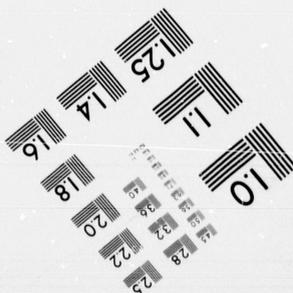
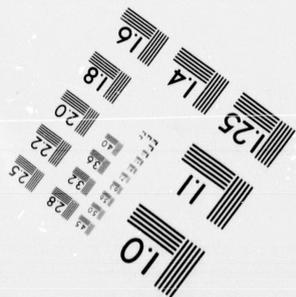
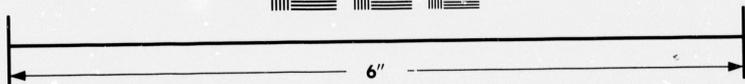
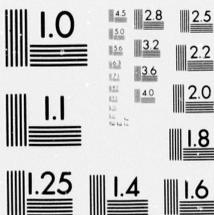


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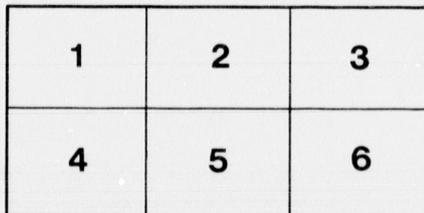
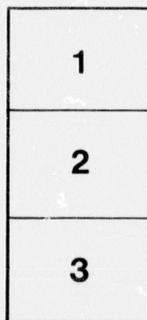
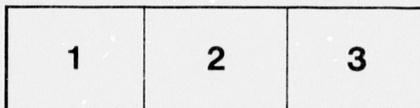
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ROMANCE OF
AN ALTER EGO.

BY
LLOYD BRYCE,
AUTHOR OF "PARADISE,"

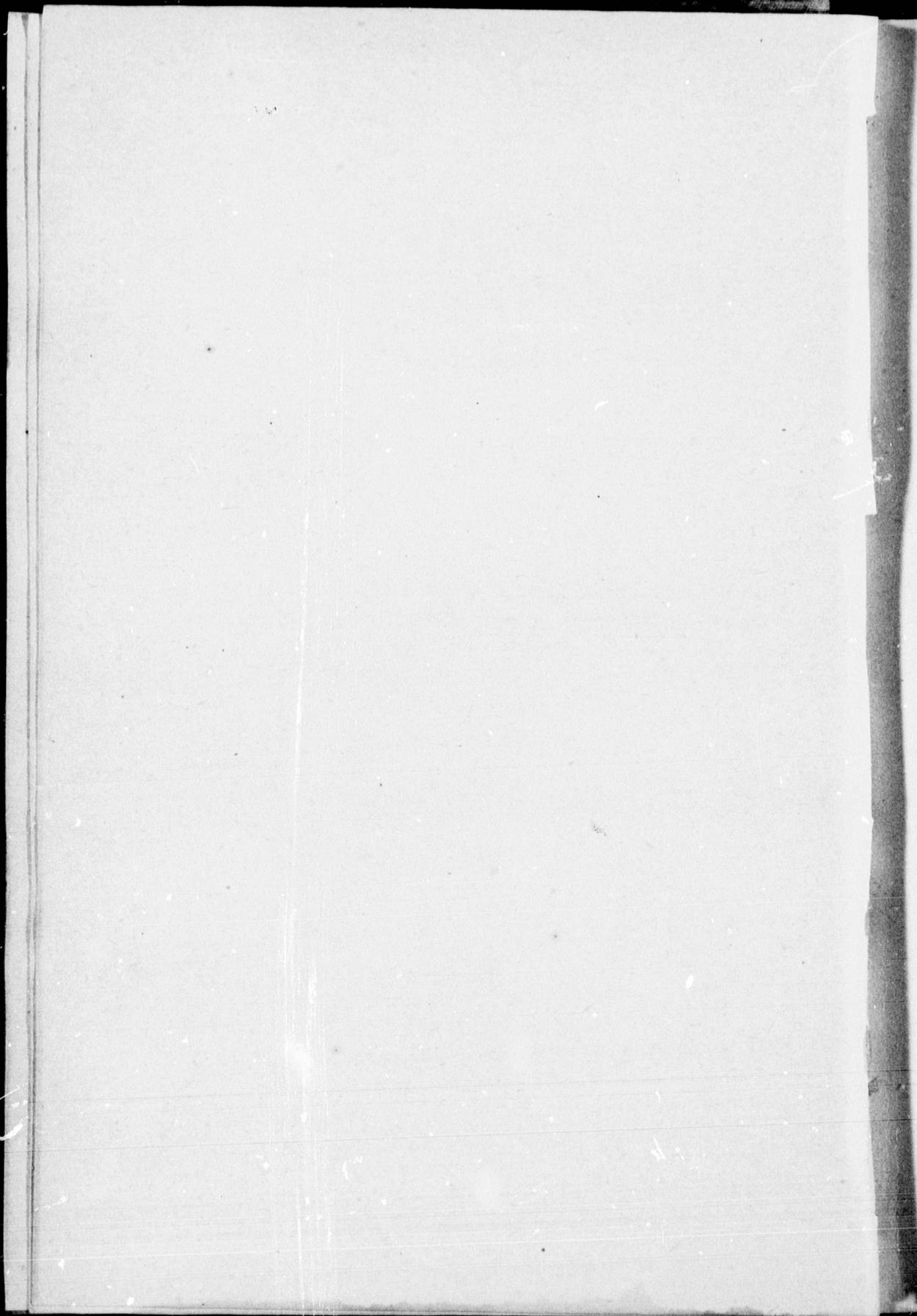
Toronto:
ROSE PUBLISHING COMPANY.
1889.

Entered according to the Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year
one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine, by the ROSE PUBLISHING
COMPANY, at the department of Agriculture.



in the year
PUBLISHING

I dedicate this book
to
My Critics.



PREFACE.

THE Washington editor of one of the most widely circulated New York dailies asked me, not long since, how I came to hit upon what he was pleased to call the whimsical plot of my little novel "Paradise"—going on to say that it could only have been inspired by fact.

I assured him that such was the case, and further explained that the present story, *THE ROMANCE OF AN ALTER EGO*, was based on the circumstances of a lawsuit that actually occurred some two years ago in Brooklyn.

This evening, while revising my final proofs, I find a paragraph in the *Commercial Advertiser*, quoted from the *Philadelphia Times*, that so strangely coincides with a portion of my plot that I give it in full below:

"Two years ago Miss Jansen, a pretty and accomplished girl of eighteen, left her home in Stockholm and came to relatives at Caldwell, in this county. On the steamer coming over Miss Jansen met John and Henry Stanton, twin sons of an English merchant at Stockholm. Both young men fell in love with her, but her preference was so strong for John that Henry apparently gave up the rôle of suitor.

"The resemblance between the brothers was striking, and they were constantly mistaken for each other. John and his sweetheart were soon engaged, and last Thursday evening was fixed

for the wedding. The Rev. Mr. Swenson was on hand to perform the ceremony. The groom arrived without his brother, who, he said, was sick. The ceremony took place, and after a reception the couple left the house. Before they had gone a block the young man said he must go to New York and nurse his brother. The bride wanted to accompany him, but he refused.

"At noon yesterday a dejected and tired-looking young man arrived at Bloomfield and asked for Miss Jansen. When she saw him she ran to greet her supposed husband. He repulsed her and wanted to know why she had tricked him; at the same time he handed her a telegram. It was from Philadelphia and was signed Emily Jansen. It was dated Thursday. It requested him to meet her at the Continental Hotel at eight o'clock that evening. All was confusion, but gradually the truth came out. Henry Stanton had decoyed his brother to Philadelphia, and, trusting to his close resemblance, had gone to Caldwell and married Emily. Mrs. Stanton will at once apply for a divorce."

LLOYD BRYCE.

NEW YORK, April 16, 1889.

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LOYD BRUCE.

THE ROMANCE OF AN ALTER EGO.

I.

Now that the excitement is over, I can look back quite calmly on events which divided the greatest city of the New World into two opposing camps, which sent a chill of horror down the spinal column of every bachelor unblest with hosts of relatives and friends, and afforded food for gossip, I might add, to every newspaper throughout the entire length and breadth of this mighty land. People called the case a sensational one, but if the suit were sensational how much more so proved the sequel—this sequel, which, though buried in my soul, has at last broken through its trammels and burst into print.

A French judge, it will be remembered, used to say in any vexed case, "*Cherchez la femme!*"—implying that a lady was the cause of every trouble. There certainly was a lady in my case, without a doubt; there have been many ladies in previous cases of mine. I have suffered largely through women, and yet, like Lord Beaconsfield, I have been largely benefited by the sex.

As regards my status in society and how and why I am before you, it will be sufficient for the present to touch only upon my immediate past.

For reasons in no wise bearing upon this story, though closely connected with a woman, I had given up the practice of the law in a New England city for the freer life of a ranchman. Please accept the fact that I had embarked in my new career on the eve of a phenomenal rise in cattle, and that, the profits continuing large, I had found after a few years a small inheritance developed into a considerable fortune. Please accept the fact that I had thereupon sold out my interest, and, turning my face to the New-World Mecca for hastily acquired riches, I arrived in New York one bright spring afternoon, with the object of enjoying that rest and recreation which my struggles with the world had prevented my indulging in before. Please accept the fact, however, that I had not a single friend or acquaintance that I knew of in the city, and that, save for one brief sojourn, I had never visited the city before.

I am a firm believer in presentiment. The curious feature about presentiments, however, is that they seldom, if ever, serve to forestall the trouble they anticipate. I remember the most prosaic incidents connected with my arrival here : that I had a slight chill driving down from the station, that the columns of the porch of the hotel where I descended looked dark and forbidding and, lastly, that the fac-simile of the great fist of the Statue of Liberty, then temporarily ornamenting Madison Square, seemed veritably holding up its torch in warning. In short, I had that strained sensation of intensity they say men have when entering battle, when on the eve of a duel, or when merely about to get married.

I suppose it is because of some such psychological con-

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ditions as these that we get the expression "Coming events cast their shadows before."

I am half a philosopher and half a fatalist. I tried to throw off my vague feelings of oppression, of an approaching horror, of something unwonted, something that had perhaps never occurred to any man before; and by dint of a fair bottle of champagne (oh, that cursed bottle! without it I would have taken the first train back to the West) and a contemplative cigar, I at last succeeded fairly well; indeed, so rehabilitated did I feel that I resolved to venture abroad. I would not be prisoned by my fears, but would, on the contrary, go forth and beard this mysterious lion of my fancy. I sauntered out into the streets; I wandered down Broadway; I began to smile to myself at the folly of indulging in such fears, and had actually begun to notice the changes four years had made in the metropolis when my Nemesis came upon me and consumed me.

I was crossing a square, one of those numerous ones gridironed with car-tracks. There was a street-car before me, one behind me, one on each side of me, and one exactly opposite me which had stopped just in front of my path, as horse-cars will. Indeed, in this age of general criticism I wish some one would raise up his voice in indignant protest against horse-cars. We are tyrannized by horse-cars, we are metaphorically ground down under their iron wheels; always full when we want to use them, always in our way when we don't, they possess but a single recommendation—namely, their dividends, which, alas! are held in too few hands. Suffice it to say I was compelled to stop, and, being so near this particular horse-car, it was only natural that I should assist

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a lady who was struggling to reach its rear platform. In some ways I am a weak man, perhaps a not altogether unsusceptible one. I don't mean to say by this that I would not assist a stout or an old and ugly lady, too, but what I mean is that I would instinctively help a pretty and a young woman more readily than an ugly or an old one. It takes less power of the will to do so, and comes, I am loath to confess it, quite naturally.

This woman was neither ugly nor old; I could tell it by the sweep of her dress, the contour of her cheek, and the turn of her ankle as her foot lightly touched the step. Well, I helped her to the platform, and she turned to thank me. Great heavens! shall I ever forget the change that came over her face as her eyes met mine? It must have been rapid, but it seemed an eternity, so marked was each phase of her emotions from surprise to conviction. It fascinated me. A bright, sparkling face she had, now that it was turned fully towards me, but becoming pale, her eyes growing more fixed and glassy as she regarded me from the rear platform of the horse-car, that had got blocked and could not or would not move on. It was a green horse-car—its very color is indelibly impressed upon my memory, and even the face of the conductor, as, with hand uplifted to the strap, he stood a little behind her. Why should she look at me in that bewildered manner? Why should she display such astonished surprise? These half-queries floated through my mind as her gaze rooted me to the pavement. Then, the horse-car suddenly starting ahead, I heard a suppressed cry, and either losing her balance, she fell forward, or half threw herself into my arms.

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With the advance of the horse-car lately before me, all the other horse-cars began to move, and with them the heterogeneous crowd of vehicles constituting the blockade.

What could I do? I could not deposit my fair burden in the street. I could not run after the horse-car with her in my arms. I consequently bore her to the sidewalk, as much for her own protection against the feet of prancing horses and the wheels of carriages as for my own. I would have borne her to the nearest shop on the corner had I not unfortunately caught sight of a druggist's in the middle of the block. Thither I conveyed her, followed by the usual rabble that any accident or excitement in the street causes to rise up as if by the magician's wand. On reaching our destination I called for a glass of water and pressed it to her lips. Then she revived, and, slowly opening her eyes, "O George!" she exclaimed, "have I found you at last?"

"My name is neither George," I returned, "nor have I any right to suppose you have been seeking me for any extended period."

In the meanwhile the people who had followed us began pushing into the shop just as such people will.

Now, as of all things in the world I most detest a sensation, I briefly explained the matter to the druggist and turned to leave. As I got near the door, however, she half rose from the chair on which I had placed her.

"O good friends, follow him!" she cried. "Find out where he lives; he will desert me again! Help! He is my husband!"

To arrive in a city whither one has come to secure

rest and enjoyment, and to be claimed as the husband of a young woman one has picked up, so to speak, in the street, is what the French might call a *mauvaise plaisanterie*.

I went back to the shopman, repeated with greater emphasis the exact particulars of the case, and was annoyed to perceive that he accepted my version rather doubtfully.

"Do you mean to imagine," I inquired hotly, "that I am really anything to this lady, that I am actually her husband? Why, I never laid my eyes on her before five minutes ago. My name is Aaron Simoni," I continued, "and I only arrived in New York this very afternoon."

"Don't let him leave," cried the lady excitedly. "Follow him! call an officer!"

Then, with that readiness to protect a female which Americans always evince, the bystanders stepped forward with one accord as a volunteer force in her service. I shook myself free of them. It was too irritating. I even assumed a bellicose attitude with my umbrella.

At last a policeman, attracted by the commotion, presented himself, and the lady, drawing him to one side, pre-disposed him in her favor by telling him her story first, whereupon he attempted to collar me somewhat roughly.

"Now look here, officer!" I exclaimed, "this woman has made an egregious blunder; she takes me for her husband, but I swear I have never laid my eyes on her, before a few minutes ago, in my life."

Again and again I reiterated my statement to the policeman, as I had done to the druggist, and I even reiterated it to the bystanders, who by this time quite filled up the shop.

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"It's a very queer case," observed the policeman dubiously, influenced at last by my repeated assurances.

"Lynch him!" (meaning me), exclaimed a belligerent gentleman with a red face and green spectacles.

"Oh, for shame!" remarked another, "to desert your own wife."

"But she isn't my wife, damn her!" I cried, with justifiable warmth.

"Oh! oh! oh!" from a woman with a limp baby in her arms and a crumpled bonnet on her head. "Look, baby" (to her offspring), "look at the ogre. What would 'oo think if 'oo's papa treated 'oo's mamma like that?" Whereupon the baby began to howl piteously and to excite the public temper more against me than ever.

By this time the interior of the shop, as I have said, was not only thronged, but the sidewalk immediately in front of the shop was thronged too, while a compact mass of faces in rows, one above another, were pressed against the large window-pane; faces of all descriptions they were, of all ages, both sexes, and of every rank, peering in, with an imperfect knowledge of what was going on inside affecting the features of each face.

Up to this moment my only thought had been to escape quietly; perceiving that this could be no longer effected, I turned again to the policeman.

"I am stopping at the Madison Park Hotel," I said, "and if you will call a cab and get me out of this, we can drive there and my statements will be confirmed." Then I slipped a "tenner" into his hand, and, clearing the way for me, he ushered me into a hansom which had considerably stopped opposite the door to give the driver a sort of

gallery view of the spectacle going on inside the shop. Instead of following me into the vehicle, however, the policeman asked me to wait for him a moment until he went back and spoke to the lady again.

I could not have escaped had I tried, the crowd was so dense, and was pressing about the vehicle to such an extent, surveying me with the peculiar curiosity people evince for the perpetrator of some extraordinary and outrageous crime. One person actually reached over, and, as if to show his sense of indignant condemnation, prodded me with his stick, while a small boy, slyly biding his opportunity, pinched me in the leg.

At last the officer returned, and we started off at a pace to distance all but the most athletic pursuers.

It was not a long drive to the hotel, though it seemed to be, the nature of the vehicle showing me off to such advantage, and the horrid beast in buttons at my side.

We arrived at our destination without further adventure, but, as I ought to have realized, the clerks were unable to give any information as to my antecedents, nor were my letters and papers sufficient to satisfy the upholder of the law. Consequently he insisted that I should accompany him to the police station in his precinct, where he informed me that he had told the lady he would convey me should he fail to be convinced as to my identity at the hotel. Here I was to await any charges she might bring against me. Here I did wait, indulging in the ardent hope that she might never appear. But she came at last.

How I hated and abhorred her as she stood up there before the sergeant at his desk, so coolly, so flagrantly

making her accusations! I had ample time to study her. Of a bright and sparkling beauty, as I have intimated, she was faultlessly attired, and was just a shade under the average height. As she went on, I could see that she was emotional by nature, and she spoke with a rising fervor that at times was almost sufficient to persuade me of her sincerity. I attributed it to her skill as an actress. She was a most accomplished adventuress, I thought.

She described herself as Edna Dalzelle, twenty-two years of age, and occupying a flat in an apartment house known as the Washington, on West Twenty-third street; stating that in the summer of '83—namely, some four years ago—during a visit to Newport, her youthful affections were betrayed into a clandestine marriage by a man named Fitzamble, whose acquaintance she had made at the Ocean House, where they had both been stopping; that immediately after the ceremony he had conducted her to New York, and arriving here, without explanation or excuses, he had abruptly deserted her, leaving her to return heartbroken and alone to her father; that from that time she had never laid eyes on him until half an hour ago, when he (I) had helped her into a street-car, I being the errant Fitzamble!!!

"Have you anything to say, Fitzamble?" observed the sergeant, looking over at me severely.

"I have only to say that I never heard the name of Fitzamble before in my life!" I exclaimed indignantly; "that I never was in Newport in my life, that I never saw this lady before some fifty minutes ago" (looking at my watch), "and that I am no more her husband than you are yourself."

"Look out, look out, sir!"—from the desk. "I can hold you for disorderly conduct."

"Oh, spare him!" cried the lady, clasping her hands. "I only wish him to come back to me, sir, and to recognize me. Think what it is, sir, to have gone through what I have done these past four years!"

"Stand up nearer here, Fitzamble. Do you mean to say you are not married to this young lady?"

"I mean to say that I will have this whole affair sifted if it costs me every penny I possess in the world."

The sergeant appeared perplexed. "Well, madam," he at last remarked, turning to my claimant, "though he seems obstinate, I can hardly hold him on the charge you make. If you desire it, however, I will lock him up over-night for creating a disturbance in the street."

"Never! never!" interjected the lady. "I will not subject him to such an indignity as that."

"And in the morning," continued the sergeant, heedless of the interruption, "you can get the necessary papers from the civil court to secure his attendance at a trial to establish your marital rights."

At the close of this speech she approached me.

"I will make a last appeal to him," she said. "O George, why will you persist in this denial? Have you not injured me sufficiently already? I ask nothing of you beyond recognition. I have means amply sufficient for us both. O George, was it because you thought I didn't care for you that you deserted me? Was it because of those odious officers at the fort who would persist in dancing with me?"

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enough," I retorted. "I am unaware of what your motives may be, but I wish to have no trouble with you, and I tell you quite candidly that if you persist in your schemes you will find me a man not easily to be blackmailed."

"Blackmailed!" she cried, throwing up her hands in well-feigned horror. "And have I only found you to have you accuse me of a crime like that?"

II.

I DROVE away in a state of bewilderment only secondary to my irritation.

At last, however, the very extravagance of the situation appealed to me, and I actually began to laugh. Nevertheless it was temporarily an awkward predicament. I had no one to advise me, as I was without a single friend or acquaintance in the city. On thinking over the matter I decided to call upon the proprietor of my hotel in my emergency, and lay the whole case before him. This I did, and he immediately gave me the address of a Mr. Slocum, as the best lawyer he could think of to advise me in my scrape.

Although business hours were by this time long over, I was sufficiently fortunate to find this gentleman at his house, and recounted to him my singular adventure.

At first he laughed heartily. When, in reply to his questions, however, I told him of my residence in the West, and further that I had visited New York, curiously enough, at a period about contemporaneous with the marriage of the errant Fitzamble, I could see that the case assumed a more suspicious aspect in his eyes.

"I fear I must ask you to acquaint me with your past history," he observed. "I must know a little more of your family and antecedents. I don't wish to be inquisitive, my dear sir, but I must be fully informed about you to be in a position to help you."

"To begin at the very beginning, then," I said, "my family is of Italian extraction, but, to distinguish me as a true-born son of America, my father named me Aaron. The combination is not a particularly happy one, but, as I had no hand in the matter, you must not hold me responsible. Towards the close of the year 1865 my mother and myself left the quiet village in Pennsylvania where I was born, and moved to Vermont, my father having died under somewhat painful circumstances."

"How so?"

"Well, I had an only brother, who was rather wild and unmanageable; he quarreled with my father, and the war, with its keen excitements, being upon the country, he ran away, enlisted in the Union army, and lost his life under Grant in the Wilderness. He was a mere boy at the time. The news of his death quite broke my father up, for he died shortly after. It broke up our home, too, as I have intimated, for my mother married again and moved with me to Vermont because her second husband's home was there; here I studied law, and had just been admitted to the bar when my mother herself died. Though she left me sufficient to live on in a small way, I continued to work at my profession, and was, indeed, making a small income as a lawyer, when I became involved with a lady who, suffice it to say, made my life wretched. Thereupon I threw up the law, and, forsaking civilization, started in the business of raising cattle out West, which I found, as luck would have it, far more profitable and more to my taste than Blackstone. While out there I came East only once—namely, to New York to collect some moneys that were due me in part payment for a herd of cattle I

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had sold in the yards of Chicago—and though I only intended stopping here a week, I was detained five.”

“And you say this visit to New York was just four years ago?”

I nodded my head in the affirmative.

“It’s an odd coincidence, particularly as it would make your return to the West so near the time this Fitzamble, as you say, deserted his wife.”

“But what makes it stranger,” I added reflectively, “is that, as far as I could make out from the woman’s allegations, the commencement of her acquaintance with this Fitzamble must have followed within two weeks or so of my arrival, too. The cause of my detention was the difficulty I experienced in making my collections, and, indeed, I was at last compelled to leave without getting my money after all.”

“By the way, what was the date of your marriage with this woman?” the lawyer asked quickly.

“With which woman? Oh! I see, you want to catch me. I swear before the Lord Almighty I was never married to any woman in my life!”

Mr. Slocum became lost for a moment in thought—

“Well,” he exclaimed at last, “I will believe your statements.”

Then he promised to have all the particulars about my supposititious wife (through the medium of a detective agency) at my disposal on the following day, and, further, to defend me should she have the effrontery to bring the case into the courts. Thereupon I retired, and to take my thoughts from the topic of my disagreeable adventure I went to the theatre, and in due course of time afterwards I found myself in bed.

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III.

I OVERLEPT myself the next morning, for it was past ten o'clock when I was awakened by a loud knocking at my door.

"The gent says he will wait at the office till you come down," a hall-boy informed me through the key-hole; then he slipped a visiting card under the sill and departed. I got up and examined the pasteboard. On it was the name of Henry T. Dalzelle, and in one corner, "Fine Champagnes, Burgundies, and other Imported Wines."

So this was a member of the family come to see me already. What right had he to call upon me at all? My first instinct was to send him down word to go to the devil. Curiosity, however, got the better of my temper, and I resolved to have a look at him. I am a good judge of character, and I thought perhaps I might gain through him an insight into the kind of people these were who claimed me.

I dressed myself leisurely, indulging in a good tub of cold water, according to my wont, as a healthy sustainer through a possibly awkward interview, and descended the stairs. At the office I found a little old gentleman with iron-gray hair well brushed forward. Before I could object, he was shaking hands with me effusively as if I were his long-lost son. At last, apparently becoming aware of

a slight incongruity in his conduct, he drew himself back with an air of reserve.

"Before I go any further," he observed with dignity, "I ought to know, sir, what you propose doing?"

"Doing about what?" I asked obtusely.

"Why, about my daughter."

"Would you mind coming up-stairs to the ladies' parlor?" I said, fearful of having another crowd congregate about us.

He followed me up, and I led him to a retired corner. Then I turned upon him fiercely:

"Now, what is your motive, sir, in all this business?"

"My motive, sir, is to right my daughter!" he exclaimed with equal decision. "After a brief courtship of two weeks you inveigled a motherless girl into a clandestine marriage and then basely deserted her. Now, sir, I don't wish all this to get into the papers, so I have come to talk over the matter with you calmly, and see whether you have a spark of gentlemanly instinct in you, or whether you are really the scoundrel your actions would indicate."

His show of sincerity provoked me.

"Damn it all!" I cried, "I don't wish to reiterate my statements. I have no doubt you believe what you say, but your allegations don't refer to me. You are eminently respectable people, I have no doubt, and I will give you the credit to suppose you have merely made a mistake in my identity."

The old gentleman interrupted me by energetically hammering the floor with his cane. "Well," he said, "if you persist in that line of defense, we will bring it into the courts, sir, and prove it."

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"It will be hard to prove that I'm some one else than myself," I retorted.

"We'll see about that," he replied, with more haste than logic; "my testimony is worth something, sir. Why, I recognized you the instant I laid my eyes upon you."

"But did you recognize me as Aaron Simoni?" I asked.

"Aaron Simoni is an assumed name. Who ever heard of such a name in real life?"

"I will not deny," I observed, a little taken aback, "but that the combination is a peculiar one; indeed, my dear sir, it is such a peculiar one that if I had been adopting a name I would have tried something far better. Now do be rational," I continued, seeing him grow again excited. "So little do I know of all this business that I am actually ignorant of the exact circumstances of your daughter's marriage. Tell me the particulars in full, and I will endeavor to prove to your entire satisfaction the extravagance of your position."

"I will say nothing," replied the old gentleman, shutting up like an opera-hat. "I have already taken legal advice on the subject, and you will hear from us before long." Then he departed, and I could hear him go stamping down the stairs.

IV.

A SHORT time after, a few lines came from my lawyer stating that he would see me at two o'clock, and somewhat impatiently I awaited his coming.

Punctual to the minute he presented himself, armed with the particulars which he had promised me.

His information quickly dispelled any lingering doubts I might have had that the situation was simply a case of mistaken identity.

While not belonging to what is known as fashionable society, they were in every way respectable people, comfortably circumstanced so far as worldly goods went, if not rich; the father, a wholesale wine merchant—a profession which is now getting to be held as almost an aristocratic one—owning a large apartment house in a first-rate street. On one floor of this he resided with his daughter, who was his only child, and who was allowed, if report spoke true, the gratification of every whim by her too indulgent parent.

“Such, my friend, are the persons you have to deal with—mistaken, to be sure, but responsible, high-principled people in every way as far as I can learn, undoubtedly believing, too, in the justice of their own position. Your visit to New York from the West just about the time of the marriage makes it slightly awkward, but all you will

have to do is to prove who you are, and that ought to settle the matter."

"There are plenty of people whom I could get to prove who I am, and even if there weren't I could easily prove I was never called Fitzamble," I added, with a shudder. "But what line of action is open to her should she actually make a case of it and bring it into the courts? You see I am a little rusty in my law."

"Well, there are several lines," he observed reflectively. "First, she could sue you for desertion and failure to support; or she might give an order to some prominent tradesman and have the bill sent in to you, and let him sue you for payment; or she might sue for divorce and alimony."

"Under no circumstances could she force me to live with her, could she?" I inquired, with a vague dread.

At this moment we were disturbed by a slight commotion in the hall outside, followed by a knock at the door. I rose to answer the summons, when a servant announced, "Mrs. George Henry Fitzamble."

I may as well state here that my suite contained a drawing-room (in which I was seated with my lawyer), and as it was into this room that she entered, her visit was robbed of any lack of delicacy.

On the retirement of her conductor she threw aside her veil, and brushed back the dark, rippling hair that struggled outside her bonnet.

"Forgive me," she said at last, "for the abrupt manner with which I recalled myself to your recollection yesterday. Forgive me, sir," turning to the lawyer, "for thrusting my private affairs upon a stranger. But what else can

I do when he" (pointing in my direction), "my own husband, refuses to have anything to do with me?"

Tears were in her eyes, and I am bound to confess they added to the beauty of the hazel orbs.

"What would you have me do?" she went on, now looking at me. "Calmly sit down under my indignity? Suppose I had deserted you, how would you have felt? Suppose—"

"Madam," I interrupted, "I fully recognize the hardships of your experiences; I take back any reference I made yesterday at improper motives; I will further admit that this Fitzamble is an unconscionable brute and in every way unworthy of you; but—"

"Oh, isn't it terrible!" she interrupted me to exclaim, bursting into angry tears, as she again addressed the lawyer—"isn't it terrible for him to treat me in this manner! If he said he didn't care for me, if he would only frankly state that he did not wish to recognize me!!!"

The lawyer (my lawyer) was evidently soft-hearted. I could see that he was affected—confound him!—I could even see that it required a moral struggle for him to continue to believe my assertions of innocence. Being appealed to, he hemmed and hawed.

Like a woman, she basely took advantage of his discomfort and redoubled her tears.

"Perhaps I'd better leave you to talk over the matter together," he exclaimed.

"Now look here," I broke out impulsively, "I have nothing to talk over with this lady. I could only reiterate and reiterate statements I have by this time grown sick of making."

"But this is the basest, the meanest defense to adopt.

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I would rather that you struck me, that you reviled me! By thus denying your identity you deprive me of mine; for if you are not George Fitzamble, who am I?”

The lawyer raised his hands above his head. “Well,” he exclaimed weakly, “of all cases this is the most extraordinary!”

“Say the most cruel! the most revoltingly cruel!” she retorted; “for I only ask recognition.”

“But, madam, to recognize you is equivalent to confessing myself some one else than I am.”

“Will you deny that you are now under an assumed name?” she asked.

“Most assuredly I will.”

“Then you were under an assumed name when you married me.”

“I never married you at all.”

“Why this long absence, then, if it were not to get away from me?”

I was about to enter into the full particulars of my return to the West after my visit to New York, when I detected my lawyer (at last recalled to his allegiance) making a series of pantomimic signals to me over her head.

“Ah! I have caught you at it,” she cried, detecting his gestures in the reflection of a mirror.

“I see, sir, you are in league with this gentleman in his conspiracy against me. Very well; I can say nothing more. I have appealed to you” (turning to me), “as a loving and affectionate woman ought. I have thrown myself on your generosity; I find you have none. You persist in refusing to acknowledge the bonds you made

me enter, I must, therefore, seek the assistance of the courts to right me."

She drew her proud little figure up with the dignity of a queen and swept out of the room.

I collapsed on the sofa, the lawyer drew a long "whew" and looked at me again with the same old doubtful expression.

"Would you mind my ringing the bell for a brandy-and-soda?" he asked at last.

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V.

A FEW hours after the departure of my lawyer, a formal looking bundle of papers were served upon me by a couple of deputy sheriffs with an order of arrest fixing my bail at five thousand dollars.

Fortunately I had deposited with the clerk in the office a hundred shares of railroad stock which, having risen beyond what I considered its fair value, I had intended selling at the first opportunity. Making this over to the proprietor as security, I persuaded him to accompany me to the sheriff's office and sign the necessary papers. Thus I was relieved of the unwelcome presence of the two deputies, who had stuck to me like a double shadow until that formality was gone through.

The last move on the part of my would-be wife did not tend to raise her in my esteem. I saw that she actually proposed to make a laughing-stock of me before the whole world; that I was to become a scapegoat for the sins of the errant Fitzamble. What cursed perversity of fate should bring her across my path just as I was about to secure a little quiet enjoyment out of life? Less my bonds than my outraged sense of justice prevented my taking flight instanter. But I would stick it out "*coute qui coute.*" That her allegations would result in a lawsuit I had now no right to doubt. No substantiation of my identity, no allegation as to my celibacy, but only

the public tribunals would convince her that I was not her own. Indeed, I had a presentiment that if one court should decide against her she would carry the case up and up, and would never desist till the highest tribunal had passed judgment on her claim; that is the way her determination of character impressed me, and yet I had a lingering belief that the case from its very extravagance could hardly ever be brought seriously into court.

That a foolish girl should be induced by a designing scoundrel to give him her hand after a brief courtship of two weeks was natural enough—a girl without the guiding influence of a mother to warn her against chance acquaintances picked up in a hotel corridor, and presumably allowed by a weak father an inordinate freedom of action. All this was quite natural, as I say; further, too, that for some reasons best known to himself her bridegroom of a day should desert her. It was also within the bounds of possibility that four years' separation might have blurred on her memory the exact personality of a lover whom she had known for so short a time, but the idea of a woman collaring a man on the open street, even supposing a slight resemblance, was simply monstrous.

Convinced of the force of my own position, and of the general axiom that truth would eventually triumph over her distraught imagination, I allowed matters to run along, and it was not till ten days after the papers had been served on me that, at the earnest solicitation of my lawyer, I proceeded to rake up out of the past such of my old acquaintances as I could lay hands on, and who

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were willing to come to New York and to swear both to my identity and to my high moral character. Desirous of settling the matter quietly, I insisted that they should have an interview with the lady, naturally supposing that as soon as she was confronted with them she would immediately relinquish her pretensions. Rash hope! She rebutted their evidence by maintaining that while I might be all that they represented, they failed to show that I might not have adopted the name of Fitzamble for the purpose of deception, and have married her under an alias.

This immediately placed the case in a more serious light, and gave to it an air of greater probability. It was not sufficient to demonstrate the fact that I was not George Fitzamble, but that I was, on the contrary, Aaron Simoni. Indeed, I could argue as much as I liked that my name generally had been Aaron Simoni, that my real name in truth was such, but to prove that for a brief period of two weeks I had not indulged in the luxury of calling myself Fitzamble and marrying her under a pseudonym was a different matter, involving no change of personality, but only of designation.

By an extreme piece of ill-luck, too, the register of the hotel where I had stayed four years ago during my brief visit in New York had been destroyed by a fire, while the name of Fitzamble was found in bold, aggressive penmanship in the record of the hotel at Newport where I went to look at it. The date of his arrival, too, at that great watering place fell within the period of my sojourn in New York. This was really all they had to base their case on—a mere coincidence of time. And yet to show that

during my stay in New York I had not visited Newport for two brief weeks out of the five was as difficult as to refute their charges that during that same period I had called myself by a name other than my own.

Take any two weeks four years back in your own life, and try to prove that you have not visited some spot as closely adjoining New York as Newport. Probably your letters would establish the fact where you had been, or a review of your business or social engagements. In my case, however, I had been merely a visitor in New York. The nature of my affairs had involved the writing of only a few letters, the recipients of which I would now very likely search for in vain. My correspondence, such as it was, had been on the subject of the payment to me of certain sums of money that were due me. The parties in question proving irresponsible, and having further disappeared, could hardly be expected now to come forward, even if they knew of my search for them, and sustain me in a position that would again open up their indebtedness. I had corresponded with no one else than these people, and had consulted no lawyer in the matter. Under these circumstances there only remained to unearth Fitzamble. But how could this be accomplished? Though I foresaw that I might incur additional notoriety for myself by advertising, there was no other course open. Each day, therefore, notices were inserted in the papers addressed to the hated Fitzamble, praying him, under one guise or another, to come back. With a deceitfulness warranted alone by the straits I was in, he was assured that if he would return he would find something very much to his advantage awaiting him.

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Fitzamble was appealed to on every score that could move or tempt humanity, but still the real Fitzamble lay low. Fictitious Fitzambles presented themselves, it is true, in great numbers—Fitzambles who were willing to play the role of Fitzamble for a consideration. Indeed, the entire population of the United States seemed to my excited fancy made up of Fitzambles, with only the real one lacking. Fitzamble remained where he was in the great mystery of obscurity, or, less poetically stated, like a fox, close in his hole. To make matters worse, the opinion began to grow more confirmed in my mind, as time advanced, that my lawyer in spite of the great reputation that he bore, was a nincompoop. He had allowed me to slide into a more serious position than there had been any need of, and under the growing conviction that he had betrayed his incapacity to the other side and that they had taken advantage of it, I grew positively to dislike him, exaggerating even his physical defects. He seemed smaller, his eyes redder and more beady, his nose more pointed, and a habit of closing one eye and of looking around his nose grew more pronounced. In doing this he would wrinkle his nose protestingly, and he would only resort to this trick when you would think, on the contrary, he ought to show encouragement and approval of some sagacious proposition that you might have laid before him. Altogether it was the most provoking habit I ever observed, and I think it was growing on him with the progress of the case. Circumstances, however, had gone too far to attempt any change; I might make a worse selection, and he was at all events honest. What he was not, albeit, was quick, and he had a perverse softness or weakness of disposition

that inclined me to believe that his sympathies, at all events, were enlisted on the other side. Poor man, possibly I did him injustice; if so it must be attributed to the nervous, irritable condition into which my extraordinary adventure had thrown me.

Indeed, it is a curious reflection on human nature that when we look back on any critical period in our lives, the small and trivial circumstances are the principal things remembered. The trifles, so to speak, become important, and the great things trifles. Thus the contemptible minutæ I have enumerated all come back to me now, while the important events of that period, such as the preparations for the suit, the interviews with my witnesses, the sifting of their testimony, the long talks with my counsel, are blurred and indistinct as if written in smoke. I can scarcely remember the day or the month the trial itself opened. All I remember is that it was an insufferably hot day, with one of those bright, lurid suns in the sky that seem to mock you and to render infinitely insignificant so trivial a circumstance as the bartering away of a human being's freedom. She, however, as she sat listening to her counsel opening her case, is always before me, and again, in due process of time, when she took the witness chair and testified in her own behalf. Indeed, her every word and gesture are burnt as with aquafortis in my memory, and stand out like phosphorescent letterings on the wall of time.

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VI.

TO PASS over the circumstances with which the reader is already familiar, I will briefly state that in reviewing her troubles she described the personality and the language of her betrayer till he seemed a very photograph of myself; recounting how he had represented himself as a man of wide travel, and alluding to the glowing terms in which he had spoken of the beauty and the fragrance of the South, where he professed to have passed much of his time. She further explained that he had hinted that his youth had been a saddened one, and that the latter years of his life were shrouded in a mystery he would one of these days unfold; showing how his tale had enlisted her girlish sympathy, until he had overcome her reluctance and finally persuaded her into the necessity of an immediate and secret marriage. Next, and with the simplicity of a child, she went on to describe their walks along the cliffs when the moon touched the waves with silver; or their long drives far away from the meretricious glitter of the great national watering-place, where peaceful lanes and quiet farmhouses seemed to whisper eternal repose.

The unnatural excitement that I had noticed in her before had given way to a warm and sensuous mysticism. There was an artlessness about her testimony, too, and besides this a certain picturesqueness that appealed to my imagination in spite of myself, that affected the judge and

the jury, as I could perceive, and predisposed them against me. Indeed, I may as well say here, and I leave it to the records of our tribunals generally to bear me out, that a man, never mind how just may be his case, stands a very poor show before an American jury where a pretty woman is concerned. I don't care what the question at issue may be, whether you are involved in a suit for a breach of promise to marry, or merely in one with your laundress for washing your handkerchiefs, so long as it is with a woman, my advice to you is to fly.

From my very first appearance in court I had recognized a certain hostility to me ; it evinced itself at every stage of her remarks, and particularly in describing her marriage and her abrupt desertion, when judge, jury, and audience all united in fixing upon me a glare of disapproval which I found it hard to face.

"Tell the court the exact circumstances under which you were deserted," her lawyer said.

"We arrived in New York by the afternoon train from Newport," she answered. "We drove immediately to Blank's Hotel on Broadway ; while I went upstairs to brush off the dust of the trip, my husband stopped below to order dinner in the restaurant, promising to join me immediately afterwards and to bring me down. I never saw him again. I learned, however, that a gentleman had called for him in a carriage, and that he was seen driving away in this carriage, presumably with his visitor. I returned heart-broken next morning to my father," she continued, "and from that evening till I met him on the street he has kept away from me. O sir!" (turning to the judge) "if he had simply told me that he

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A sympathetic murmur followed this appeal.

