

HAND IN HAND TOGETHER.

When evening o'er the cloudless sky
Hath spread her star-gemmed canopy,
We ramble forth, my love and I,
Hand in hand together.

And as we slowly onward rove,
Scarce heeding where, by field or grove,
We breathe our vows of mutual love,
Hand in hand together.

We fondly trust in future years
To share each other's hopes and fears,
While travelling through this vale of tears,
Hand in hand together.

Oh! while we wander here below,
In health, or sickness, joy, or woe,
May we be ever found as now,
Hand in hand together.

And when our term on earth is o'er,
And worldly things can charm no more,
Oh! may we gain th' eternal shore
Hand in hand together.

THE LOST WILL.

BY J. E. P.

Two persons sat together in a first-floor room fronting a street in a thriving little city. The afternoon sky was gray, cold and dull; and the room was grayer, colder, duller, than the sky; everything about the place looked sordid and neglected. The rain-channelled dust of years had crusted on the windows. The dead boxes on the shelves behind the door, the dusty books in the book-case opposite the fireplace, the yellow map that hung over the mantelpiece, were all thickly covered with dust and cobwebs.

It was the private room of Lawrence Haight, attorney at law, and it opened out from a still drearier office, in which a clerk was hard at work. There was a clock in each room, and a calendar on each mantelshelf. The hands of both clocks pointed to half-past three, and the calendars both proclaimed that it was the second day of June, eighteen hundred and sixty-two.

The two persons sitting together in the chamber were the lawyer and his wealthy old father-in-law, Mr. Jacob Osdell.

Mr. Haight had placed his chair with the back to the window, so that his features were scarcely distinguishable in the gathering gloom of the afternoon. His visitor—a stout, pale man with a forest of iron-gray hair about his temples—sat opposite, with the light full upon his face, and his hand crossed on the knob of his cane.

"I have come to talk to you, Lawrence," said he, "about George Crawford."

"About George Crawford?" repeated the lawyer.

"Yes—I think I have been too hard with him. I intend that he and Lucy shall come back to the old home."

"Ah, you don't say so! Upon what terms, Mr. Osdell?"

"Upon no other terms than that they shall be son and daughter to me. You see, Lawrence, I am growing old, and my home is a very lonely one now that you have taken my only other child."

Haight shifted around a little farther from the light, and looked up with a keen, inquiring glance.

"You have forgiven them, eh?"

"Yes; fully and freely."

"Do they know it?"

"No. I shall go to them to-morrow."

"I have no objections to offer now, Mr. Osdell; and I see you would not listen to them, if I had. But I am sure you would regret this determination. Why, it is scarcely a year since you were heaping the most vindictive curses upon their ungrateful heads."

"Yes, that is so, Lawrence. I had cherished high hopes of Lucy's making a brilliant match, and the plans of a lifetime were overset when she married Crawford; but, after all, there is nothing against him save his poverty."

"And I should say that was a very great deal, Mr. Osdell."

"At any rate, it is a fault easily remedied, Lawrence. I gave you five thousand pounds last week to invest for me. I now countermand the order, and will call next week for the money. I shall give them that at once."

Lawrence Haight's hand trembled like an aspen leaf as he placed it to his burning forehead. A moment passed before he could command his voice to reply, and there was a tremor in it then, in spite of him.

"You are too wise a man, I am sure, Mr. Osdell," said he, "to act in this rash manner."

"And you are too wise, I am sure, Lawrence, not to know that a man should never attempt to do right by halves. No, I am not acting rashly. I have but two children—your wife and Lucy. To you I have given thousands, to her not a penny. You surely should not complain if I repair the injury I have done them."

As he said that the old man rose to his feet and turned toward the door. His hand was on the latch when Haight stopped him.

"What about he will you left in my charge?" he asked.

"The will! Oh, yes; that must be altered, of course."

"When?"

"As soon as I come back from Crawford's."

"All right, sir. Good evening."

"Good evening, Lawrence."

The lawyer ushered his visitor through the

outer office, listened a moment to his heavy footfall going down the street, hastened back to his private room, and shut the door.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed he, in a low, agitated tone, "what's to be done now? This is ruin—ruin!"

