

the doctor, and "Murdered" was whispered from lip to lip throughout the crowd of spectators, "Murdered and robbed by some party to this jury unknown," was the verdict of the Coroner's jury; and thus it still remains, "Murdered," but only the grand inquest at the last great day shall reveal the name of the murderer. After the inquest was ended, Colby and Newton gave orders for bringing the body to the village and preparing it for the grave. Then they returned to the hotel to get a change of clothing, and by this time much needed refreshments.

The two friends and Brothers, Colby and Newton, seemed naturally, as Fraternally, called upon to take a sort of supervisory care of the affairs of their deceased Brother Clark, and make all necessary arrangements for his decent and proper burial. After partaking of a substantial breakfast, and while awaiting the coming of the body, the two friends were startled by an as yet unthought of difficulty. This difficulty was suggested to them by the sight of little Belle, as she was sporting amid the flowers of the park on the lakeward side of the hotel. In the sorrowful excitement of the past few hours, her very existence seemed by them to have been forgotten. But now, as if by common impulse, both asked the question, "What is to become of her?"

Neither was prepared to answer, and both remained for a few moments silent.

"I wonder," said Newton, "if any one has told her of her father's death."

"I think not," said Colby, "but let's inquire and find out." And entering the hotel, they sent a servant to ask Miss Sherill to grant them a short interview. In a moment their messenger returned and invited them into the parlor where Miss Sherill awaited their coming. After the usual compliments of courtesy were passed by the lady and the two young men, upon their entrance into the parlor, Colby at once entered upon the subject uppermost in his mind, by inquiring of Miss Sherill if little Belle had been informed of the death of her father.

"No," said Miss Sherill; and the tears started as she replied, "I could not tell her, 'twould kill me to see her suffer as she must, neither can I find any one in the house who will consent to perform the painful duty, and so it has not been done, and I cannot do it."

While she was still speaking, Belle came in at the door, and with a happy smile upon her face, bade them all good morning.

Colby had frequently spoken to her before this time, and was on very good terms with her, and now feeling it to be his duty as no one else would do it, he determined to be himself the bearer of the terrible news of her bereavement to the little girl. Extending both hands towards her, he said, "Good morning, little Belle, won't you come and shake hands with me."

"Yes sir, replied the child, and going up to him, laid both her little hands in his.

"Would you not like to go and walk in the park with me a little while," said he.

"Oh, yes," and her eyes fairly danced with joy, "I saw such a pretty little bird out there just now, I hope we can find it again, and maybe dear papa will come when we are out there," and she started to lead the way out, holding on to Colby's hand.

His heart and throat were too full for utterance, but taking the child up in his arms and impulsively pressing her to his bosom, he walked out into the park and took a seat on a rural bench in the shade of a great elm—still holding Belle in his arms—and while he gazed on her happy face, he felt that his courage was fast ebbing away, and if he was to tell the little girl the sorrowful tale at all, he must tell it at once. "Belle, darling," said he, and his voice trembled, and in spite of himself the tears chased each other quickly down his cheeks, "I have bad news to tell you about your dear papa, and you must try and be a good girl and not feel too bad when I tell it." Belle slipped from his arms and stood before him gazing into his face—her bright smile was gone, the rose blush had fled from her cheek, and every feature had assumed the expression of one suffering the most intense agony.

"What is it, sir? what is the matter with my papa?" said she in a hoarse whisper.

Colby looked in her face and saw that it was no child with whom he was talking. A child she might be in years, and in stature, but her capacity for suffering could not have been greater if twenty years instead of five had been her age; and he knew that her suspense was worse if possible, than would be the effect of what he had to tell. So taking her once more in his arms, he said, "Darling, your papa is dead, and will soon be brought here from where he was found last night in a dying condition."

Belle heard but the first few words. Without a groan—scarcely a sigh—her little head leaned upon Colby's breast, her eyes closed, and for the time being, at least, the lamb was beyond the reach of suffering. Colby thought she was dead, and taking her in his arms he flew back to the parlor where Miss Sherill and Newton were still talking of the sad events of the last few hours. Both started to their feet as they saw the white face resting against Colby's shoulder as he entered the door. Miss Sherill advanced to meet him and take the child, and as he laid the lifeless body in the arms of her friend he said, "There, the work is complete, the assassin slew the father, I have