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***** "If I ever have an opportunity to sell it, and desire to do so, i shall c nsider your offer, Mr. Bruyn," replied the lawyer, with an emphasis on the

"And if you don't," continued Mr. Bruyn, "why, I hope we shall be good neighbors. More than that I can't say now."

"It is not necessary to say more, my dear sir, pursued Mr. Saybrook.
"What more could I desire than to be your good neighbor? As events now shape, perhaps my ambition is not impossible of accomplishment. Ah, Mr. Bruyn, if my anxiety and efforts for Ralph could be thus rewarded, how happy I should be. No one can tell the interest I have taken in that boy. If I say it myself, he is a young man of rather uncommon parts, and of an intelligence and business turn quite remarkable for his years. I have taken great pains in his bringing up, my dear sir; and I venture to believe that he does me no discredit,"

"No doubt of it," replied the farmer. "I have a good opinion of the lad myself. He's steady, and that's

the main thing." "Steady, Mr. Bruyn-why, sir, I zel that his character is founded on a rock, as it were, and cannot be moved. I have never known him to commit an im-

proper or immoral act, or to manifest a single extravagant or wild trait." The old farmer did not dissent from this eulogism; and, in fact, it was true enough in its way. Ralph had enough of worldly shrewdness to have a keen regard for his reputation, and, as character went in the retired community, he was a most exemplary young man, but one of a kind who was much more respected and liked by his elders than by those of his own age. Farmer Bruyn soon took his depart-

ure, and the lawyer remained cogitating over the interview and its probable effects till Ralph came in.

The young man saw at once, by his father's gratified smile, that some favorable event had happened, and bent on him an enquiring glance.

"Old Bruyn has been here," said the father. "He bit on the bait I dropped in the proper quarter regarding my little transactions with Claude. He seems to regard me already as the practical controller of the Rolff property, and was all ready to buy the old wood lot and adjoining meadows, which I happened to know he has had a hankering for this long while. Of course I was chary of coming to any terms, and I fancy managed to advance your claims in a manner that will not be without effect. Everything works all right so far. I think there will be nothing in the way of your beginning your attentions to Miss Rosa at once. Then if young Claude only gets entangled in some way in Eu-rope, or happily dies, or we can keep him there and unsuspicious of our plans till everything is in favorable shape, success will be ours. But I dare not make public the deeds as yet. We must not run the chance of his hearing of anything irregular. In a bold step like this, much depends on the chances. Our only plan is to wait. You see the pro-

priety of that, Ralph?" "Yes, of course. It wouldn't do for the young cub to know that you had got his signature to papers that deed away all his property, and be none the wiser."
"Yes, Ralph—but speak low. What
was that noise?"
"What noise?"

"I thought I heard a sound, as if some-

body might be listening."

Mr. Saybrook arose and went to the inner door, and looked around in the fng apartments, but he saw nothing, and returned apparently satisfied to his

"It was a bold stroke, Ralph-perhaps a dangerous one—but I feit I could trust the young fool's utter carelessness, and the result was so essential that I deter-mined to risk it. After reading him the papers he supposed he was to sign, I managed to change them, and present others to him for his signature in a way that did not disclose the trick. So here they are in good shape, all properly endorsed and witnessed, and they will be hard to get over when the proper time comes. But we must be cautious. My actions have been sagaciously planned, and all undertaken in view of a possible contingency, which I now consider to be inevitable. I mean the outbreak of war with England. In that case our young gentleman will be safely kept out of our way for a number of years; there is no telling how long, but long enough, I am certain. My only anxiety is lest he should take the alarm and want to re-turn to this country. In my letters I shall take every measure to quiet any apprehensions, and I hope to draw him out on points that will be of future use

"What a general you would make!" exclaimed the admiring son, as this rehearsal of his father's plans was con-

"Ah, Ralph," was the reply; "remember, there is strategy in other fields than war, and the best general always wins.

CHAPTER X. Fire fall passed into winter, and the new year at last drew near.

Anthony Saybrook had not been unmindful of his engagement with Claude to visit the old south cellar on New Year's day, and note whether the mysfory small and as easy terious signs appeared on the door of the vault therein. In fact, he had

awaited mest anxiously the arrival of the appointed day. Spite of the ease he had had in explaining to Claude the secret of the eld lady's mysterious instructions, he was greatly puzzled in his mind as to their nature and meaning. They must mean something important, he argued: The old lady was too practical and sagacious to have given such strange and explicit direc-tions without some very definite object in view. "Can it be possible," mused the lawyer, "that she has carefully saved her earnings and deposited them in the old vault, and that great wealth is there awaiting this young prodigal. It is not improbable. Knowing his

Disease. A well-known doctor has said, "I never yet made a post-mortem ex-amination in a case of death from Heart Disease with-out finding the kidneys were at fault." The Kidney medicine which was first on the market, most success-ful for Heart Disease and all Kidney Troubles, and most widely imitated is

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eckiess and naturally spendthrift disposition, she might have adopted such a plan of keeping the money out of his hands till he should have arrived at years of greater dis retion. But who is to judge thereof, and give the mysterious sign that is to unlock the doors of the vault, provided young prodigal reforms within five years? Can it be old Carl - or Margaret? Faith, I shouldn't wonder. Either would be shrewd and trustworthy enough; and, really, the plan wouldn't be so bad for keeping the money safe till Claude got a little experience of the world. But I'll wager the old lady never counted on the possibility of any new proprie-tor coming into possession of Rolf House before the secret of the vault was revealed. Suppose there is a fortune lying in there snugly locked up!

