

"I seem to see," murmured the chevalier, "that your heart is mine."
 "You are right. If I did not love you would you be here? But you, Tancred, do you love me?"
 "Oh! with all my strength, with all my heart, with all my soul. You are a hundred times dearer to me than life itself."
 "And you will love me for a long time?"
 "For ever!"
 "Will you swear it?"
 "By my honor and my love."
 "How many women have already heard such an oath from your lips, my friend?"
 Tancred crimsoned involuntarily and answered hesitatingly,
 "None."
 "Do not say that, for I cannot believe it."
 "Well," continued Tancred, with some embarrassment, "if I must confess the truth, I may have sworn eternal constancy, but I did not consider myself bound thereby for all time to come."
 "And now?"
 "Now I have sworn it on my honor, and God is my witness that I never took such an oath before."
 "Then I can doubt you no longer, and indeed I am glad of it—happy to believe that you do truly love me, that you always will love me. I believe it, I feel it. But tell me, my friend,—only this one question more—how long has your heart been free?"
 "For a long, long time, my dear. For months; I might almost say for years."
 "Is this true?"
 "I swear it once more."
 "Then your heart never quickened at the thought of the beautiful Annunziata?"
 The unexpected mention of this name startled Tancred.
 "What!" he cried, "you know then?"
 "I know everything about you. But I beg you to answer my question."
 "That is very easy. I saw Don José Rovero's daughter but once. I found her charming, I confess, but she made no impression upon my heart. And besides, by your side Annunziata pales like the stars before the rising sun."
 "Then you do not love her? You never loved her?"
 "Never."
 "Heaven be praised. Henceforth my confidence is entire, my joy is complete and unclouded. I was suffering just now. I believed a rival was hidden in some secret recess of your heart. In fact I was jealous and I did not like to question you. Thank you, my friend, thank you. I am sure of you now, and here is my recompense—Listen, Tancred, to what I am about to tell you; and believe me, for my lips have always told the truth. The heart I am giving you, which will be yours for life, is a virgin heart. I thought it was as a stone until you appeared. Then I understood by its fierce beatings that you had won it, that it recognized in you its master, and yearned towards you. I did not resist, Tancred, I did nothing to restrain it, I felt a strange pleasure in being conquered. I was happy in my defeat. In a word, I loved—loved for the first time."
 The Frenchman, fascinated and overcome by this avowal was about to make a passionate reply, when the sudden entrance of the mulatto put an end to the interview.

XVI.
 A CLEVER ACTRESS.

"Well, nurse," asked Carmen, "what is the matter? I did not call you."
 "Hush!" whispered the woman, putting her finger to her lips. "He is coming, he is just behind me. Perhaps he suspects. A few moments more and all will be lost."
 A terrified look spread over the young girl's face as she started from the hammock in which she had been reclining. The mulatto seized Tancred by the arm and dragged him to one of the doors.
 "Come, señor; we must be quick," she said. The young man turned in amazement to Carmen as if to ask an explanation of this sudden interruption. The girl took the rose out of her hair, kissed it and held it out to him, whispering,
 "Love me; I love you."
 Tancred pressed the precious flower to his lips, as the mulatto dragged him into another room, which was perfectly dark.
 "Later on," she whispered as he tried to question her, "later on you shall know all you wish. But there is no time now."
 The Frenchman submitted and followed the nurse through a labyrinth of dark rooms and passages into the garden, where he was once more blindfolded and reconducted to the avenue, where the volante was in waiting. The two took their seats and Tancred at once broke into a string of inquiries.
 "Now will you answer my questions?"
 "Yes, provided they are not indiscreet."
 "What was the reason for this sudden flight? Was anyone coming? The lady's father perhaps?"
 "It was her brother."
 "Is her brother such a terrible being then?"
 "Indeed he is."
 "Does he not love her?"
 "On the contrary, he adores her."
 "But your mistress seemed very much terrified. What was she afraid of?"
 "If her brother had known that anyone was in the house he would have killed her."
 "The man is a monster!"
 "Oh, no! He is an austere, unbending gentle-

