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BY CHARLES J. BELLAMY.

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[CONTINUED.]

He took Alma's stolen picture from the lantern and inserted in its place a positive copy of the paper he had captured from her lover. Suddenly there flashed upon the wall a document of the most startling and extraordinary character. He read it through several times before he could bring himself to understand the peculiar nature of the important discovery he had made. Long and earnestly he gazed upon the gigantic writing on the wall, and then he slowly opened one of the shutters and shone with unnatural brightness. "Your plans will succeed better than mine, and you can't find such a good place as this. You will take my mills."

"Of course I will, but I thought you said"——

"Never mind," cried the young man, "never mind what I said. Draw the papers at once. But no, I cannot wait." Philip turned on his heel as if no earthly power could detain him a moment longer.

"But the papers are all ready." And Mr. Philbrick took a bundle of documents from his breast pocket, and laid them on the table.

"Where shall I sign them—quick?" demanded Philip.

"No, no, not there, that is my note to you; sign here, and here, and here."

"I can hardly see; everything dances before my eyes. Is it all done now?"

He hardly waited to take the papers Mr. Philbrick had signed for him. Then, without another word, he rushed from the room and bounded up the stairs. Freedom! safety! oh, thank God, thank God! He could save her yet. A castle on the Rhine, a palace in Venice; he would find the rarest homes for her. How sweet it would be to hide with her. The awful sense of hourly peril would lift from his soul.

He pushed open the door of the white chamber. Bertha had been sleeping. The tear marks were on her cheeks that had lost their beautiful flush. She was so disappointed, poor girl; and yet she never guessed.

"Wake up, wake up, my darling." She started from the bed and fell to weeping on his shoulder.

"I dreamed they were taking me away from you, Philip." But he dried her tears with merry kisses.

"We are in time yet. The steamer don't go till 3 to-night."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

UNWELCOME VISITORS.

The watchman at the mills was not a little surprised, as he went his first round that night, to see a man's figure leaning against a pillar in one of the weave rooms. The fellow did not appear to mean any harm; he was not breaking anything or stealing any cloth, but how could he have found his way inside? The watchman felt a little uneasy in spite of himself; it was such a thing as had never happened before.

"Hello! what business have you got there?"

But the interloper did not appear to hear him. How oddly he looked at the looms, as if they were living things that he loved. He had not spoken, and his hat shaded his eyes, but the expression of the attitude was so plain that even so rude a man as the watchman could read the tender reminiscence in his heart. Perhaps the fellow might be crazy, but this was no place for him. Oh! I didn't know you, Mr. Breton. It's a nice evenin', sir."

But the mill owner did not even answer him, and moved away toward the window as if impatient at being interrupted. The moon was full, and the sky was clear, only for a few silver edged clouds. One, he fancied a ship sailing over the sea, but how slowly it glided; could it go no faster? Ah! suddenly it parted into bright fragments, and the wind scattered them pitilessly. He looked across at the other mills; the moonlight kissed their grim walls fondly, and sparkled in their windows like a hundred brilliant lamps. Why, here were his fire escapes, close to the window coping—his first business venture. Philip raised the window and stepped outside.

It must be nearly time for Bertha to come with the carriage, as he had arranged, to avoid possible suspicion. No, there was half an hour yet. But Philip closed the window behind him and went down the silent stairs.

He went into his office. He would wait there for the carriage, it would not be very long, and then there was one last duty he must attend to before it came. He struck a match, and the gas shot up so brightly it dazzled his eyes. He turned away for an instant.

