their grandmother, Mrs. O'Halloran, which inheritance she had steadfastly insisted on keeping, at least in great part, intact, despite Mr. Tremaine's urgent demands that she should permit him to sell it.

This stop, however, had to be taken without the knowledge of her husband or of Miss Radway, and on one of those rare occasions on which she visited the neighboring village alone, she stopped at a notary's office and gave him all requisite instructions, begging him, when the will was ready, if she did not come to his place within a given time, to call at Tremaine Court under some special pretext, bringing the paper with him so that she might sign it.

Time sped on and Mrs. Tremaine, weak and ailing, closely watched, moreover, by both housekeeper and husband, who seemed to have conceived a faint inkling of her intentions, found no opportunity of going to Brompton unaccompanied. In consequence, the notary one day, after more than six weeks' protracted waiting, drove up with his clerk to the front entrance of Tremaine Court.

The master was in the stables, deeply engaged in consultation with his groom regarding the failing health of a favorite hunter, when Miss Radway, who was standing at an upper window, caught a glimpse of the scrivener's keen, sallow face, and at once recognized him. Bidding a messenger look up Mr. Tremaine in the stables, kennels, or wherever else he was wont to be at that hour, and tell him that he was urgently wanted in the library, she hurried down stairs and entered the latter apartment a moment after Mr. Black had been shown in. Mrs. Tremaine was already there. Under pretence of wanting something from one of the shelves, she held her ground despite the new-comer's pointed information that he had called to see Mrs. Tremaine on business, till the door again opened and the master of the house entered.

The notary, who possessed an admirable amount of self-possession, smilingly expressed his delight at seeing the latter, as he was sure he would aid him in inducing Mrs. Tremaine to allow herself to be put down as a member of a committee then organizing for the collecting of funds for building a new church in Brompton.

Now, had Mr. Tremaine been disposed to believe this statement, delivered with calm, easy, yet most deferential courtesy, a glance at his wife's agitated face and changing colour would at once have enlightened him as to the truth. A satirical smile on his handsome, haughty face, he listened to this plausible explanation, and then said:

"Mrs. Tremaine is at liberty to do as she likes."

"I think you had better call again. I am scarcely prepared to give you a decisive answer to-day," stammered the hostess, anxious, even in the midst of her mental trouble, to leave a loop-hole for a future visit from the man of law. The latter, bowing low, withdrew, and Mr. Tremaine, without look or word to his wife, abruptly retreated, and returned to his conversation with his groom.

From this out, Mrs. Tremaine felt that she was more closely watched than ever, so closely that the project nearest to her heart remained unfulfilled. By skilfully cross-questioning Mr. Black's clerk, Miss Radway had discovered with certainty that a will, leaving all she possessed to her children, had been drawn up, and that gentlemen of high standing in the county were to be named executors, so as to ensure the due carrying out of her intentions.

The day this intelligence was communicated to Roger Tremaine by his housekeeper, the pair sat together awhile in moody silence, broken at length by the former's exclaiming with a fierce oath:

"A pleasant prospect, indeed! Yes, if she gets over her confinement safely, which she will, of course, because nobody wants her to, she will carry her project into execution as sure as fate."

"But she must not get over it, Roger Tremaine," said his companion in low, sinister accents. "She must not be allowed to get over it, and make a will that will render you little better than a beggar, thus defrauding you of the only reward you have gained for having been tied eight or nine long years to a wife that you never loved."

"What are you hinting at, woman? You surely do not mean that——"

"Hush! I mean anything and everything that would tend to the object in view, that of securing you in possession of the fortune so dearly bought," and, she might have added, of restoring him that liberty, the necessary step to the realization of the dream of her life, her becoming his wife.

Mr. Tremaine sprang to his feet and paced the room with rapid, nervous tread, whilst his dark brows gathered in deep thought.

"Do nothing rash, remember," he at length said. "Every other means must be resorted to before anything so desperate is even hinted at."

