

KIDNAPPED.

A NOVELETTE.

BY T. WARSAW WILLIAMS.

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CHAP. I.—KIDNAPPED.

A SINGULAR and, at first sight, hideous and repulsive looking man was passing through one of the principal streets of a New England village, pursued, hooted at and jeered by a crowd of boys. They were throwing missiles at him, and shouting: "Heigh ho! old Warty!" "Warty, Warty, Warty!" "I say old Split-lip, what 'll yer take a month to stand in our garden for a scare-crow?" and other exclamations of a similar character. Occasionally he would turn and pursue them for a little way; but they were too nimble to be caught. Exasperated, at length, he suddenly turned, and cast a stone at the crowd, and one of them fell, wounded about the head and bleeding. The rest took the alarm and scampered off.

The man, seeing what he had done, turned about and went to the wounded boy. Another small boy, who was passing at the time, leading a little blind girl, had stopped, and was assisting the boy to rise. He was not seriously injured, as the man ascertained by examining the wound.

"Sarves ye right, ye little imp, ye! Next time, mebbe ye won't chaff me," said he, giving the boy a shake.

"Please, Mister, don't hurt him any more!" exclaimed a sweet, childish voice, in tones full of pity.

Looking down at the speaker, the man noticed the little blind girl, tenderly feeling the wounded boy's features, as if to gain some idea of his appearance, and stroking his head. Something in the blind child's tone or manner seemed to touch a sensitive chord in the rough, hideous fellow's nature, and he replied: "No, my darlin', I won't—though he's a bad boy, and ought to be walloped," at the same time stooping down, under a sudden impulse, and kissing her, and stroking her hair. He seemed pleased that she did not shudder or turn away from him in terror; though her little brother gazed at him with evident alarm and curiosity.

"What is your name, my darlin', and where do you live?" asked he, in his coarse, nasal tones, putting her two little chubby hands between his great, warty, brown ones, and patting them.

"My name is Annie Daley," answered the blind child, "and we live in the house over the bridge."

"We are going out to see Aunty," said the little boy, taking his sister by the hand and leading her away. "Come along, Annie."

"And where does Aunty live?" asked the man, following a little behind them.

"Out on this road. I know the house," said the boy. "It's 'way out, about three miles, I guess. I don't know."

"You jist wait a bit, now," said the man, diving into a variety store they were passing, and coming out with a cornucopia full of candies and sugar-plums. "Jist take them, and be good children. Good bye." So saying he walked rapidly on ahead, while the two children set to on the sweetmeats. They were neatly, but plainly clad, evidently the children of very poor parents, and not used to such treats. The boy appeared to be about ten years of age, and the girl not more than six.

Eli Wenn, for that was the hideous-looking man's name, more familiarly known as "Old Warty," moved up the road rapidly, and soon left the little travelers far behind. He appeared to be about thirty-five years of age, of medium stature, and powerfully built, but certainly of not a very prepossessing personal appearance. He had but one eye, which was large, and reminded one of a pig's eye. It had an irrepressible propensity for winking, and the lids were always coming together with a kind of snap, as if they worked on hinges, and said: "Now you see me, and now you don't." The other eye had apparently met with some accident; the lids seemed to grow over it, and you never saw it. But this was not what gave the countenance its singularly disgusting expression. A peculiar

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growth, like a vegetation of horny warts, covered his swarthy, tan-colored face; and from these warts sprang a second growth of long, black, bristly hairs. One of the largest of these warts had selected the apex of his nose as its seat; he had also what is termed a cleft, or "hare-lip," a *labium leporinum*, which exposed his great tusk-like teeth, with their red gums, and gave his countenance rather a diabolical aspect. He had no beard on any part of his face, except where it sprouted from the warts, like wisps of hay, as if those vegetations had absorbed all the nutriment from the sole-leather-colored skin. But where his checked flannel shirt, which he wore with the bosom open and the sleeves rolled up, exposed the skin, the hair grew in grizzly profusion, as if to make amends for its absence on his face. He wore a slouched felt hat, considerably the worse for wear; a light brown sack coat, rather too short; and greasy, stained corduroy pants, which he seemed to have outgrown, as they only met his feet half way below the knees, leaving the large, coarse shoes and blue stockings which he wore, to supply the deficiency in length.

Wenn walked up the road rapidly until he had left the outskirts of the village a mile or more behind, and reached a belt of timber. Here he paused and looked back. "Yes, I see um comin'," he soliloquized, with a snap of his solitary eye, as he espied the two urchins trudging along by the side of the road, the boy evidently pointing out the fields and flowers—for it was summer—to his blind sister, and describing their beauties. "I think it rayther hard of old Natur' to hev given me sich a on-prepossessin' countenance. I never knowed what it was to hev a human creatur' look kindly on me; nothin', not even a dog, ever loved me. The children run and cry when I approach um, an' the boys hoots me, an' calls me 'Old Warty.' As if I didn't hev a natur' as fond of affection as any on um, and long for suthin' to cherish an' love. An' wimmin! They say, 'Never was Jack without a Gill, an' for each man there is a maiden still.' But I'm a exception even to that—the lowest and vilest female that lives won't smile on me. I say I think old Natur's been hard on me. Now, if I could jist git that little blind gal' an' carry her off, I'd hev some one to love me, and to love! She couldn't see my ugly face; an' she's a heart full of love—I see how she pitied that 'ar imp as I keeled over. Yes, by Jingo! I'll do it. I'll kidnap her! I'll hev to take the boy, too, though I don't want him. He'd hate me, too, in spite of my kindness.

But if I take the girl, an' leave him, he'll describe me, an' everybody'll know who I am, an' hunt me down, an' take the little kid from me. So! I must take um both."

Thus soliloquizing, Wenn waited until the children approached the spot where he had rested. As they did so, he came out and met them, trying to smile and look very amiable. But when he smiled, he looked still more hideous—so much so that the boy started back in terror, and his little sister clung to him, crying, and asked what was the matter.

"Don't be afeared, my little darlin'," said Wenn, in as soothing a tone as his rough, hoarse voice was capable of. "I won't hurt ye, not a bit on it, babbies—Uncle Eli never hurts children. He likes um."

"But you hurted that boy this morning," stoutly affirmed the boy, heroically putting his little arm protectingly about his sister.

"I didn't mean to, darlin's, no, uncle Eli didn't mean to. They was a stonin' me, an' I jist heaved the stun to skeer 'em, like, an' it hit 'im. But thar's a big robber up in the road, ahead, with a tremenjus big black dorg, an' he's awful hungry, an's got a fire made, an' sez he, 'I'll ketch the fust little boy and gal as comes along, an' roast em for my dinner!'" The little girl began to cry louder at this, and even the boy began to whimper. "But sez I to myself," continued Wenn, "no you won't git my little boy an' gal, no how! So I comes back, an' thar's a nice little path through these woods, an' we'll go through that way—jist follow me, an' I'll show you the way—an' it leads into another road, an' we'll jist take that, an' go to your aunt's, an' the robber won't see us at all."

With such persuasions it was not difficult to induce the little ones to follow him. Leading them far into the woods, among the hills, and across streams, they were soon lost and bewildered and ready to follow him wherever he wished. He continued to ply them with the utmost kindness, lamenting that they had missed their way, frequently taking them up in his arms, and bearing them over the streams and rough places, until the boy lost sight of his hideousness, in his fear and anxiety. At length towards evening, when the little ones were exhausted, and very hungry, they came to a railroad.

"Now we'll soon be home, my darlin's," said Wenn. "Here's the railroad. We'll jist stop here till the caars come along, and git on, an' go right back home. It'll take all night to git thar, though; but we'll git somethin' to eat on

the way. An' I'll hev to tell the folks in the caars you're my little boy an' gal; an' don't ye, for the life on ye, let 'em know ye ain't, fur ef ye do, they'll say we are runaways, an' put us off in the woods ag'in. Now ye'll not forgit that, will ye?"

The poor little ones were glad enough to consent to this arrangement. It was not long before an accommodation train came thundering on, and Wenn, with an old handkerchief tied to a stick, stood on the track and waved it. The engineer, supposing it to be a signal of danger, brought the train to a halt, and asked what was wrong.

"Wrong? Nothin' is wrong, only I wanted to git on the caars," replied Wenn.

The engineer swore at him, and whistled "off brakes;" but before the train was in motion, Wenn had gathered up the two children and sprang on the train. It soon halted at a small stopping place, where he jumped off, and procured some sandwiches and cake, which the children ate voraciously, having had nothing since morning, and then fell asleep on the seat. During the night the Accommodation connected with a through Express and Passenger train bound for Syracuse. Wenn took passage on this, and transferred the little ones without awakening them. He had determined to go to a distant city, and rear the children as his own. His entire fortune, which was not a very large one, and therefore did not much encumber him, he always carried in a belt about his waist; he was a tanner by trade, and knew he could easily get employment in any place where that business was carried on; he had nothing, no friends, and no regrets to leave behind when he left the little New England village, and was therefore contented.

When the children awoke the next morning, they found themselves in a large and strange city, and began to cry to be taken home. Wenn now began to use authority, instead of persuasion. He bade them be quiet, that he would take them home pretty soon; that they were his children now, and had no home but with him, and that if they told any one they were not, he would put them in a dark dungeon and leave them to starve; but if they would be good children, and obey him, they would have a nice home with him, and after a while, "when he went back," he would take them to their own home. They were bewildered and easily frightened into submission—his looks alone, were sufficient for that—and meekly and quietly did as he bade them.

He first went to a cheap hotel, where he procured them some breakfast, of which they ate heartily. Having engaged a room, he told them to remain there until he should come to take them to a new home, and locking the door was gone until dinner time. After dinner he again locked them in the room, and was gone until evening. After supper he told them he would take them to a nice little home the next day. He had, indeed, found a very cozy little tenement in the outskirts of the city, near a tannery where he was fortunate enough to secure work at once, being a good workman. The former tenant was going west, and anxious to sell his lease and furniture, and this suiting Wenn's ideas, a bargain had been struck at once; so that the next day he took possession, and gave the children to understand that it was to be their home "until he went back." At first they were lonesome and homesick, and cried for "mamma and papa;" but as he was overly kind to them—he who had never been loved by any living creature, and never permitted to love anything—and treated them with the greatest affection and indulgence, and fed, clothed and sheltered them better than they had ever been fed, clothed and sheltered before, they soon became reconciled to their new home, and the memory of the old one gradually faded out. The little girl, indeed, being unable to see the repulsive face of her kind protector, and knowing him only by his unvarying affection, speedily learned to repay him with all a child's pleasing and innocent love. The boy, however, despite all Wenn could do to win him over, instinctively dreaded and shunned him. He could not fail to observe this, and it sent many a poignant pang to his heart; and gradually he began to experience a feeling of resentment and dislike rising against the child, repress it as he would. "It's natur," he would say to himself; "he can't help it, no more can I. I'm like Cain; God has put a mark on me, an' sent me into the world like Ishmael, with every man's hand agin me, an' I can't help my hand bein' agin every man."

And here, for the present, we will leave Wenn and the two kidnapped children, all of whom will yet play an important part in the events we are about to narrate.

Two children could not disappear from that quiet little New England village so suddenly and mysteriously, without creating a great sensation, and endless speculations as to their probable fate. Their parents, however, were humble and obscure, and though they felt the loss of their precious little ones as keenly as if they had been

worth millions, they did not possess either the means or influence to set on foot any extensive or thorough investigations for their recovery. The villagers turned out, of course, and beat the woods, and dragged the ponds; but no one had happened to notice them on the streets that morning, and the event after being a nine day's wonder, was forgotten by all except the bereaved parents. Sad and heart-broken, the latter, when they had resigned all hope of ever finding their children, gathered their scanty effects together, and set out for that new land of promise, the great West, in the hope of beginning life anew and mending their fortunes. So the next spring, after the loss of their little ones, Mr. and Mrs. Daley bade a final adieu to the scenes where their lives had been passed, where they were born, and married, and where their children had been born, and took up their abode on the west side of Milwaukee, a place which was then comparatively new, and seemed to them a "far Western" city. Mr. Daley's occupation being that of a carpenter, he found plenty of work to do in a new and rapidly growing town, and as long as his health continued good,—which unfortunately was not many years—he and his wife found themselves more prosperous and comfortable than they had ever been before. Here, too, we must bid them adieu for a season, as the thread of our narrative takes us back to Syracuse, where we shall make the acquaintance of some new and important characters.

CHAPTER II.

LOVE IN, AND LOVE OUT OF SEASON.

TEN years have elapsed since the beginning of our story. Ten years! So short to the old, the happy and the prosperous; but oh! how long to the young, the miserable and the poor! But to each and all they have come and gone, and brought their changes.

On a fashionable street in Syracuse, which for the sake of a name we will call Elm street, there stood at the time to which this chapter refers, and may yet, a large and elegant mansion, with extensive grounds, handsomely laid out, and ornamented with statues, shrubbery and flowers, for it was a glorious mid-summer's eve. The full moon shone down upon the scene in all her chaste meridian brilliancy, and the soft and dewy air was fragrant with the breath of the scented grasses and flowers. Everything upon which her silvery sheen fell was gilded with a dimly limned beauty peculiar to the season and the hour; but her gentle reflections fell, perhaps,

upon no fairer or lovelier object than a maiden of sixteen, that witching age at which she is—

"Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and Childhood fleet!"

Millie Brinsley was the daughter and only child of the proprietor of the mansion, Henry Brinsley, largely interested in the leather and finding business; and to her, love, the great touch-stone of woman's life, had come, and invested her with that magic charm which causes a thousand new graces to spring into life. Though so young, she was no longer a child; she loved, and was a woman—the brook had been lost in the river forever. The man whom she loved, and who loved her better than his own life, was Lionel Chatham, the noble and handsome young fellow, not yet twenty-one, who stood by her side upon that moon-lit evening, adoring her with his eyes, and listening like one enraptured to the music of her voice.

"I know your father looks higher for you, dear Millie, and has a right to expect a more wealthy suitor for your hand than I can ever be," he was saying. "I am only his clerk, you know; but I love you, for yourself alone, with all my heart. It is not my fault that I have nothing to offer you but my undying love."

"And that is sufficient for happiness, dear Lionel," was her reply. "Why should we wish for more?"

"Ah, why!" he sighed. "Ask your father that." And as he gazed upon her, as she stood before him in a fleecy white dress, with pink sash and ribbons, and delicate rose-buds in her dark hair, her soft dark eyes shining like two stars from a face whose rosy glow no carmine hues could rival, she seemed to him almost too much of an angel for earth, and yet just mortal enough to love.

"Papa is proud, I know. But we have not ascertained his views as yet. He may be kinder to us, dear Lionel," she added hopefully, "than you think. At any rate, let us not borrow trouble."

"No need, sweet Millie. We shall have enough of our own, I dare say, without borrowing any," replied Lionel gloomily.

"I hope not," she said softly, and added with an earnestness that evinced a will of her own, and a strength of purpose rarely developed in girls of her age, "papa may oppose our union, Lionel, but I will never marry any one but you, I will die first."

"Dear Millie, I know you mean it," replied her lover. "I see it in your eye, and it makes

me very proud of your love, and very happy. Do you observe the North Star?—there, just to the left of that steeple."

"Yes, I see it; and I have often thought what an emblem of constancy it is—never varying, never changing, always the same, like God, for a day, or for centuries."

"As true to you, my darling, as that star is to the pole, my heart will ever be. Should even an angel ever tell you otherwise, do not believe it. While it throbs, it will throb only for you." His head was raised proudly, his right hand pointed towards the star, the gentle zephyrs fanned the rich clusters of brown hair back from his brow, his eyes blazed with the enthusiasm of youth, and something like a gleam of prophecy lit up his finely formed and animated features. It was thus that his image was photographed upon her memory, and thus she loved to think of him in after years. It was by no means the first time they had exchanged vows of love and constancy.

Millie was about to reply, but turned at the sound of a methodical step upon the tessellated pavement leading up to the grand front of the mansion, and saw her father. He was strolling leisurely towards them, bare headed, and with his hands in his pockets. But his lips were compressed, and his face wore an expression of sternness seldom seen on it when addressing his daughter, as he said: "Come, Millie, I think you have remained out here quite long enough; please go to your chamber. I shall want you soon."

"Certainly, papa," replied she, scanning his face with some surprise. "But what is the matter—why do you look so cross?"

"Matter enough," he replied, shortly, glaring upon young Chatham. It was evident to both that he had overheard the latter part of their conversation. Had they entertained any doubt upon the subject, his next words would have undeceived them. "You, sir," said he, addressing himself to Lionel, "might be better employed than talking such romantic rhodomontade to my daughter, and putting all that school-girl nonsense into her head."

"It may seem like romantic nonsense to you, sir," replied Lionel, in a respectful, but manly tone, "but it is something far different to us."

"Very likely," replied Mr. Brinsley, dryly. Then he went on sternly: "Do you know who you are, and who I am? How dare a person of your poverty and low estate aspire to my daughter's hand? Is this the way you repay my kindness, in befriending you and giving you a res-

pectable situation? A common clerk, carrying everything he possesses, like a beggar's pack, on his back! Are you the kind of gentleman who would aspire to my daughter's hand—she who has been raised in affluence and never known what it was to feel the want of any comfort or luxury? No, sir! the man that weds my daughter will be one whose means and social position comport with her own—not a homeless beggar, who would drag her down to his own low degree of penury and dependency. Begone, sir! and never let me see your face again, and never, I warn you, presume to address my daughter again!"

Both Millie and Lionel stood petrified with astonishment, as if a thunderbolt had descended from the cloudless, star-lit heavens between them. Lionel was the first to speak. Drawing himself up proudly, and confronting Mr. Brinsley, he said:

"Mr. Brinsley, the taunts at my poverty, and the insults to my manhood, which you have cast at me fall harmless, and will in time recoil upon yourself. Millie is your daughter, and bound by filial duty to obey you, while she remains a minor. But she is an independent human being, and her affections are her own to dispose of as she wills. You may fetter her hands, but her heart will scorn your power."

"I wish to hear no more, fellow," Mr. Brinsley interrupted him at this point to say. "When my daughter is old enough to judge for herself, she will think as I do."

"Oh, no, papa," Millie spoke up earnestly. "Do not think I will ever change. I gave Lionel my heart, before I knew it, and I cannot ever take it back. I know I have his, and I would not exchange it for that of the proudest prince in Europe."

"I want no more of this dime-novel nonsense, my daughter," said her father to her. "Go to your room. My cashier will give you your wages, Chatham, in the morning. Let us hear no more of this."

"It is a small matter to me, sir that I am discharged from your service," answered Lionel. "The world lies before me, with as favorable prospects as it did to you at my age. Do not think I will take advantage of your daughter's pure and holy love to interfere between her and her father. Her name will be my watchword in the battle of life, which I now realize is gathering around me. Though I will love her still, and be true to her always, I will not ask her to accept my hand, nor you for her's, until I can lay at her feet a fortune equal to her dower."

"Now you talk sensibly, and like a man," replied Mr. Brinsley approvingly.

"Oh, Lionel!" exclaimed Millie, "I do not ask this of you."

"No matter, Millie, I ask it of myself," replied he. "Your love is too unselfish and generous to be coupled with sordid considerations—too ethereal to be weighed with ponderable gold."

"Stuff," said Mr. Brinsley.

"Papa, you're real unkind, now!" exclaimed Millie. But her father only repeated that it was all "stuff."

"I don't care, it's fine stuff," she replied.

"It is because your love is so genuine and disinterested," proceeded Lionel gravely, putting on his hat, for he was nearly through, "that I wish to prove to you that mine is equally so."

"I want no better proof than I have," persisted Millie. Her father, however, waited to hear what he had to say.

"If I were to marry you now—"

"Of which there is not the slightest danger," interrupted Mr. Brinsley decidedly.

"If such a thing were possible," Lionel corrected himself glancing at her father, "Mr. Brinsley might think I was actuated by mercenary motives; and though you would do me justice, you would have no proof to the contrary, except your trust in me."

"Which is all I want, Lionel," she said softly.

"But which is not all I want," said Mr. Brinsley, overhearing her.

"That proof I am determined to give," concluded Lionel, looking contemplatively towards the northern sky. "While yon polar star remains true to its sphere, so will I remain to you. I will go bound, but I leave you free. If I ever return, your father shall not at least have my poverty to urge against me. Good night, sir. Good night, Millie, and good bye."

He held her hand a moment, raised it to his lips, and was gone. Mr. Brinsley stood with corrugated brow, looking after him, and Millie went weeping to her room.

Lionel had been gone but a few minutes, and Mr. Brinsley had not moved from the spot, when the gate opened and an old but very well-dressed and respectable appearing gentleman, a little stooped, and evidently somewhat weak in the legs, shuffled along the paved walk towards the house. He seemed to be in a hurry, and was almost out of breath. So intent was he upon his mission, the nature of which we will soon

disclose, that he would have passed Mr. Brinsley without seeing him, had not the latter accosted him.

"Ah, Mr. Furness," he said, coming forward and taking the old gentleman's hand, "I am glad to see you, sir."

"What? Ah, it's Mr. Brinsley," said the old gentleman, catching his breath between every other word, lowering his shaggy gray brows, and peering hard at him, like one who does not see distinctly. "Ha, ha, I really did not know you, at first, by the moonlight. I hope I didn't keep you waiting?"

"Not at all," replied Mr. Brinsley. "Shall we go into the library now, or will you rest and enjoy the cool evening out of doors awhile?"

"Oh, bless you, I ain't tired at all," Mr. Furness hastened to say, still puffing. "There's few of the fellows that they bring up these days that could out-walk me—not that the days I was brought up in are so long gone, either, Mr. Brinsley."

"Very true," replied Mr. Brinsley with a smile, for he knew it was one of the foibles of this young-old man to be thought moderately youthful at least. "Very true. You are yet in your prime, Mr. Furness."

"Egad, that's so, Brinsley," replied he, evidently pleased with the delicate flattery.

"If you were not I suppose you wouldn't be thinking of taking a wife, eh, Furness?" asked Mr. Brinsley jocularly.

"And be just beginning to think of settling down in life, and raising up a houseful of heirs to fight over my property, eh, Brinsley? he, he, he," replied the old gentleman, chuckling so immensely at the happiness and originality of the conceit, that it brought on a violent fit of coughing, which compelled him to bend over and rest his hands on his knees.

"It is generally the case; but it is better than leaving it to strangers, any way," replied Mr. Brinsley, artfully.

"Egad, you're right, there. Besides the greater satisfaction one derives from that course while living, Brinsley. The greater satisfaction of being a family man," said Mr. Furness, this time with only a moderate chuckle, being afraid of starting the cough again.

"I had n't thought of that view of the case," replied Mr. Brinsley. "After all, the highest degree of happiness is doubtless found in the cultivation of the domestic affections. Come in, Mr. Furness, and we will discuss the subject farther in the library."

"Yes, yes, I was afraid I was late," said the

old man, balancing himself on his legs and adjusting his cravat. "You're a family man yourself, Mr. Brinsley, and speak from experience. You're right. We young fellows about town don't know anything about the comforts of life. I can see I've missed it, Brinsley, in leading this dog's life of a bachelor so long. But it's not too late yet, Brinsley. It's not too late, eh?"

"Never too late to mend," replied Brinsley, a little dryly, as the old man shuffled up the steps, one at a time, as a child not quite confident of its powers, might.

The two gentlemen went into the library, which was brilliantly lighted by a chandelier, and took seats by a table. Mr. Brinsley maintained a dignified silence, thereby indicating that he awaited any communication Mr. Furness might see proper to make. The latter sat down, looked at his host, then at a painting on the wall, then at his small thin legs; then fumbled in his pockets a while, then jumped up, and looked at Mr. Brinsley, and then sat down again as if he had changed his mind.

"I received your note, Mr. Furness," at length said Mr. Brinsley. "I inferred from it that you desired a private interview with me—I could hardly guess for what purpose,—but I have my suspicions."

"Have you now? he, he, he," chuckled the old gentleman, stroking his beard, which was perfectly white, crossing his legs, then uncrossing them. "You had your suspicions, eh?"

"Well, yes; after the conversation we had had the previous day, I could not help conjecturing that it related to that subject in some way."

"Well, you were right there," said the old man, fidgeting about in his chair. "The fact is,—I'll be perfectly candid and frank with you. I'm over my boyish pranks now, and I believe I can look on these things in a practical light. In a word, sir, I'm in love. I've been a gay sort of a fellow in my time, Mr. Brinsley, and laughed at the snares of those adroit little man-traps, sir, positively laughed at them. Ha, ha, ha." Here Mr. Furness was seized with a spell of coughing and had to stop for breath. "But I'm caught at last, and madly in love, with one of the sweetest, dearest, darlingest little pussies that ever directed one of Cupid's arrows. What do you think of it?"

"Of what? of your being in love?"

"To be sure, and,—and—as to how she'd take it, you know," with an anxious look at his host.

"Why, I'd think you were a sly old rogue,

and serves you right, for breaking so many hearts in your day," said Mr. Brinsley with a bland smile.

