

MARY LEE

Or The Yankee in Ireland

BY PAUL PEPPERGRASS, ESQ.
CHAPTER VII.

MR. WEEKS BEGINS TO THINK IRELAND NOT SO VERY GREEN A COUNTRY AFTER ALL, AND RATHER UNSAFE FOR MATRIMONIAL SPECULATIONS.

Quitting the lighthouse, apparently well pleased with his visit, Mr. Weeks threw his broken fishing rod on his shoulder, and set out for Crohan with as much speed as his long, shagging limbs and slow habits would admit of. It being already dark, and the distance he had to walk some four good Irish miles, and that over rough, mountainous roads, he resolved to travel somewhat faster than usual, in order to reach Crohan before the family retired to rest.

And here it should be remarked, that the Hardwinkles family was a very grand and orderly family; a family, in fact, guided by rule in every thing. They never sat up later than 9 o'clock, on any occasion whatever. Even the night of Mr. Weeks' arrival, as soon as the deep-toned clock in the great hall struck the appointed hour, the seven sisters, in the order of seniority, rose up each in their turn, and approaching their American cousin, bade him good night with a gravity of deportment that would have done credit to any of the high-toned Irish. They had long acquired throughout the parish for unostentatious piety and evangelical perfection.

This strict mode of living was by no means new to Mr. Weeks, for he was bred and born in the land of steady habits himself, and therefore could well understand the value his cousins set upon that particular family regulation. His consideration, added to the danger of being caught in the approaching storm amongst the wild gorges of Ben-raven, prompted him to tax his physical energies a little more freely than usual.

He had not proceeded very far, however, on his journey, when he found his rapid pace suddenly checked by a tall, muffled figure, that rose up before him on the road, and commanded him to stop.

"Who's there?" demanded Weeks, coming to a dead halt.

"A friend."

"What friend—Euse Curley?"

"Ay," said the old woman, wrapping her gray cloak round her head and shoulders, and advancing from the rock where she had been sitting to the middle of the road. "Ay, it's me. I stepped down to meet ye at yer own comin', to hear the news, Hem! what's the good word, sir?"

"Why, all's about right there, I guess," responded Weeks, grounding his fishing rod, and resting his hands on the end of it.

"Plazed with your visit, I hope."

"Well, yes—got along pretty slick."

"Ye seen her?"

"Well, can't say I saw much of her to speak of."

"But ye think she'll suit ye, any way?"

"Yes, reckon so; she's handsome enough, but kinder skittish, I guess."

"O, av course; what else could ye expect at the first goin' of?"

"No, that's all right. Irish girls are generally somewhat shy at the beginnin'. But I've no fear we'll bring her up to the hiltin' post yet."

"Humph! I'm not sure of that. Remember she has the old blood in her veins."

"Pshaugh! humbug! old blood!"

"Ye don't believe in that?"

"Not I; it's all sheer gammon."

"Humph! see that now! E'then, sure ye poor crathurs down there always heard it said that the blood of the 'Talbots was as hard to tame as the blood of the aigles."

"The 'Talbots'?"

"Ay."

"And who are they?" demanded Weeks, looking sharply in the old woman's face.

"The 'Talbots'—whyl, musha, thin, did ye never hear tell of the 'Talbots'?" said Euse, eying him with a very equivocal expression of countenance.

"No—don't remember exactly."

"Hoot! jog yer mimery a bit—the name's not so gently scarce that ye never heard it afore. But no matter; time enough to speak o' them things when we're better acquainted."

"Them things," repeated Weeks; "what things? By golly, ye're quite mysterious this evening, old lady; say what am I to understand by them things?"

"O, nothin', nothin', worth a-talkin' of," replied Euse; "ye're in a hurry now, ye know; and besides, there's McSwine's gun tearin' away like fury. Ye'd better make haste, sir, or the storm'll be on afore ye get home."

"As Euse spoke, a thudding sound broke like a peal of distant thunder on the still air, and echoed heavily and slowly along the shore, and then away among the deep ravines of the mountains. A little, fleecy cloud, too, which but half an hour ago, had been hardly perceptible on the western horizon, had now rolled up in piles dark and dense to the eastward, and passing the lighthouse, spread far and wide over the clear sky.

"What's that?" demanded Weeks, turning to look in the direction of the sound. "It's like a heavy broadside at sea, ain't it?"