A massive form stood in the doorway. Philip must have left the counting room unlocked when he had come in. Some one had followed him, apparently. But the young mill owner took only one step toward the intruder. It was no stranger that crossed his threshold, but a man whose name was burned into his heart. It was the rightful husband of Philip Breton's wife—Curran. His hair had grown long and almost straight about his neck. His cheeks were thin and haggard, and the form that had been like a giant's was bowed as if it had been weighed down by a burden too heavy even for a giant to bear. Philip stopped short and looked at the man with speechless terror. He had supposed him hundreds of miles away. Could it be possible the outraged husband had never left the village since their last meeting? Perhaps his flashing eyes had watched Philip wooing his wife a second time, and begrudged him his few cold kisses. Perhaps he had peered in through the windows of Philip's home; had he not a right to look at his wife, and followed them forth on every walk and drive, waiting to strike till the blow should fall most deadly. He had chosen his time well. Poor Bertha, with her dreams of Como and Chamouni. But what would he do? Leap upon his enemy and kill him? The man in the doorway looked too pale and ill for such violence; would he then heap curses upon him, the bitterest human lips ever uttered? But Curran advanced into the room with outstretched hand.

"Don't you know me, then, friend?"

Philip hesitated again. There might be a grain of hope yet; he would surely never have given the young man his hand if he had known—or called him friend.

"Some one wrote me to come. I don't know what he wanted," Curran explained wearily. "They expect so much of a man; they want him to be a God; and if he were they would crucify him."

Philip was recovering his composure. At first he had felt a wild impulse to confess everything to the wronged husband. He seemed so grand, so magnanimous; he would not be cruel. But then his reason came back to him. In such a case as this there could be no amends. Innocently, Bertha and Philip had done him a terrible wrong—and themselves; forgiveness could not blot it out. God in his mercy might spare them the penalty of infamy; but the injured husband had no choice but vindicate his honor, when he came to know.

"You look ill," said Philip at last, drawing him out a chair. Should he detain him? Bertha might come before her time and break in upon them, the two men both of whom she had injured so terribly? Oh! that must not happen. Was not that a step in the passage now? Should he let Curran go, then? The first man he met would pour the story of his shame into his ears, and then the catastrophe. He must not go—but he must not stay. Philip looked out into the passage. No one was there. Curran had dropped into the chair Philip had offered him.

"Do I look ill?" he asked, pushing his long hair back from his forehead. "Did you ever love a woman who hated you? Did you ever want to pour out your life for her, and see that she despised you? You know whom I mean. Why I once fancied you and she were lovers, till she told me not. I mean Bertha." He spoke the name so tenderly, a thrill of shame passed over Philip. Bertha was this man's wife. Had he not a right then to speak her name tenderly? And so Curran had fancied Bertha and he were lovers till she told him not—ah, Bertha.

"She has left me," Curran went on in the same soft, tender tone. "I don't suppose it interests you. But if I could only see her now, I have such a strange feeling that I might win her back. She made such a tender sweetheart." Then he lifted his eyes more firmly to Philip's face, set like a wall of rock. "Is there any trouble among your help?"

"Yes, they have flung all my offers in my teeth."

"It must have been that which made them send for me. I had hoped, or feared, I hardly know which, it might be something of Bertha. It is queer, isn't it, a woman like her should turn my head so completely? What is there about her, did you ever think? Ah! Of course you haven't." Curran seemed to make an effort to dismiss all thoughts of her that unmanned him. "You needn't be afraid of me; I thought you seemed a little strange when I came in."

Philip started involuntarily, but Curran continued: "I sha'n't encourage any strikes against you. God will bless your life for your work for the poor. If he hasn't yet, he will give you a happier love than he has given me." Then he rose with new energy to his feet. "I must go and stop the mischief. I can do more with your laborers for good or evil than any man in the world. I suppose they may be in the hall to-night?"

"Yes." But Philip hurried up to him and laid his hand on his arm. "But don't go, not yet."

"I must. Shall you be here long? Well, I will see you again to-night."

"God grant not," murmured Philip Breton, as the door closed after him. Then Philip unlocked the great safe and swung back its green door of iron. He took out a packet and locked the safe again, and carried his packet back to his office. He turned the gas still higher and held the packet in the flame till all that was left of it was a little heap of charred paper on the floor—all that was left of Philip Breton's will. With that act he closed up, as he believed, all that part of his life worthy to be remembered. He was young and strong, but he had failed. Henceforth he must look on while others worked. Fate had taken his work away from him. He must sit back on the seats with the women and children, and look on and applaud when great deeds were doing. He would have liked to work, too; but perhaps others would do his work better.

