

Poetry.

NECESSITY MAKES MAN.

Because the kings of olden days were wise,
The brave and valiant were born;

When Rome was hurled on Carthage by stern Fate,
To arms her startled merchant's flew,

Witness you empire with gold dust baptised,
Napoleon welded where he warred;

THE CHARGE OF THE TIGHT BRIGADE.

At the bar, at the bar,
At the bar thunder'd,
Thunder'd with fiercest din

There stood those thirsty men—
Thirty one hundred;
Calling for drinks in vain,

Forward the Tight Brigade!
Take the bar," Muggins said.
Into it undismay'd,

Bottles to the right of them,
Bottles to the left of them,
Bottles in front of them,

Raised now each nose in air,
See what is under there,
Mugs charged with potent beer—

Bottles to the right of them,
Bottles to the left of them,
Bottles all round them,

When they awoke again,
O how their heads did pain!
No person wonder'd!

Tales and Sketches.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

CHAPTER II.

"Captain Charlton!" said the Banker, reading the name; "I don't know him; say I'm engaged."

"Well! well! show him into the library," said the old man, excusing himself to his guests, and left the room.

mate the plot he most wished to succeed. He had alarmed him by threatening to produce Louis Harvey, and it was his intention by exposing Harrington's baseness, eventually to ruin him, unless he gave him his daughter, and secured him his fortune.

The Captain's intention, in seeking an interview with Livingstone, was to inform him that he believed he had discovered the son of his old friend. He was not certain; he might be mistaken, it was so long since he was wrecked, and the child was so young, &c.

Mr. Livingstone listened to all this with deep attention; but ever and anon his brow wrinkled, and with a half-scornful glance he scanned the Captain's face.

"Certainly," said the other. "Who introduced him to your charge?" "Mr. Joseph Harrington," said the Captain.

"Indeed! then why come to me? Why not inform him of this?" "The Captain was prepared for this. "It were not wise," he said, "to inform him of it yet; he enjoys the boy's fortune, and we shall have difficulty enough to prove the child's identity, without giving him the opportunity of thwarting us."

"You judge him somewhat harshly," said the Banker; "is he not honest?" "He may be; but men do not give up large fortunes without a struggle, and we must run no risk. Will you help to re-instate the boy?"

"The son of my old friend shall be righted, if he lives," said the old man. "When can I see him?" "Now—he waits in your hall."

"Well, let us proceed at once to Mr. Harrington's; I love not mystery; and doubtless he will be rejoiced to see his ward." "Charlton demurred to this; it was almost too late; and a few days—a little delay—would enable them to procure stronger proofs; but the Banker would not listen to it. At length he said,

"How long have you known this youth?" "Some few months! and it is only within the last month that he has arrived in England. I would not take any steps until I was fully convinced he was Louis Harvey."

"There was prudence in that," observed the old man; "and you are convinced, eh?" "Fully; but why do you ask?" "Oh, nothing—mere curiosity; but let us go," and he pressed Charlton so closely, that he could not refuse to accompany him.

The Banker arose, rang the bell, and requested that Mr. Bellingham might be sent to him; and when that gentleman arrived, they all three went into the hall, with the intention of taking the youth to Mr. Harrington's.

The person introduced as Louis Harvey was certainly not prepossessing in appearance; he did not look you in the face when speaking, but glanced furtively at you, and seemed not much to like attracting notice. Mr. Livingstone did not pay him any very great attention; but ordering a coach, hurried them in, and directed the driver to proceed to Mr. Harrington's abode.

CHAPTER III.

It was long, very long, after being carried up stairs, ere Clara sufficiently revived to be able to notice her father, who, draping any incoherent murmuring, which might enlighten her attendant, had dismissed the servant, and dared not leave her. When she did sufficiently revive to notice him, she shrank for the first time in her life from him. Distinctly, clearly, vividly, did she remember his words, yet

hardly dared to realize them. Then she thought of Arthur. "Where was he? this night he was to have taken her to his old friend's. Why did he not come? Could he, too, wish—but no, that was impossible. Harrington hung over his child; it was the first time in his life that he had ever thwarted her wishes; and now, must he do so in the whole after-happiness of her life? His heart said no!—a thousand times no; but then his pride, his position, his standing—all these weighed strongly with him; and crushing back the tears he could have shed, he dared the worst. He felt the meanness, the utter want of manliness in thus blighting a young girl's dearest hopes; but he weighed all that as nothing in the balance of his own fair name.

