a Frenchman give up that gesture.

"The crushers are getting to know too much. I believe the best of our trade join the blues. Then there's the Nailer been after me."

"What," said the usurer, his glass jingling against the spoon in it. "Hawkshaw—the 'cutest detective in the force?"

"Yes," returned Jem shortly.

"Oh, I remember, I heard something about his taking the oath on the Bow Street office testament to be even with you for something," said Moss.

"Yes, for that Peckham job!"

"Oh! Why, that was last year."

"Yes. He's been badgering a young Jew that let us into it till he got my description pretty close."

"I was pretty sure it was you," said Melter, "especially when it was the Bulldog that they got."

"They got him dead, though. I ought to have given the 'cop' the same dose—however, I spoiled Hawkshaw's mate. He dropped off a month ago and was on the pension list ever since then."

"I know," said the other, shaking his head. "I always said that that 'neddy' of course would be doing somebody a mischief. You ought to stick to and stick with a knife. They'll say it was Eye-talians, then!"

"Sh! here's the tippie!"

Maltby put the glasses on the table with a flourish, and opened the bottle.

"Though I say it, there ain't a better bottle opened at Buckingham Palace. Ten and six, Mr. Moss!"

The miser unclasped his greasy portemonnaie with as much care as if its jaws were the mouth of a fairy tale princess which let out pearls.

"There's a color! there's a bouquet!" exclaimed the manager in rapture as he filled the glasses.

"There ought to be at the price," grumbled Moss, as he paid.

Dalton tossed off the glass, shut one eye, pressed his lips together and uttered his opinion.

"Tidy swizzle!"

Moss made a face over his as the price kept present to his mind.

"So you're keeping dark, Jem?" inquired he after a pause.

"Yes, pottering about on the sneak, flinching or smashing a little when I get the sight. But the Nailer's too hard for me. There's no picking up a gentlemanly livelihood."

He sat down his glass and pushed it from him in disgust.

"Hang me!" exclaimed he, "if I haven't often thought of turning respectable."

Moss started in holy horror.

"No, no! it ain't so bad as that yet."

He looked cautiously about him in all directions.

"Jem," said he in a still lower tone than the dialogue had previously been conducted in, "I have the beautifullest lot of Bank of England flimsies that ever came out of Birmingham. It's the safest paper to work, and you should have it cheap, dirt cheap, and credit till you'd planted it."

"And how about lagging? If I'm nailed it's a lifer," observed Dalton.

"Bless you, I wouldn't have you chance it; but in the high society you keep, you could surely pick up a flat to put off the paper."

"I've the very man. I gave him an appointment here, for this evening."

"Did you, though? How pat things came about! Who is he?"

"A Lancashire lad; an only son, he tells me. The old folks spoiled him as long as they lived, left him a few hundreds, and now he's got the collar over his head, and is kicking 'em down, seeing life," said Jem, with a laugh; "life in London ain't to be seen, without paying at the doors, eh, Melter?"

"Ha, ha, ha! and you're selling him the bill of the play?"

"I'm putting him up to a thing or two—cards, skittles, billiards, sporting-houses, sparring houses, night houses, casinos—every short cut to the devil and the bottom of a flat's purse. He's as green as a leek and as soft as new cheese, no vice, steady to ride or drive, and runs in a snaffle," said the other, rising to stretch his legs.

"Oh, beautiful, beautiful?" cried the usurer, rubbing his bony hands. "It would be a sin to drop such a beautiful milch cow! Suppose we pumped him in partnership?"

"Thank you. I know your partnership articles, me all the kicks, and you all the halfpence. But if I can work him to plant a lot of these flimsies of yours, I don't mind; remember, though I won't go higher than fifteen bob for a fiver."

Melter seemed indignant.

"What, only fifteen bob! and such beauties, too, they'd take in the Bank chairman—fifteen! I'd better chance it myself. Only fifteen—it's robbery!" cried he.

"Take it or leave it."

And Jem took up the newspaper from the next table and appeared to be coolly studying the theatrical column.

"Come, you'll allow me a pound?" insinuated Moss.

"Bid me down again," said Dalton, "and I stand on ten shillings! Now you know. It's like it or lump it!"

Moss's countenance was truly troubled.

"What it is to deal with people that have no conscience!" groaned he in the manner of a street-preacher inquiring: "How's your soul?"

But Dalton's features were unbending to his pathos as the Sphinx's to Napoleon's harangue.

"Well," said the usurer at length. "I'll do it at even ten?"

"Fork over!"

"I've fifty you can begin with—twenty, a tanner and four fives. Plant the big 'un first!" said he, passing a roll of notes over to Jem under the newspaper that the latter laid down.

"I know my 'biz.' Suppose you cut. I see my man looking for me!"

Melter let the last few drops in the bottle trickle into his glass and swallowed the stale thinkable murmuring in melancholy:

"Ten and six!"

But his face brightened as he went away, croaking like a contented magpie.

"That's an honestly earned seven pound ten!"

As he glanced back, he saw that his place had been taken by another man, and he chuckled to himself:

"The young lad from the country! he'll find Jem's company very improving!"

### CHAPTER III.

TIGER SOWS THE SEED. HAWKSHAW WATCHES THE PLANT. THE FLOWER OF GENEROSITY. THE CAPTURE.

THE young man who had shaken Dalton's hand and taken the seat mechanically, was one of a plain but good look.

To be sure his features were not very attractive at this moment, for his cheeks wore the fever's flush and his eyes were bloodshot with late hours. His exaggerated sporting dress of velvet coat and black banded white hat, put on his loose hair any way, coincided with his air to tell the pace at which he was going.

Jem had eyed him as calmly as if he couldn't see through "his pigeon."

"Ah, Bob!" said he, throwing the newspaper down. "You're up to time as usual!"

"Aye," responded the other with Lancashire accent, "nabody shall say Bob Brierly craned whoile he could keep 't goaing! Here! a bottle of champagne, lad, an' half a dozen cabanas. And look shearp! Stay, yo'—a clean glass for my friend!"

The "champagne order" was swiftly obeyed, immense contrast to a request for "stout" or "glass pal' ale."

"I've had my whack already," observed Jem, as Bob was about to fill two glasses with his unsteady hand.

"Nay, lad, yo' can find room for another glass—it puts heart in a teyke, loike."

He drank his goblet off eagerly.

One could see, by his shaking hand and the looks that he nervously cast around, that liquor had been his chief sustenance for perhaps half the last month.

"Take care, Bob, or we shall have you in the doctor's hands," said Jem, not unkindly.

"Doctor? Nay; I am as game as a pebble and as steele as a tree! Curse the glass! Here—drink, man, drink. I can't abear drinking single handed. I

like company—always did. And now, I don't know how it is—No, no, its nothing! Here, have a weed," said Bob, pushing the cigars to Jem.

"I'll take a light from you. Come, come, Master Bob, you're getting shaky—this won't do," said Dalton, as Brierly nearly let fall the cigar end.

"It's that waking—waking. If I could only sleep. Oh, man—can't you help a chap to a good night's rest? I used to sleep like a top down at Glossop. But in this great big place, since I've been enjoying myself, seeing life—I don't know," said Bob, passing his hand across his eyes. "I don't know, how it is—I get no rest—and when I do, it's worse than none—there's great black crawling things about me. I say, Downy; do you know how a chap feels when he's going mad?"

"I know the symptoms of *delirium tremens* pretty well—sit down, sit down. First and foremost I prescribe a devilled biscuit—I'll doctor one for you," and he raised his voice. "Waiter, a plate of biscuits, toasted hot—butter and cayenne."

The Lancashire buried his face in his hands, trembling like a leaf.

Jem, hardened to all such things, regarded him somewhat scornfully, and muttered:

"The horrors! ah, he's seen too much of life lately—Bob, are you in cash?" added he aloud.

"Welly cleaned out—I've written to the lawyer chap, down at Glossop—him that's got all my property to manage, yo' know—for more brass."

"You must bank with me till the brass comes. Delighted to lend you a sovereign—five—ten—as much as you want," said Jem, with affected cordiality.

"Nay, will yo' though? That's friendly of you. Here's luck—and sink the expense!" cried Bob, as the waiter placed the tray of crackers, and pepper-box on the table.

As Jem was preparing the fiery "devil," the man in the tweed suit who had seemed to be the superior over the detectives, strolled by. With the utmost freedom, he took up the "Telegraph," that Dalton laid down to give his friend the peppered cracker.

"Try that," said Jem.

The tweed gent coolly sat down on a chair by the table and, in an unconcerned voice, said:

"Beg pardon, sir, but the daily's not in hand——"

"Eh!" exclaimed Jem.

The stranger scanned the paper carelessly and only remarked that he thought the papers were very dull lately.

Brierly was a little surprised to hear Jem, in a broad country dialect, say that he "never troubled that sort of thing mooch, 'cept for the Smiffle Market List, in the way of business."

"Ah," said the other upon that, "very much my own case. Still, they put a fellow up to the dodges of the town. For instance, these cases of bad notes offered at the Bank lately!"

Dalton looked over at the speaker, but he was apparently examining the item he had referred to.

"Never took a bad note in my life," said Jem.

"You've been lucky," said the stranger. "And in the butcher and drover line, too, I think you said? In the jobbing way or in the breeding?"

Jem smiled to himself. The idea of anybody trapping him.

"Sometimes one and sometimes t'other," rejoined he, flicking the ashes off his cigar. "Always ready to turn the nimble shilling."

"My own rule."

"May I ask your business?" said Jem, thinking it well to try a reach on the other tack.

"Oh, fancy iron trade. My principle is, to get as much of my stock on other people's hands as I can. From the country, I think?"

"Yes, Yorkshire."

"Ah! I'm Durham myself; and this young gent?" inquired the stranger, turning to Bob, who was ready to choke with the cayenne.

"What's that to you?" said Brierly. "It's no use—I can't swallow a morsel," continued he, pushing the plate away.

"From Lancashire, I see; why we are neighbours when we are at home—and neighbors ought to be neighborly in this overgrown city, so I hope you'll allow me to stand treat—give it a name, gentlemen," said the man in tweed, heartily.

Dalton roughened his voice into: "Thank you, I never drink with strangers."

To which Bob added: "They've a saying down in Glossop, where I come from, 'If you want a welcome, wait to be axed.'"

The tweeded customer took the repulse quite genially, and merely remarked:

"Ah, quite right to be cautious about the company you keep, young man. Perhaps I could give you a bit of good advice——"

"Thank ye! I'm not in the way o' takin' good advice," returned Bob.

"Well, don't take bad; and you won't easy find a worse adviser than your thieving companion here."

"Eh? what do you mean by that?" cried Jem, firing up.

"Not you, sir."

The man in tweed tapped the champagne bottle significantly.

"This gentleman here. He robs people of their brains—their digestions—and their conscience—to say nothing of their money. But since you wont allow me to stand anything——"

"And wish to keep ourselves to ourselves," said Dalton.

"And think your room a deal better than your company—meanin' no offence you know," subjoined the Lancashiran.

"Not in the least," said the inquisitive fellow. "If gentlemen can't please themselves in a public establishment! I'll wish you a very good evening," said he, strolling off. But he added to himself, "A plant, I'll keep an eye on 'em!"

"I don't half like the look of that fellow," muttered Dalton, after a pause. "There's something 'bout his eye. I must make out if Moss knows him—Bob, will you excuse me for five minutes?" said he.

"Don't be long—I can't abear my own company," said Bob, mournfully.

"I've only a word to say to a customer," returned Dalton, rapidly diving into the crowd.

But the man in tweed, who had hastily changed his false whiskers and his "Siamese (double-sized)" coat, was on his tracks as he searched for the usurer.

In the meantime, Bob tried to interest himself in the paper. But the letters danced before his eyes, and the column rows faded into an outlined landscape like the peaceful country home of his previous life.

The forced voices of frenetic gaiety, the loud music, the coarse laughter, melted into a mere background to the voices of his fancy.

He buried his weeping eyes in his hands and sobbed.

The light wind that came from the gardens, ruffled his hair gently as his dead father's hand patting "his bonny boy's head!"

And May Edward's plaintive voice as she threaded the untouched crowds, came to his ears like his mother's singing in the chimney-corner over her infant son.

Painful as was the memory, yet he started with anger as the dreams were dispelled by Maltby's loud voice:

"Now then, James! Jackson take orders! Interval of ten minutes allowed for refreshment! Give your orders, gents, give your orders! The nigger melodists will shortly commence their unrivalled entertainment, preliminary to the orchestral selection from *Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony!*"

In this feverish, tetchy mood, he heard poor May's appeal as if it grated on his ear, and roughly responded:

"Be off with thee, lass. I'm in no mood for music."

The girl turned away with a tear.

The crown that she owed to Emily Traddles' thoughtless freak was all the show towards a long arrear of rent.

"Not a penny," murmured she turning away, "and hard words from all."

"Stop, lass!" said Bob, hearing her weeping.

He thrust his hands into his pockets, but they encountered not a farthing.

"Pshaw!" said he, "not a red. Where's Downy?"

But Jem had not returned.

"Come here, lass!" said Bob, in a gentler voice. "Come, what'st crying at?"

May had turned faint. She caught at the back of the empty chair to save her from falling.

"Don't mind me, sir, please. I've not been well lately and didn't take much to-day!"

"Poor thing! here," said Bob, forcing her to be seated, "sit thee down, why thee looks welly clemmed. Try and eat a bit," added he, offering a cracker unadorned by the condiment to the girl.

"Thank you, sir, you're very kind. If I had a drink of water," said May, who could not swallow.

"Wather? Nay, a sup o' this will hearten thee up," said Bob, lifting the bottle. "Not a drop," said he, as he found it empty. "Here, that'll do," cried he, as a waiter was passing with a decanter on his tray.

Brierly took the decanter off, with the utmost nonchalance, and returned to his table.

"Beg pardon, sir, its for No. 1," cried the waiter.

"Pse No. 1," returned Bob.

"Hollo, sir! that's my sherry," called out a guest.

"No, it's mine," said Bob.

"I'll let you know," said the guest.

"No, I'll see the landlord," added he, as his demonstration of rolling up his sleeves drew a look of defiance from the Lancashiran.

And he left in a search for Maltby.

Meanwhile, Bob gave the filled glass to the singer, and bade her "soop thot!"

"It's wine."

"Sup it up."

"It makes me so warm," said May, drinking.

"It'll put some heart i' thee. Sup again, thou'lt tune thy pipes like a mavis on that. Now try and eat a bit."

"Oh, sir, you're too good."

"Good? me! nay——" began Brierly.

He was interrupted by the appearance of the swell and the manager, behind whom the former entrenched himself.

Maltby introduced the individual to Brierly as: "The gent who ordered that bottle of sherry!" and added to the other:

"Merely a lark, depend upon it. The gentleman will apologize?"

"Let him ordther another, I'll pay for it," said Bob carelessly.

Maltby could think of no other amende so complete and so profitable to himself.

"The gent can't say fairer."

And eager to fill the mould while the metal was hot, he called out: "Jackson! Bottle sherry! Seven and six, sir!"

"Here," said the Lancashiran, feeling his pockets. "Eh? Oh, score it down."

"Wearn't not in the habit, sir, of scoring to strangers," said Maltby, in a changed tone.

"Then you'd better begin," rejoined the other. "My name's Bob Brierly!"

"Bob Brierly," repeated May to herself, as her eyes were fastened on the manly face of the youth.

"Your name may be Bob Brierly, sir," said the manager in a vexed voice, "or Bob Anybody, sir, but when people take wine in this establishment, sir—especially other party's wine—they pay for it!"

"I tell yo'," said Bob, "that I'll pay as soon as my friend comes back!"

A smile appeared on the faces of the bystanders.

"Your friend," said Maltby, as if suspecting a new Mrs. Harris in male attire. "A regular case of birk!"

"A perfect do!" coincided Jackson, fanning himself with his napkin.

"Now yo' take care," said the Lancashiran, evidently contemplating an attack on Maltby and his assistants.

"It's too bad! Why can't you pay the man? Police! bobby!" cried the throng.

"Oh, please, sir!" said May. "Please, Mr. Maltby."

"Hullo! what's all this?"

It was Jem Dalton who at length thus reappeared.

Brierly caught hold of his sleeve at once.

"Here's Downy, he'll lend me a sovereign to pay this chap."

"To be sure. Sorry I haven't change, but we'll manage it directly."

He turned to Maltby.

"It's all right," said he. "I'll be bail for my friend."

The manager recalled the ten and six champagne.

"Oh, any friend of Mr. Moss," said he, cooling down. "Your word's quite enough, sir."

Dalton had taken his friend's arm and drew him away.

"Come, Bob," said he, "don't be a fool! I know you could roll them over like pins, but let's take a turn till you cool yourself."

But the good advice only cloaked the preliminaries to converting the twenty-pound "flash" into cash, or as Jem would have said: "Planting the big 'un!"

The manager hastened to disperse the throng.

"Sorry for this disturbance, gents, quite out of keeping with the character of our establishment. But the concert is about to re-commence; that way, gents, to the Rotunda." As the crowd dispersed, he turned fiercely on May: "This is all along of your cadging, Edwards, sitting down to drink with a promiscuous party."

"Oh, I'm so sorry—he never thought—it was all his kindness," said the girl.

"Kindness!" sneered Maltby, "much kindness he'd have showed you, if you'd been old and ugly. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself! it is cruel in you to insult a helpless and friendless girl like me," said May.

"Insult? ho, ho, ho, here's a lark! A half-starved street-singer chocking me in my own establishment! You had better apply for an engagement, you had on the first vacancy. Hollo! what's that? carriage company! Heavy swells on the lark, white ties and pink bonnets! I'll show the ladies and gentlemen to the Rotunda, Jackson."

And he hurried away to receive the gay girls of the hired lodgings and their companions.

The singer sat down at the table in despair.

Her bread depended on such as he, and it was foolish of her to be angry, however natural the feeling.

The pang was not there however.

It was to see so many girls of her age, well off, and flauntingly dressed,

light of heart and reckless of the to-morrow that saddened her. Still the fever had altogether weakened May's good little heart.

There was a stray corner in it being invaded now. She could not recal the recent scene without remembrance of the young man so good to her.

"He got into the trouble because of me," murmured she, about to venture into the crowd again. "But I mustn't think of him."

Unfortunately for that determination, it was the country youth that she almost ran against at her first step.

"Downy not here? He said I was to bring 't brass to our table," said Bob.

"'Tis he!" cried May joyously. "Oh, sir, I'm so sorry——"

"Why, it's 't singin' lass," said Bob, "I say, have you seen my friend?"

"No, sir."

"And where's 't landlord. Here's that'll make him civil enough." Bob showed a handful of gold.

"Oh, what a lot of money!" exclaimed May.

"Brass for a twenty pound note. I got it changed at 't cigar shop down 't road. He's a good 'un, is Downy—lends me whatever I want. Here yo' landlord. Hoy!" called he.

"Coming! Coming!" answered the manager. "Oh!" said he, recognising the other, "it's you."

"There," said Bob, flinging him a half-sovereign; "seven and six is for 't wine, and 't other half crown's for 't thrashing I owe you."

"Take care, cried the publican, pocketing the coin, but not the affront, "take care—I'll teach you to insult a respectable licensed victualler. "And you," went on he, addressing the nigger, "you tramp, I'll have you locked up for annoying my customers. How do I know my spoons are safe?"

"Thou cur!" cried Bob, breaking away from the nigger, and making a rush at the manager.

But the latter dextrously made a precipitate retreat, calling for the police.

May sprang between:

"Oh sir, I can't bear that you should trouble for me," said May, concealing her tears. "Indeed, sir."

"Nay, never heed that muck-worm! come, dry thine eyes; thou's too soft for this life o' thine," said Bob.

"It's the fever, I think, sir—I usedn't to mind unkind looks and words much once."

"Here, take this," said he, pressing a couple of pieces in her hand, "and stay thee quiet at home till thou'st 't fettle again."

"Two sovereigns! oh, sir!" cried May.

"Nay, thou'lt make better use o' 't brass than me—What, cryin' again! come, come, never heed that old brute, hard words brak no bones yo' know."

"It's not *his* hard words I'm crying for now, sir."

"What then?"

"Your kind ones—they're harder to bear—they sound so strange to me."

"Poor thing! heaven help thee—thou mindest me of a sister I lost, she'd eyes like thine, and hair, and much 't same voice, nobbut she favert redder 'i 't face, and spoke broader. I'd be glad whiles to have a nice gradely lass like you to talk to," said the young man earnestly.

"But where I live, sir, it's a very poor place, and I'm by myself, and——" she looked up at him timidly.

"No, no—you're right—I couldn't come there, but I'm loth to lose sight of yo' too," said Bob.

How long his hand might have remained enfolding hers, we won't take it up in us to say.

But Dalton stepped through the promenaders, saw with joy that his tool had escaped detection, and called to him:

"Brierly!"

"Here'st change—I've borrowed five o' the twenty," said Bob to him.

"All right, now let's be off—I've a cab outside," hastily said James.

"Mind, if you want a friend, write to Bob Brierly, at Lancashire Arms, Air street, yo'll not forget," said Brierly to May.

"Never, I'll set it down, in my heart!"

"Come!" cried Jem.

"And yo, tell me yo'r name—will yo?"

"May Edwards," answered the singer.

"Have done your crying and cooing!" cried Ben.

But as he was about to take his impatient companion's arm he felt it withdrawn.

Three men, the one in tweed most prominent, barred the way.

"You're wanted," said the first, putting out his hand

"Jem knocked it up.

"The crushers! Run Bob!" cried he.

But two had already detained him, and in the scuffle his hat brought away his wig with its fall.

"I knew you," cried the man in tweed. "James Dalton."

"Ah!" said Jem, getting his man down, "Hawkshaw!"

"Remember the Peekham job!" cried the detective.

"No, you don't, Nailer!"

"Hit out, Bob!" said Jem, wrestling with Hawkshaw and the other.

Bob struck the third man back on a table.

"I have," replied he, "some of them garottin' chaps, eh?"

But the word passed by the detectives and May's and the other females' screams as the fight progressed, brought such an accession to the number of the encircling crowd, that escape was impossible.

Jem fought like a fiend and got one pistol shot off before they could manage him.

May wept like a babe, as she saw Bob Brierly led off, breathless, and eyeing the handcuffs as if they were of the steel which had carved "Leave hope behind" on the portals of hell.

#### CHAPTER IV.

AT THE GATE-ROOM. AN UNEXPECTED COMFORTER. THE PROMISE. THE RAIL-ROAD COLLISION.

THE van had just arrived from the town and deposited its living freight of prisoners at the gate of the Portland Prison.

As they were told off to the wards assigned them in advance, one was left with his name unmentioned.

It was Robert Brierly.

He had come all the way from Newgate, as one in a dream. Or as if stunned by a mighty blow.

It had been a powerful stroke too.

He whose pride has been in his honesty, placed by the side of the proven thief, late his friend, and aushed when he would have replied indignantly to the sentence.

The officer folded up his list of names.

"Correct," said he to the constable with the driver, and marked the carrier's book.

"Now," said he to Robert, "you are to have ten minutes in the gate-room. Your sister has permission from the governor."

"My sister!" murmured Brierly, as a phantom of his dead playmate was all that word conjured up.

"Come along, my man. You're losing time, now. Think yourself lucky that you're to see her without supervision."

The convict let himself be pushed forward and into the chamber.

The officer turned around and went out.

"Not very loving," muttered he as he did so.

For the young female who was within hung her head and kept her eyes on the ground, more as if she was a felon than a visitor.

The Lancashiran heaved a deep breath in amaze.

"The singing-girl!" cried he.

She found words, then.

"Oh, sir!" said May in a voice full of feeling. "I—I was so sure that you would pardon me. Your money let me get a little ahead. I only saw the paper about *that*—two days ago. I got a friend to write me a letter so that I seemed to be your—your sister to the governor."

"I fancied—that is, I believed that you would like even me to see you before—before—before—oh!"

From faltering to broken syllables, from undistinguishable words sobs.

There was nothing in the shape of furniture in the room, and somehow or other Bob held her in his arms.

"You told me that day that you were alone in the world like," said May, not freeing herself from the respectful but earnest embrace. "I was so like you—I fancied how it was here."

"Don't, lass," said Brierly, "When a woman does not speak more easy than you do, she does feel what she says. I thank you from my heart—it ain't bad, spite of all they've done. I began to hate the world!"

"Oh, lass, the money I lent and spent on men and women—not women, compared to you. Not one of them came to see me in London in the big jail—so unkind of them. Never mind they ain't worth a thought. You deserve all my mind!"

"I was going to say," timidly said May, "that if you would write to me—the—the governor said it was permitted if the pris—the people he had here were not—were good—I mean—"

"I understand, lass," said Brierly.

"It would make me feel so happy if I had something like a letter every week to look forward—only a word about—about anything. Of course, I would find most to say—"

"Out in the bright world."

"Not I. I must keep to my little room and work. No, 'outings' for me unless I can pick up a sewing machine at the corner," said May, with the shadow of a smile.

At the same moment both had lifted their eyes and let their glances rest on one another.

Their spirits corresponded then, although cool reason did not comprehend the powerful mystery.

"They're at the door," cried May at last. "You will write?"

It was as if she said: "Do this, and you will win one."

"Five years," muttered Robert. "Ah!"

The door opened.

"You're a brave, best of lasses," said he pressing her hand, "May, I will."

May turned away smiling on him.

He went cheerfully to meet the officer.

She passed towards the door, but turned round and presented her cheek to the convict.



He pressed his lips to it lightly, tenderly, and suffered himself to be led away.

May begged the officer to repeat her thanks to the governor, and was soon beyond the cold enclosure.

"That's the first lie ever I told, I think," communed she with herself as she proceeded to the railroad depot. "No, it is not one. I will be as a sister to him. Who knows what a little scribble may help him through."

Come what might, she had done an act that was no less than her duty. It was not altogether love that had impelled her. It was love, now, though, that she bore away with her.

"It is an excursion I've been having anyhow," murmured she. "There goes a fine lady into the first-class carriages. I'm sure she is not as cheerful as I. Who knows? he may be pardoned—something may turn up. My hopeful, hoping. All's for the best——"

She sat in the plain, not too clean, box of the third class cars, with the usual companions, a soldier, a servant-girl returning to London, and a changing delegation of two men or so who only went from town to town.

No pleasant chat, and nothing to read or see, so boxed up.

O, Land of Snails each in his own shell, where the poor only see the rich by peeping over policemen's heads, no wonder charity is money's condescension, without the love that the highest authority said should go with it.

May, like the others, shut herself up in her own thoughts.

True, she had much to consider, while she mechanically employed her eyes in looking on the landscape, at the trees, cows, people, houses, birds.

Ah, if the engine-driver had but had the eyes of the birds that he frightened the little hearts out of, with a jerk of the whistle rope, the coming event might have been averted.

A mineral train (*i. e.* loaded with coal, coke, lime) had been switched on to the same track by one of the laborers who had turned the signal board, in the absence of the flagman.

This train had lumbered along full three-quarters of a mile, and the engineer had then concluded that all was right and bade his fireman pile on the coal.

The first thing he saw on peeping out ahead was the approaching train.

He whistled "down brakes."

But it was too late.

The other train was a quarter-mile nearer before the wheels were turned and the friction-pads began to work.

No use reversing engines at that speed as the impetus of the ninety cars behind fairly shoved the locomotive along.

The engineer of the passenger cars, saw the nature of the on-comer.

He considered it was duty to go ahead, as the only chance of saving the many lives behind, the tender was to smash instead of being smashed.

Hammer or anvil.

Suffice it that the coal-train locomotive jumped the rail just in time to avoid the contact.

The engine-man and his black-faced familiar, executed a summerset off the sides, picked themselves up and took to their heels for fear that the boiler would not be content with the escape-pipes left open, but rip a passage open at some weak rivet.

Meanwhile the other locomotive had careered into the opposer.