"As you will; but they'll prove of no avail, I warn you. I have read that poor puppet wife of yours well, and with all her vacillation and chicken-heartedness, there is at the bottom, as is the case with so many of those fair-haired, dove-eyed women, a fund of unconquerable pride and obstinacy."

"Enough! enough!" he retorted angrily. "From Adam downwards men have always found a temptress at their elbow."

Miss Radway's lip curled in a bitter, sardonic smile, that said as plainly as words could have done:

"And from Adam downwards they have never required much tempting to make them fall;" but she made no verbal reply, and her master abruptly left the apartment, slamming the door behind him.

On he went to Mrs. Tremaine's rooms, which were in the oldest but most pleasantly situated part of the building known as the east wing. On entering the boudoir, he found her sitting in a low easy chair, her arm encircling her little daughter, whilst an expression of unutterable sadness shadowed her thin pallid features.

Throwing himself on a sofa he said: "You had better send the child out in the air. She is too much in-doors—too much with an invalid."

Tears rose to Mrs. Tremaine's eyes, and she whispered, half to herself:

"She may have me but a short time with her."

"All women in your state of health have such fancies," he carelessly rejoined. "Take your hat, Margaret, and gather Mamma some flowers."

The docile child obeyed, though with a slow, halting step, for the hip disease which had attacked her in early infancy had stubbornly resisted all the resources of medicine or art.

"Margaret, I wish to speak to you seriously on a most important subject. It is very probable, indeed almost certain, that you will have a safe, happy time, but, nevertheless, it is wise to take all possible precautions, and I think it would be a prudent step for you to make your will."

For one brief moment a look of joy gleamed in his listener's wan features as she asked herself: was it really possible that an opportunity was here offered her of carrying quietly and openly into execution the project for which she had so long plotted in secret? but another moment's reflection, bringing with it the remembrance of her husband's ignoble character and soul, crushed that hope within her, putting her at the same time on her guard against any new perfidy he might be meditating.

"Make my will? Certainly!" she tranquilly replied. "It is my duty to protect my child, or perhaps I should say children," she added, whilst a faint flush rose to her cheek.

"Do you not think their father is capable of doing that?" he harshly interrogated.

"You are still a young and handsome man, Roger, and would probably marry again, 'Tis to protect them against such a casualty that I would wish to make a will."

Drawing near her he bent down, and in a low, almost menacing voice, said:

"I will tell you what sort of a will you must make—one leaving the inheritance bequeathed by your mother to me, your husband, the natural guardian of my children."

"And to what purpose, Roger? Will not the large revenues accruing therefrom be paid over regularly to you for long, long years to come; and is it not natural I should wish to keep the fortune bequeathed me by my mother for them? You know the mills and other property in Belfast that I brought you have already passed from our possession—let there be something, then, kept for our helpless children."

"You seem to think only of them, Mrs. Tremaine! You must remember that I, too, have claims which cannot be overlooked. You must protect them also, do you hear?"

A look of determination stole over the invalid's usually sad, listless face, and her mouth became firm as marble; but scarcely noting this, her husband continued:

"You must, I again repeat it, Margaret, make a will leaving me unconditionally all you possess."

"I cannot—I will not do that. Ah! Roger, how quickly would everything be spent or sold, and the proceeds devoted to paying fresh gambling debts and restocking stables and kennels? What would be the future of my poor children then?"

"Again I warn you to think of your children less, of your husband more, or it will be worse for you," and casting a dark sinister glance upon her, he left the apartment as abruptly as he had entered it. The wife covered her face with her thin hands, but the tears came rolling through, whilst her lips faintly murmured:

"Father, in Thee I have put my trust, let me not be confounded!"

Nothing more desolate and dreary than the life led by Mrs. Tremaine at the actual time could have been imagined. Ailing constantly, in body and mind, she saw approaching daily, nearer and nearer, an ordeal which her sad heart foreboded she would not outlive, whilst she had not one friend or protector to turn to—one kindly voice to whisper hope and comfort.