When he thought that Clara could pay him sufficient attention, he began cautiously to unfold to her the painful position in which he stood; he touched but slightly on the subject of her marriage, spoke as little as possible of his early conduct to the son of his friend, yet sufficiently so to enable her fully to comprehend the precipice on which he stood—of the bill and its destruction—and consequently his loss of power over Charlton he dwelt long upon; and every argument, every plea which he could, he did urge to the utmost to induce his child to save him from ruin. But he asked too much. "She would," she said, "give up her affianced husband; but it would be to remain unmarried for life."

The slightest mention of Charlton, in the form of a suitor, created in her mind such a feeling of horror and disgust, and was met with such strong and determined opposition, that Harrington feared he had lost more than he gained by the course he had pursued. Up to this hour his child had regarded him with reverence and love; now she must, in spite of herself, cease to respect him. Up to this hour, he, though stern and cold to all others, was to her as tender, kind, and loving as a mother to her first-born. She had been everything to him. Losing her mother at the daughter's birth, he had lavished and concentrated in her all the best feelings of his heart. Bitterly, poignantly did he feel how deeply he had erred. He was now about to pay the bill which, in his younger days, he had drawn upon old age; such bills bear heavy interest, and are always presented, sooner or later.

"Father," urged Clara, after a short pause in his narrative, "why increase the wrong you have already done yourself? Why not yourself seek for this boy, and render back the fortune which is his? You say he was not drowned, and yet you know not where to find him! It is this Captain Charlton who defrauds him, and you too—let him produce the boy, and let me, dear father, let me tell this to Arthur; You could trust him with your fair name."

"Yes, and be despised by the man who sees my daughter's hand! Child! child! you know not, you cannot understand what it is to shrink before those whom you have hitherto led." "Poor Clara! Little indeed knew she of anything save her immediate world. Brought up in seclusion at home, it was fortunate for her that her chief instructor had been a lady who was fully qualified for the situation she undertook. She had discovered and carefully trained all the better portions of her own pupil's character, and implanted within her heart a deep-rooted love of candour and truth. To Clara's mind it seemed always best to assert at once what she deemed right, and she would cheerfully have resigned her present station to have induced her father to do what she believed to be so.

"It would be useless," said Harrington, "to attempt to conciliate Charlton. Nothing would satisfy him but the absolute control of all. He feels his power, and will not give it up. Can you not hold out some hope, Clara?—he has position, station—"

"Father!" interposed Clara, "this must not be; I am betrothed. To break one promise is enough; to add heartlessness to it, I dare not, and I will not. Let us dare the worst you have erred, and let us both suffer."

Clara's heart, although she would not have admitted it, whispered to her that her lot could not be very dreadful. Well did she know Arthur; and she knew that no change in circumstances could alter his love. Her confidence and trust was the one link upon which rested all happiness, perhaps her life. The love which existed between her and Arthur was not of first sight; it had grown on them. The mutual discovery of mutual little perfections had waited for the time when Arthur should be taken into partnership with Mr. Livingstone (which time had now arrived) to be united in marriage. It was hard to sacrifice this—her all of happiness; but she had been taught that her father had the first claim upon her for everything, and she yielded it so far as to give up her own will; but she could not bend, at once, that will in a direction so totally opposite as he desired and urged her to.

Arguments had failed to do more than gain her promise to decline Bellingham's hand. Threats were now resorted to; and, as one angry feeling ever brings on another, so far did he increase in violence, that poor Clara, weakened by her previous anxieties, was speedily overcome, and again lay almost senseless on the sofa.

It was whilst watching over her that Harrington heard a knock at the door, and a servant entered to inform him that four gentlemen, amongst whom was Mr. Bellingham, de-

sired to see him instantly, late as it was. Their business was too urgent for delay, and they trusted they would not keep them waiting, or refuse to see them.

