

out a fearful peal. The man was masked, and in his hand he held a horse-pistol, which was levelled at Richard; but the unexpected bell unnerved his arm, the doubtful light cheated his aim, and the bullet whizzed through the hair of Richard, while the majestic mirror crashed into ruin at his feet.

"Help! help!" he exclaimed, as he dashed away the chair that was before him. The assailant saw his failure, and in an instant drew a knife from his girdle, with his left hand, and, uttering a savage Spanish oath, rushed upon Richard with the butt-end of his uplifted pistol. Swift as thought, the young man darted from the spot, and his assailant, unprepared for the movement, was carried by his own force beyond the mark, and stumbled. Like a tiger Richard sprang upon him, and struck him in the back with his poinard: the keen blade passed through the lungs into the heart, and the wretched man fell heavily upon the hearth—a corpse.

In a moment the room was filled, and Marie clung to her husband, and thanked God for his safety. The alarm was sudden, and they brought no lights. Richard dragged the body to the window, and when he drew back the curtains and tore off the mask, the broad moonlight revealed to him the face and form of Alessandro Malpertz!

Generations have passed since that time, and the world has seen a change. The family of Bridgnorth yet exists, but reverses have come—the name is changed—and the descendants know nothing of the wealth of their ancestors. The house yet remains, but it is not the same. The hand of time has been busy with the spot, and commerce has claimed it for herself. Where the garden stood, and the old tree grew, is now a garden no more: the space is filled by out-houses pertaining to the buildings that surround it, and scarcely a trace remains to say what once it was. But in the house itself are many indications of the past, and here and there the rich paint upon the walls, though cracked and broken, defaced and stained, speaks out from its ancient garb to tell of an earlier time; and to this day, in its old position, yet hangs a remnant of the alarm-bell, with fragments of the wire dangling from it, but all broken and useless, and only serving to excite speculation as to its

former intent in him who may chance to mount the staircase.

It was but the other day that I stood in the room where the fated mirror had fallen, and endeavoured to recall the incidents I have narrated. My eye fell upon the chimney-piece, and I could not look without regret upon the lately-broken marble—the work of a careless hand—nor without a wish, perhaps an idle one, that the time-honoured relics of our ancestors should be handled with a more gentle touch, and be more reverently removed. The building, from time to time, has had many masters, and undergone many alterations: rooms have been merged into each other by the removal of party-walls, and the early arrangement materially interfered with to suit the whim or convenience of the varied occupants; nor does it longer bear a distinctive character—for two adjoining houses have been blended with it, and it is now somewhat difficult to trace the boundary of each. In place of the quiet and repose of old, the roar of machinery echoes through the rooms; the passages are no longer trodden with a noiseless step; and at the entrance of the courtway, where the high gates stood, are now two slight iron barriers—the supporters of a gate, which in its turn has been removed; and on either side a bright brass plate, but lately placed there, announces to the passers-by that the premises are in the occupation of printers!

I know not why we should speak mournfully of other days, nor why we should approach, with a reverence amounting at times to awe, the things upon which Time has done its work; yet it would seem an immutable principle in human nature, and in human nature alone. May it not be that in these perishing mementos we see an image of our own decay?—silent admonitors of that great Mystery to which we are all hastening, and in which, sooner or later, we must be merged!

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Sensibility is the cause either of the greatest happiness or misery attending the female sex,—but too frequently it leads to the latter, yet if virtue is their guide it gives them gleams of the former by a hopeful assurance of eternal felicity.

Habitual acts of kindness have a powerful effect in softening the heart.