

before; but, merely because it happened to be the cause of my 'want of respect' for him at Christ Church, no charge that was ever brought against the Templars is too absurd for it in future."

"And you replied?"

"With a respectful and affectionate farewell. I had everything ready for sailing, and wasn't going to change all my plans at the last moment just because Fred had chosen to disappoint him, nor to accept forgiveness, where, if anything, he owed apology. So he came thundering down with a private detective to the East India Docks, and, as I didn't want a row, I had to slip off to the coast; when, finding him after me as far as Deal, I was put on my metal to elude his obstinacy, and, to leave no trace, dropped the Lockyer, and sailed from Liverpool in the second cabin, paying the difference after we got to sea. My name is Frederick Stephenson Lockyer, so that I have assumed no new one. I wasn't going to take the ship's company into confidence, and so held on to the flag I had hoisted, and, as half-a-dozen of them came up to the Criterion with me, it wasn't convenient to lower it immediately. To tell the truth, it hampered me most vexatiously, and I was charmed to drop it on the Station; for I told Blake the whole story, and he took it all, of course, as the most natural thing in the world."

"You must tell Charley the whole story," said Nell earnestly. "If you don't I shall; but it will come best from yourself."

"I scarcely dare to write to Charley," said Fred gloomily. "They keep such a watch on her these times, and my fine prospects have evaporated so entirely. However, you are quite right, and I shall try."

The next night we were sitting late in the verandah, with the Cross bright in the zenith, when Lockyer asked suddenly—

"What lodges have you here—any?"

"Three, I think," I answered. "I belong to the St. Patrick, but I very seldom attend. However, I'll bring you if you care."

"Why do you very seldom attend? Is there anything wrong about it?"

"Oh! I don't say that. But I'm not an enthusiast like you; and besides, they seem to do slovenly work, and I'm inclined to think half of them trade on their standing. You'll find Masonic emblems painted over lots of shops in town."

"Yes, that's bad enough; much the same as the Yankee fashion of sporting Masonic jewellery. It ought to be sternly and peremptorily forbidden. There can be no possible excuse for it."

On this point we were, that evening, virtuously unanimous. The day was not far distant when one of us should modify his opinion. It is but with inexperience that exception is denied to rule.