"Hallo, hallo, Phil, don't you work pretty late?" It was Giddings, the lawyer, in a condition of decided intoxication. "I'll bet yer dollar you don't know what I came for! ha, ha, ha; you think money; don't you; more money? But I aint that sort of a feller."

Philip had been simply disgusted at first, but there seemed a terrible leer in the drunken eyes. Could it be the man had come to expose him? What was the use of struggling against his destiny any longer? If he could have gone yesterday, he would have saved all risks. But he had waited just too long. Curran had returned to claim his wife. Jane Ellingsworth had discovered everything. And now this Giddings in his drunkard's foolishness was threatening what ruin he could bring.

"You are not going to do anything rash are you," said Philip, dropping his eyes in humiliation.

But Giddings came close to him and laid his hand on his shoulder. Then he put his face close to Philip's, with a drunken man's false measure of distance. The young man writhed at his touch, and held his breath to avoid taking the hot fumes of bad liquor the fellow exhaled. But he did not dare to anger the low creature.

"Did you think," continued Giddings with gushing reproachfulness, "that I aint got any conscience? You're doin' wrong, Mr. Breton. I aint got no right—no right to let it go on. Did you think I aint got no conscience?"

Philip shook him off and his face grew so terrible that the fellow winced as he had done before at that look.

"Don't strike—don't kill me, Phil—Mr. Breton, I was only jokin'—can't you tell when a man's jokin'. Got any money 'bout clothes, say $50; 'm awful hard up. I wouldn't hurt you; your altogether too nice feller." He leered affectionately at the young man, then suddenly he winked frightfully.

Philip threw him a roll of bills. It was the last blood money the scoundrel would ever draw. By to-morrow morning Philip Breton and his wife would be beyond the reach of harm, or beyond the reach of help, one or the other. "There is $100; take it and go, I have business."

"Ten, twenty, and twenty makes thirty, ten, and twenty and twenty, here aint but $80. Thought I's too drunk to coun' did you?"

"There is $100 there."

"S lie. Yer takin' vantage me cause I'm drunk."

This creature must be away if it cost $1,000. He crowded another $20 bill into the fellow's clammy hand.

"Now go, or you'll stay longer than you want to."

Giddings dried his tears and gathered his limp joints together to go. But he insisted on Philip's shaking hands.

But even after Giddings had got into the hall Philip heard the fellow muttering to himself. He stepped hurriedly to the door of his office to catch the word, but could not. If Philip had been a little quicker he would have heard this:

"Somethin' up, I ain't so drunk but I can see that. Guess 'sil g'up to the boy's house. His wife 'll know me, he, he."

Would Bertha never come? If they escaped now it must be but by a hair's breadth. Ruin would be close upon them. For the adjustment of a ribbon she would sacrifice everything. It seemed a great while since Curran had left the office for the labor meeting, and he had not so far to go. Something might have delayed the terrible disclosure for a few moments, but by this time he must surely have heard the whole story of his shame and dishonor. It would stir him to madness. His noble eyes would flash lightnings, and thunderbolts of hate and scorn would drop from his lips. No human being could stand against the divine dignity of such a man's righteous wrath. Philip fancied the mob sweeping up the road behind this outraged husband, seeking out his wife for the doom that would satisfy his mad thirst for vengeance. Now, perhaps, they were bursting in the gates, now breaking down the oaken door. And Philip could not be there to protect the beautiful woman who had only sinned through love for him. How the color would flee her cheeks as she looked out on the pitiless faces of the frenzied mob. There was no arm now to shield her, none but Curran's, whose love was now embittered into hate. There was no pity in his white, wasted face, only insulted love, only scorn that could grind her fair life, without one throb of tenderness, beneath his feet.

