

addressing his wife, "live contentedly and happily the remainder of our days." One and only one in that assembly did not seem to participate in the sudden joy. Everard sat silently, deeply absorbed in thought. He was thinking of his former bright prospects, and of how they were so suddenly and unexpectedly blighted. "Ah," he inwardly murmured, "riches and worldly honors are not to be relied upon."

He was aroused from his reverie by the entrance of Jake. "Anything wrong Massa Seville, 'dat Massa and Missus hab not come home?" was his eager inquiry as he entered.

"Nothing," replied Don Zeres, "we have just been a little fortunate to-night, and they stayed with us to participate in our joys, and you too are highly welcome. Please come in and take a seat." Jake felt himself so uplifted by this introduction that he gracefully raised his hat, and at the same time drew up his heavy frame, until he stood on tip-toe, made a bow, bending his body half way to the floor, then entered. Songs and jokes went round until the evening was far spent. Jake took a prominent part in the proceedings, singing comic and sentimental songs, alternately teasing Arabella, then Sophie. Turning to Arabella, who was seated beside Consabina on the sofa, he said, "I always thought you an angel afore, Miss Abella, if you only had wings, now you hab got gold uns, and I spects to see you fly off some of them days with Massa Consab." He then struck up a comical ditty, turning the white of his eyeballs to the ceiling, displayed his white teeth to a nicety, setting the whole household in fits of laughter. Never before had such an evening of mirth been spent at "Seville Place." At a late hour the Melodine family departed, after which Don Zeres gathered his household around him, read a portion of God's word, offered up a prayer of thanksgiving—then all retired for the night—to rest—to sleep—perchance to dream.

CHAPTER III.

BALDWIN BAESIL EMPLOYED.

In the darkness of the night,
When all is wrapt in sleep,
Some fiend, who fears the light
His villainous vigil keeps.
Stealthily he lurks around,
Softly he treads upon the ground.
The coveted gold he hears.

Hark! something strikes upon his ear;
'Tis but imaginative fear.

He starts at every sound he hears.
The prize is gained at last, and he
Leaves behind him a mystery.

The following morning found Don Zeres' household astir at an earlier hour than usual. The golden rays of the great orb of day were just peeping above the eastern horizon as Consabina left the house and proceeded to take—what he had not taken for some years—a morning walk before breakfast. His first expression was "what a glorious morning; even nature seems to be rejoicing with us." The birds seemed to sing their morning carol, in the tree-tops, in richer and sweeter tones than was their wont. The water of the ocean seemed to have brighter hues. The fields appeared more verdant—the hills more magnificent—the woods more gorgeous—the air more balmy. Even the sky appeared more beautiful and grand, and the straggling clouds that hung around the eastern horizon were tinged with golden hues. But why does everything appear so grand on this particular morning? Why had Consabina not perceived those grandeurs previously, for he was a real lover of nature? The reason is two-fold. He is more elated on this occasion than usual, and he has risen an hour earlier than was his wont. He, like a great many others, had the habit of sleeping away the most precious, most pleasant, and most invigorating hour of the day.

As he walked along, he became absorbed in thought. He was thinking of the happy time when he could call Arabella his own. It appeared to him now not to be far distant, since fortune had favored them so well. The great barrier before was the mortgage; now they had wherewith to clear it, and plenty of money besides. The marriage ceremony—his lovely bride—the bridal tour—all were anticipated in his imagination. How little he fancied his bright hopes, his joyous anticipations were illusive, and that ere many days he would be cast down! He started as one out of a dream, and found that he strolled further than he had intended; so he retraced his steps and found breakfast awaiting him.

At the breakfast table, Don Zeres made known his mode of procedure. Immediately after breakfast he and Consabina would proceed to the town of S—, call at Baldwin Baesil's office, acquaint him of the matter, and get him to accompany them to New York to get the check cashed and then return home.

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