The force of the collision forced about forty of the coal cars upon each other, thirty of them being smashed into innumerable fragments, the coals and coke being strewed all over the line. The engine caught two of the cars across the line, and dashed them to pieces. It then became entangled amongst the wheels of one of the cars, was thrown off the rails, and after rushing onward for about ten or fifteen yards it turned completely off the road, ran down an embankment,

went into a hedge, and was overturned. The driver and the fireman held on to the railing of the engine after it left the rails, and remained at their posts until flung off the foot plate by the overturning of the engine. The driver received a cut on the side of the head, but not of a dangerous character; whilst the stoker received nothing beyond a shock, consequent upon the violent bout.

The brakemen leaped off. The baggage-masters sprang out of their cars.

The passengers alone had to shift for themselves.

The picture that they beheld, when so abruptly hurled into the mounds of coal and clouds of lime, was as if a hurricane had passed over all.

On one side was an engine turned as nearly wrong side up as it could get; behind it was the tender, an utter wreck; at the rear of that were two cars, reared up almost straight against each other; then there were two more completely broken up; four or five others were pitched off the rails—some on their sides, others on their ends; the rails, for twenty or thirty yards, were literally torn up and bent in every form; bolts, bars, wheels, springs, and broken woodwork were strewn about; and the contents of the cars were thrown hither and thither.

Of the people hurt we will say little. Such horrors are not for these pages.

Fortunately the deaths and frightful wounds were few by that fierceness with which their locomotive had been plunged into the mineral train.

Everybody was shaken and had scratched faces and sprained fingers, perhaps, but none was the slain.

A few yards off surveying the scene, had congregated the employees of the train.

Adding to their group were a few rustics who had run up, and several of the passengers.

Among the latter was an American or two, staring on as engine-driver, stoker, guards of vans, platelayers, talked of the degree of blame attached to themselves and to the goods, waggons, the metals, the shunting.

Were not they engineer, fireman, baggage-master, brakeman, rail-layers and the subjects of their conversation the baggage, cars, rails, the switches?

Why couldn't they speak English, as he supposed they did.

As the congregation spoke of waiting till the messenger they sent could reach the next station and tell the officials, the American couldn't stand that.

Starting the lot out of their wits, first-class passenger as he was, they saw him rush into the debris and drag out the first person he could lay hands on—third class passenger, too!

"He's a Yankee!" said one "guard" to another. That explained all.

The American finding the car door locked, up foot and sent his boot through the panel, with a "Stand from under!"

And, while the guards opened their eyes at this summary dealing with the Great East-Western Company's property.

The American had already assisted the soldier and the servant girl out of the broken gap, and then came May Edwards' turn.

"Well," cried the deliverer, "For God's sake, look alive there! You've got the keys, some of you, fasteners of these coffins, open the doors—why in heaven don't you?"

Thanks to his energy and such of the passengers as caught the fever, the rubbish was cleared away from the persons.

The worst injured perhaps of all was a lady in the first compartment of the head car. She was severely lamed.

When they had extricated her and she came to consciousness, she cried out for "Amelia!"

"Another woman there? your daughter, ma'm?"

"It's a little child—in my care! oh! my sisters!" gasped the lady, her panic increased by the mental thorn in the side.



At this moment, the wail of a terrified infant, not in pain, arose.

"Stop!" said the engineer, as a young fellow was about to rush forward.

"The engine's a-going! Come on back, every one—carry the woman back!"

Indeed, the locomotive after losing its steam steady, had caught breath, as it were, several times, and now screamed in an ominous fashion.

The baby began crying in the most affecting manner.

"Won't none of you men save the little innocent?" said the lady, trying to rise.

The fireman of the threatening locomotive shook his head.

"After the explosion, anybody can," said he.

"After? my God!"

"Well, ma'm, I'll go."

No one else offered.

Some had their families beside them, the soldier had carried a woman and a child in his arms to the nearest cottage.

The American had caught a horse in the field, made a bridle of his pocket-handkerchief and necktie and galloped on to the station. On the way he passed the fellow who had started on foot for the depot fifteen minutes before.

He might have caught the horse and had the same benefit. But no one had thought of it. It would not have been English if they had.

The smutty-faced stoker threw down his begrimed jacket.

"Bill," said he, "ya' 'It bay gorn orp orn to Yorksheer section," said he to a mate. "Ya' earn tell mar old ooman arl about thees."

"No," said May, as she rose from tearing her shawl into bandages for a broken arm of the girl beside her.

"No! You've got a wife, eh? You shan't go. I'm 'lone!"

To prevent any delay she had already ran to the car.

The hissing of the boiler, super-heated by the fire which had been heaped with fuel from the mass of coal which it had crashed into, did not daunt her.

The spectators, standing at a distance, saw her thrust her head and shoulders into the shattered window.

For a second she groped among the splinters.

Then they beheld her face, flushed with blood from the stooping, and with satisfaction reappear.

With a rapid step she returned, the little infant in her arms.

She had hastily given it to the lady and assured her that it was unharmed, then the crowd gave a shout.

There was a general scattering.

A loud report preceded the heavy rain of the exploded fragments.

A minute later and May's story would have ended there.

The lady who had the care of the child, and who kept it personally now as the maid was so injured that she was left behind, forced May to accompany her into the train for London.

"Beg pardon, Miss," said a burly official, putting his head into the apartment, and about to lay his hand on May, "But this is first class. Your ticket third."

"But," said May, imploringly: "I was in that accident. I lost my purse, my dress was torn by the foreign gentleman who pulled me out. I must go to London. I haven't the money even to stay here over night, and I hear there's no third class till the Parliamentary in the morning."

The official had listened to her long petition with a stolid look.

"There goes the bell. Trouble you to step out!"

May rose, with a sigh.

"Stay, my young friend," said the lady. "You shall go to London. Keep your seat, I say."

The official looked puzzled. He didn't like to flare up against the "real lady."

"Oh, if you'll make up the difference in fare——"

May rose again.

"Thank you, madam, but I cannot let you even——"

"Proper pride," said the lady, smiling. "But there's no necessity of that. Porter——"

"Guard, ma'm!"

"Guard, you will refer anybody who questions your permission of this to that gentleman!"

And she handed him a card.

The whistle blew, the bell rang, the guards locked the doors, there was a thunder under the roof, and the express train flew off away to London.

The guard was left on the platform. He pushed his metal-tipped visor up from his eyes and read the card:

"JOHN T. GIBSON,  
"25 St. Nicholas Lane, City."

"My eye! blow me if I nearly didn't do it!" exclaimed the porter. "Why, Gibs, one of the top directors of the railway!"

## CHAPTER V.

A GLANCE AT BRIERLY. THE TIGER IN THE CAGE. PENTONVILLE. THE CELEBRATED ESCAPE FROM MILLBANK.

THREE years passed over the world, of which so infinitesimal a spot is England, and of it, May Edward's humble home, and Bob Brierly's small cell in the Portland Prison.

May's letters, telling him of the world so sweetly, had saved him body and soul.

The first had been brief, timid; she knew not what to say. Balanced between fear of exciting him by glimpses of the world he was debarred from and dread of penning that which the supervisor at the jail would erase as improper for a convict to enjoy, she was greatly at a loss.

Gradually, the two began to pour out thoughts.

Each had but the other to confide in.

That love is fiercer than death and deeper than the grave, we have high authority for believing; and every good man's and woman's heart bears living testimony within its own recesses, that the authority is to be relied on. So it was in the beginning, has been ever, and will continue to the end. Love has done more than hate, and affection achieved what malice never could have prompted.

Amongst the rest of Love's achievements, was this of May's.

She learned to leave off the English woman's broad and large handwriting, and take to the small and delicate, more beseeching her sex, and valuable in this instance for giving more on the page.

She learned how to say only this and that, and how exactly to express it best.

Bob tried to tell her, but she could not imagine in its entirety, how he worked monstrously not to lose his "gas" or leisure hours by any punishment, that he might sit on his stool within the four walls, and dwell over her lines till the light was put out as he still sobbed with pleasure.

She was so hopeful, too.

Dear heart!

She set him to conceiving a strange thought.

His happy early life and his blessed existence she promised, were separated by a little present, a black bridge of "seven years penal servitude."

Then, observing his astounding cheerfulness, his steadiness at work, many were the favors accorded him. He had over time allowed him to earn money in, was let off to do light offices, at last to help keep the books as, to equal May's improvement, he bettered his scrawl.

At first, the fellow convicts had viewed his actions with distaste and had persecuted him.

But when they came to find that he was not currying favor, that he never told of a single act of a prisoner coming to his knowledge, they let him alone.

If he did not care to break the rules, too tight for their different nature's, that was his own lookout.

He looked forward, as a soul may in purgatory, calmly. The decreed would come. Let him do his duty, wrongly condemned as he was. He could obey Heaven's law while yielding to the earthly failure as to Omniscience.

Alas, although he might be no longer watched by the stern turnkey and warder, no longer under the threat of the soldier's musket, no longer garbed in the livery of a felon and a slave, but free to contemplate the beautiful panorama of Nature, free to breathe the pure air of, and to revel in the glad light of heaven—free in his own rough way to exchange kind words and sympathies with fellow-man and woman. Still would he be, though so unjustly, a stigmatized pariah of society, a punished felon, a *Ticket-of-Leave*, but might wear off the stamp of his infamy. The support of his clear conscience, his manly fortitude, his indomitable will, his inspiring trust in her he loved so tenderly, and, remembrance of the great and good Being turned his soul to such an exalted tone of peace and quietness, for he would wait and hope, and work.

His one great agony was for woman.

Never seen within the prison, that was so terrible to the men who led such a "life on the tear" out of jail doors.

Often had the chaplains flattered themselves that. "No. Nine A" or "Six, Upper Gallery, East Corridor," was softening at length, his Bible being so frequently handled now.

Poor clergymen, who had been brought up so well, they to convert men that had seen life!

The thumbed pages were betrayingly at the "Susannah," the "Solomon's Bride's Song," and other leaves we shall not name, though the convicts brooded over them.

Oh beam in the eye!

Readers of Ovid merely for the poetical rhythm of Horace, of Dido in the Cave, confiscate papers, magazines, books, that are not at all 'classical,' but 'worldly.'

Robert found nature hard to struggle with. He kept himself from sinking into that sullen state—a horrid sleep, whose waking is when the slumberer kills his man—turnkey, warder, watcher, the nearest at hand.

Still, as time progressed, marked by the regular signal bells, stronger and more powerful rose up his longing; and more vividly the image of May's gentle face, with all its fair-locked glory, its love and its beauty, was before him; wilder was his desire, louder his heart's wailing cry; he stretched out his arms as if to enclasp some beloved form—to meet the cold mocking air alone. A prayer from his lips, pressed out by agony and pain and all the weariness of the long lost; it came forth mingled with tears fast and sad; and the morning sun rising up in the East to mark the fresh day of labor would find that he had not pressed his coarse sacking bed that night.

Jem Dalton's was a different spirit

Not the country lad, but the city boy.

Compact, trimmed of embarrassing weight in mind as he generally was in body.

He had been remanded when his companion had received his fate.

For Hawkshaw hoped to prove the Amanuel murder against him.

But the witnesses were all out of the way, and those that could have harmed Tiger, such as Meg and Long Tim knew their trade better.

After a long trial it was found that there was a flaw in the evidence, and he was acquitted of the charge of murder.

But for the crime of burglary and violent assault upon officers, he was found guilty.

The judge, who had made up his mind to pass sentence of death, was exceedingly disappointed at the failure of justice.

He told Jem so.

"You are one of those beings," he said, "whose existence is a danger and a terror to society. No law has restraint for you; your life is one career of violence and crime. I feel it my duty to sentence you to the highest term I can inflict, and that is penal servitude for life!"

Now the Tiger had been glorifying himself upon the fact of having got off the capital charge, the other he thought a mere bagatelle.

Twelve months was the most he expected. But penal servitude for life!

That was a dose he didn't expect to have. As soon as the judge had finished sentencing him, he gave utterance to a most savage oath, and seizing an inkstand, which unfortunately lay near, hurled it at the learned gentleman's head.

It did not hurt him, but passed so close as to make the judge believe he was knocked over. Of course there was a great commotion in the court; the Tiger was pulled down by half a dozen policemen and dragged away.

This act of the prisoner rather enraged the judge. He would have given him a little more punishment if he could have done so, but as there was no term longer than life, he could not imprison him beyond it.

But he called him back as they were taking him out of court.

"I gave my opinion of you just now," he said, "and you have verified it. There is no longer term than the one I have sentenced you to, but I shall take care that a statement of your conduct shall be sent to the prison authorities, who besides looking after you, will see that indulgence of a Ticket of Leave is not extended to you. The remainder of your life you may look forward to spending in a prison, and without the indulgences accorded to your fellow-prisoners. I will take care you do not have any to spare, and such things as puddings shall not be allowed you."

Do not smile, good reader, at the inclusion of such things in the fare of prisoners. They have many such luxuries, and the restrictions the judge made in Tiger's case, was one that Jem felt in the highest degree.

"I thank you," he said, "I will try and make it shorter if I can."

And he was led to his cell, from which he had promised to make his escape.

They put Tiger Jem in the prison at Pentonville, and stuck him in, what is called, the penal class, where he had the worst usage of the body, his character having been so well placarded by the judge in his commitment paper.

Jem bore the extra drill and work to which he was subjected, with the stoppage of those indulgences accorded to other persons—he bore all this with a sullen sort of determination, holding little conversation with those who came to him to see how he got on with his labours, and indeed never speaking except to indulge in some muttered curse.

As his character, in this respect, remained, day after day, the same, he became looked upon as one of those desperate men who required extra looking

after, for fear of their savage passions leading them to such little eccentricities as the choking or stabbing of warders.

Jem would not have stood nice about doing either if he had been given the chance, but the warders were pretty active and vigilant; they never allowed him any opportunity of wreaking his vengeance on them.

So after a while Jem thought he had been there long enough. He got up very early one morning and had previously loosened the bricks that supported the bars of his window, he got out and thought he would take a morning walk.

But some of the warders were up as early as he, and before he had gone far he met two of them, who, fearing that he might be ill if he went out without his breakfast, walked him back, after a great display on his part, which was only quieted by the application of some stout thwacks on the head with a heavy stick.

The next time was when Jem was let out for his regulation exercise, when he tried a little in the gymnastic way and got to the roof of the prison, but just as he was taking a leap he found himself pulled back by one of the never-failing warders.

He was looked after so well from this, that it was three months before he got another chance of getting so high up in the world, and then he made a jump from a much higher spot.

But as ill luck would have it, one of the spikes caught his jacket, and he hung head downward, when, being missed, he was sought for and found in that interesting position.

The repetition of a number of these attempts induced the authorities to think that the air of Pentonville was too bracing for him, so he was sent to Millbank Penitentiary, and made to work there like a horse.

Whenever he went out for his official exercise, he was well searched by a warder, to prevent any unhappy *contretemps*. Jem used to growl savagely at the way they pulled him about, but he made up his mind to a most desperate plan for escape, and was resolved to get out or be taken not alive.

One day when Jem was at work, one of the supervisors, a young hand, incautiously laid down a knife by his stool; it only rested there a moment. Jem, who was hard at work making mats, let some of the rough stuff fall and picked up the knife with it; it went instantly up his waistcoat, and then was wriggled round till it lay, flat and unobservable, against his back bone.

The young fellow, who had laid down the knife, having been hurriedly called away, came back looking about for the article; he could not exactly tell where he had left it, and as Jem was working away with the dogged apathy of the convicts when employed at any trade in the prison, and there was nothing in his manner to indicate that he had seen the weapon.

So after a vain look about, the young fellow walked away.

How that savage heart of Jem's exulted when he saw him go! He held a weapon at last, and if it did not help him to liberty, would at least allow him an opportunity of having his revenge.

But he worked away till it was time to leave off.

None would have known that the black passions of his breast were revelling in the contemplation of murder.

Ay, murder!

The Tiger had taken a particular dislike to one of the warders: the man had come with him from Pentonville; he was always near him, and had been the means of some extra punishment being imposed upon Jem.

Jem did hate this man, if ever one hated another.

And this warder had got a habit of coming to Jem's cell at untimely hours, to see what he was up to.

In going to and from his work or exercise, this warder—Marks was his name—was very officious in having Jem searched.

He had, what was popularly termed, his knife in Jem, and Jem wished for the chance of having his knife in him, only literally instead of figuratively.

Now the plan that had suggested itself to Jem's mind was this:

Mark's anxious regard for Jem's welfare, was so well known, that it was enough to say "Marks had searched him," or "Marks had been to his cell;" they knew they could trust then to his being safe.

So Jem thought that, if he could get to his cell with the knife, he could lie quietly in wait till Marks came, and then as soon as he was well inside, he could give him just one lunge with the knife, taking care to drive it well home.

Jem did not want to make a long job of it, nor had he any particular desire for the melodramatic revenge of standing over his victim, and revelling in his agony; he wanted to do the job swift and sure. It would be satisfaction enough to feel the knife going into the warder's breast, and to see his look of agony when he drew the reeking weapon out. He often thought and planned, while his fingers went on as usual with their work, neither faster nor slower, but just at a dogged, sullen, steady pace.

After he had disposed of the warder—so his thoughts ran—his chance of escape would present very favorable appearance, from the fact, before-mentioned, of their leaving him as looked after when Marks took the matter under his care. He could creep out of his cell, and still armed with the red and formidable weapon, fight his way out.

Jem was not anything of a romancer; he had enjoyed hard experience of prisons, and knew that getting out of them was even to the most desperate of men a very trying and hazardous operation.

But Jem had used his eyes and his wits, and had mastered one or two difficulties in getting out.

He brooded over his plans until he in imagination thought himself already wreaking his revenge.

In the midst of these agreeable reflections he felt the touch of a hand on his shoulder; he knew whose voice it was that spoke.

"No. 49—want you?"

The Tiger sullenly put down his work and rose.

Marks was standing by him.

He was tempted then to risk all upon the hazards, and plunge his knife into the other's body; but the steady eye of the warder was fixed upon him; he seemed to be reading his thoughts and preparing for his action.

"What d'ye want?" Jem asked, sullenly.

"Come with me."

Two other warders came up; the trio conducted Jem to his cell.

The Tiger knew what was the matter.

They were going to search him.

No chance then of his little scheme of vengeance having effect. The keen eyes of Marks would detect his secret.

It was very galling to be disappointed in the first flash of his plans, and the Tiger grew white with rage when Marks said—

"No 49, we want that knife."

Jem muttered a deep curse; thoughts passed through his brain like lightning. A deep frown clouded his mind, and he resolved at that instant to make the most of his chance, and even if he were hanged for it, satiate his spite.

Quick as lightning he had the knife out, and made a swift lunge at the warder's breast, a thrust that had been his enemy indeed, for it must have gone right through his body, had he not been as sharp as Jem.

At the first moment he stepped aside, and seized Jem's arm.

The next instant Dalton found himself disarmed and held by the two warders.

"I thought you had the tool," Marks said, as he held up the long, dangerous weapon, "when I heard Ansell say he'd lost it. I'm very glad, too, that

you've shown us what you wanted it for, because, now there will be no difficulty in putting a few stripes on your back."

The Tiger ground his teeth; he saw that he had fallen into a trap; he muttered many a deep curse, as they put the irons on him previous to locking him up.

It was not right of the warder, even supposing the man to be ever so bad, to bind him down in the way he did; he would have done the same to a better man had he taken a dislike to him, and this persecution, which is so often practised towards the prisoners, is the cause of many a warder being stabbed by the convicts.

The object of punishment should be to give the man a hope of amendment, and not be made a means of worrying him on to fresh crimes.

Sullen and savage as the Tiger was, no treatment would have subdued his murderous nature, but he might have remained quiet if Marks had not been ever about him.

Next morning came, and Jem was brought up. The charge of secreting a knife and attempting the life of the warder, was read over to him, and as a summary means of dealing with him, he was sentenced to receive thirty lashes at once.

And he did, Marks standing by while they were administered.

It is a horrible sight to see a man flogged; horrible to hear the strong, swinging hiss of the lash as it sweeps through the air and tears along the culprit's back, leaving its red track of blood and agony.

Jem stood it with the calmness characteristic of him. He never winced, but ground his teeth together, while the blood oozed from the gashes, and his back became one raw, lacerated mass.

When they took him down, they were startled a little at the expression of his features.

Only Marks regarded it with absolute indifference.

It was some time before Jem's back healed. There was little difference in his manner; only at times, when he caught the eye of Marks, a murderous look gleamed from his own.

He had sworn, come what might, he would have that man's life.

But he had learned one lesson, and that was, to wait.

He had learned a subtler cunning than he had before possessed.

If it were not possible to reach him otherwise, he would strangle him, and suffer death.

But if it were possible, he would get out of that prison, and make it his business to lie in wait for his man, weeks, months—it mattered not how long—so that he reached him at last.

Oh, yes! Jem had learnt the value of being able to wait.

Very secretly Jem went to work now. He wanted to make a certain escape out of Millbank Prison.

His nearest way was out of the window, that was about forty feet from the ground; so that if he got out, it would not do to jump it.

No, he must have a rope to descend by. That was the first difficulty, and Jem went to work to overcome it.

He never sat at his work that some portion of the fibrous material he used did not find its way up his sleeve, or inside his trousers—a few shreds at a time, never more.

He never went to the chapel on Sunday that he did not contrive to tear up a few shreds of the cocoa-nut fibre matting.

All these he carried away, and secreted in his cell.

Very cunning must Jem have been to secrete this where it could not be found; but Jem did.

And how?

Let us see.

Jem, one day, in a fit of spite, broke up his drinking mug. The handle he chewed in a dozen pieces.

Jem had strong teeth.

But he had put that handle to a use before it was taken away.

There was some bricks forming the wall at one end of the cell.

Jem worked with the handle of this mug till he had got away the outside mortar in large pieces, which he carefully put by.

Then he worked away till he cleared out all the mortar from the sides.

And lastly, he got the brick out.

How Jem chuckled when he managed that.

This was where he concealed the stuff he got to make his rope of. When it was lodged behind, he could fit the brick in, and lay the pieces of mortar in their place. It took a delicate touch to do this, but Jem was very careful.

Of course, when he had got the brick back, there was some powered mortar that would not go back. There was no way of getting rid of it through the window, because there was a skylight immediately underneath, and it might have been heard to fall.

So Jem gathered it up in his hands and swallowed it.

He even licked up what remained on the ground.

Day after day did Jem perform his toil of oakum and matting, and night after night he sat in his cell weaving a tough, strong rope.

It was slow work, but he accomplished it. He managed to conceal it all behind the brick, only that, as the rope became longer, and took up more room, he had to swallow more of the mortar.

Dalton would have gnawed away the whole brick to have got out.

Jem had got a good way on his venture when he had made the rope long enough to reach the roof below.

He didn't mind the punishment he got for breaking up the mug; it all went down to the one score.

The rope was finished, and he was ready for getting out. The concealment of the material had taught him a way of escape he had not before dwelt upon; and that was to make a hole in the wall large enough to get out by.

No easy task; but what will not perseverance effect?

The day came upon which he had resolved upon his escape.

There was no change in his conduct, nothing different in his looks or manner; and yet Marks, who was still on the alert, had an idea that Jem was up to something.

By the same instinct, Dalton had an idea that he would meet Marks before he had got much further in his attempt.

When they brought him his last meal, Jem amused himself by neatly taking off the wire rim of his tin mug and occupied himself in forming it into a sort of hook.

He twisted and bound it up very closely before he was satisfied, and then he let them take away his mug.

The absence of the rim was not observed.

Evening came, and Jem was locked in by Marks.

They caught the glance of each other's eyes just before the door was shut, and each had his former suspicions strengthened.

Two hours Jem allowed to pass, and then he went to work briskly. He first pulled the brick out of the wall, then he powdered up the mortar and sand that he pulled out, and, making a bag of his handkerchief put it therein.

He had judged well in all his measures. He sat himself down then beside the hole, and worked away, till he got another brick out.

When he had removed half-a-dozen of the first layer, he tried his hand on the second.

This was venturesome and slow work. There was no purchase for his fingers; and he had nothing else to work with, except the small hook of wire, and with this and his fingers he tore away at the mortar till he loosened it all round this, and got out the brick.

Then another and another.

One by one he arranged them along the floor of the cell.

It was frightful work, his nails were torn and split, and his fingers were bleeding to the quick.

Still he persevered.

And at last he came to the outer row; the first brick was got out and the moonlight, with the fresh air, came in.

Jem had worked himself into a cold sweat; thick drops were on his brow and cheeks.

And at this moment, when his energies were at a fearful strain, he heard a sound which he well knew.

There was a panel in the prison door with an iron grating through which the warders could look in upon their prisoners.

This was being opened.

It fortunately did not command a view of the corner in which he was working, which was at the side (he had taken care of this before he began), but the end he was supposed to sleep on was almost opposite, and of course it could be seen that it was unoccupied.

So Jem was not the least surprised when he heard the door heavily opened, nor did he fail to guess whom it was that came to honour him by so late a visit.

He rose to his feet and got behind the door as it opened, and Marks stepped into the cell.

He had scarcely entered before the Tiger raised his fist and struck him a terrible blow on the temple. Marks uttered a faint cry and grappled Dalton violently, but the powerful blow had taken effect, and he fell back stunned.

Jem bore him quickly to the floor of his cell and knelt upon him. That moment he had wished for had come.

His bitter persecutor was in his power.

How he wished he had a knife then; he felt in the warder's pocket for one, but he had not such an article about him, nor had he his official sword with him.

The Tiger tried first the piece of wire and then the sharp edge of a broken brick, but with all his power neither were sufficiently pointed to cut the warder's throat open.

So the Tiger took his throat in his deadly grasp, and squeezed it till the last convulsive struggle of the warder had ceased.

Then he savagely jumped on his face and breast.

If he had possessed the time he would have stayed to batter his brains out, but as delay was dangerous he contented himself with thus disposing of him, and returned to complete his escape.

Having one brick out of the wall it was not difficult to tear away others, and he soon had an opening wide enough to squeeze his body through.

He took up his rope and the hook and bag of sand and crawled out of the aperture. Having fastened the rope to the side, he let himself down on the roof of a building called the general ward, it being about twelve feet down. The roof of this building is partially of glass, the building itself being used as a Roman Catholic chapel. Having got into this ward through one of the skylights, the Tiger possessed himself of a piece of board about six feet long by nine inches wide, forming one of the tables, and also took all the sash lines of the windows.

The object of getting to this place was to possess himself of the lines from

the windows to lengthen his rope, as he did not think it advisable to attempt egress by means of the chapel.

It was therefore necessary to re-ascend to his cell, and to do this he secured the piece of board so as to form a kind of platform, its support being so frail that the least movement threatened to precipitate him below.

Whilst in this precarious position, and whilst trying to get up to the skylight, he fancied he heard a sound beneath him.

This sudden movement caused the board to swing, and for a moment, Jem being between life and eternity, it was a crisis of peril; he thrust out his hands and touched the wall with the tips of his fingers in time to save his frail platform from over-balancing and hurling him below.

Whatever sound it was that had so startled him, he did not hear it again, and he now made a most desperate effort to regain the roof.

He balanced himself on the board so that it stood evenly poised, and was just preparing for a spring, when he found the board sliding from under his feet.

To fall would be to be shattered to pieces on the stones of the chapel floor, to rest there, or to catch at anything, impossible; he could not have time to support himself again by the wall ere the plank gave way, or if he did there was nothing to hold on by, and the sliding of the plank would hurl him down.

He thought for a moment of the man whom his fingers had choked, and who lay up above in the cell, and then made one desperate and tremendous spring.

All this was in an instant, and as his foot left the plank it fell below; if then he missed his hold or failed to clutch it firm enough to hang on by it, it would be all over with him; every nerve in his system was strained; his fingers were apart, they grasped at the line of the skylight above, clenched on the wood and tightened there, the small panels of the broken glass cutting his hand.

For a few seconds he hung there powerless. He had reached the frame; but another spring was required to get through; and the glass was so cutting his hand that to hold on much longer would be impossible.

Jem grew cold all over; he let his grasp relax a little, then gathered himself up. All his body seemed thrown into a coil, and up he rose, his elbow resting on the frame; slipped, he felt himself falling; a second plunge, his arm lay bleeding among the jagged glass, but he gained a purchase there that he held, despite the agony, until he got his whole body through, and stood upon the roof.