Harrington reflected some few moments, and then decided to meet them. He was somewhat satisfied to hear that Arthur was one of them—imagining that, perhaps, anxiety for Clara was the cause of his visit, and yet he was puzzled as to who could be with him. However, he was not long left in doubt; for on entering the room his eyes met those of Charlton, and instantly decided that the worst had happened—that the Captain had, in fact, found out Arthur, and related everything to him; and that Arthur had brought his old friend and partner to witness his disgrace. Yet, had he not allowed his guilt to blind him, he might have known that the bond of union which still existed between his child and Bellingham would have prevented that gentleman from participating in any way in his disgrace, and certainly have induced him to shield instead of exposing him.

Whilst these thoughts were rapidly passing in his mind, Mr. Livingstone stepped towards him, and said—"You will, I am convinced, pardon this intrusion, when you know the purport of our visit. This gentleman, whom probably you may not recollect, is the Captain of the vessel in which Louis Harvey went aboard, and which was wrecked, as you know. He is the bearer of good tidings to you," and the old man smiled sarcastically, as he saw his listener's cheek blanch, and his lips contract with agitation. "He comes to tell you that the child was not drowned, but lives—lives to enable you to render back to him the fortune you have so carefully improved for him. To me, this is no unexpected event. Many years since I received intimation that the boy was alive. Long and carefully did I seek for him, determined, if possible, to find him. I did not inform any one of my hopes; for I had also my fears; and my only confident has frequently sounded you, Captain," and he turned towards him, "upon this subject, but without much effect."

"And did you never meet with him?" said Harrington eagerly.

"Yes; this night I am told that I have seen him; is it not so, Captain?"

Charlton, whom this narrative had somewhat alarmed, felt again at his ease, and replied, "Yes, here is the son and heir of the late Mr. Harvey; he brings his proofs with him, namely, the letters of those who saved him from the wreck, besides his own recollection of some few trifling circumstances of childhood, slight, it is true, but worthy of much weight in this matter."

"Where is he? let me see him!" said the Merchant in a hoarse voice, and he glared on the Captain with impotent rage.

"Here! here!" exclaimed two voices; and Charlton and the Banker both led forward a claimant for the name of Harvey.

"What does this mean? are you both mad?" cried Harrington. "Have you both conspired against me? You, Charlton—william! I know; but I did not think that Mr. Livingstone could lend himself to baseness."

"Nor does he," said the old man; "this means, Mr. Harrington, that Arthur Bellingham is indeed the son of my old friend; but it was my old friend Harvey, not Bellingham, who died when his child was quite young. My emissaries found out all this gallant Captain's schemes—his own confidant betrayed him; and had it not been for Arthur's attachment to your child, I should long since have made known his claims. As it is it is only two years since I obtained all the necessary proofs, and then Arthur was engaged to Clara. The attested confession of this Captain's faithful follower is in my bank; and it only remains for him to prove the title of his new protegee."

The new protegee did not however seem much fitted for difficult positions. He glanced hesitatingly at the door, and would have certainly rushed towards it, had it not suddenly opened; when, to the astonishment of all, Clara entered the room. Frightened by the loud voices she had heard, and learning that Arthur was with her father, she feared that he was resisting the determination which her father had formed forbidding him the house; and, after some slight parley with herself, she determined to go down, to see him once more, and urge him by all his love for her—by all her own to him—to leave her. She knew by her own sufferings what his must be; but still she felt she must sacrifice all for him whom she believed to have the highest claim on her. Just as she entered, the Banker had seized with a powerful grasp the trembling coward who came to dupe them all; but the Captain, with a keener eye to the turn events had taken, took advantage of the confusion caused by Clara's entry, and noiselessly, but rapidly, left the house, sprang into the coach which was waiting, and ordered the man to drive towards the Docks, where his vessel lay.

Arthur, who would have followed, was stopped by Clara, who, advancing towards her father, was about to speak; but he silenced her by placing his hand in that of Arthur's. She uttered not a word, but, turning from them, sank into a chair.

It required but little on the part of the Banker to extort a full confession from the wretched imposter before him; and as he knew nothing whatsoever of Harrington's conduct in the matter, the Merchant was thus far safe from detection. But there was the dread of Charlton's vindictiveness. Baffled as

he had been, was it likely that he would remain unrevenged! And how prevent his publishing all? If the man before them were delivered over to justice, an order from the Admiralty would soon bring Charlton to light, and then in self-defence he would expose the Merchant; and Harrington groaned in spirit as he thought of all this.

