

might give offence. Besides, you will have the advantage of getting to work as early as you please in the morning."

It was late, and I was tired—consequently less inclined than usual to encounter a storm, for in general I enjoyed being in any commotion of the elements. Also, I felt I should like to pass another night in that room, and have, besides, the opportunity of once more examining at my leisure the gap in the tapestry.

"Will you meet me early in the library, Charley?" I said.

"Yes—to be sure I will—as early as you like."

"Let us go to the drawing-room, then."

"Why should you, if you are tired, and want to go to bed?"

"Because Lady Brotherton will not like my being included in the invitation. She will think it absurd of me not to go home."

"There is no occasion to go near her then."

"I do not choose to sleep in the house without knowing that she knows it."

We went. I made my way to Lady Brotherton. Clara was standing near her.

"I am much obliged by your hospitality, Lady Brotherton," I said. "It is rather a rough night to encounter in evening dress."

She bowed.

"The distance is not great, however," I said, "and perhaps—"

"Out of the question!" said Sir Giles, who came up at the moment.

"Will you see, then, Sir Giles, that a room is prepared for your guest?" she said.

"I trust that is unnecessary," he replied.

"I gave orders." But as he spoke he went towards the bell.

"It is all arranged, I believe, Sir Giles," I said. "Mrs. Wilson has already informed me which is my room. Good night, Sir Giles."

He shook hands with me kindly. I bowed to Lady Brotherton, and retired.

It may seem foolish to record such mere froth of conversation, but I want my reader to understand how a part at least of the family of Moldwarp Hall regarded me.

CHAPTER XL.

A DREAM.

My room looked dreary enough. There was no fire, and the loss of the patch of tapestry from the wall gave the whole an air of dilapidation. The wind howled fearfully in the chimney and about the door on the roof, and the rain came down on the leads like the distant trampling of many horses. But I was not in an imaginative mood. Charley was again my trouble. I could not bear him to be so miserable. Why was I not as miserable as he, I asked myself. Perhaps I ought to be, for although certainly I hoped more, I could not say I believed more than he. I wished more than ever that I did believe, for then I should be able to help him—I was sure of that; but I saw no possible way of arriving at belief. Where was the proof? Where even the hope of a growing probability?

With these thoughts drifting about in my brain, like wails which the tide will not let go, I was poring over the mutilated forms of the tapestry round the denuded door, with an expectation, almost a conviction, that I should find the fragment still hanging on the wall of the kitchen at the Moat the very piece wanted to complete the broken figures. When I had them well fixed in my memory, I went to bed, and lay pondering over the several broken links which indicated some former connection between the Moat and the Hall, until I fell asleep, and began to dream strange wild dreams, of which the following was the last.

I was in a great palace, wandering hither and thither, and meeting no one. A weight of silence brooded in the place. From hall to hall I went, along corridor and gallery, and up and down endless stairs. I knew that in some room near me was one whose name was Athanasia, a maiden, I thought in my dream, whom I had known and loved for years, but had lately lost—I knew not how. Somewhere here she was, if only I could find her. From room to room I went seeking her. Every room I entered bore some proof that she had just been there—but there she was not. In one lay a veil, in another a handkerchief, in a third a glove; and all were scented with a strange entrancing odour, which I had never known before, but which in certain moods I can to this day imperfectly recall. I followed and followed until hope failed me utterly, and I sat down and wept. But while I wept, hope dawned afresh, and I rose and again followed the quest, until I found myself in a little chapel like that of Moldwarp Hall. It was filled with the sound of an organ, distance-faint, and the thin music was the same as the odour of the handkerchief which I carried in my bosom. I tried to follow the sound, but the chapel grew and grew as I wandered, and I came no nearer to its source. At last the altar rose before me on my left, and through the bowed end of the aisle I passed behind it into the lady-chapel. There against the outer wall stood a dusky ill-defined shape. Its head rose above the sill of the eastern window, and I saw it against the rising

moon. But that and the whole figure were covered with a thick drapery: I could see nothing of the face, and distinguish little of the form.

"What art thou?" I asked, trembling.

"I am Death—dost thou not know me?" answered the figure, in a sweet, though worn and weary voice. "Thou hast been following me all thy life, and hast followed me hither."

Then I saw through the lower folds of the cloudy garment, which grew thin and gauze-like as I gazed, a huge iron door, with folding leaves, and a great iron bar across them.

"Art thou at thy own door?" I asked. "Surely thy house cannot open under the eastern window of the church?"

"Follow and see," answered the figure.