"Ay," responded Euse, "it's not unlike it; but the reports of all the guns on the say, and the channel batteries to boot, never carried fear to as many hearts as that. God look to the poor vessels out there the night; they'll need good gear and stout arms to win through Tory Island Gut, if this storm catches them within thirty leagues of the coast."

"And what means that bright light out there? It looks like the flame of a burning ship reflected against the heavens."

"O, that's only from the lantern of Tory light," said Euse; "McSwine's gun is just beyond it to the west; and the old woman, in reply to her companion's inquiry, explained the cause of its loud report, assigning it, of course as all such things are popularly assigned

to a supernatural agency. "It's said," she added, "by the old people, that it never was heard afore the Parliament was taken away from us, and niver will stop firing the death gun of the nation till it comes back."

"Pashugh! ejaculated Weeks; "what a notion! That's some of your old priests' stories, I guess. But, see here—about that Talbot—"

"And there goes the Devil's Gulsh too," interrupted Euse; "look at the spindrifts as they begin to fly across the iron bridge. Take a friend's ad-vice, Mr. Weeks, and hurry home as fast as ye can; for my word on it, if ye don't ye'll find a wet jacket afore ye reach Crohan. Good night, sir, good night!" and Euse made another motion to leave.

"Say, hold on," cried Weeks, detaining her by the skirt of her cloak; "hold on; I can wait long enough to hear what ye've got to say about the Talbots. How can they concern me?"

"O, not the last in the world; how could they, since ye niver heard tell of them afore?"

"Well, but still I may have been connected with them somehow unknown to me."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the old woman, gathering her scanty cloak still closer round her emaciated shoulders, as she felt the first breath of the coming storm, and chuckling within its folds, like one of Maecoth's witches gloating over her boiling caldron. "Ha, ha! unbeknown to ye indeed."

"Come, come," said Weeks; "I want no more fooling just now. You kinder insinuate I had some connection I hadn't ought to with folks name of Talbot."

"Hush! I don't s'pake so loud."

"Nonsense! loud! I'm an American born, and ain't afraid to speak out before any human in creation."

"That's mighty bold," said Euse; "but somethin' somethin' s'pake the loudest."

"What name—Talbot?"

"Whist! I don't care a brass cent, woman; nonsense! Well, I swannie, if this ain't the greatest attempt at humbug I met since I left—"

"Ducksville," subjoined Euse, in a low, stealthy tone, leaning at him the while from under her hood. "And so ye'd like to hear the secret?"

"Yes, out with it," said Weeks, confidently; "I ain't afraid. If ye've got a secret regarding me, tell it. For my part I know of no secret, and I dread none either."

"And might I make bould to ask ye what brought ye here then, if ye haven't?"

"Why, I came to visit my cousins."

"Humph! and are the Hardwinkles yer cousins?" demanded Euse; "eh! surely yer cousins?"

"Well, mother says so, she ought to know something about it, I guess, being the only surviving sister of the late Mr. Hardwinkle; and so, feeling rather disposed to marry, I took a fancy to offer my hand and fortune to Mary Lee."

"And what wad ye marry her for, if it's a fair question?"

"Her beauty, of course; she has nothing else to recommend her, I reckon."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Euse, in hoarse, hollow tones, which sounded like the voice of the dead from the depths of a charnel vault, her toothless gums mumbing the words as she uttered them; "ha, ha! her beauty indeed—the beauty of William Talbot's gold!"

"I heard the name distinctly, and the hearing of it seemed to paralyze him, for the fishing rod fell from his hands without his seeming to notice it."

"What!" said Euse, pursuing her advantage, "marry Mary Lee for her beauty—a girl ye niver set eyes on, till ye seen her, not three hours ago, on Tory Island Gut? Ye'd better be foolish; ye've a queer to aisy spoken man, to be sure, and might pass for what ye prize with the simple country gawks here on the wild mountains; but as for me, I'm a little too old in the horn to be blindfolded in that way."

"You misunderstand me, old lady," said Weeks, pecking up his fishing rod, and endeavoring to compose himself.

"Well, listen to me for a minute, and ye'll hear my reasons. Didn't ye bargain with me for my good word with Mary Lee?"

"Yes; I guess so."

"And didn't ye bargain with me moreover if my good word'd fail to delude her with spells and charms, as that afore iver ye seen a faiture of her face?"

"No, that's a mistake," responded Weeks; "I saw her at the Catholic Chapel afore I saw you, and determined to have her at any sacrifice."

"Saw her I may be so, but ye didn't see her face; she was veiled."