"You're right, there," said the old gentleman, immensely tickled. "I've smashed a score or so, in my time, it's true. But no matter, I'm through with that kind of business now."

Mr. Brinsley looked as if he thought no one could doubt that. But he did not say so. "As to how she would receive your proposals, Mr. Furness, that would depend a good deal upon circumstances. Though yet in the prime of life, it is true, you're not, you must admit, as young as you have been, and it is not every romantic young girl in her teens that would absolutely languish for you."

"Oh, I know that, Mr. Brinsley," said the old man, a little crestfallen. "Still, don't you think, now, that there are sensible young ladies that would rather marry a man in his prime, that had got through with his wild oats, you know, and could give them a handsome establishment, than some brainless, wild young fellow, eh?"

"There ought to be at least," replied Mr. Brinsley. "There certainly are any number of elderly spinsters that would. I don't know, Mr. Furness, but it strikes me that men make very poor selections for wives, in general, and often the best are left. There's my sister, now, who has come to be my housekeeper. She would make any man, not too young, a model wife. Light-hearted and girlish in her ways, of a most loving disposition, and two years younger than I am."

"Yes, yes; but see, how old did you say you were?" replied the old man, moving about uneasily, and evidently not enthusiastic in reference to Miss Brinsley.

"I'm only fifty."

"That would make her forty-eight."

"And you know you are only sixty-eight, Mr. Furness; twenty years is not too great a disparity, by any means."

"Why, sir, fifty years isn't any too much difference. No, no, she wouldn't do, Brinsley, said the old man, shaking his head emphatically. "Don't try to talk her up to me, Brinsley, she's too old, much too old."

"Oh, I didn't mean to bring her to your notice in that light," said Mr. Brinsley. But he was evidently disappointed. "I wish you could see her, sir. I really fear you would fall in love with her—I say fear, for I know she could not be prevailed upon to listen to proposals from any man. She's a fine looking woman,

sir, and has been a great belle in her time."

"But forty-eight, Brinsley! only think! She must be gray headed," said the old gentleman; though he was evidently turning it over in his mind. "Could'nt you make some excuse to have her in here, so I can see her?—without her suspecting, you know. Trot her out."

"Nothing easier," said Mr. Brinsley, rising and pulling a bell cord. "Now, guard your heart, Furness. But I need not caution you. You are an old hand at the game, I suspect."

"A score or more of such affairs, Brinsley, I assure you," chuckled the old man.

A servant entered here, and Mr. Brinsley told him to ask Miss Brinsley if she could not favor him with her company for a few minutes.

"She'll not suspect, will she, that I'm inspecting her, eh, Brinsley?" asked the old man, little dreaming that the matter had all been arranged between the brother and sister, and that the latter, who was one of the sourest, and most unprepossessing of disappointed old spinsters imaginable, had been practicing before the glass for the last two hours.

"Of course not," said Mr. Brinsley. "I'll pretend I want to ask her something about my papers."

"I'm afraid she's too old, though, Brinsley. And besides, my heart has already been stolen by one of the sweetest little minxes that ever poised a Cupid's arrow. A darling little puss, Mr. Brinsley, yet in her teens. If I could only win her, I would devote my fortune and my life to her happiness."

As to Mr. Furness' life, Mr. Brinsley probably thought there was not much of that left to devote to anything. But of the fortune, he had a better opinion. He knew this weak, silly old man was very wealthy, and he had determined to secure at least a large portion of his money, which, as his own affairs now stood, he was very much in want of; for his speculations, in which he had not only used up all his own money, but involved that of the firm of which he was the senior member, had turned out unfortunately, and he was on the very brink of bankruptcy, ruin and disgrace. He had, knowing the weakness of the old man, upon the subject of matrimony, artfully led him to entertain hopes of securing Millie's hand, and to propose this interview; but had managed it so cunningly that the old man believed himself to be the sole originator of the matter. Although Mr. Furness had been acquainted with the family for years, he had never met Miss Brinsley, who had recently come to take charge of her brother's house, his wife

having lately died. Brinsley's object was to entrap old Furness with his sister if possible; if not, he determined to sacrifice even his daughter, to save his name and property, consoling himself with the reflection that the old man could not last long, and being a bachelor, without relatives, his own family would thus come into possession of his wealth.

"Too old, did you say?" asked Mr. Brinsley, starting from his reflections on this subject. "Not at all; but you shall soon see for yourself. The younger one might possibly think the same of you, you know. It certainly would not be natural for her to fall in love with you at first sight. Nature abhors the violation of her instincts; but art, Mr. Furness, art has done, and can do much to reconcile such differences. Great wealth is a great temptation to any woman; I fancy any young girl would be tempted to marry even a man of your age, and make him a good, dutiful wife while he lived, if assured of his love and confidence, his confidence, Mr. Furness; women prize that in a man."

"But how is one to prove to them that he has confidence?" asked the old man, eagerly. "I'd never be jealous of any woman. I fancy I could hold my own with her, if she were once my wife, Mr. Brinsley."

"Oh, I don't mean that. They expect that kind of confidence, as a matter of course," said Mr. Brinsley. "They would require a stronger proof, a more substantial one, of his regard, such as he could easily give, however, by settling a handsome sum upon them upon marriage, and making them his heirs by will. To be honest, Mr. Furness, I think it would be a fair bargain, too; her youth, beauty and love against your money." He looked at the old man very hard as he said this.

"And do you really think she—I mean Millie, your daughter, Brinsley,—its no use dissembling, it is her that I am in love with,—do you really think she would accept me on those terms?" asked the old man, rising eagerly, and drawing a large envelope from his pocket.

"Why, really, you surprise me, very much," said Mr. Brinsley, affecting the utmost astonishment. "I had no idea that you thought of her. I must have time to think of this. As I have already said, I do not see why any sensible girl should refuse you on these terms."

The old gentleman's hand shook nervously, as if he were rattling his documents in Mr. Brinsley's face, and he was about to reply when Miss Brinsley came into the library, her eyebrows painted, her cheeks colored, her hair

curled, and dressed like a young girl with laces and flounces. She and the old man eyed one another with mutual astonishment, disgust and dislike. As we have said, Miss Brinsley was not very prepossessing, even in her ordinary gear; but this gay attire only served to show her off to the greater disadvantage, as court-plaster serves to render more conspicuous that it is intended to conceal. Her most amiable expression was a most acidulous smile, such as would set one's teeth on edge if he kissed her; and it was with this smile, and a most ludicrous smirk that she entered the room; but fancying this gay lover to be a bachelor of forty, or at most not over fifty, and well preserved at that, her surprise and indignation at finding him a shuffling old fellow of nearly seventy, stooping, small chested and weak-kneed in the bargain, was a little too much to be entirely concealed. The vinegary smile gave place to such a scowl as only a termagant can wear. Mr. Furness, who had expected to see a fine looking woman, "fat, fair and forty," was so little prepared to meet this straight-bodied, square-shouldered, angular-faced, frizzed, perfumed, powdered, painted, beflooned and ancient charmer, that he stood in open-eyed, wide-mouthed astonishment, regarding her with abhorrence and disgust.

"Too old, Brinsley, much too old, I tell you," he began to squeak, as soon as he could recover his tongue. "Not plump enough, not a bit good looking, and a virago, or my name's not Furness."

"Who are you speaking of, you old fool in your dotage?" cried Miss Brinsley in vindication of her title to the last compliment, before her astounded brother could put in a word. "Do you think I'd have such an old beeswax codger as you are, with your spindle legs, shriveled hide, stooping shoulders, and white head? A pretty bridegroom you'd make, you insane old wretch! With not a tooth in your head, and almost blind, you'll totter into your grave in six months. You'd better think of dying instead of marrying. Ugh! you brute!"

"Sarah, Sarah, I must insist—" began her brother, but before he could utter his remonstrance, Miss Brinsley swept out of the room in a rage, kicking over two or three chairs in the passage way as she passed through it. Poor old Furness, flattered and fawned on, as he always had been, on account of his wealth, and heirless condition, had not been in the habit of hearing such wholesome, and spitefully spoken truths, and actually shrank and cowered under

the shower of invective the spinster had hurled at him as if the ceiling were falling down upon him.

"Why, Brinsley, that dreadful woman!" he managed to say at length. "It isn't so, she didn't mean it?"

"Of course not, Mr. Furness," said Brinsley smiling blandly. "Your incautious remark in respect to her age is what did it—an elderly lady will pardon anything sooner than being called old. I am very sorry,—but it's of no consequence, at all. Let us return to the subject we were discussing when she came in."

"With all my heart," said the old man, feeling of his head, as if to be sure it was still in place. "It's a much pleasanter one, I'm sure."

"You were saying something about a settlement upon your wife, in case of marriage, I think?" said Mr. Brinsley, convinced that there was now no hope of patching up an alliance between the aged suitor and his sister.

"Yes, yes, that was it," replied the old man eagerly. "The very offer indeed, I came to make you and her to-night. I have the papers all made out here," and he handed Mr. Brinsley the envelope. "It was a lucky stroke of mine to think of it. I happened to stumble on your man, Wenn, I think his name is,—a shrewd chap, too, and some remarks he casually dropped, suggested the idea to me."

"My man Wenn?" asked Brinsley, affecting the utmost surprise. "The impudent scoundrel! it's just like his impertinence to stop and talk to gentlemen of my acquaintance when he sees them. If he does it again, lay your walking cane over his back."

"Oh, it's of no consequence," replied Furness. "I rather inveigled him into the conversation,—that's the joke of it,—and I'm really indebted to him for one valuable suggestion, namely that I should get some other than my regular lawyer to draw up the papers."

"Ah, indeed? Why not get your usual man of business?" asked Mr. Brinsley, innocently appearing not to see the point.

"Well, for no particular reason—only he sometimes thinks he knows more about my business than I do myself, as Wenn very sensibly remarked, and might have tried to prevent me from doing it," replied the old man, with a wink that was intended to be very cunning.

"Ah! that is one of my lawyer's tricks, too," said Brinsley; "but I generally manage to have my own way, anyhow."

"And so do I, so I do," chuckled the old man. "But what do you think? eh?"

During this time Mr. Brinsley had been attentively examining the papers. They had been drawn by a rascally attorney, long in Brinsley's employ. It is needless to say that the man, Wenn, had acted as Brinsley's tool in the matter, and artfully influenced Furness to go to this attorney. The old idiot had actually made Millie Brinsley the heir to his entire fortune of a half million at his death, unconditionally, and settled twenty-five thousand dollars on her in case she married him. The latter sum, Brinsley knew he could control as soon as it came into his daughter's possession; and there would be the farther advantage, in her marrying Furness, that he could be controlled, and prevented from making any other disposition of his property. The prize was tempting and in easy reach, and his own circumstances desperate; Brinsley, therefore determined that Millie should wed this wretched old creature.

"This proof is too convincing to allow me to doubt, Mr. Furness," replied Brinsley, "that your intentions are honorable, and your affection sincere. I think I may speak for Millie that she will not refuse so magnificent an offer. She is young, and does not know her own mind; may even reject at first. Love, Mr. Furness, is a plant of slow growth; but I think, yes, I am sure that she will come around all right in a very short time—you may, in fact, consider the matter as settled."

"My dear sir, why, father I shall now call you," exclaimed the old fellow, in raptures, falling on Brinsley's neck, "you make me too happy, you do indeed." But to the eye of the spectator, he must have looked more like the father than the son. But comparisons, under such circumstances, are odious. Brinsley tried to look the amiable paternal, and as much unlike a man who had sold his daughter for a handsome figure as possible; but the effort was a failure.

"Can't I see her, papa, my little pussie?" asked the ardent swain as soon as he had recovered his breath.

This was too much, even for Brinsley. "Nonsense, Furness," he said, "don't make a fool of yourself. Call me Brinsley, please, as you always have, and my daughter by her proper name."

"But just a minute—old fellow—can't I see her a moment?" persisted he.

"Why, certainly, if you wish it," replied Brinsley. "But it would be better to wait until to-morrow, that I may prepare her mind for

the happiness in store for her." The words almost stuck in his throat; but he managed to get them out. He added with a caustic touch of irony in his tone, despite his effort to suppress it, "your youthful blood should be less impetuous, if you would not spoil your own cause."

"Oh, well, well; I don't wish to do that you know," he hastened to say, in alarm. "I'll wait till to-morrow."

Soon after he hobbled off, trying, in a squeaking voice, to troll a snatch of some love-song which he had learned a half century before; and Mr. Brinsley ringing for a servant, summoned Millie to the library.

CHAP. III.—ALL FOR LOVE.

It was with some trepidation, but with no suspicion of the great trial in store for her, that Millie obeyed her father's summons to the library. The worst that she anticipated, was that he would forbid all future intercourse between herself and Lionel. On entering the room with eyes swoolen from recent weeping, and feeling in rather a sulky and rebellious mood, she was surprised no less at her father's manner, which was one of unusual kindness, than at his first question.

"Sit down, my daughter," said he. "I wish to speak with you. Do you love me?"

"Love you, my father? Can you doubt it?" she replied, her dark eyes dilating with surprise, not so much at the question itself, as something in the tone with which it was asked.

"I hope I may never have reason to do so," replied he, in the same strange tone, "for I am going to test your love severely." She listened with respectful attention, while he proceeded, but with a certain tightening of the lips about the corners of her mouth which indicated settled determination, for she was her father's own child in that she had a will of her own. As he continued, the various emotions to which his communication gave rise,—surprise, incredulity, anger, disgust, sorrow, despair,—were faithfully depicted upon her mobile face, but that expression did not leave it.

Mr. Brinsley explained to her at some length, and with many apologies and palliations, what we may sum up in a few words; namely, that he had not only squandered his own means—but those of the firm of which he was the senior member, that had been entrusted to his control—in speculations which had resulted disastrously; and that the discovery of these op-

erations, which was inevitable, if he could not replace the money, would be attended with bankruptcy, ruin and disgrace. He concluded by saying that it was in her power to save him from this calamity, if she was willing to make some sacrifices to do so.

"If by any honorable means I can aid you in this extremity, my father, I will do so; and surely you would ask no more of your own daughter, if you love her," replied she readily, but with a vague misgiving that his words meant more than they expressed.

Mr. Brinsley winced under the reply, and the scrutinizing look that accompanied it, as he replied. "Of course," he said, "I would ask nothing of you that I did not deem right under the circumstances."

"Tell me at once what it is that you require of me, father," said she, "and if it is in human power to do it, I will. I would willingly resign ease and luxury, and endure toil and poverty, if thereby I could serve my father."

"I do not ask that kind of a sacrifice of you, Millie," said he. "That could avail me nothing. Indeed, it is but too certain to be our portion in any event, unless," he added expressively, "you are willing to make a sacrifice of another and of a nobler kind. A wealthy suitor seeks your hand in marriage, Millie, and by accepting him you will at once relieve me from all embarrassment."

He watched the effect of his words upon her keenly, from under the hand with which he shaded his eyes. A deathly pallor spread over her face, and the curves of her lips were drawn tighter; but she made no reply.

"The gentleman is a trifle old for you," he continued, "but so much the better. You will the sooner be left the richest woman in the city, and free to follow the inclinations of your will, which, as you will be older and wiser, you will understand much better than now. He is immensely wealthy, and cannot live long."

The full meaning of the base proposal, as she regarded it, struck her with the force of a shock, and she remained silent for a few moments, regarding her father with a tender reproach in her eyes, such as that with which a dumb pet might receive a cruel blow from its master. But his face was fixed and firm in every line, and showed neither pity nor relenting.

"Ask me anything but that father," she said, at length, slowly and firmly. "My love and my truth are given to another, and I cannot

take them back. It is hard to refuse you, but I cannot do this thing."

Mr. Brinsley started as if a dagger had pierced him, and turned pale. Child as she was, there was a firmness and decision in her character that he had not counted on.

"Do not decide a question, upon which our honor and happiness depends, so hastily, my child," said he in a voice that was tremulous despite his efforts to control its modulations. "You will think better of it, I am sure. You must obey me in this; your filial duty requires it, and our family honor demands it. Otherwise, you would be a beggar, and I a felon. As to this flirtation with young Chatham, it is a silly, childish affair. He will go off and forget you in a month, and fall in love with the next pretty face he sees. Our family pride and social position is too important to be sacrificed to a merely romantic sentiment. You ought not, and shall not allow it to influence you to become the means of ruining your family and bringing your father's gray hairs down to a dishonored grave."

Millie was evidently deeply affected by these words, the situation they disclosed, and the stern, hard alternative that they presented to her. Her breathing came deep and spasmodic, and a look of unutterable sorrow and pity for her father swept over her face. But guided by the pure intuitions of her faithful heart the path of duty and of right lay clearly before her, and the firm lines about her mouth did not relax.

"Father, you asked me if I loved you; I might, with greater propriety ask you the same question," said she, approaching him, and placing her arm tenderly around his neck, while her tears fell thick and fast. "But I will not—I know you love your Millie; and as I know that, I know that you are prompted to this by some horrible, mistaken policy. There is, there must be some other way out of the difficulties which surround you."

"There is none," he answered sternly.

"Then, whatever the consequences may be, my dear father, I cannot do this thing," said she decisively. "Whoever this may be, I do not and cannot love him; to marry him, from any other motive whatever, would be a sin; to promise to love, honor and obey him, would be assuming sacred and life-long obligations which nature would reject; it would be selling myself, and prostituting the holiest of the human affections for worldly gain. Can you ask such a sacrifice of your daughter?"

"Are you mad, Millie?" demanded her father lifting his head, and gazing at her almost fiercely. "Is it possible that you can carry your novel-reading nonsense to the extent of ruining your father?"

"In novels they do differently, father," replied Millie, with a forced smile, though every line of her face, from which every vestige of color had fled, showed how much it cost her to utter the words. "The heroine marries the rich suitor, and buries her love, and pines away in miserable grandeur the remainder of her life. But, as you force me to be plain, I must say that I cannot feel it to be my duty to sacrifice myself, and every hope of happiness for the sake of another, even though he were my father, because he has done wrong. If you have done wrong, father, I am more sorry than I can tell; but I do not believe it will right that wrong for me to do a greater one. For it is a great wrong you ask me to commit, a wrong at war with nature, reason and God. I cannot forswear myself before the altar and high heaven, and doubly wrong him I marry in loving another and living a lie to him. Believe me, father, no good can ever come of doing wrong, and I will not tempt heaven by trying to hide one sin by covering it with one still greater."

Disappointed, angered and surprised by such pure and lofty sentiments from one he had considered as a mere child,—sentiments, to do him justice, that he could not appreciate, for his view of the matter was a purely worldly one,—Mr. Brinsley was about to reply, when he heard a shuffling in the hall, and looking around quickly beheld Mr. Furness standing in the library door, with both hands lifted as if about to pronounce a benediction, gazing upon Millie in beatific adoration.

"Pardon my abrupt entrance, Mr. Brinsley," said the old man, bowing to Millie and making semi-circles with his hands from his head outward, "but I was strolling by, to get a glance at my charmer's window, and seeing her in your study through the open window, I could not resist the temptation,"—and before any reply could be made, he had hobbled up to Millie and was essaying a caress, and saying in his squeakiest tones: "Ah, this is my little darling! Ain't it, now? It'll ratify papa's consent, I know, and then won't we be happy? O, but won't we though!"

Millie was clear-headed and quickwitted. She instantly realized that this old man, in his second childhood, was the "rich suitor" for

her hand! The inception of the thought, to one of her refined and delicate sensibilities, was attended with a feeling of unutterable loathing and disgust, and she repulsed the old idiot with a violence that sent him staggering to the other side of the room.

"Why, father, is it possible that this old grandpa is the person you spoke of?" exclaimed she scornfully, looking daggers at the decrepit suitor. "You must be as crazy as he is. I would as soon think of marrying my great grandfather."

"Why, Miss, it's true I'm not quite as young as I was," spueaked the old gentleman gallantly, recovering his legs, but speaking from a safe distance, "but I'm pretty pert and lively yet, I can tell you. I'm not half as old as I look, and if you'd only—"

"O, go along, you silly old fool!" interrupted Millie, whose temper was up, sweeping from the room.

He stood looking after her in open-mouthed astonishment, until Mr. Brinsley recalled him to himself by saying, with an encouraging smile: "I told you she would object at first, Mr. Furness. I was just broaching the subject to her when you came in—most inopportunistly, I am sorry to say. She will come around yet."

"Well, I thought she was an angel, surely, when I came in," replied the old gentleman, "she looked so pure and beautiful. But I see she's got some of the woman in her, Brinsley—a little tincture of the old Eve—eh, Brinsley?"

"They all have that, Mr. Furness," replied he with a grim smile. "But she will come around when she has time to think of it."

Notwithstanding these encouraging words, Furness was at first inclined to feel rather dubious about it, and was sensibly depressed and less buoyant. But Mr. Brinsley redoubling his assurances, the old man was at length satisfied, and finally hobbled off, occasionally turning about, and casting furtive glances in the direction in which he supposed his fair *inamorata's* window to be, which it were ludicrous in the extreme to have beheld.

Mr. Brinsley had been secretly mortified and exasperated almost beyond endurance by the independent and rebellious spirit his daughter had exhibited on this occasion; nor had the inopportunist arrival of the aged suitor, and her contemptuous treatment of him, tended to assuage these feelings. Besides, he had not urged the matter upon her as strongly as he had intended, and therefore sought an early opportunity to renew the subject with her. He

did so the next evening, and a stormy interview was the result. She was still firm in her determination not to marry Furness, and argument and entreaty were alike in vain. Mr. Brinsley was a man not accustomed to being crossed in his purposes, and could ill brook opposition,—especially from his daughter, to whom he had always been a kind, though cold and reserved parent. He had set his heart on this match, and could not reconcile himself to resigning it; it appeared to him, indeed, his last hope, and he clung to it with all the stubbornness of his inflexible nature. Finding persuasion of no avail, he determined to exert his authority, relying upon the explicit obedience Millie had ever given to his wishes when put in the form of commands. He therefore told her that he had tried to make her see the matter in a proper light, but as she would not, he hoped she would not dare to disobey his positive orders.

"As I do not wish to force you into this marriage," he said in conclusion, "I hope and believe that when you reflect upon it seriously, you will coincide with my views. If you do not," he added with marked emphasis, "never call yourself a child of mine again, nor look to me for love or sympathy."

"Do not say such dreadful things, father," implored Millie, kneeling by his side. "Do not cast me off, because my soul revolts against such an unnatural connection. But know for once and all, that *I will not marry grandpa Furness!* I will be a beggar on the street, I will die first."

"Then leave my house this instant, unfilial wretch, viper that you are!" exclaimed he in a towering passion which he no longer attempted to restrain, seizing her by the shoulders with an iron-like grip, shaking her as a terrier might a rat, and casting her from him with a force that sent her reeling across the room. "How dare you set your will in opposition to mine!" he continued, rising and stamping on the floor, as she fell half swooning, clapping one hand to her heart, shocked and pained beyond expression. "Leave the room, instantly! and do not let me see your face again until you come and ask my forgiveness, and yield obedience to my commands," he said, advancing towards her menacingly.

"That will never be, father," said Millie calmly as she slowly rose and limped from the room.

"We will see, you little ingrate," he hissed after her.

Millie retired to her own room, and having bolted the door, threw herself upon the bed and gave way to her feelings. Her arm and ankle had been bruised against a table in her fall; but she scarcely thought of these; the pain that drew forth the paroxysm of grief and tears which she now experienced was deeper and more incurable than any bodily injury. She was proud and high-spirited; her father had commanded her to leave his house, had laid violent hands upon, and spurned her from his very feet, and in a rage of pain and passion she determined to take him at his word.

The night was very different from the preceding one. It was dark and stormy and the rain came down in torrents. All was still, and the servants had retired for the night, when Millie left her own room, and glided noiselessly to the one adjoining it. This had been her mother's room; it was here that she had died; and it remained exactly as when she occupied it. It was never used now, and seldom ever entered by any one, except Millie, who loved it and often spent hours in it, as if the spirit of the departed lingered about it and held communication with her own. Kneeling down by the bed upon which her mother had died, the young girl breathed a silent prayer to Him who has promised to be a parent to the orphan. Then rising, she approached a closet, and took therefrom a suite of male attire. It had belonged to her brother, who had died in his fifteenth year, several years before, and had been piously preserved by his mother as a memento of her beloved boy. In these garments Millie dressed herself, after removing her own clothing, and doing it up in a bundle. Going to the dressing case, she took from it a pair of golden bracelets, of a peculiar and unique design, set in diamonds, and having carefully wrapped them up, put them in one of the pockets of the coat she had donned. "My mother's gift, and—and Lionel always admired them so much," she murmured softly.

"There now!" she continued in an altered tone, stepping in front of the mirror, "what kind of a boy do I make?" But she blushed involuntarily as she saw the reflection of her form in these strange habiliments. "O, I forgot my hair!" she added, as the long, dark tresses caught her eye, and their inappropriateness for a boy for the first time occurred to her. "That will never do—but I shall soon remedy that."