Turning, it drew back the bolt, threw wide the portals, and low-stooping entered. I followed, not in the moonlit night, but through a cavernous opening into darkness. If my Athanasia were down with Death, I would go with Death, that I might at least end with her. Down and down I followed the veiled figure, down flight after flight of stony stairs, through passages like those of the catacombs, and again down steep straight stairs. At length it stopped at another gate, and with beating heart I heard what I took for bony fingers fumbling with a chain and a bolt. But ere the fastenings had yielded, once more I heard the sweet odour-like music of the distant organ. The same moment the door opened, but I could see nothing for some time for the mighty inburst of a lovely light. A fair river, brimming full, its little waves flashing in the sun and wind, washed the threshold of the door, and over its surface, hither and thither, sped the white sails of shining boats, while from somewhere, clear now, but still afar, came the sound of a great organ psalm. Beyond the river, the sun was rising—over blue summer hills that melted into blue summer sky. On the threshold stood my guide, bending towards me, as if waiting for me to pass out also. I lifted my eyes: the veil had fallen—it was my lost Athanasia! Not one beam touched her face, for her back was to the sun, yet her face was radiant. Trembling, I would have knelt at her feet, but she stepped out upon the flowing river, and with the sweetest of sad smiles, drew the door to, and left me alone in the dark hollow of the earth. I broke into a convulsive weeping, and awoke.

CHAPTER XLI.

A WAKING.

I suppose I awoke tossing in my misery, for my hand fell upon something cold. I started up and tried to see. The light of a clear morning of late autumn had stolen into the room while I slept, and glimmered on something that lay upon the bed. It was some time before I could believe that my troubled eyes were not the sport of one of those odd illusions that come of mingled sleep and waking. But by the golden hilt and rusted blade I was at length convinced, although the scabbard was gone, that I saw my own sword. It lay by my left side, with the hilt towards my hand. But the moment I turned a little to take it in my right hand, I forgot all about it in a far more bewildering discovery, which fixed me staring half in amazement, so that again for a moment I disbelieved in my waking condition. On the other pillow lay the face of a lovely girl. I felt as if I had seen it before—whether only in the just vanished dream, I could not tell. But the maiden of my dream never comes back to me with any other features or with any other expression than those which I now beheld. There was an ineffable mingling of love and sorrow on the sweet countenance. The girl was dead asleep, but evidently dreaming, for tears were flowing from under her closed lids. For a time I was unable even to think; when thought returned, I was afraid to move. All at once the face of Mary Osborne dawned out of the vision before me—how different, how glorified from its waking condition! It was perfectly lovely—transfigured by the unchecked outflow of feeling. The recognition brought me to my senses at once. I did not waste a single thought in speculating how the mistake had occurred, for there was not a moment to be lost. I must be wise to shield her, and chiefly, as much as might be, from the miserable confusion which her own discovery of the untoward fact would occasion her. At first I thought it would be best to lie perfectly still, in order that she, at length awaking and discovering where she was, but finding me fast asleep, might escape with the conviction that the whole occurrence remained her own secret. I made the attempt, but I need hardly say that never before or since have I found myself in a situation half so perplexing; and in a few moments I was seized with such a trembling that I was compelled to turn my thoughts to the only other possible plan. As I reflected, the absolute necessity of attempting it became more and more apparent. In the first place, when she woke and saw me, she might scream and be heard; in the next, she might be seen as she left the room, or, unable to find her way, might be involved in great consequent embarrassment. But, if

I could gather all my belongings, and without awaking her, escape by the stair to the roof, she would be left to suppose that she had but mistaken her chamber, and would, I hoped, remain in ignorance that she had not passed the night in it alone. I dared one more peep into her face. The light and the loveliness of her dream had passed; I should not now have had to look twice to know that it was Mary Osborne; but never more could I see in hers a common face. She was still fast asleep, and, stealthily as a beast of prey, I began to make my escape. At the first movement, however, my perplexity was redoubled, for again my hand fell on the sword which I had forgotten, and question after question as to how they were together, and together there, darted through my bewildered brain. Could a third person have come and laid the sword between us? I had no time, however, to answer one of my own questions. Hardly knowing which was better, or if there was a better, I concluded to take the weapon with me, moved in part by the fact that I had found it where I had lost it, but influenced far more by its associations with this night of marvel.

Having gathered my garments together, and twice glanced around me—once to see that I left nothing behind, and once to take farewell of the peaceful face, which had never moved, I opened the little door in the wall, and made my strange retreat up the stair. My heart was beating so violently from the fear of her waking, that when the door was drawn to behind me, I had to stand for what seemed minutes before I was able to ascend the steep stair, and step from its darkness into the clear frosty shine of the autumn sun, brilliant upon the leads wet with the torrents of the preceding night.

I found a sheltered spot by the chimney-stack, where no could see me from below, and proceeded to dress myself—assisted in my very imperfect toilet by the welcome discovery of a pool of rain in a depression of the lead-covered roof. But alas, before I had finished, I found that I had brought only one of my shoes away with me! This settled the question I was the moment debating—whether, namely, it would be better to go home, or to find some way of reaching the library. I put my remaining shoe in my pocket, and set out to discover a descent. It would have been easy to get down into the little gallery, but it communicated on both sides immediately with bed-rooms, which for anything I knew might be occupied; and besides was unwilling to enter the house for fear of encountering some of the domestics. But I knew more of the place now, and had often speculated concerning the odd position and construction of an outside stair in the first court, close to the chapel, with its landing at the door of a room *en suite* with those of Sir Giles and Lady Brotherton. It was for a man an easy drop to this landing; quiet as a cat, I crept over the roof, let myself down, crossed the court swiftly, drew back the bolt which alone secured the wicket, and, with no greater mishap than the unavoidable wetting of shoeless feet, was soon safe in my own room, exchanging my evening for a morning dress. When I looked at my watch, I found it nearly seven o'clock.