"Can't say as to that; saw enough at least to know she was a handsome gal. Why should she be veiled—eh?"

"Niver mind; she has her own reasons, I suppose; but this much I can tell ye, that many's the little up settin' squireen and purse proud boudjers threw themselves in her way the last twelvemonth and more, as she went in and out of Massmount Chapel of a Sunday mornin', in lacin on her uncle's arm, to stave a glimpse at her 'bonny een,' and got little for their pains when all was done. No, no, sir; ye seen that bright, sunny face this blessed day for the first time in yer life, or I'm far out o' my reckonin'."

"Well, saw enough to know she was a handsome gal," stammered out Weeks, hardly knowing what to say in the face of Euse's positive assertion.

"And listen to me again," continued the latter, still following up her advantage; "why didn't ye thry the girl yer-self afore ye came my length? Yer

not so handsome that she'd be lakely to fall plump in love with ye, to be sure; but still yer not so ill-looking neither for a foreigner; and then to the back o' that, ye've as many good rings, chains, charms, and such like, as might set an' any young crathur's heart flutterin'. Why, in the name o' wonder, I say, didn't ye thry what ye cud do yerself afore ye'd got to the expense of engagin' me?"

"Why, I wanted to be spy about it," responded Weeks. "Time's money to me; I count hours dollars, and minutes cents. I couldn't afford to wait no how. But pray how does it concern you what my views and motives are, if I pay your price when the job's done?"

"Hy, ay," muttered Euse; "that's it. Ye thought ye'd make short work of it, I fear the secret'd lake out. Tump! I see; and yer cousins, as ye call them, the Hardwinkles, made ye believe I was a witch, I'll warrant. And could do more with spells and boasted riches. Ay, ay, ye thought I was an old hell-born devil 'tilt I saw ol' conscience, ready to do yer dirty work, and ask no questions either. But yer mistake, Mr. Weeks; cute as ye are, ye'll find me just as canny; and I tell ye what it is, may I never see the sun again, if all the dollars in America cud buy me over to move one hair's breadth in this affair, if it weren't for the sake of Mary Lee herself!"

Weeks paused for an instant before he spoke. The solemn declaration he had just heard, and made with so much apparent sincerity, completely puzzled him. It was a phase in the old woman's character he had never noticed before.

Already, indeed, he had penetration enough to see that she was by no means the kind of person common report represented her, nor such as he took her for himself on his first visit to the Cairn. Since that time, her character, it's true, had been slowly and gradually developing itself, but still in such a manner as neither to surprise nor startle him.

Now he hardly knew what to make of her. Every mark, every characteristic of the original woman seemed to have gradually vanished one by one. Her deceptiveness, her suppleness, her peevishness, her deafness, her blindness, had all disappeared day after day, and so completely, that at last he could hardly believe in her very identity. The wretched being he found, but a month gone, sitting over her peat fire, with her head by her side, and looking astolid as if all her mental faculties had fled, now stood before him, an active, shrewd, energetic woman. All about her was changed—all save the furrows of her brown skin, and the gray eyelids which still stole out from under the band of her ruffled cap. After such a metamorphosis, what wonder if Weeks began to suspect (and especially after so solemn a declaration as he had just heard) that her reputed lust of gold was false, like all the other charges made against her! And how could he tell now, but it was her love of Mary Lee, rather than her love of gold, that led her to take so likely an interest in his affairs? Be that as it might, Weeks felt confused and puzzled to let Euse end, and finally resolved to let Euse have her own way, believe what she pleased of him, and carry out her own views to benefit her protegee after her own fashion.

"So it's entirely for the girl's sake," he at length replied, "that you consent to aid me in the matter of this marriage?"

"Humph! I love gold," responded Euse; "but I love Mary Lee better."

"Then you should relinquish your claim on the remaining three of the four hundred dollars I promised you, since you serve her interests, not mine."

"Not a brass copper of it," replied Euse; "not a copper. No, no; so far from that, I'll be expectin' another hundred by this time next Thursday."

"Another! whew! Well, well, you shall have it," said Weeks, promptly; "for after all, it don't matter a punkin seed to me what your motives are, if you only secure the girl."

"Nor the girl's love or beauty a punkin seed either, if ye can only make her yer wife."

"Well—don't know about that."

"Hoot! sir, ye know, as well as the soul's in yer body, that ye don't care a shawty tabasky for her beauty. Yer aftersomethin' ye value more nor beauty, or I'm not Euse Curley o' the Cairn."

