

"Only the people that have been waiting to be let in. We don't open till one o'clock on Sunday, and the people get impatient."

From that time the hum of many voices, mostly women, continued to resound within. Probably the tidings that Mrs. Alterton was lying dead in the house, gave a zest to their gossip over their drams, for the house was crowded the whole day.

To the uninitiated Mabel there was something dreadful in the desecration of the Sabbath, in that house made solemn by the presence of death. She looked with wonder on her father's complacent face, slightly grave with his new but not deep sorrow. Could it be that use could so deaden the feelings, that the tramp of feet, the hoarse murmur of coarse voices, and ribald oaths, and now and then a wild joyless laugh, the very ghost of mirth, did not disturb him; while in the adjoining chamber lay all that remained of one who had for twelve years borne his name, and shared, or it might be said made, his fortune? Mabel did not know yet that people can get used to anything, where interest prepares a sedative for the feelings.

In the evening, two visitors arrived, whom Mabel did not care to meet, and yet could not avoid—Frank and Tom Horncastle. Her early recollections of these youths were anything but agreeable; but now with their mother's last moments fresh in her mind, she tried to shut out all but kind feelings. Frank was four, and Tom two years older than herself. The first had been put to various pursuits, but tired of them all. Three premiums had been paid with him, but he staid nowhere; and at length had returned to his home and taken part in the business, but was so wild and troublesome that his mother could endure his presence no longer, and he went, duly qualified by a bluff insolence, to assist a distant relative, who had a rough tavern-trade among sailors at Portsmouth. There he was a favorite, for he did not want activity and impudence, and his mother supplied him with plenty of money. Tom was sottish, but more settled. He lived with a chemist in Birmingham, who, if he did not like his apprentice, liked the premium he got with him, and the prospect of bolstering up a failing trade by taking Tom as partner, when his time expired.

Both the young men had been summoned home, and came by their opposite routes, at nearly the same time, to the Metropolis, and met within half an hour in the home of their childhood. Mabel did not witness the meeting of her father with his step-sons, nor did she accompany them on their visit to their mother's remains. She waited alone in the drawing-room until they joined her at the supper-table. Her ears, as she sat in the twilight, were filled with sounds she loathed. The lights below sent up a strong reflection to the room in which she sat, and the constant tide of life flowing in and out was grimly shadowed on the closed blinds. As the evening deepened into night, the sounds grew louder, and between the crevice of the blind and the window Mabel saw the opposite house, the counterpart of her father's. She noticed creatures staggering forth, that looked scarcely human in their loathsome helplessness. Now and then an infant would be swinging or dangling in some virago's arms, and as the heavy door swung on its hinges, it seemed to her as if the little heads must be crushed. Once her blood boiled with indignation as she noticed a slender girl of some twelve years old weeping, as she followed a huge man to the door, and then clung round him, evidently entreating him not to enter. The man hurled her from him with fearful oaths and violence, and she fell heavily on the broken curb-stone, when a tattered boy, munching a cabbage stalk, helped her to rise. Mabel saw the blood streaming from her temple as she tottered feebly away.

Mabel was glad to ring for lights in order to divert her attention from the fearful drama going on around her.

The traces of as much emotion as they could feel, were on the faces of Frank and Tom Horncastle, as they came into the room with Mr. Alterton, and interrupted Mabel's reflections. The young men, though both good-looking, were each different varieties of the genus "Lout;" Frank being the self-sufficient, and Tom the surly specimen. They greeted Mabel with a more subdued civility than she ever remembered, and were unusually agreeable by their silence. Mabel pitied them for their loss, but much more for what she thought must be their self-reproach for their conduct to a mother who had been kind to a fault to them. She might have kept her sympathy, as neither of the young men ever had any misgivings as to their own doings; and the chief feeling in both at that instant was, vexation at the suddenness of the death, rather than at the event itself, and annoyance that they had no power over the property. This was the true cause of a clumsy attempt at courtesy that sat somewhat uneasily on both.

If either Mabel or her father had heard the young men, as they sat late over their cigars and cold brandy and water, and discussed the prospect of "the governor forking out handsomely," or, as a last recourse, one of them proposing for "Mabel, if she was likely to have what would make her worth having;" Tom exclaiming, in reply, "Oh, don't be too fast, the old codger 'll marry again, you'll see; and then all that ought to be ours 'll go;"—if these and similar remarks had been heard by Mabel and her father, perhaps a yet stronger feeling of repugnance than already existed, might have been produced.