In the first days of her married life, with health and youth buoyant to aid her, she had struggled bravely against the tyranny which even then Miss Radway sought to exercise over the household, but long years ago she had given up the unequal contest, leaving the housekeeper virtually mistress of the establishment. Years had but rendered Roger Tremaine more stern and heartless, and look or tone of love never fell now on that ear that had once known naught else.

Most happily for herself, the young wife, once convinced of the utter worthlessness of the earthly prop which she had chosen for her support through life, turned with all the warmth of her loving, impulsive nature to that source of unfailing consolation to the weary and heavy-laden, the loving promises of our Saviour. Carefully, constantly did she seek to inculcate in the mind of her infant daughter the gospel truths and lessons from which she herself had derived so much consolation, and it was in her mother's arms, at her mother's knee, that Margaret Tremaine acquired that perfect trust and faith in God—that blessed spirit of resignation—which sustained her for long years under bodily ailments and other trials that would otherwise have crushed her to the earth.

On two different occasions subsequent to the first painful interview that had taken place between them regarding the subject, Mr. Tremaine had renewed his efforts to coerce his wife into making a will in accordance with his wishes, but with a calm impressiveness that exasperated him almost to frenzy, she had refused.

The decisive and anxiously looked for hour came at length. Mrs. Tremaine gave birth to a girl, who, even in the first hours of her existence, gave promise of rare beauty and health; and Mr. Tremaine gnawed his finger nails with rage, firstly at the advent of a daughter, when he so eagerly desired a son—for more than a century past male heirs had never failed the line of Tremaine,—and secondly at the likelihood that the patient would recover. The physician who had been for months past in attendance on the latter, triumphantly announced a few days after the baby's birth—little dreaming how unwelcome the intelligence would prove—that Mrs. Tremaine's recovery was not only certain, but that her health would probably prove better than it had done for years previous. That very evening, however, feverish symptoms of an alarming and peculiar nature set in, and the doctor, somewhat at fault at first, finally announced that his patient was suffering from an attack of severe typhoid fever, a malady just then prevailing to a most severe extent throughout the county.

Ah, the gloomy joy that shone luridly in the depths of Mr. Tremaine's dark pitiless eyes when that intelligence was announced to him—the look of relief that overspread his features! For weeks past Miss Radway had been perpetually repeating to him in one form or another that either his wife must be induced to make a will in his favour, or else extreme measures must be resorted to, for that the worst use she would make of her restoration to health would be to settle on her children, by stringent legal precautions, all she possessed. Now, unprincipled and lawless as was Tremaine, regarding his wife with a dislike that partook almost of hatred and loathing, and terribly in want of that pecuniary aid which she was likely in future to refuse him, he still recoiled from the thought of the great crime with which his evil genius, Miss Radway, strove to familiarize his mind. She, untroubled by such scruples, with one end steadily in view, would, like a Borgia or a Tullia, have walked to it, if necessary, over the dead bodies of her victims. Of what value was the life of the pure, puling woman who stood between her and the long-coveted title of mistress of Tremaine Court? That its master, if free, would make her his wife, she had no doubt whatever. Why, she had become so necessary to him that in every difficulty or trouble he sought her advice at once, yielding in most things to her wishes or opinions. True, he never addressed her in lover-like tones or words, but when he should owe her freedom, affluence, when the binding link of this new and terrible mystery should exist between them, could she not coerce or threaten him into compliance with her wishes if such an extreme step should prove necessary.

The intelligence that Mrs. Tremaine was dangerously ill of the fever then exciting such universal fear, terrified the servants greatly, and housemaids and monthly nurse took flight immediately. The cook, however, remained, on condition that nothing but her legitimate duties should be expected of her.