"You're not what I once took you for, that's certain," replied Weeks.

"You may be the d—l for what I know—and just as like as anything else, for all I can see to the contrary."

"Ha, ha! I'm not the dotin' old crone yer friends'd make me out, that's all that's lakely to fill her pockets."

"I required no such sacrifice," responded Weeks. "I employed you to serve me in a perfectly lawful transaction, from which no injury could possibly result to either party."

"Humph! and suppose the girl was left a tottin' by a friend in furrin parts," said Euse; "what then? Who'd be the gainer?"

"Quinn? Why, I guess I'm good enough for her—any way you can fix it, fortune or no fortune," said Weeks, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets, and hitching up his cap behind with the collar of his coat. "Yes, old lady, good enough if she had fifty fortunes."

"Good enough for her!" repeated Euse, looking into his face—her thin, wrinkled lips curling up in scorn as she spoke. "You good enough for Mary Lee!"

"Ay, or for any other Irish girl, by crackin' ever stepped in shoe leather," cried the Yankee, jingling the silver change in his pockets.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Euse; "that's mighty modest."

"Well, them's my sentiments."

"Ye weakness, ye mane."

"No, ma'am, my solemn conviction. The son of an American revolutionist is good enough, I take it, for the big gest—darndest old aristocrat's daughter in the land, all-fired proud as they feel."

"May be so, may be so," quietly replied Euse. "But if that's yer way o' thinkin', I'd advise ye keep it to yer-

self. Such talk as that may sound big in America, but it won't go down here."

"Here—and what the tarnation are ye, that an American born can't speak his sentiments right out, just as he pleases?"

"O, then indeed it's true for ye; had scan to the much we are. But still ye know we have our feelings as well as other people. And, between ourselves, Mr. Weeks, it's not very seemly to hear a man like you, with out a drop of decent blood in his veins, comin' over here and settin' himself up as an equal for the best in the land. Wow! wow! sir, it's mighty provokin' to see a stranger takin' sich airs on him self afore he's a month in the country."

"My dear woman, ye're behind the age, I guess, two or three centuries down here in this section. If ye only kept run of the times, ye'd soon come to find, that an American always makes as an equal for the best in the land. Wow! wow! sir, it's mighty provokin' to see a stranger takin' sich airs on him self afore he's a month in the country."

"Bedad, thin, if ye thry that same passport here, I'm afereed it won't take, barrin ye spake a little modester nor ye do now. Little as ye think of the Irish abroad, faith, there's some o' them at home here'd make ye keep a civil distance, if he don't keep a civil tongue in yer head. Mind that, sir, and don't forget it, either, as long as ye'r in the country."

"Well," said Weeks, somewhat taken aback by Euse's contemptuous disregard of a d—l of a man which he thought irreducible all over the world, and especially in poverty-stricken Ireland, "well, I was always taught to reckon a free-born American good enough for any woman in creation; and I rather think, old lady, ye'll have to thry hard before ye unsettle that opinion. Cousin Nathan—I mentioned his name once afore, I guess—Cousin Nathan was considerable of a shrewd man, in this way—as shrewd, I presume, as most of the men of that section of the country—well, he was a man that was always posted up in every thing relating to Europe and European aristocracy, and he told me, often and often, that a free-born American was good enough—"

"Laugh! free born fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Euse. "What the plague do we care about yer free-born Americans or yer Cousin Nathans either? We're obliged to ye, to be sure, for sendin' us over what ye did in our time of need, in ill it'd be our common to forget it, or indeed our children after us, for that matter; but in the name of patience have sense, and don't take the good out of all ye do by boatin' and puffin' yer Americanism that way, like an auctioneer sellin' caligoes at a fair."

"Boasting!" repeated Weeks; "well, there! Boasting! why, if there's any thing in this world I hate more than another, it's boasting. I never boast—never. The people of these old reduced nations here may boast, and the poorer they happen to be, the greater bragbarts they are. But our nation is too dignified, too intelligent, for that; she's too great to stoop to such trifles. No, no; I merely stated a fact, and I repeat it again, that a free American, a son of the immortal Washington, is good enough for the best and highest blood in creation."

"Very good," said Euse; "every body has a right to his own opinion, I suppose. But don't talk that way to Edward Lee, if you don't want to pick a quarrel with him. For never was I flatter fuller of fire than ye'll find him, if ye touch his family pride, by such talk as that."