However, his child and Arthur, and Louis, as we must now call him, together with old Mr. Livingstone, did all they could to comfort him. Without other proof than Charlton's words, it was shown that there was not much to fear; and with the proofs of his guilt, little stress would be laid upon them. It was indeed decided that the man should be handed over to justice, and placed in safe-keeping at once, which was accordingly carried into effect.

Very few minutes yet remained of Christmas Eve—that Eve so eventful to Harrington—that Eve which he had so much and so often dreaded to meet. Already the bells from the neighboring churches began to ring merrily, flinging their tufted welcome through the air, far over the sleeping City into the quiet fields beyond. Now they were struggling through the fog which had gathered over the river, seeming lost and buried in that thick darkness; and anon they would be heard echoing joyfully as they emerged into the purer air.

The Banker, taking a hand of Clara and Louis, led them towards the merchant. "The son of your partner is restored to you," said he; "whatever injury he has suffered at your hands you can more than efface; and in doing so, you will regain that peace of mind—that happiness, which do wealth or power has been able to win you. Will you not make these happy, and, in doing so, be happy too?"

The pair knelt at his feet, and Harrington arose and blessed them. There was a smile, a new smile on his brow, a truer gladness in his eye than he had felt for years. He had been guilty; but he was repentant, and had made amends. The load of secret guilt was passing from him, and scarcely one fear remained. There was a tear trickling down the cheek of the old Banker, as, for the first time in his life, he grasped the Merchant's hand with kindly feelings; and as he did so the chimes ceased for a moment, and Christmas Eve had passed away into the land of things which were and are not.

A week afterwards the claims of Harvey had been all proved and settled.

When Captain Charlton stepped from the coach, it was into an atmosphere of utter darkness. The fog had risen and gathered on all sides; but for this he cared nothing; he knew the place well. Raising his voice he hailed a boat, determining to seek his vessel—"Boat ahoy! ahoy!" At last a reply came slowly through the muddy air. "Where away, your honor?"—"Here." "Ay, ay, Sir."

Charlton descended the steps towards the river. The boat was just visible; he sprang towards it.—What was that? a sudden splash—another—now a call—a cry for help—and the Captain was struggling with the cold, chill, rapid current. He had mistaken the position of the boat in the darkness, and, though a powerful swimmer, encumbered by his clothes, was rapidly sinking. He raised his voice again; and now he fancied he heard other voices near. He felt himself sinking, and shrieked in his agony of fear. Further, further, was he going down the stream. It was dark, he could not see a yard before him, and yet his eyes seemed to sparkle with myriad gleams of light. What was that? hark—the booming and swelling of a bell?—no, of a whole peal. And now it seems to mock at him; they are the Christmas chimes. How he strains to hear a voice! There is nothing but the bells, as laughingly they rush above his head—and see, a gleam of light. The moon comes straggling out, and looks upon him; but suddenly a thick cloud shuts her from his view. The bells chime faintly—faint—fainter—and then cease. One more strong agony—one more shriek—and Captain Charlton is no more.

Some days afterwards, a mutilated form was found far down the river; it was recognised as the Captain. The Coroner sat on it, and it was buried. His accomplice, in the common course of things, was transported, and Harrington and Harvey were at last happy. Many and many a Christmas Eve passed, but never without bringing back the mingled memories of sorrow and joy to the old Merchant. As years mellowed down his feelings, the light of joy shed its genial influence into his heart, and he was blessed.

THE END.

THE MIDNIGHT PERIL.

BY ARTHUR L. MERRIVE.

"How it does rain, John. I don't think I ever heard anything like it before. Hark! how the Branch is roaring. It must be over its banks now. You don't think it can rise high enough to come up here, do you, John?"

"No, Susan, the water ain't been up as high as this since Noah's flood. The ground is higher here by ten feet than it is on the bank of the Branch. If the water touches us here, I shall begin to think that the rainbow was set in the sky for nothing."

The young wife went to the one window of the cabin, and looked out into the night. But there was nothing except inky blackness before her. She could not see the rain as it de-