Why did she not come! Philip was almost wild with mingled terror and hope. He walked the room like a caged lion. Now he rushed to the door and glanced desperately up and down the street.

His horses were champing their bits at her door, but the light yet burned in her chamber. There was hardly time to catch the train at the Lockout station. The wild mob with the maddened lover, the most terrible of enemies, at their head would be at her door in a moment. Still other dangers Philip did not guess threw a gathering shadow across her path. But she lingered yet.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A POPULAR LEADER.

Market hall was full of excited workmen when Curran pushed the door open and stepped in. Some would be orator had been trying to voice the wrongs of the people, but when the whisper ran along the seats that Curran was at the door every head was turned. Then, as if by a common impulse, the whole audience rose to their feet, and the building seemed to tremble with the cheer that burst from the brawny throats. Here was an orator indeed a man who could set before them their sufferings and wring their hearts with self pity; who could make each soul of them wonder at his own patience.

He made his way slowly up the aisle with simple greetings for his friends, as they stretched out their grimy hands to him. But his smile was so sad and hopeless that every glad face sobered as he passed. He mounted the platform and turned his face toward them. He seemed but the ghost of his former magnificent manhood, but the people cheered him again, and those in the rear leaped upon their seats in the eagerness to see their hero. Then all held their breath to listen; even the girls in the gallery stopped their excited whispering while they waited for his grand ringing tones that had thrilled the faintest hearts so many times before. Would he never begin?

"What is this meeting for?"

The orator his coming had interrupted, was only too glad to explain.

"We don't get our rights. We get a little, but that's all, and we mean to fetch the young boss to his milk to-morrow; don't we, lads?"

A shout of eager assent went up from the crowd. Then all was still again. Now would come the torrent of words of flame. Yes, Curran had stepped forward to the very edge of the platform, in his old habit. But who was the fellow with bandaged head pushing his way so rudely up the main aisle, as if he bore tidings? It must be ill tidings to make him in such haste. But Curran had begun to speak.

"You are making a mistake, my friends—a great mistake. The young master has done well by you, and he will do better, if you will give him time to think. Such mighty ideas as have got into his mind can't be stopped. They will not let him halt long; he must be swept forward. But you must wait for him. You have waited for your cruel and heartless masters thousands of years. Will you only show yourselves impatient and insolent to the first one who shows himself kind toward you? Do you want to make his name an example and a warning for his class? I have heard their scoffs and taunts already—the air is full of them. Look, they say, at the way the people treat the man who tries to help them. Friends, you are making a terrible mistake."

But Curran had begun to speak.

The light of the man's noble genius had flushed his pale cheeks and flashed beautifully in his steel blue eyes. His voice, that had seemed weak and unsteady as he began, rang out its bell like tones again as he saw the sullen faces soften under his matchless power.

"He has made your village blossom by his love; he has brought smiles to your weary children's faces; he has planted homes in a thousand desperate hearts. Do you ask me how I know? I see it in your eyes. I see it in the way your heads rest on your broad shoulders. And will you use your new manhood to do him injury?"

But the man with the bandaged head had reached the platform, and at this very moment, when the orator paused to let his meaning sink into the hearts of the people, he touched Curran on the shoulder and whispered a few hurried words in his ear.

The people saw their hero's face blanch. He turned to the fellow with a look that would break a man's heart, and seemed to be asking him a question. As the agitator listened to the reply his knees trembled under him and he sank into a chair, and still the messenger of evil bent over him and kept whispering with poisonous breath into his ear. At last Bailes stood back from his victim, who bowed his head upon his hands. Curran's whole body shook with the violence of his passion.

The inert people waited. They knew nothing else to do. Their hero might have died before them, they would never have thought to stir from their seats. But he rose at last, and Bailes grinned diabolically behind him. They would hear another story now.

"Friends, you have heard what I said." He spoke as if a great weight was upon him and his voice came slowly. "I repeat it, be patient with your young master; he means well by you."

