

HARRY STANHOPE.

BY ELIZABETH DYSART.

CHAPTER V.

Time flew by, all too swiftly, and the boys became men. Then there came a day that brought sorrow and mourning to the old homestead by the river. The husband and father was ill. For a few days, the physician and wife did all in their power—then came the verdict: "There is no hope, Mrs. Stanhope."

Harry was away—no one knew where—and Tom McCreakindly volunteered to find him. Going to the nearest town, he began a search of the saloons, feeling pretty sure he would be in some of them. At last he found him, in the midst of a group, engaged in a game of cards. They were all men, apparently, belonging to the higher grades of society, and all pretty drunk—but one. He was a middle-aged man, tall and slight, with flashing black eyes and closely curling black hair, thickly sprinkled with gray. He had a commanding look and unmistakably the air of a gentleman. He seemed entirely sober, although he drank as often as the others. Tom knew enough of gambling to see, in the few moments he stood watching them, that this man was gaining, while the others were losing heavily—particularly Harry.

He walked up to him and, laying his hand kindly on his shoulder, said, "Come Harry, I want you to ride home with me. It is getting late you know."

Harry looked over his shoulder, not at all surprised at seeing Tom there, and said,

"Don't bother about me; I'm not

ready yet. You go on by yourself."

"But they want you at home."

"No they don't. The old man turned me out the other day, and told me to earn my own bread and butter—and brandy. I am doing it too, by Jove!"

"Harry, you must come with me, your father is very ill—perhaps dying."

"Ill, is he? not a bit of it! Old man's hearty as a buck—always was; you can't come that dodge on me, Tom McCrea."

Here Mr. Leslie, the middle-aged man, who seemed sober, spoke.

"How long since you left home, Stanhope?"

"A month—a week ago—no, guess it was yesterday—hanged if I know."

"And your father was well when you left?"

"Well enough to turn me out."

"He is not likely to die out so suddenly," Leslie continued, coolly; "so make yourself easy. Shall I see you to the door?" and he bowed politely to Tom.

Tom seized Harry's arm.

"Harry Stanhope," he said, "the doctors say your father cannot live more than twenty-four hours. Will you let him die without a chance to make your peace with him? Or will you come with me now? A few hours more and it may be too late."

Tom's tone, more than his words, roused him, and he stumbled to his feet, and began looking helplessly round for his hat. Tom found it for him, and they were soon driving rapidly towards the old homestead.