

terton; "I think I saw him yesterday at Forest Hall, the merriest of them all."

"I have no doubt," returned Mr. Grassenthwaite; "for there's not a merry-making within a circuit of some twenty miles, that Billy Stone would miss. But did you not know," he added, more gravely, "that the master of Dunfell was preparing to go abroad? and this I have strong reasons for believing, in consequence of — I do not really see why I should hesitate to tell you — in consequence of this unfortunate codicil."

Mr. Winterton read it twice over before he made any remark upon master Harry Netherby's intended expatriation; and then, as he slowly folded up the document and returned it, simply asked if there was no remedy.

"None!" was the laconic reply.

"The Stricklands are known to be embarrassed, could they not be induced to sell their claim?" asked Mr. Winterton.

"It is entailed upon the heirs male forever. This difficulty, however," continued Mr. Grassenthwaite, "might be got over, with the consent of the heir apparent, especially while there is no presumptive heir. But of this I am not sure. It is a case which so seldom occurs in our practice, that I should have to consult acknowledged authorities on the subject before I could give a decided opinion. I frankly confess, however," he added after a short pause, "that I see little probability of my being called upon to do so, as George Strickland would hardly be brought to give up his all but only hope of a comfortable independence, grounded though it be upon a doubtful contingency."

"It would seem," interrupted Mr. Winterton, with his mercantile and habitual acumen, "that, on referring to master Harry Netherby's intended movements, they must consider the chances rather against them now."

"I am sorry to say," Mr. Grassenthwaite observed, in answer to this remark, "that I entertain a very different opinion. The ardour of youthful lovers has, ere this, (and will again,) surmounted much greater obstacles than any now existing, to prevent a union between the parties here in question; especially since this happy and unexpected alteration in your niece's circumstances."

"But, you look into the affair," returned Mr. Winterton, anxious to make out even a probability of success for the scheme he had suggested; "you look into this affair with the keen eye of a lawyer; and, by my faith, with that of an ardent lover too, or I am much mistaken. In either of these capacities the Stricklands may not view it. Ah! I see I'm right in my conjecture," he triumphantly continued, as he saw the slight blush

mantling in the youthful lawyer's cheek. "I knew it—I was sure of it—but Phillip Strickland is now, like me, too old for love adventures, and George's are all over, now that he is married: So you see, having neither lawyers nor lovers to deal with, we may be able to bring it down to a cool and calculating matter of business; and, with the aid of avrice in our counsels, we may accomplish that, which warm young hearts, already knitted to each other, might deem impossible."

"Well! well!" Mr. Grassenthwaite replied, in some confusion; yet in a louder and more energetic tone than was his wont, as if those feelings, arising from the latter character assigned him by his friend, could not entirely be repressed; "my opinion is, although I shall not tell the Stricklands that, in spite of wills, and codicils to boot, Harry Netherby will yet wed Alice Musgrave!"

"Never! And 'tis worse than idle to talk and speculate on such impossibilities!"

This was said by Harry Netherby himself, who, on entering the office at that moment through the open door, had heard his friend's last words, ere he passed the screen which stood before it. On seeing Mr. Winterton, after the most friendly salutations were exchanged, he gave him a full and ingenuous detail of all that the reader already knows. Some points in this account were not, however, quite so clear before to Mr. Winterton's less privileged position. And Harry added, on leaving the office as abruptly as he'd entered it: "To wed the only woman I ever loved, or ever shall, and be forever after dependant on her bounty for a livelihood, can hardly be suspected of a Netherby!"

The feelings of Mr. Winterton, as well as those of his young friend, already deeply interested, were, by this short and sudden visit, so highly excited, now that he was gone, and they had leisure to reflect on the strange concatenation of events, that they sat looking at each other in silence and in some bewilderment, as if they hardly could decide, in their confused ideas, whether what they'd seen were Harry Netherby himself, or some unearthly apparition in his likeness. Considering the belief in "second sight," which then so generally prevailed, we need not wonder, if they almost entertained a doubt of its reality; and thought, for a moment, while the spell was on them, that it might have been some freak of fancy, shadowing forth a waking dream.

"How strange! How very strange!" said Mr. Winterton, at length, as if communing with his thoughts. "How cruel! that two such hearts so firmly knitted to each other, should thus be torn asunder. It must not—it cannot be. Mine, in-