"When he next saw you, did he try to escape from you, or did he act like a repentant husband?" was asked by her lawyer.

"He tried to escape from me; he carried me into a shop, for I fainted in his arms, and had I not been on the alert he would have deserted me again!"

Here my lawyer, the nincompoop, got up to cross-examine her, wrinkling his nose according to his manner and peeping out through his pink eyes. With incomparable stupidity he blunderingly alluded to me in the course of his questions as Fitzamble, when the whole gist of my defense was to show that I had never been known by that name. A circumstance for which I now accuse him of even culpable negligence was his failure to press to a satisfactory answer the following statement which was reluctantly drawn from her in her cross-examination, namely: that she had been for some time confidently looking forward to the sudden return of her husband, and her excuse for doing so was that "some one had told her that she might." On being asked for particulars concerning this mysterious prophet, she answered that she was a female acquaintance by the name of Rebecca Seaton. Beyond this, however, she would say nothing more, and my lawyer weakly failed to press his inquiry.

Then her father was put into the witness chair, and swore positively to my identity, stating that he distinctly

remembered my attentions to his daughter, though, of course, at the time he was unaware that a clandestine marriage was to result therefrom.

Several other witnesses for the plaintiff were called, who all swore to the same. The statements of the clerk of the hotel at Newport, however, were the most surprising.

He said my coming to Newport was connected in his memory with an extensive burglary that had been committed, a few days before my arrival, at the villa of one of the summer residents. He remembered to have got the idea that I had come to investigate this robbery from the fact of having once recognized in my company a detective whom he (the clerk) had previously known in Chicago. Besides the clerk, two porters swore that I had been at Newport, and, in addition, a chambermaid who had remembered making my bed at the same hotel.

This concluded the plaintiff's case, and my lawyer thereupon addressed the jury, stating that the defense would consist of an attempt to prove that there was a mistake in my identity, and that, in short, I was not the person the lady pretended. When he had finished I was called up as a witness in my own behalf. I am quite aware that I cut a very poor figure as I took my seat.

Two-thirds of the court were already against me, including the judge, the jury, and, I veritably believe, my own lawyer in addition. I was a little confused, too, and a sea of heads seemed to swim about me. I recovered myself, however, and stated with great positiveness my real name and the place of my birth. In reply to the questions of my lawyer I also entered into the reasons

of my departure from the West, when I had originally visited New York, and easily showed that my return to the West was not for flight. There remained, however, the more difficult fact to controvert—viz., that while I was admitted by the other side to be all that I represented, I yet had not married her under the fictitious name of Fitzamble; that, in short, I had not assumed an alias for the purpose of deception.

This was the rock on which I split; for, except by my own unsupported denial, I was quite unable to rebut the evidence of the hotel servants at Newport, and particularly that of the clerk, who I really believe would next have made me out to have committed the burglary, had it not occurred several days before my supposed arrival there.

The most extraordinary fact, however, going to show the utter unreliability of expert testimony, was the evidence of a letter proposing a rendezvous one evening on the hotel piazza. It was in the same bold and aggressive penmanship as I have before remarked on, and when it was presented to me by the lady's lawyer I indignantly denied ever having written it. For, while I am not addicted to self-laudation, there is one thing I have always considered that I had just right to pride myself on—namely, my penmanship. It is neat and rounded, each letter distinct, though unassuming and evincing in its every line a much-to-be-admired modesty of character. An actual letter of mine, that one of my witnesses had fortunately preserved, was produced and compared with this Fitzamble letter, and yet, to my astonishment, they were decided to be one and the same hand. To be sure,

it was admitted that they differed at first sight, but there were certain traits that proved, in spite of my denial, the first to have been a disguised hand. There was the same way of dotting the *i*'s and of crossing the *t*'s, and where this manner was not distinguishable there were unmistakable evidences, according to the expert, of a studied effort to conceal it. The Fitzamble letter ran in this wise, and I give it for what it is worth, alongside of one of my own by way of comparison:

*"My Darling: I will drink
the sunshine of your eyes this even-
ing at 9.40 on the N. E. corner of
the piazza.*

"Your little G— to command."

*"Dear Sir: I am intending to leave Chicago
by the ten-thirty train A. M. to-morrow. If
convenient, I should like to see you before my
departure.*

Yours truly,

"Aaron Simoni.

"Henry T. James, Esq."

The idea of drinking sunshine from a woman's eyes at 9.40 at night! Leaving aside the difference in the purport of the two missives, could any greater dissimilarity exist than in the two handwritings? I ask the reader

candidly whether there is one single point of resemblance. Alas! women blind men's eyes, and those of American jurors in particular.

"Do you think women are good judges?" was once asked a distinguished wit. "I think they're better executioners," was the reply.

When a woman is a plaintiff in a suit, she has no chance of becoming the executioner, the whole court are so anxious to relieve her of the mere executive duties of her position.

Nevertheless I persisted in my denial of the authenticity of the letter and the truth of her statements generally. The expert called in on my behalf upset the argument about the dots over the *i*'s as well as the crosses of the *t*'s, and I further assured the Court that I had never been to Newport except once in my life—namely, when I had gone to look up evidence in this very suit. Through my lawyer I challenged any of the parties to prove it, and I challenged the clergyman who married me (a knock-kneed young man with a stiff collar and a Wellington nose), who finally confessed that he had married so many people that he could not well remember. I challenged, through the same medium, the hotel clerk, the two porters, and the chambermaid, who at last acknowledged that a very long time had expired and that they were not quite positive. My tale actually seemed to impress the jurors, and my lawyer, picking up courage, in his final address insisted that it was only too natural for the plaintiff to be mistaken after such a brief courtship and so long an ensuing separation, expatiating on the cruelty of handing over a man to the tender mercies

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of a woman he had never so much as known. Indeed, he was getting along swimmingly until, carried away by his eloquence, I rashly rose again to assist him, and, with a touch of real dramatic feeling, I placed my hand on my heart as I said, "Gentlemen of the jury, I am not the man."

I had put my foot in it, as is usually the case under such circumstances, for the lady rose too.

"But he is," she interrupted. "O gentlemen, he is the man. He tells you he isn't till he makes you believe that he isn't, but who is as capable of judging as I—I, his own wife?"

The murmur of approval that greeted her retort could this time not be suppressed. From that moment I knew my fate was sealed. Nothing from my lawyer was listened to after that brief but telling ejaculation, "who is as capable of judging as I—I, his own wife?" Before this antagonism I grew sullen, and, sinking my hands in my trousers pockets, I resigned myself to the inevitable.

I need only give the concluding passages of the judge's charge to the jury in order to show that I was right in considering the case already decided against me.

"You will remember, gentlemen of the jury," he said, "that the defendant, if he be Fitzamble, has a deep interest in the outcome of this case, and this interest you must carefully consider when weighing his testimony.

"On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive that a lady situated as the plaintiff is could have any object in forcing a marriage upon the said defendant, unless such a marriage had actually occurred. You will therefore take the case, gentlemen, and test this evidence according to

the rules which I have laid down for your guidance. Bearing in mind the important effect which your verdict will have upon the future life of a most estimable lady, you will give that decision which the evidence seems to require."

Thereupon the jury retired in charge of an officer sworn to keep them without meat or drink, save water, till a verdict was reached.

It is needless to say after such directions from the judge they did not remain hungry very long, and, to draw a painful scene to a close, I found myself charged with the support of a wife who, but for the trial and attendant circumstances, was a perfect stranger to me.

VII.

I LEFT the building in a frame of mind that I frankly confess I have no language to portray. Out I walked farther and farther up the main artery of this great city towards Central Park, where the trees and lakes promised alleviation to a troubled soul.

There are spots in Central Park which are really pretty, spots so naturally picturesque that the people who have had it in charge have really, with all their efforts, been quite unable to deface them. In one of these places I threw myself down on a rustic bench.

Was this after all to be the outcome of my career, this the grand climacteric of my life? Was I to be handcuffed, chained, and shackled in a free land to a woman courted by another man? How I cursed Fitzamble, Mrs. Fitzamble, Mr. Dalzelle, and the entire crew! And the very extravagance of the situation occurring to me anew, I laughed out loud. People passing might well have thought me deranged; I had certainly gone through enough to make me so, and laugh I would. Forsooth, I had won a wife, and he who wins may laugh. Suddenly I grew serious. I had heard of people through some process of unconscious cerebration forgetting their own identity. Could I have forgotten mine? Could I really have adopted for those two weeks the personality of Fitzamble without

knowing it? I went over again each separate stage in the trial, and measured and weighed the evidence in the light of this sudden reflection. In this same connection, too, the plot of a novel I had somewhere read recurred to my memory, very badly written, it is true, but of strong and absorbing interest. It was of a man who at stated intervals lost entire control of his memory. During these intervals his mind was an absolute blank, and his times of aberration lasted for three years each. They came on suddenly and without warning, and on awakening to consciousness he would pick up the thread of his last thought and action just exactly where he had left off, and as if nothing had intervened. The powerful situation in the romance was when he conducted his bride to her apartment in the lofty tower of his ancestral castle, and, for some reason (probably a deeply ingrained suspicion of the sex), turned upon her the key, intending to leave her but for a few minutes. Then occurs a lapse of memory. On his return to consciousness, he picks up the thread of his last thought, and with it presumably the key of the apartment. He mounts the stairs to the lofty turret, opens the door just as if he had been away but for five minutes, and finds a skeleton of three years in the soft bridal drapery.

It isn't a pretty story, far more morbid and high-strained than mine, for while he had lost a bride I had gained one; and yet, wretch that I was, I almost envied him his loss.

But to return to the situation I had conjured up. Could I really have suffered from some such mental affliction? If so, all my dramatic situations come in during the blank. During this aberration had I married this woman,

and, suddenly waking, had I only then picked up the thread of my previous life? So absorbed was I in the possibility of such an explanation of the affair that I failed to notice a couple of men regarding me intently; so absorbed was I that when I rose to retrace my steps I failed to notice that they followed me; so absorbed was I that I failed to notice that they were possessed of anything but attractive physiognomies, and were gaining on my steps; so absorbed was I that, according to my wont, I was walking quickly and therefore rapidly approaching a more frequented part of the Park than where I had been sitting. I say that I was so absorbed that I failed to notice them. This is scarcely accurate; what I should say is that I was so preoccupied with my own thoughts that the two strangers made at the time no particular impression on me, though I remembered them distinctly afterwards, as I had good cause to.

On reaching my hotel I found a swarm of reporters impatiently waiting my coming. I had jumped into sudden notoriety. Heretofore my case had attracted comparatively little attention; now it was in every one's mouth. The real dramatic character of the situation was only beginning to be appreciated. The reporters would not let me pass. They caught me by the sleeve, and actually by the skirts of my coat. I must give a detailed account of myself, of the trial, of my early life, "how came I to do it, and what it felt like"; calling me Mr. Fitzamble as often as Simoni, and considering me in the light of a new acquisition for journalistic enterprise. I pushed by them; why shouldn't I? Forsooth, I was not a politician who basks in the light the press kindly sheds upon him; I mounted

to my room, I threw off my coat, and flinging myself on my sofa, I fell asleep.

I awoke after some two hours' restless tossings, with the feverish state of my mind but little assuaged. It was past seven o'clock, one of those hot, sultry evenings that June throws forward as a herald of the fiercer heats of August soon to come. I went to the window and looked out upon the city lying below me. I don't know why, but there is always a suggestion to me of something sensual and voluptuous about a city at the close of a heated day—something of the tired, weary wanton, who, after a brief respite, is to bloom out again in the light of her dazzling jewels. The very vice and wickedness of a great city, its passions and its cruelty, its mystery of nameless infamies, and its bursts of generous emotions—all this is truly feminine, only it is of the unsexed type.

Below me, Madison Square, with its trees and grass-plots, lay extended like a map in the twilight, to which the dust and the smoke of the great city gave a yellowish hue; around the square, the street lamps, touched by the magic wand of the lamplighter, began to twinkle one after another; and even as I gazed, the great ball of electric fire in the middle of the park gleamed into being like a freshly lighted star. I felt feverish, as I say, and yet disheartened; something like a longing suitor who woos without hope. Men with less provocation than I had have leaped from lofty windows. I looked down upon the pavements, so cruel in their stoniness, so cold for all their refracted heat. I could imagine them calling and tempting one to come. There are only two courses to pursue at such times as these; one is to accept the invitation,

the other is to hurry off to dinner. Of the two, I finally decided on the last. I dressed myself carefully, according to my wont, putting on, because of the heat, my summer dress suit; I tied my tie very carefully and proceeded to Delmonico's, where I usually dined. Yes, a good dinner, a Delmonico dinner, is a glass through which the world assumes a brighter hue; each course, as a separate stage, lifting one nearer to the climax of a supreme beatitude.

I know men who live for fame, I know men who live for money, I know men who live for heaven, and still others who live for Heaven knows what, but the philosopher lives for that which he can taste and enjoy each day, and this is a good dinner. Under its benign influence our every sensation is quickened, and I have even heard it intimated that a true-born son of America experiences, after a brief sojourn in Europe, a greater glow of patriotic fervor on once more tasting terrapin than on sighting the proud banner of his native land.

Be this as it may, I felt my interest in mundane affairs revive with the advance of my dinner, and I reviewed over the rim of my champagne glass, with something like amusement, the heterogeneous crowd that nightly assembles at Delmonico's.

And what an over-dressed, flash crowd they were that surrounded me; what a perfect personification of the swell mob! Properly speaking, there is no society in New York; there are only sets, and, polyglot as its component parts are, there is a regular Delmonico set, as I had already learned, consisting for the most part of over-fed men and over-dressed women with a stamp of combined wealth and

vulgarity hard to eclipse. Here was a butcher celebrated for the number of races he had picked up during the year; by his side was a lady with diamonds purer than—well, the French she directed at the waiter. Here was an actress whose success on the stage was principally due to Worth, and by her side a young man who ought to have been, where I am convinced he never had been—at school. At the table in the middle is the well-known couple who have never missed a meal here for the past ten years, and beyond them a party of brokers all talking stock. But, hold! Where had I seen those faces before? They were of two men seated at a table in a far corner, and somehow they gave me the impression of being equally though surreptitiously interested in me. Though they were immaculately dressed, their physiognomies were anything but attractive, and it struck me that when they detected me looking at them they slightly moved their chairs so that their faces became concealed. It puzzled me to think where I had seen them before.

Now, I have entered into the particulars of all these people so as to convince the reader that my dinner was in no wise responsible for the events so soon to follow; that my mind, instead of being muddled with champagne (I had had but a pint), was clear and analytical, and that in all my life my perceptions were never keener or more acute.

It was exactly forty minutes past ten when I arose from the table. I remember it distinctly, for I looked at my watch. At the door I lighted my cigar and sauntered out into Fifth avenue. The lights of the street lamps flickered feebly in the greater luminancy of the suspended ball of

electric fire which gave that theatrical, artificial appearance to everything it fell on. In the park the benches were thronged with perspiring humanity, and there was a close stuffiness over the city well-nigh intolerable. My nap before dinner had forestalled any inclination to sleep, and as it was too late for the theatres I stood on the curbstone, hesitating what to do, weighing the advisability of taking a cab for a drive across the suspension bridge; which I had been in the occasional habit of doing during the recent hot spell.

I had just decided to venture on the trip, and was about to hail a hansom, when I felt myself touched on the arm. I turned and encountered a seedy-looking man, who presented me a letter. I opened it hastily, and in the light of a lamp-post read the following:

"If Mr. Aaron Simoni will take the 11.15 ferry-boat from East Thirty-fourth street to Hunter's Point, he will be met on landing by a party who will put him in possession of certain facts it might be well for him to know."

The missive was without signature, but was dated June 3.

I turned for further particulars to the messenger, but he had disappeared.

The letter brought my thoughts back with a jump to my own situation. Under ordinary circumstances I would have had my suspicions aroused by such a letter. Now, like a drowning man, I clutched at it as at a straw. Certainly I would go; I would not leave a stone unturned in my efforts to discover a clue to my extraordinary predicament.

It is a curious fact that the very moment I arrived at this decision the recollection of the two men I had seen

at dinner recurred to my memory. It is a still more curious fact that at that very moment, too, I recollected where I had previously seen them, and fixed them as the two strangers I had noticed that same afternoon in the Central Park. There was something suspicious about their reappearance, but I could hardly connect them with the letter. All the same, a secret impulse led me to return to the restaurant and see whether they were still there. They had gone. Should I look for them in the café on the chance of their having betaken themselves thither for their coffee? Bother it, no! I would miss my boat.

As it was, I arrived late at the ferry, and had but just time to catch her as she left the slip. There were very few people on board, and these for the most part were forward. I walked through the cabins, which felt particularly close and oppressive. Forward it was hot too, since whatever little breeze there was came from the stern. I sauntered back and looked at the city, dark and mysterious, that we were parting with. I became lost in the sight. New York is actually beautiful from the water, and especially at night. To be nearer the water I stepped over the guard chain which crosses each end of the boat to prevent vehicles from slipping over the edge, and looked down into the waves. I was just considering what would be the chances of saving a man should he fall overboard, when something made me look around—not so much a noise as a distinct sensation of approaching danger. I turned sharply, and saw two men just in front of me with both their right arms raised in the act of striking. I heard a sharp, whispering noise, as of something singing past my ear, and, forgetting my closeness to the edge of

the boat, I sprang backwards to avoid the blow. For an instant I felt myself struggling in space, as the deck of the boat glided from under my feet, and then I experienced that shrinking of the stomach as I pitched down into the water and the dark waves closed over my head.

I know you will scarcely believe it, but my first distinct reflection was, what a piece of luck my accident would be for the Delmonico waiter, from whom I had forgotten to get the change from a ten-dollar bill in payment for my dinner. But you see I had scarcely time to realize my position, the transit had been so abrupt. I had stepped in one quick stride from the solid deck of a steamer, from the brilliancy and luxury of the world, to a probable watery grave. I was in mid-stream, anything but a good swimmer, with the tide running strong. I struck out desperately after the ferry-boat, however, and raised my voice for her to stop. As well cry for the moon; she went heartlessly, obdurately on her way, her great black body punctured by lights getting smaller, and the noise of her wheels, as they beat the water, fainter and fainter. I shall never forget my sense of utter desolation when I realized that I was deserted. Knowing how hopeless it was, because of the current, to try and reach the shore, I threw myself on my back and floated, congratulating myself that I had put on such very thin clothes that they did not weigh me down. In the position I was my eyes were turned upwards, and I began to count the stars; and as I lay there a fancy I used to have in childhood came back to me—namely, that the stars were the little children of the moon.

How odd that these recollections should have recurred to me at such a moment! In great crises, however, the mind takes in little things, as I have earlier observed. By turning my head a little I could see the dark hulls of vessels lying at the docks, and the black mass of the great city, with its innumerable lights twinkling upon me feebly. I could distinctly make out, too, the ball of electric fire which I had seen start into life that very afternoon. What was life, after all? An electric spark, illuminating, or the reverse, a small circumference for a brief spell, and then snuffed out; a little spark, with a chasm of night before it and behind. Had my life illuminated aught? Had it shed a genial radiance about it? Oh! well, what if it hadn't? It made no difference now. I was drifting onwards, outwards, towards forgetfulness, the forgetfulness of the broad Atlantic. At the rate I was proceeding I would reach there in about two hours, and I began to take measure of my progress by objects along the shore. But, hark! how is this? What I had supposed, from its tiers of lighted windows, to be a building, is detaching itself from the land. A large factory or workshop it seemed, long extended rather than high. It was only a ferry-boat, however, that had left its slip, as I soon discovered. I watched it as it approached, its great paddles flapping the water with greater and growing distinctness. It was even coming in my direction, and I began to call to it and to shout. Would it pick me up? At one moment I actually thought so from the course it was steering, and I struck out in order to bring myself more across its path. Great heavens! It suddenly occurred to me that it was getting nearer than agreeable, and the noise of its

paddles actually began to deafen my ears. Then, because it was getting too near, I turned and swam back. But was I not putting myself more within its way by going back? Thereupon I turned about and swam forwards. Like a female in the path of a rapidly approaching vehicle, or, better, a wounded sea fowl that fears capture, I first turned one way, then the other. Could it have singled out the small atom of my personality to overwhelm it? Like a huge phantom of the night it floated down upon me, looming up higher and higher as it approached. I struck out desperately now, first to one side, then to another, and yet I felt that the stopping of its paddles could hardly prevent the catastrophe. One moment I looked over my shoulder: it was fairly on top of me. I remember frantically diving, and trying to make myself sink down, down, and yet I felt like a cork; then a great surging of waters, a confused bubbling as of the breaking of the drums of my ears; I experienced a sharp pain as from the stroke of the paddle across my head, and a moment after, rising to the surface, the lights of the great city were again in my eyes. I was weak and confused. As a dragon sucking me into its capacious jaws, the great unknown was dragging me now. I seemed to be swimming on a sea of oil, Lethe before me, the Past behind. The circumstances of the suit crowded again into my memory, as the oil-like waters crept higher over my face. I was sinking down, as it were, into a vast field of oil, and it was closing thick and glutinous and darkly over me. My last distinct impression as I went down was, that I actually *was* Fitzamble, and that on the whole I was glad to have successfully disposed of him at last.

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IX.

Ah! how pleasant it is, quite worth dying for, after a life of trouble and of care, to wake up where I found myself lying now—namely, in heaven! How bright the light is, and how beautiful the angels! How fragrant the atmosphere and delicious the music of the spheres! How blue the clouds that draped like curtains my cerulean bed! Now, for the benefit of my numerous friends who, I sincerely hope, are destined for the same beatific realms, I must acknowledge that I had yet one great anxiety as I lay back and reflected, and it was this: namely, whether because of the manner of my “taking off” I would be properly recorded by a tombstone down below, stating in deep-cut letters my priceless virtues and how much the world generally had lost in me. This, I must confess, caused me no little anxiety, for even heaven would not be quite heaven if we could worry about nothing.

The bright effulgence of things, and the general beatitude of my situation, gradually drew off my mind from this earthly topic, and I began to study a little more carefully my surroundings.

There are many mansions in the skies, and presumably many chambers, and, with an appreciation that virtue had at last met with its just reward, I became conscious that mine must be the very best chamber. Indeed, with no little secret pride I could not help recognizing how much

better I was "fixed" (please excuse the expression) than any of my numerous friends that had preceded me could be, since I was quite alone in my glory; and this was only to be accounted for by the fact of my superior virtue entitling me to degrees of bliss that suffered no vulgar approach. But hold! here comes an angel, the same whose presence I had before been only dimly aware of, but who had been especially detailed, in all likelihood, to look after my comfort. She is again drawing near, and I can hear the flutter of her wings and the rustling of her drapery. She pulls the clouds of my canopy wider apart, and without turning towards me her face, presses my brow as she runs her fingers through my hair. On one of these fingers glistened a tiny star, and another of greater magnitude held like a pin the soft drapery over her breast. Through the opening of the clouds, however, I caught sight of a figure, who looked anything but ethereal, sitting alongside my bed on a very matter-of-fact chair. Indeed, he was a stout old gentleman in a black frock-coat, and he had a way of blowing his nose like a trumpet, but not at all like a heavenly one. He irritated me, he seemed so of the earth, earthy.

"And how do we feel this bright morning?" he bent over my bed to inquire.

His question irritated me more than his presence. I must say something to start him off, in order that I might be left alone with my angel.

"If you'll excuse me, sir," I observed, with a dignity worthy of the exalted spheres I had been raised to, "you look a leetle out of keeping up here; might I inquire your business?"

"I'm a doctor, my good sir," he replied, with a provoking air of good-humored sympathy.

"Ah! I see; come to look after the numerous patients you have sent up before their time," I observed, with a touch of malice. "Is your name Barker?"

"I've come up to see one of them," he replied, "and I'm glad he's so much better." Then, turning to my angel, "We'll pull him through now, madam, we'll pull him through."

"Pull him through what?" I asked. I don't know exactly what language I expected to find in use where I was, but his jarred upon me sadly. The idea, too, of addressing an angel as "madam!" I had heard "madams" called "angels" in the wicked world below, but that form of address seemed terribly gross now. This opinion I expressed in quite forcible language. He got up from the chair and looked at me with the most puzzled expression.

"Where do you suppose you are, anyway, my dear sir?" he asked.

"I'm in heaven, sir, I'll have you to understand. I was knocked off the back of a ferry-boat, drowned in the East River, and came here without the assistance of any doctor."

I saw him shake his head.

"A queer case, a queer case," he muttered. "Thank God we've got him out of his stupor, though! Three drops of that mixture every half-hour, madam; keep him quiet, and his mind will gradually clear up."

Then he departed, and my angel came over towards me. Again she bends over me, and this time turns upon

me her face. Where had I seen that face before? She smiles softly, and a great tear falls upon my cheek. Where had I seen it? Where? Where? Where? Ah! I have it, and, recognizing her with a start, I came to myself and to my real situation.

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X.

TO BE struck from heaven to earth at one fell swoop is a fate that happens to us all at some period of our lives, if in a less seemingly actual manner than in my case.

The shock rendered me perfectly speechless and took my breath away. After that brief recognition she left me, and alone I reviewed the situation. I had done all I could. Can you, O reader, suggest a single step I had neglected? I had fought against my fate, I had struggled against it, yet here I found myself in spite of my efforts. To be under her charge, the subject of her solicitude, ay, the recipient of her hospitality and her caresses—was it right, was it moral? I endeavored to rise from my bed and get up and away. I fell back exhausted. I was helpless, unable to resist, therefore I resigned myself to the inevitable. Circumstances too powerful to control were guiding me. What was to be the result? The assault on the ferry-boat, from which I had so narrowly escaped, seemed further to indicate some sinister conspiracy against my life; yet to unravel this, or even to explain how I got here, I was yet too weak and exhausted to attempt. Here I was, however, despite myself, and as a relief to my thoughts I began to survey my surroundings again in the light of a fully restored consciousness. There was an exquisite freshness and luxury about everything, as I have said, and I smiled as I looked

at the gauze curtains of the bed and remembered how I had mistaken them for clouds in my slow awakening. Drawn tightly about my couch, they gave a slightly indistinct appearance to the objects in the room, to the furniture, to the bric-a-brac, and to the hangings of the walls. The last were a sky-blue chintz, but the set figures of the flowers were quite maddening in their regularity. Everything on every side was beautiful, however, and through the open curtains of the window the sun streamed in. The world, this world that I had regained, was not so bad a place, after all!

On the mantel a Dresden china clock ticked away the hours, and alongside of the clock were a couple of Chinese mandarins of the same ware. Their heads and hands were moving in the breeze from the window, and I be-thought me of that most delightful romance, "A Journey Around my Room." Had I not possessed so hearty a contempt for novelists and the like cattle, I almost think I should have sketched out the plot for a book on somewhat the same lines. Indeed, I did toy with the idea, and pictured to myself the kind of heroine I would evolve. Should she resemble the heroine of my own actual romance? A keen resentment filled my soul against her, and yet that she was the medium of my restoration to life filled me with a sense of my own base ingratitude because I did entertain that resentment. On the whole the best thing to do was to plead with her to allow me to depart. Why did she not come that I might address her at once? Again I looked at the clock. Half an hour had elapsed from the time of her departure; she ought to return soon, if only to give me my medicine. I waited, as I was com-

pelled to do, looking at the clock and anon at the Chinese mandarins, who now seemed nodding at me derisively. I grew angry at them for their behavior, and at her for not coming. I was actually getting impatient to tell her of my anxiety to leave. I prepared myself to receive her with becoming dignity, and saw her in my mind's eye opening the door, with a kindliness that would make my task nevertheless somewhat embarrassing. She would of course be arrayed as she was last; and again I saw her in my imagination in that pale blue velvet tea-gown, that fell in such soft, luxurious folds from her person. Confound it! Was she never coming? The clock seemed running a race with time. But hush! I hear the creaking of a door; I hear a footfall—she is coming now. Suddenly the portieres are drawn apart, and then, not she, but a little old gentleman with gray hair brushed well forward, a little old gentleman of disagreeable if not hated recollection, is before me and advancing to my bedside. I don't know of anything more disagreeable than expecting a woman in a pale blue velvet tea-gown puffed with lace; a woman that you have prepared to receive, though it be with dignity, if not coldness, I know of nothing more disagreeable, I say, than, expecting such an apparition of loveliness, to find her father take her place. He came into the room with the same little jerky way he had when he visited me at my hotel, and which had been his usual manner during the suit. Had I been strong enough, I would have pitched him out the window. I was about to express my keen displeasure at his coming—I had indeed opened my mouth for that purpose—when I abruptly closed it on seeing him raise a wine-glass, and after

pouring into it a few drops from a vial, look at it critically.

"I allowed my daughter to attend you when you were unconscious," he said, "but now that you've come round I deem it better to see to you myself. Here, take this."

There are times when one's emotions are so deeply moved that no words will express them; when one is speechless, paralyzed as it were, by one's own indignation. I tried to open my mouth, but when I did so the horrid, cursed wine-glass was directed at my lips and I would be compelled to close them tight. To suffer the ministration of a woman of an emotional character and a bright and sparkling face, to even have her come and extend a glass with her star-decked fingers, can be borne with a certain degree of equanimity, although that glass contains medicine; but to have a horrid little beast (though he be her father) first prevent the gentle ministration, and then come in her stead to press upon you this nostrum—bah! the medicine becomes poison, and you would do exactly what I did: open your mouth and pretend to take it for the supreme satisfaction of spitting it out. That is exactly what I did in my weakness and in my incapacity of resenting his conduct in any other manner, though I must confess I am rather ashamed of my conduct now.

Mr. Dalzelle coolly poured out another dose, and seating himself philosophically on a chair, crossed his legs.

"I'll wait here till you take it," he said, "then I'll go."

"Will you go as soon as I do?" I asked eagerly.

He nodded his head.

"Very well, then, I'll take it now," I replied decisively.

He laughed good-humoredly as he handed me the second potion, and to be rid of him I swallowed it at a gulp. When he turned to leave I recovered myself and called him back for an explanation of things generally. Instead of acceding, however, he merely waved his hand and departed.

All that day and the next he served me my medicine with his own hands, always refusing to talk or to enter into any explanation, treating me in that blandly patronizing fashion well people always treat invalids whom they have under their charge. The third day a colored youth, his own body servant, took his place, who was as loath to talk as his master. Between the two of them I became a confirmed man-hater, and by very force of contrast I got to long for the good "angel" that had tended me during my brief interregnum 'twixt life and death. The more I disliked the men, the more I longed for her—queer compound that human nature is!

XI.

THE fifth day, feeling somewhat better, I was moved to the sofa from the bed. On repeating my request for enlightenment as to my escape, the servant presented me with a bundle of papers and drew me up to the window so that my back should be turned towards the light. They were all sorted in regular order, and I learned to my astonishment, by the first one I took up, that I had been heralded throughout the breadth of the land as having attempted suicide; in other words:—

That "George Henry Fitzamble, alias Aaron Simoni, the defendant in the now famous suit for desertion, had endeavored to end a misguided and useless career by plunging from a ferry-boat into the East River." The paragraph was headed:—

"STARTLING SUICIDE FRUSTRATED," and following this with a wealth of alliteration truly astounding, "SIMONI THE SINNER SPRINGS FROM THE SIDE OF A STEAMER INTO THE SOUND—IS HE SANE?"

Three columns were devoted to my personal description, and then a notice appeared in an evening extra stating how, the morning prints meeting the eye of a sorrowing wife, she had come with true womanly sympathy to the hospital where I had been taken, and brought me home to her nest. Next followed interviews with the principal men of the city regarding their opinions as to my identity—

whether I was Aaron Simoni or George Henry Fitz-able. Prominent lawyers, bankers, statesmen, clergymen, and even a prize-fighter, had been required to give in large print their views on the vexed question.

I learned, too, as I read on, that bulletins were being issued each day as to my condition, and generally that whatever celebrity I had acquired by the suit was augmented by my "attempted self-destruction."

As regards the manner of my escape, I inferred that the newspapers were accurate here, save that only one ferry-boat figured in the account; making me out to have sprung from the same one which had rescued me, but neglecting to mention that this last had first run me down. Without my knowledge, my cries, it seems, had attracted the notice of a deck-hand, and he had even caught sight of my struggles just after I was struck by the paddle-wheel. Shouting to the pilot to stop, he had seized a life-preserver, and jumping into the water had caught me just after I had lost consciousness and as I went down for the last time. The boat had thereupon put back, and we were soon afterwards pulled on deck. In consideration of the way he had risked his life for his son-in-law, Mr. Dalzelle had presented him with the munificent reward of just five dollars. Now, you have the whole story in black and white, save, as I subsequently learned, that instead of being brought by the daughter to her home, I had, on the contrary, been brought here by her father (though it had been at her solicitation), and that I had thereupon been consigned to the chamber reserved for guests; lastly, that a severe scalp wound was expected to terminate in a short time a career that inferentially had been of little profit to

the world except to the public journals by giving them something in addition to the strikes to talk about.

The extravagance of the situation, and its ludicrousness, outraged my every sense of propriety; I would put on my clothes this very instant and away. To have been captured and brought back by "my wife" was bad enough, but to be captured and corralled by her father was insupportable. Ah! if I had only known what was in store for me, and how slight a preparation this was for what was to ensue, I would not have been in such a hurry to break the brief respite that my convalescence afforded me.

I left my couch stronger than I could have imagined. I opened a drawer of the bureau and discovered a morning suit, which I recognized, and a change of linen, all of which must have been brought over from the hotel.

Under these circumstances a complete toilet was soon effected, and after a short rest I opened the door and looked out. I found, however, merely a narrow passageway, but at the further end was another door. I felt somewhat like a criminal as I cautiously moved down to this, and particularly on opening it, when I unexpectedly came on the principal drawing-room.

Should I endeavor to pass through it? Yes, that would be the wisest course. I had got half-way across it, and was pirouetting around the center-table, when my foot came in contact with an unseen obstacle, and I stumbled. I heard a slight scream; I turned quickly and detected Edna Dalzelle in *propria persona*. She had been standing in the deep embrasure of the window, concealed by the curtains.

For a moment she remained fixed where she was, re-

garding me with flushed cheeks. Either her embarrassment or the recognition of my own surreptitious behavior made me blush, too. Unless it was the knowledge of the proximity of the household, I hardly know why, but I raised my finger to my lips.

She came over towards me slowly, but something, I can't say what, was between us. She was no longer the same as she was before, though the same flush suffused her cheeks. It became her well. Indeed, she never looked so exquisite as she did at that moment. Counting upon her to drop into my arms, her change of manner puzzled me; a new-born shyness, an unexpected delicacy, took the place of her former "wifeliness." It fascinated me. In my desire to overcome it I quite forgot that I had been intending to leave the house. I tried to take her hand and she drew it away. I caught it at last, and, weak fool that I was, I raised it to my lips. Then, a recognition of all her gentle ministrations recurring to me, I drew her towards me and poured into her ear the gratitude that until now I had failed to appreciate that I owed her. I have said before I was susceptible; alas! my sickness had made me more so. I felt the need of support, and because I had been deprived of her society so long after I considered I had the right to expect it, I began to value it at last. Because she did not fall into my arms, as I say, I drew her towards me, but just as I was about to press my lips to hers she escaped me and ran out of the room. I could not follow her. Indeed, it was as much as I could do to get back to my own quarters. I had already overtaxed my strength, and regaining my room I threw myself down on the sofa utterly

exhausted. She had actually not addressed me a single sentence, but her actions and her manner were as completely altered as if belonging to another woman.

How inconsistent is human nature! Always wanting what it cannot have, and never satisfied till it gets it.

Had she received me with effusiveness, I was prepared to tell her, to tell her kindly but coldly, my unalterable determination to depart. As it was, I had seized her hand and pressed it to my lips. Bah! *I was* weak; and yet why, in the devil's name, had she not treated me as before? Indeed, I have come to the conclusion that it is the titillating caprices of woman rather than her virtues that fascinate, and that we appreciate her most when we understand her least.

Now I came back to my room, and as I lay there I determined that I would discover the meaning of her change, and why she had suddenly withdrawn from me her protection and her confidence. For this purpose I would suffer for yet another day the presence of her father and that of the colored servant himself.

XII.

"SO YOU'RE up and dressed," Mr. Dalzelle exclaimed, unexpectedly entering the room some three hours later, and he wore a smile of greater geniality than I could have looked for. Indeed, he was actually chirping, and he seemed to take my recovery as entirely due to his own exertions.

"I've brought you a few novels," he said, opening a package. "Do you like novels?"

I curtly replied that my experiences during the past few weeks would make any form of "fiction" extremely tame reading.

Mr. Dalzelle gave a repetition of the same little chirpy laugh as he seated himself.

"Well, I don't know but you're right," he said; "but if you don't care for novels I suppose you like games. How about chess, now?" And he looked at me anxiously.

"I never played chess in my life."

"Then, of course, you're an adept at whist?"

"Sir, there is not a single game of any character I take the slightest interest in, or can so much as play."

The old gentleman looked unhappy.

"What will you have for your old age, then?" he asked.

"I'll have a wife," I observed satirically. I could not help it, the retort slipped out so naturally.

“That is a very noble sentiment, sir,” he replied, taking me literally, “and one that I ought certainly to indorse. But you will have to learn one of these games. I’m a great player of whist myself, sir—of whist, chess, and indeed of all games; but I only came to bring a message from my daughter.” He hesitated. “My daughter is a very peculiar young woman, sir, as you’ll discover when you know her better. She takes after her poor mother, who has long since been dead.”

“How about the message?” I asked, with no little interest.

“Oh! the message. Well, she wanted to make an appointment with you for later in the afternoon; I put my foot down, however, and insisted that she should postpone matters, which she agreed to do till to-morrow at eleven o’clock. You’ll excuse me if I’m not present, won’t you?” he stopped to inquire.

“Certainly I’ll excuse you,” I said.

“Because, you know, I go down-town every morning at ten, and, unless it’s something special, I don’t like being late. Ta-ta, ta-ta!” And waving his hand he went out, only to reinsert his head into the room. “You’ll remember what I told you,” he said; “she’s very capricious at times, so you must not hold me responsible for anything she may do or say.”

XIII.

MR. DALZELLE'S parting words gave me food for reflection the remainder of the day, and served as the keynote to my dreams at night, for the merest bagatelle, if one's horizon be confined to the walls of a sick-chamber, creates an interest an earthquake would scarcely evoke at other times.

I rose the next morning feeling stronger than the day before. Yet I flattered myself that the interesting look of the invalid still lingered about me, and that it was not unbecoming. Three times I changed my tie before I felt thoroughly satisfied with my appearance, and I resolved to transfer to my button-hole a flower from a vase on the mantelpiece hard by. Yes, I would make myself as attractive as possible, though in other respects I would let the blow fall easily—I mean the blow to the poor little woman who loved me, not wisely, but so well. Her manner was changed, to be sure, but it was merely the natural diffidence of a young and pretty woman at recognition of her peculiar position. Her affection was unalterable, and would always abide. At eleven o'clock punctually I found her in the sitting-room where I had had my interview with her the previous morning.

I advanced to kiss her hand as a non-compromising action inaugurated yesterday as a precedent, but she refused me.

"Would you mind taking your seat there?" she said, as she pointed to one end of an ottoman, while she took the opposite end.

I was just starting off on the weather, which is an invariable habit of mine if I am set back, when she interrupted me, and in a hard, cold voice.

"I sent for you," she began, "I sent for you because—because—oh! how can I tell you," she cried, breaking down, "why I sent for you?" And she hid her face in her handkerchief.

"But I must tell you, I must make the effort," she continued hysterically, "never mind what you will think of me."

I patiently waited to hear what she would say, as I looked at her intently.

"I wanted to tell you that perhaps I have been to blame," she resumed after an awkward pause. "Indeed, during your convalescence, and since I have had time for reflection, I am almost sure I have been to blame."

"To blame about what?" I inquired.

"Why, for my conduct towards you. I scarcely know how or why, but I have begun to have doubts—suspicions."

"Suspicions?"

"Yes, suspicions that I may have been mistaken after all. Imagine what a position I find myself in with my doubt—with my doubt increasing, growing into a conviction that you are nothing to me, and that I have made a huge and colossal blunder."

For a moment words actually failed me.

"You have been a pretty long time arriving at this conviction," was all I could say.

"But it is not a conviction, it is only a suspicion. Indeed, if it were a conviction my course would be clear. But you would not deceive me, would you?" she went on, hurriedly; "you are good and true."

"What has started these suspicions?" I asked, with a natural curiosity.

"I don't know; mere trifles, little expressions, little ways of speech, that now, as I look back upon them, are so like and yet so different from George's. But these differences are merely the result of the long time you have been away, are they not? Oh! if I should have actually made a mistake, do you know what I'd do? I would throw myself down on the hard, cold stones in the street. Then you'd be sorry for me, and regret that you had treated me so cruelly."

Without stopping to consider the injustice of this reflection, I felt for the moment a pang like a knife-blade piercing my heart.