man who never trifles where his honor is concerned, and who believes that a stain on his name can only be washed out in blood."
 "But your mistress is as pure as an angel. She has done nothing to merit his anger."
 "She received you, and that is quite enough to enrage her brother. She knew that beforehand, yet she did not hesitate. So you may judge, señor, of her feelings towards you."
 "Do you think that I would hesitate a moment to give my life for her?" said the young man enthusiastically.
 At this point of the conversation the volante stopped.
 "This is as far as we are going," said the mulatto undoing the handkerchief Tancred still wore over his eyes. In the pale moonlight he recognized the avenues of the Lameda.
 "Are you sure," he asked, "that your mistress is in no danger?"
 "Perfectly sure. I got you away before her brother could even suspect anything, so you may go your way in peace."
 "But I cannot leave you in this manner."
 "What more do you want?"
 "When shall I see your mistress again?"
 "I don't know."
 "At least it will be before long."
 "I think so. It is very likely."
 "How shall I know when she grants me another interview?"
 "I will find means to let you know."
 "One word more. If you have any pity for me, tell me your mistress's name."
 "Her name is Carmen," replied the mulatto.
 "And now, señor, for the last time, farewell."
 The calesero whipped up his horse, and the volante rolled away leaving Tancred in a whirl of amazement and happiness.
 "Carmen!" he murmured ecstatically. "Carmen! What a sweet name! Carmen, I love you! Carmen, I am yours for this life and the next!"

(To be continued.)

AN OLD-TIME STORY.

The early years of the reign of George III., was the time of those gallant robbers, whose fine clothes, high bearing, reckless hardihood, and (frequently) good birth took away from the superficial observer much of the darkness of the crime actually surrounding their deeds and lives.
 One in particular was notorious enough in his brief day for most of the qualities I have described, as sometimes attributes of these knights of the road. He was well connected, too, his uncle being a clergyman in a high church appointment. His person was elegant, his manners courtly, and he was rash in an extraordinary degree. Mingling freely in fashionable society in his real name, his deeds of robbery were the talk of the town under his assumed one. His proper designation was Richard Mowbray—that belonging to the road, his sole source of revenue, was Captain de Montmorency—a patronymic high-sounding enough. I do not mean, however, to infer that any suspected the man of fashion and the highwayman to be the same person; that was never known till the event which I am about to relate took place.
 Richard Mowbray had spent his own small patrimony, years before the period at which this narrative commences, in the pleasures of the town; it had been melted in play-houses, fairs, horseflesh and hazard; he had exhausted the kindness and forbearance of his relations, from whom he had borrowed and begged, till borrowing or begging became impracticable. He had known most extremes of life; and, moreover, when debts and poverty stared him grimly in the face, he knew not one useful art by which he could support existence or pay dividends to his creditors. What was to be done? He eluded a jail as long as he could, and one night, riding on horseback, and meditating gloomily on his evil fortunes, he met—covered by the darkness from discovery—a traveller well mounted—plethoric—laden with money-bags, and bearing likewise the burden of excessive fear.
 It was a sudden thought—acted upon as suddenly. Resistance was not dreamed of. Mowbray made off with his booty, considerable enough to repair his exhausted finances and to pay his most pressing creditors. It was literally robbing Peter to pay Paul. And so by night, under shelter of its darkness, did the ruined gentleman become the highwayman. People who knew his circumstances whispered their surprise when it became known that Richard Mowbray had paid his debts, and that he himself made more than his customary appearance. Now his new person was ever clad with the newest braveries of the day; and in his double character many a conquest did he make, for he disburdened ladies of their jewels and purses with so fine a manner that the defrauded fair ones forgot their losses in admiration of the charming despoiler; and Richard, in both his phases, drank deep draughts of pleasure till he drained the Circean cup to its very dregs. Just as even pleasure became wearisome, when festive and high-bred delights palled upon his sated passions, and the lower extremes of licentiousness and hard drinking, ruffing, and fighting, diversified by the keen excitement and threats of danger, which distinguished his predatory existence, began to satiate, a new light broke on the feverish atmosphere of his life. He loved. Yes! Richard Mowbray, the ruined patriot. De Montmorency, the gallant highwayman, who had hitherto resented every