With a pair of scissors she deliberately and methodically clipped off her hair above her

ears, like a boy's, wrapped it in a newspaper, lighted it with a match and cast it into the grate.

"There! that will do! I think I shall pass now," she said, surveying herself once more. Then turning to take a last look at the apartment, she added: "Dear mother, if the dead return to earth and hover over their loved ones here as guardian angels, come with your child now, follow her footsteps, and guard her from evil. Her trust is now in God and thee."

So saying, she put the bundle containing her clothes under her arm, turned out the gas, and left the room, closing the door after her. Soon after, the muffled figure of a boy, with a bundle under his arm, emerged from a side door of the mansion. A vivid flash of lightning, followed by a roll of thunder, seemed to startle him, as he stood on the steps a moment, looking first one way, then another, irresolutely, as if in doubt what direction to take. Pale and trembling, he cast a glance in the direction of the Erie canal, and then leaving the grounds of the mansion walked rapidly along the street leading towards that watery highway. When within a block or two of the canal, he was met and accosted by a young and miserably clad female.

"For God's sake, sir," said she, "give me something to buy shelter from this dreadful storm. I am hungry, and faint, drenched and chilled. I shall not need charity long."

"So young, and yet so miserable!" replied the boy. "There are those, it seems, worse off even than myself. It is little I have to give, poor girl,—but I will divide with you. Here is some money; and here, take this bundle. It belonged to a friend of mine, who will never more need it. It contains a decent suite of clothing. Put it on, and obtain a lodging somewhere. Trust in God."

So saying, the boy continued his way rapidly. The young outcast, who, indeed, appeared to be very young for such, took the bundle with some surprise, and was about to thank the giver; but he had disappeared in the darkness. "Trust in God!" she muttered bitterly. "I have tried to trust and pray; but it's no use. God has forgotten me now, because I forgot him when I was happy. It matters little, though. This money will buy me a night's lodging and a supper. But what is the use of preserving a life that is full only of suffering and shame?" She partially opened the bundle, and saw what it contained by the frequent flashes of lightning. "Finery, when I want

bread! No matter, it will answer for my bridal robe. Not such a bridal, though, as I foolishly expected, when I listened too readily to his treacherous promises and left the home of my innocent childhood. But my bridal robes, nevertheless. Ha, ha, ha! I will put them on, that I may appear decently when they find me."

Thus talking to herself, the now desperate, reckless and despairing girl directed her own steps towards the canal. The storm no longer had any terrors for her, and the drenching rain would soon loose its marrow-chilling power over her graceful, delicate and beautifully moulded form.

Oh, love, love love! Perpetuating power, that with links of hearts extendeth the chain of human life upon the globe: a chain garlanded with flowers of beauty, ever blooming anew to each generation that eagerly plucketh them, and will believe only by experience that thorns lurk beneath! Here are two mournful examples of thy mighty influence: two maidens, both young and fair, have left home, kindred, fair fame, all behind, and are braving death with a heroism nobler than that of the warrior who faces him on the battle-field,—and all for love!

CHAP. IV.—SADNESS, SIN, AND SLAVERY.

AFTER his interview with Millie, Mr. Brinsley went to his room, and did not retire until late. He was in no mood for repose, and paced the floor for hours, revolving the condition of his affairs in his mind, and trying to devise some plan to extricate himself from the difficulties which surrounded him. It was late the next morning before he made his appearance in the breakfast room. His spinster sister awaited him in grim patience; but he was surprised to find that Millie had not yet come down, and inquired for her.

"I have not seen her this morning," said Miss Brinsley, taking her seat at the head of the table.

Mr. Brinsley rang for a servant, and ordered her to summon Millie to breakfast. The maid returned, looking perplexed and surprised, and said that Miss Millie was not in her room, and that it had the appearance of not having been occupied the previous night.

"See if you can find her," said he, unfolding the morning paper, which lay by his plate as usual, while his sister poured the coffee with an injured air.

"You are *all* rather tardy this morning," she remarked. "Breakfast is nearly cold."

Mr. Brinsley only rattled the paper in reply, and read it in silence. Some time elapsed, and it was evident from the frequency with which he turned the paper that he was growing impatient. Miss Brinsley said she would thank him for a bit of the steak, and remarked that it had been a stormy night; she pitied any one that had been out in it.

"I wonder what can keep that girl so long, and why Millie does not come to her breakfast," said Mr. Brinsley, as he helped her plate.

"There's no use in trying to account for her whims," replied Miss Brinsley, commencing her breakfast with the utmost unconcern.

Mr. Brinsley took up the paper again. "At length the maid returned, looking mystified. Millie was not to be found anywhere. Mr. Brinsley's irritation began to give place to alarm. He dispatched servants to the houses of the different friends of the family where she was in the habit of visiting. One by one they all returned with the same message. No one had seen anything of her. For the first time he now recalled the occasion of their quarrel, his harsh treatment of her, and his orders to her to leave the house. A sickening dread and foreboding came over him that she had rashly taken it into her head to take him at his word, and that she had sought out Lionel and eloped with him. Leaving his breakfast untasted, he hastened to his counting room to enquire if Chatham had been seen since the previous day. No, no one had seen him. The police were next called into requisition and consulted with. They took the matter in hand, and soon discovered that young Chatham had taken a morning train for Chicago the previous day, and that he went alone. No trace could be found of any person answering to Millie's description, who had left the city in any direction. A thorough search throughout the city was made, and advertisements inserted in the city papers, and those of New York, offering a reward for any information concerning her whereabouts. Various versions of the matter appeared in the papers; but the most popular one was that in a temporary fit of insanity she had left her home and either wandered off, or destroyed herself.

It was generally remarked that the most eager and anxious inquirer for the missing girl was old Mr. Furness. He scarcely ate or slept, and was in a state of constant feverish anxiety. He instituted a separate and independent search on his own account, and offered a large reward.

He was waited on, the fifth day after Millie's disappearance, by some men who came to claim the reward. A body had been found in Onondaga creek, under an old skiff; it had evidently been in the water some days, and the weather being warm, was considerably decayed; the face was discolored and bloated beyond recognition; the cat-fish had eaten part of her face and hands; but the clothing answered exactly to the description of that worn by the missing girl; and a letter, in pencil, was found in the pocket of the dress which left no doubt that she had voluntarily drowned herself.

A coroner's jury was summoned, and Mr. Brinsley and his sister notified. The moment they saw the body, they recognized it, by the clothing, as that of Millie, and the note found in the dress pocket was unmistakably of her writing. It bore the date of the night of her disappearance, and ran briefly thus:

"My dear Father:

"Forgive me, if what I do grieves you. Death in any shape to me is preferable to the course you desired me to pursue, and rash and unjustifiable as my action may seem, my resolve is firm and fixed. Heaven will surely find you some other way out of your troubles. Do not judge me too hardly, and if we never meet again on earth, my farewell prayer is that we may in heaven, where no anger or sorrow can ever come between you, and

"Your loving daughter,
"MILLIE."

What, then, would not the bowed and stricken man have given to recall her to him and to earth, if but for one brief moment in which to have unsaid those hard and hasty words, and implore her forgiveness! How willingly he could then have given her her own way, gratified her slightest wish in everything without cross or dictation! But it was too late. The die was cast by Fate, and no earthly power could now change it. He could only weep over her inanimate clay, bid them bear her back to that home from which he had rashly driven her, and which must now be forever desolate.

Mr. Furness, unable to face the heart-rending spectacle, had gone to Mr. Brinsley's mansion, almost frantic, and awaited their return in despairing hope. Poor old man! he had loved her with all the unreasoning madness of a second youth, like unto the second spring of a tree that blooms in autumn, only to be blasted by the frosts of winter. When the melancholy procession bore the body into the house, where he sat, hollow-eyed, worn and haggard, looking ten years older than he had a week before, he

arose, wailing and almost beside himself with grief, cast upon it one agonizing look, turned deathly white, tottered and would have fallen heavily to the floor, had he not been caught in Mr. Brinsley's arms.

"Zeke! here, Zeke,—somebody—help me move Mr. Furness!" cried Mr. Brinsley, observing that the old man had fallen into a death-like swoon.

Zeke, short for Ezekiel Wenn, Mr. Brinsley's hired man, was nowhere to be seen, and one of the Coroner's jury, a friend of Mr. Brinsley's who had accompanied him home with the corpse, assisted him. They bore him into the library and laid him on a sofa.

"Run, Jones, for a doctor, while we revive him!" cried Mr. Brinsley, chafing the old man's wrists, and feeling his pulse. "Be quick, or he is a dead man. I will bring some brandy from the dining room, and try to get him to swallow some of it."

The few spectators of this scene, after crowding around the fainting man a few moments, and assuring themselves that it was only a fainting fit, returned to hover around the more awful spectacle lying in the parlor, which had in it that strange attraction which death ever seems to exercise over the living. Left alone with the old man, who was still unconscious, Mr. Brinsley started suddenly and turned pale. Quickly glancing around the room to assure himself that no one was near, as if moved by a sudden impulse he cautiously approached the door, and after glancing out stealthily closed it. Then he stood by the old man, trembling as if with an ague, feeling his pulse. His countenance at that moment would have been a study for a painter. His brows were drawn down and contracted, his lips firmly closed, and the muscles about his mouth and the lower part of his face drawn down with a most determined and diabolical expression. The demon of avarice had suggested to him how easy it would be to stop the old man's breath, so that he would never revive! No human being could ever possibly know it, and then—and then by the recent will, now that Millie was dead, he would be the sole inheritor of his property!

Letting the fainting man's hand fall limply by his side, with one hand he carefully held his nose, while he firmly pressed the other over his mouth. He stood, quaking and holding them in this position a few moments, glancing uneasily from his victim to the door. Once, when he fancied he heard steps in the hall, he released his hold, and commenced chafing his

wrists. Assured that it was a false alarm, he placed them as before, still watching the door, and with contracted and corrugated brow listened intently for any approaching step. None came.

At length the old man began to show signs of returning life, moving his hands and limbs convulsively, and struggling for breath. Without removing his eye from the door, or releasing his hold, he pressed his knees and elbows against his struggling victim, and held him securely until some minutes after he had ceased to move. The old man's hands gradually sank, limp and helpless by his side, and his limbs became motionless; a few convulsive movements, and then he was quite passive. For some minutes longer the murderer retained his grasp. When at last he released it, and looked full into the face of his old dead friend, swollen and purple, his eyes staring, glassy and protruding, he shrank back in horror and covered his own face with his hands.

At this moment he was aroused by the sound of footsteps in the hall, and had the presence of mind to throw the door open, and cry,

"Make haste, for God's sake! I am afraid he is dead," just as the Doctor and Jones hastily entered the room.

"Throw open the windows!" exclaimed the doctor. He felt the dead man's wrist, applied his hand to his heart, peered into his eyes and shook his head in a perplexed, but decided manner.

"Can you save him yet, Doctor?" inquired Brinsley with an anxiety that was not at all assumed, though it sprang from a very different cause from that supposed by those who heard it.

"I will try," said the Doctor, "but I fear he is gone. How did it happen?"

"He fainted away when they brought my poor girl in, and did not come to," exclaimed Brinsley, so eagerly that the doctor looked at him with surprise and said:

"Fainted?—did you say? Did he not revive?"

"Brinsley turned pale, ignorant of the drift of the doctor's query, and fearful of committing himself. Fortunately for him, the doctor unconsciously helped him out, by adding; "This does not look like a fainting fit—see how purple his face is—more like apoplexy."

"Oh!" Brinsley felt wonderfully relieved, and drew a long breath. Beaded drops of cold perspiration stood upon his forehead. "I tried to give him brandy, but could not get any down

him." (This was apparently true,—he had made a faint attempt of the kind, spilling some of the liquor on the cravat of the deceased.) "He seemed to partially arouse, and go off into a spasm again."

"Ah, ha," said the doctor, now quite satisfied. "I thought so. It is all over—nevertheless—" He did not finish the sentence, but took a thumb lancet from his pocket, ripped up the sleeve of the dead man's shirt and coat with his knife, and opened a vein. Only a little thin reddish fluid, and a few black clots oozed from the wound. He turned the corpse over on its side, and lowered its head. "No, it is too late," he said, composing the form, and closing the eyes. "Heart-clot formed from syncope, evidently," he said, putting on his left glove. "Sad, very sad; accept my condolence"—here he gave Brinsley his other hand,—"upon this double bereavement—your daughter and your old friend."

"It is very hard indeed, Doctor Singleton," replied Brinsley, wiping his eyes.

"Hard, hard, very hard, sir,—but such is life, and—but, really sir, this death of Mr. Furness is rather a singular one."

"Very unexpected—I knew he was old and weak, but I never dreamed of such a thing," said Brinsley.

"I believe he was not subject at all to apoplexy?" Brinsley shook his head. "I was not his usual medical attendant, knew very little of his state of health, but he did not have the appearance of a person predisposed to apopleptic attacks. I think my diagnosis the correct one; but if you wish, we will call in Dr. Bradford, and—"

"It is wholly unnecessary," Brinsley hastened to say. "I have every faith in your skill and judgment, Doctor, and shall avail myself of them whenever occasion requires."

"Ah, thanks; but I must be off—command me, I pray, at any time, Mr. Brinsley," replied the Doctor, naturally flattered. "I believe there is nothing more I can do, now, so a good day, Mr. Brinsley, a good day." And the Doctor was walking off as briskly as if the lives of half the people in Syracuse depended upon his immediate presence, although it was, probably, the first call he had had that day. He was a young surgeon, of great promise in his profession, in which he had perfected himself under the direction of the best masters of the art in this country and Europe, thanks to a rich uncle. Five years before, he had returned to Syra-

cuse, his native place, and hung out the modest sign of "Warwick Singleton, M.D., C.M., Physician and Surgeon," with high hopes of fame and fortune. Some fame he had acquired, as an expert operator, and had worked into considerable practice, principally surgical,—but as yet, dame Fortune had neglected to call upon him. Some four years previously, he had felt pretty sure that she was meditating doing so. It was just after he had performed a very brilliant and successful operation upon a blind girl in the "Orphan's Home," restoring her eyesight. It was in the papers, and brought him some notoriety and practice, and gave him an acknowledged position among ophthalmic surgeons; but the public are very prone to forget merit, and since then, his income had enabled him to dress well, board at a first-class hotel, and mingle in the best society of the city—but nothing beyond. He was not Mr. Brinsley's family physician, and had been called in upon the present emergency simply because his sign was the first one that Mr. Jones saw when he went out in quest of a physician.

As we were saying, Dr. Singleton was walking off with an air of business haste, when Mr. Brinsley called him back. "My dear Doctor, this blow is so sudden and unexpected, I am completely prostrated and incapacitated for seeing to the necessary arrangements. Persons accustomed to laying out the dead are wanted, and a seamstress to assist my sister. May I trouble you to send them? Whatever expenses—" Mr. Brinsley seemed anxious to give him money, a sum quite disproportionate, apparently, to any disbursements he would be likely to have to make.

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. Brinsley, with pleasure," said the Doctor, looking at the roll of bank bills queerly, but declining them with a decided negative wave of his gloved hand, adding, "That matter you had better settle with the parties yourself."

"Ah, I'm quite unstrung, Doctor; I hardly know what I am doing," said Brinsley, reddening with confusion, and putting up the bills. "Please send them to me, then."

"At once, Mr. Brinsley, good day again." And this time the Doctor was off sure enough, wondering at his strange manner, and asking himself, "What the deuce Brinsley meant by offering him money?"

Mr. Brinsley could only bow his acknowledgments in silence, and walk from the room with his handkerchief to his face, as if to re-

press his tears; but in reality to shut out the vision of that purple visage with the glaring, glassy eyes protruding from their sockets—a sight, however, which though it might be hid from every eye save the All-seeing Eye, no handkerchief, no lids however tightly closed, no veil or curtain, or wall could ever more shut out from his guilty soul.

But was it hid from every human eye? Have walls and windows, and closets with key holes in them no eyes? Ask Zeke Wenn, who suddenly, and mysteriously appeared in the room a few moments after his master left it, and startled Mr. Jones, who was performing a few last friendly offices for the dead man, by coming up behind him and asking,

"Is he dead, Sir?"

"Yes, Zeke, he is dead."

"Then the Lord have mercy on his soul, and the master's too."

With this he left the room abruptly, and Mr. Jones soon followed him.

The storm, whose brewing none knew of save himself, sunk back into the depths from which it had threatened to rise, and Mr. Brinsley's financial sky suddenly cleared. He was a doubly wealthy and prosperous man now. The last will and testament of Abel Furness, deceased, was admitted to probate; no one disputed its validity; the death of Millie Belle Brinsley was proved; the usual formalities were gone through with, and Henry Brinsley, Esq. came into possession of the estates, funds and stocks of the deceased, who was buried with appropriate ceremonies, and his last resting place honored with a handsome and costly monument erected by the grateful inheritor of his wealth.

"It's an ill wind that blows no body good."

So thought Zeke Wenn, who had now become one of the most devoted of servants, always by his master's side, making himself, with a mysterious air of mingled obsequiousness and insolence, as necessary to his existence as possible. An air that, while it offended his master, aroused in his guilty mind a vague fear and suspicion that ever rose like an undefined, threatening shadow whenever he thought of turning the fellow away. The guilty are ever cowards, haunted by a nameless terror whose presence they feel, though they cannot see it, persuade themselves, as they will, with the delusive hope that it is not dogging their every step, ready at any, perhaps the most unexpected moment, to stand revealed before them.

Brinsley fancied that he occasionally detected

Zeke's eyes fixed upon him with a knowing, sinister look. Yet no words had passed between them to give rise to the belief that this man whom he dreaded and feared, yet knew not why, was in possession of any part of his fatal secret. "The fellow may have his suspicions, he can know nothing," he thought; and the thought consoled, but did not satisfy him. But as Zeke became more insolent, his master became more restless under the restraint which his man-servant's presence imposed upon him, and he determined to be rid of it. His increased possessions brought him little comfort or enjoyment, while this fellow sat like Mordecai at his gate.

"I think you can find some other situation that will suit you better than this, Zeke," Mr. Brinsley summoned courage to say one day, when long suffering forbearance had ceased to be a virtue. For Zeke was not content to confine his tyranny to his master. Miss Brinsley had often declared that he was unbearable, and that he must leave the house, or she would. Sweet and gentle Annie Henshaw, who, since that memorable day on which those two awful forms lay shrouded in the mansion, had been a constant inmate of the household, avoided him as she would an ill-natured cur. Mr. Brinsley alone seemed blind to the haughty assumptions of this coarse, ignorant lackey.

"I think I can dispense with your services as soon as your month is up," continued Mr. Brinsley, fastening on his cravat, while Zeke was officiously brushing his vest, seeing that his man continued his occupation without seeming to hear him. For the brief conversation we are about to relate took place in Mr. Brinsley's dressing room, adjoining his bed-chamber, one morning after Zeke, as usual, had shaved his master, and was assisting him to dress.

"I don't think you can, sir, beggin' yer parding,—not contradictin' ye, sir; but I don't think ye can, sir," replied Zeke mysteriously without looking up. Had he done so, he might have observed that his master paled, and that his hand trembled so that he could not fasten the loop of the cravat over the button, though he tried to say:

"Ah, you think not, eh?" in a very unconcerned manner.

"Yis, sir," replied Zeke, stolidly.

"And why not, pray?" Mr. Brinsley rattled the brushes on his dressing case as he asked the question, and taking up one commenced to brush his hair, as if wholly indifferent to the

reply for which he listened with all his ears.

"It's no use my sayin' *why*," replied Zeke, with particular stress on the *why*; "cause you know, an' I know, an' two's enough to know some things," laying down the vest, and taking up his master's coat.

If Mr. Brinsley had paled before, he turned ghastly white at this, and the brush fell from his hand with a crash, breaking a little hand mirror that lay upon the marble slab of the dressing case. The nameless terror whose shadowy presence he had so long felt had manifested itself at last, and struck him full in the face with its skeleton hand. He staggered backwards into a large easy chair, and gasped faintly "water!"

"This 'ill do yer more good," said Zeke, pouring out a glass of wine from a Bohemian bottle upon the dressing stand, and offering it to his master. The latter swallowed it at a gulp.

"Wat's'er matter, sir?" asked Zeke, when his master had partially recovered.

"Nothing. I felt faint. Ask Annie to bring up my coffee, Zeke."

"Yis, sir, in a minit. As I was sayin', sir, it's as well ye spoke," said Zeke, turning his back to his master and looking out of the window while he spoke, "for I 'as jist a thinkin' of doin' so myself. I thought I'd wait till things got a little settled, as they is now. An' if ye please, sir, I'd like my wages raised; an' I've been a faithful servant, I hopes ye wont deny, sir, an' if ye please, sir, to lend me some money."

"You've been a very good boy, Zeke, I must say, though a little overbearing at times," replied the humiliated Brinsley soothingly, knowing full well without daring to ask, that this odious parasite was, somehow, in possession of his terrible secret, and meant to profit by it. His sin had found him out; he was no longer a free man, but a slave to the caprice of the master of that sin.

"Which I didn't mean to be, axin' your parding, sir," said Zeke.

"I'm always ready to serve those *who serve me*," continued Brinsley, and with more confidence in his tone; now that he saw this rascal's object was money, he was ready to buy him off, aye as anxious to do it as he could be to be bought off. "How much do you want?"

"As I 'as goin' to say, sir, my brother Eli, he went West some time ago and settled; an' he's bought a little place, an' owes on it, an' I promised to lend him some money; an' I'm

wantin' a little myself for other things, an' if it ain't axin' too much, sir, I'd like a couple of thousand dollars,"—Brinsley winced—"an' I'll be satisfied with seventy-five dollars a month wages—'cause," he hastened to add, "I like the place, an' I'd rather not leave, if you please, sir; an' now we've come to a understandin', I'll try an' be a better servant than I ever was, sir, an' you'll have no cause to complain of me again."

Brinsley remained silent a while, during which Zeke resumed his brushing operation on the coat. "I am in this fellow's power; if I defy him, or send him away, there is no knowin' *what* may happen," thought the wretched man; and for the moment that dark *what* suggested an unpleasant tightness about his shirt collar—for they hung folks in those days. "Perhaps it is as well to keep him near me for the present—at any rate, I must temporize with him. 'Very well, Zeke,' he said aloud at length, "it's a bargain. See that you keep your proper place in future."

"Yis, sir, your coat is all ready, sir, an' I'll send Annie up with your coffee right away," replied the man humbly, and left the apartment.

A slight, lithe girlish figure, with a rosy face, and an abundance of glossy dark hair soon after entered the room, bearing a silver tea tray on which was a little service of the same material, lined and rimmed with gold, and a cozy little breakfast of lamb chops, hot muffins, crisp potatoes, golden cream, a little marigold-colored roll of butter, and a smoking little pot of coffee that filled the room with its pleasant aroma.

"Good morning, Mr. Brinsley," said she, in a joyous, free voice, and with a smile that brightened all her face like a gleam of May sunshine. "You are not looking well, this morning. I hope you are not ill, sir?"

"A little faint, Annie, my dear; but I think that charming breakfast will make me feel better," replied he. "Have you had yours yet?"

"Oh, yes, sir; three hours ago. Shall I put it on the table, sir?" said she.

"If you please. And then sit down, Annie, I want to talk with you," he replied.

She did as directed, her native curiosity not a little excited by the unusual request. But we must reserve an introduction to Annie Henshaw, and what Mr. Brinsley had to say to her, and some other matters of a less pleasant nature growing out of the recent understanding between Mr. Brinsley and Ezekiel Wenn for the

next chapter; after which the muse of our history will most probably direct us to "go West," where we may possibly encounter an old and handsome acquaintance, whom we first met some ten years since, by the name of Eli Wenn.

CHAP. V.—HOW MR. BRINSLEY CAME TO MAKE A CHANGE OF BASE.

"WHAT is your age, Annie?" asked Mr. Brinsley, after deliberately pouring out a cup of coffee and adding cream and sugar to it.

"Sixteen, my last birth-day," replied Annie Henshaw, somewhat surprised at the question.

"I wish you would tell me all you know of your past history, since you can first remember," said Mr. Brinsley. "I have an object in making the request. It is that I may serve you. But I will explain my reasons fully when you have told me all you know of yourself."

Annie was still more surprised; but by no means loth to comply. There was a mystery surrounding her early life that she had never been able to penetrate, and her heart gave a great bound of hope, while Mr. Brinsley was speaking, that he might know something of it, and assist her in unraveling it. After some further questioning, therefore, she related her little history to him, with truthful simplicity, and a few, to him, unimportant reservations, while he disposed of his breakfast and listened with a kind and respectful attention that won her confidence, occasionally asking a question upon some point.