"And you know," she went on, "nothing that you can do or say will make any difference. If you tell me you did marry me, I am more fully persuaded that you did not; and yet, if you tell me that you did not, I think again that you must have cause to deny your act. Oh! this doubt is killing me; think of my embarrassment at finding myself placed as I am!"

Ridiculous as it may sound, I sympathized with her deeply.

"But could you not care for me if I were other than you supposed?" I weakly inquired, my consideration for her carrying me temporarily away.

"No," she answered firmly. "I care for you because

of my recollections, and hate you for the differences I detect in you. I feel myself drawn to you because of the first, and repelled from you by reason of the last. I can't let you go away from me, since I may be mistaken, and I can't regard you quite as my husband after all that has transpired. Oh! why did you ever come back; why, after deserting me, did you not continue to stay away? I look upon myself as only half married to you. That is the way my situation strikes me."

"Then divorce yourself from this former chain of recollections, and let me stand before you anew—" a new suitor, I was going to say, but I realized the danger of using such a word in time and wisely stopped myself at "anew."

"Never! never!" she exclaimed. "If it was not you that married me, you could not respect me after what has occurred; besides how could I ever live with a man whose affections I had captured? O that lawsuit! When I look back upon it, and consider how you must regard me, I am almost tempted to throw myself down into the street!"

She got up excitedly, and, opening the long French window, stepped out upon a narrow balcony on which it gave.

I must have betrayed some involuntary sign of alarm. I certainly rose to my feet, and as I did so a change came over her.

"Stand just where you are," she cried, with a sudden air of determination. (I could not have reached her had I tried.) "Now raise your right hand and swear—swear to me that my doubts are the veriest hallucinations of a

fevered fancy; swear," she cried, and she actually placed one little varnished boot in the tracery of the railing till she raised herself above the street, "swear, or it is my last moment on earth."

A cold terror seized me. She was looking at me with an expression that for the moment left little doubt in my mind as to her purpose.

"Swear," she cried, "once more and for the last time." And then, just as I thought she was actually about to throw herself over, I swore that I had really married her, as I would have sworn to anything she asked.

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XIV

WHAT a curious reflection it is that Hell, Harmony, Happiness and Hate all begin with the same letter, possibly because they all have their habitation and often hold high carnival together in that greater H, the Human Heart.

My heart was full of these mixed emotions, if I can call them so, each one struggling, too, for supremacy, with a tendency for the last to usurp them all—Hate for the position she had placed me in, for my own weakness and lack of ingenuity in not getting out of it better than I had. In the privacy of my own room and away from her tears and fascinations, I could appreciate the fool I had been. I had no one but myself to blame in allowing a momentary feeling of sympathy to have got me into such a hole. But I would make instant amends; I would ring my bell and ask to be conducted to Mr. Dalzelle. He should be of some use after all, for, explaining to him this last development, I would on the strength of it request my ticket of leave, and permit him to break the news of my departure to his daughter.

Curse it! he was not at home. I ought to have remembered that he had by this time been long down town.

Should I leave without making any explanation? After this last episode it seemed scarcely consistent; after his kindness, scarcely courteous; and again, if I departed

now I might encounter her a second time and have the whole scene repeated. For this I found myself totally unfit. I resolved to wait Mr. Dalzelle's return, and picked up one of the novels he had brought me to pass away the time, actually refusing to take my luncheon when I heard the valet knocking with it at the door. All that bright summer day I waited, anon trying to read, and anon moving like a caged lion about my room, though I must confess the lion in me was very much played out.

It was nearly five o'clock before I heard his familiar ring, and I went out into the hall to meet him. He seemed much preoccupied, and he had a large bundle of papers under his arm.

"You mustn't disturb me now," he said, glancing at his bundle; "I've a new combination in chess I really must work out."

I insisted on his attention, however, and even followed him into the library.

"Very well," he weariedly observed at last, "what is it?"

And then I described to him my interview with his daughter, and while expressing my regrets, stated my unalterable and final determination to break the whole thing off.

Instead of being angry, as I was prepared for him to be, he looked at me with a soothing, sympathizing expression.

"Well, I really don't know what I can say," he observed. "I thought the matter was fixed up satisfactorily, and now it's all to be opened up again. I never interfere with my daughter in any way. She's a very whimsical young

woman, and, as I told you before, you must not hold me responsible for anything she may do."

"But I hold you responsible for your share in this cursed lawsuit," I answered.

"You wouldn't," he replied, "if you knew how hard it is to thwart her. She twists me right around her finger, just like that. She has a way of going into hysterics, too, poor child, when she is opposed; and even if I had not believed that you had married her under an alias, she would never have given me a moment's peace."

"Do you really believe I did marry your daughter?" I asked.

"I swear I did, sir, when I testified. My brief experience since your illness, however, assures me that you are a man of honor, and now I tell you frankly I don't know what to believe. Though four years have elapsed and I never saw this Fitzamble more than a dozen times in my life, I remember him well enough to appreciate that your resemblance to him is extraordinary. In fact, if you come to question me on the subject, and after all that has happened, I am almost inclined to believe that you really did marry her, and that, having forgotten the circumstances, you are not quite responsible for your actions."

He folded his arms and looked up at me with a deliberation that for so small a man was truly heroic.

"I wish you to understand one thing," he added after a moment's pause: "I was not responsible for your being brought here. My daughter read of your accident in the papers, and in spite of my protest insisted on my having you moved from the hospital. She has a way of going into hysterics when she is opposed, and, seeing her on the

verge of this, I weakly yielded. Once that you were here I could not very well put you into the street, and, indeed, if you will permit of the observation, I resolved to make the best of a bad bargain."

"Very well, sir; I'll terminate that bargain at once. A cursed fatality that I believe has never had its equal has followed me at every step in this adventure, but I will see my lawyer at once and learn if nothing can be done to relieve a situation that I assure you is simply intolerable."

"You're leaving without your hat, sir," he observed as I went out.

"Never mind my hat," I returned, taking his in my confusion; then I departed, and in due course of time I arrived, scarcely knowing how I got there, in the street.

XV.

FINDING myself where I was, however, the first thing to determine was whither to direct my steps. Should I return to my old hotel, or should I go first to my lawyer's? What my lawyer could do was a problem difficult of solution, and I was walking along, weighing the matter in my mind, when my eye was attracted by a sign on the outside of a dwelling house. It read somewhat in this wise :

DR. REBECCA SEATON,

CLAIRVOYANT AND FEMALE PHYSICIAN.

*Freely consulted in
all cases where human
agencies have failed.
Fee two dollars ; no
compensation expected
unless full satisfaction
given.*

OFFICE HOURS.

9 a. m. to 3 p. m.
4 p. m. to 6 p. m.

"Dr. Rebecca Seaton!" I repeated to myself. Where had I heard that name? It had a familiar sound.

I looked at my watch; it was exactly twenty minutes past five. I had often had a curiosity about these clairvoyants; should I try the powers of one now? Certainly, I had sufficient excuse to do so, and would not have applied to her till all other human agencies had failed.

Anyhow, she could scarcely prove less competent than my lawyer, and her services would undoubtedly be far cheaper, since her fee was only two dollars. Rebecca Seaton—Rebecca Seaton! Where had I heard that name before? And wrestling with my memory, I mounted the stoop and rang the bell. I was admitted into the sacred presence of the oracle by a youth with a dirty face, and ears that stood out like wings from each side of his head. I am strongly inclined to suspect that the same oracle was engaged in some mysterious performance with a whisky bottle when I entered. I am certain I saw her drop a pretty good-sized one into a voluminous pocket of her dress, and a faint aroma of alcohol certainly pervaded the atmosphere. She, however, explained matters by the statement that she sometimes took an alcohol bath between office hours, leaving me in conjecture as to the quantity it would require for such a purpose. She was of elephantine proportions, with a red nose, watery eyes, and a manner I can only define as professional. Indeed, this manner was so pronounced as to forestall any question on my part; for, without rising from the table at which she was seated, she briefly requested me to put my hand upon her forehead and to take a chair beside her. Thereupon informing me that a state of hypnotism was the forerunner of any interview, she drew over toward her a large-sized slate, cast her eye upward and her head back, and proceeded to go off into a very business-like trance.

Not being of a particularly reverential disposition, I must acknowledge that the ludicrousness of my situation principally occupied my thoughts. With one hand on

her forehead, the other on her knee, and my eyes directed on the slate, I might well have excited the ridicule of any one who saw me, particularly if in this manner I expected to have disclosed why her name was familiar to me. For some five minutes her hand, with its crayon, kept traversing the slate backwards and forwards, making but the merest flourishes, and I was at last on the point of bringing the audience to a close, when I noticed her pencil hesitate. For an instant it stopped, and then slowly and deliberately it traced "South America," after that "War, battle, not dead." I began to smile to myself when I saw her go on to write "No marriage." This was getting nearer, and I became interested. She had, of course, recognized me by my pictures in the papers. It was fully another five minutes before the pencil became again inspired, and I watched it with a greater curiosity than I should have cared to admit. Nor was my interest this time thrown away. First an H was traced, then an E, an N, and the letters constituting the name of Henry; after that an S, an I, an M, etc., until "Henry Simons" stood out plain and distinct.

I pushed back my chair in great agitation, and it dropped on the floor behind me.

The mesmerist slowly came back to life—came back to the same sordid, dense vulgarity, and left me looking at her in rapt wonder. I had entered to question her about her own name, and behold! she had presented me with another that drove the purpose of my interview for the moment clean out of my thoughts. To all my questions, however, she shook her head and professed to know nothing about what she had written. Indeed, only one

lively emotion seemed to influence her—namely, as to whether the briefness of her communications would raise any hesitation in my mind as to the payment of her two-dollar fee.

What a chain of thoughts her cabalistic writings had started, what a sad page of my earlier life they recalled! By what extraordinary coincidence had she struck upon that name? It had never been so much as mentioned in the suit, nor had I reason to suppose that a single soul in the whole city of New York had so much as ever heard it. Indeed, the person to whom it referred had now long dropped into oblivion, buried in that terrible strife between the North and the South.

For one instant it suggested a solution of my present predicament—I mean of the position I found myself in with regard to my supposititious marriage. But I put it away from me. It was too wild, too extravagant for even contemplation. Her happening to hit upon that name was only another coincidence more extraordinary than any that had preceded it. *Voilà tout!*

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XVI.

I WALKED around to my old hotel, and was sufficiently fortunate to find a suite of rooms that had just been vacated. Had my reverie been less engrossing, I might have noticed more particularly a mendicant who followed me into the office. All I remember about him is that I gave him a quarter to be rid of him; and yet, in spite of this, that he somewhat pertinaciously hung about me during my conversation with the clerk concerning the suite of rooms I was to occupy. His clothes were hardly of a sufficiently dilapidated character to warrant his ejection in the harsh manner in which the unfortunate are occasionally dismissed from the halls of our palatial hotels, and I merely supposed at the time that he was dissatisfied with my largess and that he delayed his departure in the hope of securing more.

To avoid the noise and the publicity of the regular dining hall, I ordered my dinner served in my sitting room, and sent around for my lawyer to share with me my meal; not that I had altered, during the interval since I had seen him, my opinion of his legal acumen, but, feeling very lonely, I invited him merely to have some one to talk to.

Mr. Slocum came around promptly. Indeed, a dinner at a client's expense was the only matter he never evinced any hesitation about responding to.

The same old manner was as pronounced as ever, and when I told him of the circumstances succeeding the lawsuit (circumstances of which he was only partly cognizant through the public journals) he wrinkled his nose more than ever.

"What is my exact legal status now?" I asked, as I lighted my cigar at the close of the meal.

"Well, sir, I have made a motion to appeal the case," he answered.

"How long will it be before it can be settled definitely?"

He thought for a moment.

"I suppose, if we hurry it, in about fifteen years."

"Fifteen years!" I ejaculated. "But what would be my position during the interval?"

Mr. Slocum wrinkled his nose again.

"Well, sir, that would have to be left to the courts to decide also. Even if it should be established that you had not married her at the time she claimed, I don't know but that your subsequent conduct would constitute a marriage now!"

"A marriage now?"

"Yes; you have been living in the same house with her, you have been accepted by her father, and, if I rightly understand, you swore that you had actually married her to prevent her springing out of the window. You must allow that would sound very strangely, that last? An American jury would be apt to be suspicious as to the cause of your renewing your vows."

"But what is the law on marriage?" I asked, "is it not definite and exact?"

“There are not two States in the Union where the laws of marriage agree,” he said. “The law looks to the spirit of the thing, but it is inclined to interpret this spirit differently in different States.”

“But do you mean to say my merely staying under the same roof with her, and the circumstances I have related, would of themselves constitute a marriage anywhere?”

“I mean to say that the circumstances might be so construed that the courts would consider them to mean a marriage in this very State.”

“Well, I’ll be damned if the laws don’t need to be changed!” I ejaculated.

“But if they were changed, what would become of us?” he asked, with a sly laugh.

“You mean that the laws are made for lawyers, not for justice?”

“Well, a little so. But to be serious,” he continued, “a man is scarcely safe anywhere from a designing woman, if she can show that she has lived under the same roof with him. The law is a sort of glue that couples people together—‘volens’ generally, but sometimes ‘nolens.’”

“At all events, divorces are easily procured, and if I am married to her now, as you say I am, I had better apply for one.”

“But you can’t; it was decided by the court that she alone, not you, had the right to procure a divorce.”

“Then will you tell me what I can do?” I asked desperately.

“Well, if I were in your place I would wait and see what the lady’s next move is. By the way, sir, would

you mind my closing the door? It's very remarkable! I have closed that door three times, and now it's open again."

The door was indeed ajar, and as I walked over towards it I thought I detected the sound of footsteps. I went out into the hall, and just as I reached it I noticed the door next to my bedroom on the further side of my suite silently closing. At the moment it only struck me as odd, and, on returning to my guest, the matter dropped out of my recollection.

"You were saying there was no uniformity in the divorce laws," I observed on resuming the conversation.

"I did not say so, but I well might," replied Mr. Slocum. "As for that matter, a man can be a married man in one State, but a divorced one in another. He can be a bigamist in a third State, and not be married at all in a fourth!"

"And in fact," I interrupted, "we've a uniform currency as regards money, but none regarding matrimony."

And having made my pun—which I am bound to acknowledge had a somewhat depressing effect on my guest—I changed the subject to that of my visit to the clairvoyant's. This I described in all its details, with the solitary exception of making no reference to the name she had so strangely conjured up from the obscurity of the past. From Rebecca Seaton we glided into spiritualism, and though I have a supreme contempt for that form of delusion, the subject left me in a somewhat nervous frame of mind and disinclined to slumber. Owing, however, to the fact that this was in reality my first day out of a sick-room, I was extremely fatigued, and I therefore retired soon after Mr. Slocum's departure, which was at half-past eleven o'clock.

XVII.

I WAS about getting into bed when I noticed that the moon was shining brightly into the room through the window, which, because of the heat, I had left well up. How curious are the workings of the human mind! What recalled the train of thought is more than I can tell; but, as I pulled the shutters together, the sinister faces of those two men whom I had seen at Delmonico's just before my adventure on the ferry boat recurred to my memory, blended in with the clairvoyant's ugly physiognomy.

Now whenever I go to bed with a disagreeable thought, I adopt the invariable expedient of pulling the bedclothes over my ears and resolutely determining to sleep. Even over sleep, I maintain, the power of will is dominant, and it generally proves so in my case. Nevertheless it failed to produce slumber now. For fully two hours I lay, tossing from one side of my bed to the other; and whichever way I turned, the faces of those two men were before me. I saw them again in that lonely path of the park. I saw them at again at Delmonico's, and later I thought I recognized them in the two men who had assaulted me on the steamer. Could it have been they? Must it not have been they? But what purpose could they have had? I never carried much money on my person, seldom more than \$25, and generally even

less. Robbery could scarcely have been their motive, but otherwise what? Something more sinister than theft, and I shuddered as I reproached myself for not having already given notice at police headquarters. But then I had had so much to do with police headquarters and the courts generally. I remembered now, too, the mysterious opening of my sitting room door earlier in the evening, and it made me feel additionally uncomfortable. There seemed a net cast about me that was being drawn tighter and closer each day. I had counted some three hundred and fifty meshes of this imaginary net when I fell into an uneasy slumber.

How long afterwards it was, I have no means of determining, but I awoke with a start, bathed in a profuse perspiration.

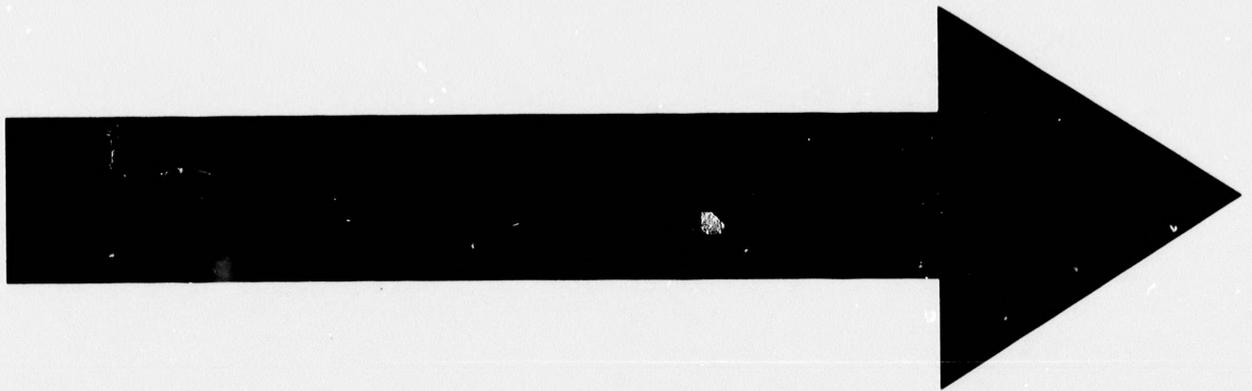
Now, there is one thing I am particularly sensitive to, namely, to being looked at surreptitiously. I can always tell when the human eye is fixed upon me, and I felt that a human eye was fixed upon me now. I shivered as I glanced about the room, knowing not in what direction it was, but conscious by its magnetism that it was somewhere. Indeed, I can think of no more unpleasant predicament than to be awakened from sleep by the uncanny, creeping sensation caused by somebody's stealthy gaze. The uncertainty as to the purpose of the intruder, the doubt as to his whereabouts, and the silent magnetism that attracts you while it awes, all combine to make the situation far from agreeable. I searched every nook and corner of the room as I lay back in my bed, perfectly still, with my own eyes partly closed, half hoping my gaze would not be rewarded. At last, however, in the dim light of the half

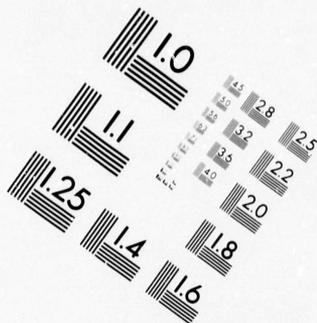
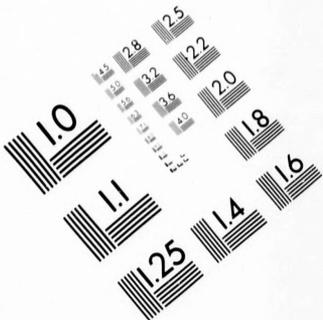
turned-down gas, I caught sight of him glancing at me from behind a wardrobe that stood with its back toward a door communicating with the next room on the right. I was like the Irish maiden who, after long and patient search, found what she did not want. Then as I gazed, speechless, a hand white and ghostlike came stealing around the edge of the same piece of furniture, as if seeking a hold on it to push it to one side, creeping and feeling its way along the edge until it was in full view. I don't know that I am less courageous than other men, but possibly because of all that I had gone through, or, likely, because my nerves had been unstrung by my illness, my self-control gave way. If only to break the thralldom of his eye, I shouted out loud, I jumped from the bed, and in endeavoring to turn on the gas turned it out. I started for the door and tried to open it. The key was on the inside, and, though I turned it, the door stuck. I got hold of the bell rope and rung it violently. At last, in feeling for a-match, I found my revolver, which I now remembered to have taken out of my trunk in dressing for dinner. I gave a brisk, cheery laugh, as I cocked it, and, aiming behind the wardrobe, I let fly. I fired three shots, one after another; and yet I must have fired wide of my aim, for I broke with a loud crash the glass in the wardrobe. Then as I waited, palpitating, I heard a door, as of the room adjoining mine, open out in the hall; I heard the sound of footsteps running down the corridor, and, applying all my strength, I pulled my own door open and rushed out. A light was streaming from the apartment next mine. It was tenantless. I hurried to the stairs, and could hear the echo of descend-

ing footsteps. There were some five flights in all, and I followed down on the full run. At the bottom I encountered a terrified watchman, who on seeing me hastily decamped, loudly calling for assistance. The cause of his alarm, as I subsequently learned, was that the fugitive in passing him had hinted at a desperate maniac up-stairs who had endeavored to take his life. Thereupon the watchman had interposed no barrier to his departure, and had naturally concluded on seeing me that the desperate maniac was coming down-stairs, and would very likely attempt his life next. In the confusion of the moment, therefore, the person who I had every right to infer had endeavored to effect an entrance into my room had been allowed to escape, and, as I was now informed that he was fully dressed, I had little hopes of his apprehension because of the scantiness of his attire.

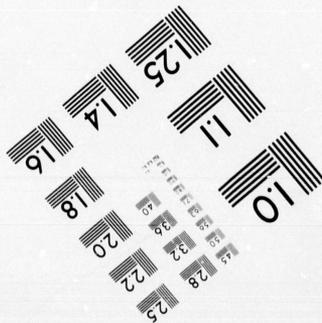
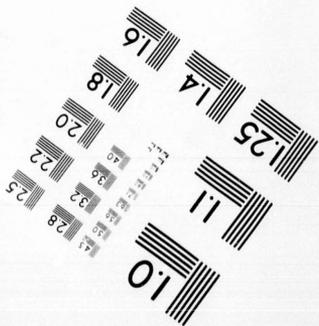
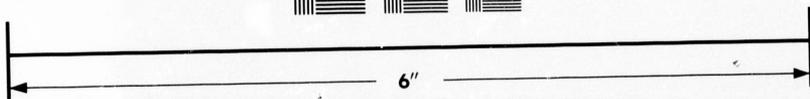
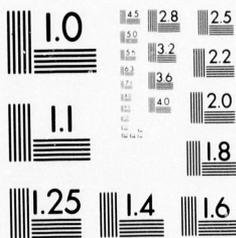
The proprietor soon after presented himself, and we investigated the register. We found that the adjoining apartment had been accorded some two hours after my arrival to a stranger who had been extremely anxious for that particular room, and who explained that his luggage would not arrive until the following day. He inscribed himself as the Hon. James Ashley of London, England.

The best clue I received, however, was from the clerk, whom the proprietor forthwith summoned. He recalled what he considered now the suspicious manner in which the mendicant had hung about me the previous afternoon during my conversation with him in regard to my quarters, and suggested that he might have been sent ahead to learn exactly where I was to be put; that he had thereupon communicated with a confederate, who had





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come later and secured the adjoining room under the alias of the Hon. James Ashley.

For the apprehension of this supposititious scion of a noble house an alarm was immediately sent out, and, after ordering a carriage, I remounted to my sanctuary for the purpose of completing my costume. Indeed, the slimmness of my attire caused extreme embarrassment to the numerous guests of the feminine gender whom I met on my way back, and whom the excitement generally, and the report of my pistol in particular, had called into the corridors in scarcely more conventional garments than my own.

My purpose was to immediately drive down to the police department, and to put the matter in the hands of the chief of the detective force myself. I had delayed already too long, since there remained no doubt but that my life was seriously menaced.

When I arrived at my destination, however, and stated the case in all its particulars, I was annoyed to perceive that, my name and reputation having preceded me, a doubt was raised in the official breast as to the veracity of my story. They promised to do all that they could, but their manner spoke stronger than language their opinion that my mind was a little affected. Instead of accepting the version of the proprietor, whom they considered naturally biassed in my favor, they evidently preferred to accept that of the porter, who repeated what the fugitive had told him in his sudden flight.

XVIII.

IF I had any doubts as to this unfavorable verdict on my conduct, I would have had them removed the following morning by the public journals, which must have got their cue from the detective's office. "AARON AGAIN AROUSED" appeared in the same startling alliteration, and after this :

"ATTEMPTS AN AWFUL ASSAULT ON A FRIENDLESS FOREIGNER, AND DRIVES HIM DOWN WITH HIS DERRINGER INTO THE STREET. NO QUESTION NOW AS TO HIS INSANITY."

I don't know when I was ever more provoked in my life than on seeing this unjustifiable version of my adventure.

At my earnest solicitation Mr. Slocum stopped to see me on his way down to his office, and I was sure that he now shared the opinion that had become all but universal. He was even a little afraid of me, I thought, and he had developed a nervous manner of edging up toward the door every now and then when, in course of conversation, I approached him. Poor man! I am not surprised at it, and though I flatter myself that I have as fair an average of plain common sense as falls to the lot of most, I sometimes wonder that I really did not get a little "off my nut," as I believe the expression goes. To repeat: Mr. Slocum was extremely timid, and, probably for this reason, could give me absolutely no assistance for

advice. I had got beyond his depth, as he frankly confessed to me, and though I tried to put the new development of my affairs before him as plainly and concisely as possible, he could only wrinkle his nose and look completely obfuscated. I know he did not believe in my construction of this last adventure any more than they did at police headquarters, and was prepared to accept my aberration of mind as the easiest way out of the whole dilemma. And yet I had got rather to like the little man, or, to be more accurate, I had grown used to him, for he was the only person to whom I had been able to talk freely. I recognized now, however, that his forbearance was exhausted, and, though he agreed to continue as my counsel, he did so in a half-hearted, spiritless manner, and in a way that assured me that he would infinitely prefer to wash his hands of me completely.

I felt extremely lonely when he left, and the world seemed barren and forlorn. The bright, sunny weather of the past few days had changed, too, and, though as a rule I am not particularly sensitive to outside influences, a dull, gloomy day affects my spirits all the same.

Heretofore I had looked upon my predicament somewhat in the light of a huge monumental joke—a piece of opera bouffe in real life. Now a gloomier, a more tragic phase seemed stealing over it that filled me with vague foreboding and alarm. The very condition of the country, too, though my own affairs had pretty well drawn off my thoughts from it, was sufficient to create a feeling of uneasiness in the breast of any patriotic American. Strikes, and rumors of fresh strikes, were on every hand, and the dreaded power of the Knights of Labor was just

beginning to make itself felt. There is little doubt that had I had less on my mind I might have gained a clue as to my perplexities from what the clairvoyant had said. Even now, as I look back, I am surprised that I did not; but her very personality was so repugnant to me that it made any reflections on the subject additionally painful to the painful episodes that her communications recalled.

Perhaps it was the gloominess of the weather, as I say, or the apparent danger that was beginning to threaten the country, or only the peril that my own life seemed compassed by, that made me especially despondent, but I felt that I had reached a pass beyond which there was no going. I began to wonder, too, whether there could be any connection between these two assaults upon me and my supposed marriage. They must be in some way connected, I reasoned; but how? Such determined, outrageous onslaughts as they were must have had some motive far out of the ordinary behind them, and yet, if these assaults were connected with my marriage, could I hold Edna Dalzelle responsible in any way? I resolutely cast the thought behind me. Indeed, the very danger I was environed by, and my loneliness in the world, made the recollection of that little woman especially welcome.

From her standpoint, regarding me as her husband who had basely deserted her, what else could she have done? Her mistake was absurd, but, once admitting that mistake, her subsequent conduct was both logical and natural. Without a mother's influence to guide her, with only an old fool of a father, blindly subservient to her slightest whim, it was reasonable that she should have acted as she had, particularly taking into consideration her

emotional and impulsive character. But how extraordinary that she should have made such a mistake, and afterwards how curious was her partial appreciation of it! Had I on my part, however, acted quite wisely? Had I not, on the contrary, behaved with culpable weakness? Did I not, on realizing my weakness, too, leave the house with an inordinate lack of ceremony? How must my departure have struck her after all her kindness and attention, just after swearing, too, that I had actually married her? But what would her next move be? I wondered. Certainly nothing short of sending after me "a posse comitatys"; that was the only card she had left. And yet I felt very sad and depressed. The reaction after my late excitement had come. My reverie was broken by footsteps out in the hall. I started from my seat, for I had become very suspicious now of footsteps. It was only a hall boy, however, accompanying Mr. Dalzelle's colored valet; he was bringing back the clothes which I had used during my convalescence, and which the events of the past eighteen hours had caused me to forget to send for.

Something in his manner led me to infer he had not come with the sole purpose of returning me my wardrobe. On questioning him closely, he became embarrassed.

"It's madam, sir," he admitted at last—"de young madam, who got took quite sudden jest after you went away. 'Deed, sir, I specs your goin' has quite done for her."

"Done for her! What ails her?" I asked.

"Sure I doan know, sir. First she was took with a sort of fit; after that she fell into a kind of a sort of a trance

like. She's still, sir—oh! so still. She can't breathe to blow a candle out."

I felt a sudden and bitter sensation of repentance. In all the wide, wide world I had not a soul that cared for me but her; no eye would brighten at my approach, no lips would smile at my coming, no ear would quicken as my footsteps fell, but hers. Suppose it were an affection by proxy? God! Even that were better than none at all. I had been a cold, cynical observer of the world, apart, and forlorn. I had had my accursed reward.

"Lead on," I said. "I will go to her."

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IX.

I FOUND her father in his library, bowed down with grief, for he was weeping and his head was sunk in his nerveless hands. There is something terribly agitating to me in the tears of a man of any age, but in those of an old man something beyond what I can support.

I touched him on the shoulder, for my entrance had failed to arouse him. He looked up, and taking my hand pressed it affectionately. I was not prepared for the change I noticed in him, nor for the manner of his reception after my unceremonious departure of the previous day. His softness further drew me towards him, and I took a seat and made him enter into the particulars of his daughter's illness. Thereupon I learned that when my departure had been communicated to her, she had been seized with a fit of hysteria, loudly accusing him, her father, of having driven me out of the house; that the colored servant had thereupon been sent out in hot haste for the first doctor he could find, and that he had apparently stumbled on Rebecca Seaton; that she had come in immediate response to the summons, and, after practicing some mysterious rite upon his daughter, had indeed quieted her, but only to throw her into a state which the family physician on his arrival had pronounced to be coma. This gentleman had loudly declaimed against the presence of Rebecca on the score of her being an irregular practi-

tioner, and it was only at his threat to throw up the case that she could be persuaded to withdraw.

"From certain expressions this woman dropped," went on Mr. Dalzelle, "I am inclined to suspect the poor child has been in the habit of consulting her before, and that my servant, knowing this, purposely called her in. I also believe that this clairvoyant, as she calls herself, is responsible in some way for my daughter's hallucination concerning you."

"Concerning me?"

"Yes; that she filled her mind with the expectation of her real husband's sudden return, and that she was thus ready to consider as such the first man who bore to him the slightest resemblance."

"Hold on! I have it!" I cried abruptly.

"Have what, sir?" exclaimed the old gentleman, startled out of his sorrow.

"I mean that I remember now where I first heard the name of Rebecca Seaton. Your daughter mentioned her during the trial, and her doing so confirms your present suspicions."

"I don't recall the fact, but I regret extremely that any testimony of mine should have been instrumental in completing your embarrassment," he said. "Would you not like to see her?"

I nodded my head, and he led me into her room. There she lay with her sightless eyes cast upward, and bearing not a few evidences of that longer sleep that knows no waking. Indeed, to a careless observer every sign of life was absent, for not the slightest movement could be detected. At the head of the bed sat a Sister of

Charity, whose face was almost as white and impassive as the patient's own.

Her father pulled me away.

"Even now it's all over," he muttered, and a convulsive sob choked his utterance.

"No, it is not all over," I exclaimed decisively. "While there's life there's hope."

He wrung his hands. "The doctor has just left, and, though he promised to return, he said that he feared his coming was useless."

"Will you allow me the responsibility of seeing what can be done?" I demanded.

He looked up at me with new-found confidence.

"You tell me," I said, "that your family physician has given her up?"

"He has. A consultation between him and two of the first physicians of New York was held this morning; they decided she would never awake out of that state."

"But if it was a condition the female physician had put her into," I objected, "why did they not wait to see whether she could not get her out of it?"

"They did all they could," said Mr. Dalzelle weakly.

"Then in that case there is no harm in trying what she can do. I shall be back here before half an hour is up."

I went out, drawn as by a magnet, to Rebecca Seaton, who claimed to give relief where all other agencies had failed. It was still within the time of her office hours, and, the same boy with the dirty face and the ears like wings admitting me, I found her much the same imperturbable mass of flesh as before. The same mys-

terious bottle, too, was making the same suspicious transit, as I entered, from the table to her voluminous pocket.

The curious feature about my visit was, however, that before I addressed her a word on the subject she seemed to know exactly what had brought me.

"It ain't no use," she exclaimed. "I won't go back; I tell you it ain't no use to ask me."

I opened my pocket-book and produced a crisp fifty-dollar bill.

"This bill," I said, "is yours if you come with me immediately. If you don't, I tear it to pieces."

I had torn it in half before she moved. At my motion to reduce it to quarters she snatched it from my hand and rose.

"Have you got a cab, then?" she asked.

I answered in the affirmative.

"Theophilus," she exclaimed, turning to the youth with the dirty face, as she affixed a soiled bonnet to her head, "I'll be back in just forty minutes. Have a sharp watch on things while I'm away, and mind you, don't keep catchin' flies on the winder panes; it don't look professional."

Then we entered the cab, and all the time during the drive she was muttering disjointed reflections on the "bumptiousness of reg'lars," which I construed as having reference to her treatment at the hands of the family doctor. Nevertheless, in spite of her vulgarity, her density, and her obstreperousness, she inspired me with confidence.

Though both the nurse and Mr. Dalzelle appeared surprised to see that she had been willing to return, they

offered no opposition to her entrance into the sick-chamber. Indeed, it struck me that in his weakness and distress Mr. Dalzelle was only too ready to leave all responsibility in my hands.

"Now," said the doctress, removing her bonnet, "jest stand all of yez exactly where you are. Don't yez mind nothin' yez sees, but do jest what I tell yez; and when I tell yez, do it quick. If I hadn't a strong affection for this yere sensitive, it ain't all the money of the surplus that would have brought me back; but human natur' is the same in the skin of a unregular, I'll have you understand, as in that of the highest big-wig of the land."

Having delivered herself of this oration, she blew her nose indignantly and walked over toward the bedside. I shuddered as she approached; the contrast between hers and the fair form before her was so great that it made any contact a profanation. For a moment she stood fixedly regarding the patient, then she began to make passes over the latter's head with her hands. For some two minutes there was not the slightest response, and my heart fairly stopped beating. At last, as she continued, a faint tremor of the eyelids became discernible in the girl, next the eyes themselves began to move in slow sympathy with the operator's hands, and finally the fair head followed suit. I can liken it to nothing else than the movement of a beautiful and sensitive plant following the sun, far-fetched as the analogy is. At last the movement of the head was communicated to the patient's body, and finally, as it was swaying backwards and forwards as the stem of a flower, the mesmerist pressed her thumb an instant

on Edna's forehead, clapped her hands, and at the noise the patient opened her eyes.

For an instant she gazed about her dazedly, then, a smile of recognition illuminating her countenance, she closed them again and dropped into the arms of Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.

XX.

I WALKED home pondering on the strange sight I had seen. Though I had hoped that Rebecca could relieve her, it was not until long afterwards that I learned the real secret of Edna's trance-like illness. Rebecca had simply hypnotized her, and then, being driven away, had left her in a condition of suspended animation.

In ordinary cases of mesmerism, the patient would have wakened out of this unassisted; but in Edna's case her hypnotization had been preceded by violent hysteria, and, her vitality being therefore lowered, it had proved unequal to reassert itself. Thereupon it was necessary to have recourse to the same agency that had paralyzed it. In other words, her troubled soul, when weakened by its struggles, had been locked up and the key temporarily withdrawn; hence, unable to burst through, her spirit had remained imprisoned till the magic key was found and the portals unlocked.

Mr. Dalzelle's words about Rebecca Seaton went a long way to explain my own predicament. A sensitive, impulsive nature had been wrought upon by a Jesigning woman who, though possessed of highly developed mesmeric powers, was in respect to her other pretensions, a sham. To rivet her hold upon her victim she had persuaded her into the belief that her errant husband would return, and because I bore to him a resemblance more or

less pronounced I had been seized upon by the deserted wife. But then if Rebecca's claims as a clairvoyant were fictitious, how account for that extraordinary revelation which she had made to me? The only inference was that, as in many of her class, mesmeric power and trickery were so closely combined that it was impossible to distinguish where the one began and the other left off.

Two weeks elapsed before I was permitted to see the patient again.

You ask me, perchance, how I passed the intervening time. Have you ever read the "Dame aux Camellias"? Well, I passed it much as the hero of that interesting romance did—namely, in constant attention on the heroine's door. The cup that escapes the lips is ever more tempting, and the cup that had been so nearly snatched from mine seemed now especially sweet.

What cared I if my course were illogical? I threw logic to the winds. My abrupt departure had been the cause of her illness, and it flattered my pride while it filled me at the same time with bitter self-condemnation. During that interval I haunted the florists' shops, and endeavored to express in the sweet language of flowers the emotions that had begun to agitate my breast. Once more, if I must confess it, I was susceptible, a weak character, but so was Julius Cæsar, and even Napoleon himself, where women were concerned.

During this interval, because I could not see her I wanted to see her still more, and thus my thoughts and energies were drawn away from the prosecution of my search after my nocturnal intruder. To be sure, I visited

the chief of the detective force frequently, but it was more from a sense of duty than any other motive, and I must admit I failed to press the case as I ought to have done. Indeed, I am convinced that they still regarded my story with grave suspicions, and my lack of energy in following up matters probably confirmed them in their belief.

During those two weeks I also visited Rebecca Seaton, but she either could not or would not give any further insight into her connection with Edna than I already had, namely, that she had long been in professional attendance on her. At last the morning came when Edna was well enough to receive me, and my patient waiting was rewarded.

What a spiritual expression an illness gives a beautiful woman, however brief that illness be! In her case this was conspicuously so. Her very character seemed to have changed; her little caprices were toned down, her whims, and, if you please, her follies.

She received me kindly, so kindly that I felt abashed. If I had any doubts as to my inclinations before, they were now removed. Some instinct, better, more innate than judgment, warned me not to speak of what had happened. She extended me her hand from the lounge on which she was reclining, and left it as a welcome gift during my visit in my own hand. Ten minutes only had been accorded to me, and, though I ought to have been glad, a deep sadness seized me, blended in with the same old feeling of foreboding and presentiment.

She appeared to read my thoughts, for drawing me to-

wards her she said: "You see I wear your flower next my heart; have you ever thought that flowers are the souls of those we love? See," she continued, "how easy it is to crush them; but you would never kill what you could not replace."

I tried to change the subject, and with a perverse stupidity into which, as I have mentioned before, I always fall when I am at a loss for conversation, I got upon the weather. I said something about the brightness of the day and the glorious sunlight streaming into the room.

"Yes," she returned, "it is very bright, but all bright things seem to fade."

"Not if they are good," I continued, with forced cheerfulness.

"Yes, the good fades too," she observed; then, with a smile that was like the ghost of her former vivacity, "but, on that score, some of us ought to be perennial."

A long pause ensued.

"Do you know," she resumed at last, "I think I read things more truly now since my illness: I mean I see them in their real light."

"What things?" I inquired densely.

She turned away her head, instead of replying to my question.

"There, there," she said, after a little pause "you must leave me now, but you will come back again, will you not?" and she retained my hand, though I had got up to go. "You will forgive me for all the embarrassment I have caused you, and you will not entirely forget me?"

I don't know exactly what I said, but, if I remember

aright, I swore lustily that I could never forget her. There were tears in my eyes, I'm sure, and I think I used strong language to divert her attention from them.

I stooped down to kiss her, and she raised her face to meet my lips with the sweet simplicity of a child.

As I was leaving the house, her father beckoned me into the library.

"What do you think of her?" he asked anxiously. "Do you notice any change in her?"

I passed over his question as well as I could. His next remark was equally significant.

"If I were in your place," he said, "I should avoid any allusion to the past. It might throw her back, and at all events would agitate her."

I had instinctively recognized the same thing, as the reader is aware. In a manner she had herself touched upon the past, but that was different from my doing so.

"Now," he resumed, "allow me to ask you one more question. As I have already told you, I am assured that you never married my daughter, but I have sometimes thought lately that, in spite of the extraordinary position she has placed you in, her illness has in some slight degree drawn you towards her. At least your devotions and your attentions during her convalescence would so argue. I don't ask in mere idle curiosity," he continued, seeing me hesitate.

"Well, suppose your impressions are correct?" I answered.