It was a lovely summer afternoon, and the windows of the sick room were thrown open to admit the perfumed air that proved so welcome to the burning brow and parched lips of the poor invalid. Fiercely the fever was rioting in her veins, and amidst the incoherent whisperings of delirium pierced the anxious, restless wish that time and opportunity might be given her to protect efficiently the rights of her helpless children. About seven in the evening Doctor Stewart called, and after earnestly studying the rapid pulse and thick-coated tongue, turned to Miss Radway, who stood with anxious face beside the patient, a model of watchful devotion to all appearance, and said:

"The crisis is at hand. About midnight we will probably know whether it will be life or death. Well for her that she has such careful, intelligent nursing as you give her, Miss Radway."

The doctor left, darkness set in, and then the housekeeper, after drawing the window curtains, and adjusting the night lamp, took her usual seat in the deep shadow beside the bed, whilst the husband paced the room with long, rapid strides. What a solemn, weird vigil it was. The loud ticking of the clock, the only sound audible, the death-like stillness of that emaciated figure on the bed, the restless sinister glance of the man and woman that watched it so narrowly, longing, not for signs of returning health, but of coming death, watching not for the soft glow of life to steal over the white face, but the ashen grayness of dissolution.

At length the woman spoke, in a low, husky voice:

"Should the crisis prove favorable, you must be ready, Mr. Tremaine, to act with decision and energy."

"What is it you would have me do?"

"Remember, in the first place, that it depends on you whether you will see yourself impoverished, beggared, for the sake of two puling children, or assure yourself future independence and wealth. But, tell me, have you at hand the will I asked you to have drawn up in which your wife leaves you the full enjoyment of all she possesses, and makes over to you the lands and properties left her by her late mother?"

"It is here—in this ebony box."

"Then nothing remains but for Mrs. Tremaine to sign it, and if she lives she must do it by free will or by force."

"It will prove a more difficult task to make her do so, Hannah, than you perhaps imagine. Three times already have I tried and failed."

"I will try but once and succeed. Listen!" and she bent low and whispered a few words in her companion's ear.

He started, shuddered slightly, but the temptress hastily continued in the same low, suppressed tone:

"Remember, no faint-heartedness to-day to be bitterly regretted to-morrow. Your fate is in your own hands if you will but seize and make yourself master of it. When she awakes, ask her once again will she sign the will; if she still refuse, be prepared for the other alternative."

(To be continued.)

THE STAR'S VIGIL.

BY JANET MACDONALD.

"Watchful Star! thy vigil keeping
In the silent sky;
See how Earth is sweetly sleeping—
Lay thy crescent by!"

Star.

"What tho' Earth, in peaceful slumber,
Needs nor care nor light,
Anxious sons of Ocean number
Each slow hour of night;

"I, their solemn watches sharing,
Chase the gloom away;
And, aloft my crescet bearing,
Guide them on their way.

"Thus, tho' Earth be calmly sleeping,
I no rest will take,
But my vigil still be keeping
For the Seaman's sake."

Cloud.

"Steadfast Star! thy bright devotion
Shames my darker view;
Cheer thou still the sons of Ocean—
To thy mission true;

"Nor in vain, thou brilliant beauty,
Hold their hearts in thrall;
Guide them in the way of duty,
Whatsoe'er befall!"

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TO THE BITTER END.

By Miss M. E. Braddon.

AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A RECOVERED TREASURE.

Richard Redmayne went back to Brierwood after his visit to Hetheridge churchyard, and the dreary days went on. A ghost pacing those garden walks, or loitering under the old cedar, could hardly have been a more dismal figure than the farmer, with his listless gait and haggard face, unshaven chin and slovenly attire. He was waiting idly for his agents in London to do something; speculation on the possibility of discovering his enemy by the intervention of the sexton—a dreary business altogether; his land in other hands, no work to be done, no interest in the young green corn, no care, no hope; his whole being consumed by one fatal passion—more constant than love, more bitter than jealousy.