He took three or four restless turns about the room, then flung himself into his chair, and buried his face in his hands.

"He thinks I am rich," he muttered. "I a rich man, indeed! Why, even the five thousand pounds are gone with the rest! Merciful powers! what can I do? To whom can I turn for it? What security have I to give? Only a week's notice, too. I am lost! I am lost!"

Again he arose and strode rapidly up and down the room. Gradually the trouble deepened and deepened on his face, and his cheeks grew deathly pale.

"There is one way out of it!" he groaned. "Bill Davis could—Must I do that?"

He sank down into his chair, rested his chin upon his open palms, and fell into a deep and silent train of thought.

In a little while he sprang up again, seized his hat, and hastened out into the street. On leaving the house he directed his steps towards a portion of the city notorious as the abode of crime and infamy.

He walked rapidly, with the firm, swift step of a man full of determination. Soon he struck into a street where everything bore the mark of corruption and decay. Houses with unglazed sashes, unhinged doors, roofless and crumbling away beneath the hand of time, were leaning against each other, to support themselves amid the universal ruin. Crowds of miserable objects, the wrecks of human beings, were loitering about the dismal holes which they called their homes; some, shivering on the footway, were nestling closely together to protect themselves from the chill night air; some, bloated and half-stupefied with hard drinking, went muttering along, or stopped to brawl with others like themselves. Young females, too, with hollow cheeks and hungry eyes, were loitering among the herd. Many of them had been born to nothing better; but there were those among the number who once had friends who loved them, and had looked forward to a future without a shadow. And they had come to this! They had broken the hearts of those who would have cherished them, and had drunk of crime and woe to the dregs.

Haight shuddered as he hurried through this gloomy spot. Sifted screams and groans and sounds of anger and blasphemy burst upon his ears, mingled with shouts of mirth; and he observed figures shrinking in the obscure corners of the buildings as he passed, and watching him with the cautious yet savage eye of mingled suspicion and fear: for he was in the very heart of the region where thieves and cut-throats were skulking to avoid the vigilance of the police, and had common lot with the penniless and homeless who came there only to die. With a feeling of relief he emerged from this doomed spot, and came to a more quiet street.

It was growing late in the night when he at last came to a mean-looking house, having a small sign over the door, indicating that it was a tavern, and with a number of illuminated placards in the windows, intimating that lodgings were to be had, and that various liquors might be purchased at the moderate sum of sixpence.

Haight pushed roughly past two or three persons, and entered a dingy room, strongly impregnated with the fumes of tobacco and spirits, and enveloped in a cloud of smoke. It was filled with persons who looked as if they would not hesitate to ease a pocket, or if it were necessary, to extend their civility so far as to cut a throat. Some were savage, silent and sullen; others, under the influence of what they had drunk, were humorous and loquacious; some, steeped in intoxication, were lying at full length upon benches; others were leaning back in their chairs against the wall, saying nothing, but blowing out clouds of tobacco smoke. In the midst of this disorderly throng sat the proprietor, keeping guard over rows of shelves occupied by a small congregation of decanters.

The lawyer walked around the room, staring into each man's face, and then approached the landlord.

"I don't see Davis. Is he there?" asked he of that personage, nodding his head at the same time toward an inner chamber.

"No; he's upstairs," was the answer.

"Alone?"

"I believe so. He took some brandy and a candle, and went off."

"Does he stop here to-night?"

"If he pays first, he can."

Haight left the room, and, ascending a narrow staircase, with which he seemed familiar, came to a dark passage. A light shining from beneath a door at the farther end of it guided him to the room that he sought, which he entered without ceremony.

Seated at a table, smoking and drinking, was a red-eyed, bloated-faced man of about forty, dressed in a ragged suit, the coat of which was buttoned closely up to the throat, to conceal the want of a shirt. As the lawyer entered he looked up; then pushing back his chair, came forward and extended his hand.

"How are you, sir?"

Haight, without noticing the extended hand, drew a chair to the table, and sat down.

"I came to see you on business," said he.

"Ah! what is it?"

"Who's in the next room?"

"I don't know. It's empty, I believe."

"Go and see, and look in all the rooms."

Davis, taking the light, went out, and present-

ly returning, reported that all the rooms were empty. He then drew a chair directly in front of Haight, and, placing a hand on each knee, looked in his face.

