

to the hall again. Your brother was below, waiting to receive me, and in a few words informed me that as Sir John was now sensible, I might see him if I pleased, but that he felt assured it would be useless as regarded yourself, and painful to your father, who had not long to live."

Francis groaned heavily, and turning away his head, exclaimed, in a suffocating tone, "What needs any more? he is dead—my poor father!"

"Nay, but hear me out; for in this cup of misery, bitter as it is, there is yet one drop of comfort, which may help to render more tolerable the draught that must be swallowed. I persisted; whereupon your brother said, in his usual cold manner, 'It was my duty, sir, to warn you of what would be the likeliest results of your proposed interview. I have done so; you refuse credence to my assertions; and it is now, therefore, my duty to let you put them to the proof, by bringing you to Sir John. I am ready.'"

"Ah, there, indeed," cried Frank, "I recognize my brother—his duty—always his duty. How often have I mocked him for that very phrase. And now, go on, sir—go on, I entreat you; keep me not a moment longer on the rack than needs must be."

"Briefly, then, I was conducted to the bedside of the dying man; and, seeing at the first glance that not a moment was to be lost, I entered with little preface upon the object of my mission. I told him all I knew and all I hoped of you—for I do hope of you, and for you: so much so, indeed, that I could verily—but *that* is for another hour. And your poor father! believe me, his heart once again warmed toward you. While I spoke, his broken eye lighted up with joy that seemed to me something more than earthly; he pressed my hand feebly to his bosom, and struggled to say something to your brother John, but all we could make out was your name, and he died with it upon his lips. Be of comfort then, my young friend; you have indeed lost your father's estate, but you have not forfeited his blessing."

We have dwelt upon these details, gleaned with much labor, and almost grain by grain, from various sources, because without them the singular catastrophe of this family tradition, though borne out by facts, would seem incredible. What next intervenes may be hurried over without much injury to the general understanding of the story.

Stimulated by the love of Elizabeth, the disinherited followed his law studies with an unflinching ardor, that made weeks do the work of months, and months the work of years. His lamp burnt late at night, his curtains were drawn early in the morning; and no sooner had the old gentleman convinced himself that this was no passing impulse, but a fixed and enduring determination, than he helped the student liberally with his purse, and at length gave him indirectly to understand that, if he would persist in the same course for two years longer, there should be no opposition made to his union with Elizabeth. The goal thus set before him was indeed a distant one, a speck it might be called in the horizon of the future, but it was clearly visible notwithstanding: and, in addition to all this, his pride—and what stronger impulse does the human heart acknowledge?—urged him to continue as he had begun: above all, he would show his brother that he could do without him.

The two allotted years had at length passed, away, employed by Francis with little or no cessation in laying the foundations of that knowledge which distinguished him in after life; and, what was more, he had fully convinced his friendly monitor that his reformation was