He had not spoken to John Wort since that night when he burst in upon the agent in his little office, sudden and violent as a thunderbolt. The two men avoided each other. Mr. Wort had his own reasons for that avoidance, and Richard Redmayne shrunk from all companionship. He smoked all day long, drank more than he had been used to drink in the old days, and paced the weedy gravel path, or lay at full length under the cedar, lost in gloomy thought. If he had needed any external influence to sharpen his sense of loss, the familiar home, once so happy and now so desolate, would have furnished that influence; every flower in the garden, every petty trifle in the house, where all things were old and familiar, was in some wise associated with his daughter. He could not have felt her death more intensely if he had spent his days and nights beside her grave.

The longest day had dragged its slow length along, and the corn was beginning to change colour when, after some weeks of sultry and oppressive weather, there came a great storm—one of those tempests which spread consternation over all the country side, filling the souls of farmers with hideous visions of beaten corn and lightning-struck cattle, and which people talk of and remember for the rest of the year. It was on a Sunday evening, just after church-time, when the first thunder-peal roared hoarsely among the distant hills, and the first vivid flash of forked lightning zigzagged across the low leaden sky. Richard Redmayne was sitting under the cedar, smoking, as usual, with an unread Sunday paper lying on his knee, and his eyes fixed dreamily on the line of poplars that rose above the garden wall. He was not afraid of a little thunder and lightning, and sat for a couple of hours, after this first swelling chord in the tempestuous symphony, watching the progress of the storm with a gloomy delight in its awful grandeur, with almost a sense of relief in this sudden awakening of earth and sky from their summer silence, as if his own sluggish heart were stirred and lightened a little by the storm.

It was only when the rain began to fall in torrents, and Mrs. Bush came out, dripping like a rustic naiad, under a dilapidated cotton umbrella, to entreat him piteously to come indoors, that he roused himself from that morbid sympathy with the elements, and rose from his bench under the cedar, stretching himself, and looking round him half bewildered.

"It's that dark as you can't see your hand before you, Mr. Redmayne, between whiles, and that vivid when it lightens as you can dextinguish every leaf on the trees, and to think of your sitting here all the time! My good man says as how you must have gone to Kingsbury village. I've been that fidgety about you, I didn't know what to do; so at last I says to my William, "If I gets wet to the bone, I'll go and see if he's in the garden;" and as soon as I came to the edge of the grass, which is like a bog, it lightened just in my eyes like, and I see you sitting here like a statter. You'll be a lucky man, Mr. Redmayne, if you're not laid up with the rheumaticks along of this night's work."

"A few drops of rain won't hurt me, Mrs. Bush; but I'll come indoors, if you like. The storm is worth watching; but I reckon it'll be bad for Davis's corn. It's lucky the hops are no forwarder." Davis was the tenant, for whom Mr. Redmayne had some natural compassion, as became a man whose interests and desires had once been bounded by those hedgerows.

He went indoors to oblige Mrs. Bush, but would not allow the garden door to be barred that night, and sat up long after the housekeeper and her husband had gone to their roost in their garret—till the tempest was over, and the sun was shining on the sodden trees and beaten flower-beds, and the birds were twittering in the calm morning air, as in the overture to *William Tell*. He walked round the garden, looking idly at the ruin of roses and jasmine, carnations and lavender bushes, before he went upstairs to his room.

It was late when he came down to his solitary breakfast, and the countenance of Mrs. Bush was solemn with the weight of a startling communication when she brought him his dish of eggs and bacon.

"Such a calamity, Mr. Redmayne!" she exclaimed; "I felt certain sure as the storm would do some damage; and it have, Mr. Davis have had a fine young heifer struck dead, and the pollard beech in Martinmas field is blown down."

"The old pollard beech!" cried Richard; "the tree my mother was so fond of,—and Grace too. I'm sorry for that."