But Bailes rushed forward and, tearing the bandages from his head, threw them upon the platform at his feet. Disease had settled in his bruises and his face was frightfully swollen and disfigured. He might have been a ghoul or a gnome instead of a human being.

"Revenge him, men," he screamed, throwing up his arms, "if you have any spirit in you. I have just told him—some of you knew it—how that boy has stole his wife and spit on the laws, as if they were not for the rich like him."

It was more like a groan than a shout that went up from the crowd before him, which only waited a word from the bowed, broken man they loved, to become a bloodthirsty mob. Would he give them that word? He had leaped to his feet and thrown out his long right arm in its grandest gesture, and the murmur of the people died down. His face was as white as a dead man's, an ashy white, but his eyes flashed lightning.

"Whose wrong is it then, this hideous creature's or mine? I will settle my own grievances, I need no mob to right me." Then Curran paused a moment. When he began again it was in a lower tone. "Besides, the man is wrong," his voice trembled like a child's. "I have no—no," he almost broke down, "I have no wife—I am—I am not well, I must go to my bed, but before I go I want to be sure you will make no mistake to-night or to-morrow." He folded his arms across his broad chest in a sublime effort of self-control. His blood boiled in mad fever, every moment was worth a world to him, agonizing pictures floated before his distorted vision, but he would not stir from his post till he had conquered this mob. "Philip Breton has shown himself fair to you, be fair with him. If he never did another thing for you—he—he has yet deserved your—your patience. You will excuse me now, I will see you to-morrow, but I need rest. Can I depend on you?" He did not even look at them; his attitude, as he waited with downcast eyes, was of a man who talks in his sleep.

"Yes—yes," shouted the people, and then he turned and stepped off from the platform. He came down the aisle very strangely. At first he would hurry and notice no one. Then, as if by a mighty effort, he would walk very slowly, then faster again. Then he would stop short and put out his hand to some perfect stranger.

Many eyes watched him curiously when he separated from his eager friends at the door of the hall and walked rapidly away. If Curran had turned off to the road that led to Philip Breton's house on the hill he would not have gone far alone, but he did not even look that way so long as the half tamed mob could see him. And the people scattered in disappointment to their homes.

But Curran is no longer walking in his first direction; he has turned on his heel and made a route for himself across the fields. His face is pointed toward the lights that yet shine down at him from the stone house on the hill. And the roads are not straight enough for the errand he is on, nor is walking fast enough, he breaks into a run. Now he falls over a low fence so violently that a limb might have been broken, but he only loses his hat and runs on, his long hair shaking down over his pale set face as he runs. His breath come like the puffing of a locomotive; he can hear his heart throb louder than his footfalls.

What does he seek? What will he do when he looks again on his faithless and dishonored wife and on the man who has put this deadliest shame upon him? Punishment can wipe out nothing, vengeance never assuaged one pang of human anguish yet. But mercy or pity or reason are fled from his maddened soul to-night, while the furies whip him on.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TOO FOND A HUSBAND.

The drunken lawyer very nearly fell as he tried to step off the counting room piazza, and almost made up his mind it would be more desirable to lie down in some soft spot and go to sleep, than take the long walk he had set himself. But the cool breeze seemed to refresh him marvelously, and in another moment he despised the green hollow under the elm that had looked so inviting, and hurried up toward Philip Breton's house. He shook his head wisely as he walked. It took a pretty smart man to get ahead of John Giddings, drunk or sober. The young mill owner wasn't nearly as frightened as usual. Something was in the wind. He ought to have watched him closer lately, but Giddings concluded he was in good time yet with Breton at one end of the village, his wife at the other, and himself, the acute lawyer, between them.

The lawyer had walked as far as Silas Ellingsworth's house, when he caught sight of a pair of horses on a fast trot, drawing a close coupe. Elegant pairs and chariots of the description were not so common in Bretonville as to make it doubtful who might own this one, and besides it must have been an occasion of peculiar necessity that called for such unaristocratic haste. Giddings was perfectly delighted with his own sagacity.