"In that case, I deem it only fitting to say that I intend to move her down into the country to a little place we have

on the Sound, and to which we usually resort much earlier in the season. Then, after she has regained her usual health, I will advise her to apply to the divorce courts to break the ties by which she is bound, or at least to have her marriage annulled. I suppose it could be easily managed on the score of desertion and failure to support."

"But what becomes of me when you take her away?" I asked, with an injured, hopeless air.

"Of you? Well, you might come down and visit her occasionally; or stay! if you are really anxious to continue your acquaintance with us, I might procure you a room at a farm house closely adjoining my place."

I think the old gentleman had really got to look upon me as a belonging, and was as anxious in the matter as I was myself.

The proposal struck me as a happy one; it promised relief and quiet, which I needed sorely after the terrible strain I had been under.

"How soon would you propose going?" I asked.

"To-morrow or next day; indeed, I am anxious to get her away as soon as possible. There is no saying what all this labor agitation may develop into, and I would not like to have her in the city during any trouble. Besides the doctor thinks the present hot weather retards her recovery. I could put her on the boat which lands us very near our place, and she would even be more comfortable than on a train. By the way," he added after a pause, "I want to ask you something I have long had on my mind. Have you ever known of any one who bore a striking resemblance to you? Search your memory, now."

"No, sir, there is no one," I answered, with a shade of hesitation—"no one, at least, who is now alive."

"Well, then," he continued, hitting on the female physician, when strangely enough I was just thinking of her myself, "I suppose the only solution is, as I have already intimated, that Rebecca Seaton, in her character of a clairvoyant, predicted to my daughter that her husband would return, and the poor child, believing it, seized upon the first man that looked anything like him."

"But that would hardly explain your own testimony," I objected, with a tinge of maliciousness. "You swore that you recognized me, and therefore the resemblance must have been phenomenal."

"My dear sir, I am quite an old man; you know how brief the courtship was, and that I never saw this man more than half a dozen times in my life. On these occasions my notice was not particularly directed to him. Why should it have been? I had no idea that his attentions meant anything more than the ordinary civilities a young man pays to a pretty girl."

XXI.

It was three days before Mr. Dalzelle put his plan of leaving the city with his daughter into execution.

At his suggestion I did not see her again before her departure, and I further agreed to wait until I received a letter from him before following him down into the country.

He engaged in the interval to make all the necessary arrangements for me at the farm house, which he assured me was barely a quarter of a mile from his residence and with the grounds also running down to the water.

Ah! ladies, I have learned to appreciate that it is rather your titillating absence than your presence that attracts.

Regret, it is stated, remains with those who stay behind. Until now I had hardly appreciated the hold this woman had secured upon me. If she had not twined herself about my heart, she had certainly filled a gap in my existence, and I felt that her fate was bound up with mine. The change in her of which I have spoken, while assuredly noticeable to any one, had perhaps been more so to me. Possibly at first I had had a tendency to exaggerate her waywardness, and now, looking at her through different eyes, I was prone to idealize her the more.

That Rebecca Seaton should have persuaded her that

her husband would one of these days return was quite within the province of a clairvoyant, and this might very well account for the assurance with which she had pressed her claims, and also a certain lack of delicacy, if you like, that had stamped her conduct.

I would try to make her change the affection she too evidently yet bore for her betrayer, to me, who would appreciate it better. But what if this man should actually come back? I had never before thought of that contingency. Suppose he should return with some good and sufficient excuse for his absence, a sort of Enoch Arden, if not to find his wife wedded, at all events being courted by another man?

The days dragged very slowly, and still no letter came. What did it mean? Had I been forgotten? For one whole week I waited, and still no message. On the afternoon of the eighth day I decided to run down to Coney Island for the night.

I took the ferry at Thirty-fourth street, and shuddered as I recollected my experience on probably this very same boat, and my narrow escape from drowning. There were five hearses with their attendant train of carriages on board, and their several drivers were swearing lustily at each other because of the crowding. Indeed, the late strike of the hearse drivers had been decided in favor of the bosses, and left the men in consequence testy and morose.

Because of the recent termination of this trouble, a large percentage of persons had been deprived of their usual recreation, for, judging from the length of our funeral corteges alone, I believe that melancholy is a domi-

nant trait with us as a people, and that it is this which causes the great mass of us to regard the attendance at a funeral as our only justifiable indulgence. It is a relic of our Puritanism that is continually cropping out, making us take our other pleasures, when we do take them, in a self-reproachful spirit and as if we were doing something we ought not, that finds its culmination in the belief that everything agreeable to the palate is injurious, and everything agreeable to the senses immoral.

At all events I could not help reflecting on the singular fact that this ferry should be at once the great roadway to the principal pleasure resort of Long Island, and at the same time that of the largest cemetery we have. Perhaps it is well, after all, and these numerous reminders of our dissolution at the outset of our holidays play the part of the proverbial death's head at the Egyptian feast. Would that I could have accepted the warning! Alas, alas!

I arrived at Coney Island along with an immense throng, and as comfortable as could be expected under the circumstances—a stout old lady persisting in sitting in my lap during the journey, and in some miraculous manner keeping her elbow the while fixed in my eye. Until dinner, I amused myself among the booths, and admired at a respectful distance the huge elephant that presides with such solemn dignity over the scene. If I had come down for rest, however, I was disappointed. Such a combination of outrageous noises I never heard—snapping of saloon rifles, of guns, and of fire-crackers, shouts of bus-drivers, of fortune-tellers, and creakings of merry-go-rounds, organ grinders grinding away on their organs,

and bands of music each playing a different tune ; whistlings, bangings, tootings, and crowds of people as at a world's fair. Just off shore, at less than two hundred yards' distance, a large sloop, with "Tarrant's Seltzer Aperient" painted on her sail, kept sailing backwards and forwards and discharging a cannon every time she tacked.

I stood it all as long as my nerves would permit, and then retreated to the hotel, only to find, alas! the change little for the better. These huge summer caravansaries are mere sounding-boards, and if any one so much as lets a sneeze escape him in the attic, it goes vibrating and re-echoing till it reaches the cellar.

In the great hall of my domicile, or so closely connected that it might fairly be considered a part of the hall, trains thundered in every ten minutes, and disgorged their passengers, the tramping of whose feet made a running rather than a walking accompaniment to the strains of a string band of a thousand pieces just outside. When to this pandemonium was added the tramp of the full Seventh Regiment marching into supper with a *brass* band, I resigned my key at the office, and took the first train back to town. The number of the apartment which I had given up was 13—please remember that. I noticed it particularly because the day of the month was the 13th and the day of the week was Friday.

Now, while I had taken my departure because of other considerations than these, I could not help thinking on my way back that after all I had acted wisely in refusing to tempt Providence under such a curious combination of so-called coincidences, and as if to give point to these re-

lections, I unexpectedly met Rebecca Seaton on the train, who looked at me stolidly, and vouchsafed not the slightest recognition. Arrived in New York, I found compensation for all my miseries in a brief note from Mr. Dalzelle, proposing that I should take the boat on the following day and join him in the country.

Punctual to the hour he named, I found myself the next afternoon at the wharf, and soon afterwards embarked for Rocky Point.

Though I was unprepared for the beauty of the trip, I was yet surprised at the premature decay that seemed to have settled on the shores of the Sound whenever we approached sufficiently near to permit me to observe them. Rotting wharves, dilapidated hotels, and broken-down summer houses loudly spoke the pride of better days.

"It is the curse of the mortgage," explained a fellow-passenger, "the primary state to destruction, harsher than the condition of landlord and tenant, because entirely lacking in those personal relations that go so far to mitigate and assuage the last."

I was met at the landing by Mr. Dalzelle. He told me, much to my relief, that his daughter had been already improved by the change of air, and instead of stopping first at the quarters which he had retained for me, he took me over to show me his own place. And a prettier, quainter abode than I found it can't be imagined. Built considerably before the Revolution, it was painted a rich though subdued red, and was fairly embowered in creeping vines. Trees of great age were on every side, and threw their long shadows over the closely trimmed lawn. Such a

bower of rest, such a snug little old-time retreat from the noise and bustle of the world, I had never met with before. All spelled peace; even the barns and out-houses. Into these last a boy was driving a herd of lowing Alderneys, and every now and then one of them would stop to nibble the grass, when a brisk little terrier, loudly barking, would fly out from some mysterious retreat and try to nibble their hoofs. All spelled peace, quiet, and repose.

Looking between the trees towards the Sound, the sun was just sinking in a blaze of glory, painting up the sails of passing vessels with radiant colors and turning the waters into one vast field of liquid gold. Looking shorewards, the land gradually ascended and rolled away in gently undulating fields into the soft distance, while the whole face of nature was suffused with that sudden flush of serene and more than earthly beauty, to which we sometimes find a faint counterpart in the faces of those that die in harmony with God.

There always seems to me a peculiar solemnity in the beauty of eventide that raises man nearer to his Creator. Even as a child I used to recognize it, and attribute it to the blessing He was breathing over the departing day.

I had left the renewal of my acquaintance with Edna very largely in Mr. Dalzelle's hands, and as he deemed it wiser that I should postpone seeing her till the morrow, he conducted me along the beach to my lodgings, where he bade me good-night. Plain as my domicile proved, how much more congenial to my taste I found it (as I sat down on the veranda and lighted a contemplative cigar) than the hideous caravansaries whither the great hosts of

summer travel flock, where your individuality is merged in a number, where magnitude excuses worth, and noise and confusion are the only things you get. How great was the contrast between this place and that huge shingle palace at Coney Island from which I had fled the previous night !

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XXII.

I ASKED Mr. Crummels, my host, to wake me early next day, but was scarcely prepared for the interpretation he put on my request. It was considerably before daylight, I remember that, and I have an indistinct recollection of using some pretty "steep" language to him when he did summon me. Not for three hours later did I get up, and, to while away the time till I could pay my respects to Edna, I proposed that he should show me about his property. This he finally consented to do, and in the course of conversation I learned that the farm was really a dependency of Mr. Dalzelle, who had been compelled to buy it in for the mortgage. Thus Mr. Crummels, by a slow process of evolution unfortunately becoming too frequent, had changed from a land owner to a mortgagor, and from that into a tenant.

The special pride of Mr. Crummels was an old gray horse called Thomas, which he led into the farm yard for my delectation.

"He ain't like some of your flash city critters," he observed apologetically—"all fuss and feathers, and that step as if they had the spring halt all round; but he's a rare one to go."

Mr. Thomas acknowledged this compliment with a whisk of his tail, and a movement that I perhaps wrongfully

interpreted into a surreptitious effort to reach my knee with his hind hoof.

"It's only his sport," continued the owner, with the air of a father atoning for some little delinquency of his son. And after consigning the horse to his stall, he showed me a buggy, somewhat in need of paint, which he informed me would be at my service along with the quadruped at any time I wished to make use of them.

Towards mid-day I walked over to Mr. Dalzelle's to pay my visit to Edna, and found her on the veranda which overlooked the water. She was reclining in a hammock, and half rose as I approached; a slight flush mantled her cheek, and she had more of her old look, her bright sparkle, and her general sunniness.

As for me, I felt the same curious shyness steal over me that I had experienced the last time I saw her, but I took her hand, and raised it to my lips.

"You've been very kind to me," she said, "and particularly to come so far to see me. Now tell me," she continued: "will you forgive me for all I've made you go through?"

I tried to pass my arm about her waist, but she gently disengaged it.

"No," she said, "you must not do that. I see things truer now. I recognize the absurd, nay, the cruel position I have put you in. During that brief illness when I lay there tossing about, I saw pictured to me in my delirium your true situation, and I recognized at last that you were not my husband at all."

Though she had intimated the same before, she had not yet definitely stated it.

"It was a very hard position for a woman to find herself placed in, too," she went on—"to realize the ignominy she had drawn upon herself, to experience the shame and despair that the violation of all her womanly instincts should have caused"—her emotions were gradually rising and asserting themselves; "and yet if you could know how hard it was to be deserted!"

"Yes, I know that experience," I answered.

"You do?"

"Yes, when you left New York and were away from me."

She dropped her eyes as she resumed:

"I deemed it right to tell you all this, hard as it is for me to do so. You have acted as a high-principled, honorable man alone could, and have treated me only too considerately under extraordinary provocation. Indeed, when I realize what you must think of me," she continued, "I am filled with shame and embarrassment."

"But think only of the happiness you cause me now—the happiness to be near you. No other woman can make me happy, no other woman can I ever care for. I love you," I continued, carried away by my passion, "and you alone; I love you because of all your trouble, because of all the bitter anguish and shame I, on the contrary, have caused you to feel."

She got up excitedly.

"But suppose he should come back! Yes, yes, I care for you—at least I think I do," she continued. "I cared for you from the first because of your resemblance to one I firmly believed I had the right to love.

But what would your position, my position be, should he suddenly return?" She looked about her with a terrified, furtive glance that alarmed me also.

"But he never will!" I exclaimed. "His long desertion of you can only be accounted for by his death."

"Then we ought to wait, for until I am assured of this my allegiance is to him. Yes, in spite of everything with which you can justly charge me, in spite of the glaring lack of logic of my position; as I told you before, I would feel that you would be but half my husband, as long as he could also claim me; I would feel that my affections had been stolen through your resemblance to him, and that even now you hardly ought to be here; indeed, I scarcely think I should have consented to your coming had I not wished to tell you all this once again."

"But, after all that has occurred, you will not drive me away?" I said.

"What good can result from your staying? Nay, only harm, danger to us both!"

"Let me stay and I will take care of the danger; the greatest privilege I ask is to be near you!"

She thought for a moment, then, with one of those bright, sudden changes that were habitual to her, "I will let you stay on one consideration," she said.

"And what is that?" I asked.

"That you won't even—even—"

"Even what?"

"Even kiss me!" Whereupon she broke away from me and left the veranda.

XXIII.

WHAT a new zest to life the affection for a beautiful woman gives! As I look back now on that period, I count those days as bright pearls on the string of time. Ah! if I could only linger and describe each one in turn! But accursed Fate is on my track and obliges me to hurry on. That she tolerated my presence, that she acquiesced in my devotions, that she even herself reciprocated my affections, I had no doubt; and yet as time went on and I got to know her better, she only puzzled me the more. It was not alone that her moods were variable; this I deemed natural in the extraordinary position she found herself in. It was not alone that she permitted me to remain by her side without any distinct understanding as to my position and our mutual relations one to the other. But it was that she began to evince for me a kind of dread, or, if not exactly a dread of myself, of some power, as it were, that I unsuspectingly possessed—a dread that she endeavored to control and to conceal from me, and yet which struggled with her augmenting affection, just as if I were cursed with the evil eye without knowing it. Sometimes, too, she would display in her conversation a morbidness that would make me actually shudder, a moment, after gliding on to subjects which she would discuss with an eloquence and a power almost masculine. One day,

as we were out sketching in a boat, she looked up from her drawing-block.

"They say there is a person confined in the attic of that house who has never seen the light of day for forty years. Some think that he is crazy, others that he really owns the property and is chained up to a post in order to prevent his asserting his rights. Do you believe it?"

"I believe anything you tell me," I answered for want of a better reply.

"Suppose I told you that dead people came back to life—I mean in this world; would you believe that?"

"Well, I must confess I'd have to stretch my credulity."

"I saw a corpse once washed up just there on the beach, and the recollection has pursued me to this very day. Have you ever thought how awful it would be to be buried alive?"

"Upon my word, Edna, you've selected a cheerful series of topics for a picnic," I retorted. "Couldn't you try another vein?"

She laughed quietly.

"Very well, then, have you ever thought what a curious reflection on human nature it is that those pursuits are the most delightful that draw us most out of ourselves?"

"That's better; but why is it a curious reflection on human nature?" I asked. "Why is it not natural?"

"What I mean is, that we are not constituted happy by nature; we must always be doing something to be happy, and what causes us the most exquisite enjoyment is the very thing which is the least connected with our own personality."

"I think happiness consists in basking in the sunshine of some one else's personality," I returned—"that is, if the some one else is the right personality."

She smiled as she pushed back from her forehead the dark, rippling hair.

"Perhaps so," she said; "and yet don't you think happiness would have robbed the world of all its great men? If Napoleon had been happy, or even contented, would he ever have had the spur to make him great?"

"What's the use of great men?" I answered. "The world has grown tired of setting people up on a pinnacle, and then standing off at a respectful distance in open-mouthed admiration. We have become too democratic even to permit of men rising above the general level in aught but wealth."

"If I were a man," she exclaimed, "I would be ambitious to make the world happier. Take all this agitation between the rich and poor; do you not think it is based on this very struggle for wealth that you speak of? The other day I picked up the 'Memoirs of Madam Le Brun,' the painter. She gave a graphic picture of the opening of the French Revolution, which she remembered as a little girl. I sometimes think we are now on the eve of another revolution, which, when it comes, will even exceed that in violence. It will not be against the aristocracy, because we have none; but it will be against the rich of whom we have too many."

"Then let us be united when it does come," I said, and my arm crept round her waist, and I attempted to reach her lips with mine.

My touch always caused her extreme agitation. She pushed me back from her and looked furtively over the waters with that same stealthy, frightened air I had noticed before. I thought I read in it the conflict between duty and inclination, since any reference by me to a closer union always caused like agitation. It would have been a very simple affair, I argued, for her to consent that steps should be taken to have her former ties dissolved, yet, anxious as I was for her to do so, I recognized that this was a subject that I must not discuss, great as was my interest in doing so.

Thus the days glided on, each one drawing me nearer, little by little, to that grand climacteric reserved for bitter and for sweet things alike.

XXIV.

IN SPITE of the simplicity of his manner of living, Mr. Dalzelle's interests were extensive and of the most diversified character, and these, in the unsettled condition of all commercial and industrial pursuits, required his daily attention in the city. Thus I was thrown more than I otherwise might have been in Edna's society, and consequently saw him but seldom till evening or late in the afternoon.

On his return from the boat, he would frequently stop at my quarters, however, to pay me a visit, often insisting on my accompanying him home to dinner for a game of whist.

It was the afternoon that closed the first fortnight of my arrival here that he stopped at the farm-house door, bringing the evening papers with him in the back of his buggy.

"They'll have something else to talk about again than the doctrines of Henry George," he said.

"And what's that?" I asked, as I rose to meet him.

"Why, the Coney Island 'murder,'" he answered.

"They've at last got a clue."

"The Coney Island murder?" I repeated, with some curiosity.

"Yes; the one that occurred a couple of weeks ago. Didn't you hear about it?"

"Since I have been down here," I replied, "I have turned my back on the world and its doings. I haven't even looked at a paper."

"Then I'll leave this one with you now; it gives a resumé of the crime. Don't forget that the whist club meets to-night at my house; so come around early, my boy. Ta, ta!"

He deposited the papers in my hand and started off again in his buggy. I watched him as he went up the lane, the yellow wheels of his trap glistening in the sunlight through the dust, and the trees making a complete arch over his head.

The mention of Coney Island had caught my ear, and rather because of this than any keen desire to resume my acquaintance with the affairs of the universe, I opened the sheet and spread it out upon my knees as I sat down on the steps of the piazza. I had no difficulty in finding the place, the letters being as large as ever and the alliteration certainly as startling.

"CLUE TO THE CONEY ISLAND CRIME!" the paragraph was headed.

"THE MYSTERY AT THE MORTON MANIFESTLY A MURDER."

"SUSPICION STRONGLY SETTLES ON SAMUEL S. SMITH AS THE ASSASSIN OF THE OCCUPANT OF ROOM NO. 13."

Why, that was the very room that had been assigned me the night of my visit at Coney Island, and which I had given up. The hotel was the same also. I felt a decided

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increase of interest, and running my eye down the page to where the history of the crime was given in greater detail, I learned that a certain New Jersey politician had been found at the Morton Hotel, lying stiff and cold in room No. 13, with a dirk sticking in his throat. His watch and a considerable sum of money in bills had been left untouched by the side of his bed on which he was lying, showing conclusively that the motive had been other than theft.

"The reason for suspicion centering on this man Smith," the paper went on to state, "is that subsequent investigations have revealed the fact that he had been an applicant for an office which had been in the gift of the dead man. On the disposal of this office to another person Smith had been openly heard to threaten the life of the deceased, or at least to vow that he would 'fix' him.

"This threat," continued the report, "was made on July 12. It was late on the following evening that the unfortunate gentleman arrived at Coney Island and secured his room at the hotel. He was found on the morning of the 14th dead."

I rose to my feet in great agitation.

"Found on the morning of the 14th!" Not only, then, was the room mine, but that was the very morning that I would have been there had I stayed over-night!

As by a twist of a mirror the whole situation was revealed to me and what I had escaped. This man had been murdered in my stead; I was sure of it. The story about the office seeker was absurd, for disappointment in

securing a small place under the government could hardly impel a man to such a deed. I had been tracked down to the hotel ; my abrupt departure back to town had escaped the notice of the assassins, and the politician had walked into the pitfall prepared for me. At least the previous attempts on my life would justify such an interpretation of the event.

If this were so, how long would it be before the mistake was discovered ? Thank God ! my name had not figured in any of the reports, and I remembered now, with a sincere feeling of congratulation, that I had neglected to register on arriving at the hotel, and that, through the carelessness of the clerk, I had not been reminded of my omission. But would they not unearth me at last, and follow up their attempt with a more successful effort ? How soon would they break in upon my quiet retreat here ?

I suppose my proper course would have been to have gone immediately to the city and have explained to the authorities the reason I had for supposing that the assassination had been really intended for me ; showing how this very room had been assigned to me, and how at the last moment I had changed my mind about remaining overnight. I was, however, unequal to the occasion. It would necessarily involve bringing up the circumstances of the lawsuit again and the delicate relations I stood to Edna. My name had escaped mention, and until the suspected assassin was apprehended and seemed in danger of punishment, I would devote my entire energies to her. My courtship was already sufficiently complicated as it was, and this last was but one ad-

ditional link in the inexplicable chain of events that was gradually winding about me.

I remembered the invitation of Mr. Dalzelle, and, though I anticipated in my present mood little pleasure from the party, I dressed myself and decided to go as soon as I had finished dinner.

As the evening was overcast and it promised to be darker later on, I requested Mr. Crummels to come for me at half-past ten punctually with a lantern. You smile, and you have reason; but I had become so nervous and depressed that I dreaded the black shadows of night like a very child.

XXV.

WHEN I reached my destination I found the company assembled in the drawing room, and the general brightness and cheerfulness of the scene removed my thoughts from the sinister turn they had taken.

The party consisted of the minister of the neighboring church, the village squire, a college professor with green spectacles, and four other gentlemen, making up the complement of two tables. They were already seated, and Edna, in a white muslin dress open at the neck, and a wide blue satin sash, was moving about from one table to the other.

Several of the gentlemen were smoking, and, as they had not yet settled down to business, they were all laughing and chatting. Altogether I hardly ever remember to have witnessed a brighter, cheerier scene. The room, with its red paper, its red shades, and its well-trimmed lamps, is cut in my memory like a bright little ruby in cameo.

As there were just two sets at the tables, I found myself disengaged, and took my seat on a sofa, where Edna soon afterwards joined me.

"My father has these little parties every two weeks," she explained; "they will draw you in later for a hand."

"I am too well off where I am," I answered, "to make that prospect attractive."

"Oh! but you must play," she cried, "if only for papa's sake. Do play when he asks you, and let him abuse your game. It gives him so much pleasure."

"I have often thought," I laughed, "that a reputation for good whist playing could be acquired by simply abusing your partner. Never mind what he does, or does not do, always find fault with his play. It immediately puts him in an attitude of defense, which is in itself a weak one, and draws off attention from your own play."

"I've noticed that, too," she cried, "and I always adopt the plan when papa makes me play double dummy. You see I play very badly also."

"Don't you think we both ought to learn to play well?" I asked more seriously. "I'll come around to-morrow at eleven, and we'll practice double dummy together all day. It will please your father so to have us develop into experts," I added slyly.

Instead of smiling, her manner suddenly changed.

"Oh! no, not to-morrow," she cried, with a startled tone. "You must not come to-morrow under any circumstances; I quite forgot to tell you. Now promise me that you won't?"

"But why not?" I demanded, with an injured air.

"Oh! but you mustn't. Now do go to New York to-morrow just for the day!"

I was about to put in an earnest protest against this easy disposal of my time when I was summoned, as she had predicted I would be, to cut into the game. I was

therefore compelled to leave her, and like a lamb was led unwillingly to the sacrifice. As regards my game, I need only say that I did as much for Mr. Dalzelle (who, on the score of my education, persisted in retaining me all the evening for his partner) as a series of bad hands and a fit of absent-mindedness caused by Edna's words would allow. At the conclusion of the last rubber my host, who had severely criticised my skill all the way through, had the consideration to acknowledge that one play of mine had been extremely scientific.

"I suppose," he said encouragingly, "that you led that card because you thought I had the queen?"

"On the contrary," I unguardedly acknowledged, "I led it because I thought you did *not* have the queen." Thereupon my monitor raised his hands with his usual gesture of exaggerated despair, and the party broke up in the midst of good-humored hilarity at my expense.

I remained until the guests had departed, but could get no explanation from Edna as to her strange conduct; she, however, accompanied me to the door, and then, as if relenting, she whispered, "Though you must not come tomorrow, the whole of the day after is yours."

Somewhat relieved by her last words, I bade her good-night, and turned to Mr. Crummels, whom I found awaiting me with his lantern.

I had before now detected in Mr. Crummels a keen interest in regard to the relations I bore to his landlord's daughter, and the fact that she let me out raised my suspicions that he might broach the subject on the walk back.

Mr. Crummels never went direct to a point, but always tried to work up to it by a circuitous and lengthy path. To start him on a different tack at the outset, however, I remarked on the long continuation of the drought, and my regrets that the prospects of rain seemed likely to be unfulfilled.

"Wall, you're jist like all the rest of the folks hereabouts," he somewhat bluntly replied. "They're never satisfied with nuthin'. First it's rain they wants, then it's sunshine. As for me, I leaves the matter of weather in the hands of the Almighty, and lets him run it to suit hisself."

I nodded my head in approbation of this considerate conduct, and we had arrived at the beach before he again resumed.

"Yes," he continued, as we walked along the shore, "take the squire who was up there to-night, he's never content neither; while as for the minister, he's always trying to prod on the Creator to suit his own purpose. This yere spring, jist because he was backward in gettin' in his pertaters, he prays for wet, and right off durin' service up jumps the squire and tells him he was takin' an unfair advantage of the rest of the congregation, for they was satisfied to let the hot spell run on till they had sown their oats. But my daughters"—here Mr. Crummels stopped to light a short clay pipe—"my daughters gives me a heap more trouble, though, than the weather. Thar' they be a-poundin' on that pianny that I bought 'em, from early mornin' till ole Abe drives the cattle in at night. Fust it's 'In the Sweet By and By' they plays, or 'In the

Prison Cell I sit, Thinking Mother Dear of You !' Sez I, If it's thinking so much of your mother, I wouldn't be settin around at all, but I'd be up and taking some of the work off her hands, and helpin' her to do the cookin'."

To judge from Mr. Crummels' remarks, one might well infer that he was a perfect paragon of industry. In point of fact the entire farm was run by "hired help," and I have reason to suspect that Mr. Dalzelle had as much difficulty in collecting his revenues from it as he originally had to collect the interest on his mortgage. My silent reflection, however, had not interrupted the train of Mr. C.'s thoughts.

"I suppose, howsomever, you'll be havin' daughters yourself one of these days," he observed after a pause, "so I mustn't discourage you. Seein' the minister, too, 'round at Mr. Dalzelle's sot me thinkin' that you might be callin' on him before long to make that daughter question possible?"

Thereupon Mr. Crummels began to inspect his lantern, as if he feared that it was about to go out.

The subject had been so skillfully worked up to that I was taken quite aback. I only avoided it by awkwardly changing to an entirely different topic, the first one that entered my head.

"Talking about Mr. Dalzelle," I said, "he happened to mention once that the cellar under your house was quite remarkable. Indeed, I think he told me that your grandfather, having been struck three times by lightning, accepted the warning as from Heaven, and built himself a retreat in case of thunder storms."

Mr. Crummels laughed. "I don't take much stock in these yere stories," he said, "for, if the truth was known, I guess it had more to do with the distillin' of whisky on the sly. It's a famous cellar, though, for storin' apples in, and if you'd like to see it I'll take yer down on the morrer and give yer a look at it."

I expressed my readiness to accompany him, and, as we had by this time reached home, I thanked him for his pains and retired for the night.

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XXVI.

WHAT a curious thing is fate, and by what odd instruments it often works out its most tragic results!

Though, as the reader is aware, I had proposed to Edna an early rendezvous for to-day, she had strangely enough excused herself, and consequently, having nothing in particular to do, I fell an early prey to Mr. Crummels. Indeed, I am persuaded that he gave up the whole of his morning's work under the sole pretext of showing me that cellar. Instead of a cellar, however, it was rather a series of subterranean passages that led away from it into regions of unknown darkness beyond the area of the house. They bore the marks of considerable antiquity, and were stored, as well as the eye could distinguish, with apples.

"Yes, it's a heap of a cellar, ain't it?" my host remarked contemplatively. "My Guy! I remember as a boy, when I used to be obstreperous, the ole man would put me in here to keep company with the spooks. A cellar is very much like a woman, it's deep and it's dark. But this yere one lays over 'em all; for never mind how you begin, you're sure to end up different than you expected."

The observation was not unwarranted; the twists and the turns were quite bewildering, and in their ramifications

bore a slight analogy to the uncertainties of character usually attributed to the female sex.

"Here's a passage, for instance," he continued, lighting a lantern as he spoke, "that, if it was only cleared away, might lead to the water, for it strikes off in exactly the *opposite* direction."

"Let's see if it does!" I exclaimed, and I began to poke with my stick at the rubbish that had collected at the mouth of a sort of tunnel leading from the main one we were in.

"It ain't no use," said Mr. C., who immediately became listless and spiritless the moment hard work was suggested; "'spose you do scrape out all that 'ere rubbish, what then? 'Spose it do lead to the water, what's the good? You can walk thar' without silin' your pants on the face of the earth, can't you? And ain't that better than crawlin' on your belly?"

"Mr. Crummels," I observed, "I am of an investigating disposition; if that passage can be cleared away and we find it leads to the water, it will be worth five dollars to me."

"Do say!" observed Mr. Crummels, opening his eyes in wide amazement. "Five dollars! Well, you just hold on till I call ole Abe."

Ole Abe, a hand on the place, soon presented himself with a shovel, and Mr. Crummels took a seat on a barrel which he brought from the cellar.

"I can always manage a difficult business better when I'm sittin'," he observed, "and this yere business, needs a heap of executive ability. I've allers noticed, too, that

you get on quicker when one does the head work and 'tother the hand work; it's a proper division of labor, as they calls it." The combined efforts of ole Abe and his master, thus divided, resulted in clearing out the passage for some twenty feet. Connecting with this we discovered an air shaft of about a foot in diameter striking upwards to the surface of the earth, and protected, where it reached the surface, with an iron grating such as is used at the opening of a drain or sewer. The metal was almost eaten through with rust, while the aperture was choked with leaves and clogged with dirt. After these obstructions were removed, a fresh current of air penetrated into the regions below, and a little sunlight filtered down through the grating.

As Mrs. Crummels appeared on the scene shortly after, and loudly remonstrated with her spouse for his waste of time, I gave her husband the five dollars to be awarded as he saw fit, only engaging his services in the near future to complete the interrupted task. And yet let me say that no five dollars I ever expended have brought me the interest those eventually did. No hour the most advantageously employed by Mr. Crummels, either, was worth to his family one billionth part of what that hour eventually proved, though he had done nothing more than lazily sit on a barrel overseeing the work.

As the day was warm and there was yet more than an hour before luncheon, I walked down to the beach with the object of taking a swim. The fact that Edna had refused to permit of my visiting her still continued to puzzle me, and particularly her manner, which had been more

than ordinarily embarrassed when I had proposed doing so. The more I thought over it, too, the further was I from finding an explanation of her conduct. There was a boat some half a mile off from the shore, which I noticed when I was undressing, and it was apparently rowing for the spot where I was; I paid no attention to it, as the sight was not an unusual one, and dipped into the cool blue waves.

All the time I was swimming about I was arguing with myself as to why Edna had refused to receive me to-day, and when I would find that the water offered no satisfactory explanation I would come out and roll on the hot beach in the sun, taking up huge handfuls of sand and letting it slowly trickle down my legs and body. So preoccupied was I between the intellectual occupation of making a sandman of myself and then dipping into the water that I quite forgot all about the boat, until, happening to glance up, I saw that the distance between us had been reduced by half. Even yet, if I thought of it at all, I supposed its proximity to the shore was merely a matter of accident, and that, while it might be heading in this direction, it would soon turn about and go on its business again; I therefore re-entered the water and soon forgot it for the second time.

The beach was long and solitary, being owned for at least a mile of its length by Mr. Dalzelle, and, without suspicion of being observed, I was indulging in a species of sport suggested by the amusing gambols of the porpoises which infest these waters. It consisted in diving, throwing one's back well out of the water, kicking ener-

getically with one's feet, and then coming up and blowing. In the act of one of these experiments, when my head again reached the surface and I opened my eyes, I perceived not alone that the boat was now less than two hundred yards away, but, what was worse, that the flutter of a red shawl indicated the presence of a lady. I was in an extremely delicate situation, for there was no longer any doubt but that the strangers intended to land. Could they have failed to notice me?

I began to splash the water about as a discreet manner of explaining that I was on the premises, but without effect, for they continued on quite heedless of my presence. There were three people in her, as I could now distinguish—a man in the bow, another rowing, and a woman in the stern. They were getting so close that modesty recommended my submerging myself lower—which I did, till my eyes were on a level with the waterline. With the top of my head alone visible I watched them drawing nearer and nearer, and an unconquerable curiosity held me, as it gradually dawned upon me that they were not strangers. Yet I must be mistaken; no, I was not. There was no mistaking the elephantine proportions of the principal figure, and I recognized with a start Rebecca Seaton as the occupant of the stern, the youth with the soiled face and the ears like wings in the bow, and a heavily bearded man amidships rowing the precious pair. My astonishment at seeing them coming upon me as it were out of the mystery of the wide, wide waters, was so great that I rose to my feet, regardless of the exposé I was making.

Without sign of recognition they passed by me, and the boat grated on the beach. Thereupon the youth with the wing-like ears disembarked, pulling the boat as far up as his strength would permit, then the oarsman came next and drew her a little higher, and finally Rebecca Seaton, moving her elephantine person from the stern to the bow, was politely assisted to terra firma by her two conductors.

"Theophilus," I distinctly heard her say to the youth with the wide extending ears, "if you aint forgot the alcohol bottle, you can gimme your harm." Whereupon the youth with the big ears politely presented his elbow, and the ill-assorted pair proceeded in the direction of Mr. Dalzelle's. As soon as they were sufficiently distant I rushed out of the water to the oarsman (who had remained behind with the boat) and began to question him eagerly, asking whence he had brought them, how long they were to remain, and whither he was to convey them. To all my queries, however, he merely shook his head. Finding at last that I was not so easily to be gotten rid of, he squatted down and wrote with his finger in the sand where the tide had left it hard:

"Deef and dum. Strike on the railroad, had to row. Yours truly, Henry Dobbs."

Though I wrote copious questions in the same vehicle of communication, he refused any further particulars, and would only shrug his shoulders and shake his head.

I dressed myself hastily. The fact of their having steered to this part of the beach instead of to the point opposite to Mr. Dalzelle's, whither they seemed

bound, argued a thorough familiarity with the shore hereabout, for a sunken ledge of rocks extending a long distance into the Sound rendered a more direct approach extremely dangerous. Nor could there be a doubt but that Rebecca's destination was Mr. Dalzelle's, for even now, as I looked down the beach after her, she and her companion were passing into the summer-house through which the path lay to his residence. But Mr. Dalzelle was in the city. Ah, I have it ! They were going to visit Edna, and it was because of this that she had refused to allow me to come.

XXVII.

I DON'T know that my feelings ever experienced a greater shock than when I arrived at the above conclusion. The connection between Edna and this terrible woman was so grotesque, so unnatural! What could their relations be? Merely that of patient and physician? And yet I was in honor bound not to investigate the matter by following up the visitors. I could do nothing but wait and question Edna after they had gone.

To the many traits of Edna that had struck me as extraordinary I thought I had now gained a clue, even to the agitation she invariably evinced when I approached the subject of her procuring a divorce. Yet this made my position more than illogical, and even rendered my courtship questionable on the score of morality. Heretofore I had allowed matters to glide along without asserting my rights, for her society had grown so necessary to me that I had hesitated doing anything that might disturb my enjoyment of it.

Now albeit I must take a decided stand, if only to break the influence which this woman too obviously exercised over her.

I wandered back to my quarters and took up a position

on the piazza which commanded the beach, and from which I could see the departure of the unwelcome visitors.

And as I sat there, the perils from which I had escaped recurred to my mind. Could Rebecca Seaton have had anything to do with them? I had little doubt but that the Coney Island assassination had been intended for me; and the cold-blooded nature of the crime showed me what I had escaped from at my hotel in the city. In some mysterious manner my fate seemed connected with the disturbed condition of the country, too, and Edna, on whom I had pinned my faith, appeared drifting away from me. But what course had I best adopt?

A multiplicity of perplexities, instead of sharpening the wits, generally paralyzes them; and while I ought to have been planning some definite line of action, there I sat on the piazza listening to the murmur of the breeze, looking at the "lady tongues" as they trembled on their delicate stems, and anon at the poultry that were picking about for crumbs at my feet. Among them was a bantam that from his extraordinary manner of walking had always caused me extreme wonder. During some especially cold night I believe his poor toes had been frost-bitten, but at any rate he raised his feet like a stepper in the shafts of a smart cabriolet. In his prideful progress, as he walked before me now, I read a fanciful moral on ambition that o'erleaps itself, that scarcely deigns to touch the earth from which it springs, that is all fuss and feathers at best, and that crows lustily in the morning only to have its neck wrung before night.

Are not human hope and ambition analogous? What

difference did it all make, anyhow, what became of even Edna or myself? In fifty years, nay, in half, the sum total of human happiness is compressed.

I rose from my seat and looked seawards. There was no sign of the boat, consequently she must still be under cover of the shore. I walked down near the beach and looked through the trees; then I detected the heavily-bearded man asleep in the bottom of the boat.

Those two hours before the absentees returned from Mr. Dalzelle's seemed very long, but at last I saw them come walking back along the sands. They took the boat; I watched them departing over the waters, and when they had finally disappeared I went directly to see Edna. I would tell her what I thought of her conduct, and I would endeavor to persuade her to break off her connection with this woman at once. I found her on the piazza of her home, and I immediately broached the subject, perhaps a little rudely, and for once there was no shrinking from me.

The pupils of her great dark eyes dilated, and she looked at me with an expression I had never seen there before. Her exact reply was this :

"I will have you understand that I will receive what guests I choose, and I consider your action as an intolerable interference."

"If it is an interference," I said, "my excuse is the affection I bear you. It is terrible for me to think of the influence this woman seems to exercise over you."

"I will thank you to reserve your philippics till they

are called for. What right have you to speak? You are nothing to me, nothing at all, and I hate you!"

"You hate me?" I said, and I looked into her eyes.

"Yes, I hate you when you don't mind your own business—" her eyes were fairly flashing with anger—"it is so indelicate of you, so rude," she continued.

"Come, let's go for a drive," I said, "and talk the whole thing over."

"I have nothing to talk over; besides, I told you yesterday I would not see you at all to-day."

"Then will you go with me to-morrow?" I asked.

"You promised that all to-morrow should be mine."

"No, I will never give you the right to see me again."

Instead of replying I turned away from her and pressed my hands to my head. Her manner pained me excessively, and though I suppose my act showed the strength of my feelings better than any words could have done, she never relented.

"Very well," I observed at last, "I *will* leave you, and I will accept the interpretation you have put on my conduct. I have been guilty of an intolerable interference."

XXVIII.

THE bolt had fallen out of a clear sky, so abruptly, so unexpectedly that I did not think of resisting it; on the contrary, I had almost drawn it down on my own head.

I returned to the farm-house, and, writing Mr. Dalzelle briefly to the effect that his daughter would explain my departure, I thanked him for all his kindness and had myself driven over to the station. "A woman is very much like that cellar of mine," observed Mr. Crummels sadly, as he bade me good-by on the platform of the car: "she's deep and she's dark, and never mind where you begin with her, you're sure to wind up different from what you expected."

I could not gainsay the aphorism.