He sat down overcome; he tore strips from his shirt, and wiped the sweat from his face and the blood from his hands.

Then he tried to get the bits of glass out of his fingers.

Having done this as far as possible, he bound up his wounded arm and prepared for the ascent.

The cord rope hung for him, he wound the rest about his body, and ascended.

Half way up a thought occurred to him that made him pause.

If anyone should have come to the cell, they had the advantage to seize him as soon as he made his appearance.

After doing so much he did not like the thoughts of being taken.

Certain death it was for what he had done to the warder.

He paused, climbed a little way, then listened, and finally recommenced his ascent.

Not a sound came from the cell.

He sprang up and peered in.

The warder still lay where he had left him.

He was quiet enough.

No one else was there.



Tiger re-entered the cell.

He went to the door and satisfied himself that no one was near.

Any one else might have thought that the best way of getting out; but Dalton knew he should not go far before he was stopped.

He was proceeding upon a plan which he had formed and mastered, after making the most of the observations allowed him in his exercise at work and in the chapel.

All being still, he gave the prostrate form of Marks a kick, and again crept out of the hole in his cell.

Up above along the roof of the prison ran a gutter for the conveyance of the rain.

The Tiger, throwing up his rope, having fastened the bag of sand and mortar to the hook, got it to catch on the edge of the pipe; he then fastened the rope of sash lines to it, and easily climbed up.

The gutter bent and shook with his weight, and the frail hook threatened to slip off; it was indeed an insecure hold, and his neck was not worth a moment's purchase as he hung to the rope.

A little more bending of the gutter, or the least shift of the hook, and he would have been precipitated to the roof of the chapel.

He got to the top at last in time to see that the hook had been drawn by his weight nearly straight, and caught by the merest purchase in the world.

He grasped the rim of the gutter, and by a leap gained the roof.

Looking down he saw the perils that had threatened him; it was, indeed, a wonder that he had not fallen to the bottom.

He was now on the roof of the principal building, and he walked across till he came to the edge that looked over the garden.

It was dizzy to look down. Jem had to act cautiously, and fixed the rope round one of the chimneys.

He then let the end fall, and found that it reached within a foot or two of the ground.

He slid down it safe, but the wounds in his hand were torn open again, and the agony made him groan.

Yet he had accomplished the most perilous part of the most desperate escape of modern days.

Jack Shepherd himself never made one so hazardous.

He now stood in the garden, shut in by the boundary wall, which is about twenty feet high, too high for the most astute climber; but Jem was prepared; he had let the hook end of the rope fall to the ground, and giving the rope a jerk, broke it about the required length.

The hook required only a little more bending; he threw it up with the sand bag still attached, and made a lodgment on the wall.

This accomplished, he stayed only to throw off his jacket, and hastily climbed up.

He had just reached the wall when the first sound that had broke the silence of the night came from the prison.

It was his cell!

The cry of escape!

They had discovered his flight. The desperate Jem, hurled the rope back into the garden; there was only a piece of open ground with some iron railings to keep him in.

He was across the ground, over the railings, and making away, before the outcry within the prison had awakened the officials to search.

Half an hour afterwards he might have been seen cleansing the blood and dust from his body in the waters of the Thames, near Lambeth.

The whole prison was on the alert. The alarm had been caused by Marks,

who, only half strangled by the Tiger, was in a measure, brought round by the parting kick the ruffian gave him.

Crawling to the door, his faint calls, summoned the warders, and the way of Jem's flight being speedily discovered, the most vigilant efforts were at once made for pursuit.

But though the police were immediately made acquainted with the escape, nothing came and no tidings came of the Tiger, except the report that a waterman had been knocked down and robbed of part of his attire by a man who had suddenly rushed against him.

Beyond that, inquiry was fruitless, and the officials of Milbank Prison had to record one of the most remarkable escapes ever known in the annals of prison intelligence.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SINGING-BIRD'S NEST. THE QUIET LANDLADY AND HER SILENT GRIEVANCES! OUT ON LEAVE. SAM.

IN a small room of the third floor in a not too aristocratic lodging-house, is a little lady whom the neighbors had long since set down as very pretty, very strange, very cold, and very discreet, and remarkably industrious—attentive almost to a miracle. It was matter for admiration for anybody to see her fingers perform such rapid evolutions with the needle that the course could not be traced with the eye, while that appeared only a labyrinth and confusion of movements, which was in fact the perfection of regularity and order, obscured from sight by its own speed.

That smiling face, that dimpled cheek, that rich but fair complexion, that sweet mouth, those clear expressive eyes, that hair of brown sweeping so gracefully over a fair brow, that air of joyousness and tenderness combined!

We have seen them before.

It don't need a glance at the guitar hung on the wall over the trim little sofa, and beside the window, where a canary sang, to know May Edwards again.

Mrs. Gibson had not let her be dissatisfied for having performed the brave act at that railroad disaster.

She had given her needle work, she had interested her friends in her, and hence May was well to do in the world, for a lonely little piece like herself.

When her friend, Miss Emily H. Evremont (who had helped her husband Jones to run through his money), told May that she ought to think herself lucky that she had only herself to keep, the seamstress would smile and say that she had found that hard enough at times.

Truth to say, after the life she had led in public, this cheerful quietude was a miniature paradise.

At first, brought up as she had been, every night at about six or so, as the gas began to flare out on the street, she had felt as fidgetty as the ballet girl herself, wanting to be off to the theater.

The sun had stolen around and now it darted into the chamber, gradually widening its joyous beam.

The canary glittered in the golden dust, and sang overpoweringly loud.

May laughed, laying down her work, at the bubbling throat of the little bird.

"Ah, Goldie," said she; "three years ago I had you first, only a week after that visit to the prison. Another of Mrs. Gibson's presents, you! Three years since I had the first letter from Robert! what an old woman I'm getting to be! It's no use denying it, Goldie! If you will be a little quiet, like a good, well-bred canary, I'll read you Robert's last letter." The bird had ex-



hausted himself. Cocking his head on one side and fastening his beads of eyes on May, he watched her go to the bureau, unlock and take out a large bundle of letters, neatly bound up with tape. The girl only took one of them and returned to the window.

She dwelt upon each word as she read, showing that it was the writer, not the mere immaterial words she cared for. The letter bore the ominous post mark of Portland, and the name was repeated within.

*Portland, February 25th, '62.*

MY OWN DEAREST MAY.—“As the last year keeps slipping away, I think more and more of our happy meeting; but for your love and comfort, I think I should have broken down.”

“But now we both see how things are guided for the best. But for my being sent to prison, I should have died before this, a broken-down drunkard, if not worse; and you might still have been earning hard bread as a street singer, or carried from a hospital ward to a pauper's grave.

“This place has made a man of me, and you have found friends and the means of earning a livelihood. I count the days till we meet. Good-bye, and heaven bless you, prays your ever affectionate,  
ROBERT BRIERLY.”

May kissed the paper over and over again.

“Do you hear that, Goldie?”

The bird, considering that he was wronged in having being let expect seed, rattled out a long chain of linked sweetness.

“Ah, Robert, don't I count the days, too?” said May, placing the letter in her bosom. “They seem so slow when one looks forward—and yet they pass so quickly. Sing away, birdie, and stop scattering seed out on me—stop it directly! It costs money! I see you find singing a better trade than I did!”

She started suddenly.

“A knock at the front door! Oh, it's not the postman, I expect a letter from him to-day! Well, Goldie, while I work you must sing me a nice song for letting you hear that nice letter.”

But she jumped up again.

“It is the post. There's Mrs. Willoughby coming up stairs?”

But there was no letter in the hand of the person who entered.

She was an elderly female, with a good-humoured broad face. The black ribbons to her cap were of a fanciful cut which seemed to imply that grandmother as she was, there was no such thing as impossibility of her changing her name.

May covered her disappointment with a smile, and hastened to take a little roll of paper from her workbox.

“Ah, Mrs. Willoughby, I was expecting a visit from you. I've the week's rent all ready,” said she.

“Yes, Miss Edwards, you ain't like them St. Evermon'ses! ah, me? which I don't believe they're French more than my teapot, no my dear!”

“Oh, Mrs. Willoughby! the St. Evermonds have had trouble. I know them well, and am sure they'd never keep money back if they had it,” said May.

And she muttered to herself: “How times are changed since she made her husband give me half-a-crown that dreadful night, when Robert—I can't bear to think of it, though all has turned out so well.”

Her sad memories were speedily dissipated by the garrulous old dame, who had finished the important process of pocketing the rent, and producing the receipt.

“Which ready you always was, to the minit, that I will say my dear. You'll excuse me if I take a chair,” which she did—“these stairs is trying to an elderly woman—not that I am so old as many that looks younger, which when I'd my front tittivated only last week. Mr. Miggles, I says ‘forty it was once, but will never be again, which trouble is a sharp thorn, and losses is more than

time, and a shortness of breath along of a shock three years was last July, ‘no Mr. Miggles,’ I says, ‘fronts can't undo the work of years,’ I says, ‘nor yet wigs, Mr. Miggles—which skin-partings equal to yours, I never did see, and that's the truth.’”

As she paused for breath, having completely silenced the canary, May struck in.

“At all events, Mrs. Willoughby, you're looking very well this morning.”

“Ah, my dear, you are very good to say so,” said the landlady, “which if it wasn't for rheumatics and the rates, one a top of another, and them dustmen, which their carts is a mockery, unless you stand beer, and that boy Sam, though, which is the worst, I'm sure it's hard to say, only a grandmother's feelings is not to be told! which opodeldoc can't be rubbed into the heart, as I said to Mrs. Molloy.”

“Your first floor front?”

“The same, my dear. Which she says to me:

“‘Mrs. Willoughby,’ says she, ‘them oils is the thing,’ she says, ‘rubbed in warm,’ says she.

“‘Which it's all very well, Mrs. Malloy,’ says I, ‘but how's a lone woman to rub it in the nape of the neck and the small of the back; and Sam that giddy, and distressing me to that degree.’

“‘He's a wild slip,’ says Mrs. Molloy.

“‘Yes, Mrs. Molloy,’ say I. ‘But what's sent us, we must bear it, and parties that's reduced to let lodgings can't afford easy chairs,’ which well I know it, and the truth it is—and me with two beauties in chintz in the front parlour which I got a bargain of the broker when the parties was sold up at twenty-four, and no more time to sit down in 'em than if I was a cherrybin!’”

“I'm sure you deserve a rest,” said May, “as hard as you've worked all your life, and when Sam gets a situation——”

Mrs. Willoughby lifted her hands emphatically.

“Sam! Sam! ah, that boy! I came up about him! he hasn't been here this morning?”

The seamstress shook her head.

“Not yet. I was expecting him, for he promised to take these things home for me.”

“Ah, Miss Edwards,” said the landlady, dolefully, “if you would only talk to him; he don't mind anything I say, no more than if it was a flat-iron, which that boy have cost me in distress of mind, and clothes, and caps, and break-ages, never can be known—and his poor mother, which was the only one I brought up and had five,” she says to me:

“‘Mother,’ she says, ‘he's a big child,’ she says, ‘and he's a beautiful child, but he have a temper of his own.’

“‘Mary,’ I says—she was called Mary, like you, my dear, after her aunt, from which we had expectations, but which was left to the Blind Asylum, and the Fishmongers' Alms Houses, and very like you she was, only she had light hair and dark eyes—‘Mary, my dear,’ I says, ‘I hope you'll never live to see it,’ and took she was at twenty-three, sudden, and that boy I've had to mend and wash and do for ever since, and hard lines it is.’”

May smiled.

“You musn't grieve that way,” said she. “I'm sure he loves you very dearly, and has an excellent heart.”

“Heart, my dear—which I wish it had been his heart I found in his right-hand pocket as I was a-mending his best trowsers last night, which it was a short-pipe, which it is nothing but the truth, and smoked to that degree as if it had been black-leaded, which many's the time when he've come in, I've said:

“‘Sam,’ I've said. ‘Grandmother,’ he'd say me, quite grave and innocent, ‘p'raps it's the chimbley.’” And him a child of fifteen, and a short pipe in

his right-hand pocket! I'm sure I could have broke my heart over it, I could; let alone the pipe—which I flung it into the fire—but a happy moment since is a thing I have not known."

"Oh!" said May, "he'll get rid of his bad habits in time. I've broken him in to carry my parcels already."

"Yes, indeed! and how you can trust him to carry parcels; but, oh! Miss Edwards," said the landlady, "if you'd talk to him, and tell him short pipes is the thief of time, and tobacco's the root of all evil, which Dean Chase he've proved it strong enough, I'm sure—and I cut it out of the *Weekly Pulpit*—and wherever that paper is now!"

As she was rummaging in her pocket for the interesting periodical, a knock came timidly at the door.

"There's a knock at your door," said the old lady, preparing to rise, "which if you expect a caller, or a customer?"

"No," said May, "I expect no one—unless it's Sam."

The raps came gently once more.

"Come in," said May.

"Miss Edwards?" said a voice doubtfully.

May threw down needle and thread. Her heart gave a great leap and she flew across the room (in great flight) to fall into the arms of Robert Brierly.

The canary stared a second and then launched forth such a pean that Mrs. Willoughby, already amazed, jumped up as if she was shot.

Each had had their own ideal painted during their faithful correspondence.

But each confessed as they caught a rapid look of one another in that close embrace, that time had verified the anticipation.

He found her pretty, winning, lovable.

She saw him manly with the hard toil, firm and handsome of feature.

She could have sobbed with joy as she felt his strong arm around her.

"Ah, ah!" panted she, "Robert! Oh! you here? I'm so glad!"

And she kissed him again as if the carolling of the canary had prompted her.

"But how is it you're—" she checked herself on seeing Mrs. Willoughby's astounded presence. "Oh, how well you look!"

"Eh?" cried the landlady, "Well I'm sure!"

May turned round to her with her blushing, smile-lit face.

"It's only Robert," said she, breathlessly, keeping hold of the Lancashiran's hands as if she feared to lose him. "You mustn't mind him!"

"Robert!" repeated the lodging-house keeper. "And who is Robert? Your brother I should think by the way he's going on, leastways, if not your brother—"

Brierly kissed May as a species of supporter to his assertion.

"Her brother? Yes, ma'am, I'm her brother."

"Indeed!" said the landlady, "and if I might make bold to ask where you've come from?"

Her air implied that she suspected that, dropped from the clouds, would be the reply.

"I'm just discharged!" began he.

When May gave him a look.

"Oh, discharged!" interrupted Mrs. Willoughby. "And where from—not your situation, I 'ope?"

Brierly shook his head.

"From her Majesty's service, if you must know," returned he.

"I've not seen him for three years and more. I didn't expect to see him, Mrs. Willoughby," interrupted May, "so it was quite natural the sight of him should startle me."

"Which well I know it—not 'avin' had brothers myself, but an uncle that ran away for a soldier, and came back on the parish with a wooden leg, and a

shillin' a day pension, and always in arrears for liquor—which the way that man would drink beer!"

"I should have written to prepare you," said Robert, "but I thought I might be here as soon as my letter, so I jumped into the train at Dorchester, and here I am."

"That was very thoughtless of you—no, it was very thoughtful and kind of you. But I don't understand—"

"How I come to be here before the time I told you in my letter? You see, I had full marks and nothing against me, and the regulations—"

But May hastened to interrupt him, and stay the exposure: his unguarded tongue kept running into.

"If Sam comes shall I tell him to go down stairs to you, Mrs. Willoughby?" hinted she.

"I shall be much obliged to you, my dear—which I know, when brothers and sisters meet they'll have a great deal to talk over, and two's company and three's none, is well beknown—and I never was one to stand listenin' when other folks is talkin'—and one thing I may say, as I told Mrs. Molloy only last week, when the first floor had a little tiff with the second pair front about the water:

"Mrs. Molloy, I says, 'nobody ever heard me put in my oar when I wasn't asked,' I says, 'and idle chatterin' and gossip,' I says, 'is a thing that I never was given to, and I ain't a going to begin now,' I says, which good mornin' to you, young man, and a better girl, and a nicer girl, and a harder workin' girl than your sister, I 'ope and trust may never darken my doors, which her rent was ever ready to the day. No, my dear, it's the truth and you needn't blush."

Robert had already thrown open the door suggestingly, but that hint was totally lost upon her. Then he came forwards and gently urged her towards the egress.

"Thank you," said the talkative dame going, "I can open the door for myself, young man. And a very nice looking head you have on your shoulders, though you have had your hair cut uncommon short, which I must say good morning, my dear," said she to May, "and anything I can do for you," said she, out on the landing.

Bob was guilty of closing the door.

But they heard her as she went down stairs, still in voice:

"I'm sure, I will do, which nobody can say but I was always ready to oblige, if reduced to let lodgings owing to a sudden shock."

"Phew!" said Robert, with a long-drawn breath of relief, when silence reigned once more. "Any one would fancy that she had been under the silent system for the last twelve month. And now we are alone, my dear May, let me have a good look at you. I have had a bit of a squeeze, but not a good look."

May held her face down but she couldnt cover it, as he held her hands.

"Well?" said she, blushing.

"You are far prettier than a year ago when you came all that way down to pay me the latest visit. May, you couldn't look better or kinder."

"Sit down, and don't talk nonsense," said she, placing a chair for him.

"Sit down," cried he, "Sit down? not I! I have had one good look at you, but I haven't had any at the place. What a snug little room it is—as neat as the cell I have just left."

He walked about, examining the furniture much like a child. To be sure, even such a sight was not a common one during his late life.

"Not that it was very hard to keep in order," continued he.

In fact, it required no great effort to keep a stool, a basin, a Bible on its shelf, and the hammock in their places.

"However," added he, "I did polish the hammock hooks? One must have

a pride in something, you know, May! But how nice you have filled this room—sofa, carpet, chairs and—"

"Pretty clock, isn't it, Robert?" cried May, who had drank of his admiration with a pouting little pride that was charming. "And such a bureau—picked that up, a bargain! All—*all* out of *my own* earnings!" said she, clapping her hands.

Bob had to come and kiss her—there was no resisting it.

"The cosiest nest for my little bird," said he, "for you was a singing-bird when I first saw you! Oh, there's the old bread-winner!"

A puff of air had made the canary sneeze with its taint of London smoke, and ruffled faintly the strings of the old guitar.

"I'm glad that you haven't parted with *that*," said he.

"I should have been the most cruelly ungrateful of creatures if I had," said the seamstress. "Except for it, who knows if I ever would have met you; my—my friend—my brother—my—"

"Out with it, May! Oh, you know how it is, as I do!"

"Your memory has haunted me like a vision ever since I last saw you. Your kind offices, your more than sisterly interest in me, has lived in my recollection often in trial until I could have worshipped the image I had conjured up."

She drooped her head.

"At the very first," continued he, "I hoped a happier day would permit our short friendship to assume another character. Thanks to your instrumentality, in part, that day has arrived."

"Yes, Robert," said she, sitting beside him on the little sofa, not too large for the two, "I wanted to explain to Mrs. Willoughby when she called you my brother."

"So did I!" cried Bob. "But I felt that it was true! If I'm not your brother bred and born, you've been a true sister to me, May, ever since that night!"

"Oh, Robert, a kind word was never lost yet. No wonder I felt for you—"

"When all stood aloof. But for you, May, I should have been a desperate man. I might have become all they thought me—a felon, in the company of felons!"

May playfully blinded his eyes with her hands.

"Oh, do not look back to that misery—but tell me how you are out so long before your time?"

"Here's my ticket-of-leave—they've given me every week of my nine months—they hadn't a mark against me—I didn't want to look forward to my discharge—I was afraid to—I worked away; in school, in the quarry-gang first, and in the office afterwards, as if I had to stay there forever—I wasn't unhappy either—all were good to me."

"And then I had your letters to comfort me," turning a fond look on her. "But when I was sent for to the governor's room yesterday, and told I was a free man, everything swam round and round—I staggered—they had to give me water, or I think I should have fainted like a girl."

"Ah, as I felt that night when you gave me wine," murmured May.

"Poor dear, I remember it, as if it was yesterday. But when I passed out at the gate, not for gang labour, in my prison dress, with my prison mates, under the warder's eye, and the sentry's musket, as I had done so many a weary week—but in my own clothes—unwatched—a free man—free to go were I liked—to do what I liked—to speak to whom I liked, I thought I should have gone crazy—I danced, I sang, I kicked up the pebbles of the Chizzle beach—the boatmen laid hands on me for an escaped lunatic, till I told 'em I was a discharged prisoner, and then they let me pass—but they drew back from me;

there was the convict's taint about me—you can't fling that off with the convict's jacket."

"But here, no one knows you—you'll get a fresh start now," said the seamstress. "Everybody will think that you are all I know you to be!"

The Ticket-of-Leave shook his head doubtfully.

"I hope so, but it's awfully up hill work, May," said Robert; "I've heard enough down yonder of all that stands between a poor fellow who has been in trouble, and an honest life. But just let me get a chance."

"Oh—if only Mr. Gibson would give you one," cried May.

"Who's he?"

"The husband of the lady who was my first and best friend."

Then, seeing the uneasiness with which her lover received this speech, she hastened to say:

"After you, of course, you jealous thing. It was she gave me work—recommended me to her friends—and now I've quite a nice little business. I pay my way—I'm happy as the day is long—and I'm thinking of taking an apprenticeship."

Robert offered her his hand:

"How I wish I was a lass," said he earnestly.

"I think I see those great clumsy hands spoiling my work," laughed May. And the canary came into the chorus as if he enjoyed the idea as heartily.

"You don't want a light porter, eh, May?" said Robert.

"No! I've not quite business enough for that yet. If Mr. Gibson would only give you employment. He's something great in the City."

The other shook his head.

"No chance of that, May."

The only one, indeed, was to begin low, low as the dust from other men's feet even, and when a character is gotten, then a possibility of reaching higher might come. So, creeping, creeping, the level of honest men might be attained.

"Ah! there's no help for it," said the Ticket-of-Leave, gloomily.

The canary, who had dipped his bill into the seed cup, paused ere throwing it around, as if he respected the darksome prospect.

"At all events, you can wait and look about you a little—you've money coming in, you know," said May, cheerfully.

"Me, May?" exclaimed the other, in surprise.

"Yes."

The seamstress took a little book from her work box.

"You forget the two sovereigns you lent me—I've put away a shilling every week out of my savings into the bank—and there's the interest, you know—ever so much! It's all here! There'd been more if you hadn't come so soon!"

Robert returned the book without looking at it.

"My good kind girl," said he, "do you think I'd touch a farthing of your savings?"

"Oh, do take it, Robert! or I shall be so unhappy! Why, I've had more pleasure out of that money than any ever I earned, because I thought it would go to keep you. You know you found that there was nothing coming to you from the country."

"Nothing, true, I ran through all that. But bless your kind heart!" cried he, laughing. "To think of those little fingers working for me! a lusty, big-boned chap like me! Why, May, lass—I've a matter of twenty pounds in brass of my own earnings at Pentonville and Portland—over time and allowances."

May opened her eyes in marvel.

"Yes, the governor paid it over to me like a man, before I started yesterday—aye, and shook hands with me. God bless him for that!"

"Twenty pounds!" ejaculated the sewing-girl. "Oh, how small my poor little earnings look!"

She put away the book ruefully.

"I was so proud of them too!"

"Well, keep 'em, May! keep 'em to buy your wedding gown!"

And he drew her towards him with the arm that had stolen around her waist.

The canary gave a warning chirp.

But their lips were meeting in a kiss as the door opened abruptly, and a figure appeared.

"Sam!" cried May, confused.

## CHAPTER VII.

SPECIMEN OF THE RISING GENERATION. A COINCIDENCE. THE BANKER. WINDFALLS ALL AROUND.

THE youthful intruder filled out with the usual portions of his person a cloth cap tattered by frequent tosses down into areas, an old jacket well patched on the elbows principally, and check pants whose principal features were pockets outvying the Mont Cenis tunnel for depth and capacity.

His sharp, knowing face shone (through a mist of extraneous matter) like a sun over his dilapidated apparel.

There is something very incomprehensible about the street boy: his impudence; his cool defiance; knowingness, are things in which no boy of the country can approach him.

The street boy delights in seeing a horse fall down, a house tumble in, or any such catastrophe. A chimney-pot flying suddenly on somebody's head, extorts from him a yell of pleasure, and when the hydrant is open in the street, he may be seen gazing in rapt admiration on the bubbling water, or splashing wildly through the flood into which it is his great joy to force weaker boys than himself, and the more innocent their look the greater his satisfaction at the trick he has played them.

At a fire his lugubrious voice may be heard terrifying old ladies and alarming timid old gentlemen. Drunken women and wild-brain creatures he marks as his especial prey, and may be often seen and heard following them with a body of his mates.

He loves to be always yelling the last popular song of which "Slap Bang" is his favourite. Generally his mouth is wide open as he utters the refrain or penned up as he whistles the symphony. He enjoys the trepidation of an old woman running after a stage with a bundle in her arms, and not catching it after all.

In employment he rarely gives satisfaction.

He plays all the time that he can, and is always out of the shop or store or office when he is most urgently required, watching a procession at the corner, or gone of an errand for some female employee whom he conceives an Abelaric passion for.

As a newsboy, he saunters along with a bundle of papers under his arm, and pulls at the door-bell, where he has to deliver them, with a fury that sets them ringing for ten minutes afterwards, and brings hot looks of wrath from James or Sarah.

During the day, he may be seen staggering under heavy loads, often dragging, at arm's length, a perfect pyramid of kettles and saucepans, or other articles. But when so laden, he is usually exposed to the reproaches of idle ones, for the boy has a great pride of his class, and thinks his dignity outraged if he is compelled to work. At night he may be seen staggering under heavy shut-

ters, which, if he has a spite against his master, he thinks nothing of letting fall accidentally through the plate-glass window—the master's pride and boast."

We were led into these details by the comical look which Master Samuel Willoughby assumed on perceiving the pleasant occupation which he had interrupted.

"Sam, is it?" cried Brierly, jumping up. "Confound him! I'll teach him!"

But seeing that it was a boy, he lowered his hands and retreated.

Put out your hand to claim the attention of the street boy, and his first movement is to dodge away from an antagonistic blow, which from conscience or the remembrance of unatoned delinquences, he seems always haunted by the fear of.

His next act is to bring his head up as rapidly as it went down, and with a look of the coolest defiance on his young-old face, square up to combat his assailant.

So did Sam, saying shortly:

"Now, will you though? Granny will be uncommon obliged to you! She says I want teaching, don't she?" appealed he to May.

"How dare you come in like that, Sam, without so much as knocking?" said the latter in vexation.

"How was I to know you had company," returned the juvenile. "In course I'd a' knocked if I'd been awear you'd your young man!"

"I t-tell you what," cried Bob advancing, "if you don't make yourself scarce, young 'un!"

"Well? what?" sneered Sam, dodging back. "If I don't, you'll pitch into me? Just you try it, Lanky!" said he, putting up his hands in pugilistic position.

The word Lanky had not referred to Bob Brierly's origin, but to his height and imputed slenderness.

"Yah!" growled the boy, making a feint. "Hit one of your own size—do!"

"Go it, Master Sam," said Bob, compelled to laugh.

"My name is not Sam!" retorted the youth, straightening himself and pulling up his prayed and dogs eared collar. "Its Samuel Willoughby, Esquire, most respectable references given and required, as Granny say when she advertises the first floor!"

Bob smiled, but in an impatient tone, begged that he'd be off like a good little chap. The diminutive wounded the receiver to the quick.

"Come, cheeky," replied he. "Don't you use bad language! I'm rising five foot five in these boots and I'm sprouting again' the summer, if I ain't six foot of greens already like you?"

Seeing that her lover had not gained much in this keen contest of wits, the sewing girl hastened to thrust her authority between.

"Hold your tongue, you naughty, impudent little boy," said she.

Sam came boldly to her and stood on tiptoe beside her.

"I'm bigger 'en you, I'll bet a bob!"

We are not prepared to say that May was going to lay down her shilling, for the preliminaries of the wager were interrupted by the abrupt avalanche of Mrs. Willoughby.

Sam got behind a chair instantly.

