

shaped by circumstances which have no necessary relation to its general aim! At another time, Nevers would have hesitated, if not altogether refused, to accept the invitation. He might have questioned his own capacity to satisfy so important a trust: now he embraced the proposition with eagerness; he determined to act with vigour—to apply all the powers of his mind, and if necessary, all the strength of his body, to gain an honourable reputation; he resolved to forget for a time, that he had loved till he could present himself before his chosen, with a name more precious than the hoards she would bring him as her dowry. But how was he to part with her?—should he leave without acquainting her with his intention?—should he say “good bye,” without a word of explanation? or should he express his regret that he was compelled so soon to leave her? Here was a puzzle. The first suggestion was not to be thought of; the second was too cold, and—should she love him, as he ventured to hope, would bear an air of cruelty;—should he adopt the latter alternative—but that would hasten the very consummation he was anxious to defer. He felt in fact, that it required a cooler brain than was his at that moment, to make a judicious choice of these several modes of proceeding, and so he left the matter to be settled altogether by the impulse of the moment when it should arrive. Perhaps there is no condition of the human mind more pitiable than that in which it is suddenly called upon to decide on a matter of critical moment in the ordinary routine of life. The necessity for immediate action rises up before it a thousand difficulties; like a body subjected to the effects of rarefaction, the matter assumes an unnatural extension, and defies the eye of the understanding to take a correct survey of it. It towers with its phantasmic shape far above its essential position, and laughs at the random efforts of the intellect to reach it; efforts which are fruitless, because they combat with a false position and are aimed at too high a point to prove successful.

It was somewhat in this state of mind that Nevers stood on the steps of the hotel the morning after his meeting with Louise Belmore; he had purposely deferred his leaving till he should be ready to start, in the vain hope that accident would assist him in his Emma, and now the time had arrived, and her impatient steeds stood champing their bits and chafing in their restlessness at delay, he looked like a man on the verge of insanity. “The horses are getting uneasy,” said the coachman, as one of the leaders, throwing out his

fore-foot against the lower step, started back from a splinter that flew off, causing the wheelers to back up, and nearly upset the vehicle.

“Come, George, rouse yourself; they’re all staring at you,” said Morris, seconding the appeal.

“So be it, then—good bye, Morris, and”——he continued, turning back; “tell her I go away on business—on—yes! say *urgent* business.”

So saying, he threw himself into the carriage; the whip cracked; and the horses bounded off at a pace that only American horses know how to take. The clear air of the morning, the merry chatter of the squirrels, and the rapidity with which he was whirled along, soon restored Morris to something like composure; and as his resolution had been taken, and it was now too late to change it, he left it with a sort of desperate satisfaction to be dealt with by the whirlpool of chance. “Yes!” he muttered, “’tis past now; and if another should woo and win her—but”——he might have added, for the thought rose to his lips, while they parted with a smile, in which a dash of malignity mingled with more tender thoughts at the possibility of her suffering in a slight degree the torments that he endured. “I think—I dare hope—nay! there can be no mistaking the nature of her emotions when we met.” But the thought never passed the threshold of his lips.

Leaving him to find his way to his place of destination—and verily there is no lack of means in these days of rail cars and steam ships for such an undertaking—we will take the liberty of mounting the back of Pegasus, *volens volens*, and take a speedier, and it might prove even a safer flight to the same point of attraction.

CHAPTER IV.

The constitution of the United States while it affords a goal for the widest, and perhaps the wildest ambition to the meanest individual, while it is admirably calculated in theory to distribute the greatest amount of blessings which the subject can enjoy, possesses also a bane which in practice clogs up the machine and renders its action fitful and uncertain.—This is owing to a variety of causes. The extent, for instance, to which the principles of democracy are carried out, engender the most absurd ideas of individual power and importance in the minds of the vulgar. The dissemination of knowledge, which is universal throughout the nation, and of which the legitimate effects should be to exalt it above other