

## TRUE FREEDOM—HOW TO GAIN IT.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

We want no flag, no flaunting flag,  
For liberty to fight,  
We want no blaze of murderous guns  
To struggle for the right.  
Our spears and swords are pointed words,  
The mind our battle plain,  
We've won such victories before,  
And so we shall again.

We have no triumphs sprung of force—  
They strain her brightest cause,  
'Tis not in blood that liberty  
Inscribes her civil laws.  
She writes them on the people's hearts,  
In language clear and plain,  
True thoughts have moved the world before,  
And so they shall again.

We yield to none in earnest love  
Of freedom's cause sublime,  
We join the cry, "Fraternity!"—  
We keep the march of time.  
And yet we grasp no pike or spear  
Our victories to obtain,  
We've won without their aid before,  
And so we shall again.

We want no aid of barricade  
To show a front of wrong,  
We have a citadel of truth,  
More durable and strong.  
Calm words, great thoughts, unflinching faith  
Have never striven in vain,  
They've won our battle many a time,  
And so they shall again.

Peace, progress, knowledge, brotherhood—  
The ignorant may sneer—  
The bad deny—but we rely  
To see their triumph near.  
No widow's groan shall lead our cause,  
No blood of brethren slain,  
We've won without such aid before,  
And so we shall again.

## DESMORO;

OR,

## THE RED HAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWENTY STRAWS," "VOICES  
FROM THE LUMBER-ROOM," "THE HUMMING-  
BIRD," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Well, Shavings still continued in the same delirious state, and there appeared to be but little hope of his amendment.

Comfort's anxious eye questioned the doctor every time he came to visit her father; but the medic made her no verbal reply, but ever sadly shook his head.

The young girl was full of sorrow and terror. She believed that she had no living creature in the world save her father—who had been everything to her that parent could be to a child—and she was dreading being left without either protector or friends.

To be sure, Mr. Jellico was always very kind to her, and so also was Mrs. Polderbrant, but their kindness could never repay her for the loss of her good parent's caressing love—oh, never, never!

Then Comfort thought of Desmoro, and a soft thrill pervaded her frame, as her mental eye presented the young man's handsome visage to her, and her ears recalled the tones of his musical voice.

In many respects Comfort was older than her years, but her mind knew no guile, and her nature was full of feminine softness, simplicity, and goodness. 'Tis true that her life had been replete with hardships of one sort or other—for her father and her had not been long attached to Samuel Jellico's company—but needy, coarse, and worthless as her associations had frequently been, there was no tinge of vulgarity about herself—she had escaped without one impure taint, without a speck that could sully the loveliness of her face and form.

Her recent intercourse with Desmoro had done much towards developing her mind, which, as you may imagine, had been overrun with crude matter, with many weeds and brambles. All the lessons that had been taught, and the learning he had acquired from the perusal of useful books, he had instructed her in. And Comfort, understanding the full value of her lessons, was careful not to forget them.

During the term of Mr. Mackmillerman's engagement at the Braymount Theatre, Desmoro had but little time to call his own. The excellent manner in which he had lately acquitted himself in the character of *Romeo*, had induced the manager to entrust many other important parts to his hands, hence his hours were all fully employed with tasks—with tasks which he could not neglect. However, when he could snatch a few moments from business, he would fly to the clown's lodgings in order to ascertain his state, and to get a peep at the fair face of Comfort Shavings, in whom Mr. Mackmillerman had become greatly interested.

Yes, the actor saw the precious jewel, and,

seeing it, coveted it as he would have coveted a mine of wealth, with longing, greedy eyes. He marked her talents, and her rare beauty, and he said unto himself, "Some day this pure gem must be mine."

Mr. Mackmillerman was a fine man, and he was tolerably wealthy as well; and, what was still more, he was proud of his looks and his gold; vain of his stalwart figure, arrogant and pompous likewise.

The night was a tempestuous one. The wind blew a perfect hurricane, and the rain came down in dashing torrents.

Pidgers was crooning over the fire, listening to the storm-blast as it roared down the chimney, when Desmoro and Comfort, attired for walking, appeared, ready to start forth.

Pidgers turned round at the sound of Comfort's voice.

Desmoro and she were standing at the door together, looking out into the darkness, almost dreading to face the pelting rain.