It is not to our purpose as yet to unfold any part of that sad little history to our readers; but in due time they shall know it. It had now been some two months since Millie's death, and during that time Annie had been an inmate of Mr. Brinsley's family. She was, in fact, the seamstress whom Dr. Singleton had sent to assist Miss Brinsley in making up the mourning goods upon that sad occasion. She was about Millie's own age, size and general appearance, so much so, in fact, that as Mr. Brinsley saw her gliding noiselessly about the house, making her useful presence felt everywhere in many arrangements for his comfort, bringing the sunshine of an innocent and joyous young girl into its desolate shadows, and occasionally caught her playing some of his dead daughter's familiar pieces upon the piano, she reminded him of her almost daily. In her best moods, his sister was not the most agreeable companion in the world, and she was often

sharp and irritable. On the other hand Annie's fresh young face was always radiant with the delusive hope and happiness of youth. She was ready to converse with him, read to him, or play for him, and it was her deft hands that cut and sewed his papers, and placed them ready to his hand every morning. He had begun to feel that he should miss her when she went away; and then to ask himself why she need go away at all, to feel, in fact, that she was necessary to him, and that he would like to keep her with him always. It is the highest evidence of one's worth and usefulness, that they are missed when the places that knew them once know them no more—that they cannot go out of our homes and out of our lives, without leaving a void in them.

Mr. Brinsley had become, also, a changed man. There is scarcely any such thing as total depravity in human nature. The vilest and wickedest man or woman has some, perhaps many good traits, many elements of virtue woven in with their vices, though the latter from their darker texture which brings them into bold relief may entirely obscure the lighter threads. It is hard to conceive of a human being wholly bad. Such an one would be, indeed, a demon incarnate. Mr. Brinsley was no exception to the general rule of humanity. He had his weaknesses and vices, and wanted that deeply inlaid principle which under all circumstances rises superior to the temptations of evil. He had, when hard pressed, and in a moment when great temptation and opportunity combined, yielded to an influence stronger than his moral nature, and committed a capital and damning crime,—one of the greatest and darkest that can stain the soul—the murder of a fellow being. And since then he had suffered mental tortures equal to many physical deaths,—the torture of fear, of remorse, anxiety, suspense, dread, uncertainty, and that still greater torture for which there is no name, no word in any language to express it, which comes from an ever present sense of having done a great wrong—a terrible something only faintly typified by Banquo's ghost at Macbeth's feast, and those "damned spots" on Lady Macbeth's hand which all the waters of the ocean, nor all the perfumes of Arabia the blessed might ever cause to "out."

And suffering, from whatever cause it may come, like flood and fire, change and purify. I repeat it, Mr. Brinsley was an altered man. A bad, wicked man still; but he had suffered, and he was changed. He had been hard and

exacting, stern and cold to his poor daughter. He did not know it then, did not mean to be. It was his nature, and he had acted out that nature unconsciously. He knew it now, felt it keenly, was sorry for it, would have given all he possessed on earth to have been able to live over the last year of his life. Too late:

"Nor all
Our prayers and tears, nor deep remorse may call
One vanished hope or humble pleasure back;
For we may not retrace life's erring track
As graven on the granite map of fate;
Alas! that wisdom should be learned too late,
That age's knowledge and regrets are vain
To lessen aught the burden of its pain."

Does some parent, perchance, read these lines, who at some period has lost a son or a daughter? Then he or she will know how much dearer they are in death than in life, how glad they are to remember every act of kindness or indulgence bestowed upon them, with what remorse every severity, however just. Every such parent has learned a lesson never to be forgotten; is kinder and more forbearing to their remaining children than ever before, as if to atone for past harshness to one to whom they may never be kind again. They alone can truly appreciate Mr. Brinsley's changed manner. He had no remaining child to atone to for his mistreatment of Millie; was it anything strange then that the feeble tendrils of his heart, feeling out from its despair and darkness towards the light should cling to Annie?

After his breakfast, Mr. Brinsley came down from his room a lighter-hearted and a happier man than he had been for many a day. He knew just where he stood with Ezekiel Wenn; he was for sale, and he had an abundance of money with which to purchase him and safety. And he had a bright, fresh and innocent young creature upon whom to lavish the unwasted love of his childless heart. Annie had gladly acceded to his proposal; it was all definitely settled between them; and to her it was the happiest day that had ever shined upon her. Henceforth she was to be the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Syracuse, the heiress of his fortune!

How true it is that "there is no rest for the wicked." Mr. Brinsley was made to feel this truth every day of his life. Wenn was his Old Man of the Sea. Mr. Brinsley was not long in discovering his object in wishing to remain with him. He had an attachment for Jane Mooney, one of the housemaids, and would not hear to her being discharged. Neither would

he consent to marry her, accept a snug little fortune and go West. He liked an easy careless life; he was indolent and ignorant, knew he had his master in his power, and was content with things as they were. He had, too, an infirmity for strong drink, which kept Mr. Brinsley in perpetual terror, lest while under its influence he might betray the terrible secret in his unsafe keeping. He was Damocles on a purple couch, surrounded with wealth and luxury, with the glittering sword of Justice suspended over his head from his richly carved ceiling by a single hair. It was alike useless to remonstrate or reason with Zeke.

"It's a family failin', sir," the latter would reply. "My father liked his drop before me; and my brother has had his day at it, an' a fine day he made of it, too. They all have had their day at it, sir, an' I must have mine, by yer l'ave, sir. Eli couldn't help it, when it tuk'im, nor no more could our father; no more can I. It's my natur', sir."

"But you know the danger of it,—to yourself, as well as to me,—you have told me it killed your father—your brother too, I suppose?" said Brinsley.

"That's thrue for yez, sir, barin' my brother. He stopped when he'd had his day at it sir, an' so'll I."

"I should never have taken you into my employ, Zeke, had I known of this habit," replied Mr. Brinsley.

"Indade, Sir, an' I hadn't the habit at all thin," said Zeke. "I hadn't took to it much thin, sir. It's the trouble that's on my mind makes me take to it now."

"What trouble?"

"The secret that I oughtn't to be kapin', sir."

This last argument always closed the discussion in Zeke's favor, with an admonition from Brinsley to be extremely cautious in his remarks, and profuse assurances from him that Mr. Brinsley need never feel the least uneasiness upon that score, as he was "never so full of the drink that he did not know what he was about." Assurances that Mr. Brinsley had no alternative but to trust to until he could manage to get rid of this unsafe custodian of his honor, and very life itself; and that he did trust to too much.

It soon became evident that in moments of maudlin confidence with Jane, or his boon companions, he had let sundry dark hints drop about having Brinsley "under his thumb," and being able to command money whenever

he wanted it. In fact, a subtle, indefinable, something as if it floated in the very air, began to make Brinsley conscious that it was unpleasant for him to live in Syracuse, where he was so well known, and once so highly respected. He fancied that he was suspected and shunned; and when the idea had once become firmly established in his mind, whether it was true or not, it made him feel and act as if he were, and this caused him to be. It is thus that the guilty aid in their own exposure. Vague rumors, starting no one knew how or where, meaning whispers, began to float around in reference to the mysterious disappearance of his daughter, immediately after old Mr. Furness had made his will in her favor, and his sudden death so soon afterwards, in consequence of which Brinsley had come into possession of his property.

In time these rumors became louder, and Zeke began to be frightened too.

"It's bad news I've got to tell ye, an' the bearer of bad news is never welcome," said he one day, coming into his master's presence, partially under the influence of liquor. "An' I'd like to know what I'm goin' to do if they bring that up. Why the devil can't they let the dead rest in peace, I'd like to know."

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Brinsley, feeling a deathly pallor spreading over his face.

"Inwestigatin' it, sir," replied Zeke. He always spoke of the murder as *it*, or referred to it in some ambiguous terms. He and Brinsley understood each other, though neither had ever spoken out directly and openly upon the subject. "Tamperin' with me, sir, them Blaines is, sir, an' a axin' me questions, and talkin' about investigatin' it, sir."

The Blaines were distant relations of Mr. Furness, and had felt aggrieved that he had not remembered them in his will. Brinsley saw that there was real danger in the air, and began forthwith to make preparations for averting it.

"This is serious, Zeke," he said. "This is no place for you, nor for me. The sooner we both leave here, the better for us."

"No place for me, sir?" said Zeke in surprise. "Why I'm not in it at all, sir. I didn't hould the ould man's mouth an' nose, so he couldn't git air tell he was dead. Now, Mr. Brinsley, don't ye go to tryin' to bring me into it, 'cause I won't stand it. I couldn't a helpt bein' in the closet in the room, an' seein' ye do it through the crack of the door, could I?"

"Not so loud!" hissed Brinsley, between his teeth, looking almost as ghastly as upon that

morning, two years ago, when Zeke first made known his knowledge of his master's secret. "You are a fool, Zeke Wenn," he continued, "that is what you are. Now listen while I explain this to you. In the first place, the word of a drunken beast, such as you are known to be, could not fasten a crime like this upon a man of my standing, even were it so."

"But ye know as yer livin' an' he's dead, that ye did it, didn't ye now?" said Zeke, regarding his master in open-eyed astonishment.

"But supposing it were so, and that your word could prove it on me. What then?" continued Brinsley in an argumentative tone.

"Well, sir," interrupted Zeke, "I s'pose they'd be afther hangin' ye, sir, an' me pay'd stop,—more's the pity, an' the Blaines would be gettin' the money."

"Worse than that, you looney," said Brinsley with a shudder. "They'd hang you up along side of me."

"Me sir!" cried Zeke in amazement. "Why'd they be afther hangin' an innocent man as had no hand in it at all, I'd like to know."

"As an accessory to the fact, as a *particeps criminis*," said Brinsley with solemn emphasis. "If a man stands by, and sees another killed, and gives no alarm, and makes no attempt to save him, and enjoys the fruits of his death, the law regards him as a *particeps criminis*, and deals with him the same as if he had helped to kill him, because he was accessory to the fact."

Now this was a view of the matter which Zeke had never taken, and it frightened him terribly. He had not the slightest idea what *particeps criminis* and being accessory to the fact, meant; but he knew they were law terms, and he had a most wholesome fear of the law, whose embodiment he saw in the policeman who arrested him for being "drunk and disorderly" and cracked him on the head with his "Billy," and in the Police Justice before whose awful tribunal he had been frequently arraigned. He was not at all sure, but that one of those sharp lawyers would turn and twist accessory to the fact, and *particeps criminis* around so as to make him out the actual murderer, and swing him up, forthwith. He was thoroughly frightened, as Brinsley saw at once. He was the master once more, and cursed himself for having so long remained the slave of this weak fool, temporizing with him; when by taking a bold course he might have been free and safe long ago.

"Party-sups-crime-an-us, an' acky-cessoria-to-the-fact, sir? An' will they hang a man for

bein' that sir, whin he's only bin on a bit of a spree, an' laid down in the closet, an' woke up an' peeped out an' see another man a stoppin' the ould man's breath? Would they swing him for that, sir?"

"Many a poor devil has swung for less. If they knew this respecting you," answered Brinsley, "they'd deal with you, as I said, as *particeps criminis*, the same as with the man that actually did the deed, because accessory to the fact."

"Arrah, thin, the Lord save my poor soul!" moaned Zeke, now bloodless, ghastly and quaking like an aspen leaf, with terror.

"But they need never know it," Brinsley went on, seeing his advantage, and following it up. "You will not be fool enough to tell on yourself."

"Faith, an' I wouldn't!" exclaimed Zeke, suddenly brightening. "I never thought of that. Ye didn't see me there?"

"Of course I saw you there," asserted Brinsley, stoutly.

"Arrah, thin I'm catched, that's all. I thought ye didn't see me at all," groaned Zeke. "An' I as a goin' to tell all about what ye did, ye see, s'posin' they tuk me up, but divil a word would I say about seein' it!"

"How could you tell what I did, unless you saw it, you fool," said Brinsley, smiling involuntarily at the "bull" Zeke had so unconsciously made.

"Thin that's thrue for ye, Mr. Brinsley, an' ye'd be afther tellin' on me, any how, if I tole on ye," replied Zeke, with a woe-begone face.

"Well, we will neither of us tell on the other, so far as that goes," Brinsley went on. "We will keep our own secrets, and we will both leave this place, and go where we are not known. I will be liberal with you, as I always have been. I'll give you *three thousand dollars*—think of that! Take it, and leave the country. I'll do the same. Let us never meet again."

"Thin it's a bargain, Mr. Brinsley, though it's sorry I'll be for partin' wid ye," asserted Zeke joyfully. "An' my mind 'll be aisy thin, which it hasn't that same for many a fine day. An' I'll always say ye was a gentleman, if ye did do it, sir, bad luck to the ould spalpeen to be makin' us all this throuble, wid his dyin'."

The matter, between Brinsley and the partner in his guilty secret, was settled upon this basis. A few mornings after, Zeke was missing, having taken a western bound train the previous night. Jane Mooney mourned her truant lover gone for a very brief season, and consoled herself

with Michael Finnigan, his old time rival. Mr. Brinsley's own movements were less hasty, but he began to draw in his funds, and dispose of his various interests, and convert his property into bonds, with a view to changing his base of operations at as early a day as possible.

There were now several strong reasons for taking this course: first, the unwholesomeness of the moral air of Syracuse upon his mental health; second, the association of the place with his crime; third, the danger of an investigation by the Blaines, who were as hungry as a pack of wolves for some of Abel Furness' money; all these reasons, we have previously laid before the reader, incidentally. The fourth one has not been hinted at yet, though it is one we would impress most of all upon our reader's mind, as it very materially influences important future events in our narrative. It was simply a very strong desire to carry Annie beyond the influence of a certain young surgeon of Syracuse, whom he hoped she would then forget.

He was, in short, experiencing the same difficulty with Annie and Dr. Singleton that he had experienced with Millie and Lionel Chatham two years before. And in his opposition to the Doctor's suit, he was actuated by a similar motive,—that of selfishness,—though it arose in this case from a different cause. Then he was threatened with ruin and disgrace, and desired his own daughter to sacrifice herself for money for his benefit. Now he had money; but Annie, his adopted daughter, had become necessary to him, and he was unwilling to face the dreary and lonely aspect which his life without her presented to him; and he wished her to sacrifice herself for his own solace and companionship in his declining years. He did not wish her to think of marrying for several years to come. The two preceding years had been devoted to her education and improvement under his own roof; he thought if she would remain contented so, for an indefinite number of years, he would have no particular objection to her marrying whom she pleased,—for he had learned a lesson in Millie's case, and thought he would never again try to thwart a young woman's ambition of love, knowing it to be a "beautiful and fearful thing;"—that is, not directly and openly.

But the whole secret of the matter is, that Dr. Singleton had known and loved Annie Henshaw,—or Annie Brinsley, as she was now called,—ever since she was a little girl of twelve; and though now only eighteen, Annie was too old to remember when she had first begun to

love Dr. Singleton. His beaming, merry face was the first she had ever looked upon in this world, and she fondly hoped and prayed that it might be the last one upon which those eyes, which he had given her, would rest upon on earth. Mr. Brinsley did not know all this; perhaps they did not know it all themselves, then; but he knew that there was an attachment between them, and he would have preferred it otherwise. Dr. Singleton had been a constant visitor at his house ever since Annie had been an inmate of it; and he had always treated him with civil respect, partly because he was wise enough not to attempt to stem such a powerful current as that of the passion of love, and partly because he had always felt a little afraid of Dr. Singleton ever since that to him memorable day upon which he had first entered that house. But it was plain enough to both the lovers that Mr. Brinsley,—for what reasons they knew not,—did not favor their choice of each other, and they were, therefore, probably less demonstrative of their feelings in his presence than they might otherwise have been.

All these reasons combined, however, were sufficient to persuade Mr. Brinsley that it would be a good thing to pull up stakes and turn his back upon Syracuse forever. And he did so. Let us now follow his example, for matters of vital interest to our narrative require our presence elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI.

ELI WENN REAPPEARS UPON THE SCENE, AND MEETS WITH A SINGULAR ADVENTURE.

TWO men were walking briskly on a hard, smooth, gravelly road on the outskirts of Milwaukee, in the dusk of evening. The cause of their haste was apparent in the sky overhead, which was murky and overcast with clouds. Occasionally a sharp flash of lightning, followed by a peal of thunder, portended an April thunder-shower, and already large drops of rain were beginning to fall, beating up little circles of dust in the road. One of the men was rather tall, spare, gray and stooping; the other was still in the prime of life, stout and thick-set. The latter wore a pair of corduroy pants, so stained and greasy that it would be difficult to distinguish what they were made of, belted about the waist and tucked into the tops of a pair of heavy boots; a slouched black hat; and a checked shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows of his brawny, hairy arms. His

countenance, covered with hair-tufted warts, the largest of which was located on the apex of his nose, and further disfigured by a gaping hare-lip, and one eye that was closed by the lids having grown together, while the other was white and piggish, and kept opening and shutting as if playing bo-peep, and saying facetiously, "now you see me, and now you don't,"—was simply diabolical in its aspect.

This hideous creature paused when they reached a point where the carriage road made a curve around a bank, and a small footpath led off from it down into a wide ravine.

"Won't ye come down to my shanty, Mr. Daly, an' hev a pipe wid me till the shower's over?" asked he, in a coarse, bearish voice that took on a peculiar nasal twang from the facial deformity already referred to.

"No, thank you, Mr. Wenn," replied the other, going straight ahead, "Betsy'll be expecting me, and uneasy—good night."

Eli Wenn stood looking after him until he had disappeared in the gloom around the bank, and then loitered along the footpath leading down into the ravine, muttering to himself:

"Eben he shuns me. No one will 'sociate wid me, not eben the tannery hands. But I oughtn't to blame old Daly. He do smoke a pipe wid me sometimes,—but he won't use mine then. Poor man! it t'ars my heart every time I look at that sorrowful, bowed face o' his. He can't be older nor me, an' he look more 'n sixty—all from the grief. But—"

He stopped short, looking around like a startled wild beast, for at that moment a long-drawn, low moan proceeded from a clump of undergrowth near the path.

"Hi yi! who's thar? Wat's 'ere matter?" he shouted, in some doubt as to whether to stand his ground, or run. The moan was repeated. Wenn was naturally superstitious and his coarse, bristly hair began to stand out, as he cast fearful glances in the direction from which the sound proceeded, his solitary eye snapping like a wild boar's at bay. He was used to the pranks of the tannery hands, and suspected that this was one of their tricks to frighten him. "Ye better stop that 'er, now, ef ye know when yer bread's buttered." Another low, sad, despairing moan was heard above the patter of the rain, which had now begun to fall, on the last year's dry leaves which were not yet covered by the early verdure of spring. "Ye'd better look sharp, now, an' not be playin' any o' yer tricks on me, or I'll heave a stun at yer," exclaimed he, feeling around for a boulder; for

the shadows of night had gathered deeper in the ravine, and he could not see.

"Help! I'm dying," said a faint, tremulous voice in the darkness; and then a low sigh of exhaustion was borne on the wind that melted the dry weeds of last year's growth.

"Who are ye? Whar are ye? Wat's 'er matter, say?" asked he in rapid succession, straightening up, and trying to distinguish some object in the darkness.

"Oh, here, help me," spoke the voice.

Partly reassured, and guided by the low moans that occasionally escaped the sufferer, Wenn approached cautiously. A fitful gleam of lightning at length revealed the form of a boyish figure, pale and haggard, lying on a bed of leaves, partially covered with an old traveling shawl, with a little satchel under his head. The rough creature's compassion was touched.

Stooping down, he lifted the boy's head upon his knee, and inquired in his gruff voice, which no amount of tender feeling could soften, who he was and what he was doing there. The poor fellow only murmured something incoherently, among which only the words, "homeless wanderer," and "starvation" were distinguishable.

Wenn saw that it was useless to question him then, took up the slight form, almost drenched with the falling rain, wrapped it in the shawl, and bore it to what he called his "shanty" at the bottom of the ravine. Laying it on the rude bed that stood in one corner of the front one of the two rooms of his abode, he lighted a kerosene lamp that stood on a shelf.

"I should say 'starvation,' poor boy," he said, regarding the pallid, wasted features with something like pity in his twinkling white eye. "He was n't heavier nor a hen, poor boy. Sich a purty boy, too," he went on, stroking back the clusters of thick brown hair that clung around his damp head. A low moan, rather of weakness than of pain, came from the lad. "But here I am a foolin' round, and he a dyin' for suthin' 'feat." He bustled around, found a bottle of whiskey, and after mixing some of it with sugar and water, raised the lad's head, and put it to his lips, saying in a tone that was meant for a kind one, "Drink this, it'll do yer good." The boy swallowed it passively. "Now yer lay quiet, an' I'll fix yer some broth. Ain't yer hungry?"

The boy shook his head faintly. "I'm past that now," he said, as the liquor began to revive him a bit. "I was, yesterday."

"Never mind, my poor fellow, we'll soon set that right; let me git these 'ere wet things

often ye, and cover ye up snug, and —" he was suiting the action to the word, when the boy appeared to become suddenly alarmed, and began to struggle, and cry, "No, no, don't touch my clothes," at the same time trying to button his coat.

"Now, don't ye be afeard; I'm unlikely appearin', but I can't help that, an' I won't hurt ye—an' ye must n't keep these 'ere wet things on," said Wenn, supposing the lad was frightened at his appearance. But he became almost frantic, in his efforts to keep his coat buttoned; and Wenn persisting, under the belief that "the boy was out'n his head," and he being too feeble to struggle, fainted.

"God grant he isn't dead!" exclaimed Wenn, tearing open his vest and putting his hand over his heart. "Good God!" he ejaculated, drawing it back as suddenly as if it had touched fire. "It is a girl! That accounts, the poor darlin'!" He proceeded no farther in his attempts at disrobing, but in a tenderer and more subdued manner, covered the slight form up warmly, chafed the wrists until he saw signs of returning consciousness, then stole away, lighted a fire in the cook stove in the next room, and began to prepare a broth with parts of a dressed chicken which he took down from a nail on the wall.

When he stole in with it, on tiptoe, his new guest appeared wide awake, the pale cheeks faintly flushed, and the large hollow eyes sought his face inquiringly.

"Take a few sups o' this, child, he said as softly as he could, "it'll do ye good. Don't be afeard. Ye shall stay with me till yer quite well and hev a friend an' a hum as long as ye like."

"Thank you," was all his guest said, as he lay back on the coarse hay pillow, after forcing down a few mouthfuls of the broth.

All that night Wenn sat or lay by his kitchen stove, for he had no other bed, and kept the broth warm. Every hour he would steal in and give the youth a few spoonfuls of it. After the first, the taste for food began to return, and he would smile and swallow what was given him with great relish, when awakened by his kind preserver, whose deformity he delicately appeared not to notice. Towards morning, Wenn ceased to awaken him, believing that sleep would do him good, now that he had sufficient nourishment for the present. When he stole away from the shanty, as the whistles were shrieking all over the city to call the laborers to their daily work, the girl was sound asleep. He returned an hour later, with a bundle under his

arm, and found his guest still sleeping. He undid the bundle, and spread the contents, purchased at a second-hand store, out within the sleeper's reach, and where he could not fail to see them, and then retired to his kitchen and busied himself about breakfast, prudently closing the door leading into the front room. After dispatching his own breakfast of fried bacon, boiled potatoes and coffee, and peeping in to assure himself that his guest still slept, he lighted his pipe, and went out and walked up and down the ravine awhile. He had concluded not to go to his work in the tannery that day, but to remain at home and nurse his patient. Wishing the latter to sleep as long as possible, he strolled along the foot-path to the road. The rain of the previous night had washed the face of nature, the sun was shining warmly and brightly, and the birds were chirping merrily among the trees that covered the ravine. He was sitting on a large boulder smoking his pipe and enjoying the freshness of the morning, when his solitary friend, Mr. Daley, came along with a saw in his hand.

"How is it you're not working to-day, Mr. Wenn?" he asked.

"Hist!" said the latter, taking his pipe from his mouth. "It's a bit of a secret, an' ye needn't speak of it to the tannery men. My daughter's come hum, sick like, an' I'm keeping about the house to day."

"Your daughter?" exclaimed the old man, dropping his saw in amazement. "I did not know you had a daughter?"

"That's true enough. I never mentioned the fact before," said Wenn, knocking the ashes from his pipe. "She's kem hum, to stay awhile. Yer friends can git along wi'dout ye when they're in prosperity. So wi'd my gi'l as long as she could earn a decent living at respectable employment. But when she got sick, she kem hum," he added with a well feigned injured air. "I was expectin' her, from her last letter; but for all, I was taken a little aback to find her to hum last night."

"No wonder," said old Mr. Daley, picking up his saw. "Well, she ought to be a great comfort to you at hum. I hope she's not much ailing?"

"No, she'll soon be chirpy ag'in," said Wenn. "Be ye repairin' the vats?"

"Yes. The new master's down himself this morning, looking around, and laying out improvements."

"Mr. Johnson seems to be a stirring sort of man," said Wenn.

"So he is," replied Mr. Daley. "The place needs fixing up bad enough. But he's got the means, and I guess he'll have everything put in good order."

"You think he's well off?" asked Wenn, indifferently.

"He must be," replied the old carpenter, "or he could not have bought the tannery, and the Mirtle place, and be going on as he is. He is having the grounds all laid off new, making walks and planting trees, tearing the old barn down and having a new brick one put up, and refurbishing that big house all through. They were bringing loads of new furniture there, the very richest kind, all day yesterday, Betsey says. And such another fine span of horses and carriage is not to be found in this city, excepting Alexander Mitchell's, perhaps."