"Well, hold on a bit. I've got an all-fired sure way of bringing down that same family pride a peg or two, and without a quarrel either. See if I hain't it."

"Why, in deed an word," said Euse, suddenly changing her tone to a confidential whisper, "and to tell ye truth, may be that self wad't be the worst thing ye cud do, after all, for I'm thinkin' they'll have to be beggared before they're bettered, the crathurs."

"What does that mean?" demanded Weeks.

"Why, that after all our schemin', Mr. Lee won't have ye till she finds there's no other way to save herself and her uncle from the poorhouse or the jail."

Whilst Euse was yet speaking, the crack of a pistol made Weeks turn his eyes quickly in the direction of the little cabin on the Cairn. The night, however, was so pitchy dark, he could see nothing beyond the edge of the road; but judging from the sharpness of the report, he thought the weapon must have been discharged within a dozen yards of where he stood. Wondering what this could mean in a spot so remote and a night so dark and threatening—for the evening breeze had now changed into occasional gusts, and big drops of rain began to fall so heavily as to disturb the dust under his feet,—wondering, and still keeping his eyes turned towards the Cairn, he was again startled by a shrill whistle twice repeated, and seeming to close to him as if it had come from himself. Turning short to demand from his companion what this signal meant, and why she replied to it, he found, much to his surprise and vexation, that he stood alone—Euse was gone. The moment after, however, an answer came to his question, but in a form somewhat different from what the astonished American expected; for hardly had he dashed the old woman's second time to come back and explain the mystery, when a flash of lightning, instantly followed by a clap of thunder, shot across the road and revealed for a second the form and face of the handsome young sailor, whom he had seen conversing with Mary Lee but an hour before, on the edge of the precipice. It was but a single flash, and lasted no longer than the twinkling of an eye; and yet he saw the young man distinctly—standing on a little knoll within a short call of him, and resting on the boat-hook in the very position he had seen him last.

Weeks' first impulse was to follow Euse and demand an explanation. The presence of the stranger, at such a

time and place, appeared to him rather suspicious; and being inquisitive by nature, as well as somewhat apprehensive of Euse's fidelity, he resolved to have the mystery cleared up at once, let the storm rage as it might.

With this magnanimous intention, he strode over the low fence on the road side, and boldly advanced up the hill towards the Cairn. Breathless, as much from agitation of mind as of body, he made his way within fifty paces of Euse's cabin, fully determined to have alas for human hopes I he was again destined to meet with disappointment; for just as he had gained the top of the first slope, Nannie presented herself before him, right in the middle of his path.

"Well, there!" he exclaimed, gazing at the old white goat standing before him as stiff and resolute as a sentry on guard—"there! you're ready for mischief again, I see; but go ahead, old Beelzebub; I'll be darned if you stop me this time!" and clutching his fishing rod Celtic fashion, he straightaway put himself on his defence.

Nannie, true to the well-known habits and instincts of her species, backed slowly away, till she had receded some ten or twelve paces, and then rearing on her hind feet, made a rush full against the intruder, and would probably have upset him, but for the animal's already, evaded the blow by stepping aside at the critical moment, and as she passed struck her on the horns. The goat, however, seemed not to notice it in the least; for immediately turning and running up the hill to intercept him, she again drew herself up in a position to renew the encounter. It should here be said, perhaps, that Nannie had somewhat the advantage of Mr. Weeks, inasmuch as the latter was a stranger in the count-ry, and had no knowledge of the use of his weapon; whereas Nannie according to common report, was already the "hero of a hundred battles." Besides, she knew her ground better and could see more distinctly in the darkness. With such odds against him, however, Mr. Weeks did his devoir bravely, and showed no lack of courage in addressing himself to so strange a combat. At length Nannie again rose up, and plunged for-ward as before, with a furious rush, and again missing her aim, received a second blow on the horns as violent as the first.