"Oh, here's that boy at last! which upstairs and down stairs, and all along the street, have I been a seekin' of him," cried she, as soon as she had recovered breath.

"Which, if you'd believe me, Miss Edwards, I left a fourpenny-bit in the chaney dog-kennel on the mantel-piece down stairs only yesterday mornin' as ever was, which if ever there was a real bit of Dresden, and cost me fourteen-

and-six at Hanway Yard in 'appier days, with a black and white spaniel in a wreath of roses, and a shepherdess to match, and the trouble I've 'ad to keep that boy's 'ands off it since he was in long clothes—where's that fourpenny-piece?" cried she, seizing Sam. "You know you took it, you young villain—which you know you took it."

"Well, then, I did—to buy bird's-eye with," said Sam coolly.

"Bird's-eye! and him not fifteen—and the only one left of three."

"If you will nobble a fellow's bacca, you must take the consequences; and just you mind—it ain' no use a tryin' it on breaking my pipes, Granny. I've given up Broselys and started a briar-root. It's a stunner," said he, displaying a pipe.

"Oh dear, oh dear! if it ain't enough to melt an 'eart of stone—no! fronts I may wear to 'ide my suffering, but my grey 'airs that boy have determined to bring with sorrow to the grave," moaned the landlady, falling into a chair.

"What? 'Cos I smoke? Why there's Jim Miggles smokes, and he's a year younger than me, and he's allowed all the lux'ries of the season—his father's going to take him to see the badger drawn at Jemmy Shaw's one of these days—and his mother don't go into hysterics."

"Sam I am surprised you should take pleasure in making your grandmother unhappy!" interposed May.

"I don't take pleasure—she won't let me; she's always a knaggin' and aggravatin' me. Here, dry your eyes, granny—and I'll be a good boy, and I won't go after the rats, and I won't aggravate old Miggles' bullfinches," said Sam going to his grandmother.

"And you'll give up that nasty tobacco, and you'll keep your clothes tidy, and not get slidin' down ladders in your Sunday trousers—which moleskins won't stand it, let alone mixed woollens."

"Best put me in charity leathers at once," said Sam, "with a muffin cap and brass badge! Wouldn't I look stunning, oh, my!"

"There!" exclaimed the house-keeper, appealing to May, "that's just him! always some of his imperent out-dacious chaff. I know he gets it from that young Miggles—ready to stop his poor granny's mouth with."

"No!" said the boy, who had climbed up behind her chair. "Here's the on'y way to stop it!"

And he kissed her.

"Come, I'm goin' to take myself up short, like a jibin' cart 'oss! and be a real swell, granny, in white kids! Only," added he, mournfully, "I'm waiting till I come into my fortune. You know—that twenty pounds you was robbed of, three years ago!"

"Which, robbery is too good a word for it," said Mrs. W., who had been seeking an opportunity of dilating upon it. "It was forgery, aye, and a'most as good as murder—which it might ha' been my death! Yes, my dears, as nice looking, civil spoken a young man as you would wish to see—in a white 'at, which I never can forget, and a broad way of speaking—and,

"Would you change me a twenty pound note, ma'am," he says.

"And it aint very often," I says, 'you could have come into this shop!'—which I was in the cigar and periodical line at that time."

Brierly had listened to her with increasing interest.

At this point he hastened to enquire:

"Where was your shop?"

"Three doors outside the Cremorne Gardens—'And a note is all the same to me,' I sez—'if all correct,' I sez—and when I looked in that young man's face, I had no more suspicion than I should of either of yours, my dears; so he gave me the note, and he took the sovereigns.

"And the next thing I saw was a gent, which his name he told me was Hawkshaw, and were in the police, on'y in plain clothes, and asked to look at the

note, and told me it was a bad un; and if that man left me on the sofa, in the back shop, or behind the counter, with my feet in a jar of brown rappee, and my head among the ginger-beer bottles, is more than I can tell—for fits it was for days and days, and when I worked out of 'em, then I was short of my rent, and the stock sould up and me ruined."

"And you never recovered your money?" asked Robert, rising and feeling for his hat restlessly.

"Not a penny, and if it hadn't been for a kind friend that set me up in my own furniture, in the Workhouse I might have been at this moment, leastways St. George's which that's my legal settlement—and that blessed boy—"

Here she broke down, crying.

But Sam, in his own gay spirit, continued the burden:

"In a suit of grey dittoes, a stepping out with another chap, a big 'un and a little 'un together at an auction, to church of a Sunday, to such a jolly long sermon! shouldn't I like it! I say, don't cry, granny, we ain't come to skilly yet."

"Which if that young man knew the mischief he'd done," moaned the landlady, rocking to and fro.

"Perhaps he does, and is sorry for it."

This said May, as she exchanged a pressure of the hand with Robert, whose eyes hers had met.

"Not he, the wretch!" cried the lodging-house keeper vehemently. "What do the likes 'f them care for the poor creatures they rob. Hangin's too good for 'em, the villains!"

"Good bye, May," said the Ticket-of-Leave, as he stood by the door about to go out.

"You're not going?" said the sewing-girl.

"Yes, I've a little bit of business that can't wait. Some—some money to pay."

"You'll not be long!" said May, glancing at him.

"No. Back directly."

And he swiftly ran down the stairs.

He could make up that wrong to the landlady at all events, little of it as had been his act.

May only half understood his flitting. She imagined that it was this touching on the felon's soul-wound that had caused pain he could not bear.

Mrs. Willoughby wiped her eyes and begged to be excused.

"But it's not often," said she apologetically, "that I talks about it Miss Edwards, which it's no use a-cryin' over spilt milk, and there's them that tem-pers the wind to the shorn lamb—and if it wasn't for that boy—"

"There, she's at me again!" howled Sam, rolling off the sofa.

"Which if I'd only the means to put him to school and keep him out of the streets and clear of that Jim Miggler and them rats!"

"Bother the rats!" cried Sam more tears than voice.

"You see, Sam, how unhappy you make your grandmother," said May, imploringly.

"And don't you see how unhappy she makes me, a-talking of sending me to school," returned Sam with disputable logic.

May forced him to go to his grandmother.

"Come, kiss her, and promise to be a good boy. Ah, Sam, you don't understand the blessing of having one who loves you as she does."

"Then what does she break my pipes for?" retorted the youth.

Mrs. Willoughby was about to pour forth some more declarations on the vices that King James did not utterly demolish, when a knocking at the door deprived the world in general of that inquisition.

"More visitors!" exclaimed she. "Lors! what a busy morning it is!"



"Come in!" said May.

An elderly gentleman, with grey whiskers and a face not devoid of kindness, dressed as became a well to do merchant, walked in.

"Miss Edwards, eh?" inquired he, his eyes glancing from the more prominent figure of the house-keeper to the slighter form of the seamstress.

May courtseyed.

"Yes, sir."

"Glad I'm right—I thought it was the third floor front—a woman told me downstairs. I'm afraid I pulled the wrong bell."

May hastened to take the speaker's hat, gloves and cane, and place them on the table. Then she offered him a chair, after whisking her apron about it.

"And a nice way," said the lady of the house quickly, "a very nice way Mrs. Molloy would be in if you brought her down to another party's bell, which, asking your pardon, sir, but was it the first floor as opened the street door?"

The stranger rejoined that it was a person in a very broad cap border, and a "still broader brogue."

"Which that is the party, sir, as I was a speaking of," said Mrs. W., quite convinced by the comment on the linguistic note. "And I do ope that she didn't fly out, sir, which Mrs. Molloy so morning—after her tea—she says it's tea—is that rampageous—"

"No, no," interrupted the old gentleman. "She was civil enough when I said that I wanted Miss Edwards."

"Which I do believe my dear, said the lady of the house to May, that you've bewitched everybody from the kitchen to the attics."

"Miss Edwards don't confine her witchcraft to your lodgers, my good lady," remarked the stranger. "She's bewitched my wife."

May looked inquiringly.

"My name's Gibson."

May looked pleased.

"Oh, sir; I've never been able to say what I felt to your good, kind lady; but I hope you will tell her I am grateful."

"She knows it by the return you have made," said he, "You've showed you deserved her kindness. For fifty people ready to help, there's not one worth helping—that's my conclusion. I was telling my wife so this morning, and she insisted that I should come and satisfy myself that she had helped one person at any rate who was able and willing to help herself, and a very tidy, nice looking girl you are, and a very neat, comfortable room you have, I must say."

Mr. Gibson let his eyes range from the serving-girl's trim self to the contents of the chamber, from canary to Master Sam, who was a little overawed by his presence.

Not so, Mrs. Willoughby, she thought the survey a fine chance for a new ventilation of rhetorical powers, and she declared:

"Which you can tell your good lady, sir, from me, Miss Edwards' rent were always ready to the days and minits—as I was telling her brother just now."

"Brother? My wife said you were alone in the world."

"I was alone, sir. He—he was—away," faltered May.

"Ah! This is not the young gentleman?" inquired he.

Sam had tumbled off the sofa in trying to execute some acrobatic feat of the Hanlon Brothers invention.

"Oh, dear no, sir, begging your pardon, which that is my grandson, Samuel Willoughby, the only one of three, and will be fifteen the twenty-first of next April at eight o'clock in the morning, and a growing boy—which take your cap out of your mouth, Samuel, and stand straight, and let the gentleman see you."

"The old gent can see well enough—he don't want a telescope. I aint a-going to be inspected. I'll mizzle," growled the youth.

And suiting the action to the word, with a celerity and go-aheaditiveness that would have been admired by any locomotive-builder in search of a model, Sam executed a flying leap over a chair, darted out of the door and slid down the bannisters, shooting upon the bottom landing with a force that nearly upset Brierly, who had just returned.

During that while, Mrs. Willoughby had hastened to say:

"Which Miss Edwards' brother is grown up, and only come back this blessed mornin' as ever was, discharged from her Majesty's Service, and five foot nine in his shoes, by the name of Robert—which, well he may, for a sweeter complexion—"

"And with a good character, I hope?" said Mr. Gibson, coming to a more practical certificate.

"Oh, yes, sir!" exclaimed May, eagerly. "The very best!"

Robert came into the room, and bowed respectfully to the gentleman.

"I suppose this is Robert?" said the latter rising. "A very likely young fellow, indeed!"

"This is Mr. Gibson, Robert," said May, to introduce them. "The husband of that lady who has been so good to me."

"May heaven bless her," said Brierly, feelingly, "and you, for your kindness to this poor girl while I was unable to help her."

"But now that you have got your discharge, she will have a protector," observed the patron.

"I hope so, sir! as long as I live and can earn a crust. I suppose I shall be able to do that?" said the young man, taking May's hand.

"What do you mean to do?" inquired the other.

"Ah, there it is, sir," said Bob, less confidently. "I wish I knew what I could get to do, sir. There are not many things in the way of work that would frighten me, I think!"

"That's the spirit I like," said Mr. Gibson. "Your sister speaks well of you, but I shouldn't mind *that*! It's enough for me that you've come out of—"

Brierly turned pale.

"Her Majesty's service with a good character."

The Ticket-of-Leave felt the blood rushing into its courses with redoubled force for the check.

"You write a good hand?" asked the patron.

"Tolerably good, sir," said Robert.

"Beautiful, sir!" corrected May, plunging her hand into the drawer, and unearthing the packet.

"Here's one of his letters—loo—this side, sir! It's better written."

"PORTLAND" was on the other page.

"A capital hand," said the gentleman. "Can you keep accounts?"

Robert bowed.

He had helped to keep the prison books.

Mr. Gibson took out his tablets and began to write.

Sam softly opened the door, stole in around to the back of his grandmother's seat and held up a packet before her eyes.

"Hullo, granny!" said he, "here's a parcel I found for you in the letter box. Aint it heavy neither!"

"Whatever, is it for me!" exclaimed the landlady.

It felt hard, like coin in the paper:

"Money! Oh, Sam, you aint been and gone and done anything wrong?" cried she.

"Bother!" muttered the boy, "do you think that if I had I would have come to you with the swag?"

The old woman opened the packet, screamed as if she had seen an adder in it and let it fall on her lap.



"What's the matter," cried May, jumping up.

"Sovereigns! real golden sovereigns!" replied the other, wringing her hands in sheer ignorance of what else to do with them.

"Sovereigns!" exclaimed all.

"Oh, crickey!" exclaimed Sam, dancing the "Ham Fat Man" quadrille as a solo of exultation.

Brierly pointed to a slip of paper fallen on the carpet out of the roll.

May picked it up.

"Here's a note:—For Mrs. Willoughby—£20 in payment of an old debt," read she.

"Yes, and no signature. Come, don't faint, old lady! Here, give her a glass of water," said Mr. Gibson to May.

"Sovereigns! for me? Oh, sir, let me look at 'em—the beauties—eight, nine, ten, twelve, fifteen, eighteen, twenty! Just the money I lost," cried the landlady, recovering it.

"There, granny—I always said we were coming into our fortune," said Sam.

"I shouldn't wonder if it was some nasty ring-dropper," said Mrs. W., with a flash of doubt. "Oh! are they Bank of Elegance, or only gilt washed? Which I've seen 'em at London Bridge a sellin' sovereigns at a penny a-piece."

"Oh, no! they're the real thing," said Mr. Gibson.

"Perhaps it's somebody that's wronged you of the money and wants you to clear his conscience," suggested Bob.

"Ah! eccentric people will do that sort of thing—even with income-tax. Take my advice, old lady, keep the cash," said the patron.

"Which in course a gentleman like you knows best, and I'm sure whoever sent the money, all I wish is, much good may it do him, and may he never know the want of it."

"Amen!"

"Which, first and foremost—there's my silver tea pot, I'll have out of pawn this blessed day, and I'll ask Mrs. Molloy to a cup of tea in my best blue chanev, and then this blessed boy shall have a year of finishin' school.

"I wish the party had kept his money, I do!" said Sam, disconsolate. "I say, Granny, you couldn't spare a young chap a couple of them, could you?"

"Drat that boy's impertinence! Him asking for sovereigns as natural—Ah! they'll all be for you Sam, one of these days."

"I should like a little in advance," said the youth.

And with that, he grabbed half a dozen of the shiners, and ran behind the furniture.

Mrs. Willoughby well knew the impossibility of her catching him, and, half hysterically sobbing, she remained in her chair.

"Oh, Sam," said she, "which that boy will be the death of his poor grandmother, he will!"

But the boy enticed her towards the door by holding out the money, and ran into her arms.

"There, granny it was only for a lark. All for a kiss," said he.

The landlady looked round on the assemblage, and then led away her hopeful.

They could hear, as he pulled her down the stairs, in admiration and affection, exclaim:

"Oh, what a boy you are, Sam!"

Mr. Gibson had only waited for her withdrawal for his own.

He gave Robert his card and a note, and said, after wishing Miss Edwards good day.

"Ten o'clock, to-morrow, young man. We'll see if you are fit for the messengership, of which I have discharged the last occupant."

"Oh sir!" said the lovers both.

"There—there don't thank me! I like gratitude that shows itself in acts like yours to my wife. Let's hope," concluded he to May, "that your brother will repay me in the same coin."

May watched the door close and saw the patron down the stairs.

When she had returned, tears in her eyes almost prevented her seeing what joy reigned in her lover's heart.

She came to him quickly, perhaps to make up for that momentary blindness; she stumbled on the carpet, perhaps.

At all events she was in his arms.

They embraced silently, their meeting breasts too full for speech.

But the canary, who had remained so still through all, now had his say. He fluttered against the bars merely to signal his outburst, and trolled forth:

"See—see—see! that res-titu-tion has brought you a blessing already—cep! cep!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

SUCH A COME DOWN! THE ENGAGING COUPLE WHO WISH TO BE ENGAGED.  
THE INVITATION.

WE really should have looked in upon Mr. Green Jones, otherwise Montague St. Evremond, when we were last in Mrs. Willoughby's caravansery.

Still, as we would have seen much the same then, as we do now in this peep, six months afterwards, the loss is not so material after all.

Emily, increased in development of figure (all those singers and ballet girls run into the extreme, been ever exceedingly stout or exceedingly lean), returned home one day a trifle depressed.

She came up stairs slowly and stopped at the door of the room lately May Edward's.

But, since Robert Brierly had won the confidence of his master and been rewarded by gradual advances, he had obtained the favor of a residence in the banking-house.

May, her own part, had confided part to Mrs. Gibson, and that lady had contrived to get her husband to over-look the passing the young man off as a brother.

So May was made housekeeper of the broker's establishment, and Robert of course, saw her often, as he took dinner every day with her.

It was a strange face, therefore, that appeared at Emily's knock.

"I've your shawl to return to you, Mrs. Page," said the ballet girl, "which you were kind enough to lend me."

"I hope you got the engagement, dear?" said Mrs. Page.

"No; the proprietor said my appearance was quite the thing—good stage face and figure, and all that; you know how those creatures always flatter one; but they hadn't an opening just now in the comic duet and character-dance business," replied Emily.

"I'm sorry; your husband will be so disappointed."

"Oh, no! Jones doesn't know what I went out after. I couldn't bear worriting him, poor fellow! He's had so many troubles! You see, I was used to rough it, Mrs. Page, before I came into my fortune!" said she, with an air of a St. Catherine in martyrdom.

Mrs. Page, a good sort of woman, remarked that, as theatres were so full, why didn't Mrs. Jones try another kind of life.

"Oh, bless you!" replied that person. "I couldn't live away from the float, that is not if I had to work for my living,—of course it was very different the

three years we had our fortune. Oh, Jones and me have run through a good deal in a very short time. But to do Jones justice, I think, though we were both fast, I was the faster. Jones was used to spending, and I wasn't. It was so jolly at first to have everything one liked!"

"Very true, Mrs. Jones!"

"Please don't call me that. I know I forget myself often. But by my desire, Jones changed his name. When people have come down in circumstances, the best way they can do is to keep up their names. I like St. Evremond, it looks well in the bill, and sounds foreign. That's always attractive—and I dress my hair à la Française, to keep up the effect."

A loud cough overhead startled them both.

"In your room!" exclaimed Mrs. Page.

"Oh! don't be alarmed, I know now. It's only Jones, I left him to practice a clog dance while I was at the Oxford and Alhambra. He's so clumsy. You haven't been here long enough, but he was dreadful in coming down so, when Miss Edwards had this room! He gets on nicely, though, in the comic duets. You shall have some tickets when we get an engagement again."

"Thank you. It's very fortunate he's one of those gentleman who can turn their hands to anything."

"Well, it isn't the turning of his hand I object to, but he's very slow in turning the leg."

And with this jest, Emily sprang up the stairs.

In her room was the melancholly Green Jones.

Seediest of swells, his tattered dressing gown and venerable smoking-cap (that Raleigh or Cavendish might have worn first), were so suitable that he would have been incomplete without them.

He was chewing a straw mechanically in memories of cigars and meerschaums, and bewailing over his seventieth attempt to master the involution and convolutions of clog-dancing.

He had become perfectly satisfied that he would never electrify the public in that style of pumps.

Ah, in the old "how much? don't mind the change" days—he had never thought of being reduced to earn subsistence by the hornpipe, especially without thick stockings to keep his shins shielded.

In fact, he had tried to convince his more energetic partner that he was too stout to be a star of the ballet. But she had styled him mean spirited when he had observed that his vocation was for the private walks of life, such as a nice, easy light-porter's place.

And when she told him that there was nothing open to them but the music halls, he had been desirous of rushing into the performing dogs line.

"I am more at home with puppies," he would observe. "It's the thing I've been used to, since I was at college. But, if you must give your Montague a lesson in the poetry of motion under difficulties, come on! But, oh, remember that your Montague has shins, and be as sparing as possible of the double shuffles."

"Ah, grumbling again, Green!" cried Emily bounding into the room.

"Oh, no, Milly! repining audibly!" returned he.

"Well, don't repine! I've been out for a long walk and yet—see what I can do."

She rapidly stripped off her walking dress, and disclosed to view the span-gled bodice and tinsel skirt of a ballet dancer, and at the same time put forth her foot and ankle, with which she began to execute that extremely difficult movement known by the name *epointillage* with most singular grace and precision. Then before the glass she bounded and pirouetted, and performed a succession of fantastic motions which she managed to conclude by a kick in the

shins of her husband, laughing immoderately at the clever feat, she sank back in a chair, exhausted with the twofold exertion.

Green rubbed the wounded member painfully.

"As if you had not barked my intractable shins sufficiently already," moaned he. "If you would only make a feature of the comic duets, and excuse me from the dancing!"

"No, no! now I'm rested. Come we'll have one try and then have dinner."

"Here's the boy with the beer now," said Green going to the door. "Have you got any coppers in your pocket?"

"No, I—"

"Eh? Miss Edwards!" exclaimed Jones, doffing his cap in the cavalier style.

"Oh, my dear!" said Emily, pretending to be embarrassed at being surprised in professional costume.

May came in with a smile.

"I was seeing a manager or two," whispered the dancer to her. "How well you look! We haven't seen you since so long?"

"No," said May, "I have to stay at home all night, and Robert likes to see me during the day—"

"That's how it is," said Green dolefully. "When are the cards to be issued?"

May laughed.

"That's just what I've come to see about," said she, "It's day after to-morrow. You're to come to the city, before ten, you know, and perhaps I'll let you have a peep at where they make the money."

"A wedding!" cried Emily. "Oh! and I haven't got a thing to go in."

"Oh, it will be so private," said May. "You won't disappoint me? after I've come all the way from the City."

"Well I think I can manage," said the dancer, "but Green—"

"Oh, we must have him," said May.

"Thank you, Miss Edwards! But even Green Jones, Esquire., cannot accomplish impossibilities. The law is laid down relative to attire on such occasions, and a smoking cap and dressing gown no more than a clog-dancers—ahem, is admissible. Milly shall go, however!"

"Indeed, I will!"

## CHAPTER IX.

THE OFFICE MESSENGER. THE WEDDING-DAY. JONES TURN UP A TRUMP. FACE TO FACE WITH RUIN.

In the misty, dark office of Gibson, the bill broker, sat Robert Brierly.

It was his wedding day, yet he had come earlier than usual and performed some little duties as faithfully as on a less happy occasion.

As he had labored at Portland conscientiously, he worked now, but with the addition of the pleasure in freedom.

And beside, he wanted to keep his mind employed, for the shadow ever hovering over him might immensely enlarge if he gave way to scanning the horizon.

As he was stamping the numbers of check and margin in a check-book, Sam Willoughby, who owed his situation to Robert, was taking the large account books out of the safe and arranging them on the desks.

Sam was better dressed, but the vivacity of his spirits was not to be oversapped by broad-cloth.

"There they are, all ship-shape. I say, Bob, if granny could see these big chaps, all full of £ s. d., and me as much at home with them as old Miggles with his toy terriers," said the boy, patting a ledger, irreverently.

"Only the outsides, Sam—fifty—fifty—one——"

"Everything must have a beginning. I'm only under messenger now, at six bob a week, but it's the small end of the wedge. I don't mean to stay running errands and dusting books long, I can tell you. I intend to speculate—I'm in two tips already."

"Tips?" queried Bob.

"Yes," said Sam, flourishing a betting-book. "I stand to win a fiver on Gladiateur, for the Derby, and a good thing on Tenbroeck's Manhattan for the Ascot Cup—they were at Gladiateur last week but he's all right again, and Manhattan's in splendid form, and the stable uncommon sweet on him."

"Bring me those pens," said Bob.

But as Sam innocently returned with the articles, and placed himself within Brierly's reach the latter caught him by the collar and shook him.

"You young rascal! Now, now you mark me, Master Sam. If ever I hear of you putting into a tip again I'll thrash you within an inch of your life, and then I'll split on you to Mr. Gibson and he'll discharge you," said he.

"Now I call that mean. One city gent interfering with another city gent's amusements!"

"Amusements!" When you've seen as much as I have, you'll know what comes of such amusements, lad," said the messenger, bitterly.

"As if I didn't know already. Lark, lush, and a latch-key—a swell rig out, and lots of ready in the pockets—a drag at Epsom, and a champagne lunch on the hill! Oh my—ain't it stunning!"

"Ah, Sam, that's the fancy picture—mine is the true one. Excitement first, then idleness and drink, and then bad companions—sin—shame—and a prison."

"Come, I don't want to be preached to in office hours: granny gives me quite enough of that at home, ain't it a bore, just!"

"Oh, my lad, take my advice, do! Be steady—stick to work and home. It's an awful look out for a young chap adrift in this place, without those sheet anchors."

"Oh, I aint afraid," said the boy. "I didn't come up from the country—not much! I cut my eye teeth early. Tips aint worse than time bargains—and they're business. But don't look glum, Bob, you're the right sort, you are, and sooner than rile you I'll cut tips, burn 'Bell's Life,' and take to Capel Court and the 'Share List,' and that's respectable, you know," said he, sitting on the counter.

"You young rascal! you made me misnumber my cheques."

"Serves you jolly well right, for coming to business on your wedding day," returned the boy.

"Oh! I've two hours good before I am wanted for that."

"I say, Bob, you don't mean to say you've been to the bank for the petty cash this morning?"

"Yes."

"And didn't leave the money on the counter?"

"No."

"And didn't have your pocket picked?"

"No."

Sam emitted a whistle of excessive delicacy in point of tone, but perhaps liable to criticism in respect to power.

"Well, you *are* a cool hand," said he, with the breath unexpended in the effusion. "I've often wondered how the poor chaps in Newgate managed to eat a good breakfast before they're turned off. But a fellow coming to office the morning he's going to be spliced—and when the gov's given a holiday too—by Jove, it beats the Old Bailey by lengths. I hope I shall be as cool when I am married."

"You young cocksparrow!" laughed the other, looking up.

"Yes," returned the boy. "I've ordered the young woman I want down at Birmingham. Miss Edwards aint my style!"

"No—isn't she, though?" said Brierly, undecided whether to cuff the speaker or laugh at him. "I'm sorry its too late to have her altered."

Sam Stopped making a pen stand on its point, to remark:

"She's too quiet—wants go! I like high action. Now I call Mrs. Jones a splendid woman! You know Jones! Sam Willoughby esquire must have a real tip-top lady. I don't mean to marry till I can go to church with my brougham."

"Your broom? I suppose that means when you have set up as a crossing sweeper. And now, Sam, till your carriage comes round to you, just trot off to the stationers and see if Mr. Gibson's new bill-case is ready."

Sam slid off the counter, and look through the glass door on one side.

"I see! Miss Edwards is a coming in full tog! Quite right! O. K! Samuel is fly!"

And he laid his finger along his nose, darted an awfully wicked look at Brierly and left the office.

Spite of her being in lace and ribbons that should not have been "mussed," May let her intended embrace her to his fill.

As their kiss echoed in the office, Sam put his lips to the partly lifted window as he passed it, and cried out:

"I saw you!"

"Hang that boy!" said Brierly. "But don't mind his impudence my own little wife."

"Not yet, sir," pouted May.

"In two hours."

"There's many a slip between the cup and the lip, as you know. But as the clerks aren't come, I thought I might just look in and shew you——"

"Your wedding gown!"

"Yes. It's Mrs. Gibson's present, oh! and with such a kind note—and she insists on providing the breakfast—and she's sent in the most beautiful cake, and flowers from their own conservatory. My little room looks so pretty."

"It always looks pretty when thou art in it. I shall never miss the sun, even in Nicholas Lane, after we are married, darling."

"Oh! Robert, won't it be delightful? Me, housekeeper, and you, messenger, and such a favour too! And to think we owe all, to these good kind generous—There's only one thing I can't get off my mind."

"What's that?" said Bob.

"Mr. Gibson doesn't know the truth about you. We should have told him before this."

"It's hard for a poor chap that's fought clear of the mud, to let go the rope he's holding to and slide back again. I'll tell him when I've been long enough here to try me, only wait a bit."

"Perhaps you are right, dear. Sometimes the thought comes like a cloud across me. But you've never said how you like my dress?"

She turned around like an uncommonly tempting teetotum.

Robert admired it with all the simple glee that May herself exhibited.

"I couldn't see it for looking at thy bonny face," said he, "but it's a grand brave gown!"

