

Fifth Avenue, in the raw and rainy twilight, is not the sprightliest spot on earth, and there was very little for Mr. Walraven to gaze at except the stages rattling up the pave, and some belated newsboys crying their wares.

Perhaps these same little ill-clad newsboys, looking up through the slanting rain, and seeing the well-dressed gentleman behind the rich draperies, thought it must be a fine thing to be Mr. Carl Walraven, heir to a half a million of money and the handsomest house in New York.

Perhaps you might have thought so, too, glancing into that lofty chamber, with its glowing hangings of ruby and gold, its exquisite pictures, its inlaid tables, its twinkling chandelier, its perfumed warmth, and glitter, and luxury.

But Carl Walraven, lying back in a big easy-chair, in slippers and dressing-gown, smoking his costly cheroots, looked out at the dismal evening with the blackest of bitter, black scowls.

"Confound the weather!" muttered Mr. Walraven, between strong, white teeth. "Why the deuce does it always rain on the twenty-fifth of November? Seventeen years ago, on the twenty-fifth of this horrible month, I was in Paris, and Miriam was—Miriam be hanged!" He stopped abruptly, and pitched his cigar out of the window. "You've turned over a new leaf, Carl Walraven, and what the demon do you mean by going back to the old leaves? You've come home from foreign parts to your old and doting mother—I thought she would be in her dotage by this time—and you're a responsible citizen, and an eminently rich and respectable man. Carl, my boy, forget the past, and behave yourself for the future; as the copy-books say: 'Be virtuous and you will be happy.'"

He laughed to himself, a laugh unpleasant to hear, and taking up another cigar, went on smoking.

He had been away twenty years, this Carl Walraven, over the world, nobody knew where. A reckless, self-willed, headstrong boy, he had broken wild and run away from home at nineteen, abruptly and without warning. Abruptly and without warning he had returned home, one fine morning, twenty years after, and walking up the palatial steps, shabby, and grizzled, and weather-beaten, had strode straight to the majestic presence of the mistress of the house, with outstretched hand and a cool "How are you, mother?"

And Mrs. Walraven knew her son. He had left her a fiery, handsome, bright-faced lad, and this man before her was gray and black-bearded and weather-beaten and brown,