Yes, yes—it is a prize worth having; and I must and will have it, unless the devil himself fights against me." New Year day at last arrived; and, immediately after a hearty dinner, Anthony Saybrook proceeded to the old mansion, and, lifting the great rusty, knocker of the heavy oaken door, sent a loud alarm through the vacant halls and rooms, that echoed and re-echoed as if giving warning that a dangerous

It makes Rolff House the greater prize.

enemy was at hand. Old Carl answered the summons "Good day, Mr. Crum," said the lawyer, with a pleasan smile." "Good day," answered the old man.

"Come in. I knew the object of your wisit.' "Ah! - Claude informed you, course. Very good, indeed-it saves the trouble of explanation. I presume we may as well proceed at once to the old cellar. It is my plan to transact all business as speedily as possible; and, as this is a holiday, and I have invited my friend Mr. Bruyn over to have a

o'clock. I will adhere to my plan on this eccasion." "Curse your plan!" muttered old Carl under his breath; and then he said aloud, "I'll get a light," and at once started off to procure it, leaving the lawyer standing in the cold, gloomy,

social glass and pipe with me at four

"Scant courtesy," he said to himself, as he gazed after the old man with a peculiar glitter in his eyes; "but it's all the same to me, Mr. Crum; I fancy, I shall be able to get even with you one of these days."

Old Carl presently returned, with & candle in a tin lantern, and beckoning to the lawyer, led the way to the stair case, and down into the basement. They traversed the dark passage that led to the cellar stairs, and old Carl descended them and unlocked the door, and held the lantern that the lawyer

might safely descend. In a moment they both stood in the old gloomy cellar, and the old man led the way with his lantern to the vault. "This is the vault?" queried the lawyer.

"Yes," curtly responded the old man, Anthony Saybrook examined the door carefully. There was no sign of the mysterious marks that were to be the signal of the breaking of the prohibition against the door being opened. This was all that the lawyer's duty required of him. But his curiosity was increased by the sight of the vault and its massive structure. He examin-

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ed it closely. He noted how nicely the door fitted, and wondered as to its thickness. He scanned keenly the massive masonry that surrounded it, and mentally concluded that no such solid structure could have been built for a trifling purpose. Why had old Magnus Rolff had it built? This question came up in his mind, and set him to trying to weave a theory to explain it. He to weave a theory to explain it. He concluded that it must have been intended for the deposit of some precious treasure. Public gossip may be more than half right about it, he thought. A smile flitted across his face as he called to mind the superstitious report that no one could enter it or handle its ontents except he sold himself to the devil. "Suppose I should be the one to outwit the devil," he exclaimed mentally, and again the smile flitted across

"Rather a queer piece of masonry, this?" he said in an inquiring tone, turning to old Carl, after having finished his inspection of the vault "I don't know," responded the old man; "it is according to how you look

"Well, how do you look at it, if I may be so bold as to enquire?" responded the lawyer, in an inquisitive tone. "As a very simple matter, without a

bit of mystery about it," was the re-ply. "In their better days, the family had many valuable articles, and it was very natural that a great house like this should have a private strong place, where valuable papers or articles could be kept safe from prying eyes and fire." "So, so-very keen, very sagacious, Mr. Crum." replied the lawyer, who saw at once that old Carl was not disposed to encourage him in any curiosity about the vault. "And now, if it is just as agreeable to you, I should like to be left alone here a few monents, that I may carry out certain instructions of your young master." Mr. Saybrook had taken a fancy that ne would like to closely examine the old cellar, and hence his request to be

left alone. But old Carl had no notion of indulgng him in his curiosity.

"It would afford you little pleasure, nethinks, to be left alone here in the dark." he answered. "I cannot leave you the lantern, as I am growing old, and it is not safe for me to be wandering around in the dark passages above without a light."

"I will light you up the stairs and through the passage, if that is all," anwered the lawyer, "and then return and fulfill my duty here."

Seeing that any attempt to evade the equest would prove useless, the cld man replied, somewhat bluntly:

"It is not in accordance with my instructions to leave you alone here. "Instructions from whom?" demanded the lawyer, sharply. "That question concerns me and not

you," responded the old man, with a suspicion of warmth in his tone. "But to save words, I will say that my instructions were to accompany you down here once each year, on New Year's Day, until I received orders to the contrary; but under no circumstances to allow any one in here alone, or, in fact to allow anybody in here except yourself, at the time and in the manner I have stated."

Anthony Saybrook was too shrewd der the circumstances. prised and annoyed that Claude should have left any such instructions, but a noment's reflection convinced him that did not necessarily imply any suspicion of himself, but might have been the result of extra care in so instructing old Carl that he would guard well

the vault. "Well, well, Mr. Crum, we will not quarrel over the matter," he made haste to reply. "Please hand me your lantern a moment, and I will more carefully perform my duty of inspec-

The old man handed him the lantern. and he critically examined the vault again, and, in doing it, managed 10 so throw the light as to allow it to penetrate the recesses of the old cellar. But the furtive glimpses of dark recesses in the heavy stone wall, and of the steps in the outer wall, afforded him only so much satisfaction as to in-crease his curiosity. In a far corner, he saw what seemed to be several heavy chests piled one upon another. He would have given a good round sum to have stayed and critically examined the old cellar, but Carl's eyes were fixed on him with a steady and observing gaze, so he suppressed his curiosity. and handing back the lantern, followed his guide up to the great hall again. Here he took a prompt leave, and was

on his way home again. "The old watch dog," he muttered, as he strode along, "he was suspicious of me as if he knew my secret resolves My first step must be to get him out of the house. Ah, if events only favor me, there will be no trouble. I fancy, however, that I can manage the matter. Let me think-let me think."

And so, planning and gloating over his enticipated trium ph, Anthony Saybroom soon reached

To be Continued.

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