Mrs. Bush shook her head in a dismal way, and sighed plaintively. He so rarely mentioned his daughter, although she was bursting with sympathy.

"And so she was, Mr. Redmayne—poor dear love—uncommon fond of Martinmas field and that old tree. I've seen her take her book or her fancy work up there many an afternoon, when you was in foreign parts. 'I'm tired of the garden, Mrs. Bush,' she'd say; 'I think I'll go up to Martinmas field, and sit a-bit.' And I used to say, 'Do, Miss Gracey; you look to want a blow of fresh air;' for she was very pale that last autumn before we lost her, poor dear. And when the hop-picking was about, she'd sit under the pollard beech talking to the children, no matter how dirty nor how ragged, she was that gentle with 'em! It was enough to bring the tears into your eyes to see her."

"I'm sorry the old beech is gone," said Richard thoughtfully. He remembered a tea-drinking they had had by that tree one mild afternoon in the hop-harvest, and Grace singing her simple ballads to them afterwards by the light of the hunter's moon. What a changed world it was without her!

He made short work of his breakfast, which was as flavourless as all the rest of his dismal meals; and set out immediately afterwards to inspect the fallen beech in Martinmas field. Very rarely had he trodden the land tenanted by Farmer Davis, but to-day he was bent on seeing the nature of the accident which had robbed him of one of his favourite landmarks, the tree that had been ancient in the time of his great-grandfather.

The ruin was complete; the massive trunk snapped like the spar of a storm-driven vessel, broken short off within three feet from the roots. A couple of farm labourers—men who had worked for Richard Redmayne when he farmed his own land—were already hard at work digging out the roots, which spread wide about the base of the fallen tree. Farmer Davis was a smart man, in the Transatlantic sense of the word, and did not suffer the grass to grow under his feet.

"Gettin' rid of this here old beech will give him a rood of land more at this corner," said one of the men, when Mr. Redmayne had surveyed the scene, and said a word or two about the storm. "He allus did grumble about this tree, the grass was that sour under it; so now he'll be happy."

"I'm sorry it's gone, for all that," replied Rick, contemplating it gloomily.

He seated himself on a gate close by, and watched the men at their work, idly and hopelessly, thinking of the days that were gone. He sat for nearly an hour without speaking a word; and the men glanced at him now and then furtively, wondering at the change that had come upon him since the old time when they had called him master. He took his pipe from his pocket, and solaced himself with that silent comforter. He was sitting thus, with his eyes fixed on the distant horizon, when one of the men, who had been digging out a rugged arm of the root from a little hollow into which the dead leaves had drifted, tossed some glittering object away with the leaves upon his spade and uttered a cry of surprise, as he stooped to pick it up.

"Why, what's this here?" he exclaimed, turning it over in his broad hand. "A gold brooch."

It was not a brooch, but a large oval locket. Richard Redmayne roused himself from his reverie to see what this stir was about; and at sight of that golden toy broke out with a loud oath, that startled the men more than the finding of the treasure.

"It's Grace's locket," he cried; "the locket my daughter lost three years ago! See if there isn't a bunch of blue flowers painted inside."

He had heard the history of the locket from Mrs. James, and had forgotten no detail of the one gift which the fatal stranger had sent his child.

"It's uncommon hard to open," said the man, operating upon the trinket with his clumsy thumb. "Yes, here's the blue flowers, sure enough, and I suppose there ain't no doubt about the locket being your property, sir, so here it is."

"And here's a sovereign for you and your mate," replied Richard Redmayne, tossing the coin into the man's hand.

He took the locket, and sat for some time looking at it thoughtfully as it lay in the palm of his hand—poor relic of the dead. She had worn it round her neck every day, Mrs. James had told him; had loved it for the sake of the treacherous giver. "I ought to 'ave thought of hunting for it about here," he said to himself, "knowing she was fond of sitting under the beech. I suppose it dropped from her ribbon and fell into the hollow, and so got buried among the dead leaves. And she grieved for the loss of it, Hannah told me. Poor child, poor child; she was no more than a child to be tempted by such toys."