"Oh! I forgot!" said May. "Mr. Jones is here, and Mrs. Willoughby. They're going to church with us, you know. Emily looks so nice—I—I was afraid. She would so like to see the office, she says if I may bring her in."

The messenger glanced at the clock.

"Oh, yes! the place is free to the petticoats till business hours."

May left the room for a few minutes and when she returned she led the dancer by the hand.

Emily had not been able to achieve wonders in the costume line, but, considering all, her spotted muslin dress and neat hat would not have forced any one into the belief of her dejected state.

"Oh! Mr. Brierly," said the dancer looking around.

"While Robert does the honours of the office," said May, "I'll go and help Mrs. Willoughby to set out the breakfast. The white service looks so lovely, Robert, and my canary sings as I haven't heard him since I left the old lodgings. He knows there's joy in the wind."

As if to chime in with her flight, the voice of Mrs. Willoughby was heard calling,

"Miss Edwards!"

May ran to the door.

"There! I'm wanted. I'm coming, Mrs. Willoughby. Oh, dear! If I'd known the trouble it was to be married, I don't think I should have ventured. I'm coming."

"I did so want to see an office—a real one, you know. I've seen 'em set on the stage often, but they ain't a bit like the real thing," said Emily.

"They are but dull places. Not this one, though, once May's been house-keeper."

"Yes, they are dull, but so respectable—look so like money, you know. I suppose, now, there's no end of money passes here?"

"A hundred pounds a day, sometimes," answered Robert.

"Gracious goodness! All in sovereigns?"

"Not a farthing—all in cheques and bills. We've a few thousands, that a queer old fashioned depositor insists on Mr. Gibson keeping here, but except that, and the petty cash, there's no hard money in the place."

"Dear me! I thought you City people sat on stools all day shovelling sovereigns about. Not that I could bear to think of Jones sitting on a stool all day, even to shovel about sovereigns, he always says something in the City would suit him better than the comic duet business. But he doesn't know what's good for him—never did, poor fellow."

"Except when he married you," interposed Brierly.

"Well, I don't know about that, but I suppose he would have got through the property without me—he's so much the gentleman, you know."

"He's coming to church with us?"

"Oh, yes! You know he's to give away the bride. But he was obliged to keep an appointment in the City first, so queer for Jones, wasn't it? He wouldn't tell me what it was."

During this conversation the rattle of a cab had culminated, and then dropped to silence at the door of 25.

Out of the vehicle leaped Green Jones—the Green Jones of other days, in all the glory of new frock coat, white vest and such a pair of gloves!

Emily ran to the window on hearing her husband's loud voice.

He was bidding the cabby wait for his half-crown.

This fact made Emily sure of the identity.

She had left him in seed—to behold him in blossom.

"In a cab—and new coat and waistcoat! oh!" cried the dancer. "Well, I shan't pay for 'em Mr. Jones!"

She was more amazed when the cabman impressed a couple of boys besides two men who had ridden on the box with him, and the procession, laden with boxes, marched into the passage and into the broker's office.

Green waved the men to get.

"Very good! wait!" said he. "There! all's here! Let's see. Bormets Colonge, gloves, bouquets—seven ten—that's thirteen! Two and six, the cab! my own togs five ten—that's thirteen two six in all!" said he reckoning on the tips of the gloves.

"Gracious goodness, are you mad, Jones?" exclaimed Emily.

"Is your principal here, Brierly," said the restored swell.

"The governor?" queried the messenger.

Green nodded slightly.

"No, it's not his time yet."

"*En attendant*," said Jones, "you couldn't advance me thirteen two six, could you?"

Brierly's face was perceptibly clouded.

"What! lend you the money?" said he. "I'm afraid——"

"Oh, Jones!" said the dancer, pulling her husband by the sleeve reproachfully.

"Emily, be calm," said he. "It's not the least consequence. They can wait—the shopman—that is—I mean, the two shopmen and the cabby."

"Oh, he's gone crazy!" cried the dancer.

"The fact is, I've had a windfall. Choker Black has turned up trumps. He was put in the hole in California's year, had a bolt to Australia—struck an awfully pocket at the diggings, and is paying off his old ticks like an emperor. He let me in for two thousand, and he has sent me bills for five hundred, as a first instalment."

"Five hundred! And you've got the money?"

"I've got the bills on his agent. Here they are. Emily, embrace your husband," said Green kissing her.

"I wish you joy—both of you. Mr. Gibson will discount the bills for you as soon as he comes in," said Brierly.

"But, I say, cash, you know, no curious sherry—no old masters, or patent filters—I've had rather too much of that sort of thing in my time."

"What loves of gloves!" exclaimed the ballet-girl, who had her fingers employed in unfastening the boxes. "What a duck of a bonnet!"

"No, you're not among your old sixty per cent, friends here. We only do good bills at the market rate."

"That's your sort. I feel now the full value of the commercial principle."

"Oh, Green! But you'll be careful of the money?" cried Emily.

"Careful! I'm an altered man. Henceforth I swear—you'll allow me to register a vow in your office?" said Jones, "to devote myself to the virtuous pursuit of money-making. I'm worth five hundred pounds, I've fifteen hundred more coming in—Not the farthing of that money shall go in foolish extravagance."

"But how about these things, Jones?"

"Trifles;—a *cadeau de nocce* for the ladies, and a case of Eau-de-Cologne for myself. I've been running to seed so long, and want watering so much," said he sprinkling himself with cologne. "Oh dear, Green! I'm afraid you're as great a fool as ever," exclaimed Emily.

"Nay, nay, Mrs. Jones—no man's a fool with £500 in his pocket. But here come the clerks;—bandboxes and bouquets ain't business-like. You must carry these down to May," said Brierly, indicating Jones' purchases.

Green began loading his wife with them.

"Beg her acceptance of a bonnet, a bouquet and a box of seven and a quarters—and accept the same yourself from yours ever affectionately G. J."

He tried to kiss her over the pile of bandboxes, but it was a lamentable failure, as the mingled aroma of the artificial flowers of the bouquets, the perfumed gloves, the cologne, set him violently sneezing.

He followed his spouse a little way with a deal of springiness forcing her to cry out that she'd let all the things drop if he wouldn't go along with his nonsense.

"I'm glad they're gone," muttered Robert.

The clock struck and speedily, a couple of clerks came in. They were delighted to find that, near as it was to their employer's hour, they were beforehand.

One of them wished to know if he could do anything for Mr. Jones, who had returned to the office.

"No!" said Robert, "the gentleman's waiting to see—Oh, here is Mr. Gibson!"

Indeed, the broker walked into his office, and exchanged a good morning with its occupants.

"Oh! Robert," said he, "I didn't expect to find you at the office this morning."

The messenger smiled.

"There's a gentleman waiting for you, on business," said he, indicating Jones.

"If you'll walk into my room," said Mr. Gibson.

One of the clerks opened a side door, and Green strode into the sanctum with the air of an Alexander who had been informed by an oracle that the new world he was to conquer was there situated.

"I thought, sir," said Robert, as his master stood by him to deposit his umbrella in the rack, "that I might as well number the checks and go for the petty cash. Somehow I felt I shouldn't like anything to go wrong to-day."

"Well," said the broker, "that's a very proper feeling, I hope May likes my wife's present. She is a first-rate housekeeper, though she did call you her brother, the little rogue and I've every reason to be satisfied with you."

"I'm right pleased of that," said Robert.

"You won't mind my giving you a word of advice on your wedding day?"

"Certainly not, sir! at anytime."

Go on as you've begun, Robert. Keep a bright eye and an inquiring tongue in your head—learn how business is done—watch the market—and from what I've seen of you the six months you've been here, I shouldn't wonder if I found a better berth than messenger for you one of these days."

"Mr. Gibson—sir—I can't thank you—but a look-out like that—it takes a man's breath away."

"In the City there's no gap between the first step of the ladder, and the top of the tree. But that gentleman's waiting. By-the-way! I expect a call from a Mr. Hawkshaw."

"Hawkshaw!" echoed Robert.

"Yes, the famous detective," returned the broker, not remarking his emotion.

"Show him in when he comes. I've a particular appointment with him."

With these words, Robert was left to himself, except for the clerks.

Hawkshaw coming there!

Such a key-note to the requiem of his dearest hopes.

The prisoners at Portland had so often said that the detective, who had been chief witness at his trial, never forgot a face he once had seen.

He would know him, then, and of course tell the broker. Then, still more, master of course, the Ticket-of-Leave would be discharged.

That day! Just when it had dawned so brightly.

But not of himself, thought Brierly so much. Of dear May.

Poor May.

Her heart would break.

Why had he come that day?

Fool!

Had he not better remedy it at once?

He caught up his hat and, muttering some excuse to the clerks, strode to the door.

But he heard a footstep in the passage, and coming along towards him in the hall, was Hawkshaw himself.

The man who held more than a life—the ruin or security of two loving hearts in his hand!

## CHAPTER X.

THE AGONY OF SUSPENSE. THE TIGER SHOWS HIS CUNNING, THIS TRIP. CAUGHT, TO CATCH!

ROBERT had slowly retreated, and returned inside the room, stammering that he had forgotten something.

The clerks only smiled, as they attributed it all to the momentous occasion. The detective came into the office slowly and inquired for Mr. Gibson.

"He's in, sir!" returned Robert, "but engaged with a gentleman."

"Take in my name," said the other, writing on a card. "I've seen you before, I think?" added he, as he caught Brierly's eyes.

The latter shrank but recovered himself.

"I don't recollect you, sir!" replied he, with an effort repressing his agitation.

"Perhaps," said Hawkshaw carelessly. "Perhaps I'm wrong. Though I've a good memory for faces. Take in my card."

But as he looked over the Times, he murmured to himself:

"It's Dalton's pal—the youngster who got four years for passing forged Bank of England paper, at the Belle Vue Tea Gardens. I owe Master Dalton one for that yet. Returned from Portland, eh? He looks all the better for his schooling. But Portland's a queer shop to hire a messenger from. I wonder if his employer got a character from his last place!"

But he displayed no emotion whatever when Robert returned to say that Mr. Gibson would see him directly.

In fact, Green Jones almost instantly bounded out of the private room.

He clapped Brierly on the shoulder and cried out with a gaiety that racked his hearer:

"All right! Market rate—and no old masters. I'll drive to the bank—cash this—settle with those counter-skippers, and rattle back in time to see you turned off. I say—you must allow me to order a little dinner at the Star and Garter, and drive you down—all right, you know. Mail phaeton and pair—your wife and my wife. I want to show you the style G. J. used to do it in." They heard him add loudly as he appeared in the street: "Now, cabby, pull round. London Joint Stock Bank! Best pace!"

"He little thinks what may be hanging over me," thought Bob.

"Now, Mr. Hawkshaw, I'm at your service," said Mr. Gibson, at his door.

"Cool case of note-passing that at Bow-street, yesterday," said Hawkshaw, handing Robert the paper. "It's my man, sure enough!" added he, following the broker into his sanctum.

"All's over," thought Bob. "I am not changed enough. He knows me—I can read it in his face—his voice. He'll tell Mr. Gibson! Perhaps he's telling him now!—I wish I'd spoken to him—but they have no mercy. Oh, if I'd only made a clean breast of it to Mr. Gibson before this!"

Mr. Gibson opened his door to let his head pass through.

"Mr. Sharpe, just go around to the banks and see what's going on."

One of the clerks laid down his pen, changed his coat, put on his hat and went out.



"And Mr. Burton," said the broker to the other quill-driver, "I think you will just be in time for the morning's clearance."

He was closing the door without saying a word to Robert, when he suddenly paused and said:

"Robert, before you leave, just step round to Glynn's, and get me cash for this. You'll have time enough before you will be wanted downstairs, you rascal."

It was evident he knew nothing.

"I'll be back in five minutes," said the messenger, taking the check.

But at the door, he couldn't help stopping to overhear the subjoined dialogue.

"Your messenger, eh?" queried Hawkshaw.

"Yes," returned the broker.

"Had him long?"

"Six months."

"Good character?"

"Never had a steadier, soberer, better behaved lad in the office."

Listeners do hear good of themselves.

"Had you references with him," continued the detective.

"Well, not exactly. I think I took him mainly on the strength of his good looks, and his sweetheart's. An honest face is the best testimonial after all."

"Humph! neither is always to be relied on."

Robert could not go away now, if he would.

"You detectives would suspect your own fathers," said Mr. Gibson. "Come, you never had him through your hands?"

Brierly felt that heart, respiration, life within him were suspended.

"No!" returned Hawkshaw, who considered that the poor devil had paid his debt at Portland. "No! he's quite a stranger to me. I hope he won't make any mistake with that check, though."

Brierly darted off on his mission, thanking heaven for the detective's words.

"My dear sir," said Mr. Gibson, "he's had money in his hands of far greater amount and even more easily convertible. He might very unlikely run away from me—but not from his wife—his wife to be—at least!"

"Well," said Hawkshaw, "we are with ourselves. To business. You say a bill drawn by Vanzeller on the London Joint Stock Bank, was presented for discount here last night, which you know to be a forgery?"

"Yes," said the broker. "As it was after hours the clerk told the presenter to call this morning."

"Bill forging is tip-top work. The man who did this job knows what he's about. We mustn't alarm him. What time did the clerk tell him to call?"

"At eleven."

"It's within five minutes. You go to your room. I'll take my place at one of these desks as a clerk and send the customers in to you. When the forged bill is presented, you come to the door and say, loud enough for me to hear—'Vanzeller and Co., Penang,' and leave the rest to me."

"Haden't I better have assistance within call?" said the broker nervously.

"Oh, dear, no—I like to work single handed—but don't be excited. Take it coolly, or you may frighten the bird."

"Easy to say take it coolly! I haven't been thief catching all my life," said Mr. Gibson, entering his sanctum in no enviable state of mind.

Hawkshaw smiled to himself, and placed himself at one of the desks, amusing himself with guesses at the probable perpetrator of this heinous offence on the mercantile world.

Several boys and older clerks came in to leave slips and get their filled out books returned, but Mr. Gibson attended to all that.

Finally, in hobbled a queer old chap in ancient habiliments whom the detective easily recognised as Melter Moss.

The old usurer had baffled the police so long, that Hawkshaw was pretty sure that he was not the forger.

Besides, Moss had his bill-book in his hand, and as he ran the papers over, he indulged in a semi-audible commentary:

"Let me see—Spelter & Wayne. Fifty, ten three—thirty days after sight. That's commercial. For two hundred at two months—drawn by Captain Crabbs—accepted by the Honourable Augustus Greenway: that's a thirty per center. Better try that at another shop. Mossop & Mills—good paper—ninety-nine, eight—at sixty days. That'll do here."

But as he was drawing out the paper he meant to present, he heard the private office door open.

Mr. Gibson had just got the first syllable of the detective's name out when the latter silenced him with a gesture, and hurried after him into the sanctum.

But the usurer had caught the sound although he had given no token of so having done.

"Hawkshaw! a detective here, eh? Ware—hawks."

But his natural alarm was quickly dissipated.

"Well, it ain't for me—I'm all on the square now. If bills will go missing—it ain't me that steals 'em—Tiger does that—I'm always a *bona fide* holder for value—I can face any examination, I can. But I should like to know Hawkshaw's little game, and I shouldn't mind spoiling it. Mr. Gibson, if you please."

said he as the detective opened the office door.

He had been censuring a business man like Mr. Gibson who had been so green as to call a man like the public functionary by his real name.

"He's in his office, sir," replied he.

Melter could not help laughing inwardly at the disguised officer's capital assumption of a clerk's voice.

However, he betrayed no emotion and had his conference in all quietude with the broker.

Hawkshaw found that his surmise had been correct, and that the signal for his services was not given.

Melter came out chuckling silently.

It was all right. The "beautiful paper," as most of his checks and drafts were, was easily put off. Two "fishy" ones, he would try farther down the lane where they might not be so particular.

Hawkshaw saw him go, without interfering of course.

But Moss, as soon as he had got out on the stoop, began to protract his stay there by all means of excuse, such as securing his book, preparing his spectacles, etc.

It might be some pal of his, this person for whom the spider-detective was waiting in the web.

To his joy, he suddenly espied an elderly gentleman, in irreproachable but quiet attire, stepping gingerly along the flags.

Melter had hardly taken one long look at the venerable white whiskers than he muttered to himself.

"It's Tiger in his city get up! oh! if this should be Hawkshaw's little game? I'll let on!"

As the old gentleman reached the portal, he exchanged a knowing look with Mr. Moss, and inquired in the most benignant tone:

"Mr. Gibson, sir?"

"Yes, sir," said Melter, "you'll find him in."

And then in a low quick tone:

"Twig the clerk!" and off he limped.



"Forewarned, forearmed," muttered Jem Dalton, giving a touch to his disguise.

Hawkshaw called Mr. Gibson as the new comer entered:

"A party wants to see you, sir, if you could step this way a moment?"

Dalton smiled to himself.

Old Moss might crow now. The detective's trap was unveiled to the intended victim.

With his quiet voice, as he held out a paper to the broker, Jem inquired:

"Would you oblige me, Mr. Gibson, by looking very particularly at this bill."

"Vanzeller & Co., Penang," exclaimed the broker, glancing at his ally.

But Hawkshaw merely went across the office, and sat down to a book at another desk.

Gibson repeated the words.

The detective unseen by either of the other, was noiselessly getting a pair of spring handcuffs open under cover of the desk.

"Vanzeller & Company," re-iterated the broker once more, fearful that he had made some blunder.

"Yes, a most respectable firm," said Jem. "But all's not gold that glitters; I thought the paper as safe as you do; but, unluckily, I burnt my fingers with it once before. You may or may not remember my presenting a bill drawn by the same firm for discount two months ago."

"Yes, particularly well."

"Well, sir, I have now discovered that was a forgery."

"So have I," said Mr. Gibson.

"And I'm sadly afraid between you and me.—By the way, I hope I may speak safely before your clerk?"

"Oh, quite," said the broker.

"I'm almost satisfied that this bill is a forgery too," said Dalton. "The other has been impounded, I hear. My object in coming here yesterday was, first to verify, if possible, the forgery in the case of this second bill; and next, to ask your assistance, as you had given value for the first as well as myself, in bringing the forger to justice."

"Really, sir!" said Mr. Gibson, surprised.

"Oh, my dear sir! If we City men don't stand by each other in these rascally cases! But before taking any other step, there is one thing I owe to myself, as well as to you, and that is, to repay you the amount of the first forged bill."

"But you said you had given value for it?" said the broker.

"The more fool I! But if I am to pay twice, that is no reason you should be a loser. I've a memorandum of the amount here."

Dalton took out a billbook and scanned its formidable list of entries.

Then he checked it off, made a tick to the amount in his cashbook, and then proceeded to raid upon the contents of his wallet, counting the money methodically.

"Two hundred and twenty-seven—five. Here are notes—two hundreds—a ten—and two fives—seven—and one—two—three."

"Oh! pray, sir, don't trouble yourself about the coppers," said Gibson as the supposed old gentleman made up the odd pence.

Hawkshaw put up the manacles.

"I'm particular in these matters. Excuse me, it's a little peculiarity of mine—three—four—five. There! that's off my conscience! But you've not examined the notes."

"Oh, my dear sir!" said the broker, rolling up the notes.

"Ah! careless, careless! Luckily, I had endorsed 'em."

"Really, sir, I had marked that two hundred and twenty off bad debt a month ago. By the way, I have not the pleasure of knowing your name?"

"Wake, sir—Theophilus Wake, of the firm of Wake, Brothers, shippers and wharfingers, Limehouse, and Dock-street, Liverpool. Here's our card."

"So far from expecting you to repay the money, I thought you were coming to bleed me fresh with forged bill No. 2—for a forgery it is, most certainly."

"Quite natural, my dear sir, quite natural—I've no right to feel the least hurt."

"And what's more, I had a detective at that desk, ready to pounce upon you."

Dalton assumed an expression of the extremest respectability bewildered at the idea of the faintest breath of suspicion.

"No, really!" exclaimed he.

"You can drop the clerk, now, Mr. Hawkshaw."

"Hawkshaw! Have I the honour to address Mr. Hawkshaw, the detective, the hero of the great gold dust robberies, and the famous Trunk-line-transfer forgeries?" cried Jem.

"I'm the man, sir. I believe——" answered the officer modestly.

"Sir, the whole commercial world owes you a debt of gratitude it can never repay. I shall have to ask your valuable assistance in discovering the author of these audacious forgeries."

"Have you any clue?" inquired the detective.

"I believe they are the work of a late clerk of ours—who got into gay company, poor lad, and has gone to the bad. He knew the Vanzellers' signature, as they were old correspondents of ours."

"Is the lad in London?"

"He was within a week."

"Can you give me a description of him? Age, height, hair, eyes, complexion, associations, any female connections?" said Hawkshaw hastily.

Jem seemed amazed at the flow of words, but he recovered sufficiently to respond:

"Unluckily I know very little of him personally. My partner Walker Wake, can supply you with all the information you want. He has been making inquiries."

"I hope he hasn't frightened him off. Well, where will I find him?"

"At our office. We'll take a cab and question him at our office. Or," said Jem, as if struck by a sudden thought, "suppose you were to bring him here, so that we could all lay our heads together."

Mr. Gibson nodded.

"You won't leave the office till I come back?" queried Hawkshaw, buttoning up his coat for the sortie.

"If Mr. Gibson would permit me to remain?" said Dalton, timidly glancing towards the broker.

The latter said that he would only be too deeply obliged.

"You may expect me back in half an hour at the farthest," remarked the detective. "Egad, sir!" continued he, "you have had a narrow escape of it. I had the darbies open under the desk, Mr. Wake."

"Mr. Wide-a-Wake knew that," thought Jem.

But he only took the bracelets up in one hand daintily and eyed them, much as some lion of the virgin forest might be supposed to regard a cage in a menagerie.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed he, in the most natural cachinnation of elderly gentlemanhood. "How very pleasant. So they put these things on criminals to prevent them breaking away! Dear me! I suppose these are improved species too! I've a faint remembrance, Mr. Gibson, of seeing a person so secured a long while ago in the Old Bailey. I forget the name—he was a celebrated offender. It wasn't Jack Turpin or Dick Sheppard, or any of those, but——"

"I'll be soon down on the youngster," interposed Hawkshaw, impatiently.

"If he hasn't left London?"

"Bless you," laughed the officer. "They can't leave London! They're like the moths—they turn and turn about the candle till they burn their wings."

Jem shook his head solemnly.

"Ah!" said he, "we should give more thanks to men like you. How little society is aware of what it owes to its detective benefactors."

"Well, there's the satisfaction of doing our duty. And somebody else now and then."

"A good reward," said Mr. Gibson.

"Not bad," returned the officer. "But there's something better than that."

"Indeed?" said Jem, interestedly.

"The paying off old scores. If I would only clinch the darbies on Jem Dalton, for instance!"

"Dalton?" repeated the representative of the Tiger ilk. "What grudge have you got against him in particular?"

"He was the death of my pal—the best mate I ever had—poor Joe Skirrit!" replied Hawkshaw with emotion. "I shall never work with such another!"

"Did he murder him?" asked the broker.

"Not to say murder right out. But he spoiled him. Gave him a clip on the head with a neddy—a life preserver. He was never his own man afterwards. He left the force on a pension, but he grew sort of paralysed, and then got queer in his head. I was sitting with him the week before he died—'Jack,' he says, it was Joe and Jack with us, 'Jack,' he says, 'I lay my death at the Tiger's door—that was the name we had for Dalton in the force. 'You'll look after him, Jack,' he says, 'for the sake of your old mate.' By—no, I won't say what I said, but I promised him to be even with Jem Dalton, and I'll keep my word."

"You know this Dalton?" said Jem.

"Know him! He has as many outsides as he has aliases. You may identify him for a felon to-day, and pull your hat off to him for a parson to-morrow. But I'll hunt him out of all his skins;—and my best night's sleep will be the day I've brought Jem Dalton to the dock!"

"Mr. Hawkshaw, I wish you every success!"

"But I've other fish to fry now," said the detective, hurrying away to the address on the card:

"Wake Brothers, Buckle's Wharf, Limehouse."

"Ask anybody for our office! And if anybody can tell you I *shall* be astonished!" said Jem to himself.

"I'm really ashamed to keep you waiting, sir," remarked the broker.

"Oh, I can write my letters here;" returned Jem, at the counter. "If you don't mind trusting me all alone in your office?"

"My dear sir, if you were Dalton himself—the redoubtable Tiger—you couldn't steal nothing but ledgers and daybooks, and there's nothing more valuable here—except, by the way, my queer old depositor, Miss Faddle's five thousand, that she insists on my keeping here in the office in gold, as she believes neither in banks or bank notes. And, talking of notes, I may as well lock up these y-u so handsomely paid me."

"Not believe in notes! Infatuated woman!" said Jem, adding: "I hope he'll like mine."

"I'll leave you to write your letter," said Mr. Gibson, locking up the notes in his safe. "If anybody should come in, be so good as to pull that bell. I haven't seen my housekeeper this morning. A young and good girl that's to be married to-day."

"Ah!" said Jem, making a great flourish of papers on the mahogany.

In another minute, he found himself all alone in the office.

"Phew!" whistled he to himself. "Another little reach towards Millbank!"

But I've done 'em clean! That's the narrowest shave I ever had! So, Jack Hawkshaw, you'll be even with Jem Dalton yet will you? You may add this day's work to the score against him. How the old boy swallowed my soft sawder and Brünagen notes! They're beauties! It would be a pity to leave them in his hands—and five thousand shiners p'raps alongside of 'em. Here goes for a squeeze at the lock!"

Ere commencing, he had listened carefully.

Then assured of no interruption, he took out a small piece of wax from a secret pocket and, with a fine picklock, pressed it into the Chubb keyhole.

He never traveled without his tools.

The complications of the wards took him longer than he had anticipated.

He was in the most delicate part of all, when he felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and a voice cry out:

"Hold hard! what are you at that lock for?"

## CHAPTER XI.

THE COMPROMISE WITH GUILT. NO HONOR AMONG THIEVES. THE BROKEN BRIDAL.  
THE WILLOW THAT BENDS TO RISE.

It was Brierly who had surprised the felon in the burglarious act.

Jem instantly recalled his features.

"Hands off, young 'un," said he. "Don't you know a locksmith when you see him?"

"Gammon!" returned Bob. "Who are you? How came you here? What are you doing with that safe?"

"You ask a great deal too many questions," rejoined the other coolly.

"I'll trouble you to answer 'em!" said the Ticket-of-Leave.

"By what right?"

"I'm messenger in this office, and I've a right to know who touches a lock here."

"Oh! you're messenger here, eh? Indeed! and suppose I took to asking questions—you mightn't be so quick to answer yourself, Robert Brierly!"

"You know me?"

"Yes."

The messenger looked fixedly at his interlocutor, but he could not recognize him.

"I do know you," said Jem. "And your character from your last place—Port—"

"Sh!"

"Your hair hasn't grown so fast but I can see traces of the prison crop."

"For mercy's sake."

Dalton smiled.

"Silence for silence. Ask me no questions and I'll press you for no answers."

"You must explain your business here to Mr. Gibson," said Robert firmly.

"I suspect you for a thief."

"And I know you for a jail-bird. Let's see whose information will go the furthest."

Robert remained in indecision. Anything to escape such an exposure, was all he could think:

"I'll make you a fair offer, Robert Brierly," said Jem. "Let me pass, and I leave this place without breathing a word to your employer that you're fresh."

from a sentence of penal servitude, for four years. Detain me, and I denounce you, for the convict that you are; somebody's coming, speak!"

"Go—go!" moaned the messenger.

Tiger had already reached the door in assurance of this being the reply.

He disappeared as Mrs. Willoughby came in by the house door.

She was in the most gorgeously-patterned shawl that ever woman wore.

And her dress was a silk of a verdant hue unknown to any dyer since moderate memory.

She looked about somewhat embarrassed.

"Which, I've to ask pardon for intruding," said she, "not bein' used to an office, and knowing my place I 'ope. But it's gettin' on for a quarter past eleven, Mr. Robert, and twelve's the latest they will do it, and the breakfast all set out beautiful—and some parties is a gettin' impatient, which it's no more than natural, bless her, and Sam that rampagious—But whatever's the matter? You look struck all of a heap like?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. It's natural, you know, a man should look queer on his wedding morning. There, go and tell May I'll be with her directly," said he, attempting to smile.