I was so excited and bewildered by the adventures I had gone through, that, from very commonness, all the things about me looked alien and strange. I had no feeling of relation to the world of ordinary life. The first thing I did was to hang my sword in its own place, and the next to take down the bit of tapestry from the opposite wall, which I proceeded to examine in the light of my recollection of that round the denuded door. Room was left for not even a single doubt as to the relation between this and that: they had been wrought in one and the same piece by fair fingers of some long vanished time.

(To be continued.)

The following curious catalogue of Dickens' works is worth preservation:

"Oliver Twist," who had some very "Hard Times" in the "Battle of Life," and having been saved from "The Wreck of the Golden Mary" by "Our Mutual Friend," "Nicholas Nickleby," had just finished reading "A Tale of the Two Cities" to "Martin Chuzzlewit," during which time "The Cricket on the Hearth" had been chirping right merrily, while "The Chimes" from the adjacent church were heard, when "Seven Poor Travellers" commenced singing a "Christmas Carol," "Barnaby Rudge" then arrived from "The Old Curiosity Shop" with some "Pictures from Italy" and "Sketches by Boz" to show "Little Dorrit," who was busy with the "Pickwick Papers," when "David Copperfield," who had been taking "American Notes," entered and informed the company that the "Great Expectations" of "Dombey & Son" regarding "Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy" had not been realized, and that he had seen "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn" taking "Somebody's Luggage" to "Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings" in a street that has "No Thoroughfare" opposite "Bleak House," where "The Hanted Man," who had just given one of "Dr. M. Rigold's Prescriptions" to an "Uncommercial Traveller," was brooding over "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

How a Western Editor gets out of a scrape.—The editor of the *Lacrosse Democrat* had some prairie chickens sent him the other day, and thankfully acknowledged the same, forgetting that the chickens had been shot in violation of the game law. Next day he says they were fish, and blames the compositor for the mistake. He adds: The error was more mortifying to us because the law preventing the having in our possession of prairie chickens was yet in force, and it might lead ignorant parties to suppose that we had violated the law, and set at defiance the State of Wisconsin, and all the law-abiding people thereof. We knew they were fish all the time, and told the girl when she was picking off the feathers they were fish. The wish-bone was a regular cat-fish wish-bone, and the feet—but why multiply words, anybody would know they were not chickens.

The last joke at the expense of the French Society for the Protection of Animals is to the following effect:—A countryman, armed with an immense club, presents himself before the president of the society and claims the first prize. He is asked to describe the act of humanity on which he founds his claim. "I saved the life of a wolf," replied the countryman. "I might easily have killed him with this bludgeon," and he swings his weapon in the air, to the intense discomfiture of the president. "But where was the wolf?" inquired the latter; "what had he done to you?" "He had just devoured my wife," is the reply. The president reflects an instant and then says:—"My friend, I am of the opinion that you have been sufficiently rewarded."

Edward Carter, Esq., Q. C., has been elected by acclamation to represent the county of Brome, in the place of the Hon. Mr. Dunkin, elevated to the Bench.

Rev. Mr. Myers, of this city, has organised a subscription for the relief of the famine-stricken population in Persia. The famine is most severely felt in Shiraz.

The North-West expedition arrived at Fort Garry on Saturday last, and made the journey without a single accident. Telegraphic communication is established with Fort Garry.

Next to busy bees, bootblacks furnish the brightest example of improving the "shining hour."

An Indiana editor says: "We leave to-morrow for the county hog show and hope to take the first prize."

The latest euphuism for red hair is Canandaigua colour; Canandaigua being, as every New York traveller knows, a little beyond Auburn.

A music dealer in an Eastern town announces in his window a sentimental song, "Thou Hast Loved Me and Left Me for twenty-five cents."

Henry Ward Beecher says that the most gratifying circumstance in his life was being kissed by Kossuth. A contemporary asks: "Isn't this a little hard on poor Mrs. Beecher?"

An Irish doctor advertises that all persons afflicted with deafness may hear of him in a house in Dildy Street, where also blind persons may see him daily from three till ten o'clock.

A San Francisco journal says: As a rule, it is not a good plan to visit the house of a recently married lady to collect money loaned her while you were courting her yourself. We have reason to believe that we are supported in this opinion by Mr. Edward Kelly, of this city; but as Mr. Kelly is at the hospital, suffering from five gashes with a bowie-knife, we have foreborne to personally consult him.

NOTICE.

I have received Mr. W. G. STETHEM as a Partner in my business; the Partnership to date from 1st April, 1871, and all liabilities and assets on and since that date will be those of the new firm.

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