He knew human nature pretty well. When a man gets another in an unpleasant situation, he must count on the unfortunate struggling to escape. If it happens to be a woman, he need not be so watchful—women are all fatalists. But it takes a pretty smart man to get ahead of John Giddings.

"Whoa, whoa, I say." The lawyer had thrown himself in front of the excited horses, and the driver had to pull up to keep from running over him. "Whoa, I say."

Then he stepped to the door of the carriage and turning the knob threw it wide open. The moonlight revealed a woman surrounded with carpet bags and shawls. A thick brown veil concealed her features, but Mr. Giddings took off his hat to her.

"Mrs. Breton, I believe."

"Why yes," she did not recognize him, "but I am in a hurry," she said nervously drawing back.

"Drive on Henry."

"No, you don't," insisted Giddings, mounting the steps. "I guess you don't know me." His liquor began to overcome him again, "name's Giddings, aint goin' far, are you?"

"To Europe," she answered quickly, recognizing him at last. "I have no further occasion for your services, I have paid you, haven't I?"

"Not s'much as your second husband's paid me since," he gurgled. "If you're goin' so far, guess I'll go to, I like your family, Miss Breton."

"Drive on, I command you," she screamed, and the horses started. Giddings lurched forward, and Bertha put out her white hands and tried to push him back. He clutched, with an oath, at something to hold to, but she loosened her India shawl and the man carried it with him into the ditch. But he leaped to his feet.

"Hold! stop! police! police!" but Giddings had no sooner spoken than the village policeman laid his hand on his arm.

"Here I am, sir, what'll you have?"

"Stop that carriage; arrest that woman, she is a criminal." Giddings had shaken off the policeman's grasp and started to run after the carriage.

"You must be very drunk," said the other, overtaking him, "that is Mr. Breton's wife."

"I know that," screamed the lawyer, "and I tell you to stop her, let me go."

"More likely you're the criminal. Hallo, what you doing with that Indy shawl. Guess I'll have to lock you up. Come along quiet, now."

But Giddings was perfectly frantic. He fought with his feet and hands, and with his teeth, kicking, tearing and biting like a wild beast.

"Don't let her escape, I say, never mind me, I'll give you a thousand dollars. I'll tear your heart out, you villain. Stop her, stop her!" The officer grew angry at last, and drew his billet, but still the fellow struggled and screamed like a wild creature, till blow after blow paralyzed his arms, and finally stretched him unconscious and bleeding on the ground.

"Treasons," growled the policeman, as he lifted him to his feet soon after, and led him along, subdued at last.

But a woman had stood in her window as the carriage had rolled by, and she had recognized the equipage, too. A sudden change came over her face.

"Where are you going, Jennie?" Her husband looked up calmly from his paper.

"Out a minute," she hardly looked at him, "that is all."

"But it is almost 9 o'clock, my dear, what can you want out?"

Her breath came fast, and two bright red spots burned in her cheeks. Mr. Ellingsworth had never seen her so pretty. He must keep her so a few moments. He stepped to the door and turned the key, then he put it in his pocket and threw himself back on his chair again.

She faced him with flashing eyes.

"How dare you—am I your slave? I want to go out."

Her husband settled down cozily in his seat, and smiled his old brilliant smile. She had never seen him laugh any more than the rest of his acquaintances. He might, perhaps, have laughed before an intimate, but men like Silas Ellingsworth have no intimates.

"How lovely you are when you are angry. I see I have made a mistake in being so amiable with you. What treats I have lost. Why, you are better than an actress, my dear. Such coloring as yours does not hurt the complexion."

Precious time was flying; the carriage had rolled away out of sight; her victim had outwitted her—her hate would be balked forever, and all for her husband's foolish caprice. She stamped her foot at him. "I must go." There was yet time to rouse the villagers, and fetch back the fugitives from justice. Oh, what devil of stupidity had possessed her wise husband to-night? "Give me the key." She had come close to him, but she did not scream when she was angry, her voice grew low and almost hoarse, "or I will leave you forever."