He put the trinket into his pocket, and walked slowly homewards; and from that time forward he carried it about him, with his keys and loose money, in an indiscriminate heap. The spring, which was made to defy the eye of jealousy was not proof against this rough usage, and became loosened from constant friction. Thus it happened that, when Mr. Redmayne dropped the locket one day, the false back flew open, and the miniature stood revealed.

He swooped upon it as a kite upon its prey. Yes, this was the face he had heard of; but how much handsomer and younger than Mrs. James's description had led him to suppose! He sat for an hour gazing at it, and thinking of the time when he should come face to face with its owner, should look into the eyes of the living man as he now looked into the eyes of the picture. Nemesis had put this portrait in his way.

"It'll be hard if I don't find him now," he said to himself.

He went up to London, took the miniature to a photographer, and had it copied carefully, painted in as finished a manner as the original; and this copy he gave to Mr. Kendel, the private inquirer.

"You told me you could do somethi[illegible] if you had a picture of the man I want to find," he said; "and here is his miniature."

"An uncommonly good-looking fellow," remarked Mr. Kendel, as he examined the photograph. "I'll do my best, of course, Mr. Redmayne, and the portrait may be of some use; but if I were you, I wouldn't build too much on finding the man."

CHAPTER XXX,

"LOOK BACK! A THOUGHT WHICH BORDERS ON DESPAIR."

THE London season waned, and Mr. and Mrs. Walgrave Harcross went on a duty visit to Mr. Vallory, at the villa in the Isle of Wight: not an unpleasant abiding-place after the perpetual streets and squares, with their dingy foliage and smoky skies. They had the Arion, on board which smart craft Mr. Harcross could lie under an awning and read metaphysics, without giving himself much trouble to follow the propositions of his author; while Augusta talked society talk with the bosom friend of the moment. Of course they came to Ryde when the place was fullest, and it was only a migration from a larger heaven of Dinners and At Homes to a smaller, with slight variations and amendments in the way of yachting and picnicking.

Weston was with them. He was now much *too useful a person to be neglected by his* uncle; he had indeed become, by his inexhaustible industry and undeviating watchfulness, the very life and soul of the firm in Old Jewry. There was still a tradition that in affairs of magnitude Mr. Vallory's voice was as the voice of Delphi; but Mr. Vallory indulged his gout a good deal, gave his fine mind not a little to the science of dining; and the rising generation of City men were tolerably satisfied with the counsels and services of Weston. He was less inclined to formality than the seniors of Harcross and Vallory had been; brought his own mind to bear upon a case at a moment's notice; would take up his pen and dash off the very letter in the vain endeavour to compose which a client had been racking his brain by day and night for a week. He leaned less on counsels' opinion than the firm had been wont to lean; and indeed did not scruple to profess a good-humoured contempt for the gentlemen of the long robe. The business widened under his fostering care; he was always to be found; and his ante-chamber, a spacious room where a couple of clerks worked all day at two huge copying machines, damping, pressing, drying the autograph epistles of the chief, was usually full of busy men eating their hearts out in the agony of waiting. He was free of access to all, and there was now much less of that winnowing in the sieve of Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson, articled clerks, or junior partners. So great was Mr. Weston Vallory's power of dispatching business, so rapid his comprehension of every legal entanglement, every undeveloped yearning of the client's mind, that the junior partners found themselves reduced for the most part to drawing up small agreements, filling in contracts that Weston had skeletoned, writing insignificant letters, and such small details. Weston held the business in the palm of his hand, and yet he was able to attend his cousin's "at homes," and escort her to classical matinées when Hubert Harcross was too busy. A man at his club asked him one day if he ever went to bed, to which Weston replied blandly, "Sometimes, in the long vacation."