But it was fortunate that the old lady was too much agitated to notice him more closely.

"Ah! hark! here's Sam, which that boy follows me all about!" cried she.

Sam came in dancing Bob Ridley.

"Oh, come along, Bob!" cried he, "we're all tired of waiting, especially this child. Come along! 'Oh, we ain't got time to tarry, ain't got time to stay! oh, we all are bound for Canaan, the lan' so faraway!' sang he to the intense admiration of his grandmother.

"Oh, that boy!" said she. "If it ain't enough to make any grandmother's 'eart proud!"

Robert, sick at heart, shuddered like one in a fever. The agony of being known by the detective had been followed by relief as excessive when Hawkshaw had spared him. And now again to be depressed by the impending denunciation of the stranger.

He was like one in a dream, and his pale lips kept murmuring, trying to make him hope:

"Yes—he's gone—I can draw my breath again—I was wrong to let him go. But to have the cup at one's lip, and see it struck away—I couldn't—even the detective had mercy. When we're married, I'll tell Mr. Gibson all."

"Are you coming Bob, now or never?" cried Sam.

"Go—go," returned the other impatiently, "I'll follow you—I've some business matters to attend to."

"A nice state for business you are in—I don't think!"

Sam pointed to him.

"There, granny! That is what comes of getting married! If it ain't an awful warning to a young fellow like me!"

"Drat your impudence!"

"But the party's waiting down stairs, and we're wanted to keep 'em in spirits, so come along, granny!"

And he made the old lady dance out of the office with him.

Dalton had not been idle during the while; he had thought, from his intimate knowledge of Brierly that the latter would be useful to the outlaws in general, and his clique in particular.

As he was considering what to do, he ran against Melter Moss at the Exchange.

He quickly imparted the discovery to him.

"You had better blow on him," said Jem. "I owe him one for spoiling my squeeze."

"Very well, sir," said the usurer, as a policeman came by. "I remember the young man now. A convict get himself into a respectable situation. It is a duty one owes to society to put his employer on his guard."

This pious motive impelled him to a second visit to Mr. Gibson.

The latter treated his communication with irreverence, truth to say, perplexed as he was with a strange medley of forgers, detectives, handcuffs, till he could hardly have told a Hawkshaw from a handsaw.

"Very well," said Melter, in an offended tone, "you can question him, sir, if you don't believe me. Anyway, I've done my duty, and that's what I look to."

With which maxim, he limped off to hazard one of the "fishy" bills not yet negotiated.

As soon as the messenger saw his master disengaged, he hastened to put down the money he had drawn.

"The money for the check, sir."

"Robert!" said the broker, as the messenger was going into the house.

Brierly started at the unusual sternness.

"Sir?"

"Where are you going?"

"To dress for church, sir," was the reply.

"Stay here."

"Sir?"

"You have deceived me."

"Mr. Gibson——"

"I know all—your crime—your conviction—your punishment!"

"Mercy! mercy!" said Robert.

"Unhappy young man."

"Ah! unhappy you may well call me. I was sentenced, sir, but I was not guilty. It's true, sir, but I don't expect you to believe it—I've worked out my sentence, sir—they hadn't a mark against me at Portland—you may ask 'em—here's my Ticket-of-Leave, sir. You own I've been steady and industrious since I came here. By heaven's help I mean to be so still, indeed I do."

"I dare say, but I must think of my own credit and character. If it was buzzed about that I kept a Ticket-of-leave man in my employment——"

Brierly clasped his hands, and looked piteously supplicating on the broker.

A noisy party, May, surrounded by her friends, came into the office, with much rustling of new dresses.

"Which, axin' your pardon, Mr. Gibson, we're all ready, and the cab is a waitin'——" apologised the landlady.

"And the parson getting cold," said Sam.

"Robert, why are you not dressed? What is the matter?" cried May.

"Heaven help thee, my poor lass," said Robert, sadly.

"You are pale—you tremble—you are ill! Oh, speak, what is it?"

"Bear up, May. But our marriage—cannot—be—yet—awhile."

"The wedding put off!" chorused all.

May stood aghast, her hands on her heart, that was so suddenly chilled.

"No bonnets!" cried the ballet-girl.

"And no breakfasts!" exclaimed Mrs. W.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Jones, his very neckcloth drooping.

"Here's a go!" said Sam, upsetting a bottle of ink, and clapping the newspaper over the pool.

"Am I dreaming?" moaned poor May. "Robert, what does this mean?"

"It's hard to bear, dear," said the Ticket-of-Leave. "Keep up your heart." May saw it all.

He was discharged. She, too, fell under the ban, for the broker included her in the deception.

"But it was I alone deceived you, sir," said May, "not he, only give him a chance," implored she.

"Never heed her, sir," said Brierly. "She would have told you long ago, but I hadn't the heart. Poor lass! Let her bide here, sir. I'll never trouble you. I'll leave the country—enlist!"

May silenced him.

"Dear," said she firmly, "we were wrong to hide the truth—we were punished, sorely punished. But if you have courage to face what's before us, I have!"

"My brave girl!" said Robert. "We'll go together, May. Good-bye, friends. Thank you, sir."

## CHAPTER XII.

TAVERN. THE JONES'S NEW PHASE. THE "ROMANZA OF THE RENOVATED WIND." THE LAST CHANCE. BRAVE LITTLE MAY.

It was not so easy to reach the "Bridgewater Arms" P. H., this evening, four months or so after the period of our last chapter.

The water pipes and gas and sewers, or heaven and the Commissioner of the Streets and Public Ways know what, were wrong again, and the streets approaching the tavern were torn up and barricaded by mounds and scaffolding.

Yet we must enter the public-house, for there are to be found three, if not more, acquaintances of ours.

For, at a table, sat Jem Dalton, still disguised, but affecting the young man with a false moustache and a rakish air.

He confronted Melter Moss, who seemed to have suffered no alteration in attire at least, and had, evidently, never had his hat off out in the rain, to judge by his visage.

But the publican, with a red-pimpled countenance, small twinkling eyes, and the "lamp of whose nose," in the words of a facetious writer, "had never gone out."

With a lamentable broken-down, pulled up look, can this be the once manager of Cremorne, Maltby, to whom even head waiters cringed?

Alas! such is life!

He seems to feel the contrast, for, as he sets the pint of sherry ordered on the Dalton table, he sighs and remarks to the usurer.

"Very curious!—Yes, Mr. Moss, it's a pleasure to see you, sir, at the Bridgewater arms; though it aint the Belle Vue Gardens! worse luck!"

"Ah! ups and downs is the lot of life, Mr. Maltby. You'll let me know when Mr. Tottie comes?" said Moss.

"Ah, the subcontractor for the main sewer in the next street. Such a nuisance! stops all traffic——"

"But sends you all the navvies. It's here they're taken on, and paid—you know."

"Connexion not aristocratic, but beery; we do four butts a-week at the bar, to say nothing of the concert-room up stairs."

"What, the navvies like music to their malt, do they?" asked Jem.

"Oh, yes, sir! I introduced the arts from the West end. The roughs adore music, especially selections from the Italian Opera, and as for sentiment and sensation, if you could hear Miss St. Evremond touch them up with the 'Renovated Wind,' the new sensation ballad, by a gifted composer, attached to the estab-

lishment, and sold at the bar, price one shilling: why we've disposed of three dozen 'Renovateds' on a pay night—astonishing how it goes down!"

"With the beer?" said Jem.

"Sh!" said the tavernkeeper, "here comes Mrs. Jones!"

It was indeed Emily, a deal stouter still and showing her statuesque (I believe that's the word) shoulders out of all the scant glories of full evening dress.

"Gentlemen!" cried Maltby, "this is the great and gifted creature I was alluding to."

"Go along with your nonsense," said the singer, curtsying grandly.

"Miss St. Evremond, the great sensation balladist and Queen of song, formerly of the Nobility's Concerts and her Majesty's Theatre."

"Ahem—in the ballet," muttered Jem.

"Proud to make the acquaintance of so renowned an artist," said Melter, falling in a bow.

"You're very obliging I'm sure," said the vocalist! "How's the room to-night?" inquired she of Maltby.

"Tidy, but nothing to what it will be. It's the navvies pay-night you know."

"Navvies! oh, lord! to think of Emily St. Evremond wasting her sweetness upon an audience of navigators!" sighed the Tiger.

"They are not aristocratic, but they are appreciative."

"Yes! poor creatures! they do know a good thing when they hear it!"

"If Miss St. Evremond will oblige us with a ballad——" hinted he pointing to the piano in the corner.

"If these gentlemen wouldn't mind."

"On the contrary—we like music; don't we, Moss?"

"I doat upon it; especially Handel!" said the usurer.

"But where's the accompanist?"

"I regret to say the signor is disgracefully screwed!" answered the publican.

"Oh, never mind, Jones can accompany me! Come in, Green Jones, you are wanted!" called out she.

A long drawn face was Green's, more woeful than ever would have been needed for model by a sculptor bent on producing all les Miserables in one.

He was dressed in the shabby-genteel style: an old, well-brushed, well-watered, napless hat, with a piece of black crape, for the double purpose of hiding the age and grease, as well as keeping it together. A claret-coloured surcoat much the worse for wear; a black satin cravat, light purple from use; shirt, doubtful; trousers strapped tight; boots not clean, finished the person of the doubly broken down swell.

It's unnecessary to say that he had galloped through the Australian's remittances, and was thrown at last as low as this.

On his arm was a basket the contents of which emitted the more or less alluring exhalation appertaining to that comestible designated most appropriately sheep's feet, or, if you will have it abruptly, "trotters."

"In the trotter line, or the tuneful?" inquired Jones, in a voice in exquisite keeping with his habiliments.

"To accompany me on the piano!" replied Emily, arranging the bouquet in her bosom.

"Till you're ready, these gentlemen would like to try a trotter would they? A penny a set, and of this morning's boiling—if I might tempt you? They're delicious with a squoupon of pepper," said the eatables merchant.

"No, no, Mr. Jones, these are not *your* style of customers."

"Excuse me, Mr. Maltby, I'm aware trotters are not known in good society; but they go down as a relish, even with people accustomed to entrees! I liked 'em as a swell before I was reduced to them as a salesman."

"Perhaps you'd give us the Renovated Wind?"

"I can't do it without letting down my back hair," rejoined Emily. "Its' a romanza and recitative."

"Oh!" said Dalton, entreatingly, "down with the back hair by all means!"

As the speaker was the youngest man in the room and not ill-looking, the talented performer assented.

"You're very kind," said he. "Jones, where's the glass?"

Green had just opened the piano when this request induced him to dive into the basket and produce a hand-mirror and a comb, the latter of which two he took forth with a dexterity that made one doubt if it really had occupied that delicate position.

At length, the singer who had let her tresses flow down her back and had weaved her arms several times to "get up steam," as Maltby whispered to his friends the audience, bade her husband rattle off the overture.

The melody was one of the ordinary ones of the day, and was furnished with words calculated to raise the hair on end. We regret that our limitable space permits us merely the following harrowing extract of the recitative:

The flames they threaten'd to light up the morn,  
And hiss'd all watery attempts to scorn;  
Uprose the curling flames and writhed amain,  
As they had burn'd themselves and rear'd with pain;  
Uprose the ruddy smoke in lurid rolls,  
As fiery dragons had belch'd forth their souls!  
And flocks of glowing fragments forced on high,  
Like red flamingoes soar'd along the sky."

"Beauti——" began Moss.

"Hush!" said Maltby. "That's only the involuntary!"

"Oh!"

And indeed there was this to follow:

"The Renovated Wind now roars again,  
Plying his giant lungs in agony,  
Howling, and muttering thunder! How the rain  
Whirl'd with the rattling hail comes foaming! See  
The momentary flash dispart'd to be  
The herald of the Thunder! Hark, he comes,  
The formidable Lord of Terrors! He  
Whose lust dread peal shall pierce old Hades' gloom,  
And with galvanic shock resuscitate the tomb!"

Moss banged his umbrella on the floor. Jem pressed a handful of cigars on Jones, regretting loudly that he could not show his gratitude for the musical feast to Miss St. Evremond.

In a few minutes, a great stamping overhead, made Maltby run out and quickly return.

"Look sharp, Miss St. Evremond," said he. "The Wisconsin Warblers are at their last chorus?"

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said Emily to Jem, point-blank. She subjoined to her husband: "By-bye, dear, till after the concert—you know I can't be seen speaking to you while you carry that basket."

"True—in the humble trotter-man who would suspect the husband of the brilliant St. Evremond!" said Jones a la Manfred. "There's something romantic in it. I hover round the room, I hear you universally admired—see you visibly applauded—audibly adored. Oh, oh, agony!" said he, clasping his hands around the basket handle.

As soon as Moss and Jem were alone, they leant their heads towards each other's over the table.

"Now's our time," said the usurer, "While the fools upstairs are having their ears tickled. Have you the tools ready for jumping that crib in St. Nicholas Lane?"

"Yes, but tools ain't enough," returned the Tiger. "I must have a clear stage and a pal who knows the premises."

"I've managed that. Nobody sleeps in the place but the old housekeeper and her precious grandson."

"The errand boy?" said Jem. "Oh, he's as sharp as a terrier dog—and can bite, too. I'll warrant a young varmint. If he gets in my way——"

"No occasion for that, Jem! so you're so violent, Tiger. I've made the young man's acquaintance, I asked him here to-night for a quiet little game—his revenge, I called it. I'll dose the lad till he's past leaving the place. You drop a hint to the old lady—she'll come to take care of him. The coast will be clear yonder."

"And the five thousand shiners will be nailed in the turning of a jemmy. If we had that young Brierly in the job—he knows the way about the place blind-fold. But he's on the square, he is—bent on earning an honest livelihood."

"But I've blown him wherever he's got work. He *must* dance to our tune at last."

"Ah! if you've got him in hand! Work him into the job, and I'll jump the crib to-night."

"He's applied to be taken on at the contract works near here. This is the pay night—Tottie, the subcontractor, is a friend of mine——"

"He's lucky," sneezed Jem.

"Yes. I find him the cash at twenty per cent," said Moss, pointing to some bags of silver, he held, "till his certificates are allowed by the engineer. Taint heavy interest, but there's no risk—a word from me, and he'd discharge every navvie in his gang. But I've only to breathe jail-bird, and there's no need of a discharge. The men themselves would work the lad off the job. They are sad roughs, but they've a horror of jail-birds."

"Ah! nobody likes the Portland mark. I know that—I've tried the honest dodge, too."

"It don't answer."

"It didn't with me. I had a friend, like you, always after me. Whatever I tried, I was blown as a convict, and hunted out from honest men."

"And then you met me—and I was good to you—wasn't I?"

"Yes. You were very kind," answered Jem, ironically.

"Always allowed you handsome for the swag you brought, and put you up to no end of good things! and I'll stick by you, my dear—I never drop a friend."

"Not till the hangman takes your place at his side."

Jem held his arms beside him as if they were pinioned.

Moss started.

"Don't be disagreeable, my dear—you give me a cold shiver. Hush! here come the navvies," said the usurer.

The benches and long tables were filled by a boisterous set of the excavators, amid a clattering of hob nails.

Maltby and his servants came down from the concert room and were kept busy in obeying the calls for gin and beer.

There was one navvie, called Ginger by his mates, who seemed to have been tacitly permitted to take the lead.

He sang a song "Aboot oor geast oonder t' hedg" which was raptuously received, and then called for a gallon of beer, "aye, another when that's done. He was in brass that night and he stood treat."

There were a couple of men who sat among the laborers, and who were waiting to be took on.

One of them eagerly joined in Ginger's treat, but the other shook his head.

"Come, won't thou drink, my little flannel sack?" said Ginger.



"No, thank you," said the young man. "I've a poor head for liquor, and I've not had any supper yet."

At the sound of his voice, Jem pricked up his ears and nudged Moss.

"The Lancashire lad," said he.

"So he is here. Good," returned Moss.

But the navvie seemed not to like the rejection of his gift.

"Thou'st sure that its not proide?" said he to Robert.

"Pride?" repeated the latter bitterly. "I've no call for pride. I've come to try and get taken on at the works."

"Well, thou looks a tough un," commented the navvie. "There's Castiron Jack was mashed in the tunnel this morning. There'll be room for thee, if thou canst swing the old anchor."

Brierly looked puzzled.

The other laughed.

"It's easy to see that thou'rt no banker. Why, the pick to be sure—the groundman's breadwinner! Hallo! mates, keep a drop for Ginger!" cried he. He filled up the pewter that Robert had refused.

"Here's the old anchor, boys," cried he, "and long may you live to swing it."

"The pick for ever!" chorussed the rough throats, with a cheer.

"Mr. Tottie's in the parlor," said Maltby coming to Dalton's table. "He wishes to see you particularly, Mr. Moss."

"I should think he did," said the discount, taking up the coin. "Say, I'm coming."

The publican hurried away to herald the advent.

"I'm off, too," said Jem, rising and lighting a cigar at the gas. "I'll drop a hint to the old woman. Stay. We'd better work from the old church yard of St. Nicholas. There's a door opens on it from the crib. I'll hide the tools behind one of the tombstones."

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Moss. "Sacred to the memory of Jem Dalton's jack-in-the-box! ha, ha, ha!"

As the laughter went out by one door, Jem left by the street opening.

He had not been gone a second before Ginger flung a sovereign on the bar.

"Take your change oit of that," said he to the boy. "Call for more beer, mates, till I coom back!"

And he staggered out the front way.

"Thou'lt coom back, mate?" said the workmen.

"Aye, aye, boys, directly. Contractor's in t' parlor wi' week's pay."

"Here's his health!" said one. "Ginger's a right doon good chap!"

"He is. For he's a jolly good fellow," sang the rest.

Robert, hiding his face in his hands, brooded in a corner.

"Yes," mused he, "yes, the old anchor is my last chance—I've tried every road to an honest livelihood, and, one after another, they are barred in my face. Everywhere that dreadful word, jail-bird, seems to be breathed in the air about me—sometimes in a letter, sometimes in a hint, sometimes a copy of the newspaper with my trial, and then it is the same story, sorry to part with me, no complaint to make, but can't keep a Ticket-of-Leave man. Who can it be that hunts me down in this way? Hawkshaw spared me; I've done no man a wrong—poor fellows like me should have no enemies. I wouldn't care for myself, but my poor lass, my brave true-hearted May; I'm dragging her down along with me."

He did not even look up when Green Jones's voice came to his ear, as that versatile individual plied with his basket.

"Trotters, gents, trotters, penny the set, and this morning's boiling."

"Stop till we get brass, we'll clear out thy basket," said one of the navvies, as the mob of them tramped to the parlor to receive their wages.

Soon after the floor began to shake under heavy stamping, indicative of immense applauses.

Green was counting his change, when this earthquake burst over his head. He let the money drop into his pockets in frenetic haste.

"I can't stand it. Emily's bringing down the house in the Renovated Wind, but I can't stand it; my feelings as a husband are trampled on! But she's a tramp, too, and what talent! By heaven, if ever I get my head above water again, I won't fool away my money as I've done; no, I'll take a theatre at the west-end, and bring out my wife in everything. It will be an immense success. Meanwhile, 'till the pounds present themselves, let me look after the pence!"

And crying: "Trotters!" as melancholy as if they were coffin-plates, he returned to the concert room.

In the midst, or rather the depth of Brierly's misgivings, he felt a little hand on his shoulder, aye, littler than ever, for it was thinned with her unceasing labors.

It was May.

But her voice was as cheerful as if her fine wedding-dress and not this coarse calico and this half-mourning, was her attire.

She held up a tin dinner-can and a ragged but clean napkin wrapping up bread.

"Well, Robert, dear, I said I shouldn't be long; I've brought your supper."

"Thank thee, darling—I'm not hungry—thou'st been out after work all day—eat thyself—thou need'st strength most."

"Nay, dear, what will become of me if you lose heart? But if you'll be a good boy, and take your tea, I'll tell you a piece of good news—for you—for both of us," said she, gaily.

"That will be something new."

"I've got the promise of work from the Sailors' Ready-Made Clothing Warehouse near here. It won't be much, but it will keep the wolf from the door till you get another situation. Have you tried if the contractor here will take you on?"

"Not yet. He's in yonder paying the men. He'll send for me; but I scarcely dare to ask him. Oh, May, lass, I've held on hard to hope, but it feels as if it was slipping out of my hand at last."

May shook her head.

"Robert," said she earnestly, "dear Robert, grasp it hard! so long as we do what is right, all will come clear at last. We're in kind hands, dear—you know we are."

"I begin to doubt it, lass; I do, indeed?" said the Ticket-of-Leave.

"No, no! never doubt that, or my heart will give way, too!"

Bob took her hands tenderly in his.

"And thou that has had courage for both on us. Every blow that has fallen, every door that has been shut between me and an honest livelihood, every time that clean hands have been drawn away from mine, and other faces turned aside as I came near them, I've come to thee for comfort, and love, and hope—"

He kissed her.

"And I've found them till now!"

"And you'll find them forever—God grant it at least! Why, yes! what's the good of a wife only bright in sunshine! It's hard weather tries us women best, dear, you men ain't hulf so stout-hearted."

"I'd not mind the misery so much for myself, 'tis for thee."

"I don't complain—do I?" said May.

"Never! But, nevertheless, I've brought thee to sorrow, and want, and shame. Till I came back to thee thou hadst friends, work, and comforts. But since Mr. Gibson discharged us off, the blight that has followed me, has reached thee too, the bravest, honestest, brightest lass that ever doubled a man's joys,

and halved his burdens. Oh! it's too bad; it kills the heart out of me—it makes me mad!"

"I tell you, 'twill all come clear at last, if we are only true to ourselves—to each other. I've work promised, and perhaps you may be taken on here. I spy bright days before us still," said the little love stoutly.

"Bright days! I can't see them through the prison cloud that stands like a dark wall between me and honest labour. May, lass, I sometimes think I had better let it all go—run—'list—make a hole in the water, anything that would rid thee of me; thou could'st make thy way alone."

"Oh, Robert, that is cruel! nothing others could do to us could hurt me like those words from you; we are man and wife, and we'll take life as man and wife should, hand-in-hand: where you go, I will go; where you suffer, I will be there to comfort; and when better times come, as they will—we will thank God for them together."

"I'll try to hope," said he.

"And you won't heed the black thoughts that come over you when you're alone?"

"I'll do my best to fight 'em off."

"That's a brave dear; I'm going to the warehouse, I shall be back soon. Good-bye, dearest. Remember, when the clouds are thickest, the sun still shines behind them."

Robert watched her go, with an aching heart. But there was confidence in her parting kiss—there was something in that pressure on his lips that did not fade for the next words they formed were much more hopeful.

"Bless that brave heart; she puts strength into me, in spite of the devilish doubts that have got their claws about my throat. Yes, I *will* try once more," said he, as the navvies came trampling noisily in, jingling their coin.

Robert rose, yet hesitated a moment.

Dalton passed him without exciting his notice, and went to confer with Moss, who had returned from the parlor.

"The lad's coming," whispered Jem to his confederate. "I've tipped the old woman at the office, and planted the tools."

The man who had before been so kind to Brierly, Ginger, who came in from the street after Jem's arrival, slapped the Ticket-of-Leave roughly on the back.

"All the gang's gotten the brass," said he. "Tottie's taken the new men on, my little flannel-back, thou, go in and put on a bold face—Tottie loikes the chaps as speaks oop to heem!"

Bob shook off his feeling, and strode towards the parlor.

If that chance failed him, it would seem that he was at the end of his tether.

Jem looked over at the navigators, who were larking, clamoring, drinking and shouting enough to deafen one, and observed sarcastically to his friend that:

"It would be a pity to let a ticket-of-leave man in among all those nice, sober, well-behaved young men."

Moss grinned.

"I'll blow him again," said he, "but here comes our young friend," he said, as Sam sauntered in man-about-townishly.

"Ah, my dear—so you've come out for a little hanky-panky with old Moss. Sit down. My friend, Mr. Walker. What'll you have?"

"I don't care—I'm game for anything from sherry to rum-shrub. Suppose we begin with a brandy and soda, to cool the coppers?" said the youngster.

"Brandy and soda, Maltby," called out Jem.

"I had an awful go in of it last night at the National Assembly, dropped into a lot of 'em, like a three-year-old!" said Sam, making a carom with his cane.

"Billiards, too! Lord! what a clever young chap you are!"

"Yes, I know a thing or two," replied the boy. "I wasn't born blind, like a terrier pup—I rather think.—But you promised me my revenge, you old screw. That's the tippie to steady a chap's hand," said he, drinking. "Now, fork out the pictures, old boy."

"Oh, what a boy you are!" sung out Moss. "What shall it be this time?"

"A round or two of brag to begin with, and a few deals at Blind Hookums for a wind-up."

"Heaven be thanked, another chance yet!" muttered Robert coming back.

"Well, my little flannel-back, has he taken you on?" asked Ginger, familiarly as before.

"Yes, I'm to come to work to-morrow morning. I'm in Ginger's gang."

"I'm Ginger. Come, wet thy footing."

"My last shilling! It's all I have, but you're welcome," said Robert, throwing the coin down.

"Nay, it shan't be said Ginger Bill ever cleared a chap out neither. I'll pay for thy footing, and thou'lt stand beer thy first pay night. Here, measter, a gallon to wet t' new chap's name. Bob, we'll christen thee, 'cause thou hadst but a shillin'—Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's Bob's health!" cried all, laughing.

But he started as his eyes wandered to the group at the other end of the room.

"Sam Willoughby," continued he, "in this place, and over the devil's books, too. Oh! I'm sorry to see this—sorry—sorry. Poor old woman! If she knew."

And instinctively he watched for the first chance to leave the navvies, and steal unobserved to watch the game at cards.

It was evident that the two experienced sharpers were trifling with the boy.

"Best card!" cried Sam, showing his king. "First stake!"

But Jem bade him stop a bit, and quietly let fall an ace.

"First stake to you, then," said the boy. "Hang it, never mind! One can't lose much at this game, it's my deal. I go a tizzy!"

"Shilling!" cried Moss.

"Five!" bluffed Sam.

"I stand," said Jem.

"Ten," went Melter.

"A sov!" crowed the boy. "Thirty-one! Third stake, and the brag!"

He slapped down his card.

"Fork over the shiners for pair royal—pair—ace of spades!" said he.

Moss paid his pound, whining lugubriously:

"Oh, dear, oh, dear! I'm ruined—ruined!"

Dalton called for the brandy, as if he felt queer when Sam's deal came round again.

"Oh, dear, what a boy it is!" exclaimed the usurer, regarding Master Willoughby as much in the style of a patriarch as he could muster for the occasion. "How much have you got in your pocket?"

Sam laughed.

"Lots! I'm paid quarterly now—had my quarter to-day. Come, fire away. Let's see. I'll hold on. Thirty-four—overdrawn? Confound it. Let's see your hand, now," said he to Jem.

The latter obliged him by parading three pairs.

"Hang it all!" ejaculated the junior gambolier. "How's a man to stand against such cards?"

"How is a man to stand against such play?" interposed Brierly.

Before any one could prevent him, he seized a card that Moss had not had time to take from his knee.

"Look! the ace of diamonds! Handy to make pairs royal. This other man was looking over your hand and telegraphing, Sam," continued he, "if you

won't believe me, believe your own eyes. You were being cheated, robbed by this old villain!"

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" whined Moss. "To say such things to a man at my time of life."

Dalton rose threateningly.

"Hold your horses! we're not to be bullied!" said he.

"You give me back my money!" said Sam.

"Shan't!" said the usurer.

"Come, be off!" said Maltby. "I can't have any disturbance here. Mr. Moss is a most respectable man, and his friends are as respectable as he is. And as for you," continued he to Sam, who was disposed to be pugnacious, "if you won't leave the room quietly, you must be made to."

"Who'll make me?" returned the boy, squaring off at the publican and his potboy. "Come on, both of you! Stand up to 'em, Bob, I'm not afraid."

"Go it, young 'un!" hurraed the navvies.

