

floor of what had been the crypt of the old chapel, was being slowly raised. A human head and bust were dimly seen beneath, struggling to displace the slab.

With a suppressed shriek, as if she feared the grave were indeed yielding up its charge, Madeline clung trembling to her brother. But Calvert, dashing forward, heaved, with his whole strength, against the stone.

Thus assisted, Barney, for it was none other, emerged. Letting go his hold, the heavy flag dropped into its place again. Then the youth faced round on the intruder.

CHAPTER VIII.

To the two onlookers, that was indeed a speaking silence that followed. For a full minute not a sound, not a motion broke the stillness. But the face-play of the two chief actors was something thrilling in its intensity of meaning, in its rapid interchange of emotion. The youth's countenance, pale, stern, commanding, the candid brow calm, unruffled, but haughty, the lips firmly compressed, all served to heighten the questioning expression of the cold, clear, unwavering blue eye, which poured forth a steady searching gaze, as the truth-compelling spear of Ithuriel.

It was such a gaze as well became a son making inquisition for a father's blood. With a shiver, the observant girl read therein the settled determination, if there was even a sign of flinching in the eye that encountered his, that life for life was to be the forfeit.

But the eye of the man they had accused of murder did not flinch. Though every nerve of the pallid, grimy face was quivering with agitation, and the hands were piteously working; though in the grey, dilated eye, you might by turns read suspense, awe, terror, the agony of wounded feeling, indignant resentment of suspicion; yet, as truth never quails before justice, so the man's conscious integrity upheld him through the ordeal; and never did his look once swerve, till the youth's softening eye and lip relaxing into a smile told that the trial was over. Then the recoil came, and the break down of the strong man was something pitiable to witness. Gasping, sobbing, grovelling at the young man's feet, with out-stretched hand he burst forth hysterically:

"For God's sake, masher Calvert, you wouldn't take back the kind word, would ye? Say ye nivir, for wan minnit, laid the likes on ould Barney."