"What a night it is, Desmoro!" shuddered she, drawing her hooded cloak closer about her. "I am so sorry to take you out into the wet: let me go home by myself for this once; no one will harm me, I am sure, and I'll run every step of the way."

"Let you go home by yourself, Comfort!" repeated he. "Indeed, I shall do no such thing! I'm not afraid of a little water, I am only vexed that you are compelled to face this storm. I don't care for myself, I ought not to do so, you know, when you are in the case," he added, with an air of youthful gallantry, and lowering the tones of his voice—of that voice whose accents the girl was so learning to love above all other earthly sounds.

Pray do not mistake my meaning. Comfort's affection for Desmoro was such as she might have felt for her own brother—a pure attachment, which, with her advancing years, might be likely to ripen into a different and more ardent feeling.

Yet I will not say, young as she was, that Comfort was utterly devoid of the natural coquetry of her sex. She liked a pretty dress, or a becoming hat, as well as any woman, and, as far as she could be, she was always especially neat in her attire, both on the stage and off it.

While the young couple were thus standing at the door, about to issue forth, Mr. Mackmillerman's private vehicle drove up, and, at the same instant, that gentleman himself, wrapped in his cloak emerged from the passage communicating with the inner portion of the theatre, and seeing Comfort, addressed her.

"You are surely not going home in this storm, and on foot?" said he, paying no attention to the presence of Desmoro, who kept his place by the young girl's side.

"Oh, yes, I am, Mr. Mackmillerman," she answered, turning her smiling face upon him.

"Nonsense, nonsense," he added, in quite a grand manner; "I must not permit you to do anything of the kind. Here is my carriage—step into it, and I will see you safely home."

"No, thank you, sir," she replied, modestly, as her arm linked itself through that of Desmoro, where it was firmly held, as in a vice.

"How absurd!" laughed he. "You played *Ariel* like an angel to-night; and I must not have you catch cold by following one of your own coy whims. Come!"

At this instant, Mrs. Polderbrant, in her patent, a huge beaver bonnet on her head, and an immense gingham umbrella in her hand, issued from the passage, and stood behind the trio.

She paused on hearing the star's voice—paused and listened.

"I am much obliged to you for your kind offer, Mr. Mackmillerman," said Comfort, very resolutely, "but I must beg to decline it. I do not live many hundred yards from here—I shall get home almost directly."

The great tragedian bit his lips at this; while Desmoro's heart beat fast and gratefully under the girl's arm that was being pressed so closely and so confidently to his side.

The wind just now swept down the alley in a sudden gust, and the rain fell in even greater torrents than before.

It was, indeed, a night of fearful storm; yet Comfort was willing to confront the fury of the elements, rather than accept Mr. Mackmillerman's offer.

But that gentleman's intentions were not to be opposed without his showing some resistance against those who opposed them. He could not suffer himself to be balked by this young girl—oh, no, certainly not!

"You shy, pretty creature!" he cried, suddenly encircling her waist.

And, before Desmoro could regain his hold of the arm he had permitted to slip through his own, Comfort was lifted up, carried to the vehicle, and placed inside it.

"No, no! if you please, Mr. Mackmillerman!" cried she, struggling to get out of the conveyance. "I beg you will not insist upon taking me against my will! Desmoro!"

"Make yourself quite easy, my dear," replied a well-known female voice. "I shall accompany you!"

"Oh, Mrs. Polderbrant, it's you!" exclaimed the young girl, in relieved accents.

"Mrs. Polderbrant!" uttered Mr. Mackmillerman, in great disgust.

"Here I am, close at your elbow, my very good sir, ready to accept of your gallant escort home on this awfully tempestuous night."

The gentleman looked aghast as Mrs. Polderbrant, patters, poke bonnet, umbrella and all, thrust herself before him, and entered the equipage.

"Miss Comfort lives at No. 2, Crosby Cottages, Spring Green," added she, addressing the

owner of the conveyance. "Please to tell the driver the address, Mr. Mackmillerman," she added, in the coolest manner imaginable; "and don't stand any longer in the rain, but come into this dear cosy nest, and make yourself comfortable!"

The gentleman fumed and gnashed his teeth in impotent fury. He had been outdone by Mrs. Polderbrant—by the woman whom he most detested.

But he did not let her perceive his rage, his boiling fury—oh, no, he would not accord her so much satisfaction, so much triumph over him—he crushed it all back, and calmly addressed his coachman.