He had laid aside his paper now, with quite a serious air, and Jane felt vaguely frightened; she had never seen him sober with her. Could he do any more than others when they are angry? She did not reason about it; she only began to be afraid of her own words. His was the only nature in the world could have tamed her so completely.

Every moment Philip Breton's carriage was bearing the woman Jane hated to safety and peace that her false heart had never deserved. But there were fleeter horses in Bretonville than his; they could be pursued; they could be overtaken and dragged back in greater ignominy than ever. It would be more terrible for Bertha even than if the blow had come while she sat serene in her own home. To be overtaken in flight would cap her shame. Jane throw herself into her husband's arms. She kissed his eyes, his mouth, his white neck; she covered his smooth hands with kisses; twining her arms about his neck she lavished the tenderest of carressing epithets on him. Then she drew herself away. Her black hair had been partly loosened, and as she stood hung well down her flushed cheeks. She had raised her hands and clasped them over her bosom; her lips parted; surely no human being can resist such wistful beauty as hers.

"Please let me go."

But before he could answer she heard a noise like thunder and rushed to the window. She sees nothing, but the sound comes on nearer and nearer; it comes from the hill. Something white gleams in the moonlight.

"What do you see?" asked Mr. Ellingsworth carelessly, returning to his newspaper.

She holds her breath. Nearer it comes, Philip's white horse Joe on a mad gallop. But Philip is not upon him. Who is that rider, with long, uncovered hair and pale, haggard face? He strikes the maddened animal every moment for better speed, though now they seem flying faster than the wind. The man is Curran. Let him be his own avenger, then.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PRICE OF HAPPINESS.

The Breton carriage had passed the last house in the village, when Philip leaned out for one last look at the home of his childhood and the scene of the only work he should ever do. He was almost a boy yet; it seemed only a few days since he had looked at the great world only as a play ground. It was a short work he had done in the few days of his manhood, and even that had been condemned. Dear old mills, with their bold towers and massive walls, but his no longer. His heritage was sold, his birthright lost. He turned his eyes away; it was more than he could bear. On the hill back above the village he saw for the last time, as the road wound off toward Lockout, his house, that was. "Deserted" seemed written on its stone walls. It had never looked so noble to him, a sort of halo seemed to float above it. He could see the window of the room where he was born, but for what a worthless life.

"Good-by," he murmured. The road as it followed the winding river made another turn, and the lights of the village were shut away from his misty eyes.

The horses were trotting at their best. There was none too much time.

It was far better than he had hoped. The dangers had gathered so thickly, there had seemed at one time hardly more than a chance for escape. Peril seemed on every hand, enemies to spring from every covert, and stretch out their hands to stop the fugitives. But the village was far behind now. A few moments more and the steaming horses would draw up at the Lockout station, and they would be whirled away faster than any pursuer to peace and safety and honor.

"How odd it all is, setting out in this way as if we were eloping."

Philip was reaching forward to take her hand, but he drew back, as if he were stung. How terribly thoughtless she was.

"I explained about the steamer's early morning start."

"Do you know," resumed Bertha softly, "how pleased I am to have this trip to Europe? It is a sort of wedding journey isn't it?"

How good God had been, to let him keep the awful truth from her. It would have crushed her, the very thought of her shame. It was pushing him.

"I shall enjoy it very much," she said, putting out her hand to him, in unusual fondness. "I am afraid I haven't returned your goodness very well." No more she had

"Where shall we go first?"

"To the south of France, God willing," he added solemnly.

Bertha looked at his face with a new anxiety. The moonlight seemed to bring out all the marks of his terrible care and suffering. But he gazed at her in astonishment; he had never seen an expression so near love in her eyes for him. Was her heart softening, would she yet make up to him in her new love all that he lost for her sake? But her lips were moving.