"Whew!" exclaimed Wenn. "He must be a millionaire. Maybe he'll be fixin' up your house, too, Daley?"

"That's the last thing he'll be thinking of," replied Daley. He's close and sharp enough when it comes to that. He asked me yesterday, how Mr. Mirtle came to rent me the place so cheap. I told him because I was old and poor, and had been unfortunate—you know what I mean when I speak of being unfortunate, Wenn?"

The latter waved off the question impatiently, and showed a degree of irritation greatly out of proportion to any apparent cause for it, as he said: "O' course I do, Mr. Daley. Hevn't ye told me nor less than a hundred times about yer childers bein' kidnapped years ago, an' yer never seein' hair nor hide o' 'em since? Then where's the use o' allers harpin' on that e're string, an' wearin' yerself out wid worryin' about it?"

"You must excuse me, Mr. Wenn, I cannot help it," said the old man, sadly. "You are a father yourself, though I never dreamed it before, and you know a parent's feelings."

"O' course, o' course," replied Mr. Wenn, evidently mollified at being considered a father. "But w'at's the use o' it, thet's w'at I sez?"

"True, true, it cannot bring my darlings back," and the old man brushed a tear from his eye.

"Well, w'at did Johnson say w'en ye told him that?" asked Wenn, glad to change the subject.

"He said it was a very low rent, considering the large garden that goes with the house," replied Mr. Daley. "And that I couldn't expect

much repairs at that rent. The house leaks, too. I am afraid we'll not find him such a landlord as Mr. Mirtle was. But I'd hate to give up the place; you see we can have our chickens, and raise our own vegetables."

"He's a old skinflint, that's what he are," suggested Mr. Wenn philosophically. "But them's the kind that prospers in this 'ere world. Providence, as I allers said was a onkind Providence, seems to smile on 'em, while it busts the good 'uns like Mr. Mirtle. Have you been to the tannery already, this morning?"

"Yes; I found I needed this ripping saw, and went back for it?"

"Flannigan at work?"

"Yes. His eye is all patched up. He went to some new doctor that has lately located here, —Singleton, I think is his name,—and he brought the lid together. It seems you tore it in two in the scuffle."

"I'll tar the liver out'n the cuss the next time he refers to me as 'Old Warty,' mind ef I don't," said Wenn savagely.

"You're too sensitive about that," said Mr. Daley kindly. "The boys will all think that it is on account of that scrimmage that you are not at work to-day."

"Let 'em think as they pleases," said Mr. Wenn, rising to go back to his shanty. "I won't stand no 'old Wartying,' no how."

Mr. Daley made no reply, but went on his way. Wenn returned to the cottage. Quite a transformation had taken place in his young guest. The boyish looking figure he had left asleep had disappeared. The coarse bed was neatly respread, and a fair, pale young girl, with soft brown eyes that appeared unnaturally large on account of the hollowness of her cheeks, dressed in the dowdyish costume he had procured from the pawnbroker's, sat in the unpainted, split-bottomed rocking chair, the sole luxury, with the exception of tobacco, that Mr. Wenn indulged in. She had accepted the hint, so delicately conveyed, that her preserver knew her sex, and had acted on it accordingly. It was a pleasant, comfortable day, near the close of April; the shanty door was open, and the bracing morning air brought a faint glow to her pale wasted face.

She started involuntarily as the hideous man stood in the door way, looking at her out of that piggish eye with inexpressible pleasure and satisfaction.

"Now don't ye mind me, my poor darlin'," said Wenn. "I've a onlikely face, but a good true heart. I'll be yer friend an' father. Ye

shall never want either while Eli Wenn's got a strong arm and a dollar. W'at's yer name, Miss?" he asked with a sudden accession of respect, as he intuitively perceived in her very expression, and the grace and dignity with which even the pawnbroker's tawdry goods sat on her graceful form, that she was no wandering outcast, but a young lady, used to a much higher social station, who for some inexplicable reason had chosen to assume the disguise in which he had found her.

"My name is Zenobia," said she. "How can I ever be sufficiently grateful, or repay you for what you have done?"

"Now, don't, Miss, I begs you won't talk that way, 'cause I'm not used to it," exclaimed Wenn.

"How?" asked she in perplexity.

"The fact is, Miss," replied he with such evidences of emotion as a great mastiff might show,—"that I ain't used to hevin' any one speak kind to me. A onkind Providence has set a mark on me, an' I'm shunned by every livin' thing, a'most. Ef you'll only let me loye you as a faithful dog might, an' serve ye, I'll do anything in the world for ye, I will. I hev'n't a fine hum to give ye, as ye see; but sich as it is, an' w'at's more, sich as I can make it, ye shall hev. Livin' all alone, as I am, 'cause nothin' won't live wi'd me, w'at need hev I for nice things?" She started at this, and looked around in some alarm. The gesture did not escape him. "I'll be a father to yer, Miss, as true like as ef yer was my own child. But I've got a good 'eal o'money, an' I'll fix this 'ere place up,—it b'longs to me, ye see,—into a nice little hum for ye; ef ye'll only jist stay here, and let me serve ye, an' tell me how to make it pleasant and purty like, for ye see I hain't no taste for sich."

"You are very good and kind," replied Zenobia. "I will stay, if you will let me, at least for the present, for I've no other place to go to, no friends, and no means; and I am now far too weak to help myself. Some day I may be able to repay you. Now, I can only try and make your home pleasant and happy. Its location is pretty, and it seems so peaceful and restful here, and I am so glad to get away from the glare and glitter of the life from which I am a fugitive, that I feel as if I could gladly end my days here."

She leaned back wearily and closed her eyes from sheer exhaustion.

"Yer a good angel sent to me, Miss. Only show me how I can make this nice for ye, an'

"I'll do it. Wat's yer tother name, besides Zenoby, Miss?"

"I have no other name."

"No tother name! that's quare," answered he. "Well, I'd like to ax ye one more thing, Miss, ef I ain't intrudin', would ye explain how all this 'ere comes about?"

"Please ask me nothing regarding the past. It is dead to me. If I live at all, it must be only for the future," said she resignedly.

"An' ye won't explain, at all, Miss Zenoby, will ye?" asked he.

"No, I cannot," she answered decidedly.

"All right, Miss. It's none o' my business, no how," he said aloud, but added to himself, "I wish she would explain, though. I likes to hev things explained, I do." Then he scratched his bristly head and said, "Here I am a talkin' an' ye must be starvin'."

"I was very hungry," said she with a faint smile, "and I helped myself. I ate all the chicken soup you had so kindly prepared. I found it on the stove. I'd better not eat any more now, for I have tasted nothing before for three days."

"I hope it'll do ye good, Miss Zenoby, an' no harm."

"Call me simply Zenobia," said she.

"Yes, Miss,—Zenoby, I mean. Ef ye don't mind, Zenoby, I'll tell folks as yer my daughter as has come hum, otherways they might be wonderin', an' that 'll be best, b'arin' ye don't mind me sayin' yer my daughter?"

"Not at all. Tell them what you like. I am a stranger here."

"That's w'at I'll do Miss, the few as 'll ever see ye here. I've never been troubled much wid visitors."

"When I am stronger, which will be soon,—for I am not sick,—only starved,—I will teach you how to beautify this place, and make a very little paradise of it, if you wish to," she said with more animation in her tones than she had yet exhibited.

Wenn's solitary eye snapped with exquisite pleasure. "Yis, sure, Miss,—Zenoby, I mean,—I'll hev some use for my money now. I never knowed afore w'at it was good for. It'll be a uncommon pleasure to spend it to make a paradise for ye, my poor child."

She smiled an assent, and he went away, wondering what impossible reasons she could have for not explaining, but not wishing to appear intrusive, with a slinking consciousness that his presence could not be in the least degree agreeable to any human being.

CHAP. VII.—THE RECORD OF TWO MONTHS.

TWO more months have passed away and added their records to the past. It is the object of this chapter to transfer such of those records as concern the personages whose acquaintance we have made during the progress of our story to these pages.

Zenobia, the beautiful waif picked up by Eli Wenn that stormy night in April, as described in the preceding chapter, still remains at his cottage in the ravine, where she appears to be quite resignedly domiciled. Resignation is the word that best expresses the quiet, shrinking and saddened manner in which she moves about, and adapts herself to her surroundings, beautifying the "Ravine," as she has christened the place, with her taste and ingenuity, as well as blessing and brightening it with her presence. As soon as she had recovered from the slight illness and weariness consequent upon her previous exposure and wanderings, she set about carrying out the suggestions of her uncouth protector in regard to the improvement of his rude abode.

The spot, as all know who are familiar with it, from its vicinity to the "Lovers' Walk," which is on the bluff overlooking the valley of the Menomonee and the ravine in which Wenn's shanty stood, was favored by Nature with a charming and romantic situation, capable of receiving delightful transformations from the hand of art and industry. A slight gorge, commencing near Spring Street, Avenue, gradually widens and deepens as it approaches the low level of the Menomonee Valley, hemmed in on two sides by abrupt banks, covered with trees and undergrowth. Where it emerges upon the margin of the valley, it spreads out, forming a little triangular valley of its own, embracing little more than half an acre of level land, through which a little brook traces its serpentine course. Near the upper extremity of this triangle of alluvial soil, beneath a clump of elms, and facing a little grove of thrifty hickory trees, stood Wenn's shanty. The latter had selected this location for its solitude and retirement from the usual traveled thoroughfares rather than from any eye to its picturesque scenery. With a portion of the money received from his brother Zeke, he had purchased the acre or two of ground, including the mouth of the ravine; but up to the time when Zenobia took refuge under his humble roof, he had made no efforts looking towards its adornment other than the erection of the board shanty in

which he lived, a solitary recluse, not so much from choice, as necessity, for neither man or beast cared to court his society. The very dogs snarled at him as he passed, and the cats made backs and glared at him with their yellow eyes until he was out of sight.

Zenobia, however, soon made the "Ravine" redolent of the softening and refining touch of a woman's hand. A pretty little paling enclosed the bit of land that formed Wenn's domain; and the season and soil favoring, the level strip was tastefully laid off with beds and walks, and planted with flowers, shrubbery and vegetables. A little rustic bridge had been thrown across the brook where it ran within a few feet of the shanty, and the latter had been transformed into a neat white gothic cottage of three rooms and a kitchen and a little piazza over which luxuriant Virginia creepers and morning glories thickly clambered. One of these rooms had been fitted up for Wenn and the other for herself; the remainder, graced with a cottage piano, was dignified with the name of parlor. Here she often sewed on her own simple, but tasty ck thing, and sang and played, her clear young voice, subdued and plaintive, like that of an imprisoned bird, faintly echoed back, from the sides of the ravine. She had firmly declined to make any explanation of her past history and the circumstances that had brought her there, and Wenn had ceased to question her upon, or even allude to the subject. Her coming had been like an angel's visit to him; he was only too glad to second her wishes in every respect, and seldom ever intruding into her presence, blessed and worshipped her at a distance, as something almost too sacred to approach, scarcely able to realize that anything so bright and beautiful lived near him, and expecting every morning to awake and find it all a dream.

Into the little *bijou* of a parlor, he had ventured to peep but once; and then he saw something which he had no desire ever to behold again, the reflection of his own hideous features in an oval mirror between the two front windows! He started back in mortification and disgust, with a half stifled oath, and never again crossed the threshold. He had a mortal aversion to mirrors, and would not allow one in his room. He generally sat in the kitchen, or on the small porch at the back door, smoking his clay pipe alone. Zenobia, however, did not seem to fear, or shrink from him, and moved quietly about attending to her little household duties as if he had been an ordinary mortal—a thing that he often wondered at to himself, as he cogitated over his pipe, and

ran his great square hand through his grizzly shock of hair. For Zenobia was obliged to perform all the housework. Wenn was willing enough, and eager, to hire a girl to help her, and had succeeded, through the kind offices of his only friend, old Mr. Daley, in inveigling one or two German girls to the Ravine for that purpose. But they invariable left precipitately upon the first appearance of the master of the house. So the attempt was given up, and Zenobia cheerfully did the work herself. Her own companions were very few. Old Mr. Daley and his wife frequently came in of an evening, the former to smoke a pipe with Wenn on the back porch, always bringing his own briar-rod for that purpose, and the latter to knit and talk to Zenobia. There were two other visitors who came still oftener; a young gentleman, and a young lady of her own age; but they always timed their visits when Wenn was away, and took their departure when he was seen descending the path that lead down into the ravine. Zenobia had met them first in the "Lovers' Walk," where she sometimes walked alone; afterwards she met the girl alone, and through the free-masonry of women, they made each other's acquaintance. The casual acquaintance thus formed had ripened into friendship and confidence. The gentleman and lady were lovers, and met in that place because they had reasons of their own for keeping their intimacy a secret from her father. After that, they often met at the cottage. The girl was the daughter of Mr. Johnson, the new proprietor of the tannery, and largely interested in the leather and finding trade; the gentleman was Dr. Singleton, who, whether he had entirely recovered from his former attachment to Annie Henshaw, or not, was certainly very devoted to May Johnson.

But the intervals between the visits of these few friends left Zenobia many lonely hours. Girl like she desired some kind of companionship, if it were only that of a bird, a cat or a dog. One day May Johnson brought her a thrush and a canary. These made the vine arbored piazza vocal with their matin duets. Old Mrs. Daley sent her a half grown Maltese cat, which seemed charmed with its new home, took up its abode in its box behind the kitchen stove and purred itself to sleep in blissful contentment. But the next morning when Wenn went in to light the kitchen fire, Zenobia heard a most energetic growling, hissing and spitting, a rattling and rumpus as of some one falling over chairs, and then the kitchen door was opened and slammed to, and she heard

him muttering something to the effects that he "won'tered how that 'ere cussed varmint come to be thar." When she went out to begin breakfast, the cat had disappeared.

"Why, where's my Kitty?" She asked in perplexed anxiety.

"Oh! was that 'ere yer kitty, Miss Zenobia? I dunno whar he is. Soon as I opened the door he went a kiting. Reckon he had 'nt got used to the place Miss, which I'm sorry as ye've lost 'im."

"Its too bad," was all Zenobia said, for she saw how it was. Wenn, ignorant of the animal's presence, had gone into the kitchen. It had opened one eye just in time to see his face as he leaned over to light the fire, became frightened, and sprang at his legs, ferociously scratching and spitting so suddenly as to startle, and cause him to lose his balance and fall over the chairs. He had then opened the door and it had taken its departure after this unfriendly salutation, without the least ceremony. The little dog which Dr. Singleton had brought her was quite as little inclined to cultivate the master of the house. Upon his first appearance it had taken up a position under a chair, bristling and snarling and barking, and would not be coaxed out until he went off. Everytime he came near Ponto he acted in the same way, so that Zenobia out of a delicate regard for Wenn's feelings, as well as Ponto's, sent him away, and contented herself with the birds which did not appear to notice him much.

But another, and a much more serious event, and one which had a very important bearing upon the coming events of our narrative, occurred during those two months between the last of April and the last of June. This was the appearance one day at the Ravine of Wenn's brother, Zeke. To him, as to too many others, the possession of money, without judgement and discretion to use it wisely, had been a curse instead of a blessing. He had, on leaving Brinsley with three thousand dollars in his pocket, plunged into the most wild and reckless dissipations. During a drunken orgie, he had got into a fight with some ruffians, and received severe injuries about the head, not before seriously injuring one of their numbers, however. For this offense he had been arrested and condemned to spend three months in a house of correction. Owing to the severity of the discipline in that model reformatory, combined with the effects of his injuries and dissipated life, and a severe cold contracted from the dark humid cells, resulting in inflammation of the lungs, when he came out he was completely shattered and broken down, and almost

destitute, having squandered all his money. In this plight he sought his brother. Wenn reproved him, grumblingly, but shared his bed with him, and took care of him until he died, which was within a few days after his arrival.

After that, Wenn was thoughtful and puzzled, ran his hands through his shock-like hair more vigorously than usual, and went about with the air of a man who had something on his mind. His brother had evidently left some awful secret in his keeping. The day before Zeke died, a long conference took place between him and his brother. Finally Wenn came to Zenobia and asked her if she would come into his room and sign a paper as witness. As she entered the room, she beheld the sick man's features for the first time and as she did so, suddenly started and turned pale. Both of the men were too intent upon what they had been discussing, to notice this however, and she instantly recovered her usual self possession, signed the paper with a hand that was a little tremulous, keeping her face averted from that of the sick man, and hastened from the room. Wenn added his sprawling signature to the document, for writing was not much in his way of business, and carefully locked it up in a drawer of his wash stand. He took care however, to have Dr. Singleton, who was attending Zeke professionally, sign it also, as Zenobia had affixed her own signature simply, "Zenobia." Dr. Singleton remembered Zeke, of course; but it was not necessary that either of the witnesses should know the contents of the document. After that Wenn always kept that drawer locked and carried the key in his pocket, except when he would take out the paper, as he often did, going over it and spelling out each word to himself, with his finger on the line, as if his very life depended upon his getting at the exact meaning of every syllable.

At first Zenobia paid but little attention to this behavior, thinking that the paper was probably his brother's will. But seeing him repeat it so often, her female curiosity was excited, and she said: "You seem to have some trouble in reading that paper, Mr. Wenn. Can I read it for you? I suppose it is your brother's will?"

"Oh, no Miss Zenobia, I thank 'e, I can read it fust rate," replied Wenn. "No; it isn't 'xactly poor Zeke's will; an' yit, it is too, in one sense."

"Ah," said Zenobia, curiosity not gratified, and still more puzzled. "Did he have much property—or money?"

"No, Miss, no not a cent, poor Zeke," answered he. "But I put great store by this 'ere paper, I

does Miss. Ye moughtn't b'lieve it, now, but thar's a big fortin in this 'ere paper, thar is. I can't tell ye no more now, Miss, but ye shell know all 'bout it when the time comes, Miss. Mobby thet won't be long, neither my dear little girl."

"Oh, very well, excuse me for asking," she answered and went away, as she always did whenever this monster began to bestow gentle epithets upon her, for anything like words of tenderness seemed to acquire a disagreeable pungency from that great grinning cleft of his.

Wenn certainly had reason to be grateful for human companionship, if ever any being had, and he seemed pleased to have old Mr. and Mrs. Daley come to his cottage. But Zenobia always noticed a peculiar expression on his face when they were present that she could not account for; and he was always uneasy and fidgety at such times. He would sit with one hand over his mouth, a habit probably contracted from a desire to conceal that portion of his face, and when they were not observing him, leer at them with his solitary white rimmed eye, from beneath his lowering brow, with a look that was a strange mixture of cunning, doggedness and pity. Sometimes he would become uneasy, especially when they were speaking of their children having been kidnapped years before, and slink away with a conscious, hang-dog air, or suddenly change the subject. Though Zenobia was wholly unable to account for this, it will be no conundrum to the gentle reader, who must be aware that Wenn had some time since recognized in them the parents of the children that he kidnapped, as related in the first chapter of this history; and that, knowing his inability to give them back their lost treasures, even if he had so desired, his agency in their disappearance was the dark secret which he felt he must ever hold against them. A consciousness of his own guilt, and a remorseful feeling for the act, and all its painful consequences to himself and the children, as well as to the bereaved parents, naturally made him uncomfortable in the presence of those he had so deeply wronged; and it is no matter of wonder that this state of feeling should betray him into actions utterly unaccountable to those who did not possess the key to the mystery.

The old couple—for they were old prematurely—seldom spoke of the painful subject now, not only because it was a painful one to them, but long past, and crowded into the back ground by more recent and pressing cares.

Mr. Daley's health was not good, and being unable to work regularly at his trade, that of a

carpenter, he was obliged to depend upon such light work in his line as he could get to do by the job. As his daily labor was the only means of support of himself and wife, and such work as he could do not always to be had, his income was necessarily small and precarious, and as a necessary consequence, it frequently happened that he was without the means of meeting the monthly rent, which his new landlord, Mr. Johnson, was not only exactly punctual about, not so much from any miserliness, as from strong business habits, but had raised it the first of May. During the greater part of that month, one of the best for him, in consequence of numberless little jobs of repairing to be done about that time, he had been unable to work much; so that when the first of June arrived, he was obliged to ask a postponement of pay day. To this Mr. Johnson consented, not very graciously; but when he sent his clerk to collect the two months rent due the last of June, and Mr. Daley was still unable to pay, having barely earned sufficient to live on since he had been able to work, he bade him to notify "that old nuisance that if the rent was not paid by the fourth of July, he should be compelled to let the place to some one else." This the old man felt would be doubly hard, as he had already broken the ground and planted his little annual crop of garden stuff, to leave which would be to him a great loss, however trifling a matter it might seem to the hard, cold rich owner of the great mansion which seemed to overshadow and blight his little home.

"I really don't see what I am to do," he said, talking it over with Wenn, "for there is no possible way in which I can get the money so soon."

Wenn only grunted; but there was a queer twinkle in his white rimmed eye.

"It was not so with our former landlord," continued the old man.

"Johnson's a hard fellow to deal with," growled Wenn. "They don't none o' the tannery hands like 'im as well as they did the old boss. It do me good to see sich brought down a peg or so. An' they ginarally is, afore they knows it."

"I wish we had to deal with his daughter, Miss May, instead of him," said Mrs. Daley.

"Do you know her?" asked Zenobia, who happened to be present at this conversation.

"Only by sight," replied she. "I have never met, to speak to her. But she looks like a good tender hearted girl that would not oppress the poor."

"She really does," said Mr. Daley. "I can't help loving that child, somehow."

"Nor I either," said the old woman warmly. "She always looks at me so kind and tender like, whenever I happen to pass her, as if she would speak. Something in her face draws me right to her, and I feel as if I could take her in my arms and have a good cry on her neck if I only dared to."

"I reckon as how the poor thing kind o' longs, like, for some motherly body to talk to, too," said Wenn; "and Johnson must be poor comp'ny for her, poor thing. That 'ere man don't look to me as if he could love anything. But sich is often brought down, as I said afore."

Zenobia gave the old lady one of those subtle, electric glances pregnant with meaning, which only women are versed in. She seemed to divine its import, for she answered:

"Zenobia seems to think rich young ladies are never at a loss for some one to love them, or to pretend they do, anyway; but although May has plenty of beaux, I am sure she does not seem to care for any of them much. There may be one, though," she went on, in answer to a look on Zenobia's face, "that she does care for."

"They ginrally is," growled Wenn, with a leer at Zenobia, as if in reference to her reticence on such matters whenever they affected herself.

"I know May," said Zenobia, "and I will speak with her about this, Mrs. Daley. She has influence with her father, and I know she will not see you turned out, if she knows of it."

"Oh, I do wish you would," said Mrs. Daley.

"No you needn't," said Wenn.

"Why not?" asked Zenobia looking up quickly, surprised.

"'Cause, I'll speak to 'im myself," answered he doggedly.

"You!" ejaculated Mr. and Mrs. Daley, both at once.

"Yes, me. I like to see sich brought down," answered Wenn, "an' I'm the feller to bring um down, too. Johnson don't know me as well as I does him."

No body replied to this, for none of them knew what to make out of it.

"I like Miss Zenobia's idea," said Mr. Daley, "for I think Miss May has more influence with her father than any one else."

"Not more'n I hev," said Wenn mysteriously.

"You!" they all exclaimed again.

"Yes, me. I likes to see sich brought low, I does," replied he.

"May certainly must be a dear, good girl," said Mrs. Daley.

"Do you know who she always makes me think of, wife?" asked her husband sadly.

"Yes," she answered quietly.

"Don't she remind you of her, too?"

"The first time I ever saw her. Her forehead, and mouth. And she smiles exactly like she used to," said Mrs. Daley.

"Who?" asked Wenn suddenly.

"Our dear little Annie that was kidnapped," said the old man putting his hand to his face.

Wenn gave a great start, then made a tobacco stopper of his thumb, and burned it, and shook his hand with a growl as if to make that account for the movement.

"Thar ye go agin on that 'ere," he said. "Now how d' ye know yer babbies was kidnapped at all, old man? Moughtn't they a fell into the water an' a been drowned?"

"Possibly," answered Mr. Daley, "but still I never could think so. They raked all the waters which they could by any chance have reached."

"Those children never were drowned, Mr. Wenn," said Mrs. Daley. "I know, I feel that they were stolen and carried off, and may be living some where now."

"Well, 'tain't likely as ye'll ever set eyes on 'em, I reckon, any how," said Wenn, getting up.

"Didn't ye say one on 'em was blind?"

"Yes, the little girl was born blind."

"W'at d' yer reckon sum un 'ud want 'o steal a blind babby for, now?" he asked.

"Lord only knows," she replied.

Wenn said no more, but laid down his pipe and walked off.

"What a strange being that horrid monster is," said Mrs. Daley.

"He means well," answered Zenobia.

"I don't see why you stay here," Mrs. Daley continued. "I don't see how you can bear to be so near him all the time. It is the talk of every one that knows it, how such a dreadful creature could have such a beautiful and intelligent daughter. Indeed no one will believe it. Do you remember your mother, child? Has she been long dead?"