good or evil influence which love, pure or earth-stained, offers to his votaries, succumbed to the simple charms of a young, unlearned, unambitious girl, so youthful that her tastes and habits, childish as they were, could be scarcely more so than suited her years. Flavia Hardcourt had just attained her sixteenth year—had never been to a boarding-school, and loved nothing so much—even her birds and pet rabbits—as her dear old father, an honest country gentleman, and a worthy magistrate. Flavia had never been even to London, for Mr. Hardcourt resided at Aveling—a retired village, about twenty miles from the metropolis. Barring fox-hunting and hard-drinking, the old gentleman, on his side, took pleasure only in the pretty, gentle girl, who, from the hour of her birth—which event had terminated her mother's existence—had made her his constant playmate and companion. And it was to this simple wild flower that the gay man of pleasure, haughty, reckless, unprincipled, improvident, irreligious, and rash, presumed to lift his eyes, to elevate his heart; and, oh, stranger still! to this being, the moral antipodes of her pure self, did Flavia Hardcourt surrender her youthful, modest, inestimable love. It must have been her very childishness and purity that attracted the desperate robber—this hardened libertine, now about to commit his worst and most inexcusable crime. He had evidently met Mr. Hardcourt at a country hunt; had, with others of his companions, been invited by that honest gentleman to a rustic *fête* in honor of little Flavia's natal day—a day, he was wont to observe, to him remarkable for commemorating his greatest misfortune and his intensest happiness; and then and there the highwayman vowed to win and bear that pure bud of innocent freshness and rare fragrance, or to perish in the attempt. Master Richard Mowbray! unscrupulous De Montmorency! I will relate how you kept your vow.
 He haunted Aveling Grange till the chaste young heart, the old father's beloved darling, surrendered itself into the highwayman's keeping. Perhaps Mr. Hardcourt was not altogether best pleased at Flavia's choice; but then she was his life—his hope—and he trusted, even when he gave her to a husband, that her love and doting affection would still be his own; besides, Mowbray was well connected—boasted of his wealth; whereas a very moderate portion would be hers—was received in modish circles, into which the good old magistrate could never pretend to penetrate; and, in short, what with his high bearing, his handsome person and insinuating tongue, Mr. Hardcourt had irrevocably promised to bestow his treasure into the keeping of the prodigal, who numbered himself almost year enough to have been the father of the young girl, whom he testified the utmost impatience to call wife.
 It was during the time that Mr. Mowbray was paying his court at Aveling that the neighborhood began to be alarmed by a series of highway robberies, which men said could have been perpetrated but by that celebrated knight of the road—Captain De Montmorency. No one could stir after nightfall without an attack, in which numbers certainly were not wanting.
 "Cudgel me, but we'll have him yet," said old Mr. Hardcourt. "I should glory myself in going to Tyburn to see the fellow turned off. Ay, and I would take my little Flavia to see him go by in the cart, with a parson and a nosegay, eh, my little girl?"
 "Oh, no, father," said Flavia, "I could not abide it, though he is such a daring, wicked man, whose name makes me shiver with fear and terror whenever I hear it. I could never bear to see such a dreadful sight—it would haunt me till my death."
 The betrothed pair were together to visit London.
 "But I shall not dare," said the girl, as walking together in the old-fashioned Dutch garden, she leant her young, sinless head on her guilty lover's breast; "I shall not dare take such a journey, for fear of the highwayman, Montmorency."
 "Fear not, my sweet Flavia; this breast shall be pierced through ere De Montmorency shall cause one fear in thine."
 "Richard, sweetness, why do you leave me so early every evening? At sunset, I have remarked. These are not London habits. Ah, does any other than poor Flavia attract you? Oh, Richard, I must die, if it should be so, I could not live, and know you were false."
 "Sweetest and best! my purest love, could any win me from you? were it a queen, think it not, I—the truth is, Flavia, I have a poor, sick friend not far from here; he is poor, ill and—I—"
 "Say no more, dearest. Oh, how much more I love you every day! How good, how noble, thus to sacrifice!" And the blushing girl threw herself into her lover's arms.
 Ah! how differently best these two human hearts! One pregnant with love, goodness, charity, sympathy; the other rank with hypocrisies, dark with unbelief.
 They came to town unobserved, you may be sure; the stranger, because a few days previously a terrible affair had occurred. Old Lord St. Hilary, the relic of the *beau garçon* of former days, had been robbed and maltreated. Men were by no means so favored as the *beau sexe*. Above all, a family jewel of immense value had been taken from his person; and on recovering from his wounds and fright, he swore vengeance. He took active measures to fulfill his vow.
 The wedding was to take place at the old religion's, Mrs. Duobesue's house, and on lagging

