

moment this thing had cost her was remembered now and avenged.

But the moment drew nigh when this wondrous strength of Joan's was to leave her as it had come—suddenly. Her eye began to glaze, her hand to strike at random.

Even if this had not been perceived by the crowd at the door, it was hardly likely all could resist the temptation to help at such fascinating work. Just as Joan's hand grew unsteady, a powerful young fellow who had once felt the barber's heavy hand and had not forgotten its weight, tore up a loose paving-stone at the door, and, rushing in, fell upon the remains of poor Arkdale's hand and brain labour of so many weary years with a fury that left it nothing but a heap of rubbish on the floor.

No sooner was this brave deed finished than the word was passed from mouth to mouth that Arkdale was coming. There was a fresh yell of triumph as the crowd jostled each other, and rushed to the area steps and poured into the street.

The tidings of the destruction of the model was speedily passed on to those who had been too far off to hear and see what had taken place within the threshold of the inventor's door.

The increasing roar of voices kept Joan still inspired a moment or two with their joy and their exultation. Presently she heard Humphrey's firm foot leaping down the steps, and her heart seemed to stand still. Her yellow hair was still borne wide on either side of her by the wind; her face was paling slowly from the crimson flush of passion to the hue of death; her hand, holding the instrument of destruction, hung powerless by her side. She tried to grasp the child, but felt him slipping from her. Her eyes were staring fixedly at the doorway.

The well-known face came before her, and looked at her with eager and tender eyes.

"My wife! thank Mercy you are safe."

He took the child from her, actually setting his foot on the ruins of his model without noticing them.

This tender anxiety for her, and forgetfulness of everything else, increased for Joan the anguish of the moment.

As he stooped to kiss her a sound between a sob and a laugh came from her white lips, and she pointed down with one hand while she lifted the other to her eyes, and hid them.

Arkdale looked on the ground, and saw the rubbish without recognising more than enough to give him an uneasy thought, and send his quick glance darting about the room. His glance returned to the broken mass at his feet, and a flash of recognition came into his eyes.

"Ha!"

He staggered back with the sharpest cry of pain Joan had ever heard from a man, and sank down on the doorstep, pressing Dick fast in his arms and staring at his mangled treasure with brows drawn upward and forehead full of lines.

Dick caressed him in childish terror at his strange looks, and soon Humphrey began to return his caresses, sighing heavily, and kissing him and pressing him to his breast.

It was worse than gall to Joan to see him sit hugging his boy in silence, and his staring eyes filling slowly with tears, the first she had ever seen there.

"Ay, Dick," said he, hoarsely, stretching out a hand that shook as with palsy, "there 'tis, my lad, all dust and ashes! Thy fortune—fit for a prince, boy—fit for a prince—dust and ashes! Thy mother's home—our home, where we were to make up to her for all she has suffered and wanted in this—ah, such a place, lad, thee'st never seen the like—there 'tis, Dick, dust and ashes! Her carriage, her fine friends—my lords and my ladies—she'd have shined amongst 'em, Dick, no fear o' that—her servants, her charity money, that was to be spent like water on the poor folk she loves, there—there, all dust and ashes! The means of glorious prosperity thy dad was to leave his country, all dust and ashes."

Joan had cowed down to his feet, with her forehead to the stones.

"Ay, 'tis a heavy blow for thee, my poor lass," said he, stroking her head gently, "but heavier than thou knowest."

Now Jenkyns, who, while struggling to force his way through the crowded area, had seen all that had been done, came in at this minute, and seeing Joan at her husband's feet, and Arkdale's hand on her hair, the simple 'prentice supposed that all was known and made up between the two. It was therefore with the greatest surprise and horror that he saw his master suddenly start to his feet, in a paroxysm of rage, crying—

"Oh, 'twas like striking at a human life. May the accursed hand did it be held out in vain for charity's mite! May it be held out in vain for another hand to grasp it at the hour of death! Lay—"

"Hist, master; hold your tongue," cried Jenkyns, rushing at him as if he would seize him by the throat. "D'ye know who you are cursing?"

"Would I did," groaned his master, stooping to raise Joan—"would to heaven I did!"

"Then you shall know. 'Tis her—your wife!"

CHAPTER CXY.—PART OF A LETTER FROM HUMPHREY ARKDALE TO HIS BROTHER PAUL.

... And in this way, Paul, we lived for many weeks, she speaking to me no more than if she were my servant, and I taking my meals from her in silence, without so much as looking at her face. When she did things to please me I feigned to take no notice; but I assure thee, Paul, a favourite dish eaten in this way was often like to choke me. I began my model partly because I had many excellent new ideas, one of which I have told you at the beginning of this letter, and partly to show my wife she had gained but little by her wicked act. I laboured hard, and with effect, but being much pinched for means, spite of the most careful housewifery on Joan's part that was ever known, I made but slow progress. As I could not make up my mind to tell thee of the blow I had received, I could not ask thee for money, after so much generosity as you have already shown me.