"Can you keep a secret, Davis?" asked the lawyer, looking full into two eyes that never blenched.

"Can't you tell? You ought to be able to."

"Will you swear?"

"Yes, out with it! I'll keep a close mouth."

"Well, then," continued Haight, watching him sharply, to see the effect produced by his communication, and speaking in a whisper, "suppose you owed a man five thousand pounds, and no man knew of the debt but you two, what would you do?"

"I'd kill the creditor before morning," was the reply.

"What if you were paid to do that very thing? Would you do it?"

"What is the pay?"

"A hundred pounds."

"I'll do it!"

"And your nerves won't fail?"

"Never fear that."

Leaning forward in his chair, and speaking in a still lower tone, the lawyer now poured all his plans into the ruffian's ear. An hour passed by, and then he arose to go.

"Mind, now," said he, "he will leave at half-past ten to-morrow."

"All right, I'll be ready."

"Here's ten pounds; I suppose you are broke?"

"I always am," was the reply.

Haight handed him the money, and, leaving the house, hurried off toward his own home.

The early morning stage drew up in front of the "Eagle" hotel, just as Mr. Osdell awoke from a long, deep sleep. He opened his eyes, and heard the stage horn, both at the same instant of time. His determination to do an act of charity and justice to his injured child had filled his whole being with the warm glow of happiness and peace, and he had slept the sleep of the just.

He sprang out of bed, when he heard the blowing of the horn, and began to prepare for his journey. While he is doing so, it is necessary that we should go back a little way into his past history.

To the majority of person Jacob Osdell was simply a rich, gentlemanly, "clever-looking" man. Even his clerks, who saw him daily for three hundred and thirteen dreary days in every dreary year, had no more notion of their employer's inner life than the veriest stranger who brushed past him in the street. They saw him only as others saw him and thought of him only as others thought of him.

They knew that he had a profound and extensive knowledge of his business, an iron will, and an inexhaustible reserve of energy. They knew that he had two daughters, that he was a widower and rich, and this was all they did know.

One of his daughters had been married, long ago, to the wealthy and rising young lawyer, Lawrence Haight. The other remained at home with her father, and became his darling and pet.

A year before the time when our story commences, this daughter had met George Crawford, who was one of her father's most trusted clerks. They had loved each other from that moment. When the knowledge of this fact came to the old gentleman, he had raged and stormed in the most outrageous manner. He at once dismissed George from his employment, and threatened Lucy with the direst vengeance if she persisted in her "folly."

All to no purpose, however, were the old man's threats and anger. At the first opportunity, Lucy left his house, and she and George were made man and wife.

From that day forward Jacob Osdell never mentioned their names. He made his will, leaving to Mrs. Haight all his property except the house in which he lived. This alone out of his great wealth he gave to Lucy.

This will he placed in Lawrence Haight's hands with the injunction that it should be opened immediately after his death, and before his body should be consigned to the grave.

Month after month he had been nursing his wrath to keep it warm, but it had grown cool, cold, colder, in spite of him. His heart yearned for his darling and pet, and refused to be comforted.

Finally the news came to him that a little child had been born to Lucy, and that she had given it his name. Then all his anger left him, and he determined to take her to his heart and home again as we have seen.

Crawford lived in a snug little cottage a few miles from the city and it was thither that Mr. Osdell was about to journey by the coach that stood waiting at the door.

In a few moments he came to the bar to pay his bill.

"Are there any other passengers?" said he to the landlord.

"Yes, there is!" was the reply. "And an odd-dacious character he is too, I think."

"Why, what kind of a man do you take him to be? Not a highwayman, I hope, landlord?"

"Was nor all that, sir; but then I only suspect."

"What do you suspect?"

The man adjusted his collar, and looked impressively into Mr. Osdell's face.

"I suspect a great deal—a very great deal!" said he, with an ominous shake of the head. "He's a murderin' raskil—I know it by a sign that never fails."

Mr. Osdell was not a nervous man, and there-

fore was not at all alarmed at this communica-

tion.

"What is your sign?" he laughingly asked.

"The sign," replied the landlord, confidently,

"I know it by the cut of his eye."