"Come, old she devil,—half catamount, half Lucifer,—fire up again; I'll teach you a Yankee trick or two; come on, old rattlesnake!" But Nannie, it seemed, was not disposed to renew the encounter so readily as he expected. Taking it for granted, nevertheless, she would a third time repeat her manoeuvre of running on before him and heading him off, he resolved to benefit by her loss of time, and have the start of her for the Cairn. With this object in view, he made all possible haste up the hill, and had gained on her a considerable distance, when all of a sudden, and without the slightest anticipation of it on his part, something struck him from behind, and threw him back head foremost, down the hill. A statue of marble thrust back from its pedestal down an inclined plane could not have fallen more helplessly than did Ephraim Weeks. The third of his body on the beaten foot path might have been heard distinctly at the mercy of his enemy. Twice he essayed to regain his feet, and twice did Nannie lay him flat on his back. At length, however, he succeeded so far as to scramble up on his knees, and as the goat, now in the heat of her counter, closed in upon him, no longer retreating and advancing, as before— he finally seized her by the horns, and speechless, breathless, furious, there he held her. But what was he to do now? He could not remain kneeling, in that attitude, looking in his enemy's face, all night, amid the rain and lightning. He was sorely perplexed, and never was he between two such horns of a dilemma before. To let go his hold, and strike with the but of his fishing rod, would only enrage her the more, without in the least extricating him from his embarrassment; and to hold her with one hand, whilst he drew out his pocket pistol (a weapon he always carried about him) with the other, was more than he could accomplish. In either case, he was likely to do himself as helpless and prostrate as ever before he could strike a blow or draw a trigger.

"Tarnation seize ye," he cried, looking into the animal's face, and shaking her by the horns; "are you man, or beast, or devil, or what are ye?"

Nannie bleated a reply. It was her defiance a Loutrance.

"O, good heavens!" cried Weeks, in accents of despair, "is there such another country as this in all mighty creation? Here I am on my knees, pelted with rain, half singed with lightning, and nearly beaten to a mummy by a goat, the very first day I entered on my plans and speculations."

But this condition of things could not long endure; and so Mr. Weeks, at last, prudently determined to run for it, since he could see no other way of terminating the fight. It was the reverse of a poor, hard working man, but what else could he do? Making a desperate effort, therefore, he threw the goat on her side by a sudden wrench of the horns, and then, jumping on his feet, fled down the hill, over the fence, and along the road, as fast as his long legs could carry him, cursing lustily, as he ran, the unlucky day that ever had the misfortune to meet Euse Curley of the Cairn. And here we must leave him to pursue his dreamy journey, and return to other actors in the play.

TO BE CONTINUED.

To take a Catholic paper is an evidence of interest in Catholic views as well as Catholic news. To stop a Catholic paper is evidence of a loss of interest in things Catholic.—Catholic Citizen.

AN EX-GOVERNOR'S EXPERIENCE WITH AN INNOCENT CONVICT.

Not long since I was visiting in the family of an ex-governor, and I heard him relate a story, which he gave me permission to print:

"When I was governor, I took a little pleasure trip, going to see a special friend. His country home was near the coal mines, and I made known my intention of visiting them. Of course my visit was known of even before I had arrived at my friend's home, and the very children along the wayside smiled at me as I drove from the little depot to my friend's house.

The third morning of my stay I went to the mines with a pleasant party of gentlemen. I was about to enter the shaft, when I felt a touch on my arm, and, turning, saw a girl about 15 years of age. She was the only female to be seen, though a number of idle men were standing about observing the governor."

"The girl was bareheaded holding a limp, flabby sunbonnet in her left hand. Her shoes were much broken, and her black calico dress had been washed until it was rusty. That, and the intense paleness of her long, bony face made the big freckles very plain. I noted these things at a glance, and then my eyes looked into hers—the most beseeching eyes I ever saw outside of the head of a hungry dog pushed into the cold air."

"What is it, child?" I asked, everyone looking on, waiting.

"Please, sir, let my brother go home a little while," she said. "The sight of him will keep mother from dying, and we can't get along without mother."

"Who is your brother, and where is he?" I asked, though I had guessed promptly enough that he was a criminal.

"His name is Nathan Peel, and he's—he's down here," she said, pointing to the shaft. "It's night about killed mother, sir," she added. "She would take a turn for the better and get well if she could just see him at home for a while. And Nathan didn't do what they said he did, Governor. He didn't do it."

A light that was fierce seemed to spurt up in her eyes as she spoke, and her face became mottled with color.

"He ain't that kind," she continued. "But the law put him down there, and he'll work faithfully. Only let him come home this once—only let him—only let him!" she pleaded.

I remember her words well, but to tell how her voice sounded is out of my power. I know it made me feel like taking the young man by the shoulder and hurrying him home without a moment's delay. Instead, however, I asked the questions one in a similar position would be expected to ask. I found that the family lived fifty miles away; that the girl walked the distance alone, having heard of my intended visit; that her father was dead, and that the mother had been in bed ever since the arrest of her son.