One day, in the old coffee-beggin where I put by all the spare coins I can for my model, I found a bright gold guinea. My heart leaped at the sight; but, on getting cool again, I began to ask myself how it came there, I took it to Jenkyns, and asked him concerning it, and, says he, "Thee'rt such a heavy sleeper; but if thee could'st cast an eye in this room by four in the morning, thee'ud perhaps get an inkling as to where that came from." I did as he said, and what, think you, I saw?—my wife at her wheel, spinning as for dear life. The sight did me no good, Paul; I was savage that she should have any hand in the thing she had ruined before. So, in the course of that day, I went, as by accident, to the beggin, and taking a few coppers I had put in, turned the guinea out on the table before her, bidding her find another place to keep her money in. Well, my boy, I grew poorer and poorer. She used her precious guinea, poor soul—unknown to me, she thought—to buy us food. At last came news that gave me more hope than I had ever known before. Mr.—, a great manufacturer of Nottingham—I told you he came once and saw my other model—sent a very particular message to me by the landlord of the "Red Lion" Inn, where all the quality go when they come here. He wanted to have the pleasure of an interview with me at breakfast the next morning, if I would favour him with my company, at the "Red Lion," at ten o'clock. What would I do but send my best respects, and say I would come? But oh, Paul, I was such a ragged beggar to go to breakfast with a gentleman. I can scarcely tell you what I suffered all day thinking of it. The more Jenkyns and I talked it over, the more necessity there seemed for going in clothes somewhat gentleman-like, and the less probability of being able to do aught of the kind. I should tell you that my wife went out a little before noon, telling Jenkyns she was going to see a gossip of hers at the other end of the town; and that, should she not be back by the dinner-hour, he and his master were not to wait for her. She was not back then, nor at the supper-hour, and I was much surprised to hear that the carrier had seen her at—, which, you know, is full ten miles from here. After supper I went to old Speers, the tailor, to make a last appeal to him about letting me have

the suit he had made for me before the destruction of my model. He was obstinate as a pig, and laughed at me into the bargain, declaring he had got rid of them, which I did not believe, as Jenkyns had seen them at his shop that very morning.

I went home, and found that Joan had returned. She was looking pale and fagged. I supposed she had been spending an odd shilling or two of her own earning at—, for she had on a new cap, such as the wives wear here, covering all the hair. I asked her no questions, and went to bed with a heavy heart.

The next morning I awoke late, and turned with a groan to the chair where I had laid my ragged clothes.

Lad, I thought I was yet asleep and a-dreaming, and rubbed my eyes again and again, till I made sure they saw the same for all the rubbing. My rags were gone, and there lay on the chair the very suit I had ordered of old Speers, as neat a brown cotton shag as ever you saw in country or town.

I shouted to Jenkyns, who came running in pretty quickly, not having had his inquisitive eye and ear far from the keyhole, I'd warrant, at that minute. The rogue pretended to be as much bewildered as myself, but I soon found out he knew more of the mystery than he acknowledged, and at last I got it all from him, bit by bit. My wife had been to—, and sold her hair to Pritchards for seven pounds ten, on purpose to get those clothes for me. Paul, what possessed me I know not, but I could not lose such an opportunity for making her suffer. I put on my old things. I took the others back to old Speers, and forced him to return me the money. I did the same with the shoes and the hat, came back with the whole sum, for she had spent every farthing on me.

She was sitting busy at her wheel, which she stopped as I went up to her.

"Joan," said I, "here is your money; I have nothing to do with it, and I request that you do not again meddle in my affairs." And I put the money in her hand, and turned.

A little cry came after me.

"Humphrey!"

I turned sullenly. She was standing up with the money in her hand.

"You'd never be so cruel as this," she said, with the tears running down her face. "I walked twenty mile, Humphrey, to get it."

"I have said," answered I and went away to keep my appointment. You will see by what I have told you in the enclosed paper of our interview, that it was my good fortune to meet with a truly honest and generous rich man, who was not particularly horrified when requested to look a little further than his own nose—in the way of invention I mean. The new crank and comb he thinks—But I forgot; I have told you about that on the back of the drawing which I send. Show it to Sir R. C., if you think it wise so to do. On the whole I would rather you did not. That day you were determined to make good the old saying, Paul, that "Fortune makes fortune," for on getting home I found thy good news, lad, for which I thank thee, and money, for which I shall give thee no thanks for a year or two, but which, none the less, doth come to me like rain in drought. I told Joan nothing of my talk with Mr.—, or of your letter, but she soon heard all from Jenkyns.

I took more rooms in the same house, and kept my work carefully and ostentatiously locked up in a chamber by itself.

Joan became paler and thinner day-by-day, yet my heart remained hard as stone to her.

"Master is a brute, to treat thee so," I heard blunt Jenkyns say to her one day. He often said as much to my face.

"Hush, Jenkyns," she said; "he is one of those who are slow to take offence, and, once offended slow to forgive."

One morning she came and stood before me in the shop, with a sort of quiet courage and determination that made me angry. I should tell you she had had news that morning through the old farmer, Luke Bristow, that her father had died at Philadelphia, and left her four hundred pounds