"The what?"

"The cut of his eye," reiterated the landlord, positively. "Let me get the cut of a man's eye, and I know him at once. And I warn you, sir, to look out for that man. He's a murderin' raskil!"

After the coach had started, and was well on its way, Mr. Osdell looked up at his fellow passenger, and endeavored to ascertain the mysterious "cut of the eye" for himself. The man before him was bundled up in a huge overcoat, and his hat was pulled down over a face which was not the most prepossessing in the world, and whose natural deficiencies were not at all diminished by the lack of a very recent application of either water or razor.

He coolly bore the scrutiny of his features, and never for an instant turned away his glance from the face of Mr. Osdell.

"Well," said he, growing weary at last, "I'm a beauty, ain't I?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied Mr. Osdell, somewhat disconcerted at this remark, "I mean no offence, I assure you."

"Oh! you didn't, didn't you? Well, don't do it again, that's all!"

"I certainly shall not, sir; I have no wish to offend you."

"No; you had better not. I've had enough of your impudence; and if you give me any more, I'll—"

"You'll what?"

"I'll that," said the man, opening his vest and touching the handle of a dirk. His eyes flashed from their dark caverns with sullen ferocity, like those of an hyena. "Yes, that!" he continued. "Do you understand now?"

Evidently the man for some reason wished to quarrel with him; and Mr. Osdell, seeing this, and believing him to be drunk or crazy, restrained himself, and, as calmly as he could, said:

"Put up your knife, sir; you shall have no occasion to use it. And, besides that, to use it would be murder, and the punishment of that, I believe, is death."

The brow of the villain darkened, and his eyes flashed fire. He leaned forward and fingered his knife as though about to use it. On reflection, however, he seemed to have made up his mind to another course; and buttoning up his vest, he muttered a fearful oath, and cast himself back into a corner of the coach.

Mile after mile was now passed in utter silence, and soon the little village came into view. To Mr. Osdell's great relief, his surly companion now stopped the coach, and sprang out into the road. Without uttering a word, he crossed over to the bordering fence, sprang over it, and struck into a little path that led across the fields.

It was just growing dark as Mr. Osdell started out on the road that led from the village to George Crawford's house. It was but a short walk of a mile, and he was too impatient to wait till morning. Thoughts of the conversation he had had with the landlord, in the city, and the subsequent meeting with the rough passenger in the stage coach, almost deterred him. But there was no one, that he knew of, who had cause to injure him—the ruffian must have been mad to threaten his life; and, at any rate, he had long ago disappeared. No; there was no danger that he could see, and so he strode along cheerily.

Absorbed in thought as he was, however, Mr. Osdell paused every now and then to reconnoitre the country around him. The village was now some distance behind, and on no other side of him were there any buildings in sight.

Presently he came to an abrupt curve in the road.

He had been looking forward to this point for some minutes, and felt so sure that it must bring him in sight of Crawford's house that he was much disappointed to find all forward view out off by a huge boulder that jutted out nearly across the road, a few yards ahead of him.

Instead of following the path, which would for a considerable distance around the rock, Mr. Osdell sprang over the adjoining fence. When he reached the road again, he turned out and looked back.

Indistinctly, through the fast gathering gloom of the evening, he could see a human face peering after him, around the corner of the rock nearest the roadway. The sight alarmed him exceedingly. Could it be possible that a man had been lying in wait for him, and that his life had only been saved by his lucky choice of roads? It was very probable; and the thought of it made him hasten on now as rapidly as he could. After he had proceeded a short distance, a thought struck him, and he sprang to one side, with a rapid movement, and concealed himself behind a large stump, standing in one of the fence corners.

Presently he heard a footstep coming along the road—a footstep so light and swift that he thought his ears must have deceived him. But it soon grew more distinct, came near, nearer, and then passed swiftly by. Looking up from his place of concealment, Mr. Osdell saw his fellow passenger of the morning.

He was convinced, now, that the man had been waiting for him at the rock; was even now in pursuit of him. What was he to do? It was all dark to him, but plainly he must go on now to his journey's end. The man would soon miss him, would turn and follow him. Yes; he must go on and take the risks.

He was now but a short distance from Crawford's house; a little way up the road he could