"Prudon, drive to No. 2 Crosby Cottages, Spring Green. Good night, ladies," he added, closing the door of the carriage, and disappearing in the darkness.

"What! are you running away from us, Mr. Mackmillerman?" shouted Mrs. Polderbrant, her head thrust out of the vehicle. "Well, I must say I never met with such strange behavior in all my life! Go on, coachman!"

"No, no; I would much rather get out!—I would, indeed, Mrs. Polderbrant!" said Comfort. "Let me get out, I entreat you!"

"Don't be a little nitny!" replied the lady, in her usually brusque fashion. "Sit where you are, and don't trouble yourself about going any further for the present. We shall get home without a wetting, thank goodness, which is a felicity quite unexpected by me."

The equipage was now rolling along the public road. Comfort was sitting as in a dream, and Mrs. Polderbrant was laughing heartily.

"Nicely tricked, nicely tricked, Mr. Mackmillerman!" she uttered, triumphantly; "tricked by Patience Polderbrant!"

As the carriage rolled away, Mr. Mackmillerman, fuming with disappointment and rage, turned aside and trudged homeward on foot; while Desmoro, inwardly pleased with Mrs. Polderbrant's late conduct, went back into the theatre; where the performance being over, the lights all extinguished, he sought his homely little couch.

Pidgers looked out into the night—which was pitch dark—then he closed the outer door, and drawing near the table, on which a small lantern was burning, he produced several articles, and placed them before him.

The man had on a suit of new garments, and his hair had been recently cut and oiled. Altogether, he presented a different appearance from his former ragged, dirty self.

But, notwithstanding that fact, he remembered that he had failed to draw Comfort's attention to himself—she had never once looked at him; and, consequently, his improved looks had not been noticed by her for whose sake they had been so much improved.

"It aren't of any use of thinkin' of her while I hev' empty pockets," mumbled he, under his breath. "I must hev' a sight of mune, an' then, I'll maybe be able to get her to listen to me, fur I shall be as bold as brass to her an' everybody else, when I've got the cash to finger. I wonder how many of those five-pun notes the ould witch hev' got, an' wheer she do keep 'em? Under her pillar, I'll lay a wager!" he added, examining a black mask, which he had abstracted from the property-room of the theatre, and a lump of red paint.

Pidgers glanced around the room, at the closed door communicating with the stage, and listened to the splashing rain without.

"That Desmoro chap 'll not coom down here agin; I'm safe enough so fur as that goes. Now fur it! If I don't git her pun-notes, I'll wark out my spite on him, the varmint!"

Then the man took the lump of red paint, and mixing it with a little water, commenced smearing the inside of his hand with it, until his palm was very nearly the color of that of Desmoro.

"My! that'll do!" he exclaimed, regarding his infamous work with wicked satisfaction.

Thrusting his mask under his jacket, he put on his hat, took up the lantern, covered its eye, and stole out into the night, fastening the stage-door behind him.

The wind was still blustering loudly, and the rain was falling in a drenching flood. But Pidgers cared nothing for the storm—he rather liked it at this moment.

He emerged from the alley, and reached the street, which was quite deserted now. From a neighboring church clock, the hour of one was tolled. Buttoning up his jacket, and pulling up his collar (which served to half conceal his ugly face) Pidgers limped along as quickly as he could. Presently he turned down a lane, dark and miry, where there were only a few scattered, humble cottages. It was a lonely place; Pidgers was well acquainted with it, and could have found his way along it blindfold. Mrs. Polderbrant lodged in one of those lonely cots, and her landlady was an old widow, who was almost stone-deaf.

On one occasion recently, this crafty knave, having been sent on a message to the actress, he had silly learned where she slept, and all he had in hand presented but few difficulties to him. Mrs. Polderbrant occupied the ground floor of the dwelling; she had always a great fear of fire breaking out in the night, and she preferred to sleep in an apartment from which—in case of danger—she might be able to effect an easy escape.

The man now paused before a lone little house; and, after putting on his mask, produced a bunch of keys, one of which fitting the common lock of the house-door, he quietly made his entrance. All was still within; he could hear only the blustering wind shaking

the casements of the cottage, and the heavily falling rain.

He now let the light of his lantern shine on everything around. A door was in front of him—the door of Mrs. Polderbrant's bedroom. Laying his fingers on the entrance-latch, he noiselessly lifted it, and passed into the apartment, about which he cast an inquiring glance. On a narrow couch lay the actress fast asleep. Her face was turned to the wall, but her regular and heavy breathing proclaimed her state of deep repose.