"You must expect me to answer no questions, Mrs. Daley," Zenobia answered with dignity and a lady-like reserve. "I can explain nothing."

"Pardon me, Zenobia. I know there are matters in every family that outsiders have no right to pry into," answered the old lady. "But do speak to May Johnson for us, I know she will help us if she can."

"I will, Mrs. Daley, I believe she can and will," answered Zenobia. "I will see her to-morrow."

Wenn who was walking in the yard, was passing the door and heard these words. "So'll I see sum un to-morrow," he muttered to himself, with a horrible leer in the direction of Mr. Johnson's mansion, and a chuckle of infinite satisfaction. "So'll I see sum un to-morrow," he repeated; "an' I reckon I'll jist pin that same sum un a billy ducks, now, an' mail it so he'll git it in the mornin'."

He went in, as soon as the Daley's left, and asked Zenobia for a pen and ink, adding facetiously that he wanted to write a "billy ducks." "Shan't I write it for you, pa Wenn?" she asked, bringing writing materials.

"No, thank 'e, it's suthin partickler," he answered, the great cleft in his face expanding with an enormous grin. "An' I ralyther you wouldn't get in the way o' writin' billy ducks, my dear child," he added with a twinkle of his solitary eye that was meant to convey a tender regard. Zenobia made no reply, but deposited the inkstand on the kitchen table and returned to the parlor. After turning up the lamp wick a little, Wenn deposited himself in a chair, leaning forward with both elbows on the table, and putting his feet back like a frog preparing to leap, indited the following epistle, covering four pages of note paper with it:

Mill walky jy th 3—18 & 60.
MR. Henry Brinsly sun—Yewl no bi thies i no yew—
vengens iz min sath ther lord—an ther wicked li Be
Brot lo—I no all—an yure in mi Pour—But munny li
saly yure Nec—Nuthin else li do it—so yewl hev too
Kum Down ur swing—take yure choyas an mak up yure
mind Bt 9 o Clock to morow nite when ill Bee att ther
tany to reseve yure anser—an then yewl no hoo i am—
no trix an no fulin—yure munny ur yure lif—Wich iz
tu sa fill hev part uv yure munny or the Law li hev
yur lif—No mor at Presents—from yewl no hoo to
morow nite.

"I ralyther reckon that 'ere billy ducks 'il fetch the ole boss, hey?" chuckled Wenn, after he had finished this elegant composition and read it over. He then sealed it up, put Mr. Johnson's address on the envelope, and went down and dropped it in the Post Office. It suited him best to do this at night, for he did not much affect the streets of the city during the day time.

CHAP. VIII.—THE FIRST ACT IN THE DRAMA OF AN EVENTFUL NIGHT.

IT is now, not to be too exact, about twelve years since our story began. During all

these years, important events have been ripening for a series of grand *denouements*, which were all precipitated in one night, and will occupy the remainder of our narrative. The present chapter deals with the day preceding, and the beginning of that truly eventful night.

Notwithstanding the improvements effected in his home and surroundings, Wenn was not happy—few people are that *in love*; and *unfitting* as it may seem to his character, etc., he *was* in love. The object of his passion was no other than the beautiful girl, Zenobia! Of course it was a secret, buried in the deepest recesses of his heart, hidden and unexpressed—but there, nevertheless, a deep and absorbing passion, all the more terrible from its hopeless nature, knowing full well, as he did, that it never would or could be returned. He was content to love her madly in secret, to worship her from afar, as we might a creature belonging to a superior order of beings. It made him all the more conscious of his deformity, and more than ever dissatisfied with himself. And as love is always and necessarily selfish, the great fear of his life now was, that so rare a gem as Zenobia would not long remain unsought and unwon. He brooded over thoughts of the time when some gay cavalier would come along and take her from him; and he felt, that in that dark hour, life would lose all its attractions for him. At such times, strange and dark thoughts obtruded themselves into his mind, and he would yield himself to the sway of wild and impossible dreams. He had seen something of the power of money, and had great faith in it. He had never cared for it before; but now the next greatest desire of his life was to be a rich man. He had never cared for wealth before; but now he regarded it as the one thing which would open to him avenues of enjoyment hitherto unknown.

Zenobia was friendless and homeless; as yet unsought, and apparently indifferent to making acquaintances. Sometimes he asked himself if in time, by unwearied attention and devotion, she might not learn to forget his horrible deformity and enact a part in the old story of "Beauty and the Beast," for the sake of unbounded wealth? The thought thrilled him like an electric shock, and set him almost wild to acquire that wealth, by any means that might offer; and at this juncture, his brother appeared, as it were, and left in his possession a talisman with which he believed he might turn the stream of gold that was flowing into his rich employer's coffers, into his own strong box. And it was in pursuance of

a plan he had formed to effect this desirable object, that he had addressed the note mentioned in the last chapter, to Mr. Johnson. He held a terrible secret that he had no doubt the latter would be willing and anxious to buy; and his determination was to make him pay a high price for it.

Recent events made him doubly anxious to carry out his plan at once. He was aware that a handsome and well dressed young man visited his cottage in his absence, and was often seen about the "Ravine." He had often discovered him leaving it, but could never see his face, or discover from whence he came, or whither he went. He had often tried to do so; he had tried to follow him, to head him off, to intercept him, to surprise him by returning suddenly at unexpected hours; but had never been successful in coming face to face with him. In a suspicious, roundabout way, as if desirous, but afraid to learn the truth, he had questioned Zenobia about the mysterious visitor; but she always quietly, but firmly refused to give any explanation.

"It is a friend," she would say, "and he does not wish you to know who he is, or why he comes. But he is nothing to me, nor I to him. He is no lover of mine, and I care for him only as a friend. Further, I cannot now explain. In due time, you will know all, and be satisfied."

This was all strictly true, but by no means satisfactory to Wenn, who in his unreasoning jealousy, but half trusted these assertions. The fact was, that Zenobia had once loved, as some women can love but once; and though she had lost the object of her heart's pure devotion, she had not forgotten it, but was still as true to the memory of him she had loved as she had been to him, and felt that she never could love another. Her only desire was to be left alone, quiet and happy in her own way, hidden from the world, and as lost to it as if she was not in it. And hope is a strong element in all human natures, and possesses a wonderful vitality. It is constantly whispering, "he is not lost, he is not dead," and adds with words that burn into the heart with all the force of prophecy, "he will yet return to you." How many otherwise disconsolate lives are rendered endurable by the siren's deceptive promises so perfectly in accord with the souls dearest wishes?

"O' course I don't want o' interfere, Miss Zenoby," Wenn would say, "an' I s'pose it ain't none o' my bizness, an' moreover I hadn't orter doubt your word, but it would make me feel a

heap more comfortable like, of ye'd only explain to me why he does come 'ere, an' be so secret about it."

But she would "explain" nothing, and Wenn was left to gloomy darkness and doubt. After due deliberation, he had resolved to bring matters to a crisis with Johnson, and as soon as possible afterward, induce Zenobia to remove with him to some remote place—the farther the better—the western wilds of Nevada, or some place at least out of the reach of the mysterious visitor. If he followed them there—vague and hideous phantoms here filled up the hiatus in thoughts that would not give themselves shape in his troubled mind. Love and jealousy are the cat and dog of the human heart—most constant, but uncongenial companions. There is nothing too good or too bad for a man to do under their influence.

As a first move in carrying out the plan he had formed, Wenn had sent Mr. Johnson the threatening and mysterious note, as we have seen. The next night, being that of the Fourth of July, a holiday, was the one appointed by Wenn to meet Mr. Johnson at the tannery. He was not sure that Johnson would meet him as proposed, and was fearful that if he did, he would do so for the purpose of entrapping him, and would have others with him. He had an uncomfortable knowledge that his little game might be considered in the light of "black mail," and lead to unpleasant consequences, and was in doubt what plan to adopt if it failed. However, he trusted to luck, and the power of the secret he held to secure his release, through Johnson's influence, if he should come to grief, and was determined to risk the consequences at all hazards, using every precaution to guard against treachery.

During the greater part of the day he kept closely at home and was restless and fidgety. About ten o'clock in the forenoon, he walked up the path leading from the ravine to the road that made a circuit near its brink, and sat down to smoke and listen to the various sounds that fill the air on a Fourth of July morning—martial music and beating of drums, the firing of guns, the explosion of pyrotechnics, and the shouting of boys. While so occupied, he heard a carriage rolling over the hard, gravelly road, and retreating a little, took up a position behind some bushes where he could see without being seen. The carriage contained a little party evidently going out to some of the various picnics being held within the vicinage of the city—among them, Mr. Johnson and his daughter.

This spectacle seemed to strike Wenn as rather singular. There could be but one of two explanations to it: either Johnson had not received his note; or, if he had, was unmoved by it. On no other supposition could he account for his untroubled and happy appearance. Wenn was puzzled, and determined to walk up to the residence of his employer, under pretext of making some inquiries in regard to matters about the tannery which Johnson owned, but in reality to pick up any information he might be able to, bearing upon the question of his having received the letter. It had not escaped his attention that Mr. Johnson's sister was not of the party, and he determined to interview her, hoping that she might let some remark fall from which he could at least get an inkling of any unusual occurrence of the kind.

With this object in view he walked boldly up to the front door and rang the bell. The housemaid who answered the summons, as soon as she opened the door recoiled in terror, and ran screaming through the hall. The disturbance brought Miss Johnson (Mr. Johnson's sister) to the spot. She had heard her brother speak of Wenn, and though somewhat taken aback by his hideous appearance, was less alarmed and more self-possessed than the maid. She was a tall, gaunt, shrewish looking woman, with a sharp eye and wiry frame, and disposed to resent the frightening of the housemaid as a personal affront. Wenn advanced into the hall to speak to her.

"You horrid creature!" she screamed, retreating a step or two, "What do you want here, say?"

"I beg your parding—Miss Johnson, I believe?" said Wenn.

"And if I am, what is that to you, you disgusting object? You needn't think I'm an unprotected female, because my brother's away," Miss Johnson answered shrilly, seizing the knob of the door, as if about to retreat into the room and lock herself in. "I've got three or four revolvers right here, and I can shoot, too, and I will shoot you as quick as I would a wild beast, if you come near me."

"I meant yer no harm, mum," replied Wenn, apparently, not the least alarmed by these beligerent assertions; "my name's Wenn, an' I'm one o' the tannery han's an' I kem to ax Mr. Johnson su'thin' about the vats."

"Ugh! You horrid beast!" said Miss Johnson spitefully, with a shudder. "What right

have you, I'd like to know, to come here frightening folks out of their wits? You knew very well Mr. Johnson was not at home."

"I ax yer parding, mum, but I didn't know no sich thing," asserted Wenn, uttering a deliberate falsehood, his cleft mouth expanding like a frightful chasm, with a grin at the idea of any human being having designs upon the vixenish individual before him. "Ef you'll excuse me for axin' mum," he added facetiously, "is yer attractions so powerful that ye need FOUR revolvers to pertect ye? Ef I ain't mistaken, mum, yer dubly safe without any sich armory, mum."

"Ugh! You horrid, horrid brute, how dare you stand there insulting me," exclaimed Miss Johnson, with a scream. "Won't some one put the wretched creature out of this house?"

"Don't be afraid, mum," began Wenn.

"Oh, don't 'mum' me!" exclaimed Miss Johnson. "I'm a respectable young woman, I'd have you know, you hideous thing."

"Don't be afeard, Miss, correctin' myself," said Wenn, who saw the weakness of this elderly young spinster, and feeling in a reckless mood, was not indisposed to have a little amusement at her expense, in retaliation for the abuse she had given him. "I knowed as ye was a young 'oman, o' course, an' ef I hev'n't but one eye, I ken see that yer a han'some young leddy, too."

"Oh, what flattering creatures you men are!" simpered the spinster, taking a second look at her interlocuter, and thinking that after all, his appearance was not so revolting as she had thought at first sight.

"Not at all, Miss, I 'sure you," replied Wenn. ("The ole gal'll be gettin' sweet on me next," he thought to himself, a little flattered in his turn.) "I'm plain an' out spoken, which was allers a fault wid me, Miss, bein' as ye see, a little unfortun'ate in my bein' marked by natur' from birth, an' its onlikely as any one 'ud ever take flatt'ry from me. But I've an eye for the beautiful, Miss, an' ef I do say it to your face, you're a uncommon fine lookin' young 'oman."

"Oh, pshaw! You wheedling creature!" exclaimed Miss Johnson, coquettishly, coming a step or so nearer. "You know you don't mean a word of it."

"O, yes I does, Miss, I 'sure ye," not a little delighted that the spinster was so evidently pleased with his flatteries. "I often remarked the same to my daughter."

"Your daughter!" exclaimed she angrily, retreating again. "Then you're a married man, and here talking such nonsense to me! You

ought to be horsewhipped! I wonder how you ever found a woman who wanted to marry bad enough to have such a looking object as you are! For my part, I wouldn't have the best map that ever lived."

"I'm sorry to hear ye say that, Miss," answered Wenn, vastly amused, with one of his most fascinating smiles. "Cause I'm a widdy, Miss, an'?"

"Oh, Mr. Wenn!" cackled the spinster, restored to good nature immediately. "Are you really a widower now? I didn't mean it, then. How very lonely life must seem to you!"

"So it do, Miss, I 'sure ye," replied Wenn, "an' as I 'as a goin' to say, I've often thought as how when I got the fortin' that's comin' to me, I'd like to find just such a lovely creatur' as yer-self, that wouldn't object to my face bein' a little disfigerd."

"Oh! Mr. Wenn! he, he, he," simpered Miss Johnson, putting both hands to her face and affecting to blush. "This is so unexpected, so very sudden! I hope you will forgive me for speaking so harsh at first, won't you? I didn't mean it at all. I see you've got good sense, taste, judgment, and a noble heart. I really should not make a point of objecting because you've a hare-lip. I've known many really clever folks have them. And then the doctors can cure it, too, so that no one would notice it."

This remark affected Wenn strangely. It contained a bit of information that was a new revelation to him. It convulsed his whole being with such a spasm of hope and joy as he had never known before. He sought her face with his solitary eye dilated with excessive eagerness, to see if she meant it. Perceiving that she did, he slapped his knee with his hand exclaiming:

"Is that r'aly so, Miss? For God's sake don't chaff me, Miss I beg ye. Can they r'aly cure it, mum?"

"Why, truly it is so, Mr. Wenn," replied she, not exactly knowing how to take his excessive interest in the question, but naturally attributing it to his desire to win her dear self. "I have known several cases cured by an operation, so that you'd never notice it."

"Thank'e Miss, oh thank'e. You've lifted a mighty load off'n my mind, I can tell ye, an' yer the sweetest and dearest creatur' as natur' ever built, I do sw'ar," exclaimed he, springing into the air, and hopping down before the wondering spinster in the exuberance of his joy like a mad man, and winding up these demonstrations by

embracing her and imprinting a kiss on her dry, skinny face that covered nearly half of it.

"Why, you naughty fellow!" simpered Miss Johnson, looking, however, as though she was not very seriously offended. "I wouldn't stand such freedom if you hadn't just declared your honest and manly love."

"Bless yer dear old bones, mum, I does love ye for what ye've jest told me, an' I'll bless ye the longest day I live Miss," replied Wenn, seizing her hand, kissing and shaking it warmly, and hastening from the house.

The maid, who had recovered from her terror in the kitchen, returned to the hall just in time to witness this last scene in the ludicrous act.

"Oh," cried she with a little scream, "what was that 'orrid monster a doing, Miss Johnson?"

"Betsy Jane, mind your own business, and learn to speak more respectfully to folks," replied Miss Johnson sharply, turning upon her with considerable asperity. "The poor man can't help having a hare-lip, and you shouldn't sneer at any one's misfortunes."

"I know 'e can't 'elp 'aving a 'are-lip, Miss, but I thought as 'ow 'e could 'elp kissing folks 'ands with that 'are-lip of his, Miss," replied the maid, who was pert and pretty, with a toss of her head, and opening her eyes wide at the sudden change of Miss Johnson's tune towards the "orrid monster."

"Betsy Jane, go to your room and remain there till I ring for you," was all the reply that Miss Johnson deigned to make, as she walked off with a contemplative air.

"Whew! blisters, broomsticks, brimstone, beeswax and bootjacks!" said Betsy Jane, with whom this form of alliteration was a favorite expletive, when sure that her mistress was quite out of hearing. "I believe the old cat would marry the very Old Boy himself if she could get 'im."

Miss Johnson, after devoting five minutes to reflections of a pleasing nature in her own room, rang softly for the maid. The latter came pouting.

"There now, Betsy Jane, don't take it to heart so if I scold you a little," said Miss Johnson, tapping her cheek caressingly, and almost dying to make a confidant of some one. "You must not speak so disrespectfully of Mr. Wenn. He's going to have an operation on his lip and—he, he, he,"—simpering—"I'm engaged to him!"

"Oh Lord! blisters, broomsticks, brimstone, beeswax and bootjacks!" ejaculated the maid, throwing up her arms in utter astonishment.

"Now what is the matter with you, Betsy Jane? You great moon-eyed huzzy!" exclaimed Miss Johnson in a rage. "Go to your room, Betsy Jane, till I ring for you."

"Y-e-s, Miss," blurted out the maid, cramming her handkerchief into her mouth to keep from laughing outright, as she left the room.

"I do believe the little wretch is jealous of me," said Miss Johnson to herself. "I think I'll discharge her. No, I'll keep her and see to it that she don't get an opportunity to practice her arts upon him. These young wenches are so artful, when a man is in the question." She then gave herself up to such blissful dreams of the future as young ladies during their first little "affair of the heart" are wont to; and to these dreams we cannot do better than leave her for the present.

In the meantime Eli Wenn, his whole soul illuminated with the sudden light of a new hope and joy, returned to his cottage and awaited nightfall. An hour or so before nine o'clock, the appointed time for the important interview with Johnson, he set out to meet the latter at the tannery. He ascended the pathway leading up from the ravine, turned into the broad road that curved around the brow of the hill, and was plodding off in the direction of the tannery when he heard a carriage approaching; thinking it might be Mr. Johnson returning from the picnic, he concealed himself behind a tree and waited until it had passed. It proved to be a carriage containing a solitary gentleman. Being on the alert, he watched the vehicle until he saw it stop in front of the "Ravine." His suspicions being aroused, he turned about, determined to go back to his house, with the expectation of catching the mysterious visitor this time, for sure. But he was again too late. While he was yet some distance from the carriage, he saw a young lady assisted into it by a gentleman, who then followed, and it drove off before his very eyes, notwithstanding that he ran and hailed the driver; the latter only put his thumb to his nose, gyrating with his fingers, and flourishing his whip with a crack, drove off, shouting back, "Hi, Old Warty, yer a little too late this time!" The face of the lady was veiled, so that he could not see it; but he was sure from her size, and general habit, that it was Zenobia. For one moment he had stood face to face with her mysterious visitor, and had looked at him; but now that he

had seen him at last, he felt that he would never be able to recognize that face again, for the simple reason that it was—masked!

Almost wild with baffled rage, jealousy and disappointment, he followed the carriage on foot, pursuing it frantically, determined if possible to keep it in sight.

CHAP. IX.—THE SECOND ACT IN THE DRAMA OF AN EVENTFUL NIGHT.

WENN was muscular and long-winded, but no match for the bays that spurned the boulders of the paved highway with their fire-flashing hoofs. He pursued the carriage like one possessed, and held out well; but it widened the distance between him and it rapidly, turned into another street and was soon lost to his view. He uttered a guttural oath, and still followed it panting and snorting like a frightened horse, threading the dusky streets at random, gazed at by passers, and hooted and encouraged by the boys, who seemed to enjoy the race hugely, until he was obliged to pause from sheer exhaustion.

"I won'er wherever they could a went to," he muttered, as he took a huge handanna handkerchief from his hat and wiped the streaks of dust and perspiration from his face and looked about him.

He was in that portion of the city known as the North side, and, at that early hour of the evening, the streets were thronged with people, some of whom were winding up the celebration of the holiday by returning homeward rather too impregnated with beer for a dignified perpendicular. The air was full of music and sounds incidental to the occasion. Wenn stood listening to these, in doubt as to what course to pursue next, and was soon surrounded by a crowd of boys who seemed disposed to regard him as a cleverly masqued individual from some of the beer-gardens.

"I say, Jim," screeched one of them, "that's the best masque I've seen yet."

"Der Teifel!" exclaimed another, "he's takin' der character of der Teifel!"

"I say, old Beelzebub, where's yer horns?" suggested another.

"He's taken plenty of them—you bet!" said another. "See, he sweats through his masque like a pitcher!"

Just then a band of music struck up a waltz at no great distance, and not courting further observation, Wenn moved off in the direction from which the music proceeded, growling, "Git out, you little warmints," savagely, as he pushed his way through the crowd, intending to quench his thirst with a foaming tankard of lager. The music, however, came, not from a beer-garden, as he at first supposed, but from one of the handsomest residences in the vicinity—a fine house that stood a little back from the street in a large yard, partly concealed by a thick growth of evergreens—evidently the abode of wealth and luxury. The grounds were ablaze with variegated Chinese lanterns, casting a fairy-like glamour over the masqued figures that strolled beneath them in gay converse; while through the open windows, from which the waves of voluptuous music floated out upon the summer's night, others could be seen whirling joyously through the revolutions of a giddy waltz.

Wenn stood in front of the house looking on awhile. "Pooty happy, ain't ye?" muttered he, and was about to turn away, when he found himself facing a stranger who stood leaning on the gate, as if engaged in deep revery. He was a well dressed and gentlemanly looking young man, broad shouldered and athletic, the very picture of conscious power in repose. There was a cast of settled melancholy upon his handsome, bold, bronzed features, in such strange contrast with the scene of gay revelry within, that Wenn involuntarily paused, through a fellow-feeling of sympathy with his apparent dejection, and gazed at him in some astonishment. The stranger paid no heed to him, and while he was thus employed a carriage drove up to the gate, a gentleman jumped out, lifted a lady from the vehicle, and hastened into the house.

The lady passed in first, and as she flitted past the melancholy athlete at the gate, as she lifted her drapery, the jewels in a bracelet of peculiar and antique design upon her wrist flashed in the light for an instant like a gleam of lightning—and she was lost to view among the masqueraders within. Wenn and the stranger seemed equally moved by this occurrence. The latter instantly altered his attitude of repose, and started as if aroused by a galvanic shock, while the former snapped his great tusks together with rage, and started furiously forward as if to follow them into the house—a movement on his part that evidently did not escape the athlete, for he dexterously planted himself before the monster, and in a stern, authoritative manner exclaimed,

"Hold!"

Without in the least heeding this admonition, Wenn was about to rush past him, when he hauled off and knocked him down in the most unceremonious manner.

Wenn was on his feet in an instant, blinded with rage and pain, and went bellowing at his antagonist like a mad bull—the result of which manoeuvre was that the next instant he found himself sprawling on the pavement, stunned and confused, with the athletic stranger standing coolly by awaiting his further movements. Finding that he had more than a match to deal with, and not courting another encounter, Wenn yielded like an animal that has tested the physical superiority of his opponent, and yields submissively to brute force.

"W'at did yer do that 'ere fur, say?" he asked, assuming a sitting posture, and rubbing that part of his great, bushy head with which the iron-like knuckles of the stranger had come in contact.

"Get up, you beast," commanded the athlete, contemptuously, "and when you are told to stop, do so."

"Wal, w'at d' yer want, say?" asked Wenn, scrambling up, and standing sullenly before his interlocutor.

"Who were that gentleman and lady that just passed in?"

"W'at's that 'ere to yer, any how?" asked Wenn doggedly.

"Will you answer my questions at once?" commanded the athlete menacingly.

"Look'e 'ere, stranger, don't ye go a keelin' me over ag'in," exclaimed Wenn, with a wholesome fear of those firm knuckles, retreating a step or two. "Ef ye want a civil answer to a civil question, ax it civil like, can't ye, say?"

"Well, who were they?"

"The gal was my darter, then, an' I dunno who that 'ere fellow are. Thet's jist w'at I want 'o know."

"You lie, you scoundrel," said the stranger emphatically. "I know you, Old Warty, and I know you never had a daughter. Your daughter! humph! The woman never lived that would bear one for you. Now will you tell me the truth?"

Wenn looked hard at him in mingled amazement and terror; but judging by the stranger's tone and attitude that he was terribly in earnest, and that further trifling would precipitate another "keeling over," decided in his own mind that honesty would be the best policy.

"Leastways, she's my 'dopted darter, sur, an' I've a feyther's right to look arter her," he said. "An' I've ev'ry reason to b'lieve thet 'ere feller, whoever he be, thet's a runnin' arter her, don't mean her no good, an' I wanted to take her hum. Now I 'ope yer satisfied; an' es I don't know ye, mought I jist ax ye who ye be as goes 'bout keelin' folks over as is a'tendin' to their own business, say!"