The disgust Mabel felt for the business pursuits of the home she had so long desired to visit, deepened into horror as the days passed slowly on. Thursday was the time appointed for the funeral, and though all the feminine preparations for mourning genteelly, were lingered over with the inten-

tion of resolutely diverting the mind from the daily, and even hourly, brawls that startled no one in the house but Mabel, yet she grew so nervous and unhappy, that Susan said, "If my pore Missus had really liked Miss Mabel, and been her hone mother, the young cretur couldn't ha' pined more."

Meanwhile a resolution was forming in the mind of Mabel, that circumstances speedily confirmed. On the Tuesday before the funeral, there was a quarrel between two women in the street. They were parted by the police, and admonished to "move on." They did move, each to the opposite gin-palaces, where for a long time they seemed each to stay in quiet, no doubt drinking deeply of the inflaming potion. It happened that the woman at the "Tun and Noggin," Alterton's house, was emerging from the door, just as her opponent came out upon the opposite pavement, and was lounging at the side of an oyster-stall that roofed the gutter. This virago no sooner caught sight of the face of her foe, than madly snatching up an oyster-knife, she rushed across the road, and with all her force stabbed the woman in the chest. The wretched creature fell back between the doors upon the floor of the gin-palace, and with a bubbling groan expired instantly. Then followed an indescribable scene. A terrific mob gathered instantly; a detachment of police came to secure the murderess, and to restore order. Mr. Alterton's house was of necessity closed for an hour, and the dead body laid in the office at the side of the bar to await the inquest.

Much that happened constantly in that business Mabel knew nothing of, except as noise and evil looks displayed it; but this could not be hid from her; neither the dreary details of the inquest, which was not long either in assembling, or finding a verdict of manslaughter—the removal of the body to the dead-house—the fact that each of the women had families—the dead three, and the living five children. Mabel knew that the streets, the prison, the hulks, the penal settlement, were likely to await these miserable victims of their mothers' crime, and she could not eat or sleep. The very air seemed filled with sighs and groans, and the openly expressed wish of Frank Horncastle that "Government would hang a few of these yelling cats of women who bothered tradesmen out of their lives, and brought disgrace on respectable houses," made her sick with dread.

She noticed that her father looked deadly pale when he returned from the funeral, and she learned that the husband of the woman in prison—an Irishman—had followed the procession to the cemetery, and there, after the service, he had cursed Mr. Alterton with all the vehemence of his nation, and prayed that "the tears of his children might bring sorrow upon sorrow on the murdering villains who fattened on their misery." Both Frank and Tom repeated the words as a bit of Irish frenzy; but Mabel shuddered at them. Had she been superstitious, she might have thought the curse began instantly to work,—for that very evening, as some money and jewelry of Mrs. Alterton's was being divided between her sons (Mabel keeping only a plain ring as a remembrance), the pent up discontent of the young men found vent first in murmurs, then in open anger. The constraint they had put upon themselves for some days had been a kind of dam to the swelling tide of bitterness which had accumulated none the less, and now burst all restraint, and poured forth with a violence that nothing could check. Mr. Alterton, though, as we have seen, an easy man, was obstinate, and, when fully roused, was a match for both his sons. Mabel's love to her father did not blind her to the fact that the quarrel was disgraceful on both sides. The young men were flung out of the house, threatening legal proceedings, while their retreating steps were followed by Mr. Alterton's voice, telling them "never to enter his doors again till they knew how to behave themselves."

Mabel had retired while this storm was at its worst, and did not rejoin her father until the evening was far advanced. When she entered the room, the first words he uttered, as he saw her, were grateful to her ears.

"My dear child, this is no place for you; to-morrow you shall return to Miss Germaine's until I can decide in what quarter I shall take a little country box. It musn't be far off, for I shall have to come to business daily for a few years; but for the present, Mah, you look so pale that no time must be lost in getting you back to Bath. I shall take you down myself."

(To be Continued.)

For Girls and Boys.

A BRAVE BOY.

His name was Frank Thompson; he was fifteen years of age, and he lived in a large city, where he was a pupil in one of the public schools. He was a slender lad, with quiet gray eyes, gentle ways, and with nothing of the "brag" about him. Some of the boys called him a coward because he never would fight; and whenever a rough fellow would shake his fist in Frank's face, with "You don't dare to fight," Frank would quietly say, "I dare not to fight," which was a much braver thing to do.

But there came a day after which no one doubted Frank's bravery.

Suddenly the teacher in the division where Frank Thompson studied discovered from a cloud of smoke that burst into the room