

homeward, each declaring that he had seldom spent a pleasanter day. As they can undoubtedly find their way to Frankfort without our assistance, we will remain at Uncle Joshua's together with Mr. William Middleton and Mr. Ashton. The latter felt as if he had suddenly found an old friend, and as nothing of importance required his presence at home, he decided to remain where he was until Monday.

That evening, after everything was "put to rights," and Mr. Middleton had yelled out his usual amount of orders, he returned to the porch, where his brother and Ashton were still seated. Lighting his old cob pipe, he said, "Come, Bill, Nancy'll fetch out her rockin' cheer and knittin' work, and we'll hear the story of your doin's in that heathenish land, but be kinder short, for pears like I'd lived a year to-day, and I feel mighty like goin' to sleep."

After a moment's silence Mr. Middleton commenced: "I shall not attempt to justify myself for running away as I did, and yet I cannot say that I have ever seriously regretted visiting those countries, which I shall never look upon again. I think I wrote to you, Joshua, that I took passage in the ship *Santiago*, which was bound to the East Indies. Never shall I forget the feeling of loneliness which crept over me, on the night when I first entered the city of Calcutta, and I felt that I was indeed alone in a foreign land, and that more than an ocean's breadth rolled between me and my childhood's home. But it was then useless to dwell upon the past. I had my fortune to make, and I began to look about for some employment. At last I chanced to fall in with an intelligent Spaniard, Signor de Castello. He was a wealthy merchant, and for several years had resided in Calcutta. As he spoke the English language fluently, I found no trouble in making his acquaintance. He seemed pleased with me, and offered me the situation of clerk in his counting-room. I accepted his offer, and also became an inmate of his dwelling, which was adorned with every conceivable luxury. His family consisted of himself and his daughter, Inez."

At the mention of Inez, Ashton half-started from his chair, but immediately reseating himself, listened while Mr. Middleton proceeded: "I will not attempt to describe Inez, for I am too old now to even feel young again, by picturing to your imagination the beauty of that fair Spaniard. I will only say that I never saw one whose style of beauty would begin to compare with hers, until I beheld my niece, Julia."

"Lord knows, I hope she wan't like Tempest," said Uncle Joshua, at the same time relieving his mouth of its overflowing contents.

"I do not know whether she were or not," answered Mr. Middleton, "I only know that Inez seemed too beautiful, too gentle, for one to suspect that treachery lurked beneath the soft glance of her dark eyes. I know not why it was, but Castello, from the first seemed to entertain for me a strong friendship, and at last, I fully believe the affection he felt for me, was second only to what he felt for his daughter. But he could not remain with us, and in eighteen months after I first knew him, he took one of the fevers common to that sultry climate, and in the course of a few days he was dead. I wrote to you of his death, but I did

not tell you that he left a will, in which all his immense wealth was equally divided between myself and Inez. He did not express his desire that we should marry, but I understood it so, and thenceforth looked upon Inez as belonging exclusively to myself."

"You didn't marry her, though, I take it," said Joshua, making a thrust at an enormous mosquito, which had unceremoniously alighted upon his brawny foot.

"No," answered William, "I did not marry her, but t'was not my fault. She played me false. Six months after her father's death we were to be married. The evening previous to our wedding arrived. I was perfectly happy, but Inez seemed low-spirited, and when I inquired the cause she answered, 'Nothing, except a little nervous excitement.' I readily believed her: but when the morning came the cause of her low spirits was explained. The bird had flown, with a young Englishman, Sir Arthur Effingham, who had been a frequent guest at my house."

"That was one of Tempest's capers to a dot," said Uncle Joshua. "But go on, Bill, and tell us whether the disappointment killed you or not."

So William proceeded: "Instead of my bride, I found a note from Inez, in which she asked pardon for what she had done, saying she had long loved Sir Arthur, but did not dare to tell me so. They were going to England, whither she wished me to send a part of her portion, as her husband was not wealthy. I understood Inez's character perfectly, and could readily see that she preferred a titled, but poor Englishman, to a wealthy, but plain American, so I gave her up quietly."

"And was mighty lucky to get shut of her so," interrupted Joshua.

"From that time," continued William, "I gave up all thoughts of marriage, and devoted myself to increasing my wealth, and spending it for my own comfort and the good of others. Twelve years ago I chanced to go on board the English vessel *Delphine*, and there I found our friend Ashton."

"Look at him, for gracious sake," said Uncle Joshua, pointing towards Ashton. "Why Ashton. 'Why, man, you are as white as one of Judy's biscuits; what ails you?'"

"Nothing," answered Ashton, who really was much affected by Mr. Middleton's narrative; but he said, "I am only thinking of the long, weary days I passed in the *Delphine* before Mr. Middleton kindly cared for me."

This seemed quite natural, and Mr. Middleton continued: "Ashton was wasted to a mere skeleton by ship fever, and my heart yearned towards him. Perhaps I felt a stronger sympathy for him when I learned that he was an American. He, like myself, had run away. The vessel, in which he had embarked, had been wrecked, and he, with two others, were saved in a small boat. For days they floated over the broad expanse of waters, until at length the *Delphine* picked them up, and brought them to India. I had Ashton removed to my own house, but as soon as he recovered, he took French leave of me. From that time I lived alone. I wrote to you frequently, but got no answer. My letters must have been lost, but I then concluded you were dead. At last I began to have such an ardent desire to tread my native