The storm was lulled by the thunder of another voice.

"It's his voice—which well I know it!" cried Mrs. Willoughby's housekeeper at 12 St. Nicholas Lane. "Oh, Sam, Sam, I've found you at last!"

"Well, suppose you have—what then?" returned the scapegrace.

"What then?" echoed the old woman. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! And I've run myself into that state of trimmule and perspiration, and if it hadn't been for the gentleman I might have been east and west, and high and low, but it's 'at the Bridgewater Arms you'll find him,' he says—and here I have found him sure enough—and you come 'ome with me this minute."

"Yes," said Moss, with a touch of the patriarch, "you'd better go home with the old lady."

"Yes," subjoined Jem, "and if you'll take my advice you'll send him to bed without his supper!"

Sam pushed his grandmother away from him.

"I aint a-going to stand any nonsense. I'm not to be choused out of my chink, no, sir!"

Mrs. Willoughby lifted her hands in horror.

Jem Dalton took advantage of her hands being raised to pick her pocket of a bunch of keys and a purse. The latter he let drop on the floor as if she had pulled it out with her handkerchief.

"And this is what he calls attending elocution class of a night, and improvin' of his mind," cried the housekeeper, "and me a toilin' and a moilin' for him—which I'm his own grandmother, gentlemen, and him the only one of three."

"It's no use, Granny, I'm not a child to be tied to your apron strings—you've no right to be naggin' and aggravatin', and coming after a chap, to make him look small this way. I don't mind—I shan't stir. There!" cried he indignantly. He flung down his cap, and jumped upon the table, swinging his legs to and fro.

"Oh! dear—oh! dear—he'll break my heart, he will."

"Sam, my lad," said Brierly, "listen to me, if you won't hearken to her. A bad beginning makes a bad end, and you're beginning badly: the road you're on leads downwards, and once in the slough at the bottom o't—oh! trust one who knows it—there's no working clear again. You may hold out your hand—you may cry for help—you may struggle hard—but the quicksands are under your foot—and you sink down, down, till they close over your head."

"Hear the little flannel-back. He talks like a missionary, he do," exclaimed Ginger to the delight of his mates.

Brierly continued, regardless of their merriment:

"Go home, my lad—go home with her—be a son to her—love her as she has loved thee—make her old days happy—be sober, be steady, and when you're a grown man, and her chair's empty at t' chimney corner, you'll mayhap remem-

ber this day, and be thankful you took the advice of poor, hunted-down, broken-hearted Bob Brierly."

It would have taken a deeper plunge into evil than Sam could have even dreamt of for him to be deaf to this appeal. He slid off the table and looked over at the old woman.

"I don't know—I feel so queer—and—don't look at me. I've been a regular bad 'un, Granny—I'm very sorry—I'll put on the curb—I'll pull up—that is I'll try," said he.

"Oh! bless him for those words!" cried Mrs. Willoughby. "Bless you! my own dear boy. And you too, Mr. Brierly—which if the widow's blessing is worth while it's yours, and many of them. Oh! dear—oh! dear."

"Nay, don't thank me. It's late now. Go home—Sam, give her your arm," said Brierly.

"Here's your purse, old lady," said Moss picking it up. "What?" continued he to Sam, making a last attempt, "you won't stay and make a night of it."

"I'll trouble you not to speak to my grandson!" returned the old woman in a haughty tone. "If ever an old man was ashamed of his grey hairs, it's you ought to be."

"Baulked," muttered Melter as the housekeeper led away her hopeful.

Jem touched his hand under the table.

"No!" whispered he, "got her keys!"

Sam turned round at the door.

"If I wasn't going to turn over a new leaf," said he to Moss, "oh, wouldn't I like to pitch into you?"

"And so should I," took up Ginger in a drunken way, "An old varment! and so would all on us! you're bad enough for a Tommy-shopkeeper!"

"Aye!" chorused the workmen, "that he is! ought to be ashamed of himself!"

Moss laughed.

"And who accuses me? A nice chap this, to take away honest folk's characters!"

"Stow that!" said Ginger. "He's one of us now—a regular blue-stocking, Tottie's taken him on. He's paid his footing—eh, mates?"

"Aye—aye," said they all.

"Here's Bob's health," proposed Ginger.

"Aye—aye!"

"Stop!" said Moss. "Before you drink that health, best know the man you're drinking to. You're a rough lot, I know; but you're honest men."

"Oh, mun, if you have a heart!" said Robert, appealingly.

But Melter shook him off.

"I owe you one," returned he, "and I always pay my debts! You're not felons!" proceeded he, to the workmen, "nor company for felons or jail-birds."

"Jail-birds, I say. Ask this man how long it is since he served his four years at Portland? Look!"

They saw Brierly turn pale and quiver. He did not deny it, as who could the undeniable.

"Who knows, lads?" interposed Ginger. "Perhaps he's repented?"

"Aye, mates—it's true I was convicted," said Bob, "but I wasn't found guilty. I served my time. I came out an altered man. I tried hard to earn an honest livelihood. Don't all turn away from me! Give me a chance—only a chance."

"No—," was all the answer.

"Nay, then, my last hope is gone—I can fight no longer!"

And, broken at last, he reeled towards a chair and sank on it as though never to rise again.

## CHAPTER XII.

BITING THE TIGER. THE TEST OF ALL. GIVE 'EM GINGER.

THE navvies were called for, some by their wives, some by friends, and within an hour all had gone out or upstairs to the concert room.

Ginger had had a scuffle at the door with a mate and its result had been a push that completely disarranged his equilibrium.

Overpowered by that and by the liquor he had drank, he lay, propped up against a corner of the deserted bar, sitting or reclining on the floor.

After a harmonious howl, he seemed to have slid into sleep.

Jem gave his companion a nudge, and Moss went over to Brierly, who had dwelt in the same prostrated attitude.

"Honesty's bowled out at last!" croaked the usurer in his ear. "It's our game now. I say, my friend—"

"Eh!" cried Bob, looking up, fiercely. "You! the man who told them?"

"Yes, Yes; but don't put yourself in a passion."

"Only tell me. Is it you who have followed me in this way? who have turned all from me, who have kept me from earning honest bread?"

"Yes."

"But why, man, why?" said Brierly, sadly. "I never wronged you."

Moss turned towards Jem.

"You'd better ask your old friend here," said he.

"I don't know him—yet—I've seen that face before. Yes, it is—Jem Downy! Thou villain!" said he, grappling Jem. "I know thee now. Thou shalt answer to me for all this misery."

"Easy does it, Bob. Hands off, and let's take things pleasantly."

"Not content with leading me into play, and drink, and deviltry—with making me your tool—with sending me to a prison, it's you that have dogged me—have denounced me as a convict."

"Of course—you don't think any but an old friend would have taken such an interest in you," returned Dalton decidedly.

"Do you want to close all roads against me but that which leads to the dock?"

"Exactly," replied Tiger as calmly as before.

"You see," explained Jem, "when a man's in the mud himself and can't get out of it, he don't like to see another fight clear. Come, honest men won't have anything to do with you—best try the black sheep—we ain't proud. We've a job in hand will be the making of all three. Here, drink, and put some heart into you," said the Tiger as he filled a glass.

Bob drank it greedily, and sat down with the two.

"That's your sort—a lad of spirit—I said there was real grit in him—didn't I, Mossy?"

"You always gave him the best of characters," replied the usurer.

"Is it a bargain?"

"Yes."

"There! Tip us the cracksman's crook—so!"

The two joined hands in a peculiar grip.

They were about to discuss the scheme when May entered. She had a cloud on her face, but it flitted on her perceiving her husband. Yet again it returned, as she saw him, usually alone, alas! on such intimacy with two men.

"Now a caulker to clench the bargain," said Jem, filling again.

"You here, lass?"

"Oh, these petticoats!" moaned the usurer.

"You're not wanted here, young woman," said Dalton.

"He is, my husband, sir. He is not strong—the drink will do him harm."

"Ha, ha, ha! Brandy do a man harm! It's mother's milk—take another sip," said Jem. "To your girl's good health!"

"Robert, dear—come with me," implored she.

"Have you got work?"

"No—not yet."

"No more have I, lass. The man took me on—it was the old story."

"Robert—come!"

"I shall stay with my friends here—thou go home, and don't sit up for me."

"Oh, Robert?" she continued to implore.

He thrilled with pain. But if he did not assume the tyrant now, the others would suspect him.

"You men," said May, "to what have you tempted him in his despair!"

"Silence! be off, I say!" said Brierly, repulsing her.

"Oh! Robert, Robert! This is the first time you ever thrust me from you."

He is a good, kind husband, gentlemen; but we have had sore trouble lately, and it has almost driven him mad sometimes. But, oh, if you have wives of your own at home, think of them and spare me. Don't drive him to drink. He's never taken to that in all our troubles. Robert, come home with me—our hearth may be cold, but Love has always sat beside it—our cupboard may be bare, but we have never wanted bread, and, with heaven's help, we never will. Robert, come—come with the wife that loves you—come, come!"

But the Ticket-of-Leave felt that the two men's eyes were on his face, and he mastered the impulse to yield.

He shook the girl off as she clung to him.

"Come, are you going?" queried Dalton.

"Stand off," said Bob. "You used to do what I bid you—stand off, I say."

May went away sorrowfully, but she could not go home. She stationed herself a little way from the tavern door, and patiently waited till he should come forth.

Oh, those creatures with the loving hearts! the more they have to suffer, the stronger their love seems to grow. They're like the coral trees—break off a bough and twenty branches are put forth to remedy the loss.

Maltby had come down to turn off the gas over the bar, and he tried ineffectually to arouse Ginger.

But the navvie was past waking.

The landlord was afraid to handle him himself, and he was wanted in the concert-room, besides.

"He's in a deplorable state of intoxication," said Melter as he, too, concluded an inspection of the drunkard.

"Yes," coincided Dalton. "He's got his cargo. No danger from him. Now, for business. You've heard about the job?"

Brierly nodded.

"Yes, only you haven't told me where it is, or why you want me in."

"Oh, it's old Gibson's office," replied Jem.

"Who turned me away," said Bob, grinding his teeth menacingly.

"Aha," said the Tiger. "The five thousand, you twig. You know where it's kept."

"Well."

"And you take us in?" inquired Dalton.

"Yes," was Brierly's reply.

"That's the ticket, then we may as well start," said Jem. "Now."

"Now. My rule is, never put off till to-morrow the crib you can crack to-day. Besides you might change your mind."

"One has heard of such things!" remarked Moss drily.

But—" began the Ticket-of-Leave Man.

"You crane—" said Jem.

"No."

"I'll get a cab," said the Tiger, going towards the door.

"I'll get another—we'd best go singly," said Moss.

"No, it wouldn't be polite to leave Mr. Brierly," said Jem, adding:

"I don't half trust him—don't let him out of your sight," whispered he to Moss.

"If he'll only leave me for a moment," thought Bob.

"He's carried off the bottle, and the bar's shut up, or we might have a little refreshment," said Melter, at the bar.

"Perhaps, if you went to the landlord—" suggested Brierly.

"No I'd rather stay with you—I like your company, uncommon."

The usurer was too-sharp for any evasion.

At this juncture, the landlord, candle and wine basket in his hands, came to visit the cellar for replenishment of the upstairs stock.

The waiter had gone to bed, and, as the contractor had been so exhilarated by the effusion of Cooney in the Holler by the Wisconsin Warblers, Maltby had to go for the drink in person, however humiliating.

He opened a trap in the floor, but embarrassed with the candle and the basket, he begged Mr. Moss to lend him a hand.

Brierly thought that here was his chance at length. He might be able to give the publican the information of the burglary.

"Let me help you, sir," volunteered he.

"Then I'll go too," added old Moss.

"The stairs are steep—two's quite enough," said Bob.

"But I'm so fond of your company," retorted the fox.

Bob took the light as the landlord went down the stairs.

A word would have done it, but Moss took the candle from the Lancashire and went between the two.

"The light will do best in the middle," remarked he, philosophically.

Bob was left alone in the taproom.

It was the time.

He closed the trap quickly, ran to the bar, found the pen and ink, tore out the paper lining of his cap, and wrote on the clean side, muttering as he penned:

"To Mr. Gimson, Peckham.

The office will be entered to-night; I'm in it to save the property, and secure the robbers.

R. BRIERLY."

"But who'll take it," wondered he, looking about him mechanically.

"I!"

He was surprised to see a man by his side.

Ginger the drunken navvie.

"You?"

"I, Hawkshaw the detective. Here!"

He gave him a pistol.

"Take it! I'll be on the look-out."

"And we'll give him *Ginger*!" said Bob, almost bursting into a laugh of hysterical delight.

## CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE STREET. THE COAST IS KEPT CLEAR. HAWKSHAW IN A HIGH OLD HUMOUR.

SAM and his grandmother had not gone far, before he was much annoyed by her sudden stopping and her hasty examination of her pockets.

"What is it now, Granny," said he, impatiently.

"The keys!"

"What keys?"

"Of the house. I must have dropped them in that 'ouse, which I'm sure it's quite natural where there's such a-going on with a mere boy like you!"

"You're sure you had 'em at the public?" queried the boy.

"Certain sure, my dear, leastways, I let myself out with the big street door, so I couldn't have left that in the kitchen window, and I'd the little ones all in my pocket, which I noticed a hole in it only yesterday—and it's best holland at one and six, and only worn three years, and they ain't dropped into my skirt, nor they ain't a hanging to my crinoline."

"Oh, bother, granny, we can't have a regular Custom House search in the street; let's go back to the public, perhaps they've found them."

That road led them upon Emily and her husband, who had severally completed their evening's occupation.

Or, at least very nearly, for it is true that Green, once spying the house-keeper, said:

"There's only one set left: perhaps Providence has sent a customer. Trotters, mum?" said he to her.

"In my company! I'm surprised at you! conceal that basket. Why, if it isn't Mrs. Willoughby and Sam! Why don't you know us—the St. Evremonds?"

Mrs. Willoughby lifted her hands in amaze.

"Lor' bless me—and so it is! and that dear, blessed man that suffered so in his shins—which perseverance is it's own reward, and may I ask what Mr. Jones—"

Emily corrected her.

"Mr. St. Evremond—what he's doing?" resumed the old lady.

"He's in business," replied the singer.

"Yes," said Jones, "as a—"

But his wife interposed her voluminous skirts between the basket and the housekeeper.

"As a sort of a sheep farmer," said she loftily. "But whatever are you doing at this time of night?"

Mrs. W. sighed.

"Oh, my dear," said she, "It's a long story—and if you wears pockets, mend 'em is my advice—which whether they dropped, or whether they was picked—"

"We can't get in," interrupted Sam, impatiently. "Granny's lost her keys."

"And *you* haven't a latch? Well, I wouldn't have thought it of you. Where did she lose them?" inquired Emily.

"At the Bridgewater Arms—and the house is shut up now."

"I'm engaged there; I don't mind knocking Maltby up—I rather like it. Come along, Jones, it's only a step; conceal that basket!" said she angrily.

Green followed the party at a distance, yet carrying the offensive container with the air of its being the cushion to the crown of a king at a coronation.

"Ah!" sighed he, "Emily thinks trotters low; she don't see that even the trotter trade may be elevated by politeness and attention to seasoning."



Still farther down the street, nearer the corner of St. Nicholas Lane, two cabs had let three men jump out of them, Brierly and Moss being together and Jem, taking the lead, the other one.

Dalton was a little perplexed.

"Where could Bob have got that six-shooter from?" wondered he. "However, I nailed the caps in the cab. Moss, you be crow—two whistles if the coast ain't clear—we'll work the crib. Lucky I nailed the old woman's keys. They'll save tools and time. Give me the glim."

Moss handed his confederate a dark lantern.

"Now, my lad," said the Tiger emphatically to the Lancashiran.

"Take care; I'm a man of few words. The pal who sticks by me, I stick by him, till death. But the man who tries to double on me, had better have the hangman looking after him, than Jem Dalton."

Brierly only smiled, and the three went forwards together.

They had scarcely reached the broker's half-house, half-office, than a figure that had been watching them, came down the lane.

It was Hawkshaw.

He gave a low and peculiar whistle.

"Crampton," said he as a man appeared, in plain clothes. "I thought it was your beat. Take the fastest hansom you can find; tear down with this note to Peckham. Bring the old gent back to St. Nicholas Lane. Say he'll be wanted to make a charge. There's a crib to be jumped. I'm down on 'em. By the bye, lend me your barker."

The detective handed him one of his revolvers.

"I've lent mine," remarked Hawkshaw. "As you go up street, pass the word to any of the force for 'em to be a little lively."

The detective nodded, and went quickly away.

"Jem Dalton's a tough customer," muttered he. "I always feel rather ashamed to burn powder. Any fool can blow a man's brains out. So that lad's true blue after all. I had no idea that he tumbled to their game. He managed that letter uncommonly neat. Now for St. Nicholas Churchyard. When Jem Dalton planted his tools he never thought they'd come up darbies."

## CHAPTER XV.

THE CHURCHYARD. MAY'S TEMPTATION. THE BURGLARY. THE TIGER'S DEATH.

THE moon had risen, but its light was at intervals blotted out by large and slowly-moving clouds.

May had tried to overtake the cabs, but her strength had soon failed, as had her vainly appealing voice.

She had strayed down to the river, and had but a few steps to go to the wharf.

The shining surface, covering so much mire, but looking so fair, had a strong as strange attraction.

"Thrust from his side," moaned she, leaning against a cold lamp-post to cool her arms and flushed face. "No, no, not his! But from the hard man's, that drink and despair have made him."

"He told me to go home. Home?" she repeated bitterly. "As if there was any home for me, but where he is, dear Robert! I have tried to find him, but where? The pain in my heart nigh maddened me and has driven me to wander here. What if he was going to evil through the stony streets—what if to—death!"

"If I could die now! after so much I have borne."

The ripple arose from the river as the tide changed.

There was rest there!

"Oh, devilish temptation for that little heart!"

The braver, than she had pressed their feet (for Tom Hood to write with the dusty ink in those imprints), on the Bridge of Sighs.

But she wanted to die with him, for him, when the messenger should come.

"Heaven help me," cried May. "Help me and him! Bring him back to me! or lead me to him. Oh, cloud o'er my heart, break as that vapor above is fading now!"

The rift overhead widened and the moon burst forth more gloriously than ever, and glinted like the smile of faith on the steeple of St. Nicholas.

May clasped her hands.

She turned her back to the stream that has floated many million up, and many a broken heart in a deflowered body down its course.

May uttered a cry of joy ere she had gone many steps.

"Oh, there's one of those men that were with him!" exclaimed she.

It was indeed Melter Moss, on the lookout.

"Nice quiet place," reflected he. "I like working in the city! I wish every body lived out of town, and left their premises in charge of their housekeepers, Hullo! there's that girl!"

But it was too late to avoid May.

"Oh, sir, you were with my husband! Where is he?" said she.

Moss stopped on the stoop.

"Oh! I'm just looking about before retiring for the night," said he mildly. "They've gone into the Cave of Harmony—first turn to the left! There's a red lamp over the door, you can't miss it!"

May thanked him and ran off in the direction indicated.

"That's neat!" chuckled Melter. "Trust old Moss when anybody's to be made safe."

During this time, Dalton had transplanted his tools, that is taken from behind a tombstone, and entered the office by the sidedoor.

Brierly followed him.

Moss slipped inside the church railing and crept towards the house to see how matters were progressing.

He was checked in his laudable curiosity, by somebody seizing him from behind, tumbling him to the sod under a large sepulchral urn and handcuffing him scientifically.

"Stir or speak," said this operator, "and you're a dead man."

Moss had been partly stunned by his head having struck a slab, but on recognizing Hawkshaw, he kept silent.

Presently, they heard Dalton's voice.

"Hang the clouds," cried he, "I can't see, Moss!"

Hawkshaw assumed the usurer's voice to answer.

"All serene."

"We've done the job," said Jem, getting down the half-dozen steps. "Now the box, Bob!" called out he to Brierly still within.

"I bring it."

The Lancashiran appeared in the dodrway.

"We'll share at the Pigeons in Duck Lane. The box quick!" said the Tiger, hastily.

"A word or two first," said Bob.

"We can talk in the cab."

"No, here. You were my ruin four years ago."

"I've paid you back to-night twice over. Come, the box!" cried Jem impatiently.

"I suffered then for your crime!" continued the Ticket-of-Leave. "Ever

since you've come between me and honest life—you've broke me down—you've brought me to this."

"I suppose you mean you've a right to an extra share of the swag? we'll regulate all that."

"No!" thundered Bob, presenting the revolver, "I mean that you're my prisoner, or you're a dead man!"

"Hands off, you fool!" returned the Tiger.

They struggled fiercely, and at last Bob pulled the trigger.

"You will have it!"

"Here's the caps!" said Jem, coolly, as he wrenched the repeater away.

"No matter! armed or unarmed you don't escape me!"

But the country lad was no match for the Tiger.

Jem knew all the feints and tricks and shifts of honest man and thief, and devil, even. He had strength, too.

He flung Bob to the bottom of the steps.

"Now, Jem Dalton! It's my turn!" cried Hawkshaw, springing to the rescue.

"Hawkshaw!" exclaimed the burglar, as if given a new and fiercer life.

He met the onset calmer, fresh man as the new assailant was.

"Remember Joe Skirret," cried the detective. "I swore to do for you!"

"Wait till you get me," returned Jem through his set teeth as he forced his antagonist, half strangled, down on a gravestone.

"I've had too long a turn at prison-life already!"

Still they fought.

Jem was bent on killing this time. That was sure death in return, anything short of it would be the dungeon and chain for life.

But Sam Willoughby leaped over the railings from the street, and was just in time to save the detective.

Hawkshaw fired his pistol.

Jem knocked the boy head over heels with a blow, and eluded Hawkshaw's grab at him.

There was May, a couple of policemen, Mrs. Willoughby and some stray passers-by in the street.

Jem took in the lay of the land at a glance, and saw that he could do nothing for Moss.

Hawkshaw, lamed in the struggle, was cocking his revolver and bringing a fresh chamber to bear.

Jem ran for the fence, leaped upon a tomb and cleared the railing spikes with a second bound.

He picked himself up from the flags.

He rushed for the cab at the corner.

But the policemen set up a shout, and the frightened driver cut at Jem with his whip instead of letting him in.

Jem ran straight down the hill for the river, pursued by a score.

He climbed a fence, kicked a dog to death that had flown at him, and had a breathing spell on the coal-wharf.

But the gate was beaten down, and there was no exit but the dread portal of Death.

He chose his own mode.

There was a splash that all heard, so loud was it.

The moon lay all upon the surface, but nothing was visible except the circling ruffle, and presently the huge bubble of discolored water imprisoning a wicked soul's last breath.

In the meantime, Moss had been secured, and Bob, the most hurt of any, cared for.

Mr. Gibson and the detective messenger had rattled up in the cab.

"The cash-box is gone!" cried he.

"No!" answered Hawkshaw, "it is saved."

"By whom?"

"By the man you see bleeding yonder."

"Robert Brierly!"

"My husband," said May proudly. "You see he wasn't ungrateful, although you wouldn't trust him. There may after all be some good left in a Ticket-of-Leave Man!"

#### AND THE END

Is that Mr. Gibson stood up like a man for the young couple, and dared all the consequences of sheltering and favoring them.

Melter Moss was severely handled on his trial. But he got three lawyers to busy themselves in his defence, and their united cleverness shook even Hawkshaw's evidence. He was let off easy, only seven years, which have not expired yet.

Enough was discovered to lighten the load of that old burden cast upon Robert Brierly, and he and his little wife had so much more joy.

Sam kept to his promise pretty well and his new leaf that he turned over bids fair to remain long before the serenity and yellowness comes.

Green Jones is still of an opinion that his wife will do immensely if she can have a whole play-house to herself, and it is even said that he is the person who writes so many letters to the Lord Chancellor on the question of letting theatres be opened by whom, at what place, and with whatsoever person, they may desire.

They were working at Smithson's coal wharf not long ago, for the Thames Embarkment project, when they found a man's skeleton, curious for being maintained there by a huge block of coal clasped by the hands. Jem Dalton had anchored his frame thus firmly against the ebb and flow.

Had he anchored his soul to stay as unmoved by temptation's flood, what might not his energy, his truiness to a comrade, his many misdirected qualities, have led him to?

To a fate as happy as has now befallen our Ticket-of-Leave Man.

#### THE APPARITION.

"WELL, people may say what they will about there bein' no sich a thing livin' as a ghost, or speret—but, bedad! I was nearly forgettin' myself—away, one ov yees, an' bar the door, for at this hour o' the night—they generly be out parthrolin' together, an' who knows but if one of them would chance to overhear me mintion anything cousarnin' them, some bad thing might temp' him to intrude in upon us; for I must say, as far as I have any expariance of them, that they're mity civil crathurs as long as they're let alone, an' very gud naibors to them they take a likin' for, but if iver they are mislisted, they hant a fello' till the revirind clargy spakes to them, an' promises them rest. For my part, I always like to spak of them as pullitely as possible, the gintlemin, an' have nothin' in their power."

The door bein' made secure against the admittance of any spirit or fairy and a supply of fuel having been added to the fire, Paddy thus resumed:

"Wou very winthry night, whin the snow was on the groun', a couple o' years ago, Jim Mulligan gave his barn, at the riquist of the naibors, to hav' a night's divarshun in. Well, avick, bein' young at the time, an' as thricky a fellow as the parish cud produce, whin I was towld of the dance, my heart lepped to my mouth wid joy, for it was to be a gran' tuck out altogether."

Well, my dear, I was rather dishorted for cash; for well I knew that every one would thrive to scrape as much together as would make them respectable; so my father, at the time—God rest his soul! for he died since—had plenty of good praities stored by in the room behin' us, an' I knew as well as the worl', as long as I cud git a purchiser for them in the markit, he wuldn't see me bate for eight or nine shillin's, for the gud ould sow! heaven be his bid! always wisht to make me as happy as serkumstances would permit. At last, I resolved to let him know my intintion, an' ax him quietly for a few shillin's. But my dear av the worl', I think I'll never forgit the gud nathure av him on this occasion: he towld me, anything that was about the house, I might do as I liked wid, to convert into money, to appear ginteel on the occasion, for, in troth, I was very eager to act the ginteelman as much as any of the other consaity fellows that war invited. Havin' got this point accommodated, I thought the night never wud cum, for ye must know, that there was a young coorthier of mine to be there, a far purtier crather than I happened to git united to aftherwards."

Then Molly, when she heard Paddy speaking of her in such a derogatory manner, interrupted him in his relation and said—

"Musha bad luck to you for a worthless wretch! but I was the misfortunit crathur, whin I happined to buckle to you for life. I don't know what in the broad worl' blinded my eyes. It has been a rale merakle to me evir since."

"'Tis too late to repint now, at all evints," replied Paddy; "you must jist indeavour to contint yourself; an' maybe, though you're not quite as purty as I would wish, you have other kwolities that make aminds for this little deficiency."

"Well, boys, wherabout's this I was in my story? See what it is to be interrupted whin wan's engaged tellin' anything partikler. Well, I believe I remember now myself, without throublin' ye. Molly didn't like to hear me tell av the purty girl I was coortin'. Troth, an' it was my own fault, or I might be livin' along wid her now. Women are like the faeries, they're very gud and civil whin let alone, but iv evir they're meddled with, they're as wicked as a high storm. Howandevir, the girl I spoke of was a purty crather all out, an' all the youngsters in the village were dyin' afthur her. But as soon as time allowed it, the night came; an' that was the night in airnist. I think I will carry the remembrance av it to the grave wid me."

"About four o'clock that evenin', as I wanted to be there afore any of the cumpinny, I set out for Tom Higgins, for he was an ould comrade of mine an' we both went together. Tom was rather of a weak disposition, an' a cowardly crathur intirely; an' as the moon didn't think o' risin' till the night was far spint you may be sartin that my cumpinny, bad as it is now, was thin mity comfortable. Well, my dear, off we wint; an' as I was desirous of bein' there as airly as possible, the greatist neer-cuts were very acceptable to me. It's thrue, indeed, that byways are generly lonesome; but as for me, I was straightforward sort of fello'; an' as for bein' feard of seein' anything, I might hav' been sen-thry on a churchyard. Howandevir, Tom thought that the most public road was the best."