wings the day at length arrived. The marriage was celebrated, and the happy pair were in the act of being toasted by the father of the bride, when a strange noise was heard below; rude voices were upraised; oaths muttered; a rush towards the festive saloon. The company rose.
 "What is it?" asked Mr. Hardcourt.
 The door was broken open for answer. The officers of justice filled the room. Two advanced. "Come, captain," said they, "the game is up at last. It's an awkward time to arrest a gentleman on his wedding day; but duty, my noble captain, duty must be done."
 Entranced, frozen beyond resistance or appeal, the bridegroom was fettered; and the bride! she stood there, her hazel eyes dilating till they seemed about to spring from her head.
 "My Richard! what is this?"
 "Scondrels!" said Mr. Hardcourt, "release my son."
 The men laughed. One of them was examining the necklace of Flavia; it contained a diamond in the centre worth a ransom. "Where did you get this, miss?" he said.
 Her friends answered for the terror-stricken girl was inarticulate, "Mr. Mowbray's wedding gift."
 "Oh, oh! This was the diamond Lord St. Hilary was so mad about. By your leave," and the gem was removed from the neck it encircled.
 She comprehended something terrible. She found speech: "Whom do you take Mr. Mowbray for?" she said.
 "Whom? Why the renowned Captain de Montmorency."
 A shiver—so fierce in its agony as to cause the criminal to rebound—struck on the ears of all present; insensibility followed, and Flavia was removed. So was her bridegroom—to Newgate.
 The trial was concluded—justice was appeased—the robber was doomed. And his innocent and unpolluted victim— For days her life had hung on a thread. But youth and health closed for a short time the gates of death. She recovered. Reviving as from a dreadful dream, she could scarcely believe in the terrible event which, tornado-like, had swept over her. She desired her father to repeat the circumstances. Weeping, and his venerable gray hairs whiter with sorrow, Mr. Hardcourt complied. She heard the recital in silence. Presently clasping her father's hand, "Dear parent," she said, "when—when?" She could utter no more; nor was it necessary; he comprehended her but too well.
 "The day after to-morrow," he replied.
 "Father, I must be there."
 "My Flavia, my dearest daughter!"
 "Father, I must be there! Do you remember your jest? Ah, it has come to pass in bitter earnest. I must be there!"
 Nor would she be pacified; she persisted. Her physician at length urged them to give her her way. It would, he said, be less dangerous than denial.
 Near Tyburn seats were erected. Windows, balconies to be let out to hire. One of these last, the most private, was secured; and on the fatal morning Flavia was taken thither in a close carriage, accompanied by her parent and her aged cousin. She shed no tears, heaved not a single sigh, and suffered herself to be led to the window with a strange, immovable calmness. Soon shouts and the swelling murmur of a dense crowd reached her ears. The procession was arriving. The gallows was not in sight, but the fatal cart would pass close. It came on nearer, nearer—more like a triumph, that dismal sight, than a human fellow-man hastening to eternity.
 She clenched her hands, she rose up, straining her fair white throat to catch a glance of the criminal. Yes, there he was, dressed gayly, the ominous nosegay flaunting in his breast, dull despair in his heart, reaching from thence to his face. As the trap passed Flavia's window, by chance he raised his hot, blood-red eyes; they rested on his bride, his pure virgin wife. The wretched man uttered a yell of agony and cast himself down on the boards of the vehicle. She continued gazing, the smile, frozen off her face, her eyes glassy, motionless, fixed.
 They never recovered their natural intelligence; fixed and stony, they bore her, stricken lamb, from the dismal scene. Her old father watched for days by her bedside, eagerly waiting for a ray of light, a token of sense, or sound. None came. She had been stricken with catalepsy, and it was a blessing when the enchanted spirit was released from its frail habitation—when the pure soul was permitted to take its flight to happier regions. Poor Mr. Hardcourt sunk shortly into a state of childish imbecility, and soon father and daughter slept in one grave.
 A lady was in the midst of conversation with some visitors in her drawing-room, when a recent scandal among the "upper ten" coming upon the tapis, she said to her elder daughter, who was turning over the leaves of an album with her little sister, a child scarcely six years of age, "My dear, the lamp is smoking." The lamp was at the other end of the room. The young girl turned it down, but the subject not being exhausted, she was requested to wind up the lamp. On the following day the careful mother, wishing to get rid of her little one, for some reason or other, said, "Go up into the nursery, Alice," when the child replied, "Mamma, if you don't mind, I'll rather wind up the lamp."