"That happens to be none of your business," said the stranger dryly. "But that is not all that I wish to know. I know you very well, if you don't know me, and the best thing you can do is to answer my questions, and ask me none. What is the lady's name?"

"Zenoby."

"Zenobia? What else?"

"Now, look'e 'ere, stranger, I dunno no other name she's got, only Zenoby, for she'd never explain," answered Wenn, backing off, as the stranger made a slight movement as if to turn back his cuffs. "Don't ye be a peelin' them 'ere thunderbolts o' yourn to keel me over ag'in, an' I'll jist tell yer all I knows 'bout it."

"Very well, be quick about it," said the athlete, following him up.

Wenn, trembling for his life, and with an occasional glance of his solitary piggish eye at the stranger's brawny fists, briefly told him all he knew about Zenobia, not omitting the episode of the mysterious visitor, to which the athlete listened with a gathering brow.

"Now leave here," commanded the stranger aggressively, when Wenn had finished.

"Look'e 'ere, stranger, won't ye jist explain this 'ere peecoliar proceedin' o' yourn?" demanded he, still reluctant to go.

With a finger, imperative as that of Fate, the athlete only pointed down the street, and Wenn had no choice but to slink away, muttering something to the effect that "it was a pooty piece o' business, a keelin' a feller over, an' extortin' a confession from 'im, an then a p'intin' 'im off wi'dout a word o' explanation."

The stranger turned away and walked off in another direction. Watching him stealthily until he was lost to sight in the deepening shadows, Wenn turned suddenly round, and rushed into the house, presenting, with his deformity, swollen face and coarse, soiled clothing, a strange contrast to the gay and finely dressed masqueraders among whom he intruded, not unlike Satan among the angels. However, as most of them mistook his natural hideousness for an exceedingly clever masque, he did not excite so much at-

tention as he would have done under other circumstances. He soon singled out the lady and gentleman whom he had pursued, and followed them. They noticed and avoided him. He still followed, and finally confronted them. They attempted to move away, when, impelled by a sudden passion he struck the man in the face, dislocating his masque, and tearing off that of the lady with his other hand.

It was Dr. Singleton and May Johnson! The music stopped suddenly, the ball room was in an uproar of confusion, and Wenn stood staring at them in stupified amazement. A half dozen men seized him by the arms and throat, and he, struggling and frantically trying to "explain," was kicked and buffeted out into the street from whence he came.

Aching and smarting under the blows he had received, Wenn was shuffling along, making his exit with a very bad grace indeed, when he met the athletic stranger, now masqued, at the gate. He recognized him instantly, by his form and dress, and intercepted him with;

"I say, Mister, jist stop a minit, an' I'll explain. I see 'em in thar, but—"

"I told you to leave here!" said the stranger, cutting him short, and turning upon him menacingly, causing him to shuffle out of the way precipitately in order to avoid further punishment.

Wenn, realizing that he had made an egregious fool of himself, and that Zenobia was, in all probability, quietly practicing at home, now remembered that it was very near the time appointed by himself for meeting Mr. Johnson at the tannery and accordingly set off for that locality at a kind of dog-rot between a walk and a run. The stranger in the meantime, passed into the house, where the dancing had been resumed, and where, as all were masqued, his appearance excited no remark.

Arriving at the tannery, Wenn found it lonely and deserted. There was no sign of Mr. Johnson, and as if he had casually happened to come there, Wenn loitered around the place for a little while with his hands in his pockets. At length, thinking it must be time for his employer to put in an appearance, he was creeping up near the wall to conceal himself in its shadow to await the interview, when Mr. Johnson himself stepped out, and said:

"What are you prowling about here for?"

"Hi yi, Mr. Brinsley," answered Wenn, bringing up short. "Yer on hand, I see."

Brinsley, for it was indeed he, as the reader has doubtless already divined, who had come West, and established himself under the name of Johnson, remained silent, regarding the fellow awhile. "So you are the fellow that sent me that insolent note, are you?"

"Yer jist right, I am, Mr. Brinsley," answered Wenn.

"Call me Johnson, you dog," said Brinsley with closed teeth.

"All right, sur. We won't quarrel about names, Mr. Johnson, sence we know each other right; jist ye call me Wenn, by that same to ken," replied Wenn.

"What do you mean by this proceeding, you insolent scoundrel?" demanded Brinsley.

"Now look'e 'ere, Mr. Johnson," said Wenn, casting his head back, and assuming something of a swaggering attitude, "there ain't no sort o' use o' yer puttin' on any airs over me, ye know. I ain't no dog, no how. An' ef I'm a scoundrel, thar's a pair on us, an' I'm in pooty good comp'ny jist now, anyhow."

"I have no time to parley with you, fellow. What do you want of me?" said Brinsley in a less lofty tone.

"W'at does I want o' ye? Hi, yi, yi," chuckled Wenn, swaggering around, and still watching Brinsley narrowly with his white-rimmed solitary eye. "Ere's a go, 'ere is! Didn't I tell ye in thet note w'at I wanted?"

Brinsley stood immovable. "Upon what grounds do you base your modest demands?" he asked.

"Now ye can't cod me, Brinsley, 'cause why? it won't go down," answered Wenn. "I knows everythink, Mr. Johnson—excoose the slip—fur my brother Zeke see ye do the ole man, an' w'at's more, it's in w'ite an' black. Ye ain't fur enough from Syracuse to play off on that same Wenn family, I ken tell yer. The fack is, ye've got thet money, Brinsley, thet no more b'longs to ye than it do to me, an' ye've got to *divy*, or I'll peach. Thet's the long an' short o' it, Mr. Johnson—excoosin' the slip o' callin' ye Brinsley."

"Where is this brother of yours?" asked Brinsley, with an anxiety in his tone that he could not wholly conceal.

"Thet's neither 'ere, neither is it thar, nor yonder, Mr. Johnson," replied Wenn. "O' one thing, be sure. The money's in yer hand, an' the halter's in mine. Jist ye *divy* the blunt, an' it's all right. Jist ye don't, an' swing ye go, high, low, jack an' the game—'cause I hold the

trumps, Mr. Johnson, an' I likes to see sich brought low, I does."

From the first reception of Wenn's note Brinsley had fully realized the peril of his situation, and that he was in this creature's power. He did not know that Zeke Wenn was dead, and had no doubt but that he and his brother were confederates in a desperate game to black mail him heavily. His object was to buy off as cheaply as possible, and he was feeling his way carefully and cautiously.

"All this talk amounts to simply this, Wenn," said he. "You and your convict brother are confederating together to rob me, and to further our ends have hatched up this plan. You are, probably not aware that your attempts at black mail would place you in the penitentiary, where you so richly deserve to be, are you?"

"Now, look'e 'ere, Brinsley," replied Wenn quaking in his turn, "yer an ole fox, but ye can't come none o' yer gammon on me, do ye mind? I tell yer it won't go down. Ye know w'at ye've done, an' w'ere ye stand, an' so do I. I've no more words to waste. *Divy* the blunt, an' I'm off w'ere I'll never trouble ye ag'in. Keep it, ef ye like, an' I'll peach, an' ye swing, ef I hev to rot in jail the balance o' my days. I'd as lief be thar as live like I does, anyhow." Wenn spoke like a man who had made up his mind, and presented his ultimatum. Brinsley realized that fact and hastened to come to terms.

"How much money would you want," he asked, "providing that I should prefer paying you something to going to the trouble of having you sent to state-prison, the only place you are fit for?"

"The game's ag'in ye, Johnson, an' ye'd as well give in," said Wenn, sullenly. "I knows w'en I'm beat, an' gives in gracefully, an' thet's yer best lay now. Ye know yer made away wid de ole man Furness, an' ye'd never a come away an' lived 'ere under another name ef yer wasn't guilty. Ye couldn't very well explain away thet fack, I'm thinkin'. How much does I want, hey? Wall, I'll be easy wid ye, Brinsley. Gi'e me ten thousand dollars an' call it squar'. I'll leave the county as a resate."

"Are you crazy, or do you think I am a fool, man?" exclaimed Brinsley, white and angry. "I have no such amount of money at my disposal, however much disposed I might be to save myself annoyance. See here, I'll tell you what. I might, mind, I say I might, be disposed to give you something, say a thousand dollars, or so, on condition of you and your brother leaving

the country at once, delivering up to me what you say you have in black and white, and signing the proper documents binding yourself never to trouble me again. What do you think of it? Come, I've no time to waste."

"Nor I, Mr. Brinsley," replied Wenn, shaking his head decidedly. "Don't, I beg yer, let me keep ye 'ere. Ef yer time's so walerble, sur, I'll wait tell ye've more to spar'. Ten thousand's my money. Them's my terms. Yea or nay, an' the business is done. Good night, sur."

Wenn was actually about to walk off. He had calculated all the points nicely, and decided that less than the sum demanded would not subserve his ends, and that he could and would have that or nothing.

"Here, you d—d fool," hissed Brinsley, like a tiger at bay, "come back here. We will settle this matter now. Where is your brother, and where are the papers you spoke of?"

"Ye've nothink to do wid my brother, Brinsley," replied Wenn, turning around. "The papers, in black an' w'ite I'll gi'e ye up when I gits the money, not a minnit afore I does. As to signin', I don't know nothink about papers, an' I mought sign uthin' as would n't agree wi'd my stomach, an' I wcn't sign no papers. I'll gi'e ye them 'ere papers, an' clear out, an' thet's all I'll do. Ye ken do w'at ye like wid 'em, fur all I'll care. Ye may burn 'em up, I say, Brinsley, but thar's a record o' 'em above thet ye can't destroy."

"And your brother?"

"Wall, p'raps I'd as well tell ye the truth," replied Wenn, after a few moments reflection. "Poor Zeke'll never trouble ye. He's gone w'ere ye sent ole Furness. It's his dyin' confession as I've got, an' thet ye may hev, providin' ye consider it worth ten thousand dollars. Yea or nay?"

Brinsley started and put his hand to his head. This put the matter in a new light. The only witness of his crime, then, was dead, and had left a dying confession. That out of the way, and he would be comparatively safe.

"Who besides yourself knows of this?" he asked eagerly.

"Not a livin' soul," replied Wenn, "Not a livin' soul. He writ it out hisself, an' signed it in the presence of three witnesses, which same witnesses was me an' my darter, an' Dr. Singleton. But none of 'em, 'ceptin' myself, knowe! w'at was in thet paper."

"I'll buy it," said Brinsley, as a man who closes a bargain, and makes up his mind to take

his chances on it. "Bring it to my office to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, and I'll give you a check on the bank for the money. You can draw it, and leave this place the same day. Say nothing to any one at all, and above all, let no living soul know of the existence of the paper."

"Ye'll deal fa'r an squar' an' no goin' back?"

"If you will, I will, so help me God, I have sworn it."

"Gi'e me uthin' on it to bind the bargain," said Wenn, holding out his hand.

Brinsley handed him a twenty dollar bill. "There's twenty dollars," he said. "What I say, I'll do. Rely on me, and don't fail me. With that amount you can leave the country and live like a gentleman the rest of your days."

"W'ich for my own sake I wouldn't care for," answered Wenn, pocketing the money. "But I'm a family man, Mr. Brinsley, an' I've a darter which has a feller as I don't b'lieve means her no good, an' I'm ready enough, an' glad enough to leave this 'ere wretched country for good to git her away from him."

"A good idea," answered Brinsley. "Girls these days need considerable looking after."

"Thet ye may well say," replied Wenn. "An' by thet same token ye'd better be lookin' arter thet gal o' yourn. P'raps yer not aware thet she's wid Dr. Singleton at a masquerade ball to-night?"

"What! at a masquerade ball with Dr. Singleton! Where? How do you know?" enquired Brinsley, enraged instantly.

Wenn related the circumstances of the masquerade, which we have already acquainted the reader with, describing the locality, but omitting, of course, the greater part of his own figuring in it.

"The ungrateful little traitor! I did not know they ever met now!" Brinsley growled furiously to himself, rather than to Wenn, and set off in rapid strides in the direction Wenn had given him, while the latter, highly elated at the success of the interview, started for the "Ravine" in the best of spirits with himself and Dame Fortune, who at last seemed disposed to smile upon him benignantly.

CHAP. X.—THE THIRD ACT IN THE DRAMA OF AN EVENTFUL NIGHT.

HOWEVER melancholy the athletic stranger may have been while outside and unmasked, inside the ball-room, with a masque

over his face, he appeared to be the gayest of the gay, full of vigorous life, and brimming over with volatile fun. So much so, indeed, that he speedily became an enviable favorite among the fair portion of the company, who supposed him to be an invited guest, of course—one whom they must know—and they hazarded various conjectures among themselves as to which one of their acquaintances he would prove to be when all unmasked.

So it is with us all: the world is but a large masque-ball, and many faces that seem to beam with smiles and happiness, could we but look beneath the masque that covers them, are distorted by pain and passion. The human form is but a masque of clay that conceals alike the beauties and deformities of the real being, the soul.

Had attention been directed to that point, it might have been observed, however, that the stranger kept near to Dr. Singleton and his companion. And could the eye have pierced the imperturbable masque that hid his features, it might have readily observed that when he was the gayest, his bosom was rent by the pangs of anger, jealousy and disappointment, not unmingled with a sorrowful pity and strange, sweet memories of past years.

When the time for unmasking arrived, which no one had more impatiently awaited, and yet dreaded, than the stranger, he was still near them. To him it was a supreme moment, and his strong arms, as they undid the elastic cord, trembled so violently that it was with difficulty that he controlled their movements. He and May unmasked at the same moment: each eagerly sought the face of the other, and each started back, and stood motionless with mutual surprise and disappointment—though of a very different kind, and with widely different emotions. Annie May Brinsley—for we might as well now call her by her proper adopted name—felt only a simple girlish surprise and disappointment that the cavalierly and gallant masquerader was an entire stranger to her, and wondered why he had followed her all the evening. His disappointment was of a more serious nature—not unmingled, it must be confessed, with a feeling of relief that she who had seemed so devoted to the handsome young man at her side was not the woman he expected to see; one whose vows of eternal constancy he had so faithfully treasured. This little by-play had not escaped the eye of Dr. Singleton; for though they say that love is blind, there are times when his perceptive faculties are morbidly acute.

"Do you know that man, Annie? Why does he stare at you so?" he asked, leading her away.

"I never saw him before in my life," she replied. "He has kept near us all the evening, and acts strangely."

"I will demand an explanation," said Dr. Singleton, stopping short and wheeling around.

An explanation came, however, of the stranger's own seeking. He confronted them when they turned around, and with a bow that was both polite and dignified, said, addressing Dr. Singleton:

"I crave your pardon, sir, and that of the young lady, and beg the privilege of making an explanation of conduct that may have seemed singular to her, and also of asking a question."

"Certainly, sir, it would be very proper under existing circumstances," replied the Doctor, somewhat stiffly.

"You probably supposed me to be some acquaintance in disguise, by the way in which I haunted you to-night," he continued, addressing himself to Annie. "Such, indeed, I supposed myself to be, until you unmasked. I am an entire stranger, not only here, but in the city. I was passing the house, and, attracted by the music within, paused a moment at the gate. While I did so, you passed in, and I saw upon your wrists those bracelets, which I would know the world over, as they once belonged to a very, very dear friend of mine, whom I have for some years mourned as dead. I obtained a masque, and came in, only too wildly hoping that when you unmasked, I should see her face, and learn that the report of her death was untrue. You may imagine how sadly I was disappointed, when I saw the mistake I had made. Perhaps you were her friend, and wear them for her dear memory's sake! You at least must have known and loved her, or you would not be in possession of her trinkets? Can you, will you, tell me anything of my Millie?"

During this brief recital, Annie and Dr. Singleton had listened with something more than polite interest. But when at its conclusion the stranger gave utterance to the name of Millie, both started violently and turned pale. Dr. Singleton was the first to speak.

"Come," he said, "this is not the place for these matters. We will find a more retired one." Which they did in an alcove in one of the inner rooms.

"You called your friend Millie—what was her other name, please?" asked Annie breathlessly.

"Minnie Belle Brinsley,"—he pronounced the very name reverently—"tell me of her—do not prolong my suspense."

"Alas, my friend, you were not misinformed," it was Dr. Singleton who answered; "she is indeed dead."

"But those bracelets, how came you in possession of them?" gasped the stranger, and even Dr. Singleton directed a glance of inquiry towards her.

"That is the most singular thing about it," she said, speaking more to Dr. Singleton than to the stranger. "They belong to Zenobia; I fancied them, on account of their antique design, and happening to suggest that they would be just the thing for a masquerade, she insisted on my wearing them."

"Who is Zenobia?" inquired the stranger evincing the deepest interest.

"The reputed daughter of a rascally monster who lives here, by the name of Eli Wenn," replied Dr. Singleton, touching a slight bruise on his forehead which he said Wenn had left there that very night, when he had attacked him in the ball-room.

"You may well say his reputed daughter, for he never had one," said the stranger. "He must have stolen and given them to her. I must see this girl, by all means. There may be more in this matter than any of us dream of. I know this Wenn well, and he will have good reason to remember me after this night. You know where she lives?"

"Perfectly well," answered Dr. Singleton, not noticing the peculiar expression upon Annie's face, which, could he have read it aright, would have spoken volumes. "But if you will pardon the liberty, may I ask your name?"

"Certainly. Lionel Chatham," replied the stranger promptly.

"I thought so. I was sure of it," said Dr. Singleton. "You were the lover of poor unfortunate Millie Brinsley. It was for your sake that, probably in a fit of temporary insanity, she left home and—"

"No more! please spare me. I know it all but too well," said the stranger, with deep feeling. "Let us find this girl at once. Perhaps she can throw some light upon the subject."

"By all means," said Dr. Singleton, glancing at May interrogatively.

"Certainly, let us go at once," said she, feeling an instinctive womanly desire to aid a forlorn lover, as well as a woman's curiosity to obtain a peep into the mystery.

Dr. Singleton summoned a carriage, and the three got into it and drove off to the "Ravine" at a rapid pace, and reached it just as the clock struck the half hour after twelve.

It was nearly half past nine when Johnson, or rather Brinsley, and Wenn met at the tannery. The interview occupied about two hours, so that it was only half past eleven when Wenn turned his face homewards. He strolled along leisurely, giving himself up to reflections of a roseate hue and building castles in the air, little thinking how soon they would all fade away in the misty darkness of that very night. The clock in the old cathedral tower was on the stroke of twelve when he arrived at the "Ravine." The light was still burning brightly in the cottage, and it occurred to Wenn, true to his suspicious and sneaky nature, that the occasion furnished an excellent opportunity for spying about the premises. Since unmasking Dr. Singleton, he had come to the conclusion that he was mistaken in identifying him with the mysterious stranger who he supposed visited the "Ravine" for the purpose of seeing Zenobia.

"That 'ere dark visitor are thare with my gal now, p'raps," muttered he, when he saw the light gleaming brightly from the cottage windows. "I'll jist slip up, easy like, an' mebbe I'll catch 'im; an' sure's I does, I'll go fer 'im, faster'n lightnin', 'less he's a better man nor I are, like thet 'ere iron-fisted chap as I tackled to-night." Here another thought seemed to strike him, for he stopped suddenly, knit his brows, and shook his head doubtfully. "Ki yi!" he growled at length, slapping his thigh. "Mebbe he's the very chap! I reckon I shouldn't go for him over strong, though! He's a most onpleasant way o' keelin' folks over, he 'as. Leastways, I'll slip up an' see."

With this laudable intention, he stole up to and around the house, where he could peer into the front room through an open window. To his surprise, Zenobia was sitting quite alone, reading.

"The precious little angel's innocent as a lamb, an' how I've wronged her!" thought Wenn. "I'm awful sorry, but it's a wicked world, this 'ere are, an' it's no harrum to watch even a angel as lives in it. She 'pears to be waitin' for somebody, an' I knows as I are not thet somebody. I mought take a notion to lay 'round 'ere a bit an' see who comes."

Wenn evidently did take such a notion, for he stole around towards the upper end of the ravine immediately, and concealed himself behind the

foliage where he could see both approaches to the cottage without being seen. He had lain there on the grass for about half an hour, when his vigilance was rewarded by seeing three persons, two gentlemen and a lady, crossing the rustic bridge in front of the cottage door. He sprang to his feet and hastened towards the front entrance of the cottage, which he reached just as they entered it. He was too much excited to think of strategy, but rushed in after them. Judge of his consternation and surprise to find himself face to face with the athletic stranger, Dr. Singleton and May Johnson!

And then a very strange scene occurred. One, indeed that beggars description. A simple statement of what occurred is all that will be attempted, leaving the reader to picture the ineffable happiness and joyful surprise that it brought to those most immediately concerned.

"My own darling Millie!" exclaimed the stranger the moment he saw Zenobia.

"Lionel!" cried she rapturously, turning very white, her beautiful, soft eyes sparkling with unexpected pleasure, while they dilated with the utmost surprise.

The next moment they were clasped in each other's arms, and Millie—for it was she—lay fainting on his bosom.

Nobody seemed more surprised than Wenn himself. He gnashed his great tusk-like teeth with rage, and danced about furiously, growling:

"W'at do all this 'ere mean, say? I want some'un to explain how this 'ere are! Won't none on yer explain? I say, Mister Stranger, thet's not fair, a keelin' a feller over, an' then a enterin' 'is 'ouse, an' a goin' on thet way, an' won't explain nothin', neither."

To which no one paid the slightest heed, until Millie had been borne to a sofa in the strong arms of Lionel Chatham, and revived. Lionel then condescended to point towards the door, contriving at the same time to intimate to Wenn, by a significant gesture, that a failure on his part to find said aperture would be attended by certain unpleasant consequences which Mr. Wenn would describe as a "keelin' over." Not exactly yearning for which, Eli retired to the door, and stood glaring at his powerful adversary something as a jackal might at a lion that had robbed him of his prey.

When she had sufficiently revived, however, Millie, as we must now call her, intimated her desire to "explain" in these words:

MILLIE BELLE BRINSLEY'S STORY.

"My dear friends, that rough creature saved my life, and has been very kind to me. I owe it

to him, as well as to you all, to make an explanation, which I will proceed to do as briefly as possible."

Here Lionel intimated to Wenn that he might come forward and hear it—a privilege of which he readily availed himself.

"This gentlemen," clasping Lionel's arm firmly and lovingly, "is my own dear Lionel Chatham, whom I have long mourned as dead." And she blushed unconsciously.

"I wish he was," thought Wenn; but he listened intently without giving utterance to the thought.

"My father wished me to marry one Abel Furness, a feeble old man, but very wealthy."

At the mention of this name Wenn gave a great start, as if a sudden revelation had broke in upon him, and became intensely interested, as was apparent from the twinkling of his solitary eye. But he remained silent.

"I did not, and could not love the foolish old man; I loved my father, and in anything else would have sought his pleasure; but I loved my Lionel better," she added, looking up into his face with a confiding smile, "and I was obliged to cross him in this. My refusal brought down upon me the full force of his resentment, and he ordered me to leave his house, and never to call myself his child again. I knew that his strength of will and persistency of purpose were such that if I remained beneath the roof of my home, I would be forced sooner or later to yield to his wishes in this respect, and so determined to take my flight. I left home one night, disguised in boy's clothing, and made my way to New York, intending to communicate with Lionel, knowing that as soon as he knew where I was, he would come to me, and believing that when my father knew we were united, he would forgive us. The unwonted excitement of these events made me ill. It was nearly two weeks after my arrival in New York before I was able to sit up in bed. Then the first paper I took up, contained an account of the wreck of a vessel that had sailed from San Francisco, with a list of the passengers that were lost. The first name that my eye fell upon was the one most dear to me of all others on earth—Lionel Chatham. I need not speak of my grief and despair. Suffice it to say that it threw me into a relapse and prolonged my illness. Of course the deception of my dress had been discovered; but the lady of the respectable boarding house at which I was stopping was very kind to me. The slender means I had brought with me were well-nigh exhausted by the time I had sufficiently recovered my health to seek employ-

ment. With the assistance of this good woman, who indeed proved herself an honest friend to me, I obtained employment in the way of writing in the office of an insurance agency. I continued to board with this good lady, who, when she saw I presistently refused to confide any of my past history to any one, ceased to press me. My employer was an elderly and honorable man; he seemed to appreciate my services above their actual worth, and for the first two years everything went on quietly and pleasantly. At the end of that time, my employer's son, who had been off to college, it appears, had returned home and was assigned a desk in the office. He was what is generally termed a "fast" young man, and his attentions to myself soon became so disagreeable that I decided to once more don my boy's clothing, as a greater protection, and seek employment in some western town.

It may seem strange to you that during all this time it never occurred to me to return home. But there is a certain fascination about perfect freedom, which, when it is once tasted, makes one, especially a woman, loth to surrender it. Besides, I had read an account of the supposed finding of my body, and knew that I was given over as dead, and would not, therefore, be sought for. I could readily perceive how the mistake occurred; for when I left my father's house, in male attire, I carried the clothing I had last worn in a bundle under my arm, intending to throw it into the canal, in order to mislead them when they should miss and search for me, with the supposition that I had drowned myself. I had forgotten to take from the pocket of the dress the note I had intended to post to my father. Meeting a forlorn young woman, I gave it to her, having but little money to spare; and she no doubt put the clothing on, and afterwards drowned herself. Believing Lionel to be dead, I could but regard my father as his executioner; and although I knew that poor old Mr. Furness was dead, I felt, somehow, no inclination to return to my home.