Pidgers put down his lantern, and drew near the bed; nearer and nearer he drew towards it; still she slumbered on, wholly undisturbed, not dreaming that the midnight robber was by her side. Stealthily he introduced his hand under her pillow. Ha! He had guessed aright; his fingers were grasping a purse, a leatheren purse with crisp bank-notes within it.

At this instant, the sleeper turned suddenly, uttered a scream, and started up in bed in a bewildered manner.

"Thieves, thieves!" she shrieked out with all her might, her hands at the same time grasping the man's shoulder.

But Pidgers, who had "the purse in his sack" possession, was now prepared to struggle with her—to struggle with her to the death for aught he cared. His frame, although ungainly in the extreme, was of great muscular strength. Her twining arms and clutching fingers he but little regarded; and, as for her cries, he knew that there was no one near to hear them.

Presently she fastened her fingers in, and grappled with his hair, which act giving the man much pain, he dealt her a violent blow in the chest, whereat she loosed her hold of him, and fell back upon her pillow in an almost insensible condition.

Pidgers uttered not a sound, but taking up his lantern he lifted up his reddened palm before the eyes of the helpless woman: in the next moment he had extinguished the light, and the place was in total darkness.

"Good heaven!" she gasped confusedly; "that red hand! Desmoro Desmoro!" and then she swooned, and all was still.

Pidgers chuckled inwardly: his base purpose had been effected, and he was triumphant. Heedless whether his victim were alive or dead, he quitted the house, and regaining the street, made his way back to the theatre, where, having washed the paint from his hand, and burned the mask, he proceeded to examine his booty, the contents of the purse which he had just stolen from Mrs. Polderbrant.

Three-five pound notes and some gold! Pidgers was a rich man! How his bleared eyes gloated over his ill-got gains, and how his evil spirit rejoiced at what he had done!

"Won't the ould witch mak' a rare fuss over this job!" he said, within himself. "Weel, let her! She'll double up that proud chap, Maister Desmoro, an' that'll be capital fun for me. Oh, I ha' gotten a 'ed on my shoulders, not a turnip as they maybe think it! Wait until to-morrow! I've fairly hungry a wishin' fur that to-morrow to coom!"

And the ruffian rubbed his knotted hands together, and laughed aloud quite gleefully.

Then he approached the fire-place, and putting his arm up the chimney, removed a loose brick. This done, Pidgers secreted in the vacant space, the stolen purse with the money inside it, and replaced the brick as before.

"Now, I defies them!" he exclaimed in an undertone, "an' I shall look the ould witch in the face as bold as brass. Yes, yes, I be all safe, all safe, an' I've gotten my spite on him besides!"

So saying, the detestable creature quickly undressed himself, and letting down a narrow press bedstead tumbled into it, and soon fell fast asleep, out of which sleep he did not wake until broad daylight.

He rose as usual, without fear of any kind. He felt no remorse for what he had done—not he! his base heart was still throbbing with vengeful anticipations. He was thinking of how soon he should see Desmoro accused, and dragged off to prison, and of how he should enjoy the sight of his undeserved degradation.

Mrs. Polderbrant long lay motionless and cold, as one from whom the life had fled. When she recovered her recollection she found that she was stiff and sore, and unable to rise. She could remember everything that had occurred—the masked robber and his red hand.

She shuddered, uttered a mournful cry, and covered her face with the bedclothes.

Merciful powers! how she had been deceived! She had deemed him one of heaven's purest sons, and loved him almost like her own! But she had done with him for ever, now: the midnight thief that he was!

By-and-by, she rose, and dressed herself. She was enduring great bodily pain, and her thoughts were full of aching trouble.

Desmoro was an ungrateful, wicked young man, and deserved to suffer for what he had just done—for the crime he had lately committed. She would have no mercy whatever on him; she would deliver him into the hands of the law, and let him pay the penalty of his sinful deed. She felt strangely ill, and she thought it possible that she had received her death-blow.

She said nothing to her landlady of the past night's event, but sat over her breakfast in tearful silence. She was a woman full of integrity and high principle, one who would not hesitate to sacrifice even her own child, if that child had done anything unworthy or wrong. The money that had been stolen from her was not her own! it had been entrusted to her care