

with the author of all this misfortune, even though they were to death.

"If I can only see that there 'Amilton," he thinks savagely, as he journeys from Priestley, "and break his dorned head for him, I shall bide, perhaps, a bit quieter. Whenever I meets him, though, and wherever it may be, it will be a stand-up fight between us. And if he won't own his child and provide for it as a gentleman should, why there'll be another. And small satisfaction, too, with my poor girl a-lying cold in the church-yard." And here, hurried by retrospection beyond all bounds of propriety, he begins to call down the curse of the Almighty upon the luckless head of his unknown enemy.

He quits Priestley at the very time that Eric Keir is trying to drown his disappointment by running over the United States with his friend Charley Holmes, until the fatal letter announcing his elder brother's death shall call him back to England. Had it not been so, there would have been small chance of his being encountered in the streets of London during the shooting-season by our poor friend Joel. But what should a country lout know of such matters? It is to London that he works his way, feeling assured that in that emporium of wealth and fashion and luxury, sooner or later, he must meet his rival. So far he has reason, and by slow degrees he reaches it, journeying from farm to farm, with a day's job here and a day's job there, until he has gained the site of a suburban railway, on which he gets employment as a porter.

Here, seeing no means of bettering himself, he rests quietly for several months, more resigned and disposed to take interest in life again, perhaps, but still with that one idea firmly fixed in his mind, and eagerly scanning the features or following the footsteps of any one whose face or figure reminds him, in ever so small a degree, of the hated "Amilton." Perhaps it is fortunate for Joel's chances of retaining his situation that he cannot read, else the times he would have been seduced from his allegiance by seeing the mystic name upon a hat-box, or a portmanteau, would have been without number. How many Hamiltons journeyed up and down that line, I wonder, and embarked or disembarked at that station during the three months Joel Cray was porter there? But personal characteristics were all the guides he followed after, and these were often sufficient to insure him a reprimand. At last he heard of a situation in the West End of London, and resigned half his wages to increase his chance of meeting Muiraven.

But Muiraven spent his Christmas and his spring at Berwick Castle, and did not leave home again until he went to Glottonbury and met the Mordaunts.

Meanwhile poor Joel, much disheartened at repeated failures, but with no intention of giving in, searched for him high and low, and kept his wrath boiling, all ready for him when they *should* meet, by a nightly recapitulation of his wrongs.

Muiraven leaves Priestley, and embarks for India. The unfortunate avenger is again baffled.

The season passes, and he has ascertained nothing. Among the "Amiltons" he has met or heard of he can trace no member answering to the description of Myra's betrayer. Many are tall and fair, and many tall and dark; but the white skin, and the blue eyes, and the dark hair, come not, and the poor, honest, faithful heart begins to show signs of weariness. "Who knows?" so he argues—for two years and more Myra had heard nothing of him—"perhaps he may have died in the interim. Oh, if he could only ascertain that he *had*!"

But this search is as futile as the first. By degrees Joel confides his sorrow and his design to others—it is so hard to suffer all by one's self, and his acquaintances are eager to assist him, for there is something irresistibly exciting in a hue-and-cry: but their efforts, though well meant, fall to the ground, and hope and courage begin to slink away together. During this year Joel passes through the various phases of pot-boy, bottle-cleaner, and warehouse porter, until he has worked his way down to the Docks, where his fine-built, muscular frame and capabilities of endurance make him rather a valuable acquisition. He is still in this position when Lord Muiraven returns from the East Indies.

Muiraven left Fen Court in a strangely unsettled state of mind. He did not know if he were happier or more miserable for the discovery he had made. After an awkward and unsatisfactory manner, he had cleared himself in Irene's eyes, and received the assurance of her forgiveness; but how was his position bettered by the circumstance? Love makes us so unreasonable. A twelvemonth ago he would have been ready to affirm that he could bear any thing for the knowledge that the girl whose affection he had been compelled to resign did not utterly despise him. Now he knows that it is true, and thinks the truth but an aggravation of the insurmountable barriers that Fate has raised between them.