

astonishment, he took out a license for me, and presented me with a handsome fowling-piece. "This, Noah, he said, "you may consider in the way of business, as it is my intention to bring you up for a gamekeeper."

Oh, what a proud day that was to me—with what delight I handled my newly acquired treasure. How earnestly I listened to all Joe, the gamekeeper's directions about it, the use of it; and how I bragged and boasted to my village associates of the game that I, and *Master Walter* had bagged in those sacred preserves that they dared not enter, for fear of those mysterious objects of terror—mantraps and spring guns.

"The Guy, he thinks that no one can shoot but himself, sneered Bill Martin to his train of blackguards, who were lounging against the poles of the porter's lodge, as I returned to my mother's with my gun over my shoulder, and a brace of hares in my hand.

"I guess that there be others who can shoot hares without the Squire's leave, as well as he. Doubtless he fancies himself quite a gemmam, with that fine gun on his shoulder, and the Squire's license in his pocket."

These insulting remarks woke up all my evil passions. My gun was unloaded, but I pointed it at my tormentor, and told him "to be quiet, or I'd shoot him like a dog."

"Fire away!" says he, "It is a better death than the gallows, and that's what you'll come to."

"I shall live to see you hung first!" I cried, lowering my gun, while a sort of prophetic vision of the far off future swam before my sight—I really wished him dead, and the thought familiarized my mind to the deed. That Bill Martin, was my evil genius, the haunting fiend, ever at my side to tempt me to commit sin.

Young as I then was, my heart had been deeply moved by the beauty of Miss Ella Carlos. I could have waited upon her all day without feeling the least fatigue, and at night my dreams were full of her. I don't think that she was insensible to my devotion, but it only seemed a matter of amusement and curiosity to her. I remember one day—oh, I shall never forget it, for it formed a strong link for evil in my unhappy destiny, that I was sitting on the bank of the river making a cross bow for my pretty young lady, and she and *Master Walter* were sitting beside me watching the progress of the work, that the latter said—

"I wish I were two years older."

"Why do you wish that?" asked Miss Ella.

"Because papa says I could enter the army then, and I do so long to be a soldier."

"But you might be killed in the wars."

"And I might live to be as great a man as the Duke of Wellington," said he, with enthusiasm; "so we will set the one chance against the other."

"But it requires something more than mere courage to make a great man like him," said Ella, laughing. "I have heard papa say, and he fought under him in Spain, that it takes an hundred years to produce a Wellington."

"I think papa did the Duke great injustice," returned Walter. "There is not one of the heroes in Plutarch to compare with him. Julius Cæsar himself was not a greater conqueror than Napoleon, and Wellington beat him. But great as the Duke is, Miss Ella, he was a boy once—a soldier of fortune, as I shall be; and who knows but that I may win the same fame?"

"It's a good thing to have a fine conceit of one's self," said the provoking Ella. "And what would you like to be, Noah?" she said, turning her bright blue eyes on me; "an Oliver Cromwell, at least, as he was a man of the people, and you seem to have as good a head-piece as my wise brother."

"I wish," I said, with a deep sigh, "that I were a gentleman."

"Perhaps you are as near obtaining your wish as Walter is. And why do you wish to be a gentleman?"

"Oh! Miss Ella, can you ask that?"

"Why not? I wish to know."

"Because I might then hope," I added, in a low voice that trembled with emotion, "that you would love me, and that I might one day ask you for my wife."

The young thing sprang from the ground as if stung by a viper, her eyes flashing, and her cheek crimson with passion. "You are an impertinent, vulgar boy," she said. "You think of marrying a lady. You have not even a fortune to atone for your common name and low origin. Let me never hear the like of this from you again."

She left us in high dudgeon. I was silent then and for ever, upon a subject the most important to me in life. But her words had awakened a strange idea in my breast that finally led to my destruction.

That money was the only real obstacle to the attainment of my wishes. That, common as my name was, I only required the magic of gold to ennoble it; and proud as she was, if I were but rich, even she would condescend to listen to me, and become mine.

From that hour, Miss Ella walked and talked with me no more. I saw her daily at the hall, and the distance that now separated us, tended to increase the passion that consumed me. Shortly