How I got through those first few days of my return to the city I hardly know. I felt quite broken up, utterly regardless of the future; and the worst of it was, when I came to think over it, the more I realized that I myself had been alone to blame for the rupture. Certainly I had shown a miserable lack of diplomacy and had acted with such precipitancy as to allow plenty of time for repentance. Here I was, however, and, being here, what should I do? Should I go back West, should I go to Europe, or should I stay where I was? God help me! My only object in coming East had been to get a little amusement out of

my wealth, and what a time I had had! Apart from the blow to my affections, the extraordinary snarl I had got myself into was of itself sufficient cause of perplexity. Was I married or was I single? I kept asking myself; was I the true guardian of Edna, or was I not? Would my separation be final, and would the attempts upon my life that had ceased during my residence in the country be now renewed in New York when I was parted from her? Then that horrible woman, Rebecca Seaton, would loom up before me, appearing at every turn of my dilemma in her redness, her hideous vulgarity, and recalling her malevolent influence over the object of my affections. What had been her motive in coming down to the country? Was it only to interrupt my happiness?

The third day I left my apartment for the first time since my arrival, with the sole purpose of quieting my nerves by physical exercise. I remembered the walk I took on leaving the court-house after the trial, really so short a time ago, and yet which now seemed removed by ages. As I walked on, however, and my blood began to circulate, my mind gradually regained its usual equipoise, and to prevent my thoughts from reverting to my own troubles I set to work to find an explanation of a circumstance that had often puzzled me before—namely, why a city that professes to be the most progressive in the world should be constructed, as it were, against the grain of travel. All the course of travel is north and south, and yet there are some twelve cross streets running east and west to one going up and down.

By dint of much reflection I hit upon the following so-

lution—namely, that when the upper portions of the city were laid out, the rivers, it was supposed, would be the principal means of transportation; hence the majority of the streets were cut to reach the water. One would think that diagonal streets would have been cut to facilitate your progress to points on either side, but the grim and useless tyranny of right angles faces you wherever you go. Now, because there are twelve streets athwart the line of travel to one in the proper direction, it happens that these cross streets are comparatively deserted. Except in the more important ones, people are few and far between; and as for policemen, well, they are as scarce, when you want them, as foxes in a Connecticut township with a bounty of five dollars apiece on their heads.

Besides, there is about these same cross streets a gloom of color and a monotony that an August sun, however glaring, can never light up and make cheerful. I was thinking on these several circumstances, the grim ugliness of the houses, the scarcity of people, and the intense heat, when my shoestring became unlaced and I stooped to retie it. In doing so I turned slightly around, and on raising my head I became aware of two men who had been walking behind me. Save from the general scarcity of people, there was nothing remarkable in the fact, but their turning in the opposite direction when I looked up induced me to turn also and to follow them. They had been too far off for me to distinguish their features before they faced about, but the additional fact of their now quickening their steps excited my suspicions and caused me to hasten mine. Nevertheless I failed

to gain upon them. It was extremely awkward. I was hardly warranted in accelerating my pace to a run, and yet without running I could not get near enough to see whether my suspicions were justified. We were on Thirty-ninth street, approaching Park avenue, and when they reached the corner and turned down that avenue I took advantage of their being out of sight and did run after them. Strange to say, they must have availed themselves of the like opportunity, for when I gained Park avenue they were at Thirty-eighth street, and the distance between us was but little decreased. Now, at the junction of Park avenue and Thirty-eighth street, as every New-Yorker is aware, a stairway leads down into the tunnel of the Fourth avenue horse-car line, which runs to Thirty-fourth street under ground. Down this staircase the two men rapidly disappeared, and when I descended and reached the tunnel myself, two cars going in opposite directions left me in doubt as to which they had taken. While I was hesitating both cars had gone some distance down the track, and when I hailed them they both redoubled their speed, as is the custom of horse cars when you wish to board them. I suppose the best course would have been to have selected one car and pursued it, on the chance of one or both of the strangers being on it ; but the close, stuffy odor of Ammonia Hollow increased my repugnance to the exertion, so I remounted to the street and continued my aimless walk.

Now, whether Rebecca Seaton's magnetic qualities drew me like a loadstone towards her, or whether out of pure

accident I passed her house, I leave to the psychologist to determine. Her residence lay, at all events, quite near, but I scarcely recognized that I had taken the street on which it was situated until I found myself opposite her door, and, what was worse, myself the object of the surreptitious gaze of Theophilus from the window. Under the circumstances I could scarcely pass the hospitable mansion; and though I was totally unprepared with any excuse for a visit, I mounted the steps and in due course of time was informed by the large-eared attendant that his mistress was not at home. A suspicious whispering that had preceded the opening of the portal, however, induced me to ask Theophilus to let me enter the sanctuary of the oracle, on the pretext of writing a few words to her on my card. What was to be the purport of this message was as much of an enigma as what I would have said to her had she been visible; but an uncontrollable temptation seized me to discover whether she was really absent from her office or had simply made a pretext not to receive me. Theophilus, nevertheless, conducted me into her parlors, and, as they were tenantless, left me in the awkward predicament of confessing that on second thoughts I would call again and deliver in person my message. To be sure, I made a pretense of writing something on my card, only to tear it up in pieces afterwards, and then, in order to derive some benefit from my coming, I endeavored to draw out Theophilus on the subject of his own recent visit and that of his mistress to Rocky Point. To all of my questions, however, he was as uncommunicative as an oyster,

and I left the house recognizing that I was badly worsted. Now, it was not till I had returned to my hotel, and had been home in fact some hour or so, that I discovered that my card case was missing. It had no particular intrinsic value, but having been given me by Edna I prized it highly. Thinking I might have left it on the table in Rebecca's office, where I remembered laying it down for a moment, I decided to go back on the chance of its recovery. What is more disagreeable than such a second visit? But I started out forthwith. The house was on Thirty-seventh street, and but a few doors from the corner of the avenue by which I approached it. Consequently it was concealed from my view until I had passed the corner of Thirty-seventh street. Arrived here, I stood for a moment in utter amazement. Two men were coming out, and, this time, being nearer and their full faces turned towards me, I recognized them not only as the couple who had followed me earlier in the day, but as the same two men who had crossed my path at an earlier period of my history. What should I do? Get a policeman and have them arrested? Easier said than done. Policemen, when you want them, are harder to catch, as I have intimated, than Connecticut foxes.

I looked up and down the long, dusty avenue; there was not a single bluecoat in sight. I was ignorant whether the pair had seen me or not, for they were slowly walking away in the opposite direction, down towards Third avenue. If I went in quest of a policeman they would certainly escape me. There was nothing to do but to follow them a second time. I felt for my pistol

and carefully examined it. With it I argued, there could scarcely be much danger, particularly as it was yet barely four o'clock. Hastening my steps, therefore, I soon made up the distance I had lost by my hesitation. I was rapidly lessening what remained, for, evidently yet unsuspecting, they continued to walk leisurely on. My heart beat so loudly that I half feared they would hear its palpitations, but I decided that they should not escape me again: on that I was resolved. Once more I looked at my pistol, slipped it back into the pocket of my sack-coat, and keeping my hand upon the handle, ran along on tiptoe till I was directly behind them. Then stepping up suddenly between them, "Now," I ejaculated, "who are you, and tell me what you want?"

They stopped, and I must say their self-control astonished me. Could they have been conscious all along of my presence, and had they drawn me into a trap? Not a muscle of the face of either changed. They surveyed me quite calmly, then looked stealthily around, and the next instant two knives flashed out. So quick was the action that I barely had time to spring back, and, drawing my revolver, pulled the trigger. Curse it! it missed fire. At sight of my weapon they started to run, and I after them, down towards Third avenue. Again and again I cocked it, took aim and pulled, but the mechanism failed to work. Several times they turned their heads and seemed half inclined to resume the attack, but either they were ignorant that I was trying to shoot or my determined appearance warned them not to take any chances. At Third avenue there were plenty of people, and as we

approached it I loudly called upon the crowd to stop them, but my only satisfaction was a general and a hurried stampede. One of the fugitives, too, was fast outstripping the other, and this one I lost sight of after he passed the corner. The other, being less fleet-footed, I was gaining on, and on him I fixed my hopes. Down Third avenue he went, and I could now see that he was racing to catch a train on the elevated road that would reach its station (Thirty-fourth street) in about three-quarters of a minute. I redoubled my efforts, shouting as I did so. But the people, instead of trying to assist me, opened like human portals before him as he went. Still I was rapidly gaining on him, and when we got to the steps leading up to the depot I could almost put my hand on his back. One more bound and my hand did actually rest on him, but he veritably seemed greased. Already the train had arrived and was beginning to disgorge its passengers; down they came flocking, while a great coarse woman with a basket on her arm fairly blocked up the narrow passageway. Through these people the fugitive slipped like an eel, and, ducking under the arm of the heavy woman, left a slice of his coat tail in my hands for my pains. I saw him reach out and pay for his ticket as he gained the landing, and, forgetting that the same formality would be required of me, I was delayed for a moment at the turnstile. Pushing by, however, I was in time to see my quarry spring on the rear platform of a car just as it started off. When I tried to follow him the guard shut the gate in my face. I fairly cried with vexation as I ran along after the train,

expostulating with the guard and trying to make him let me board it. Both he and the fugitive laughed in my face, then finally, as the train rolled away, the latter leaned far out, and, with a vindictive leer which I shall remember to my dying day, "We'll meet again," he hissed, "before very long, and don't you forget it."

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XXIX.

“CAN I be of any assistance to you, sir?” It was a great tall man that addressed me, with a bright, wide-awake look. He had evidently arrived at the station only a moment after me.

“Remember that person,” I answered, pointing at the retreating train, “and be ready to identify him if I call upon you.”

“I will certainly remember him, and will be at any time at your orders. I have had some little experience in these matters, as possibly you may recognize by this.” Thereupon he handed me his card, and I read with surprise the name of a young criminal lawyer who had lately jumped into sudden fame through his masterly defense of a noted defaulter. “I see you are excited,” he continued; “you had better take the next train down and tell me the particulars on the way. If necessary we can get off and lodge a complaint at headquarters.”

Another train came rumbling into the station as he spoke, and without more ado I followed my new-made friend in and took a seat beside him. There was something about him that invited confidence, apart from what his great reputation would inspire, so I explained the nature of the case as well as the opportunity would allow. On arriving at the station nearest to Mulberry street we

got out and proceeded to police headquarters. Accompanied by so distinguished a gentleman, I was at once admitted to the sanctuary of the chief, and lodged my complaint in due form, leaving a more accurate description of my assailants than I had heretofore been able to give.

Owing to the briefness of our acquaintance, I had not as yet given my name to my legal companion, and he now heard it for the first time. The effect on him was electrical.

"Do you mean to tell me that you are the very Mr. Aaron Simoni whose trial made such a sensation a little while ago?"

I expressed my regret that such was the fact.

"Well, sir," he exclaimed, "I know your case almost by heart. I read up all the evidence and have it at my finger tips. You were wretchedly advised. Though it is scarcely professional for me to say so, that Slocum is an ass. No lawyer with a spoonful of brains would have let you get into such a fix. From the very first," he continued, "I was convinced that it was merely a case of mistaken identity. These mistakes are really very frequent," he went on. "At this very moment there are as many as three figuring in the papers. There is the Cart-right case for instance; the Tascott case again; and some eighteen months ago I remember that a man was actually tried in Brooklyn under very similar conditions to yours. Have you ever thought that these attempts upon your life, of which you gave me a brief account coming down in the train, might owe their origin to

something which this double of yours might have done? It might explain his hasty disappearance, too, for he might have been in fear of his personal safety, and consequently have left suddenly; or again he might even have been made away with. Following out this suggestion, when you came on the scene they might have taken you for him and have tried to square up some old grudge. In other words, I mean that these attacks, possibly being directed at Fitzamble, would naturally seem inexplicable to you, because you are not familiar with the circumstances of his life.'

"I never thought of that," I said, seeing the reasonableness of the inference.

"Well, such an explanation is possible, at all events," he continued, "and if you care to call upon me in a week's time I may be better prepared to advise you what to do, should your assailants not be run down in the meanwhile."

I promised to call upon him, and, expressing my sincere thanks for his interest in my affairs, I returned to my hotel.

I was in such an irritable condition that only strong stimulants or excitement could steady me. Not being addicted to the first, I picked up the evening paper and looked over the list of amusements. I ran my eye down through the wearisome list of concerts, museums and theatres with their hackneyed plays, until I reached a notice at which I stopped abruptly.

It was as follows:

"This evening, after a sparkling prelude consisting of

songs by celebrated artists, the world-renowned clairvoyant, Rebecca Seaton, will give the first of a series of mesmeric performances at Bowery Hall, at half-past seven o'clock. Don't fail to attend."

No, I would certainly not fail to attend. Rebecca Seaton and her doings had become of special interest to me.

I was a little late in finishing my dinner and the drive was long. The curtain had fallen on the "sparkling prelude" when I entered the hall. I was hardly prepared to find the audience seated at little tables drinking beer and spirits, as at a variety show. I was just taking a chair at one of these tables, and was about to give an order to a somewhat forward young waitress, when the curtain went up, displaying the ordinary stage of a concert hall, and Rebecca Seaton enthroned thereon in a flaming red gown, sparkling with glass diamonds. After a brief address on the possibilities of mesmerism, she bade any one who felt inclined to mount the platform. This invitation some dozen or so young people, of different sexes, after a proper degree of hesitation, accepted, and, weeding out a few from these, she seated the remainder in a long line like negro minstrels. Then beginning to move up and down in front of them, she waved her hands before their faces until they were severally reduced to a proper degree of responsiveness.

The ordinary mesmeric exhibition is probably too familiar to my readers to warrant my dwelling on this portion of the entertainment. Suffice it to say Rebecca put her "class" through a variety of roles and characters as widely diversified as school children and Choctaw

Indians, Lady Macbeths and Daniel Websters. At one time they would be squealing pigs at another members of the United States Senate, while at a third moment they would be dancing like idiots till a word and a snap of her finger would reduce them to solemn decorum. My suspicion was that the majority were confederates, or at least readily lent themselves to the deception. Yet there were several who I had little doubt were entirely unconscious of their actions.

This closed the first half of the mesmeric performance, and, though I had derived little pleasure from the exhibition, something, I can hardly define what, induced me to await the finale, which I did on the outside of the building, smoking a cigarette. The curtain had gone up when I re-entered the hall, and the oracle was saying something about having reserved the choicest and most startling evidences of her power to the last, hinting at a mysterious personage of unexampled beauty and purity who would emerge at her bidding from behind a green baize screen in the rear of the stage. "Yes," continued Rebecca, "she's a marvel; there's nothing I can't make this yere young sensitive do. I could tell her she was Joan of Arc, and she'd let herself be burnt at the stake. Again, I could turn her into James Wilkes Booth, and she'd start off for Washington for to murder the President. She's a born millionaire, too, and does it for the genuine love of science. None of your cheap trash, but a tip-topper from Topsville. What character now will you have her take? Suppose, to begin with, I make her one of these yere waitresses that is serving you with drinks. For

a tip-topper as lives in a marble palace and has troops of servants to wait on her, this yere duty might seem the most remarkable; howsomever, she'll wait on you as well as any of them professionals, and throw in a kiss like the rest, mayhap, to titillate the boys."

I had been seated in the back of the house during the address, and a vague and undefined uneasiness stole over me. I saw Rebecca approaching the screen. I saw her draw it aside, and then addressing some one, whom her broad back concealed, I saw her make her infernal passes over the hidden figure. The next moment my worst fears were realized. Edna Dalzelle was in truth advancing towards the audience—Edna in all her purity and her beauty, but metamorphosed into the coquettish smartness of a waitress in a Bowery variety show.

I waited until she had descended from the platform. I waited until she had started to come down the aisle. Then, when she got opposite me, I rose, and, seizing her about the waist, I tried to drag her out of the hall. In a moment the room was in an uproar. "Officer!" shouted Rebecca Seaton to a policeman whom I had failed to notice, but who had been standing by to maintain order, "put that man out; he's drunk!"

"Put him out! put him out!" was caught up on every side, and a thousand hands, as it seemed, reached at my throat and tore me from the woman I loved. Before I could explain I found myself on the outside of the building in the glow of the garish lights and the cheap brilliancy of the thoroughfare, with the thoughtless crowds

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passing in troops before me, and very likely wondering what the matter was all about.

"Come! Move on there—move on," cried the policeman; and as he refused to let me re-enter, even though I tried to bribe him, I left her surrounded by the laughing audience and waiting upon their wishes.

Not a word had she addressed me; not a sign of recognition had she bestowed upon me, only the coquettish smirk of a brazen girl. It was awful, grotesque, outrageous! and yet I loved her at that moment more than I had ever done before—loved her for her real self, and longed to protect from insult that other self which was being destroyed; loved her for the risk of contamination that her unreasoning self was bringing upon her other self.

I sprang into a carriage and had myself driven to the lawyer's in whose hands I had placed myself this very afternoon. As I reached his house he was just mounting the stoop on his return from his club. My agitation really alarmed him, and it was some time before I could give him an intelligible account of the occurrence.

"What can I do?" I demanded. "Will the law give me the power to have this woman arrested?"

"If any crime could be proved, of course it would. But I am really at a loss to advise you. In one sense you might claim that the action of the courts had made you Edna's husband with authority over her to oblige her to return to you; but inasmuch as you have appealed from that verdict, I don't see how you could logically adopt even that course. If you bring Rebecca into the

courts, too, she will prove that this girl acts of her own free will; and as Edna is of age, even her father could hardly interfere."

"But she is not acting of her own free will. This woman paralyzes, destroys her will."

"And yet when you condemned Edna's acquaintance with Rebecca the other day, she let you leave her."

I could do nothing but wring my hands.

"Suppose we go to her father," he said. "An energetic protest from him might serve better than from you."

We drove immediately to his residence, only to learn, to my consternation, that he was not in town.

"Then to the hall again!" I cried. "I must learn if she is still there."

On our arrival at this last point my companion obliged me to wait in the carriage till he first descended and surveyed the premises. In a few minutes he returned and assured me that the performance was all over and the parties to it had gone.

Thereupon I formally retained Mr. Star in my service and went home.

That night, I think, was the most terrible one I had ever spent in my life. But it crystallized a resolution that I would stay in the city and devote myself to saving this woman from her fate.

XXX.

EARLY next morning found me at Mr. Dalzelle's place of business, where I waited at least an hour before he came in from the country. On his arrival I briefly related the particulars that had so shocked me on the previous evening.

"Well, it's very odd," he said. "Here's a letter that was handed me by the elevator boy as I was just coming up. Read it for yourself." And he handed me a delicately scented envelope:

"My dear father," it ran, "if Mr. Simoni comes to you this morning with any ridiculous story, place no credit in his statements. Not satisfied with treating me in a most inexcusable manner, he has carried his interference so far as to make a scene last night at some charades gotten up for charity. At all events, if I choose to act I have the right to do so, as I am over age; and if I find my health benefited by the course of treatment I am pursuing under the advice of Mrs. Seaton, you really have no cause to object.

"Your affectionate daughter,

"EDNA."

I was amazed.

"But she never wrote that letter herself!" I cried.

"It is in her own handwriting."

"Then she wrote it under the spell this hideous wo-

man has thrown over her. She feared I would come to you, and she made her write it to counteract anything I might say. Mr. Dalzelle," I continued, "I can prove that these charades, as she calls them, were conducted in a public hall, and, so far from their purpose being charity, it was the pecuniary benefit of Rebecca Seator. You ought to exercise your influence and bring your daughter home at once."

"It's very easy for you to say what I ought to do," he replied, with senile petulance, "but I've repeatedly told you I have no influence over my daughter at all. Even if I applied to the courts I don't know as it would do any good; as she says, she is over age, and I suppose they would hold that she has the right to consult any physician she wants."

"But this public performance?"

"My dear sir, I have noticed that you are of an imaginative disposition, given slightly to exaggeration."

"Well, look at this paper. Here the performance is advertised."

"I don't wish to look at any papers. My daughter has adopted a certain line of conduct without consulting me, and since your departure she has moreover persisted in taking up her residence at this woman's house on the plea of being nearer her, and thus better obtaining the benefit of her advice. I can do nothing with her, and as I understand that you have resigned any pretensions you might have had, I don't see how you can do anything either."

His weakness exasperated me. In my heart of hearts

I believe he feared Rebecca Seaton himself and dreaded to exercise the little power he had.

"Very well, sir," I replied; "your daughter is a slave to a bold and designing woman, and your refusal to interfere is both unnatural and unfatherly. I have said all I can, however, and before long you will repent of your lack of decision."

I had barely returned to my hotel when a few lines came from Mr. Star, giving what he deemed an explanation of Edna's extraordinary debut the night before. It was this: He had learned that Rebecca had gone to considerable expense in preparing for the exhibition, which had been delayed several days by the indisposition of her principal performer. It was in all likelihood only when it was apparent that these disbursements would be wasted and the performance given up that she thought of Edna as a substitute. Considering the place and the nature of the audience, she had evidently been willing to run the risk of Edna's escaping recognition, and had probably gone down to the country to secure the girl's services.

Whether Mr. Star was correct or not in his inferences I had no means of determining. There was one course remaining to me, however, and this I forthwith resolved to adopt. I would closely watch Edna, and guard her from harm as far as I could myself do so. The trend of my thoughts brought me back to the attempts on my own life, and again I began to wonder whether there could be any connection between these and Rebecca Seaton. The appearance at her house of the two men whom I had

chased would seem to give color to the suspicion. I knew it was because of her that Edna had thrown me over, but would she carry her opposition to me so far as to have me assassinated?

I secured quarters in a lodging house sufficiently near Rebecca's residence to command a view of it from the window, and in order to be away from my watch as little as possible, I had my meals served in my room. Fortunately for my peace of mind, I learned through Mr. Star that Edna did not appear the second evening at the hall, nor during any day of the following week. Indeed, as I never saw her leave the house, I had every reason to suppose she was still domiciled therein.

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XXXI.

DURING this period I got hold of all the books on mesmerism I could find. I devoured the contributions of Braid, of Charcot, of Obersteiner, of Beard, Hammond, and Carpenter, and marveled at the audacious suggestions of Campili, Gilert, La Tourette, and Deleuze. I learned how the Indian fakirs practiced it in India, and how by reducing the subject through it to a cataleptic condition could be explained their principal wonder trick of burying men under ground for several days and then bringing them back to life again—a phenomenon that had so often puzzled the English conquerors. These and many more wonders I read about, but after my experience with Edna I was forced to agree with that great physician Charcot, who presides over the Salpêtrière hospital for the insane in Paris, that the practice of so dangerous a power ought to be as carefully guarded and restricted as the use of poisons.

Of all that I read on the subject, however, the most suggestive treatise was a short article in the *North American Review*, by Mr. W. A. Croffut, a gentleman occupying a high position in the service of his country in Washington. It was entitled "The Open Door of Dreamland," and because the extraordinary array of facts which it presented so largely influenced my action, I give a few brief extracts:

"For thirty years I visited every traveling mesmerist that came along, and marveled at his experiments. After observing them under scientific conditions, and carefully eliminating Beard's 'nine sources of error,' I became quite certain of their genuineness, and a year or two ago began to practice upon such sensitive people as I could induce to submit to manipulations.

"I did as I had seen mesmerizers do: sequestered the person as completely as possible from conversation, laughter, and the company of others; asked him to sit at perfect ease, and to close his eyes and keep them closed for some minutes. I touched his forehead with gentle pressure, then told him firmly that he could not open his eyes, necessarily accompanying that assurance with a strong desire that he should keep them closed.

"The first success surprised me greatly, because it did not appear that the small cause was at all adequate to the tremendous result. There was before me a sturdy man apparently helpless, apparently subject in all things to my direction and caprice, apparently unconscious of his surroundings, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, knowing nothing, not even his powerlessness in the presence of a dominant mood and purpose. There was no collusion; for I had never seen the man or he me till five minutes before. I did not know his nativity or his name, or where he lived, or anything about him. I had not even been aware of 'bringing my will to bear on him' in any sense other than that in which we employ it to second and enforce any desire. Yet there he sat, apparently deprived of all ability to lift his hand without my permission; and I experimented with him till I proved that the appearance was a reality, and that he was absolutely subject to my suggestion.

"Let me say that this influence over him was cumulative and progressive. At first he was only passively responsive. I could keep him still but could not make him

move. I could close his eyes, fasten his clenched hands together, prohibit his rising, prevent his speaking, and control all his muscles, but for a time could not subject him to active hallucinations through his senses.

“It is sometimes a long step from the loss of power over the weak and fluttering eyelid and that ludicrous loss of perception in which a roll of paper becomes a dagger, a glove becomes alternately a bird and a snake, and a broom becomes a banjo.

“The various stages of mesmeric control seem to follow each other somewhat in this way: first, bewilderment and doubt; second, muscular obedience—and up to this point the responsive is wholly or partially conscious of his identity and surroundings; third, lethargy or tendency to sleep; fourth, surrender of the senses and loss of identity; fifth, catalepsy; sixth, complete hallucination or waking dream.”

Again he goes on to say:

“Many believe that mesmerism has its source in spiritualism, and that the entranced person actually sees the forms and hears the voices of departed human beings. I have never had the least evidence tending to justify any such conclusion. There seems to be nothing in hypnotic hallucinations showing whether man is an angel or a clod, whether he is an indestructible soul waiting for release from his cage to soar like a bird to the stars and live forever, or merely the transitory crown of earth's fauna, struggling with the hopeless problems of his destiny between ice-age and ice-age.

“Mesmerism is always the result of suggestion, and is never effected in any other way. If I face a responsive to the wall I can have no effect upon him unless I speak to him. If he is beyond my reach I cannot affect him at all without communicating with him. Dr. Gilert, in

France, has written a good deal and told many marvelous stories about '*sommeil à distance*,' but I have never been able to obtain any such results under the most favorable conditions. I have mesmerized a good many without touching them, by merely waving my hand or speaking to them, and I have several times put absent responsiveness into a sound sleep by writing or telegraphing to them that they would fall into a mesmeric sleep at a certain hour, and this has happened, sometimes to their inconvenience. But the sleep was the result of a conspiracy between expectation and acquiescence. If they had not known what I wished, I might have set in my library and wished till the next century without any response whatever.

"For the benefit of those who may desire to experiment, here are certain conclusions derived from my own observations :

"About one person in ten can be easily mesmerized. There are no known rules by which to pick out this mesmerizable person in advance, as eligibility extends almost impartially to both sexes and all ages, to blondes and brunettes, and people of all temperaments, to rich and poor, to learned and unlettered, and, it may be added, to obstinate and docile.

"The proportion of people who have the 'power' to mesmerize, if it be a power, is still more problematical. But it seems to me what might be called a biological axiom that no human being possesses any quality different in kind from that possessed, in various degrees, by all other human beings.

"Mesmerism is a trance, artificially produced, and it appears almost identical with somnambulism, or active sleep.

"This artificial sleep, if unaccompanied by exciting episodes, is as harmless as natural sleep. My responsiveness occasionally come to me in the daytime to be put to sleep for the purpose of obtaining needed rest."

Going on, he says :

“Hallucinations that take place under mesmerism are seldom remembered in a subsequent waking state, but they are generally recalled vividly in a subsequent mesmeric state.

“The exception to this is that exciting scenes into which responsiveness are thrown are often recalled after they are awakened. Imaginary shipwrecks and conflagrations are generally thus recalled; and a young lady who, while in a mesmeric trance, was taken where she could scrape up her handkerchief full of imaginary diamonds, sighed deeply on coming to herself, and exclaimed: ‘Ah! where are the splendid diamonds?’

“It is conceivable that mesmerism might injure an invalid. If he have heart disease, for instance, an exciting or violent episode, a rapture of joy or a convulsion of great grief or fear, might prove injurious or even fatal, just as it might in his normal condition.

“This possibility is abundantly offset by the value of mesmerism as a therapeutic agent. The responsive can be made so intoxicated on water, which he has been told is whisky, as to exhibit all symptoms of extreme inebriety; can be made disgustingly seasick by being told that he is at sea in a storm; and can be at once physically affected by any imaginary medicine. His temperature can be changed, his eye dilated, and his pulse quickened. Mesmerism is as perfect an anæsthetic as ether, and as harmless as water. Any mesmerized person can at once, by a single stroke of the hand, be rendered totally insensible to pain, and can have a tooth drawn, a cataract removed, a cancer cut out, or an arm cut off without feeling the slightest pain. This has been so often demonstrated that amputations frequently take place under its influence in the Paris hospitals, and it is successfully employed in obstetrics.”

Again:

"It is quite erroneous to suppose that the conduct of the responsive is directed in detail by the operator. He only suggests the general line of thought, and each responsive pursues it according to his own knowledge, experience, or prejudices. I say to my responsives, for instance, that I have a wonderful educated cow with seven heads. They all want to see it. I call their attention to the imaginary stable door near by; they look towards it, and, when I snap my fingers, they all see a seven-headed cow enter. Now, by questioning them it becomes obvious that they all see a different cow. Unless I have designated her color, one sees a white cow, another a red cow, and so on.

"Then I tell them that she can dance—can waltz and keep time with music. I hand one a cane, telling him it is a flute and that he is an eminent performer, and he goes through the motions of playing to the dancing cow. They all hear different tunes, but the exhibition is satisfactory."

Continuing, Mr. Croffut says:

"As a rule, responsives can be completely dominated and made to do anything of which they are physically capable. They could generally be induced to take poison, or jump off the house, or throw themselves under a locomotive, or attack one another with deadly weapons. But there are some exceptions. I was unable to overcome the fear of one of my responsives, whom I sent to assault an imaginary Indian in the Park. He refused to go, and said it was 'difficult to kill an Indian.'

"A young lady, one of the brightest sensitives I have ever seen, steadfastly refuses to play cards. I tell her she is Buffalo Bill and easily induce her to assume his char-

acter, but when cards are suggested, 'No, I never play cards. It is wrong!' she says, and I cannot move her. I could make her jump out through the window or put her hand in the fire, but play cards she will not. I was puzzled by it, till, inquiring, I ascertained that her religious parents had brought her up very strictly, and taught her it was 'wicked to play cards.'

"And this brings us to the question, much mooted of late, whether crime can be committed by the aid of mesmerism. If so, it is brought into relations, not only with medicine, but with jurisprudence—not only with the pharmacopœia but the penitentiary. It is obvious that, if cases of this kind occur, the one to whom punishment must be dealt out is the mesmerist.

"I have no doubt that crimes of a certain sort can be thus committed. It is obvious that sexual offenses could easily take place without the acquiescence or conscious concurrence of the responsive; and it is alleged that aggressions of this kind have attracted the attention of the authorities in France. Crimes against life and property by the agency of the responsives, being more complicated, would be more difficult and proportionately less frequent. Deep interest has been challenged by the allegation that a young girl in Paris, whose lover had become tired of her, was mesmerized by him and sent twenty-five miles away on the cars, and there, influenced by his previously communicated suggestion, induced to commit suicide with a pistol. If such a power exists it is indeed not only startling, but greatly alarming. The question is, Does it exist? Did it exist and operate in this instance, or did the suicide result from some other prompting—for instance, the knowledge of the girl that her lover wished that she was dead?

"One evening at a reception," continues Mr. Croftut, "a curious thing happened. I transported a young man and two ladies to Paris in imagination, and left them en-

joying and commenting on the pictures in the Louvre while I turned aside to superintend a personation of the President by another. When I returned to the tourists they had absolutely forgotten me, and I could not in any way make my presence known to them. They did not see my face or hear my voice, but continued their absorbed enjoyment of the great art galleries. I was compelled to unmesmerize them and start again from the beginning.

"This same young man proved an expert penman. I filled out a check on the Lincoln Bank of New York City with the sum of \$100,000, and then, producing a genuine signature of Cornelius Vanderbilt, I induced him to imitate it with great accuracy in a signature at the bottom of the check, my arrangement with him being that he should have one-half of it when collected. I suggested that I would collect it and then rejoin him; but he was too shrewd and suspicious for that, and insisted on accompanying me to the imaginary bank, informing me, with more than the unction of Sairey Gamp, that he would 'knock my head off' if I did not 'divvy square.' I do not see why a depredating mesmerist might not thus make use of an innocent accessory to complete a felony.

"At another reception I was more successful in the matter of burglary. I made private arrangements beforehand with a neighbor half a block off, who concealed a plethoric pocket-book in a bureau drawer up-stairs, then locked the bureau, the room, and the house, and brought me the three keys. When I had mesmerized my agent I told him he was the famous robber, Dick Turpin, and that I had a job for him. I called his attention to the fact that he was on the earth and must look out where he stepped. I told him where the house was, and described it minutely. I made a diagram of the interior, of the stairs, the room, and the bureau, gave him the keys, and introduced him to a 'pal' who would keep watch. He asked if there were any dogs. I reassured him on this

point, gave him an imaginary revolver, and started him off. I requested some gentlemen to follow him, to see that no harm befell him, among whom were General Greely, Senator Kenna, and W. E. Curtis, the well-known journalist.

"He went to the house, skirmished slyly about it, and finally unlocked the door, groped his way up the front stairs, unlocked the room and the bureau, and got the wallet. Then he began to exceed his instructions by plundering the house. His accomplice argued the matter with him, and finally induced him to desist from his purpose and start to return. But when once on the street, he resolved to run away and enjoy the whole of the booty himself. 'What's the use of going back to divide?' he petulantly asked. Only after another argument and some show of force was he got back to my house. He came in noiselessly, but with triumphant air, and demanded three-quarters of the spoil, which I gave him on the spot—at least, to his satisfaction. He left the bureau open, but locked the doors on leaving. On being restored to himself he knew nothing of his adventure.

"So it seems obvious to me that burglaries at a little distance can be committed under the most favorable circumstances by the employment of an innocent agent, who is quite unconscious of any violation of law or equity. There are strict limitations to this power of vicarious crime, but the possibility that it may occur should be enough to excite the solicitude of neurologists on the one hand, and the attention of jurists on the other.

"'How do you know these persons are not deceiving you?' is a question often asked. They might deceive me for a few minutes or an hour, but not for months. In the first place, they are not persons who would indulge in such folly. In their normal condition they are quite incapable of the long and elaborate speeches and earnest dramatic performances which they give. They are thrown into

cataleptic rigidity, whose genuineness is attested by physicians. While insensitive they are subjected to great pain which they could not bear in their normal state. They can be made to laugh immoderately or weep at will.

"I have seen a young man, while making a speech, deliberately and deeply seared down the hand with a white-hot iron, quite unexpectedly to himself, and he showed no sign of being conscious of it. I have seen a mesmerized man, driven to despair by the suggestions of the operator (Dr. George M. Beard), seize a revolver, which he could not have known was unloaded, utter a frantic prayer, aim the weapon at his heart, and fire, dropping to the floor an inert mass. He recovered after a while, but it was a perilous experiment. In a hundred ways I know I am not deceived, and that these phenomena are genuine and all significant.

"That they have been so long treated with supercilious derision by the learned, surrendered to traveling showmen and exploiting laymen, neglected even when not rejected, and left to make their way, like the truths of all revelations, by 'the mouths of babes and sucklings,' is the irony of science and the reproach even of that variegated empiricism which calls itself the 'medical profession.'"

XXXII.

IN short, the question suggested but hardly answered in this article was, could a mesmerized subject be unconsciously, led into sin? It was a line of thought that, because of my ignorance of mesmerism, had only vaguely floated through my mind. But with such a suggestion, scientifically propounded and presented as it was here, imagine my position: for I still loved this woman—ay, my love was intensified by the greater risks that environed her; fully conscious was I too that her father was in his dotage, and that Rebecca's influence was of so subtle a character as to make it more than questionable whether, any evil though detected, could be construed otherwise than as committed of the girl's own free will.

I watched the house, and every one entering and leaving it, with new terrors. Daintily dressed men occasionally went up the stoop, and to my fevered fancy were surreptitiously admitted; women, too, in finery that might have been purchased through sin. Could there be aught going on behind those dark brown walls more infamous than mere trickery?

A wild idea suggested itself to me of trying to counteract Rebecca's influence for evil by some other influence for good—by engaging, if possible, some one who had the

gift of mesmerism to counter-mesmerize Edna. But how could Edna be reached in order to be practiced on? and who would have a power equal to Rebecca's? Then I reverted to the old puzzle as to what could be Rebecca's purpose. Was it to obtain money alone? Of course she had brought Edna from the country for the performance, and of course she had visited the country the day I had seen her there, to procure her consent to come. Edna's thorough subordination probably rendered her the most valuable substitute Rebecca could turn to in her dilemma. Besides this, I felt instinctively that the woman disliked me, and possibly it entered into her calculations to separate us, and even to degrade Edna out of spite for me. If so, to what lengths might she not go?

Amongst the many names which the books I read gave as authorities on the subject of mesmerism, that of a Doctor Henry appeared the most frequently. He was represented to be a physician of acknowledged position in the scientific world, and was alluded to as being at the present moment engaged in conducting a series of experiments, with a view to the adoption of hypnotism as a branch of study in the medical college of which he was one of the professors. He was, besides, a resident of New York, and it suddenly occurred to me to pay him a visit. As the directory gave me, in addition to his address, the hours at which he received his patients, the next morning found me in his waiting room, and, in due course of time, in the presence of a stumpy little man with large spectacles and closely cropped gray hair. On mentioning the nature of my business, however, I noticed that his frank and easy

manner changed to one of sudden caution. In fact it was not till I had told him that my interest was purely scientific that he became communicative. Referring to the experiments he was making, he thereupon confirmed the statement that had appeared about him, by saying that he hoped to establish the study of hypnotism as part of the regular curriculum in the principal medical colleges of the city. As he proceeded, I could see that he was an enthusiast, and yet at the same time that he fully appreciated the many difficulties to be surmounted before the hoped-for result could be attained.

"The fact is," he admitted, "there is a great deal of prejudice amongst the faculty, and it is hard work to get them even to investigate the subject. There is a flavor of empiricism about it and they don't like to have their names appear in connection with it. Hence I have to manage things very quietly. There is, besides, another great difficulty I labor under—that of procuring honest subjects. You never can be quite certain that they are not shamming. I have frequently gone to considerable expense to obtain these, and have lately been obliged to have an agent visit the places where public exhibitions of mesmerism are given, to procure them for me."

"Do you think persons under the influence of mesmerism could be made to commit some act quite foreign to their natures," I asked—"a crime, for instance?"

"That is a problem which is attracting much attention in Europe at this very moment. I have long had it under consideration, and I now congratulate myself that I am in a position to investigate it. You see I have recently se-

cured a subject that I know is genuine, and I promise myself some very interesting experiments on this very line."

"I see by Mr. Croffut's article in the *North American Review*," I continued, "that deep interest has been lately excited in France about a young girl whose lover had tired of her. It states that she was mesmerized by him, sent twenty-five miles off in a train, and then, influenced by his previously communicated suggestion, induced to commit suicide. Do you believe such a thing is possible?"

"I certainly do not believe it would be possible with the ordinary 'responsive,' but such a thing might occur with a phenomenally sensitive person. The fact is, so little is really known about mesmerism, people's temperaments differ so radically too, that each person becomes a law to himself. I believe this, however, that the habit of being mesmerized grows on one, until it becomes as strongly developed a craving as that for opiates or alcohol, and the more it is indulged in the weaker becomes the patient's power to resist."

"Well, granted that a person we will call A," I said, "was held by designing persons represented by B, and for criminal purposes, could B's influence be counteracted by power for good represented by C, we will say?"

"Your question is a very suggestive one, but is really a development of your first. "Before I could give any answer, I must convince myself that A can be made to commit crimes contrary to his inclination. This once demonstrated, it will be most instructive to investigate

whether C, representing the good influence, could counteract the vicious, represented by B. I will certainly investigate this subject."

"Why not let me assist in your experiments?" I asked eagerly. "To tell the truth, sir, there is a young lady—"

I got no further. The reserve with which he had received me on my coming returned, and became so pronounced a suspicion that my mouth was closed effectually.

"I thought your interest was purely scientific," he observed, "You have raised a question that I frankly tell you I don't mind looking into, but it is purely for the furtherance of science. If you wish to see me again, however, you may do so freely, and if I can develop anything on the lines of your suggestion I will report to you. I will only do this, however, on the condition that it is in a strictly impersonal way, and that you don't mention the name of any woman. Mesmerism in connection with ladies is a very delicate matter."

XXXIII.

THE next day my new counsel, Mr. Star, called to see me. "After reading up the evidence in your trial very carefully again," he said, "I found only one fact that could serve as a clue to work upon."

"But what is the use of going back over this old ground?" I asked wearily. "I have become callous to what happens to me. My only thought now is to protect Edna."