"I shall be better with you than I used to be. I—I—" she dropped her eyes before his passionate joy, the sadness had gone in an instant from his face, his future seemed beautifully radiant again. "I feel different toward you, dear."

He bent forward to draw her to his heart. He was paid for everything. He had taught his wife to love him as he dreamed she could love. She had lifted her rapt face toward his. It had come—the moment he had given his life for. But suddenly his heart stopped beating; there was a sound of a galloping horse. Philip kissed his wife, but as solemnly as if she were dead, and put her away from him. He leaned forward and looked back over the road they had come.

He saw nothing at first, but he heard the sound of a horse's hoofs. He put his head far out. It might have been a white speck in the road, but as he looked the speck became larger and clearer. It was a white horse, at a dead run, on their course. Philip Breton's heart, that had just been almost bursting with its new happiness, was a great, cold stone in his breast. And he fancied he could escape, with enemies like his and a whole village against him. He could see only one pursuer. Ah, he knew who it must be. And that pursuer grew nearer every moment.

"Drive faster," he shouted to the coachman, "run the horses."

How like the wind his pursuer came. Philip had thought there was but one horse that could leap so mightily. Why this was that one, his own horse Joe. Why it might be a servant from his home with something that had been forgotten. It need not be the worst peril his fancy could picture? But he dared not hope.

"Isn't this delightful," exclaimed Bertha. "There can't be any danger of our missing the train at this rate."

"Whip your horses; don't spare them—faster."

If anything should break their troubles would all end that night. And the strain on the harnesses and the groaning axles was beyond all calculation of the makers. The horses, too, had got past the control of the driver. He had no more occasion to urge the wild creatures; instead, he was pulling at the reins with all his strength, but to no purpose, except so far he had kept them in the road.

The rider of the white horse was hatless, and his long, loose hair and his swinging hand, as he struck the panting white flanks of the horse, gave him an uncanny look as if there were no deed of horror too blood curdling for him to do. The horse dropped big flakes of foam from his mouth, foam mingled with blood; his eyes and nostrils were dilated with agony; his breathing was like fierce gusts of wind in a tempest. Philip Breton knew the rider as well as the horse. His pursuer was Curran; and the implacable laws made him yet the husband of the woman whom Philip Breton had made his wife.

They were almost at Lockout. The carriage gave a terrible lurch at a turn in the road. The horses were almost taken off their feet, but still there was no accident; the windows of the carriage grazed the solid wall of rock without being broken, and in a moment the horses, now subdued, were trotting down the hill toward the city.

But the fugitives had hardly escaped the cut through the rocks when the pursuer entered it. He had almost overtaken them. He struck the horse's white flanks a pitiless blow. It was the very spot where Curran had saved Bertha's life from the mad dog, that the old horse, forced beyond his strength, stopped as if lightning had struck him. The blood welled in torrents from his mouth and nostrils; he quivered like a leaf, and then fell dead in his tracks. The rider shot over the creature's head with the gathered momentum of that mad race, and struck the jagged rock with a sickening crash.

Curran was dead.

CONCLUSION.

As the dawn broke in the east that Thursday morning, Philip Breton stood on the deck of the steamer Salvator. The look of feverish watchfulness, that had never left his face for so long, was gone at last. The great fear that had chased smiles from his lips, had given place to a great hope. A divine calm and peace had come at last upon his soul. Fate had seemed invincible. He had pitted his beautiful mills and his home and his hopes of glory against it, all for the love of a woman who had no heart for him. He had conquered, and he did not begrudge the price, this royal lover; for he had won the love of his bride at last.

Below in her stateroom, weary with her unwonted excitement, Bertha was sleeping; sleeping like a child unconscious of the terrible peril and infamy she had escaped by only so much as a hair's breadth. The hurrying ship rocked her gently in the great cradle of the deep and bore her to lands of undreamed of beauty; where the light of a new eternal love would be on everything.

THE END.

"Honey will be high this year." Bees still, oh fluttering heart, bees still!—[Lowell Citizen.