

worry his confused brain, just then, but had given himself up to the more congenial task of watching dear Lucy and listening to her voice, as she alternately conversed or read to him. Mr. Roberts had only run in once or twice to see our hero for a few minutes, pleading that there was so much business on hand that he had to work far into the nights.

The papers had all passed through Mrs. Roberts' hands before they had been seen by Grant; but one day that lady, having been detained at home, the boy who usually went to the village post-office had brought out the daily *Globe*, and it had been sent direct to Mr. Grant's room. He idly glanced over the columns, when his attention was rivetted by a familiar title amongst the telegraphic items. The words which immediately arrested his attention were "The Silver Creek Woollen Mills, Ashton," and the paragraph read thus:—

"REPORTED ABSCONDER.—We are informed that the proprietor of the above mills, Mr. Roberts, of Ashton, has been lately so closely pressed by clamorous creditors that he has for some reasons that are yet but matters of unfounded rumor, seen fit to place the United States boundary line between his person and Canada. In connection with these woollen mills it will be remembered by our readers that a Mr. Grant, who lately entered into partnership with this Roberts, has built a new mill in the Silver Creek Valley. This mill had to be shut down since the terrible thunder-storm on the morning of the Queen's birthday, which washed away the dam, and in which the young proprietor, Mr. Grant, was so nearly drowned. We are glad to hear that the latter gentleman, who has been lying very ill since his immersion, is rapidly progressing towards complete recovery."

This was almost too much for the weak brain fully to take in; he sank back on his pillows exhausted, and a confused sense of impending ruin took possession of his mind.

Like a violent stroke from a heavy missile, this blow was so sharp and sudden that he did not for some time feel its full effect. The force threw him back prostrated, but the pain was that of a deadened feeling.

As he brought his mind to contemplate the event,—how thinking, as he hoped, that the newspaper had obtained an exaggerated account, now calling to mind, what he had at the time taken little notice of, his partner's continued absence, Mrs. Roberts' heavy step and sad looks which she unsuccessfully tried to hide beneath a cheerful exterior, and the trace of recent tears that he had vaguely noticed on Lucy's cheek at her last visit,—he could not but feel that there was truth in the miserable extract.

An hour later and Mrs. Roberts came as usual to see her patient. She was horrified at the blank look of despair, and felt that by some news or other her careful schemes had been frustrated and Grant knew all. She could not find words to speak, but sat quietly until he should first say what he had heard.

"I know all," said Grant at last, "and, Mrs. Roberts, you can't think how sorry I am for you and dear Lucy." He did not revile Mrs. Roberts nor reproach her for her husband's sins; in gentle tones he tried to make her understand how well he knew and how thankful he felt to her for all her kindnesses; and the tears fell fast from the poor lady's eyes as she sat crouched in a chair, as if, poor thing, she had been the cause of this sad event.

"But tell me," said Grant, "and it is all the pain I will give you upon this subject, how did it happen and cannot it be righted?"

With bitter tears and many self-reproaches, as if she were responsible—but, like many a wife, she would willingly have taken upon her shoulders all her husband's faults,—she recounted to him the whole story. How the business had been rotten from the first, and that Mr. Roberts would have been sold out months before, but the new partnership staved off his debts, and how, in the end, he had seen utter ruin and had fled.

As Grant listened, he thought of the cooked books, the seductive measures by which he had been too easily persuaded, the great prospects of fortune opened out before him by his tempter, and now the victim, lying on the bed of sickness brought about in that fatal mill-dam, felt, not so much hatred, but bitter contempt and aver-