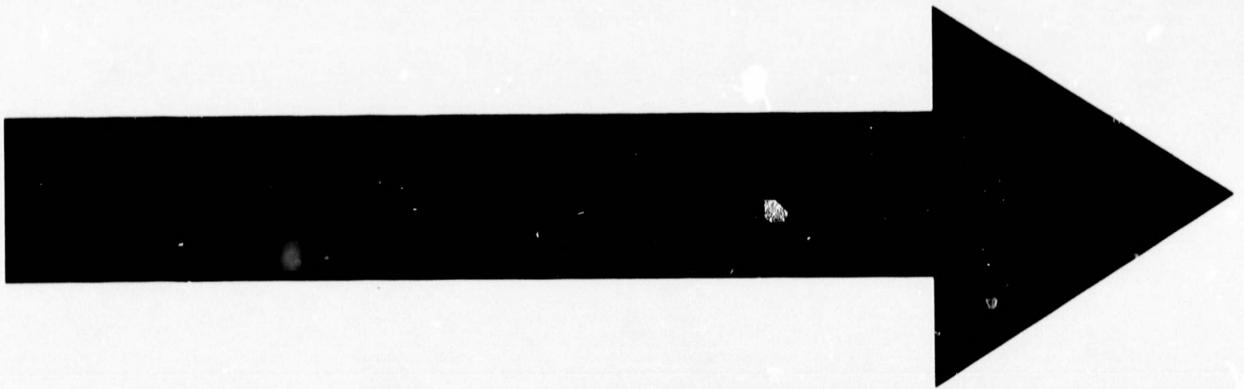
"But without protecting yourself, how can you protect her? Besides, who can say that we may not hit in our investigations upon something that may criminate Rebecca herself?"

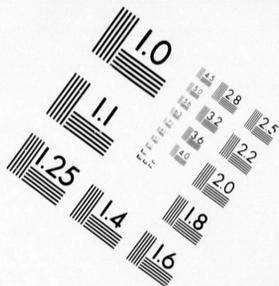
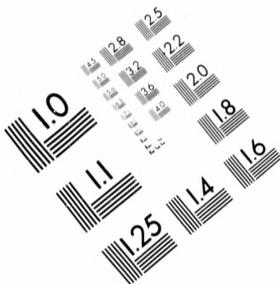
"Go on," I answered; "that is a contingency that warrants any sacrifice."

"Well," he resumed, "the clerk at Newport who swore to your identity said in his evidence, you may remember, that his attention had been particularly directed to you from the circumstance of having once or twice seen you in company with a detective whom he had previously known in Chicago. So important did I consider this statement that I have just paid a flying visit to Newport where I had a long talk with this clerk. From what he said I believe that your double actually did visit Newport for some purpose connected with this burglary.

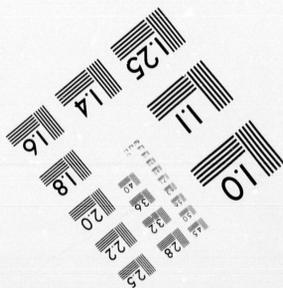
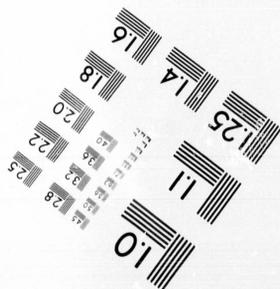
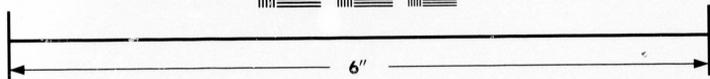
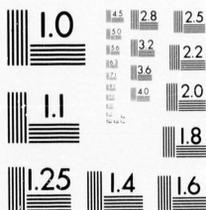
“Now, under the head of a ‘Singular Desertion’ I find in this paper, continued Mr. Star, removing from his pocket an old copy of the *New York World*, a somewhat fuller account of the circumstances attending Fitzamble’s sudden disappearance than was given at the trial. At about nine o’clock in the evening, in fact immediately after the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzamble from Newport by the afternoon train, the paper states that a carriage drove up to the hotel where they had alighted, and the occupant sent a message to the bridegroom begging him to come outside. He gave the somewhat singular excuse that he, the visitor, was lame and could not very well leave the vehicle. Fitzamble himself is represented as being surprised at this, but nevertheless went out and was seen to enter the carriage. A suspicious circumstance is that one of the waiters thought he detected a man loitering on the opposite side of the carriage, who, after the entrance of Fitzamble, sprang in by the other door. Immediately afterwards the carriage drove rapidly away through the darkness as if by a preconcerted arrangement.

“Now, starting with the presumption that the lady was as beautiful then as you represent her to be at present, and that he had married her only a few hours before, as he did, is it as likely that he left of his own free will as that he was forced away? Did not the statement that the visitor was lame look as if he hesitated showing himself, and might not the man who sprang in from the other side have done so for evil intent? It is a very simple matter to kidnap a man in some such way as this when he is off his guard.”





**IMAGE EVALUATION
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"But the motive?" I objected.

"That's just what I'm coming to," continued Mr. Star, "carrying out the idea of the Newport clerk that Fitzamble was a detective engaged in unraveling the burglary, might not the guilty parties have become alarmed and have kidnapped him to prevent his testifying? Might it not be that on your appearance they mistook you for Fitzamble turning up again, and in spite of the long interval that had elapsed still feared you as possessed of some proof that you might yet bring up against them?"

"But would they go to such lengths," I asked, "to prevent this testimony coming out? I should think they would be running more risk than it was worth."

"I confess they ought to have had some better excuse," said Mr. Star, "but I am convinced we are on the right track.

"To return to the hotel clerk, however, he told me the name of the detective in whose company he remembered seeing you, and I telegraphed from Newport to the Chicago agency. I have just received a reply stating that there is such a man still in their employ, and they offer to send him on if his presence is necessary and if I will pay all expenses. I thought it better to ask your consent."

"Telegraph at once," I said, "and let him come on at the earliest moment."

XXXIV.

In the midst of my numerous perplexities I have quite forgotten to state that the reason I had for believing that Edna must be still domiciled at Rebecca Seaton's was because she was neither at her father's city or country residence. This information Mr. Star had procured for me just before his departure for Newport, and he had learned it from the porter of the apartment house where her father lived when in town. I had persuaded Mr. Star to enquire because of the long time that I had watched Rebecca's house without result.

On the second evening after the events recorded in the last chapter I was occupying my habitual seat in the bow window of my sitting room, with my eye fixed on Rebecca's stoop, when I noticed a carriage drive up and deposit three men at her door. It was too dark to distinguish their features or even their general appearance; and besides this they were admitted without delay, as if their coming had been expected. Heretofore the calls of visitors had been generally confined to the daytime, and while I was wondering as to whether their coming might have aught to do with Edna a second carriage drove up, out of which four men got. These likewise were admitted with the same dispatch. As a rule, of an evening, too, the windows of the lower floor showed that the gas

was partially lighted, but now they were as dark as the night itself. At last as I watched, however, the gas was turned on, and, the parlors becoming suddenly illuminated, I could see the dark shadows of people from the inside crossing the drawn blinds, as if engaged in dancing. What infernal orgy was taking place? Was Edna the central figure of it—not Edna in her right-mindedness and purity, but in that other phase of her character that so distressed me? And I thought how extraordinary it was that while I had a double, she had a double character to match. Was it possible each of these characters of hers—I mean her dream character and her real character—could have each one an affinity and which she had claimed as her own—me for the good and Fitzamble for the bad?

These very lights and shadows—were they not typical of her double-sidedness? The idea was confused and I walked up and down my room with an anxiety impossible to describe, stopping every now and then at the window and looking across. Once I could have sworn I saw Edna's graceful figure cut in black silhouette on the blind, to be quickly replaced by the elephantine proportions of another woman whose figure I knew equally well and yet so loathed. At last the heavy rep curtains were dropped across the blinds, and, save for a narrow streak of light between them, the windows were as black as before the gas was turned on. What did this new move portend? Something of which the bare shadows should not reveal the tale? You may think me over-wrought and supersensitive, but did I not have cause for uneasiness? Put yourself in my place, and put the woman you love as I still did—Edna—

within the ugly walls of that house. Remember the evil influences that I knew controlled her, and besides the reason I had for thinking that criminality lurked therein, from the fact of having observed my two assailants leaving the mansion. Think, too, of my conversations with Dr. Henry, wherein he had partially confirmed the possibility of my worst suspicions. Add to this what I had with my own eyes seen Edna do, remember her senile father and my own helplessness, and then ask yourself whether you would not have had the same anxiety that I had. And as I walked about my room and anon looked out, drawn by the horrid fascination across the way, rage, jealousy, hatred, all the mixed emotions one is capable of experiencing, swept in quick succession through my breast. At last the suspense became actually unendurable. I picked up my hat, intending to cross the street and take a nearer stand. I had barely reached the sidewalk, however, when I abruptly drew back on perceiving that some one was coming out of the house I had been watching—some one who seemed to glide down the stoop like a ghost and who was coming in my direction. As it was very dark, my instinct rather than my eyesight told me that it was Edna. My first impulse was to run over and detain her; my second and better one to see on what mission she was bent. Noiselessly I followed her, and as she passed under the lamp post that stood on the corner and turned down Park avenue, I could see that she was in the same wakeful trance I had before seen her in. It added to the fascination her presence had for me, became an uncanny fascination—the kind one might have for a sleep walker.

It separated her from me by a chasm almost as impassable as death, rendering me callous to outside circumstances and to the fact that a carriage had started up behind us and was slowly following us as we went.

Our course lay westwards, and on reaching Madison avenue she turned down that street. Once or twice I approached her side and looked up into her face. Though she failed to recognize me, I thought my presence disturbed her, so I dropped behind. Down Madison avenue we went, that gloomiest of all streets, rendered additionally gloomy now because so many of its residents were out of town and their houses closed. Once or twice I thought I heard carriage wheels, as if we were yet being followed, but so absorbed was I in watching every move of Edna's that I scarcely turned my head. Arrived at Madison Square, I became disagreeably aware of the greater number of persons about, and the benches in the park were crowded as usual. People looked at her inquisitively, and men, seeing her beauty, often turned and followed. My impatience could be restrained no longer, and barely had we passed the great fountain in the middle of the square, now filled with flowers, when I approached her and addressed her for the first time.

She turned. "Why do you call me Edna?" she asked. "My name is Aspasia. Will you come with me to the dance to-night? Come! The wine flows merrily, and of what use is it but to drown our cares?"

"Edna! Edna!" I cried, "are you mad?"

"I know no Edna! My name is Aspasia, I say. Give me your hand, and we will drink of life's pleasure to-

gether. See, the light glistens on the houses." And she pointed to the buildings and hotels across the street on Broadway, that shone white through the trees. "Did Athens ever look so bright?"

"Edna! Edna! for Christ's sake let me take you home?" I cried.

We had reached by this time the southeast side of the park, bordered by Twenty-third street, and I got my arm about her waist, making for a carriage that had just drawn up to the curbstone. I took for granted that it was returning to its stand and was consequently disengaged. Into this I hastily decided to place her. Then as I drew her towards it she screamed, and a woman with flaming cheeks and a red shawl—a woman of elephantine proportions and of accursed memory—unexpectedly descended from the carriage together with three men.

"Unhand that woman!" I heard some one cry, and then I was struck at with a cane. In trying to seize it my own arms were suddenly seized by one of the men, who had got behind me, and with a jerk and a wrench of the back I found myself flung over on to the grass plot bordering the side of the street. As I lay there I saw Rebecca lead Edna to the carriage, and the three men, re-entering it, drove rapidly away towards Fourth avenue.

I was a little slow in picking myself up. My back felt stiff and pained me considerably; consequently when I got to the curbstone and looked down the street, the carriage was a considerable distance off. Before I could secure a cab it had disappeared in the darkness. My first impulse, as usual, was to drive to the nearest

police station and get out a warrant against Rebecca. Nevertheless, I resolved to act cautiously. My affection for Edna was too sincere to sacrifice aught by a hasty action, and I would not permit myself to be influenced by any feeling of resentment at my own treatment. Besides, it would be impossible to serve any warrant upon Rebecca till her return to her own home, for the very efficient reason that I was unaware whither she had driven. Consequently I decided to go and consult Mr. Star, who, I remembered now, had told me that he could generally be found at his club at this hour. On arriving at the Manhattan I was informed by the porter that he was sitting on the back veranda, and as I waited in the hall for my card to be taken to him I endeavored to conceal my agitation from the assembled guests. Amongst these I perceived my old lawyer, Mr. Slocum, and the hurried manner in which he left the building at sight of me caused me to laugh in spite of myself. Nevertheless, he had good cause—my coat was torn, my manner was extremely excited, and I have no doubt he heartily congratulated himself that my distressing complications had been transferred to another's shoulders.

On telling Mr. Star of my adventure he expressed himself as more than pleased that I had not applied to the police court.

"Rebecca would probably appear to-morrow," he said, "and explain that Edna had freely put herself under her charge because of a flighty disposition and as subject to occasional fits of aberration; that in one of these fits her ward had escaped from the house and that she had pursued her; that in the darkness she did not recognize you, but

seeing what she supposed was a strange man attempt to take Edna by the waist, that she had called upon a bystander to protect her from insult. Some such explanation as this she would give, and it would be extremely difficult for you to disprove it. Of course, as I have said before, if you were really married you would be in a different position, but, having appealed from the decision of the courts that would have made you out to be Edna's husband, your interference would be held as absolutely ridiculous. By your own sworn statements you are nothing to her."

"But is there nothing that I can do, then?" I asked.

"Yes; you can wait. I expect the detective on from Chicago to-morrow, and I hope yet to connect this woman in some way with the criminal assaults you have been subjected to. I have another resource, however, which I have been thinking over in case all others fail. It is still merely in embryo, and I would prefer not to tell you yet what it is. In the meanwhile, I would make one last appeal to her father. If you can induce him to take any action against this woman, well and good; my only desire is to prevent your getting more deeply involved in the entanglements of the law than you are at present, which might render it difficult for you to act when the proper time comes."

As I had the utmost confidence in my new adviser, I resolved to follow his counsel implicitly; so promising to call first on Mr. Dalzelle and later on Mr. Star himself (at the hour he told me the detective from Chicago might be expected to arrive at his office), I left him and returned home.

XXXV.

Now, on stopping next day at Mr. Dalzelle's I was informed that that gentleman was out and in all likelihood would not be at his office during the entire day; consequently I found myself at Mr. Star's office a little ahead of the hour fixed, and as he was engaged I tried to while away the time in the magnificent view to be had from his lofty window. Twenty-five squares miles, I should think, of river were before me, glistening in the morning sun, and the tops of houses, lessening in height according to their distance, seemed like veritable steps descending to the water. From every house-top steam from pipes and chimneys shet up in the air; and the great unceasing hum of the vast city was borne upwards to my ear.

I was disturbed by a loud knock at the door, followed by the entrance of a tall man in a long duster. At first he failed to see me, but when his eye caught mine his astonishment knew no bounds. He stopped, hesitated, then rushing forward with extended hand, cried: "Well, I didn't expect to find you here; but though you've treated me pretty shabbily, upon my word I'm glad to see you again."

I tried to explain that Fitzamble and myself were not one and the same person.

"Oh! that don't wash," he continued. "You're a trifle

stouter and your beard is cut in a slightly different way from how you used to wear it, but if you ain't Henry Jones, alias George Henry Fitzamble, I'm not Stephen Lyman, that's all."

His words and manner both assured me of the strength of the resemblance.

"Allowing for argument's sake," said Mr. Star, who had followed him into the room, "that this gentleman *is* your old acquaintance, tell me all you know about him, and everything you can remember down to the minutest detail, just as if he weren't present."

"Well, as he'll tell you himself," observed the stranger, after a slight pause, "we first became acquainted in Chicago while we were serving together as Pinkerton detectives. On my coming East the acquaintanceship was interrupted for a short spell and was then resumed in a somewhat unexpected fashion. You see I had left Chicago to follow up a case that took me to Connecticut, and I had just finished my business there when I heard of an extensive burglary at Newport. The reward was very large, so, having nothing to detain me, I started for New York to confer with the police. At the depot, however, just as I arrived, I happened to meet my old acquaintance here, and it suggested itself to me that if I could only secure his cooperation it would save delay in the city and be better than any assistance I could secure at the department. When I proposed, however, that he should immediately accompany me off again on a new trip, he strongly objected. I forget his exact excuse, but I think he told me he had

got leave from the agency in Chicago and had come to New York to look up one of his relatives.

"After representing to him, however, the size of the reward and my extreme anxiety for his assistance, he finally consented to postpone his search, and we started off for Newport by the first train. On arriving there he went to the Ocean House and I to the Acquidneck, passing ourselves off as gentlemen of leisure to better prosecute our investigations. Now, while these resulted in absolutely nothing so far as the burglary was concerned, the visit to Newport proved a turning point in my friend's career. Imagine my surprise when he came to me one day and informed me that he was sick of the whole detective business, and that he was going to marry a lady whose acquaintance he had made in the hotel, and begin life anew. A few days after he did marry her and I never saw him since. The lady, I believe, was wealthy, and I supposed she resented his keeping up with his old chums."

"Do you think he was really in love with this lady?" asked the lawyer.

"I never saw any one so moon-struck in my life."

"Was he likely to have basely deserted her immediately after his marriage?"

"The last man in the world to do anything base. Indeed, we used to call him 'gentlemanly George,' not so much because his ways were different from ours, as because he always had such a nice sense of honor."

"Could any one have had a motive for abducting him within eight hours of his marriage?"

"Not that I know of."

"Was there any business he was engaged in at Chicago that would have rendered it expedient for any one or any set of people to make away with him?"

"Well, I can't answer that. You see, I had been separated from him for the last few months that he was in Chicago, and was not likely to have heard."

"Could the perpetrators of the burglary you came to investigate have feared your discoveries?"

"There was nothing for them to fear, for, as I said, we discovered nothing."

"Was not the period between the time you left him in Chicago and that of meeting him in the Grand Central Depot, one of considerable disturbance in Chicago?"

"There always is disturbance in Chicago."

"But especially so then?"

"Well, the labor troubles were just beginning, and the Anarchist troubles also, but the worst of them didn't come till the time of the explosions in the Haymarket, long after he was gone."

"Very well," said Mr. Star, "inasmuch as you are not aware in what branch of work your friend was engaged during that interval, I desire you to return to Chicago to-night and to learn exactly. Then come back here and report to me. You shall be well paid for your time, and I feel convinced the department will not only permit of your second absence, but will facilitate your inquiries to the utmost of its power."

The detective received these instructions with a nod of the head.

"Do you know, sir," he resumed after a pause, "there

is one circumstance that makes me think my friend was abducted after all, and that this gentleman here, in spite of his resemblance to him, is not the man I at first supposed. I had forgotten the circumstance till you came to speak of money."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Star.

"Why, three days before the wedding I lent him twenty-five dollars, which he promised to repay in a week's time. He was the most particular man in such matters I ever met, and the fact that he failed to send it to me convinces me that something must have happened to prevent his doing so after all. I will start to-night, and report as soon as I have learned anything."

I must confess the interview confirmed me in the opinion of my new lawyer's ability. We must go back into the past to pick up the threads, he had said, and lo! Fitz-able, from a myth, was becoming an actual personality.

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XXXVI.

ALAS! if I could only have controlled my impatience, and have followed out the spirit as well as the text of my lawyer's advice!

I made it my invariable habit to absent myself from my rooms for as short a time as possible, so immediately on leaving Mr. Star's I returned home and took a seat in my bay window. Then, as I sat there that long afternoon, my thoughts for other occupation traveled backwards, and I became lost in the quiet contemplation of my own pleasing situation from its first inception, commencing with the extraordinary act of Edna in claiming me as her husband, and the equally extraordinary rulings of the court that had sustained her in her suit; then my appeal from this decision, and, running counter to this appeal, the gradual change in my sentiments for her.

Through this situation, sufficiently complicated, one would think, already, the attempts on my life, including the Coney Island assassination, ran like garish threads on a variegated background, and, interlacing these again, the mysterious subordination of Edna to Rebecca Seaton. So complicated was it all that I wrote it down on a piece

of paper, much as it is at present before the reader, and wondered whether any one circumstance could ever account for the many seemingly disconnected, not to say antagonistic, coincidences that made up the confused web. So occupied was I with my own reflections that I failed to notice the ringing of the front door bell, and was at last only brought back to present reality by hearing some one knocking at my portals. Rising at last to acknowledge the summons, I opened the door, and started back in very natural astonishment as I detected Theophilus with his large ears darkening the passageway.

Imagining myself to be so secretly installed in my retreat, the visit was as unexpected as it was unwelcome.

"The missus sends her respects," said Theophilus, twirling his hat, "and begs to say she'd be pleased for you to call over to her home."

"How did she discover my address?" I inquired in my surprise. The very ears of Theophilus seemed to smile.

"The missus she owns this yere house now, and her tenant, which is the landlady, told her you had took these rooms the day before you moved in."

"I'll go over with you at once," I replied briefly, and without more ado Theophilus pulled the dilapidated opera hat, which constituted his headgear, down to his large ears, and valiantly led the way across the street.

A wild hope that I might see Edna induced my ready acquiescence in Rebecca's request, but it was dashed to the ground by finding the oracle in solitary glory, ensconced in her usual seat behind the table.

"Theophilus," she observed, after receiving me with a

majestic grandeur worthy of Isabel of Spain—"Theophilus, you can take the alcohol bottle around to the druggist, and mind you, if it comes back diluted, as it did the last time, with any furren compound, there'll be a shortage of wages for the next three months."

However unintelligible the above might be to a casual visitor like myself, it seemed quite comprehensible to Theophilus, who, taking the bottle, closed the door behind him as he went out.

On his withdrawal she turned upon me with quite a different manner.

"Now look a-here, young man," she said, "I've sent around to you with a special object; until I had this object I didn't send. That's my way; until I'm ready to speak, I holds my mouth shut, but when I'm ready I lets it open, and I'm going to let it open now. What do you mean a-spying and a-peeking up at this yere house all day, as if you was a boy at a tuppenny show a-waitin' for the curtain to go up?"

If ever I felt inclined to answer a woman's question with a blow, I felt inclined then. In spite of her brutality and coarseness, I knew her to be a wily, clever woman, and I must be wary in turn. I also thought I detected in her manner a desire to enrage me and thus to draw me out as to my ultimate intentions in regard to Edna; consequently I resolved not to "give myself away," but, on the contrary, to try to draw her out.

"Was it to ask this that you sent for me?" I said.

"That was one of my objects."

"Then, in reply, allow me to state that possibly you will discover a cause for my conduct before long."

"It won't be long before I do," she answered, "whether I learns it from you or other parties; but I tell you this, that it's got to stop."

"What's got to stop?"

"This yere spyin' and nosin' into other people's business. So long as Edna Dalzelle freely comes to me for medical advice—"

"Medical advice!" I insinuated.

"Yes, so long as she comes here for medical advice, it ain't you nor a dozen like you as can get her away." And she snapped her fingers at me.

"We will see about that," I answered.

She rose from her seat.

"Aaron Simoni, I give you fair warning not to cross my path: I'm a dangerous person to cross."

"That remains to be proved," I continued in the same laconic style I had adopted, for I saw by her rising passion that it was beginning to tell.

"Oh! that remains to be proved, do it? Now look here. Once more, and for the last time, I ask you, will you give up your quarters in this street and go back to your hotel, or the devil itself, where you came from?"

"I will use my own discretion about that."

"Then if you don't, by God, I'll degrade her to the dirt beneath my feet! I'll make her worse nor the women as walks the pavements for a livin'. I'll—"

"No, you won't," I exclaimed.

"I won't? Why won't I?"—thrusting her face near my own as she squared herself before me.

"Because if the law won't give me the right to protect her, by the living God! I'll take it into my own hands."

Carried away by my emotions, I seized her by the throat. At that moment I could have murdered her, and it was not till she was almost black in the face that I relaxed my hold and she fell back heavily across the table.

"Now do your worst," I said. "I'm expecting evidence against you that will convict you, and have only been induced to delay action till it arrives; but in the meanwhile if you do anything more to Edna, mark my words, you'll pay for it."

She lay back against the table moaning and cursing, and thus I left her, sustained by the conviction that if ever a man had the right to raise his hand against a woman I had had it. And yet, in spite of the bravery of my words and the righteous punishment I had inflicted upon her, a wild terror seized me as to whether Edna might not have to bear the brunt. What effect would my conduct have on her? I kept asking myself, and the shadows of night that soon after began to fall could not compare with those that were falling over my own soul.

Though I actually felt ashamed to go and communicate to my lawyer what I had done, yet every step on the deserted pavement outside increased my alarm as I realized that if I were arrested Edna would be deprived of her only protector.

All strong passions are brought out by opposition. We battle and struggle and wail and poetize for Helen carried to Troy, though perhaps, rescued and reduced to the snug comfort of a suburban villa and an assured competency, Helen herself might "pan out very flat."

How can I describe my dreams that night? The halls of Greece as represented by the hideous buildings surrounding Madison Square, and that, according to poor Edna, shone so brightly, again appeared to me in my sleep.

Some time ago in Chicago, over a mantel-piece in a millionaire's palace I saw a marble Italian relief that made a great impression on me. It represented the steps of a temple on the occasion of a festival to Bacchus, and the doors of this temple were bursting open before the maddened crowd who came flooding down. In their midst was delineated the most exquisite woman I ever saw, mounted on a leopard. Now, in my dreams the face of this woman was changed to Edna's, and she and the marble throng became alive. I could see her eyes light up with mad deviltry as she raised the cup with seductive gesture to the crowd, or anon pressed it to her wine-stained lips. All the people in the foreground bore familiar faces. Here was Mr. Star; here were the two men who had assailed me; here was Mr. Dalzelle, and leading the leopard were Rebecca and Dr. Henry, while slinking away in one corner was my old lawyer, Mr. Slocum, just as he had slunk away from me at the club—all, with the last exception, carried away with the mad abandon of the moment, and the doors of the

temple bursting open before them as like a wave they swept down the steps.*

It was the most awfully realistic dream I think I ever had, and seemed to typify the utter transformation of character under Rebecca Seaton's lead that without my protection Edna would suffer.

I rose next morning with the conviction that this protection, slight as it was, might be withdrawn at any moment because of my rash treatment of Rebecca Seaton the previous afternoon; yet if it had not been for this consideration I think, on the whole, I should have courted arrest as likely to bring affairs to a head. So convinced was I, however, that my summons would follow that, on hearing the bell ring and my name mentioned out in the hall, I actually seized my hat, but whether to fly, or to resist, or to go willingly I can hardly say. It was only a messenger boy who brought me a note. I took it up weariedly. It was perfumed and delicate. I looked at it more carefully. It was addressed in a hand that was familiar. My heart gave a sudden bound. Expecting arrest, the transition between that and a note from Edna—Edna Dalzelle herself—was too violent. I drank a pint of whisky before my agitation would permit of my breaking the seal. On opening it I read these few lines :

“ If you can find it convenient to call upon me to-day, I should like to see you for a few minutes' conversation. I shall be at my father's house between ten and eleven.

“ EDNA DALZELLE.”

* The sculptor, as I subsequently learned, was barely nineteen years of age, named Beulluri, and, though a Spaniard by birth, resided in Rome.

That messenger boy had cause to mark as a red-letter day in the calendar the one on which he brought me her note. Ah God! How we work ourselves up to a period of ecstatic expectancy, and then how sudden is the descent!

As the clock in the nearest church tower struck ten, I was ringing the bell of her apartment, and was admitted by my old friend the colored butler. Bless his soul! I so far forgot all semblance of decorum as to shake him cordially by the hand. Then he led me into the sitting room, and the next moment I was before her.

I was prepared to see her eyes circled with dark rings, to have her look worn and at least wearied; I was consequently agreeably disappointed in seeing her in her usual appearance of health. Yet there was a certain air about her that was not quite her own, that placed a barrier between us, and that I could only account for by the supposition that she was acting a part that had been laid down for her in advance. She received me in a cold, restrained way, chilling in me the warm effusiveness that was ready to gush out. Indeed, she never asked me to sit down, so I remained standing. Could she still be under the subtle and controlling influence of Rebecca Seaton? And yet I had no reason to suppose Rebecca was upon the premises.

"I sent for you," she said, "to ask you whether you think you have lately been treating me as a gentleman should?"

"What have I done?" I asked, wishing to make her define herself.

"You have constituted yourself a spy on my conduct; you have subjected me to an espionage little short of the shadowing of a detective."

"But think, Edna, how I am situated towards you. I could not accept our last interview as final."

"I fully recognize your position," she said, "and I know I have much to reproach myself with, but you gave me up voluntarily; you must at least acknowledge that."

"Edna, I only asked you to break off your connection with a woman who changes all your better nature; who makes you other than you really are; who prevents you being natural even now—don't interrupt me. You have never done me justice is my reason for asking you to give her up. Think of the grief it causes me to see you going on as you are."

"How am I going on? Explain yourself," she continued, with an increasing coldness and reserve.

"Edna, though I care for you the same as I ever did, the only thing I ask now is to guard you from evil. If I can do this I am willing to sacrifice even my hope of regaining your affection. For she is trying to master your better nature, trying deliberately—"

"What do you mean?"

"Trying to lower you to her level, a few nights ago making you publicly exhibit yourself in a common music-hall, and the night before last walk the streets of this city as—"

"As what?" she asked.

"As Aspasia!"

"As Aspasia? Enough, sir; you must be mad or intoxicated. Leave the house this instant! That I should suffer recrimination from you is natural, but I had yet to learn that I must suffer insult. Enough! Your way lies there; I will take care of my own conduct."

I had not said exactly what I wanted to say; indeed, the interview had been awkward and constrained all through. As I reached the hall Rebecca Seaton's unexpected appearance from a side door went far to explain Edna's unnatural manner.

"Now you have it from her own mouth!" she cried. "Once and for the last time, will you give up this spying?"

"I will not," I answered. "I am more decided than ever, for I can now fully appreciate the hold you have secured over her."

"Then you will rue the day you ever crossed my path."

XXXVII.

REBECCA'S presence was the one thing needed to assure me that Edna had been under her spell during my visit, and had most likely been acting semi-consciously, so to speak, on a previously given line of instructions. So perfect was the woman's control that she could allow her "subject" to retain her own personality and yet warp it to suit her own purpose. I shuddered, for it was the most conclusive proof yet of her power. Had I thought otherwise—I mean had I thought that Edna's words and manner reflected her true sentiments—I would not have hesitated about breaking off my connection with her there and then.

As I left the house and pondered on the continuation of this influence of Rebecca, doubts began to rise for the first time in my mind as to whether my new lawyer had rightly advised me to take no definite action against her. Owing to the rapidity with which events had crowded themselves upon me, I had, however, neglected his advice about seeing Mr. Dalzelle and making one last effort to induce him to exercise his paternal authority. To be sure, I had called upon him, but, as the reader may remember, I had not gained admittance, and I had not repeated my visit. As the present moment seemed to offer a favorable opportunity, I proceeded directly down town

to his office, where I presumed he would now be. My visit was as fruitless as my last, if not more discouraging. One of his clerks came out and bluntly informed me that his employer was unable to receive me, and further intimated that there was no use in my continuing my visits. The rebuff excited my pity rather than my indignation against the old gentleman and confirmed me in the belief that Rebecca's malign influence had extended to him. How I cursed his weakness and his besotted folly, not because of his rudeness towards me, but because of his callousness toward his daughter! I had resolved to save her, and save her I would; but Mr. Dalzelle's conduct threw me back upon myself, and yet the only hope that remained now was the return of the detective from Chicago, bringing with him intelligence that might criminate Rebecca—a very faint hope indeed.

As my retreat was discovered and I could probably learn little, if anything, by continuing my vigils at my window, I repaired, on leaving Mr. Dalzelle's, to Dr. Henry's instead of to my lodgings. He lived in the upper portion of the city, but though I walked all the way I arrived at his residence within three hours of my last meeting with Rebecca—a fact that I hope the reader will bear in mind. As his morning office hours were just closing, he was preparing to leave the house as I entered, so I followed him out. In reply to my questions as to how his experiments were progressing, his little red face fairly beamed with enthusiasm.

"Why, there's nothing like the success that I've had in the whole range of mesmerism," he cried. "This

'sensitive' that I told you I had got hold of is a wonder. She is without question reliable, and so susceptible to the influence that a wide field of experiments is still before me."

"Is it a woman?" I asked.

"Well, I confess that it is, and, to tell you the truth, I am just on my way now to make arrangements for another experiment that you suggested some time ago in your conversation. Do you remember, it was of the woman who was sent out and made to commit suicide by her lover. Of course I will arrange it so that she will do herself no injury, but, in order to demonstrate it to the physicians whom I shall take as witnesses, I must convince them that the woman believes her act will certainly result in her death. It will be a little difficult to manage, but I have thought of a way by which it can be accomplished. If this succeeds—as I have no doubt it will—I shall make the whole thing public, give the names of all the witnesses, the woman, and every one connected with it. I am sure, too, it will have great weight in establishing the extraordinary developments that mesmerism is capable of."

"You said that the other experiments had turned out well; do you mean to say that you have already proved, and beyond question, that a person could be made to act in a manner repugnant to his or her nature?"

"I have had the most positive proof of it with this young woman of whom I spoke, and only the night before last."

We had been walking down in the direction of my lodgings, and consequently were approaching the street in

which Rebecca's house was in. So interested was I, however, in the conversation, that if I thought of it at all I merely supposed that the professor had gone out of his way to accompany me.

"You said you had the most positive proof of this the night before last?" I repeated.

"Yes; the experiment then was the most successful, although the previous ones surpassed my expectations. The night before last, however, at the College of Physicians, I demonstrated the thing completely."

"The night before last?" I repeated, in a brown study—"the night before last? Why, that's very odd."

"What's very odd?"

"Why, that your experiment should have been made two evenings ago."

"Everything is odd about mesmerism. I tell you, my dear sir, the more you investigate it the more extraordinary you find it. There are so many conflicting—"

"Where is the College of Physicians?" I interrupted.

"Why, on the corner of Fourth avenue and Twenty-third street."

"Fourth avenue and Twenty-third street? Why, that is only a block from Madison Square."

We had by this time reached the street in which I temporarily resided, and as we turned into it a couple of men unexpectedly presented themselves, as if they had been lying in wait for us.

"Is this Mr. Aaron Simoni?" one of them asked of me.

"That's my name," I answered, in much surprise. "What do you want?"

"We have an order from the court for your arrest," he replied, showing a warrant.

"My arrest! On what charge?" And I remembered Rebecca Seaton.

"On that of the Coney Island murder."

"The Coney Island murder!" I cried in my amazement, for I had almost forgotten the circumstances. "And who brings forward the charge?"

"The people of the State of New York."

I turned to Dr. Henry, not so much to get him to expostulate in my behalf, as in the fear that the line of conversation we had been on would be interrupted.

"Let me have one word with this gentleman first," I said.

But Dr. Henry turned away. His astonishment at what had occurred seemed too great for words. A holy horror of me seized him as his first suspicions of me appeared realized.

"I wish to have nothing to do with you at all," he said; then turning to the officers: "My name is Dr. Henry—Dr. James P. Henry. Here is my card. If you desire me at any time to explain what I know about this gentleman, and how I came to make his acquaintance, you have only to apply at that address. I have had my suspicions about him a long way back."

"We know all about you, doctor, one of the men replied quite civilly, "and if the court needs your testimony at any time you will be subpoenaed. For the present all we want is him, and we have to thank you for putting him into our hands and saving us unnecessary trouble."

XXXVIII.

REBECCA SEATON had fired her shot after all, for I recognized her hand in the matter. Probably she had been holding back until she saw whether I would be influenced by Edna's protest at my espionage and her request for me to desist from it. The charge against me was so absolutely absurd—the charge that I had committed a murder intended for myself—that my only consideration was as to the effect on Edna of my temporary incarceration. And yet as the gloomy portals of the prison closed upon me and I went over in my mind the circumstances of my visit to Coney Island, I began to have misgivings. Certain facts might be difficult to explain—why I had gone to Coney Island, and why I had so suddenly returned; why I had not registered, and why I had left New York the next day for the country. Nevertheless, it was the last few words of my interrupted conversation with Dr. Henry that caused me most perplexity, far more indeed than my incarceration, and the terrible situation of merely being held on suspicion of such a crime.

The idea of his experiments being conducted on the very night I had followed Edna, and, moreover, at the College of Physicians, towards which I had seen her being hastily driven away—this, as I say, caused me extreme

perplexity, and started a train of doubts and suspicions the reader will probably appreciate.

I quite forgot to say that at the preliminary examination that followed my arrest I had wisely refused to say any thing further than to plead entire innocence of the charge, and, having learned the value of caution, I had thereupon sent for my lawyer, Mr. Star.

Do you remember in Carlyle's "French Revolution," where the end was drawing on, how rapid was the culmination of events, and how startling circumstance crowded on the heels of startling circumstance with such lightning-like speed as to render the baldest enumeration of them alone possible? So it was in my case; only let this be remembered, that, with me, instead of the final catastrophe it was rather the beginning of the end that was culminating. In reply to my message Mr. Star sent down towards evening a clerk from his office to say that a certain very extraordinary event had occurred that would most likely have an immediate effect upon this new charge against me, and that he was consequently better engaged in attending to my affairs than by coming to me at once; that in all likelihood he would see me early on the following morning, after which date my incarceration would hardly be extended; in the meanwhile to answer no questions that might be put to me.

Under this cheering intelligence I found my spirits rise, and I enjoyed no little the frugal meal which my jailer brought me.

Indeed, there is nothing truer than that fortune, whether good or evil, never comes singly, and I felt that now, at

the blackest period of my adventures, the clouds were breaking. Only breaking temporarily, however; for while the next four days of my life comprise the most ecstatic moments of my whole existence, yet could I have looked a little ahead I hardly think I should have been able to resist the temptation of lying down and giving up completely. I was not at the end of my adventures; I was merely at the beginning of the end, and the clouds were only going to lift—a little.

Having established a precedent by describing my dreams of the preceding night, allow me to say that the similarity of my position to the prisoner of Chillon was too striking not to be taken advantage of by my dreams to-night. I believe the best authorities have played sad havoc with that pleasing delusion, but the popular belief as represented by every school-boy's primer found in me a realistic counterpart. Through my sleep I kept wearing away the stones of my cell in my ceaseless perambulations with a clanking chain about my foot. Now, if you will carry back your recollections to these school-book pictures, you may remember that there was a narrow window on one side of the cell, commanding a contracted view of the lake; my own opinion is that this window was simply inserted in the picture for artistic effect, and to permit the introduction of the iron bars that crossed it. Be this as it may, there it was in my dreams, and as I stopped every now and then in my imaginary walks, and looked out of this window at a rugged point of land extending into the lake, Dr. Henry suddenly appeared in a costume of the period. Even in my dreams I could not help being

struck by the ludicrous effect he presented, with his closely cropped gray hair standing up like the bristles in a brush, his green spectacles, his earnest face, and his wide velvet breeches. He seemed to be looking out for a convenient spot for the prosecution of some fell design, the exact nature of which I could not distinguish. While I was gazing at him and wondering what he was going to do there, he was joined by another person, a woman, who looked familiar and whose countenance only gradually, as in dreams, assumed the familiar features of Rebecca Seaton. The two of them thereupon concealed themselves in some bushes along the water's edge, and kept peeping out through the leaves as though they were watching for the advent of a third person.

Suddenly Edna Dalzelle approached. Her eyes were open, but they had that vacant, absent look which I had seen in them the evening I had followed her, and which showed that she was still under the influence of mesmerism. Passing by Rebecca and the doctor, without paying the slightest heed to them, she walked out upon the point until she finally arrived at a high rock that terminated it, and precipitated herself into the lake. Then everything became confused. I remember trying to force myself through the barred window to get to her rescue, and then I awoke in a cold perspiration with the light from the gas jet in the corridor shining on the whitewash of the cell.

Because of his appearance in the dream, my mind recalled my last interview with Dr. Henry, and I naturally attributed my dream to it and to his having said that he was

on his way to arrange an experiment that was to test the possibility of the story of the young French girl's suicide. I mean the story that I had previously mentioned to him as having read in the *North American Review*. If the reader has forgotten it, let me briefly repeat that it was to the effect that the French authorities had lately been much exercised over the death of a woman whose lover, it was stated, on the score of being weary of her, had first put her under the influence of mesmerism and had then sent her off to a distance and made her destroy herself. So striking was the dream, so realistic, that to compose myself I got up and began as restless a walk as that of the prisoner of whom I had imagined myself the living counterpart. Two nights in succession Dr. Henry had appeared to me, which was odd of itself. Besides he had confessed to me that one of his experiments had been made the very night I had followed Edna. In addition to this the place had been the College of Medicine, on Fourth avenue and Twenty-third street, down which—

Great God! The explanation came to me like a flash. Dr. Henry had been experimenting with Edna. She it was whom he had discovered, and whose extraordinary sensitiveness had so facilitated his investigations.

I too, I, had been giving him a cue as to these same experiments, and had, moreover, been egging him on to continue and develop them.

I fell back on my bed and tried to think it all out, but the process was maddening. How could I explain my dreams? Simply that my mind at night had been clearer than during the day, and had unconsciously worked out a

solution of facts which, though presented during my waking hours, could not be unraveled then owing to the confusion my mind was in. Dr. Henry and Rebecca leading the leopard, on which Edna was seated, was but a fanciful representation of her character as Aspasia, induced by these two. When I last saw the professor he was making arrangements for another experiment having suicide as the result. I had seen in my dreams the development of this—a suicide I had myself suggested, though in a different form, and of which he would have never thought but for me—the suicide of a woman I loved more than myself: of Edna Dalzelle.