"Arrah! what are ye afeared ov?" siz I; 'hav' ye iver kilt anybody, that you're so cruelly 'fraid?'

"No," siz Tom; "but I was always a little tim'rous an' faint-hearted at goin' through the gap ladin' out of Nick Sullivan's grazin' field; for ye remember, that at that spot, or thereabouts, Jane Taggart unfortunately cut her throat, an' iver since her ghost has niver sased to haunt that spot."

"Arrah! what nonsense wid ye," siz I. "Shure ye never did the crathur any injury, an' what spite wud it hav' at ye? Come on," siz I; "don't be the laist afeard, an' not a crathur livin' 'll mislist ye till ye come back. If ye be thinkin' o' things, man alive, yer 'magination will run so high that ye'll consate

everything ye see is a speret. But take heart, for ye know that nothin' ever appears to two."

"Well, begar, affhure preaichin' to him as long as a priest id be in sayin' mass, I at lenth purvaild on him, an' off we set for the dance."

"It was now gettin' late in the evenin'; an' as I thought the sport id be carryin' on, I began to stip out; for, do ye pursave, there was a thrick in that same, for well I knew that Tom wudn't let me git far afore him, for fear somethin' invisible should appear to him. We wint on together purty well till we kem to the ould gate which led into the field, at the other ind of which was the gap, at which it was reportid by the neighbours that Jane Taggart's reperition was to be seen. Jist as Tom stipped through the gate, for he wuldn't be hindermost goin' through for the broad worl', he chanced to cast his eye to the left, for begar, he kipt his eyes goin' roun' in every diraction, like a duck in thunder, an' what should be pursave, think ye, but somethin' lyin' undhur the shade of an ould hawthorne tree that was said to be inchantid, for the gud peple in thim days was very fond of meetin' roun' the ould thrunks of threes, an' put a charm on thim. Well, you may be sartin, whin Tom spied this, the very hair on his hid stud fair up on an ind."

"God purtect us!" siz he, "what's that lookin' at us? I never in all my life saw anything to aiquil it. It must be the Ould Fello' himself that wants to scar us."

"Why, what do you see?" siz I. "Shure ye needn't be the laist afeard. Cross yourself, in the name of the Blissd Vargin, an' thin ould Nick himself can't hav' power over ye."

"Are ye blin', man alive?" siz he, "that ye don't see them two eyes blazin' away like two mowld candles. I'd give all the worl', iv I had it, I was wanst more snug at home. But it's you I have to blame for this, for I knew that the same place wasn't right to be thravelled in afther night, for it's not the first time I hard of things bein seen here."

"At hearin' the fello' spaik so positiv', I looked at the spot, an' there it was, as thrue as thruth, as white as a sheet, lyin' wid two rid eyes gazin' at us, as iv we had been somethin' inhuman; an' in thruth for the first time it brought fear to my own hart."

"It's not gud, anyway," siz I, "to be passin' remarks in sich a place as this, for the gud peple may be lisinin' to us, an', maybe, wondhur what has brought us here at this untimely hour. May the blissd Vargin an' all the saints purtect us from anything that is dangerous?"

"Shall we go home agin?" siz Tom; "for I don't think that it's gud to go any farther."

"Arrah! do ye think I'm a fool, to turn home, an' be laughed at afther comin' so far, an' lose all the sport? Let us go on quietly, an' say nothin'; perhaps we'll hav' cumpinny home wid us, an' thin we don't care iv the divel himself appears to us."

"Well, my dear life o' the worl', I was very unaisy in min' to know what this wondhur cud be, so I detarmined, if possible, to find out; but, by the hole o' my coat, we hadn't stripped tin yards, when I happened to look behind me, an' there it was, risin' up, an' makin' reddy to follow us. So, quick as thought I turned my hed afore me, for fear I should see it, thinkin' to myself that it must be somethin' more than common."

"But the worst wasn't over wid us yit; for in less than two minutes it was up at our sides; an' afore I had time to spaik a word, it gave Tom a dunt, that, iv I hadn't had a howld of him by the arm, I raily think it wud hav' sint him into the ailimints. At this, I thought Tom wud hav' vanished into nothin', for he fell down on his mouth an' nose that made me believe he got a parlatic stroke."

"What in the livin' worl' to do now, I was at a grait lose to considhur. I had a gud honist shelelagh in my han' at the time, an' I thought I'd let him feel it, he'd vinture to come near me. But what are ye splittin' yer sides laughin' at? Jist listin', an' hav' a little patience, an' ye'll fin' it was as quare a thing as tuk place afore or since. When I stooped down to ax Tom how he felt, it gave a grait *ma* out of it, an' to my wondhurful astonishment, what did I remember that it was, but Neal Ramsey's buck goat, for it had been sleepin' undhur the bush until we waked it, in openin' the gate; and the youngsters in the naiborhood, who was always very devilish, had teacht it the accomplishmint to dunt peple with its horns, for they torminted it whin it was a kid. Well, my dear, for som' time I cud scarcely know what I was about; for to be so feared as to be frighted by an owld he-goat, I railly was ashamed of myself.

"Are ye gettin' any betthur?" siz I, to Tom. "Purshnin' to ye, wasn't it the owld goat ye happened to git yer eye upon?"

"At this, a shulish machree, ye'd think he became a new crathur—he was upon his feet in less than ye'd be winkin'.

"Tatthurashun to ye for a goat," he sid, 'but yer don' our job to-night, anyway! What the devil cud temp ye to walk afthur us so unginteele? Give us yer shelelagh,' siz he.

"What do you want wid it? Is it to murder the owld goat ye want it?"

"Giv us a howld of it," siz he. 'I'll put it that it'll nevir frightin' any mortal in haste agin.'

"Arrah! will ye nevir hav' sinse? Do ye want to go to gaol? An' ye don't know but som' o' the wee peple are lookin' at ye. For the love o' gudness, let us sthrive to get out o' the place as quick as possible, for it's shurely misforthu nit. But I towld ye that ye shouldn't be timoris.'

"Havin' now got ourselves som' little thing strenthened, we wint on as brisk as two bees, till we kem to the gap, where Jane Taggart's ghost was sed to be always seen; but here, my dear, I didn't stay a minit, for, avick! we had no time to spare; so wid a hop, stip, an' lep, I was over, an' Tom lit down at my heels as purty as anything evir ye saw; for ye may rely upon it, that he wudn't stay long to look behin' him afthur me. Howandiver, nothin' appeared to us at that time, an' mighty glad we war at it, for I'm sure an' sartin iv there had we wud have fainted on the very spot.

"Afthur crossin' ourselves wanst more, an' givin' ourselves over intirely to the blissed Mother o' Heavin for purtection, on we wint to Jim Mulligan's, an' ye may be shure they wondhured what kipt us. Whin we landed there, we war in the quare condition, espishelly Tom, for whin he fell down on his mouth an' nose, he was so durtued, that all the scrapin' we cud do to git him clane agin, he was little betthur than whin we begun.

"What in the worl' cam' over ye, at all, at all?" the wan id say; an' 'Did ye see anything?' the other id say—that poor Tom at last beken so much ashamed, that ye'd think his face got as rid as a thrumpiter's. In throth, I felt for the poor crathur very much, knowin' the kind o' speret he was of, for he didn't like to be affrunted; so I took his part as well as I cud, an' towld him that they shouldn't ax so many questions; for maybe, if ye'd see a ghost yer-selves, ye wudn't fall down wid fear. For ye see I cudn't say that it was an owld buck goat that frightened us, for that id be making bad worse. So I gave Tom the hint afore I wint in, an' towld him to stick up to it, or they'd make a complait sport ov us, to let sich a lile thing make us afeard.

"Well, my dear, we suprisd them, at all evints. An' afthur all that we seen we war treated as kindly as iv we had been ladies; an' iv we didn't shew ourselves clever on the flure, whin the d'nein' cominced, it's mity odd. In throth timid as we war, we dancd till owld Pat Shields, who the gintlemin, used to oull, I think it was 'Peggylenny'; for ye see it was at wan time sed, he cud

play any tune on wan sthring; well, as shure as I'm here, he confessed he cudn't time his music half quick enough for us. So a little fright's no harm to wan before he goes to a dance, for it makes him feel quate quare all over.

"Afthur the party all scattered, shure enough every wan was for going his own way, an' faix! it was the d'nein' partin' all out; for every wan was in the best o' good humour an' friendship, bekase, barrin' Ned Connor, not a mother's sowl happined to get dhrunk, an' thin ye see, for fear of givin' the laist unaisness to the company, he slipped away home a full hour afore we all broke up. In throth, he had the same groun' to go ovir we had ourselves, an' only he wint out unpursaved, I'd made it my bizniss to go along wid him. Well, whin we war comin' home, nothin' wud sarve Tom's cussin, Dick McKenna, but he'd come an' see us through the field which was haunted by Jane's ghost.

"Arrah! what capurs wid ye," says I; 'd'ye want to make the naibors believe we're sitch grait cowards, an' to shame us intirely; for ye persave in thim days, it was the case, not all as wan as it's now, no purty girl wud ever fall in consate wid a fello' that was sed to be a coward; so nobody liked anything o' the kind to be mntioned last it should happin to do him harm in the eyes o' the ladies—the crathurs. Here Tom whispered quantly into my ear, that I ought to hould my tung, an' say nothin', for he was thremblin' all over, jist like an aspen lase in a winter win', for fear; an' so to plaze Tom, I didn't persist in purvintin' Dick, so on he come, Tom havin' a hould ov him by the arm, linkt as pullite as any lady, while I wint whistlin' a little afore thim, like a dhrum-major. Well, be gorrah, I wasn't long walkin' in frunt ov thim, ladin' the way, whin I discuvered Tom an' his cussin to be discoorsing to wan another very sacritly.

"What may yees be talkin' about, boys?" siz I; 'wud ye let a body into yer sacrits?'

"Oh, go on," siz Dick; 'for Tom has already spied somethin', he is grown quite timorsome an' wake, the crather!'

"Musha, avick! what can be the matthur wid ye? Ar' ye gom' to sear' us all, out an' out?" siz I. 'What d'ye mane mane at all? It's not long since he thought the divile appeared in the shape of an owld goat, an' is he goin' to play the same thrick on us agin? What is he afeard ov, for the norra a hapurth worse than himself he'll lay his two eyes on to-night.'

"Well, to be sure, to encourage the poor crathur, I wint up an' catch hould ov his other arm, an' maybe he wasn't the proud whin he foun' himself defend-ed on all sides. But this was the wurst plan we cud take; for ye see, the charin's always in three, an' be goxy even the very clargy thimselves wud see a ghost iv they war togither. As the night wasn't very dhry, we war comin' along in purty quick time, whin Tom's cussin, who was always a mity consid-hurate sort of a crathur, pult out ov his coat pocket a bottle ov the raal owld stuff; an' in throth, you may sware it wasn't long afore we aised it of its contents, for we stud in grait need ov a little dhrup, for maybe we weren't fatigued wid all we seen an' come through. But howsimdiver, whin we finished the bottle betune us mighty quait, we thought it best to be doin' a little, so off we set an' thravelled till we kem to the owld gap, where the divile put it in Jane's hed to commit a shoonside on herself, whin, by all that's gud, jist as Tom's cussin—the Lord always stan' atween us an' every harm, an' purtect us from witches, an' warlikes, an' every invisible thing—he war puttin' over his arm to catch the owld stump that grew on the wan side, what should he happin to lay his han' upon, but on the hed ov somethin' like a humin bein'; nor did he diskuver his mistake till he was narly over, when all ov a suddint he gave a roar out ov him that id wakin the very ded, iv it warn't impossible. But the norra along he staid to persave what it was, for down he came in the twinklin' ov an eye, quakin' an' thrimblin' all over, like a man in a favur, an' faix! he was very narly frightenin' Tom out ov his wits, wid the roar he giv.

"Well, be dad! I cud scarcely hilp splittin' my sides wid laughin', for ye see I expected that it wudn't be any way sthrange iv he should persave somethin'. Howandiver, to set off the thing as well as I was able, siz I,— 'What in the name o' wonhur is the matthur wid ye, or hav' ye seen anything unnathural?'"

"'Whisht, man alive,' siz he, back agin, 'there's a ghost, an' by the powdher's ov delf, I had the gud luck that I wasn't down on top ov him.'"

"'Arrah, none ov yer tricks upon thravellers; it's wantin' to thry us ye are. In't it a murdhurin' shame for a man ov your sinse an' larnin' to sthrive an' frightin' poor ignorant crathurs in this sort ov way?'"

"'Can't ye whisht, man,' siz he; 'ye don't know what harm ye might lade us into by yer foolish discoorse. Jist to sathisfy yerself, away an' look over, an' iv the owld boy, or somethin' in his shape aren't there, my eyes must hav' greatly desaved me.'"

"Well, thinks I to myself, there can be no harm in that, at all evints; so havin' crossed myself, I made to grope as well as I was able for the gap, for the night was as dark as pitch, whin the first thing I come aginst was somethin' like a humin' beam, an' down, wid wan souse, he fell on his side. 'Thundher in turf,' siz I, comin' down tin times smarter thin I wint up, 'but there's somethin' there that's not right, shure enough!' Wid this, my dear, the ghost giv' a groan out ov it that id scare a priest, iv he warn't a gud soger, an' afthur that, a long, boust moan, like a person in throuble.

"'Sweet Mother o' Hivin! take care ov us; but this is wondhurful all out,' siz Tom.

"'Amin,' sed I, mity sarious; niver was I so much feard. 'What do ye think we'll do any way, Dick?'"

"'Faix, this baits all I iver knew or hard ov; the sooner we lave this, I think the betthur,' sed he; 'let us make clane heels over to Tarry Brian's, an' he'll not refuse us a night's lodgin'.'"

"It 'ud be bad iv he wud,' sed I; 'for I always placed grait depindence in Tarry, an' he niver desaved me yet. What matthur wud there be in it iv we had a couple o' gud cudgels wid us, that we might let him know who we war iv he'd offer to insult us, or iv we had a lanthurn itself, to see to make our way gud, it 'ud be sathisfactory; but at presint he has the advantage ov us, for he can do as he plazes in the dark. I wish we had a stim o' light, any way, to see who he is, that we might be sartin, an' not serkelate a false report. But, be this an' be that, my jewel, I hadn't the word out o' my mouth, until the black gintleman began to kick up, the norra knows what all, for as soon as we hard him movin', Tom thought he was on for purshuin' us, an' away he wint, an' the divel a long Dick nor I staid afthurwards to see what it was. But, my darlint, if we hadn't the purty race till we came to Tarry's, it make no odds. Why, we war so feard, that I wud sometimes think he was jist at my heels, although I niver lookt behin' me to see whether or not. Oftin it has made me wundhur, whin I'd think of it since, for how, undhur hivin, we accompliced our journey in the dark, ded hour o' the night, whin not a mother's sowl was up, barrin' ourselves, I niver cud come to undhurstan'; sorra a hapurth cud stop us at the same time, for no grayhoun' cud run soopiler thin we did; hedges an' ditches war cleared as aisy as iv they had niver bin in our way, exceptin' wanst that Dick, in his hurry to be over the ditches first, happened to rush into a quaw, an', indeed, only we war somewhat behin' him, the poor fello' might have stuck there till mornin'; for ye persave he cudn't see too well, at any rate, an' espeshally thin; throth, it surprised me to think how he escaped as well as he did. But afthur we relaved an' exturkated him, it wasn't long till we arrived at Tarry's, the shirts stickin' to our very backs as if they war glued. Up to the doore myself goes—for I was niver mity pullite—an' I rapped at it as iv I war on a messidge ov death an' life. Well, nobody made me an anser for some time, till at lenth I was goin' to force the door opin whin Tarry spoke an' sed—

"'Who in the worl' are ye, any way; or what do ye want wid me at this far hour o' the night?'"

"'Up—up wid ye, out o' that, an' let us in,' sed Tom. 'Shure yer slep enough, any way, for it's convanient to mornin'.'"

"Well, up he gets, an' lets us in.

"'What's the matthur wid ye, boys?—has anythin' bin chasin' ye?' siz he, openin' the doore.

"'Oh, Mother o' Hivin be thank, for we're safe at last!' sed Tom.

"'But what in the broad worl' cud hav' kipt ye out to this late hour? I'm very much afeard yees hav' bin actin' rather improperly, or ye'd hav' bin snug an' oozy in yer bids by this.'"

"'Arrah, is it dhramin' ye are!' siz I. 'Faix! an' yer far misthakin', for it's quite airly in the mornin'; howandiver, man's dhramas are conthrary at times. Maybe, iv we cud hav' hilped it, we wudn't hav' thrubled ye at sich an airly hour, at any rate.'"

"'Oh, yer mighty welcome,' siz Tarry, 'to remain here; but to tell yees the thruth, I was a little timersom' at first to open the doore, not knowin' who yees might be. But tell me, boys, war ye scarred at anythin', or what's the matthur at all, at all?'"

"Well, to make a long story short, I led him into the contints ov everythin', jist as it happined, an' as I've jist towld ye. But iv he warn't the surprised man, whin he hard it, it bates all!"

"'What do ye think,' siz he, 'iv we'd take this lamp, an' slip away down agin, now it's gettin' near daylight, an' see what it cud be?'"

"'Throth, an' I hav' no great kuroosity to do that same. But howandiver, shure we might take a few gud sticks along wid us, an' thin we'd be somewhat prepared for the gintleman, iv he offer to mislist us.'"

"'With this, my dear, we all rose, each of us havin' a gud blackthorn along wid us, an' Tarry carried the lanthurn; but afore we got to the place where we war frightened, we hadn't much want for it, for the sky was beginnin' to get quite clear. Well, whin I got near to the place, I kept a sharp eye, to see iv I cud persave anythin'; whin, behold, ye, the first thing I happined to get my two eyes upon, was the big black thing.

"'Thundhur an' turf,' sez I to Tarry, 'but yonder it is, an' not one inch it has budged since we war here afore.

"'An' are ye sartin that's it?' siz Tarry.

"'Why, blur an' ouns, are ye blin'? Don't ye see it?' siz I.

"'Quite plain,' sez he 'but sure that's no ghost!'"

"'An' what 'ill ye make ov it,' siz I, 'iv it's not somethin' speritual?'"

"'Jist as I happined to spake these words, what does it do but lift up its head quaitly, an' make as if it wanted to git up on its feet. Shure enough, we all watched it mity partiklar; but Tarry, whin it turned roun' its hed, lifted up his cudgel, swearin' that 'every livin' sowl ov us should be made to feel it.'"

"'Why,' siz Tom, 'is anythin' wrong?'"

"'Purshuin' to yees, for a set of cowards, what war ye afeared ov? Is it ov owld Nid Connor ye'd be afeard?'"

"Well, my dear life o' the worl', whin I hard him say this, I thought my face id take fire with parfit shame, for I wanst saw what it was the whole time. Tom an' his cussin war for givin' him what he was desarvin ov for not spakin' to thim; but the poor fello' was so tossekated whin he left the dance, that norra a step further he was able to go, iv he had even bin paid for it. An' as we war jist gettin' up to the place, he had woke, an' was sthrivin' to rise, but cudn't.

"'Well, bad luck to ye,' siz I, 'but this was a quare place for ye to stop all night to frighten peple.' At the same time, I suppose he didn't know what he was doin'; an', in throth, he was very little betthur yet, for two ov us had to



bring him to his home as well as we cud, an' iv that was as aisy task, lave it to me.

"Havin' now nothin' to fear, we all wint home afthur we left Connor, not a little ashamed at our own wakeness, although Tarry had promised to keep it a sacrit from every wan. Howandiver, nothin' frightened us afthurwards, for ye see it made us bould an' stout-hearted wan away. An', to tell the thruth, we didn't wandhur out far from home, after night agin, for some time."

### A NIGHT OF HORROR.

Down in the iron country, where Spring flies frightened from the roar of furnace blast, and the rolling clouds of black, soot-laden smoke—where scorched and withered herbage; stunted, ragged, skeleton-armed trees; while piled around cinders, scoria, caked together, half-fused bricks, torn and shattered, or eaten and rusted iron; and ever by night the wild red glare from the furnaces. An angry battle going on; the coal and iron, buried deep for centuries upon centuries, now dragged from the teeming bowels of the earth, and tortured beneath the mighty steam-blast—and at last, fused by the raging heat, give up the ruddy, newly-molten metal now set at liberty, and ready to become the valued friend of man.

There is the noise of blows, and the panting and roaring blast is silenced, while the men in charge group themselves around the furnace door. Another blow or two, and then the furnace-door is open; a warning-cry, and out leaps in a wondrous stream, the molten iron, and floods the mould-mined floor with its orange and gold—reflected from wall, beam, rafter, and roof, and raging forth so great a heat that the cheek scorches and the eye fails in gazing upon the marvellous radiance. Gold, gold—not iron—everywhere; while the half-naked workmen sit about. Then the light fades. All this time, wild, harsh, sounds float far and wide.

No such thoughts as these, animated the breast of Samuel Hardesty, as leaving his frugal tea he went to work for the night to watch the furnace and feed it with fuel. Along the gloomy, black streets he took his way, and had relieved the man anxiously waiting his coming.

"Just made her up, Sam. Wind's changed, and the stoke hole roars again."

"All right," said Hardesty; and the man took his departure, while the new comer prepared to take his long night-watch and stood gazing on the sunny coloured flames dancing in the furnace—scarlet, crimson, blue, green, yellow, orange, and purple—colours of every shade and tint. But Samuel Hardesty saw not the bright hues of the roaring furnace—the sight was too familiar, and his mind was taken up by the quarrel he had had the night before with a fellow workman concerning the threatened strike. There had been high words, which ended in the heat of discussion by Hardesty calling his opponent "a fool," receiving a blow in return, and then dashing the assailant to the ground, where he lay stunned and bleeding.

His fit of anger past, Hardesty answered the murmurs and dissatisfaction shown amongst the on lookers by stooping down and helping his adversary to rise; but the man no sooner recovered himself a little than, with a fearful and blasphemous oath, he shook his fist at Hardesty and staggered out of the place.

The night was advancing, and again and again the watcher heaped fuel between the jaws of the insatiable roaring monster he tended, and utterly heedless of the noise and fiery glare around he stood time after time watching the glow.

"I didn't want to hurt the lad," he muttered; "but I hate this striking work, throwing honest men out of their bread, and starving those at home. 'A fool' I called him, and so he was, or he would have kept his hands off me, for a man

can't stand that. I'd have——What were that?" he exclaimed starting, for he fancied he saw a figure pass the light.

"I'm all wrong to-night," he muttered, "and full of fancies; I could have sworn some one was looking over my shoulder half an hour ago."

To vary his lonely watch, Hardesty went to the steam-engine, down to the stoke-hole, and then, after speaking to the man in charge there, he returned to his own solitary post, and sat down in the covered corner, where he had stretched some old sacks to form a screen from the night air, which, drawn by the fierce flame, came constantly in a cutting draught.

After a while he felt drowsy, and his eyes closed for a few moments, but an undefined dread of something dreadful about to happen caused him to start up, rub his eyes, and look anxiously around. But there was nothing visible to cause his uneasiness and he again turned to watch the fire reverberating from the furnace sides ere it darted up the huge shaft.

"What can be the matter with me?" cried Hardesty, jumping up and stamping about to get rid of a numbness in his feet. "It seems just as if a chap had got the horrors. I feel that creepy and shuddery I don't know what to do; and I know if I dropped off I should go dreaming all the horrors that ever came into a fellow's head."

But Hardesty seemed too good a watcher to drop off, for at every touch of drowsiness he leaped up and began to busy himself about something in connection with his duty; and after every such few minutes of activity he seemed lighter and more cheerful, and again took his seat behind his screen, with the fire making his figure glow with the ruddy light.

It seemed as though a watchful spirit kept whispering to him of impending evil and roused him to battle with the overwhelming sense of drowsiness that came upon him, to keep which off he had several times taken a draught from the can of water he kept there for that purpose, though it seemed to have a bitter unpleasant flavour, which he attributed to his mouth being out of taste.

He fought against the stupor falling upon him again and again, rousing up, too, at the whispering of danger that seemed breathed around; and at last it was with a growing sense of horror that he looked anxiously about, peered once more in the roaring crater of the furnace all but ready to vomit forth its molten lava, as well as smoke and flame; and then, with the drugged water effectually doing its work, nature could bear no more, and the stupefied man sank back breathing stertorously, but without losing his power of vision.

He had been in this state about a quarter of an hour, fancying all manner of horrors, and vainly struggling to shake off the trance, when a chill ran through him, as he saw something come slowly crawling from where the darkness was blackest. He would have shouted at it, or thrown a lump of coal—fled from it or struck it with the great iron shovel; but he sat helpless, as though in a dream, while the figure came slowly crawling to him, and then passed out of sight behind his screen; while it seemed as though ten thousand bells were ringing in his ears, and so dread a horror upon him that it could not be borne.

Then the figure appeared again upon the other side, passed through the flood of light from the furnace, and was gone in the direction of the engine-house; while Hardesty sat motionless and unable to utter a cry.

All at once the figure came back, swiftly rose to his feet, and then the watcher recognised his adversary of the late struggle. But it did not seem surprising that he should be there, for all was dreamy and strange, and but for the feeling of horror upon him the seated man would have quietly closed his eyes and given way to the sleep that was trying to steep his senses in oblivion.

But now the horror increased, for the man seized Hardesty by the collar and dragged him down upon the floor, and then slowly and laboriously towards the open circular hole where the furnace was fed with fuel, an opening which now glowed and raged forth its heat, as the whole of the fuel was incandescent.

It was a large yawning opening, and with a helpless shudder Hardesty felt himself drawn nearer and nearer to the mouth, and knew that the fiend who held him was about to hurl him in; and yet he could not resist, but expected to wake shortly to find that all was unreal.

"Curse you!" muttered the wretch, dashing the head of his prey upon the bricks, as he lay where the fire burnt his face, and made his head crackle. "Curse you!" he cried with a fearful oath! and then in the very wantonness of brutality stamping with his heavy heel upon the poor fellow's face, so that blood gushed from his nose and mouth. "Curse you! you've struck your last blow."

But the villain was wrong; for as he uttered the words, and stooped down to clutch Hardesty by the arms and drag him forward, the bleeding man seemed to leap into life, as though electrified; rose to his feet; there was a momentary struggle; an awful, despairing shriek; the sound of a fall, succeeded by a horrible crackling noise; and Samuel Hardesty kneeled alone upon the brink of the furnace trembling and horror-stricken, with his hands over his face, trying to think it a dream. The next moment, though, he was upon his feet, running towards the engine-house shouting for aid—aid for the man whose death must have been instantaneous. But soon four or five men were gathered round the furnace-hole, armed with the great iron rakes and a boat-hook from a barge, and then, plunging them into the roaring flames, they endeavored to drag forth the body of the perished man.

It was a hideous and sickening task, and for a long while every effort seemed in vain; while the flames seemed to dance, and rejoice, and leap at the men as though ravening for more—even as the tiger that has tasted human blood is said to be insatiable.

Twice they were beaten back; but again they tried, and again; but hardened as the men were to the enduring of ardent heat, yet they were beaten back, for the furnace heat seemed fearful.

But at last there was a thrill amongst the men, and a hush fell upon them as at the seventh trial the man with the boathook, nearly burnt through the stout pole, whispered that he had something; and directly after dragged forth on to the brickwork the charred skeleton of the wretched man, headless, and with arms and every atom of flesh burned from the bones—which the men shudderingly hid from sight with the sacks that formed Hardesty's screen.

Their task, though, was not yet ended; for Hardesty, sickened and faint with loss of blood and the drug he had swallowed, threw up his hands wildly, staggered forward, and would now have met the fate from which he had so narrowly escaped but for the hands of his companions, who conveyed him to his home and left him in a state of wild delirium, raving of the furnace, the crawling figure, and the charred and smoking bones—the remains of the fellow creature whose death—so said the jury—was accidental.

THE END.

Dare