I had some money, the result of savings from my salary in the insurance office. So donning male attire once more, as a safer disguise, as well as protection in going among strangers, I purchased a ticket for Milwaukee, and took passage for this city, without acquainting any one with my intentions. Unfortunately, my pocket was picked on the way, and I arrived here, a stranger and penniless. I went to a boarding place, hoping to find employment of some kind. In this I was not successful; and as soon as my

week was up, and it was ascertained that I could not pay, I was obliged to leave the house. I still wore my disguise, knowing how difficult it would be for a strange young woman, alone, to obtain respectable lodgings. I wandered about the city for four days and three nights, seeking some kind of employment, and sleeping in sheds. During all this time I had tasted nothing but water; for I could not beg, and besides I had no desire for food. On the fourth night, feeling worn out and exhausted, I wended my weary way up Spring avenue, with the expectation of finding some lonely spot in which to lie down and die. I had, indeed, wandered into this very ravine for that purpose, when I became faint and laid down, feeling that death was not far distant, and that my troubles would soon end. But the nearer I came to death, strange to say, the stronger I felt a desire to live; the vital instinct seemed to come into greater activity in proportion as my desponding reasoning faculties lost their sway from weakness. It so happened, though I supposed no human habitation near, that I had fallen in the vicinity of Mr. Wenn's cottage, and that he chanced to pass, heard my feeble moaning, found and took me into his house, where I have since remained, under his kind protection, isolated from the world, and as happy as one could expect to be under the circumstances. This is my story, Lionel, and I will again commend Mr. Wenn to you, for though he is a singular man, and rough in his way, he has been a friend in need, and I cannot better express the nature of his kindness than to say he has been a father to me."

"O, pshaw, Miss Zenoby, don't ye go a praisin' me like thet 'ere now, 'cause I'm not used to it, an' I can't stand it," said Wenn, bringing the rough sleeve of his coarse shirt across his solitary eye, "ye've been the best o' gi'ls, a rale darter to me, an' ye've paid me back a thousan' fole for all the little kindness sich as I could show ye, in makin' this 'ere humble hum o' mine the heppiest an' brightest speck on the yearth."

"I must at least thank you, Eli Wenn, for what you have done for Millie," said Lionel, going over and shaking his hand, which, by the way, Wenn yielded to him, not without an anxious look at his face, and some misgivings that he was going to be "keeled over" again. "This is the one good deed of your life, that redeems it from being an utterly bad and useless one, and atones for many evil ones. You shall not go unrewarded."

"Thap'k'e, sir, but I don't want no reward," said Wenn doggedly. "Life ain't got no more charrums for me. Providence are allers unkind to the misfortunate."

Lionel made no reply to these remarks, for the reason that his attention was now called to May Johnson, who was acting strangely. She had listened to Millie's story with a sadly intent face, and eyes glistening with tears. At its conclusion she put her handkerchief to her face and wept. She was now laughing hysterically, and it was with some difficulty that Dr. Singleton, the only party in the room who understood the cause of her behavior, was able to calm this state of nervous excitement.

When he had succeeded in doing this, Millie threw her arms around Lionel's neck, exclaiming, "Now, Lionel, we want to know how it is that you have come to life again. Tell us your story."

"I have not come to life," he replied, with a smile, "for I have not been dead."

"I ken say as ye haven't acted much like dead folks to-night," said Wenn, with a vivid remembrance of the "keelin' over" business.

Lionel Chatham smiled good-naturedly at this, and proceeded to tell his story; which, together with some other matters pertaining to ours, we are obliged to defer until the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.—THE FOURTH ACT IN THE DRAMA OF AN EVENTFUL NIGHT, UPON WHICH THE CURTAIN FALLS.

LIONEL CHATHAM was about to commence his story, when he was interrupted by the entrance of old Mr. Daley and his wife.

"Pardon this intrusion, kind friends," said the old man, taken aback by the presence of Lionel, Dr. Singleton, and Miss Johnson in their ball-room costumes, "I did not know you had company, Mr. Wenn."

"W'at brung ye 'ere this time o' night, Daley?" asked Wenn turning his solitary eye upon him with some surprise.

"Oh, no matter, now," replied the old man, moving towards the door. "We will not stop. To-morrow will do."

"Now, look a 'ere, ole man, this 'ere won't do," exclaimed Wenn, planting himself in the door. "'Ere's more myst'ry, an' it's got 'o be explained, I tell yer. All sorts o' strange things

is 'appenin' 'ere to-night, an' nobody won't explain nothin'; and 'ere comes ye a makin' another an' won't explain. I wants 'o know w'at brung ye 'ere at this ongodly hour 'o the night, wid the ole 'oman?"

"It is no intrusion, Mr. Daley," said Millie, looking very happy, as she nestled close beside Lionel on the sofa, with his arm thrown protectingly around her waist. "We are all very happy here. You look sad and anxious. If there is anything we can do to make you happy too, do let us help you."

"Oh, yes, all's wery 'appy 'ceptin' o' me," growled Wenn. "I never was 'appy an' don't never s'pect to be. I'm a on'appy wretch, I are."

"We were very uneasy, wife and I," said Mr. Daley, to Millie. "Seeing by your light, that you were still up, we thought we'd drop in and tell you about it."

"It's all about the rent, you see," spoke up Mrs. Daley. "You see we couldn't pay it to-day, and Mr. Johnson has given us notice to vacate to-morrow. Where we shall go I'm sure I do not know, unless, indeed, you will give us the shelter of your roof, Mr. Wenn, for a time."

"Oh, that's all right, ole uns," said Wenn. "I ain't got nothing to live for no more. Ye can hev the hull on't arter to-day."

"It's too bad," said May, with genuine sympathy in her tones. "I never knew pa to be so hard before. I have done all I could—but I interceded in vain."

"What does he mean?" asked Mr. Daley, looking from Wenn to Millie for an explanation.

"Something very strange has happened," replied she. "The lost is found,—my friend, I mean," looking at Lionel. "He has come back alive and well. I thought him dead."

"An' he'll take 'er away from me, now," explained Wenn, "an' I won't hev no hum no more."

Both the old man and woman seemed struck dumb with surprise. "How is this?" asked the former at length. "I did not know you had an absent friend. Where has he been all this while?"

"Just what I was going to explain when you came in," said Lionel.

After Millie had briefly explained the occurrences of the evening to her humble friends, Lionel proceeded to tell his story.

LIONEL CHATHAM'S STORY.

"When I once felt assured of my Millie's love," he said, "and that nothing but my poverty

stood between us, I determined to make a grand effort to remove that obstacle. I had faith in my ability to win a fortune, and when that was won, her father, I believed, would not object to our union. I had no settled plan, but determined to take advantage of any opportunity that might present itself. I went first to San Francisco, hoping that something to further my designs would turn up in that land of adventure and gold. A vessel being about to sail for an Eastern port, I made up my mind to go on it, and had engaged my passage and had my name registered. But before the vessel sailed, meeting with an opportunity to join a new mining company, and thinking the prospects better in such an enterprise than going to the Indies, I abandoned the contemplated trip, went ashore at the last moment, and went with the miners. It was fortunate that I did so, for the vessel was lost. This will account for my name having been published among the missing. The account of Millie's death, with all the particulars, having reached me, and having no doubt that she was indeed lost to me, I gave up all hope.

"It is not necessary, though it might prove interesting, to recount the history of my hard struggles, adventures, disappointments and final triumph—for I did triumph at last. Suffice it to say I went with the miners, and after many adverse experiences, we struck a rich lead and made our fortunes. I found myself a rich man; I had attained the object I sought, but the motive for gaining it was no more. I felt like one who having acquired a rich pearl at great sacrifice sees it crumble to dust in his hands.

"It was then that I remembered I had another object to live for and accomplish—that somewhere in the world I had a father and a mother, and a dear sister, if they were still living; and I determined to find them. I was the more anxious, knowing that they might be in poverty, and in need of the gold that I valued so little. My object in returning was to find this very man Wenn, and ascertain something relative to my parents and sister."

At this point of Lionel's narrative, Wenn became visibly moved and excited.

"I wish, Mister, ye'd jist explain that 'ere, an' how as I've got anything to do wid yer findin' them relations o' yourn," remarked he.

"Perhaps you will not need any explanation when you have heard more of my history, Wenn," replied Lionel, bending upon him a severe glance, beneath which he cowered with a vague pre-

monition of something unpleasant connected with his former misdeeds being in store for him.

"When I was a little boy," continued Lionel, still fixing Wenn with his eye, "I was KIDNAPPED by an evil-disposed ruffian."

As these words escaped him, Wenn sprang to his feet trembling so that his very knees smote each other, and made a loud exclamation of mingled fear and surprise. Old Mr. Daley and his wife were scarcely less moved, but retained their seats, and listened to the stranger with a fixed and yearning interest.

"Sit down, and hear in silence all I have to say," Lionel spoke to Wenn authoritatively. The latter obeyed with a most dogged and hang-dog expression of countenance.

"The fellow was so uncouth and hideous in his appearance that I disliked him from the first, which he could not fail to observe, and for this reason doubtless disliked me in turn, for he was very hard on me, and, especially when under the influence of liquor, treated me very badly. When I got older, though still a mere child, I escaped from the monster one day, and ran away. My only regret in leaving him, was in parting from my poor little blind sister, whom I left with him."

At this juncture Mr. and Mrs. Daley began to exhibit the most profound emotion, but remained silent, gazing upon him with glistening eyes, as if trying to recall the traces of features graven deep upon their memories.

"ELI WENN was the villain that Kidnapped my little sister and me. I knew you the moment I saw you to-night, and determined then that you should never escape me until you had confessed all," he added to Wenn.

"Look a 'ere, Mister," began Wenn, in great distress.

"Be silent, sir," commanded Lionel. "I am not through yet. I found a home with a good old farmer and his wife, after I ran away from Wenn. Having no children of their own, after hearing my story they adopted me as their own son. Soon after they removed to the state of Ohio, where I was educated as far as their limited means would allow. They died when I was about eighteen, leaving me everything they possessed. It was not much, and barely sufficed to complete a tolerably fair English and business education, the foundations of which were laid during their life time. The force of old associations then took me back to Syracuse, the place of my early home, partly to seek employment, partly to find my sister, of whom I had never heard since the cold grey morning upon which I

kissed her as she lay sleeping in her little bed, and asked God in a brief prayer to take care of and bring her back to me. Wenn had left the place, and no one knew of his whereabouts. It was believed, however, that he took the child with him. Such matters soon pass out of the minds of those who have no interest in them; but it was different with me. My interest in the fate of the lost sister whom I felt was somewhere in the wide, wide world, was too deep and abiding to allow me to give up the design of finding her. But my funds becoming low, I decided first to obtain employment, and then pursue the inquiry at leisure. I succeeded in obtaining a situation with Mr. Henry Brinsley; and while with him met my dear Millie here. Our engagement caused a rupture with her father, and prevented me from carrying out the plan I had formed of finding my sister. Now, Wenn, speak—Where is my sister?"

"Wall, to be honest, Mr. Chatham, as I are a honest man," said Wenn, greatly moved, "I allers treated the gi'l well. But I took to hard drink you know, though I don't drink now, as Miss Zenoby know, an' they took the child from me an' giv'r to a horfurn Asylum, or sum sich, after which —"

Wenn had no sooner uttered these words than Annie May, who had evinced great emotion during the recital of Chatham's story, sprang to her feet, and with a loud exclamation of joy clasped him to her bosom and cried:

"Willie! my long lost brother! Thank God we have found each other at last!"

"Sister? Dear young lady, can this be so? My little sister was blind, and I have an indistinct memory, like a half-gotten dream, of having been called 'Willie' when a child—Wenn always called me by the hated name of 'Jubbleg'—how is it that she who now claims to be my sister has a pair of bright blue eyes?" As Lionel Chatham said this, he held Annie May at arm's-length, gazing at her as if he would read the mystery in those same bright blue eyes.

"Yes, look a'ere now, thet's wat I'd like to nev explained," said Wenn. "'Cause why?—the little gi'l ez I kidnapped, ez ye call it, was allers blind—blind from a babby."

Annie and Dr. Singleton exchanged meaning glances. Old Mr. and Mrs. Daley had arisen to their feet, and hung upon her answer as a criminal might upon the one word of the judge which would doom him to the gallows or give him life and liberty.

"That mystery, dear brother, for such you really are, and, and 'Uncle Eli'—as I remember you used to like to have me call you in those childish days when I had never seen a human face, and supposed your's had the same appearance as that of other people,—is a mystery easily solved. I was once, indeed blind, and by my side stands the noble being," she continued, clasping the arm of Dr. Singleton a little closer, "who unsealed my lids by a skilful operation, and opened to my soul the fountains of light."

And Dr. Singleton assented, "It is as she says."

"Sister, mine, you are then, indeed," exclaimed Lionel, folding her fondly in his arms and kissing her many times.

And then occurred a surprise for all parties concerned, except Wenn. Mr. and Mrs. Daley fell simultaneously upon the young people—that is upon Lionel and Annie—crying:

"My children! My own long lost, kidnapped children, we have found you at last!"

No attempt will be made here to describe the scene which ensued between the parents and their children.

"Mr. Daley," said Wenn, when matters had become quieter, "I 'ope ye'll forgive me. I've know'd for a long time ez 'ow ye and the ole 'oman was the father and mother o' the babbies I stold, but not knowin' ez how I could put yez in the way o' findin' 'em, I wouldn't tell. These, indeed be yer babbies—big 'uns, too, they is, and one on 'em's a keeler, I ken tell yer, an' right glad I am ez you've found 'em at last. It's a big load off'n my mind, I ken tell yer."

Mutual explanations and rejoicings followed, as a matter of course. And all were happy except Wenn, who wanted a few more matters explained. One of these was, how this "keeler's" name could be Lionel Chatham, and he the son of Mr. Daley?

"Because it was the name of my foster father, and he gave it to me," replied Lionel. "I have always gone by it, and always shall—adding 'Daley' to it."

Next Wenn wanted it explained how Annie Johnson could be Annie Daley at one and the same time?

"Worse yet, Wenn," said Dr. Singleton, laughing, "she is Annie Daley, Annie Henshaw, Annie Johnson, and Annie —"

"Hush!" cried Annie, putting her hand over his mouth.

"And Annie Somebody else, all at the same time."

"And, ere long, will doubtless be Annie Somebody else still," said Lionel joining in the laugh. At which Annie blushed and looked up confidently into the face of her lover.

"Ow are it, any 'ow?" persisted Wenn, still more mystified.

"Very simple," said Annie. "I had no name but Annie when I was received into the Asylum. I never knew you by any other name than 'Uncle Eli.' The matron's name was Henshaw, and she gave it to me. After I was operated on, and was able to earn my own living, by sewing, I still retained it. When Mr. Johnson adopted me, I of course took his name."

Wenn gave a prolonged "Ow-O!" and said, "I sees it now! Yer not Mr. Johnson's rale child then, but a adopted one? I sees, I sees it now."

Another *dénouement*, another surprise, and another strange scene followed these in rapid succession.

After learning from Wenn that his daughter was at the masque ball with Dr. Singleton, Mr. Johnson hastened to the place, with which he was previously acquainted. He ascertained that they had left. He then went home, and learned that Annie had not returned. Suspecting that she might be at Wenn's he went there. He walked down the little winding pathway to the cottage gate, and seeing the parlor lighted up, and several parties inside, and the door open, walked in. He had never before been at the cottage, and as Millie never went out, they had as yet failed to meet. As he strode into the room, with a stern rebuke to Annie rising to his lips, he met Millie, dressed in white—father and daughter stood face to face!

"My Father!" and she flew with outstretched arms to embrace him.

* * * *

It was with great difficulty that he was restored to consciousness. The events of the preceding day and evening had so unstrung his nerves and told upon his mental faculties, that, not doubting in the least that his daughter was dead, when he saw her, he supposed it to be her spirit, or an optical delusion, resulting from a diseased brain. He sank under the blow in a death-like fainting-spell, from which it required all Dr. Singleton's skill to arouse him.

He slowly returned to consciousness; but was never himself again, never the crisp, energetic shrewd Henry Brinsley of old. He was gradually made to comprehend the true state of affairs. Then, folding his daughter in a long close em-

brace, he caressed and kissed her, and wept her neck, all the time saying:

"My own darling daughter! Alive, thank God! My long lost Millie! Forgive your poor, wicked old father, darling!"

They all forgave him, then and there—even Wenn.

When this was over, and he had become calm, he recognized Lionel.

"What Lionel Chatham?" he exclaimed.

"And you, Mr. Brinsley?"

"My sins, which are many and grievous, have found me out at last," he said, glancing at Wenn.

The latter asked no explanation. On the contrary, he said: "It are all right, Mr. Brinsley. I'm a blighted flower, I are. No, thank'e, nothing for me, only a little change to take me to furin' parts. The only cre'tur' on earth ez ever war kind to me are now taken from me; doubly taken from me: Your darter Zenoby, I mean. It war for her alone I wanted it for. Live an' die 'appy, only gi'e me enough to reach furin' parts an' die on a unknown shore, an' that are all I'll ax."

Millie explained to her father what the reader already knows respecting her refuge with Wenn. Brinsley then even went so far as to clasp Wenn's hand, and thanked him.

"Any time, Mr. Wenn," he said, "my purse is at your service. You shall be rewarded."

"Wirtur are its own reward," said Wenn. "All I ax are enough to go to a furin' land."

"Ab, Annie," said Mr. Brinsley after awhile, "I have a *real* daughter now. You have found a sister."

"Something better, pa Brinsley," exclaimed she,—"I have found a *real* father, a *real* mother, and a *real* brother." As she said this, she indicated Mr. and Mrs. Daley, and Lionel.

Mr. Brinsley was dumbfounded, and asked an explanation, which they all joined in giving him.

"Ah, Daley, I little thought I was robbing you of your own daughter," said he, "and I am mortified to think I have been so hard on you. Of course I could never anticipate this. Business is business, you know," he added, with something of his old air, "and though such things seem hard, we have to do them on principle. I will try and make amends."

"Your heart was very hard towards us, Mr. Brinsley," replied the old man. "It is human nature. We are all too hard on one another. We cannot see clearly the right way in this world."

In the next the veil will be lifted from many lives, as it has been here to-night."

"And now that we have found your *real* father and mother," said Dr. Singleton to Annie, "we shall begin the new life by asking them to smile upon us, hoping they will be kinder to us than your adopted parent was."

While he spoke he led her up to them; and as he and she stood before them, with bowed heads, the old couple raised their hands and said:

"God bless you, our children."

"And now that we have found your father, Millie," said Lionel, leading her up to the sofa where Mr. Brinsley reclined, looking but the wreck of his former self,—grown indeed, ten years older during the previous twenty-four hours,—"let us hope he will prove as generous as Annie's father and mother here. I am a rich man, now, Mr. Brinsley."

They knelt before him, and raising himself up he joined their hands, and laying a hand upon each bowed head, he also said:

"God bless you my children."

* * * *

We had intended writing "The End," here. But a pertinacious individual, who for the last half hour had stood on the porch of the little cottage, an unobserved spectator of these proceedings, now came forward, and insisted upon being heard, and having her rights like other women.

"I don't propose to be left out in the cold in any such way," said Miss Brinsley, bustling into the room. "How'd'y do, Millie? I'm real glad to see you alive and well! But my! Don't you ever give me another such turn as you did the day you ran away!"

"My dear aunt, I'm so glad to see you," said Millie, kissing her. "I'm so sorry I have caused you all so much trouble."

"Oh, it's all right now, I suppose," said Miss Brinsley, turning sharply on Wenn, who was edging off towards the door, and fixing him with her keen grey eye. "You can afford to be sorry, now that you've got the man you wanted. But I'm not to be cheated out of my just rights, Mr. Wenn. So don't you be a sidling off. It's very well to be giving consents, and pairing off. I like to see it. But I don't want to be an odd one. So come along."

And she went over, to Wenn's utter consternation, seized him by the hand, and pulled him up before her brother.

"Come, Henry, while you're in the way of it, bless one more couple," she said.

Brinsley sat looking from one to the other in utter amazement. A huge grin distended Wenn's cleft mouth, for he regarded it as a capital joke. But Miss Brinsley was terribly in earnest.

"What does this mean?" asked Brinsley, barely able to credit his senses.

"It's all arranged, Henry, so don't make a fool of yourself," answered his sister with considerable sharpness. "He proposed to me this morning, and I accepted. All you have to do is to bestow your blessing."

"How is this, fellow?" said Brinsley to Wenn.

"I war only a coddin' the old gi'l; but I ain't no feller, no 'ow," answered Wenn, sneakishly.

"I mean to marry him or die in the attempt," said Miss Brinsley, firmly. "And I'll have his hare-lip operated on, and those warts taken off. And he'll be a real decent looking man, I'm sure."

• Here an idea struck Dr. Singleton, and he came to the relief of the aged spinster.

"I have an idea, Wenn. If you'll marry Miss Brinsley, as you are in honor bound to do," said he, "I'll cure your hare-lip, and remove those ugly excrescences from your face, so that you'll be an ornament to society of whom any elderly unmarried female might well be proud."

"Won't ye do that for money, Dr. Singleton?" asked Wenn, hesitating.

• "Money couldn't procure such a service," Lionel hastened to answer for the Doctor. "No surgeon in the world would undertake such a job, Wenn, only as a matter of friendship and honor you know."

Chatham doubtless felt that if he could bring this match about he would be amply revenged upon Wenn.

An idea struck Brinsley here, and by no means unwilling to lose his amiable sister, he motioned to Wenn to stoop down. He whispered in his ear: "Marry her. I'll give you twenty thousand dollars. Knowing what you do, you ought to be in the family." His native craft, we perceive by this, was not entirely extinguished.

"W'en'll you do that 'ere job?" Wenn raised up and asked Dr. Singleton.

"To-morrow morning," replied the Doctor, promptly.

"Give us yer 'and, old b'y." They clasped hands.

"It's a go, then, snouted Wenn. "It'll be a triple wedding!" The operation and the twenty

thousand dollars doubtless had more to do with this decision than Miss Brinsley's youthful charms. Seizing her by the hand, he made her, nothing loth, kneel before her brother, and exclaimed, "Father, give us yer blessin'."

And Brinsley grimly did so.

Miss Brinsley arose and bashfully hiding her face in her handkerchief, wormed her lover over to a chair and sat down on his knee.

"Come, ole gi'l, don't yer be too sweet on me, yit. Ef Dr. Singleton don't make this 'ere lip good, the bargain's off." He felt sure of Brinsley.

"Never mind, Lovey, it'll be all right," whispered the ancient maiden affectionately.

Had any one passed the cottage the next morning about ten o'clock, they would have heard a frightful groaning, and muttering of half articulated imprecations. They were operating on Wenn. He had declined taking chloroform, declaring he had "the narve" to undergo any punishment that human torture could inflict, in order to be cured of his deformity. As he had the constitution of a beast, the Doctor consented. And he lay like a statue—not a muscle moving, but groaning and swearing, while the three doctors pared off the edges of the hare-lip with their keen scalpels, and sewed it up as if it were the ripped seam of a garment,—and applied the thin strong ligature to wart after wart, tightening it by main force until it cut its way through integument and root, and then applied caustic hot as brands of infernal ire itself to the quivering nerves,—as careless of the torments they were inflicting as if they were operating on a dead body. To Wenn the operation seemed to last about six weeks,—though in reality it occupied only a few minutes.

Then Dr. Singleton told him it was over, and that he was all right—"Quite a respectable looking man," added the Doctor, with a bland smile. To which observation the others assented.

Then Wenn sprang to his feet, and gave vent to the pent-up agony of those six weeks in one prolonged guttural howl, and for the first time in his life voluntarily sought the mirror. His appearance was so vastly improved, notwithstanding the patches of plaster and the compress and bandages, that he actually wept for joy.

A few days later, there was, indeed, a triple wedding. An old *Milwaukee Sentinel* containing the announcement lies before me as I write these concluding lines:

"Lionel Chatham Daley to Millie Belle Brinsley."

"Warwick Singleton, M. D., C. M., to Annie May Henshaw Brinsley."

"Eli Wenn to Sarah Lucinda Brinsley."

Brinsley became a truly penitent and altered man; but it soon became painfully evident to those who learned to recognize his halting step, when they met him on his daily morning walk, even before they saw his stooping form, that he was not long for this world.

Lionel and Millie were as perfectly happy as people ever are in this world.

Dr. Singleton and Annie were not less so.

And if Eli Wenn did not experience all the joys of Elysium with the youthful Sarah, it is some consolation to know that he richly deserved any gentle admonition she might occasionally bestow upon him.

And now we have indeed reached

"THE END."