There is a situation to moralize on that would make a novel of itself, and to any criticism on its exaggeration I can only reply that when you get on the subject of mesmerism, the gates of dreamland being open, you have free scope to indulge your fancy. Indeed, the temptation is strong within me to dwell upon this particular phase of my subject, but events are crowding upon each other, so thick and fast that I am obliged to hurry on. Let me say one thing, however, if only to account for the comparative peace of mind I now felt: I recognized that if my inferences about Dr. Henry with Edna were true, the experiments had been conducted on a scientific basis, and at the direction of a man whom I believed to be a gentleman both by instinct and training.

XXXIX.

MR. STAR presented himself early the next morning, and his pleased smile of welcome and his cheerful manner generally assured me that the good news I had received the past evening from his office would not be contradicted.

"A really most extraordinary incident happened yesterday," he said. "You remember the man you chased up to the elevated railway station, and which circumstance led to our acquaintance? Well, he was captured yesterday afternoon after a desperate struggle, during which he was shot through the head. The reason I could not come to you last evening was because I was detained in taking his dying deposition and in having it properly recorded. He confessed to having committed the murder at Coney Island, mistaking the victim for you, but absolutely refused to give his reasons or his accomplices, and died soon after. Nevertheless, so far as your incarceration is concerned, it is sufficient, and the charge against you falls to the ground. But I was also prevented from coming down to you yesterday by other business in your interest, the result of which will probably be as welcome when I tell you. What would be the most gratifying news that I could bring you?" And he looked at me quizzically.

"That Rebecca Seaton could change places with me here."

"Well," he said, "you have come pretty near it, for she is already arrested, and I have brought an order for your release."

"Arrested!" I cried. "On what charge?"

"Well, it's a long story, but, to put it briefly, you must know that this estimable lady has had many strings to her bow. Among these was a wealthy lawyer in good practice whom she had got in her clutches, and whom, on the strength of spiritual manifestations, she had induced to settle on her about one-half of his personal estate. Now, if you may remember, I intimated to you some time ago that I had a scheme in embryo that, if everything else failed, I might work up against her. Lately, as I had begun to despair of finding any criminal charge against her that we could prove, I have been revolving in my mind several projects to induce the heirs of this gentleman to invoke the law against her, and so break up her influence over Edna at the same time. This was one of my motives in advising you to wait.

"A circumstance that only came to my ears yesterday greatly assisted me—namely, the recent transfer to her of a large amount of real estate, including the very house your lodgings were in. Now, I know this gentleman very well. His name is Mr. Falkner, and on all other subjects than his sincere conviction in Rebecca's supernatural powers his mind is as clear as a bell. As far as I can learn, she has exercised her sway over him by showing him blank pieces of canvas which gradually assume, by the use of some kind of acid or other, I suppose, the physiognomies of the heroes of antiquity. These invari-

ably advise him, in mystic writing on her slate, to make over to her a hundred shares of railroad stock, a house, or a piece of land somewhere, and he is so deluded as to do it. On representing the case to the family of this gentleman, and on showing them that unless they took definite action soon there would be nothing left of the estate, they finally consented to act, and late last night she was arrested on the charge of obtaining money under false pretences. So you see yesterday was a busy time for me, and you have not suffered by my failure to come down to you before."

I grasped Mr. Star's hand warmly, and went on to speak of Edna. Then his manner suddenly changed.

"Well, it's a little odd, but she was not at her father's when I stopped there this morning to inquire, nor could I learn that she was at Rebecca's. As regards the arrest, it was also somewhat peculiar. The officers who had the warrant for Rebecca could not find her at her house, but they frightened Theophilus into telling them that she might be found at Dr. Henry's. On following her there they learned that Dr. Henry was also absent, and had left word that he would not return until late in the night. The manner of Theophilus had raised in the officers' minds the suspicion that she might have got wind of the arrest and escaped, so they returned to her house again, and on cross-questioning Theophilus they drew from him the unwilling admission that she had gone to a dock on the East Side of the city. This confirmed their suspicions as to her flight, so they immediately repaired thither, only to find Rebecca and Dr. Henry waiting together on

the end of the wharf. It was not so much the fact of discovering her in such company and at such an hour that perplexed the officers, as the peculiar manner of the doctor.

"He explained that one of the greatest experiments in the interest of science was about to be consummated, and begged them, with tears in his eyes, to delay the arrest but thirty minutes. His manner was such that they considered him deranged, and though they only had a warrant for the woman, they arrested them both. I gained these particulars this morning, but they seemed to point to Edna; so, feeling anxious about her, I stopped, as I told you, at Mr. Dalzelle's, and later at Rebecca Seaton's, but she was at neither place."

Even before Mr. Star had finished speaking I had hit upon an explanation of the circumstances that had so puzzled the officers in whose hands had been confided the arrest of Rebecca. They had come upon her while she and Dr. Henry were waiting for Edna. Dr. Henry's discomfiture was to be explained as the disappointment of a scientific enthusiast whose experiment promised to be baffled.

But if baffled, what had become of Edna? If the experiment had been interrupted by Dr. Henry's arrest, there had been no one to stay her suicide. I saw the whole situation at a Prometheian flash.

"Get me out of here at once," I said.

After a few preliminaries which I was too much agitated to exactly understand, the doors of my cell were opened and we passed out and down together. Our course lay past the ward reserved for women on a lower floor, and as

I went down the stairs by it my eye unconsciously turned in that direction. The cells were ranged back to back in a long corridor, and opposite to each cell was a chair on which some of the clothes of the inmates were left hanging. On one of these I detected a shawl that somehow looked familiar. I hesitated on the landing, asking the matron in charge of the ward to whom it belonged.

"To a poor girl who was picked up out of East River last night," she replied.

"Out of the East River?" I cried. "Let me see her."

No objection was made to my entrance into the ward, so I was led up to the door of the cell, and there, reclining on a cot, and with her long hair hanging about her, was the woman I thought drowned. My coming disturbed her. She raised her head, then, recognizing me, she burst into tears.

"Take me home!" she cried, "take me home!"

And take her home I did.

XL.

I HAVE said that each event crowded on the heels of each fresh event, as in Carlyle's history of the closing scenes of the French Revolution. Therefore I am compelled somewhat hurriedly to clear away the stage and to leave it free for the *dénouement*, which will require all the space at my disposal.

Though of course my inferences about Edna and Dr. Henry were only confirmed later, they were nevertheless correct.

Further, it seems, that the officer who had arrested the doctor was so puzzled by his protests that after placing him in custody he had returned to the scene of the arrest, and that he had arrived there only just in time to see a woman walk right out to the end of the wharf and fling herself into the water. Thus was my dream realized. To rescue her had proved a difficult matter, and, supposing that she was deranged also, he had brought her to the station house for examination as to her mental condition. Whether Dr. Henry had been incarcerated in the same building I did not stop to inquire. A happy suggestion by Mr. Star was sufficient to liberate Edna. It was this: That being engaged to be married to me (a non-compromising situation), she had been overcome on hearing of

my arrest on such a shocking charge, and she had thereupon endeavored to end her miseries in a watery grave.

Under these circumstances, and the promise that I would be responsible for her welfare, she was allowed to depart, and in two hours afterwards I was seated on the deck of a tugboat which Mr. Star engaged for me to convey her to Rocky Point.

In fact, I was uncertain whether Rebecca might not soon be released on bail, and unless I got Edna away from the city, Rebecca's arrest might avail little. To remove her beyond the influence of that woman was my first thought, and for the time being my only one. And yet I don't think that in the whole course of my life I ever enjoyed a trip on the water as much as I did this one in the tug. Though late in September, it was a still day, insufferably hot in town; but the motion of the boat caused a slight breeze of its own, and seemed to dispel the noisome odors of the great city we were leaving. The air became fresher too, and crisper as we proceeded, and the stretch of water opened out wider and wider like the creation of an artist's dream. Here a rich man's yacht with languid sail rocked upon the tide, and now a coaster waiting for a tug; crafts of all descriptions were about, all bathed in the soft light; with the shores gradually widening, as I say, but an occasional point jutting out quite close to us, and its trees running down to the water's-edge, Narcissus-like, to see their wealth of beauty reflected in the waves.

I remarked a little way back in my history that Edna's health appeared to have in no wise suffered from the mental strain I should have thought she must have been put to

under Rebecca's manipulations. This was conspicuously so now, for as the soft breezes kissed her cheeks her elasticity of spirits returned till I thought I had never seen her so bright and dazzling. Except during that brief moment of awakening in the cell, she refused to speak of her experiences in New York, and from one or two observations that she let drop I am inclined to believe they were not very distinct in her memory, and that her mind reverted to the period of our intercourse just before I left her so abruptly to return to New York. What I mean is that she was leaving the recollection of the city along with the city itself behind her, and that the intervening time between the period of her arrival there and the present was a blank more or less complete. It remained with me to avail myself of her forgetfulness as I saw fit. The observation to which I particularly allude was a proposal for me to take her on the following day that very drive which our rupture had interfered with, speaking as if nothing had intervened, but a simple lovers' quarrel.

On arriving at her home we found that Mr. Dalzelle was expected by the evening boat, and after seeing her made comfortable, I took up my old quarters at the farmhouse, much to Mr. Crummels' delectation. He appeared genuinely glad to see me once again, though deeply curious as to what my ulterior object might be. Inasmuch as this was yet obscure in my own mind, I failed to enlighten him; but as I sat on the piazza that afternoon and talked with him as of yore, everything seemed so natural and unchanged that I could hardly imagine I had been away. I picked up the thread of my pre-

vious life exactly where it had broken, and could imagine things settling down exactly in their old lines.

This impression was deepened by a visit later in the evening from Mr. Dalzelle himself, who spoke about his daughter's return in the most every-day manner, accepting our reunion quite as a matter of course.

The fact is, I don't believe Mr. Dalzelle credited one-half of what I had told him. He considered me an impetuous, hasty, imaginative personage, apt to go off at half-cock. Besides, I think he had a wholesome terror of Rebecca, and, like many good-natured men, a natural antipathy to trouble. Excusing himself on the grounds that his daughter was of age, and that he could do nothing to control her conduct, he had allowed things to take their own course. That he was passionately fond of his daughter, however, I have no doubt, and that he was a little afraid of her also I am inclined to believe. He certainly knew nothing of my arrest, but during this very period, as I subsequently learned, he was engaged in some very important business transactions which monopolized most of his time and thoughts, rendering him less inclined than he might otherwise have been to investigate closely anything else.

XLI.

BUT I must turn to the condition of public affairs which yet I have only hinted at, but with which my own fate was to be most unexpectedly interwoven.

It was a time of growing luxury for the wealthy. It was a time of destitution for the poor. It was a time of despair for the many and of dread for the few. It was a time of agitation and of heated discussion and sporadic conflicts between employer and employed. Men's minds were a little unstrung. The grim walls of the factory, *mutatis mutandis*, had got to be viewed somewhat as the castles of the French noblemen in the latter days of the last century, and the speculator in wheat as the Fermier General of the same epoch. Even that public benefactor and philanthropist, the railroad director, was not excepted from the general criticism, and his control of the highways of travel was said by many to be as complete and despotic as when the border baron collected tolls upon them at the mouth of the blunderbuss and the culverine.

In the haphazard, don't-care-a-damn manner of our development, it is true that there had been opportunities for enormous increase of wealth by the few, and it is further true that so much of this had been acquired by piratical methods that all wealth, ay, down to the moderate man's competency, was beginning to stink in the nos-

trils of the man who had nothing. Over this troubled horizon the prophet of a new creed had arisen, promising relief to the many from their burdens by a single tax.

In propounding his creed he asked some curious questions.

For instance, where were we coming to with all this vast aggregation of wealth? Whether, too, the rich, with all their talk about the sacred rights of property, were as thoughtful of the obligations of property, and, while ready to ape the manners of an aristocracy, whether they had not neglected every public duty, except where money could be made out of it?

In short, the tenor of his criticisms was that "*laissez faire*," roughly speaking, meant "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," which, closely analyzed, might mean, again, that the sharp, shrewd business man had been given an unfair advantage over the simple man, and that while the many toiled the few had reaped.

To meet these outrageous assertions and cavilings on a state of things that had never been so much as questioned before, there was talk on the part of the few of a strong government, and the grim shadow of the Man on Horseback began to steal over the landscape. Nevertheless, the world wagged on much as before, and particularly in the rural districts, where the new doctrines had taken as yet little hold, except for discussion at an occasional political meeting or debating club.

Yet here, in the neighborhood of Mr. Dalzelle's, a philosophical mind might have found food for contemplation. Nine farms out of every ten were mortgaged, and in con-

sequence the steady deterioration of a class of people I can find no better word to define than yeomanry, was conspicuous; people who forty years ago were rich in the unincumbered possession of farms of a hundred acres, and whose homes nothing that is being built now seems exactly to replace. "Western competition," the old miller had given me as an explanation of this retrogression when I had once asked him the cause, and perhaps he was right. To me, however, it rather seems due to the temptations for financial profit that our spider-like cities generally throw as a web about the country that surrounds them. They not only draw in to themselves the young men from vocations where there is room for all, to professions which are over-crowded, but they catch the hard-earned gains of the farmer in speculative enterprises, giving that restless, nervous intensity to our lives, also, which results in making a few rich at the expense of the many poor.

I had stopped for Edna in the buggy at the hour agreed to on the previous day, and had touched upon the above subjects, political and other, as we drove along. Indeed, a feeling of constraint was on both of us, and this constraint evinced itself in the abstract turn our conversation took. For though I had picked up the thread of my past life exactly where it had been broken off, I had yet formulated no plans for the future.

My only immediate purpose, to repeat, had been to get Edna away from the influence of Rebecca, regardless of any duties and obligations that act might entail of itself. I doubted, too, whether our quarrel preceding our separa-

tion had been forgotten as completely as the circumstances succeeding it appeared to have been, and, though she avoided any allusion to it, the uncertainty as to whether it was still in her mind increased the awkwardness of my situation, and my own discomfiture probably reacted on her.

As we drove along, however, this constraint gradually wore off; and as we turned to go home, and a bend in the road disclosed the white steeple of the little village church, she looked up with the pensive air that had previously been so habitual to her.

"What peacefulness a spire seen over trees gives to a view!" she said.

"Yes," I replied; "a steeple inspires hope."

I don't know how it was; I had been sitting next to her in close contact all the afternoon, but somehow she seemed to press up to me more closely as I spoke, to nestle to me, as it were, in repentance for her cruelty of the past. In an instant my arm went about her waist, and for once she did not resist.

"Why will you not let me realize the hope that steeple inspires?" I said, on a wild chance. "We are near the church; let us stop and have my longings set at rest!"

At first she actually appeared yielding, and the next moment to be held back by her old doubts. Her hesitation caused me to press my point more earnestly, and by the time we had got opposite the parsonage she did yield. I hurriedly descended and tied the horse. I was agitated myself, her acquiescence took me so completely by surprise, and yet I must be quick to prevent any change of

humor. I knocked at the door of the parsonage, and was told that the minister was in the garden. I hurried thither, only to discover a hired man pruning some peach trees. From him I learned that instead of his master being in the garden, however, he had just taken his gig for a visit of consolation to a sick parishioner. I got the latter's address, but on my return to the buggy she had regained her composure and absolutely refused to follow the minister on his travels. As for me, too, I also had weakened. When it came to the point, could I marry a woman who had played the part of Aspasia through the streets of New York? But if I were not ready to marry her, what was I here for? Utterly illogical and absurd as it was for me to remain, I could not yet make up my mind to relinquish her, so we drove back in the soft afternoon light, through the sleepy fishing village, past the brightly painted oyster boats that were just returning from their day's work, past the old historic mill which had ground flour for General Washington, over the milldam, and along the locust-fringed road—a road whose beauty not even the advertisements to use Mandrake Bitters or to "Shake No More" could quite deface; nor whose tranquility the rumors that were becoming frequent of labor troubles and of encounters with Pinkerton detectives could quite disturb.

XLII.

I FOUND my position absolutely absurd and illogical, and my dilemma was no little increased by my perplexity as to Edna's conduct (irresponsible as she was for it) while in New York. Under these circumstances you will appreciate how welcome was the letter I found awaiting me on my return from my drive. It was from Mr. Star. He informed me that Rebecca was still under arrest and had been as yet unable to find securities for her bail ; further, that Lyman, the detective, had not yet returned from Chicago, nor could he obtain by telegraphing him any explanation of his long delay. What came after atoned for this last discouraging piece of news, since he assured me that he had just seen Dr. Henry, and in a long conversation with him had learned, on his word as a gentleman, that the experiments Edna had been subjected to while under the influence of mesmerism were guarded in such a way as to leave not the slightest blemish on her character. In conclusion the letter said :

“They were merely tentative and made in the interest of science, of which the doctor is an enthusiastic disciple.”

“I will, however, keep you informed of what goes on here, but as I have to appear in court in less than fifteen

minutes, I must ask your permission to close somewhat abruptly.

“ Believe me,
 “ Always very truly yours,
 “ REGINALD P. STAR.”

The letter relieved my mind of my greatest perplexity—a perplexity that I could hardly formulate in language. Cleared of this, my course was distinct and clean cut. I would try once more to make Edna have her marriage annulled, and then I would be free to wed her. I walked out on the piazza to think over the good tidings, and here found Mr. Crummels anxiously pacing up and down. He was in a condition that for him was one of unusual mental disturbance.

“ I guess there'll be lively times to-night over to the village,” he observed. “ You see the boys is goin' to discuss these yere doctrines of Henry George in the Debatin' Club. What do yer say to be one of the party? I'm goin' over myself, and you've been away so long I'd like your company.”

“ Mr. Crummels,” I returned, “ I've had enough excitements lately of a personal character without wishing to incur any of a political sort. I think, therefore, I shall forego the temptation this time.”

Mr. Crummels' face fell. “ It's about the only sport, barrin' a church picnic or a funeral, the boys has 'round here, and they makes the most of it, you bet. Won't yer change that opinion of yours 'round now for one to go ?”

“ Mr. Crummels, my resolution is unalterable; but go yourself, and may the advocates of the pernicious doc-

trines be brought through your arguments to see the unrighteousness of their cause. God be with you!"

"Say," observed Mr. Crummels, stopping short, "did yer ever know ole Squire Hopkins?"

I expressed my regrets for the pleasure denied me.

"Wall, whenever I hear the Scriptures quoted I thinks of ole Squire Hopkins. He was always spoutin' it hisself, and, if you'll excuse my saying so, he was yet the doggondest screw these yere parts has ever produced. His fingers itched for every man's dollars and seemed coated with glue to which they all stuck. Whenever he put out a copper it was always tied with a bit of elastic that snapped it back with interest, and before lettin' it go he squeezed it so tight as to leave the stamp of the eagle impressed in his palm. Every farm hereabouts gradually got to have a mortgage on it, and every mortgage somehow got to stand in Squire Hopkins' name. What he couldn't get by fair means he got by foul, and every case as was brought in court always found the jury fixed in his interest. After skinning the folks out of all they had, after rakin' the whole county, as it was, with a fine-tooth comb for dollars, Squire Hopkins died. What do yer think the openin' words of his will was? 'I die in peace with God and forgive all my neighbors.'"

I expressed my deep sense of approval of this beautiful sentiment.

"Now, if it hadn't been for the Squire I'd ha' been a richer man. He first lent the money on this yere farm, an' then sold it to Mr. Dalzelle. 'Tain't that I'm exactly a poor man, but then I ain't never got much cash handy."

I had a vague suspicion of what was coming.

"And I was thinkin'," continued Mr. Crummels, working around in the usual circuitous, though skillful, way to his point, "that if you'd just loan me five dollars to put on top of the bill you gave me the last time you was here for clearin' out the cellar, I'd kind of seem more respectable if I was called upon at the meetin' for drinks."

Mr. Crummels had fairly earned the money, so, without more ado, I presented him with a five dollar bill.

"I'll just take it off the account for yer board," he said; "that's the easiest way to fix it. Good-by," he continued, and then he stopped again. "By the way," he hesitated, "talking about Squire Hopkins sot me thinkin'. Don't yer suppose it might be the doin's of jist such folks as him as has started all this yere talk about the land question? I don't mean only 'round here, but through the county generally, for he was a grabber from Grabbersville, and that's a place as ain't cleaned out of inhabitants yet."

Mr. Crummels' remarks opened up an extensive mine of thought, and while I was pondering on what he said he started in the direction of the village.

I have moralized on the consequences that were to ensue, in due course of time, because of the first five dollar bill I had given him before my departure from New York; the consequences flowing from my second gift—or let me call it loan—while less direct, will, at all events, be seen to be momentous.

Hearing the sound of chopping in the neighborhood of the stable, I walked over in that direction, to find old Abe

employed in splitting up some kindling wood. On casually mentioning to him that his master had gone to the village for the purpose of attending a meeting of the debating society, I was surprised to notice a broad smile parting his head from ear to ear as he looked up.

"Oh! he's gone to the debatin' sassiety, has he? Well, I guess he won't be home early."

Then he resumed his chopping. It has fallen in the line of my experience to see wood chopped before now, but I must admit I never saw any one handle the axe with quite the dexterity old Abe did. In his hands it appeared veritably alive, and a trick he had of passing it over his head with a double flourish when any one was looking at him, raised the performance into the realms of high art. At last he stopped abruptly. "He's gone to the debatin' sassiety, has he?" he repeated, and then, just as I thought his oracular utterances were to cease, "Well, I guess," he added, "it won't be de fust time."

Finding he would give no further particulars, I wandered back to the house. Some deep mystery seemed connected with these meetings other than appeared on their face. When I alluded to the subject to Mrs. Crummels, a suggestive silence fell over her, and she continued to set the table for my supper with a nervous haste equally inexplicable. Next I tried her daughters; but here again I was met with absolute failure, for on my mentioning the topic to them one began to giggle and the other burst into tears. Could Mr. Crummels be a revolutionist in disguise? I wondered.

Altogether it was a most extraordinary state of affairs, and, really feeling anxious about the matter, I walked down the lane towards the water, hoping to find a solution mirrored in its crystal depths. Now, the lane, as I have before intimated, was lined with cedars and led down to the beach, which was some five hundred yards away. On each side of the lane the fields were cleared so that the eye had an unobstructed view right and left. Except from the piazza, however, the beach was concealed by a chain of low-lying sand hills fringed with alderberry and ailantus bushes, and until one had arrived at the head of the lane, and was beyond the trees and shrubbery immediately surrounding the house, only a partial glimpse could naturally be had of either fields or water. I had just reached the head of the lane, and was walking down it, when I detected in the field to the right, and a little more than half way to the beach, an object which, taking everything into consideration, was the very last object any one would naturally have expected to find standing here in an open field some seven miles distant from the nearest railroad station, and considerably off the line of travel for tramps. The object I allude to was an Italian organ grinder. His organ was resting on its wooden leg, so to speak; he was perfectly motionless and seemed to be observing the house. Dressed in dark clothes, with his swarthy face making a black spot on the landscape, he appeared to have been transported hither for the special purpose of casting a shadow over the fair scene. I walked down towards him to learn his business, and when he detected me he moved away rapidly, and, slipping into the

bushes that fringed the back of the beach, disappeared. Not to be so easily given the slip, I climbed over the fence that separated the lane from the field, and proceeded to the spot where he had entered the bushes. Here I saw the marks of footsteps in the sandy soil, but though I searched the ground thoroughly he was not to be found. I even walked out on the beach, where there was an unobstructed view up and down for considerably over a mile. There was not a soul in sight. The underbrush barely reached to my shoulder, and how he had managed with such scant cover to get away with his instrument, much less with himself, was a puzzle. After half an hour's fruitless endeavor to discover him I returned to the house for a supper that had grown cold by waiting.

XLIII

SUPPER over, I consumed a brief half-hour with the papers, and then walked across to Mr. Dalzelle's, where I have forgotten to state that I had promised to meet Edna. I found her on the little piazza of the summer-house on the edge of the beach, with a rustic table holding coffee and liqueurs.

It was a beautiful night. The moon, like a great ball of subdued fire, was just rising from her liquid bed, strewing, the waves right up to our very feet as with of ducats of reddened gold. Here and there, just off the shore, the lanterns of eel-spearers glided mysteriously along, the oars in the rowlocks of their boats chiming in with, rather than disturbing, the soft lapping of the wavelets on the beach. Nevertheless, poetic as was the scene, sentimental as was the hour, I could not quite shake off a slightly disagreeable impression left on my mind by the organ grinder. It chilled the satisfaction Mr. Star's letter had given me, and carried back my thoughts to the city and my sinister experiences there. Perhaps because of this, I lost my spirit for addressing Edna on the subject I had most at heart, and turned the conversation on my fruitless search instead of my fruitless courtship.

"I don't know that I am more heartless than the ave-

rage of humanity," I continued, "but I confess I bear a grudge against these modern troubadours."

"And so do I," she exclaimed quickly. "From my very earliest childhood they have haunted me. Never did my poor mother send me supperless to bed, never did I have one of those hopeless attacks of depression common to all children, that an organ-grinder did not come, place himself beneath my window, grinding out the 'Miserere,' or some equally melancholy old Italian opera, to make my cup of misery complete." She dropped her chin on her hand and looked pensively over the waters.

"It's rather odd, though, that you could not find him," she resumed at last, recurring to the itinerant musician; "he was here this afternoon, and they told me over at the farm that he had been about there all the morning."

"Well, I didn't see him," I returned, and I had nerved myself up to allude to a more tender topic when the debating society of Mr. Crummels inconsiderately came in my head, and I went on to speak of it, asking why there was so much mystery connected with his attendance, and wherein these differed from other meetings of a like character.

This time Edna laughed herself.

"Well, you'll probably discover before long. Poor Mr. Crummels! he's a pattern of all the virtues except industry for about six consecutive weeks; then he makes ample amends. Remember, however, that the life of a man of his kind is extremely monotonous, and we who have so many resources should be the last to throw stones."

She had dropped her chin again into her fair white hand, and her eyes were directed over the water with the same wistful expression I had noticed before that evening. The light of the moon was falling full upon her face, and I, on my part, sat silently contemplating her as she sat there, thinking over my adventure with her this very afternoon, and wondering what would have been the result had she taken me at my word.

Suddenly the light left her and she became submerged in darkness. The transition was so abrupt that I started, and, casting my glance seaward for an explanation, noticed that a passing sail had intercepted the rays of the queen of the night. The vessel was near in shore, and in endeavoring to come about had evidently missed stays. The voices of the crew were born distinctly, to our ears over the water, and the noises of the ropes working through the blocks. Owing to the slightness of the breeze, she was hardly sailing, but she managed to get about somehow, and drifted slowly on her course.

"Do you know, I have often thought a vessel becalmed was like a person in a trance," Edna observed at last "with all the powers of movement petrified for want of the breath of life to waken her."

"The analogy is rather far fetched," I replied, "though I suppose it has certain points of resemblance. But why do you dwell on such gloomy topics?"

"Well, then, how selfish human nature is, if you like that better!" she continued; "not naturally cruel, perhaps, but so self-engrossed. Take that vessel again, for instance; how little we think of her, whence she comes

or whither she goes, wrapped up as we are in the halo that surrounds the narrow personality of each of us."

Here was my chance; sentiment engendered sentiment in return, and there is no policy that is so well calculated to put you right with a woman as to put her in the wrong.

"Yes," I observed, "what you say is true. Some of us are so self-engrossed that it does amount to cruelty." I laid particular stress upon the last word. "Nothing short of cruelty," I went on, "and I have arrived at the conclusion that the cruelty of woman is more unreflecting than that of man. Now see here, Edna," I continued, taking her hand, "don't you think you're treating me very cruelly?"

"How so?" she asked, with feigned surprise.

"Well, at least you're drifting out of my life just as that schooner has done."

"What would you have?"

"I would have your confidence; I would have you apply for a divorce and break off this marriage, so that you will have no excuse to refuse me what I asked this afternoon."

I had risen and was standing over her. My arms, or at least one of them was raised to enforce my remarks. Without any visible rhyme or reason, she suddenly shrank away from me.

"Put your hands down!" she cried, with an accent I had never heard her employ before. "Put them down, or I leave you immediately and go into the house!"

She had risen, also; the light of the moon was shining

upon her face, and she looked at me so wildly that she quite terrified me. I dropped my arms, and even sank my hands into my pockets. My action seemed to have a quieting effect, and she gradually regained her composure.

"Sit down again," she observed at last, "and don't mind what I have just said. There, there, don't ask me for any explanation; I am excitable, that is all. It terrifies me when some people raise their arms, perhaps because I fear they are going to strike me. Smoke a fresh cigar; see, I will light it for you." And she actually put one between her lips and lighted it herself. There was too plainly an effort to distract my thoughts from her extraordinary terror—an effort that resulted in conduct quite foreign to her nature.

Her terror, however, though accentuated, was on a line with conduct I had noticed in her at times before. In spite of her desire to appear at ease and her request for me to stay, I could not help noticing that she was anxious for my departure; and as, I am frank to confess, I was no little disturbed myself, I brought the interview to a close. It was not till I arrived home that I guessed the solution of her behavior. And as I look back now, my only excuse for not having hit upon it while I was with her is the hopeless confusion my mind was reduced to by so many conflicting perplexities. Indeed, I cannot help wondering how it was I had any mind left; and as if I had not had enough excitement during the evening, I was aroused towards morning, by the most awful din at the front door it has ever been my misfortune to hear. In the

confusion of my sudden awakening I seized my pistol and rushed down-stairs. There was a hurried scampering before me, as I descended into the hall, of females in demi-toilet, and their presence rather reassured me on the subject of marauders. The knocker was still going like mad, however; and concluding that burglars would hardly announce their coming in so conventional a manner, I made bold to open the door. Here I encountered Mr. Crummels, in a state, I regret to say, of extreme intoxication, and with him Squire Smith, whom I had met once at Mr. Dalzelle's. He was acting as his Fidas Achates and was endeavoring to get him into the house quietly.

As I was a little uncertain regarding my duties in the matter, I was extremely relieved to see Mrs. Crummels descending the stairs again, only this time in an India shawl and a highly indignant frame of mind. Under the circumstances, I concluded that my services could be dispensed with, so I discreetly retired to my room. Arrived there, I must confess a more successful piece of strategy than this good woman displayed in the management of her husband I never witnessed (through the crack of any door). Her very appearance seemed to have a sobering effect, and instead of telling him to come into the house, which he had just been refusing to do for the squire, she insisted upon the squire carrying him back to the village in his buggy. Whereupon Mr. Crummels became deeply repentant, and pleaded to be allowed to enter. On her reply that if he was permitted to enter he would have to sleep on a mat in the hall, Mr. Crummels insisted upon

coming up-stairs; and finally, when his spouse, rising to a climax of diplomacy, stated that if he was allowed to come up-stairs he would be permitted under no circumstances to enter her sanctuary, that gentleman, becoming obstinate again, insisted on doing so, and was finally disposed of presumably between the sheets of his wife's chaste couch.

Next morning Mr. Crummels failed to present himself. I was late in making my own appearance, and it was considerably past ten o'clock before my breakfast was served.

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XLIV.

THERE are certain occasions when the mind, I believe, instinctively prepares itself for some great crisis, and when the very atmosphere assists in accentuating our condition of expectancy. This forenoon was one of them. I think that the reader will agree with me that the next few days of my life equal in dramatic incident anything that he has met with in the domain of light literature, and that all that I had gone through was a feeble index to what is coming. Something told me that this climax, though much delayed, was drawing on. Something told me that I had been brought back here to this peaceful retreat for some catastrophe that could not have been accomplished in the city, and that, in short, all my comings, goings, and dilemmas were but predestined and pre-arranged steps leading up to the grand acme of my fortunes. The very quiet that reigned over all things told me; the stillness and the repose. Never shall I forget the absolute deadness of that morning as I sat at my open window and looked out. The very buzzing of the flies intensified it, the humming of the bees too; all nature seemed to hesitate, to stop, and to stand still. And yet, as I sat there, I resolved that I would bring my affairs with Edna to an issue this very day. I would not have it on my conscience that I had not done all that I could to sim-

plify my situation with her. Unless she would definitely promise to take immediate steps to annul her marriage, I would bid her good-by forever. Any other course now than this was weakness, and I would not submit to remaining longer in the dubious position I occupied. I had got up with the intention of putting my plan into immediate execution, I had even reached the door of my apartment and my hand was on the handle, when the deep, impressive silence was broken by the jingle of music accompanied by the deep baying of the faithful old watch-dog, Tobey. I started and looked about me, and there, just outside, was an organ-grinder. He was ducking and bowing at me smiling and grimacing, and I recognized him immediately as the subject of my fruitless search the previous evening. There was something sinister about his reappearance, and I hastened out and demanded an explanation of his extraordinary behavior of yesterday. To all my questions, however, he merely ducked and smiled, muttering disjointed remarks in a language with which I was unfamiliar. Finding that he either would not or could not understand me, I walked over to the kennel of old Tobey, whose every hair was standing on end, and made a motion to unchain him. My gesture was better interpreted than my words. With a scowl I shall remember to my dying day, the unwelcome visitor hoisted his instrument on his back and started up the lane. On gaining the gate he paused and, turning, called down an imprecation on my head.

I regretted my act as soon as committed. It was unwise, to say the least, and was almost cowardly. Nevertheless I had no inclination to call him back.

Not until two o'clock could I find Edna—on the beach overseeing the launching of her wherry. Despite the sultriness of the day, she informed me she was going for a row. As this would offer me as good an opportunity as any other to resume my interrupted conversation of the past evening, I assisted the gardener to get the boat into the water; for, the tide being somewhat low, it was necessary to traverse a long stretch of sand. I remembered afterwards our difficulty in doing this, and I also remembered at the time that the day was Friday, exactly six weeks after the night of the murder at Coney Island. Though she offered no opposition to my coming, I suspect she read the thoughts that were in my mind. The tide was yet running out, and I took up the oars and rowed slowly with it. For some twenty minutes I pulled, and then I took in the oars and laid them deliberately across my knees.

"Edna," I said very gravely, "I want to ask you something."

Her hand was softly playing in the water, and she looked up in my face.

"And I want to ask *you* something," she interposed quickly. "Don't you congratulate yourself that I did not accede to your request yesterday?"

Her question threw me off my line of attack.

"Yes," she continued, "your sober second thought causes you to rejoice that you are still free."

"But I am not free, for the affection that binds me to you is in no wise weakened because it has not yet been sanctioned by the church. I—"

"How odd it is!" she interrupted me again to exclaim. "When I was so anxious to consider you my husband you strenuously objected, and now, while you appear anxious, I hold back."

"But the circumstances have entirely altered," I observed, "and I want to speak to you about the determination I have come to on this very subject. I want you to promise me that you will immediately begin proceedings to have your marriage annulled."

I saw that she was becoming agitated as usual when I touched upon that topic. I knew it, though her face was turned away from me, by a perceptible tremor passing over her, and by the way the bunch of flowers rose and fell on her bosom. Her right hand was still playing with the water, with the sleeve well rolled up, showing her ivory-white arm, while her left hand was raised to her breast to calm its palpitations. In spite of my determination, I was afraid to continue the subject; something warned me that I had better not, so, clenching my teeth, I began again to row slowly further out into the Sound, cursing myself for my weakness and wondering when and how it was all to end. She was grateful for my forbearance, as her next remark proved.

"I want to speak to you about something quite different," she said; "and if I have not alluded to the subject before, you must not think it is because it has been absent from my thoughts. I wish to ask you if you have not yet received any clue as to the mysterious attempts upon your life?"

I was surprised, for I had always purposely avoided

the subject, and had no means of supposing that she had not accepted the version the newspapers had given.

"Do you know," she continued, "I can't help thinking that your entanglement with me is in some way responsible for your danger—or should I say your resemblance to my husband?"

The mention of her husband caused her to wince, but she continued without other sign of excitement:

"I sometimes think that he might have been guilty of something, or have done something that has drawn down upon your head a vengeance intended for him. Have you taken any precautions for your safety?"

"I always go armed," I answered. "I have a trusty friend here that will protect me." And I motioned to my hip pocket. "Ever since my room was entered I carry it wherever I go."

"But why don't you get a detective to follow you wherever you go? If I were you I would; now promise me that you will."

"Not to follow me *quite wherever* I go," I said meaningly. "There are occasions when he might be *de trop*."

"But if you knew how anxious I am, the bare idea of my being in any manner instrumental in causing you injury!"

"But I don't see how you can be; and besides, judging from my experience of the 'Force,' their services are not of any very great utility. They have proved themselves totally incapable in my case, though I have placed everything in their hands."

The matter evidently pained her more than she cared to avow, so I bent to the oars again, while she leant way back in the stern and looked at me with her great, dark hazel eyes.

"Do you know you are very odd?" she said at last.

"Odd?" I ejaculated, as I stopped rowing.

"Yes, very odd; how did you ever become so?"

"I suppose I was born so," I replied for the want of a better excuse.

"Sometimes I am almost persuaded that you are my husband after all. I mean that while I know that you are not, you make use of an expression or a word that almost convinces me that you and he are one."

"Consider me, then, in that light," I answered. "Why do you keep me dangling like a poor fish on a hook, letting me go a little and then suddenly pulling me back? I never know what to expect with you, for at one moment your kindness lifts me up into heaven, and then your cruelty casts me back to—" (Earth I was going to say, but used a stronger expression beginning with an H).

I had risen from my seat in the boat and had come over towards her. I knew my face looked appealing into her eyes as I took her unresisting hand. "Why won't you accept me either in the light of your husband or accept my advice?"

"What is your advice? Tell it to me again."

"Either to get a divorce, or to have this marriage annulled."

"Can't you see—can't you see?" she cried. "Are you so blind?"

"I can't see any reason if you care for me."

"Then it is because I am uncertain whether I *do* care for you; whether the feeling I have for you is not the love I bear for him; whether I can give you more than a reflected affection. Sometimes I think I care for you, for yourself alone, and then again that it is because of your resemblance. Oh! I don't know what to do—what I ought to do!" And her long dammed-back emotions burst forth in a flood of hysterical tears. So great was their violence that I became uneasy. We were fully two miles now from the shore. I pressed nearer her, trying to console her, when suddenly I recollected her behavior of last evening and the construction I had placed upon it. She had evidently feared I could mesmerize her, and her fear that I might inspired the belief that I could. Once before I knew Rebecca Seaton had put her under the influence to relieve a condition that could not have been much more severe than her present, and did not the occasion warrant my attempting to do so now?

I looked at her fixedly in the eyes and made, as well as I could, the passes before her face I had often seen Rebecca make. She resisted; but gradually her opposition ceased. The paroxysms of her hysteria become less vehement. A dazed, vacant look stole over her face. Then, as I continued, the eyes began to close, and she finally fell away into unconsciousness.

My first feeling was one of relief; my next of acute alarm. I had merely wished to soothe her—to tranquilize her. Here she was lifeless on my hands. I tried to waken her, but could not. I splashed water in her

face, but she would not come to. I seized the oars, and began to row desperately for the shore, with my eyes fastened on her. There she lay, with a flush of beauty such as I had never seen before on her face, with the color still in her cheeks and her rich, red lips slightly parted. Her hat had fallen and its satin strings were clutched in her hand. At one moment I thought she had actually stopped breathing, and I came and put my face close to her lips. Thank God! I detected a slight respiration. But it excited me. The touch of her hair intoxicated me; the perfume of her breath maddened me. I looked out guiltily, fearfully, over the waters. The fishing boats anchored off so far idly rocked upon the tide, and all Nature seemed to whisper that we were alone. This sense of absolute power over her added to my terror; it afforded me as much alarm as her actual condition. I picked up the oars again and rowed with all my might; then, as I rowed, the reverse passes Rebecca Seaton had made to awaken her flashed back to my memory, and I came over towards her and repeated, as well as I could remember, the same. Slowly but surely she responded to these also, and at last I brought her back to life.

But others possessed the same power over her that I did. I must prevent her helplessness from being preyed on any longer by establishing my right to guard her. A resolution, sprung from my passion and my excitement, seized me. Through my troubled mind, the phases of my extraordinary situation thrust themselves one after another. The courts of the land had pronounced us one; was I not justified in confirming this verdict? They held

me to the responsibilities of a husband; should I not equally enjoy the rights? Suppose she were even willing to apply for a divorce, he might return before it would be granted. What then? His absence ought to bar his claims without a divorce. Ninety-nine chances out of a hundred he was dead; and even if he were not, let him who could get her from me.

"Stay just where you are," I said, as I turned the bow of the boat in a different direction.

She looked at me inquiringly in a dazed, half-sleepy way as I headed for the village, which was really closer than her father's residence.

At the end of some half an hour we reached the village wharf, and, assisting my companion ashore, I made the boat fast.

"Where are you taking me?" she inquired.

"I am taking you to the minister's," I said curtly.

"You are to be my bride."

"The responsibility, then, be on your own head," she murmured in the same listless way.

"I accept it," I answered.

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XLV.

