

the dim echo of the noise in the work-rooms recommencing that struck upon my ear. Touching my watch, I found it was five o'clock, and recollected that it was Michaelmas Day, and my wedding morning.

"Good Heavens! should I ever get out of this hole in time? and if I should, would Mr. Hilton believe my story?"

"Frenzied by such fancies, I gathered all my strength together; but, alas, it was too small, from long fasting, to stir the lift an inch! Then I called for help, but my voice was powerless, and reached no human ear. In utter despair I sunk down on the floor again, resigning myself to fate.

"Four hours later—it must have been quite that—I was again aroused by feeling myself gently descending, and fully awakened, as I heard the cry of astonishment escape the lips of the workman who had been the accidental cause of my release, as he needed the lift, and by no means expected to find it occupied. The man instantly decamped when he saw me, but returned soon after accompanied by Mr. Furton, who looked petrified at my unexpected appearance.

"Thank God, Mr. Cliffe!" he exclaimed, when he had found speech. "You have been searched for all over the place since Saturday, and have caused no little heartache and anxiety. We never thought to find you here. Tell me, pray, how I come to find you thus?"

"He did not proceed further, for he began to perceive my exhausted condition, and desired some men to carry me to his private room, there employing restoratives, and administered food in small quantities to me with tender care. He immediately dispatched a messenger to Mr. Hilton, who arrived soon after, looking pale and worn, being in a towering rage, and demanded how I had dared——"

"Hush, sir!" said Mr. Furton, "see his state, and have pity on him. I feel convinced, when Mr. Cliffe recovers, that he will explain all to our satisfaction. I already begin to have an inkling of the cause of this unfortunate accident."

"Well I'd like him to know when he comes to himself," stormed Mr. Hilton, "that no girl of mine shall ever be his wife; so you may tell him."

"He was going to depart, and I was far too weak to detain him by even a word, for I could not utter a single one from sheer exhaustion, when Mr. Furton held him back by main force, and soon after I revived sufficiently to speak.

"Briefly I told my story, and Mr. Furton confirmed my statement by saying he could perfectly understand the way it had all occurred.

"But the irascible old gentleman was inexorable at first, accusing us of having plotted this accident as an insult to himself and family. At length after nearly an hour's reasoning, his anger began to cool; he could no longer pretend not to see my miserable condition, and that no man would voluntarily impose such a one upon himself. He began also to be ashamed of his unseemly violence, and hastily entreating my pardon, sent a message home to say the bridegroom was found, and that the wedding should take place. This was at my urgent request, as I did not wish it postponed, knowing Emma's heart was set upon its being on this Michaelmas Day.

"So we drove to church, where the bride, her mother and brother joined us, (bridesmaids and guests had been already put off.) We were married very quietly, just in time to save the last stroke of twelve; and then, instead of leaving for the Continent, as we had intended, stayed a week in Steepleton, during which time I was carefully nursed back to health.

"There," I said, sinking back into the soft grass, "I've told you my story, and I declare I feel almost as if I had been living it over again. I see I must not repeat it often; I have not before had courage to recall it since that dreadful time; and now it has excited me as though I had indeed been through it once more in all its terrors."

"Yes," said my friend; "you seemed quite to forget all around you, and I am sure transported me with yourself into that dungeon. Come let us saunter back to the house and join the ladies. We'll spend to-morrow night joyfully in commemoration of your happy deliverance from starvation, and in remembrance of last Michaelmas Day."