Now, while I recognize in mesmerism a yet unmanageable force in nature, I consider it merely physical and possessed by a limited number of people over a certain other limited few. That it is often combined with sham and deceit is no proof of its inefficacy, but whether it is destined to become of great practical value to the world is another matter. At least Dr. Henry once told me that in the French navy, where surgeons are obliged to study it as one of the branches of their profession, the experience is that not one man in ten can develop sufficient power to exercise it, and even a smaller percentage of patients are able to be subordinated to it sufficiently to permit of being operated on.

Nevertheless, in spite of the premonitions I had received the foregoing evening in the summer house, it came upon me like a revelation that I was one of the few that possessed this extraordinary power—I, the most prosaic of men. The discovery explained much that had been incomprehensible to me in Edna's previous behavior, and particularly that fear of my touch, which I had so frequently observed. She had long read the power that unsuspected by myself, lay dormant in me, and she had evidently dreaded my discovering it as much as I dreaded it after it was revealed to me. One word more on a

subject that Dr. Henry had touched upon. It is this that the habit of being mesmerized grows on one like any other habit, till it becomes as strongly developed a craving as that for opium or alcohol, the patient becoming, however, instead of hardened to its use, more sensitive to its influence by each repetition. In this way I can alone account for the secret struggle I had frequently noticed in Edna—a struggle by her physical nature for something that her moral nature both resented and feared. Though she appreciated, before we reached the church, what she was going to be called upon to do, her will power was yet benumbed, and I have no doubt now that her acquiescence was merely because in my inexperience I had not completely de-mesmerized her; she offered no opposition, indeed, to my will, but she trembled violently when I placed upon her finger the ring the minister supplied me with.

“The responsibility be on your own head,” she repeated again with the same listless air, after the informal ceremony was over; then I kissed her, and she nestled up to me like a frightened bird as we slowly walked back to the boat.

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XLVI.

I HAD done what I deemed right, but I had acted on the spur of an all-blinding passion. Scarcely had I taken the step before I began to realize the madness of my conduct and the wild responsibilities that I had assumed. That the minister had not refused to perform the sacred rite struck me now as extraordinary, but very likely he shared in common with the village the belief that I was veritably the man who had married her under the name of George Fitzamble, and had called upon him merely to make good any lack of formality in my previous marriage. On arriving home my wife pleaded that no change should be made for the present in her mode of life, and I left her to communicate the tidings to her father in the manner she deemed wisest.

When I reached my own quarters I learned from the parlor maid that Mr. Crummels had availed himself of a moment when the eye of his faithful spouse was removed from him to slip back to the village again, and that the old colored man had just been directed to go in search of the delinquent. Such was the condition of affairs at the cottage, and I had hardly been home a quarter of an hour when I saw the sable emissary start off. Indeed, I appreciated now the reasons why debating societies were a painful subject in that household, and I inferred that atten-

dance at them was an idiomatic form of expression used by Mr. Crummels to define a carouse. Infrequent as were these lapses from virtuous paths, however, they made ample amends by their severity and long-extended duration when they did occur; yet, smile as I might, the anxiety and embarrassment, not to say grief, of the household added to the weight that was upon me.

That very phrase of Edna's, "The responsibility of your act be, then, on your own head," recurred and recurred again to my memory.

After dinner I had intended going over to her father, but before I had finished my meal his servant brought a note from Edna to say that he had been detained in the city over-night and that she had resolved, as for herself, to retire early. Ah God! Could I have foreseen my next meeting with her and what was to transpire during the interval! Her very refusal to see me threw me back on my own thoughts, and my nervous irritability and anticipation of coming evil which I had experienced this morning were redoubled now. I got hold of a novel and tried to read. Why in God's name are all our modern romances conceived on such hackneyed lines? Is it owing to the copyright laws? The heroine, the daughter of rich but vulgar parents, marries an English earl; the scene, all but the first chapter—very often that—laid in England, of whose society the author is as ignorant as a Kalmuck. What arrant snobs we are who have to go to the English peerage for our characters and to foreign lands for the scenes of our tales, when here within eighteen miles of New York such adventures as are about to happen to me could be utilized

by the romancer ! Let us create a peerage, if only to keep our beauties, both real and fictitious, at home. I picked up a second book ; it contained the rhapsodies of a widow over a two-year-old cigar stump belonging to a defunct husband. This was a realistic novel. I threw it aside and took up a third. The last was actually loathsome. I don't set up to be a moralist, but when a young lady suffers herself to be ravished by a former lover, and then, because her husband kills him, allows her better half to be killed in turn before her eyes without changing a muscle of her face—killed, though a word from her would save his life—well then, I say, it is about time to cry halt. Yes, the only approach to originality in the modern novel is indecency, which takes the place of talent. Then I took up a paper. There was the usual assortment of horrors. "Pretty Polly Poggins Found in the School-House with her Tongue Cut Out," is the first pleasing paragraph. "Slays his Son with a Six-Shooter," is the next. "Eloped with a Bartender," is another. "Fires the Hospital" is the next ; winding up with "Danny Daniels to Dangle To-day"—all set off with the same wealth of alliteration and of startling type I had so often seen employed in my own case. Are we a nation of bloodthirsty ruffians ? I asked myself, or is it only that we thirst for these bloodthirsty details ? I have often heard it said that crime is a disease, therefore contagious ; do we not encourage it and disseminate it by the wide publicity we give it ?

Everything I touched, books or papers, instead of tending to cheerful thoughts, on the contrary increased the doleful frame of mind I was in. Nevertheless, one

paper I had glanced over gave me an explanation of Mr. Dalzelle's unexpected departure to the city. It was the *Evening Cyclone*, and I learned that the strikers in the bobtail street-car road, of which he was a director, had at last resorted to violence. They had thrown a car across the track and were endeavoring to prevent the police clearing the way. Not only so, but the strikers in a large sugar refinery were held by some to be responsible for burning that building, and the long-threatened labor troubles seemed about to culminate, as they had done a few years before at Pittsburgh, in blood and flame. A circumstance that did not tend to relieve my anxiety occurred about half-past ten o'clock namely, the old watch dog, who was usually tied at night to one of the posts of the piazza, poor old Tobey, began making an awful ado, and, when we got to him, expired in our arms with evidences of great internal agony. My thoughts thereupon reverted to the organ-grinder at whom the poor dog had barked this very morning; while its death increased the anxiety of Mrs. Crummels, too, and the other females of the family, for her husband had not yet returned, nor even had old Abe, who had gone in quest of him. It was past eleven before I retired to my room, and, finding sleep impossible, I sat down near the window and looked out into the darkness. The wind was sighing through the trees, and as I thought of the dog's death I got out my pistol and carefully reloaded it. After that I lay down on the bed and waited, listening to the clock as it ticked away time. It was just striking twelve when I heard carriage wheels grinding on the gravel. Naturally imagin-

ing it to be old Abe bringing back Mr. Crummels in the buggy, I gave a sigh of relief and prepared to go to sleep. Mrs. Crummels evidently was of the same opinion. I heard her descend the stairs in her slippers; I heard her unbar and unlock the door; then there was a pause, succeeded by a smothered conversation which I inferred to be with her spouse. Again I distinguished the wheels crunching the gravel as the vehicle drove away. I was turning over with an increased sense of satisfaction that Mr. Crummels had at last got back, and the horse was being driven over to the stable, when I heard footsteps approaching my door, after that a knock. I got up hurriedly, but before I could open it Mrs. Crummels pushed an envelope under the sill. It was a telegram. I broke it open hastily, and read these words :

“Lyman just returned from Chicago bringing information that may solve mystery. Call upon me early tomorrow, but in the meanwhile be on your guard, as you are in imminent danger from those who know no mercy.

“REGINALD P. STAR.”

“They’ve just sent it from the depot,” Mrs. Crummels said. “It was received at the office early in the evening, but they could get no one to bring it over.”

“Then call the person back who brought it.”

“It’s too late, sir; he is by this time far out of reach.”

I requested Mrs. Crummels to wait for a moment, until I could decide whether to tell her or not the substance of the telegram. If I told her it might unduly alarm her, and yet she, as well as the entire household, shared any peril that

might threaten me. Certainly no attempt was likely to be made upon me without superior force to back it up, and, under these circumstances, it might be advisable either to get the family out of the house altogether or to secure assistance from Mr. Dalzelle. Mr. Dalzelle was away in the city, however, and it would scarcely be right to draw upon his limited resources. Besides, if I went myself for such assistance, I would leave the house entirely unprotected during my absence. On the whole, the best thing to do was to ask Mrs. Crummels to send one of the servants, or even one of her daughters, over to a cottage at the further end of the property, which was inhabited by a couple of men who worked for Mr. Dalzelle.

Mrs. Crummels started off down-stairs on her mission, only to return a moment later with the reply that her daughters absolutely refused to go, while the servants vowed they would throw up their situations first. Explaining to her, therefore, as much as I deemed necessary, I persuaded her to go back to her room and wait for her husband, whose return, I argued, could now be not much longer delayed. Then, to be ready for any emergency, I slipped on my clothes and lay down on my bed again with my pistol fully cocked at my side.

Now, it is a curious fact going to prove the perversity of human nature, that when you desire to sleep it often happens that you are unable to do so, while if you wish to stay awake you never can. I instinctively recognized that probably at no period of my life had I more cause to keep my eyes open, and yet their lids never felt so heavy. I felt that some event of terrible import was

on the eve of occurrence, some event which was to bring to a head the extraordinary circumstances of the past few months; and yet I almost believe that had I been suspended by a cord about the neck I would have dropped into the untimely slumber that I did.

I was disturbed by the slamming of a door. I do not say I was awakened by it, but I was brought back to a state of semi-consciousness. For a moment I lay there drowsily reasoning on the occurrence, which I was just attributing to the entrance into the house of a horrible genius, who had taken possession of it, when my own door was burst open and a flood of burning light struck my eyes.

"Get up! get up!" I heard a familiar voice cry. "The house is on fire, and in another moment the stairs will go."

I sprang to my feet, forgetting my pistol, and found Mrs. Crummels and the household gathered in the hall. They were nearly paralyzed with terror, and were wringing their hands at the sight of the flames leaping all about them and at the volumes of smoke. How the fire had secured such a headway before it was discovered seemed at the time a miracle, only to be accounted for by the long drought and the consequent dryness of the aged timbers. I learned afterwards that kerosene was to a greater degree responsible. The wall paper was actually burning when I reached the hall.

"Follow me!" I cried, and, seizing a female in each arm, I pushed the rest helter-skelter down the stairs, which were crackling under our feet. Though the flames seemed veritably to leap after us, we reached the lower

floor in safety, and I set to work to unbolt the main door. I attacked it with a desperation little short of fury for the heat was terrible. The hinges turned outward, but, though I had slipped all the bolts, I found I could not move it. I applied all my weight to it, and at last it swung open, and I was precipitated out by the very force of my own exertions. Necessarily I was unprepared to resist any attack; I felt myself suddenly caught by each arm; I saw four masked faces near my own; I saw the women who were following me thrust back into the burning building, and then, as the door was closed upon them, "God damn you!" I heard whispered in my ear, "we've got you at last."

The shrieks of those women still ring in my ears. Suddenly they ceased and an ominous silence ensued, broken only by the roaring of the flames. Yet I fought desperately; I would rather die than bear on my conscience the death of those poor creatures because of me. I offered my fortune, everything in the world that I had, if they should only be saved from that fiery furnace. As well appeal to demons; the whites of my captors' eyes gleamed vindictively through their masks as they bound me, and but for that one sentence they said not a word. After I was firmly secured they laid me down on the grass for a moment, and stopped to survey their work. They *were* demons, and the light and the shooting flames were those of hell.

It was not till the roof had fallen in with a mighty crash that I was raised to my feet and an arm was run through each of mine; I was hurried down the old familiar lane

towards the shore. Here there was a boat in charge of a fifth masked man, and into this I was forced. Then the others entered, and, shoving off, they took their seats and rowed with muffled oars out into the still waters. Tied as I was, and lying in the stern, I resembled the subject of that famous picture by Gérôme, called, I think, "The Captured Slave."

I must think of something else than my present plight; to reflect on that would make me crazy. Perhaps I was crazy. Could it be? Yes, it must be. I was mad! But this was my bridal night. "Ha! ha! ha!" I laughed aloud. I saw a knife flash before my eyes in the moonlight. I courted the thrust. "You're cowards," I cried. "I dare you to strike!"

There was a hurried movement as the black masks drew their heads together. Then one of them, coming over to me, slipped out a bottle; my head was thrust back, and I felt a pungent liquid gurgling down my throat. I must swallow it, if only to prevent strangulation.

Yet, this must all be a nightmare, a continuation of my dreams. It was too sudden to be real—too abrupt a transition from when I had lain down on my couch, wondering what was to come. But this was my bridal night! This fact refused to withdraw itself from my thoughts. Ha! my bridal night, and I had been torn away. What would *she* think of it? Great God! And this was the very same fate at a similar period that had met her *first* bridegroom. The idea was grotesque. What terrible concomitance of circumstance! What outrageous coincidence of fate could explain that? How would she take

this second repetition of the drama? I would drown myself. I would work myself over the side of the boat. I knew I was being reserved for a fate worse than that from which I had been seized; therefore I was only selecting a lesser evil. I tried to lift myself over the gunwale, but found my energies were departing. Had the liquid I had swallowed been drugged? If so, it was beginning to work. The black masks themselves grew indistinct, and the moon seemed swimming and ducking like a buoy over my head. At last the moon and the black masks disappeared, as it were, in a mad dance together, and black, impenetrable darkness settled on me.

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XLVII.

To make clear the events that are to follow I will relieve the reader of my own personality for a short time, and ask him to board the next morning that huge leviathan which is slowly approaching New York. She has lain off the bar at Sandy Hook all night, and the deep incrustation of salt on her smoke stacks indicates a long voyage. An expert in mercantile affairs could distinguish by her flags that she trades between New York and South America, the land of silver-mines and flowers. Her passengers are gradually emerging from their cabins to the decks, and by the time she draws opposite Staten Island they grow into a dense crowd, all pressing forward to the bows to catch a glimpse of their future home.

And they are well repaid. Seen in all the glory of an early morning, the City of Cities rises like a newborn Venus from the main, with the sun touching as with electric fire, the weather-vanes of her numerous spires, and flooding her somewhat dirty streets with the promise of a better local government. To the right the huge suspension bridge springs an ethereal link to join New York in wedlock with the City of Churches, and to the left the Statue of Liberty rears her head aloft, proudly emblematic of every citizen's privilege of voting early, often, and late. As you get nearer the city

you can distinguish the trains on the elevated roads like huge snakes twisting around the Battery, and the lofty façades of the Field building and the Produce Exchange towering as red-clothed giants amongst the pigmies. Here entering and leaving their slips, are ferryboats freighted to the water's edge with black massed humanity on their daily round of toil, for New York is awakening to another busy day—such a busy day as even strikes can only partially interfere with, and which can nowhere else be comprehended save in a land where men work as much for the sake of working as for the earnings of their work.

Among those most interested in the sight, is a tall, handsome man, in the extreme bow. He has a bronzed face, on his head is a wide-brimmed sombrero, and a newspaper is in each hand. He has a quick, nervous manner, and his whole style and get-up would argue an extended residence in Southern climes. At last the steamer draws near her dock, but what with the delay caused by getting several vessels that had anchored in her course out of her track, and the parting of a hawser or two, it is nearly ten before she finally disembarks her passengers. Among the first to land is the stranger we have described. He appears in a special hurry, and, directing that his baggage should remain in the Custom House till called for, he leaves a bright gold piece in the itching palm of an officer.

Ten minutes afterwards he is bowling along in a coupé, and if your ear were close to the window you might hear his smothered curses at the pavements as he goes over the ruts and into the holes. The papers are still in his

hands, and every now and then he looks at the advertisement sheet of one of them and at the following notice :

“ If George Fitzamble will make his whereabouts known to, or will call upon or address, Mr. Winkle P. Slocum, Attorney-at-Law, No. 228 Broadway, he will learn something to his advantage.”

The other paper contains a full description of a lawsuit that by this time has grown stale, great as was the interest it had excited a short time ago. Anon he reads the last, and anon he reads the advertisement—that is, as well as the villanous condition of the pavements will allow him, and which he every now and then compares with those of Valparaiso, but very much to the latter's advantage. Here and there, too, the streets are blocked by the strikes along the car routes, and he looks at the lines of listless people standing about and at the solid files of police that occasionally disperse them by causing them to move on. Probably these sights recall the normal condition of things in that land of chronic revolution from which he has just come. At all events they somewhat delay him. On arriving at 228 Broadway he searches the names on the signboard in the hall, and, learning that Mr. Slocum occupies the fourth floor, he goes up the stairs three steps at a time. A moment later he bursts into the office of that gentleman with an impetuosity that quite upsets the staid, old-fashioned clerks whom the distinguished advocate employed to obfuscate him. Three minutes afterwards he is confronting Mr. Slocum himself, who, in spite of strikes, is at his post, and who, rising in evident astonishment, wrinkles his

nose more than he had ever been known to wrinkle it in my behalf.

"Yes, here I am," exclaimed the stranger, dropping into a chair before the confused solicitor, "safe and sound, come in answer to this advertisement."

"Who are you, anyhow?"

"I am Henry Simoni, known, by this lawsuit, to f.c.me as George Henry Fitzamble."

"What relation to my client?"

"I am his twin brother."

"*E Pluribus Unum!*" This was the strongest expletive Mr. Slocum ever permitted himself to indulge in, and was reserved for occasions of the most momentous character alone. "But I don't remember his mentioning that he had a twin brother," he recovered himself to add, with an air of sudden doubt. "It seems to me that he would certainly have given so natural an explanation of his dilemma."

"I don't suppose he knew that I was alive. I left my father's house in a fit of boyish pride, enlisted in the army, fought with Grant in the Wilderness, was captured, and remained in prison till the close of hostilities. On returning to my former home I found that my father had died and my mother had moved away. I hadn't sufficient means to prosecute any very exhaustive search, and was obliged to shift for myself. Besides, I felt that I had been badly treated, and that if my family cared for me they should have taken more pains that on my return from a Southern prison I could find them. But let me know

my brother's whereabouts ; I'm in a hurry to resume my acquaintance and will explain everything to him."

"Your brother is somewhere in the country, I was told only yesterday. It is absolutely impossible now to reach him quicker than by taking the boat at four o'clock this afternoon. Go on with your story, therefore, and if you don't mind I'll have a stenographer take it down verbatim and put you under oath. One never knows what may happen."

"I have no objections," was the reply. "I suppose it's only necessary for me to touch upon those circumstances of my past life that seem to bear upon the fix I've got my brother in. To tell you the truth, ever since the papers reached me in South America I have been trying to see whether any actions of mine prior to my marriage may not have conduced to his predicament, and I think they have. It might be better for me to give you the points as briefly as I can at first, and you can put them down on paper in proper shape afterwards. I will then attach my signature with all due formality."

"I should think that would answer," replied the lawyer.

"Very well, then. Suffice it to say that up to seven years ago I led rather a haphazard, rollicking sort of a life, with little profit to any one, still less to myself ; now a deck-hand of a steamboat, now ferrying logs down the Mississippi, and once I was on the point of enlisting again in the army. Five years ago, however, I drifted to Chicago, and as the labor troubles—which I see are still with us—were just then beginning, I secured employment

as a Pinkerton detective. The service was congenial to me, and having a natural aptitude, I suppose, for such kind of work, I was retained on the permanent force. In the course of my profession I chanced upon the name of my brother connected with an extensive sale of cattle in the stockyards of that city. It was some time after the sale had been made that I learned of it, but I did not let go of the clue, and finally learned that he had come to New York. Then I obtained a leave of absence and followed him here. This accounts for the coincidence of my brother and myself being in New York at the same time. Circumstances, however, induced me to turn around and leave the city just as I arrived at the depot, thus preventing me from communicating with him, and causing me to postpone my reunion to a later date. If you wish to know why, an extensive burglary had occurred at the villa of one of the summer residents at Newport, which had baffled the experience of the local police. A friend of mine whom I had known at Chicago in the detective force, happened to meet me at the Grand Central Depot as I was just getting out of the cars. He it was who told me about the case, and, further, he informed me that he had resolved to undertake its unravelment. As the reward was very large and the circumstances would not admit of any delay, he induced me by the dint of much persuasion to accompany him to Newport at once and to lend him my assistance. On arriving there I adopted an alias, as the necessity of my business had often required before, and registered at the Ocean House as an ordinary guest. During my investigations it was necessary to keep up the

character of a gentleman of leisure, which I had assumed, and I thus became acquainted with the plaintiff in this suit. To cut the matter short, I became infatuated with her. I lost my interest in the work for which I had come, and at last told my friend I was going to marry and begin the world anew. You see, though well born, I had descended in the social scale, and I hardly thought the nature of my occupations and past life would meet her father's approval; I even grew ashamed of my profession, for I doubted whether she would marry me if I told her what I was. I resolved, therefore, like many a better man, to secure her first and inform her afterwards of my true condition in life.

"Now, don't interrupt me till I have finished, for here comes the most interesting part of the story. Some time back, in Chicago, I had devoted myself to the task of unraveling the secrets of the Anarchists, whose doings were beginning to arouse public attention. My course of action naturally excited their enmity, but because of my connection with the police they likely feared to try anything on in Chicago. Nevertheless, I was a marked character, and when I came East to look up my brother they had me shadowed, which their affiliations with the criminal classes rendered it easy for them to have done. As no occasion offered at Newport to pay me off, however, they waited till my return to New York, and then they 'shanghaied' me almost before the very eyes of my bride—"

" 'Shanghaied' you !"

" Yes ; that's the professional jargon for kidnapping,

and this is the way they did it : I had brought down my bride by the afternoon train that reached here at nine o'clock in the evening. We drove immediately to Blank's Hotel on Broadway, and, while my wife retired to her room to brush up after her trip, I went into the restaurant to order something to eat. After leaving my order I was just going up for my wife to fetch her down when a card was brought to me accompanied by the message that my visitor was waiting at the door in a carriage. He desired particularly to see me, if only for a moment; but as he was crippled and any exertion was painful, he begged me to step outside instead of requiring him to come into the hotel to me. The request struck me as a little unusual, and it seemed additionally inexplicable that my arrival should be already known; but my curiosity was piqued, so I went out. I found the vehicle drawn up a little beyond the lights from the hotel entrance, and occupied by a single person. On gaining the doorstep, he made a sign of caution, and, beginning to speak of the Newport burglary, requested to know the amount I would give for the recovery of the stolen articles. His objection to entering the hotel now seemed logical. He was anxious to avoid any unnecessary publicity on his mission as a go-between. Consequently, when he asked me to step inside the carriage for greater precaution, I did so, unsuspecting of treachery. No sooner had I entered, however, and shut the door behind me, than he slipped his arm about my neck, and, with a power amply refuting any question of physical infirmity, choked my cries, while another man, whom I had not noticed before, entered the carriage by

the opposite door. Then one of them, I hardly know which, pressed a handkerchief soaked with chloroform under my nose. The attack was so sudden, and I was so completely off my guard, that I was unable to offer any effective resistance, and before I could prevent it I felt myself losing consciousness, for I am particularly sensitive to narcotics in any form.

"When I next opened my eyes I found myself on board a steamer bound for Valparaiso. I will give you the particulars of my trip later."

"Are such things possible?" asked Mr. Slocum in astonishment.

"For fifty dollars I could kidnap any one you chose to name, from the President down."

"But why did you not communicate what had happened to you?"

"I did. As soon as I arrived at Valparaiso I wrote my wife a long letter, giving the full particulars."

"She never could have received it."

"She never received it! Well, the only way I can account for that is that the country was in a state of revolution, and the mail subject to constant depredations."

"Your story, at all events, throws light on the extraordinary series of attempts that have been made on your brother's life," said Mr. Slocum. "They mistook him for you."

Thereupon the lawyer gave a brief résumé of these attempts, omitting the last, of which he had no knowledge, as he neither yet had heard even of my marriage.

"Yes, that must account for it. I found pinned inside

my shirt, when I woke up on board the steamer, a letter stating that I had got off very easily, but that if I ever returned again my life should pay the penalty. When my brother appeared on the scene they mistook him for me, I suppose, and naturally thought I had come back in spite of orders and to bring them to justice. He is lucky to have escaped. All these labor troubles must have encouraged them."

"But it is a most extraordinary case, in spite of his resemblance to you," said Mr. Slocum musingly. "I mean that the courts themselves should have been deceived."

"Not half so extraordinary as this. I cut it out of a back number of the New York *World* which the pilot brought out to us." And he presented a long clipping from that journal dated August 16. "Here is a man named Robert Leeson Porter imprisoned for months because of a like resemblance to one Scott Partin who had committed murder. Had it not been for the prominent paper that brought his case before the public he might have been hanged."

"But this shampooing, then—I mean this 'shanghaing' business," exclaimed Mr. Slocum confusedly, who nevertheless, finding himself routed out of one intrenchment, retreated to another before giving up. "You must admit that this is a slight strain on one's credulity."

"I can meet your objection even on that point by the public journals, too. In the New York *Telegram* of last June 16, which also contained an advertisement for my return, appeared this letter from a man who had met exactly the same fate as mine. I have cut it out, and here

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it is for you to read. What strikes me as the most extraordinary is the coincidence of my finding these two cases, acknowledged to be accurate by every one, and in two of the most prominent daily papers of this very city, almost precisely similar to mine. In the face of these, no one has the right to say my story is extravagant."

"Truth is stranger than fiction."

Mr. Slocum finally gave up the citadel of his doubts.

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"Let me ask one thing more, however, but on a different line. Why have you been so long away? Was it your dread of these Anarchist people?"

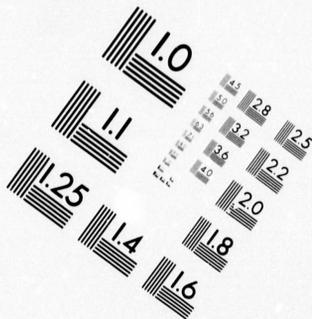
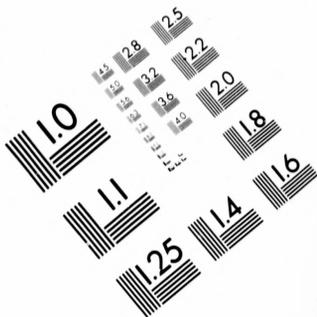
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"Most assuredly not. In my letter to Edna I gave my reasons, and these I will only explain to her. This, however, I will say: that when I woke to consciousness I was very ill from the effects of the chloroform. A passenger on board, a South-American, extended me his sympathy, and, taking a fancy to me, finally offered me a position as foreman in a silver-mine he had back in the interior. It was, however, not a very attractive berth. Three of his former agents had been shot by the bandits that infested that region, and four had died of South American shakes, as they call it. His object in offering it to me was principally because of my nationality, and because he thought that the grit of a Yankee could surmount every obstacle. As it turned out, I *did* surmount them, and, though the mine was supposed to be exhausted, I had shipped out some improved machinery from Chicago, and made it pay very well. Then I bought a share in it, and expect to get a fortune out of it before I've finished. If my brother is in that way inclined, I will let him in on the 'ground floor.'

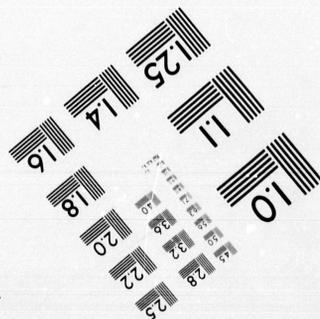
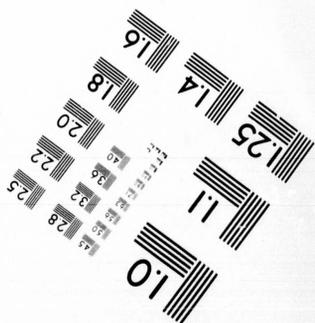
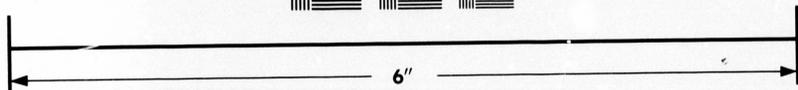
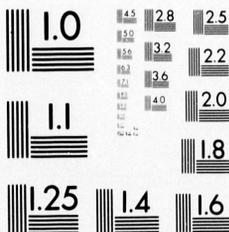
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But I must see my wife as soon as possible ; such I consider to be my duty."

"I think if you don't see her soon you won't see her as *your* wife," said Mr. Slocum dryly.

"What do you mean?"

"It looks very much to me as if your brother's affections were engaged. He's been stopping down near them in the country, and he follows her about like a shadow."

"Great God!" exclaimed the stranger, and he walked over to the window and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"My advice is not to drop in too suddenly on her," went on the lawyer; "but if you intend going down to see her, allow me to suggest your stopping at her father's city residence, and learning exactly where his country place is. I think the landing is called Rocky Point, but I'm not quite sure, though I know the boat starts at four o'clock."

The stranger took up his hat to leave, but was detained at the door by Mr. Slocum.

"There is one other circumstance I ought to mention, and which, but for the interesting nature of your communication, I would have thought of mentioning to you before. It is that your brother has lately secured other counsel. It might be advisable for you to see him also. His name is Mr. Reginald P. Star. Strictly speaking, I ought to have turned you over to him at first. His address is — Broadway."

XLVIII.

NEVERTHELESS, despite this intelligence, Henry Simoni, as he must now be called, has himself driven from Mr. Slocum's to the apartment house of Mr. Dalzelle instead of to Mr. Star's. Arrived here, he questions the porter, and learns that, instead of being in the country, Mr. Dalzelle had remained in the city over-night, and that his daughter had unexpectedly returned but half an hour ago to town. He also learns that the cause of her coming is some very shocking, not to say tragic, event that had occurred at Rocky Point.

The porter could give no very accurate information, stating that he was new to the post he filled. He thought, however, that Mr. Dalzelle had not yet seen his daughter, as he had stopped in the city over-night and had gone to his office long before her arrival. She had just sent a messenger down-town for him in hot haste. She was upstairs alone, and if the gentleman desired any further information he had better go up and question her himself.

"Suppose you go and ask her first if she will receive me," observes the stranger, with a catch in his voice.

"What name shall I say?"

"Never mind the name ; simply state that a gentleman desires to see her on very particular business."

"Very good, sir." And the porter disappears, leaving

Henry Simoni in the hall as casually as if he were an ordinary visitor.

Five minutes afterwards the porter returns.

"If you will walk up, sir, she will receive you."

For a moment he hesitates, then, gripping the banisters with a nervous grasp, the visitor mounts the stairs. At the fifth floor he stops again, but at last rings the bell with trembling hand. After a few moments' delay the door is opened by a woman—a woman so pale and ghost-like we scarce recognize her.

"Who asks for Edna Dalzelle?" she inquires. Then the long-deserted wife and the errant husband are face to face.

Half an hour after this meeting, or, to be precise, at exactly three o'clock, Henry Simoni proceeds in a condition of great agitation to Mr. Star's, whose address Mr. Slocum had given him. To Mr. Star he repeats in substance the story he had told Mr. Slocum, and communicates to him in addition all the particulars he had learned of my late abduction. This fails to surprise Mr. Star, as it would seem that it ought to do, at least to any one unacquainted with the contents of the telegram he had sent me the previous evening. Henry Simoni himself expresses his surprise that Mr. Star is not surprised, whereupon Mr. Star opens the door of the adjoining room and surprises Mr. Simoni by summoning the detective who had so lately arrived from Chicago in my interest. Thus the two detectives, the one from Chicago and the ex-detective from Valparaiso, are brought face to face, to the

mutual astonishment of each and with mutual expressions of pleasure at seeing each other still in the flesh.

The business of Henry Simoni, however, seems of such all-absorbing moment that the renewal of his acquaintance is confined to a few brief words. These over, he refers to my abduction, and, the two laying their heads together with that of Mr. Star as a third, it is resolved, after much discussion, to proceed forthwith to Rebecca Seaton's.

Nearly two hours have been consumed at Mr. Star's, consequently it is now near five o'clock before this committee of three sally forth. Arrived at Rebecca Seaton's, they are informed by Theophilus that she is invisible, but whether she is at home or really out is not vouchsafed.

Here there is another hurried consultation, after which Mr. Star leads the way to Dr. Henry's, only to meet with a similar disappointment. A very active afternoon our trio are having, since from Dr. Henry's they proceed to Mr. Dalzelle's. Every one they seek, however, appears to vanish at the moment of need, and they are informed here also by the porter that Edna has gone out. This intelligence seems to puzzle them extremely, and they take a hasty dinner at a neighboring restaurant while talking it over.

The next place visited is the College of Physicians, on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Twenty-third street, but apparently with equal lack of success in finding whom or what they want, as they start off again, and visit from there the Police Headquarters in Mulberry street. Again they

seem baffled, for, doubling on their track, they return to Rebecca's. But all this crossing and recrossing of their track, this visiting and doubling and dining, have consumed time, and the shades of night are falling as they reach her familiar doorsteps. Some suspicion connected with Dr. Henry and Rebecca they evidently have conceived, and again they are confronted by Theophilus, who somewhat reluctantly admits them into the hall, and, at their urgent request, finally into the office.

Mr. Star assumes the rôle of spokesman, as he raises his hand to the chandelier and turns up the gas.

"Theophilus," he observes, "we wish to see your mistress."

The manner of Theophilus, as previously intimated, was never prepossessing.

"So you want to see the missus, does you?" he replied laconically. "Well, that's very flatterin' to her—very flatterin' indeed."

"Is she in the house?" pursued the lawyer.

"Well, I don't see her," answered the youth, looking vacantly about him.

"For we were thinking," continued Mr. Star, "that she might inform us what had become of Mr. Aaron Simoni."

"Oh! you was thinkin' that, was you?" went on Theophilus in the same sneering tone. "Did it take three of yous to think that out?"

At this moment the detective from Chicago interposed.

"Theophilus," he said curtly, "if you don't tell us where your mistress is we're going to arrest you."

The young man threw up his hands in ironic delectation.

"How ecstatic!" he said. "A nice striped suit, which is so fashionable now, and nuthin' to do but sit around all day so as not to interfere with any reg'lar trade. Smuther evenin', I guess, howsomever."

"No, we'll take you right off with us now," exclaimed the detective, slightly nettled.

"No, you won't," said Theophilus in a different tone, at last giving up banter.

"And why won't we?"

"Because you ain't got no warrant, nor is there any law to make a person answer foolish questions."

The detective threw open his coat so as to disclose his badge.

"Very pretty," said Theophilus, still unconquered; "but, however captivatin' to the ladies, it don't captivate me. Keep it for Chicago, my innocent; it don't wash in New York."

"Theophilus," observed Henry Simoni, coming to the rescue of his baffled comrades, "if you'll give us the information we want, this bill is yours." And, to the dismay of the other two gentlemen, he held up before Theophilus a note of one hundred dollars.

A sudden change came over the young man.

"Now, gents, you're talking business," he said. "Sit down. S'pose we call it five."

"Well, if you will give me such information as I wish, and this results in rescuing my brother, I *will* make it five."

Henry Simoni's two companions shrugged their shoulders in disapproval, while the sallow complexion of Theo-

philus actually became livid, as the perspiration started out in beads all over his face.

"How will you fix it so that I'll be sure you won't go back on your word?" he asked cautiously.

"I'll pay you by installments."

"How do I know it ain't flash?"

"Because I guess you're 'cute enough to tell a good note from a bad one."

"Lay her down on the table," said Theophilus, "and I'll test her." Thereupon he slipped his finger in his mouth, and then pressed it firmly down on one corner of the note. "I guess I'll risk it," he said, closely scrutinizing his finger. "There's only one man that makes 'queer' of that denomination, and his color always comes off. She's good enough for me."

"Very well, then; as you are satisfied, I am going to trust you by making a clean breast of our dilemma," resumed my brother. "The situation is exactly this: Aaron Simoni has been kidnapped. We have suspicions by whom, but we do not know where he is held. We also have a suspicion that your mistress knows, and possibly you too. In consideration of his having signed her bonds yesterday, we hoped that we could get Dr. Henry to obtain this information from her. We therefore called at his house, but, though his office hours were not over, he was out. Next we returned to Miss Dalzelle's, also in the hope that she might persuade your mistress to tell us, but she too had left her house. The fact of her going out is somewhat peculiar, because when last seen, only a few hours before, she was in very great distress, and more

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fitted for bed than an afternoon's outing. Next we went to the College of Physicians, but could learn nothing of Dr. Henry there. Now, I said I was going to try and purchase from you the information about my brother, and about one or two other facts besides ; further, I said I would pay you by installments ; therefore I will give you this hundred-dollar bill first if you will truthfully tell me where Miss Dalzelle is at this very moment."

Theophilus got up from his chair, looked cautiously out of the door, then, coming back, "She's up-stairs," he said curtly.

Henry Simoni presented the bill, which was fresh and crisp, and Theophilus grabbed it like a hungry shark.

"Where is Dr. Henry?" was the next terse question.

"He's up-stairs with her," answered Theophilus.

Another bill followed, and met a similar fate to the first.

"Where is your mistress?"

Theophilus hesitated a long time before answering this. "She's up-stairs, too," he at last admitted.

A third bill was handed out and pocketed.

"Now tell me, what are they all doing up there? Is your mistress and Dr. Henry cooking up another experiment with Miss Dalzelle?"

"That's a question I won't answer," said Theophilus.

"But if you wish to find your brother, all you've got to do is to follow Dr. Henry and the young lady when they leave the house."

"Very well, then," ejaculated the other detective, again coming to the front. "If you won't answer our questions, we'd better go up-stairs and nip whatever's

going on in the bud. The law would warrant us in doing that much.

Theophilus looked at the speaker with an insolent air. "I guess you're too fresh for this city," he observed. "If you go up-stairs and interfere, it's Aaron Simoni's escape as what you'll be nipping in the bud. You won't learn even where he's detained, for Dr. Henry won't know till just before setting out. The young missus, though she will go with him, never *will* know, because she won't be in her right mind; while as for the missus, if you try to come it rough over her, the most that you will do is to put a porous plaster over her mouth. Now, see here," he continued, turning to my brother, "you've treated me like a gentleman, and I want to help you; so if you will only promise that you won't get the missus into trouble, I'll start you on the right track. She's goin' to put the young woman under the influence of mesmerism, and make her take some character what is similar to that of the people who is holdin' your brother. Dr. Henry has persuaded her to do this in the interest of science, as he calls it; but after his slip-up of the other night, he wants to see with his own eyes how far the young missus will really go when it comes to the point."

"But this experiment—has it to do with my brother?"

"I think it has, but I don't know exactly how, as all that I have learned is from a few remarks as escaped from a key-hole opposite which I happened to be. I'm sure of this, however, that the experiment will be held at the spot where your brother is detained."

"Could it in any manner prove injurious to the lady?"

"I don't think so. A carriage is ordered from Brown's livery stable to be here at eight o'clock. Dr. Henry will put her in after she has been mesmerized, and drive her over direct. It will be somewhere in the neighborhood of Jersey City, and my advice to you is to wait concealed in another carriage till they leave the house, and then follow them."

"But the professor might become aware of our pursuit and give us the slip."

"For ten dollars I guess you could get his driver to change places with you on the box before they start. Then you'd have them under your wing all the time. After you have left them at their destination, you had better drive around to the nearest police station and let the cops know. If I was you I wouldn't return to the house you drive 'em to, without a pretty good force."

"But I fail to see," said Mr. Star, picking up the conversation at this point, "why the best way would not be simply to send up to Dr. Henry, tell him our dilemma, and trust to him to help us out. He is treading on very delicate ground, and he could hardly refuse his assistance when it's a case of rescuing this gentleman's brother."

"Then you don't know the doctor," said Theophilus. "He's a perfect crank on this yere mesmerism. To help you out he would have to give up the experiment, and before doing that he'd sacrifice his own brother, let alone any one else's. If you send up, therefore, and try to make him help you, you'll only be kicking the fat into the fire."

"Well, then," replied Mr. Star, turning to his two companions, "the case, as I understand, can be thus summed up: Rebecca owes your brother a grudge, and won't direct us to the place where he is detained. Dr. Henry might, but would be afraid of foregoing his experiment if he did. Edna can't, and the police, as we are already aware, know nothing. If we go up-stairs and forcibly try to make Rebecca part with her information, we run the risk, as our young friend here epigrammatically expresses it, of upsetting the fat in the fire. And last, but not least, delay is risky. Under the circumstances, there only remains to follow out the advice of Theophilus. He looks like a pious young man, and I have no doubt, in due course of time, will become an ornament to the church. But I must confess things have arrived at a pretty pass when the united talent of Chicago, Valparaiso, and New York can find no other means of discovering the whereabouts of a gentleman who has been made away with in the most public manner than by following a mesmerized girl and a half-cracked professor. Theophilus, on second thought, you had better adopt the law, if only to help me out when I get beyond my depth."

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XLIX.

IN the suburbs of a city closely adjoining New York is a wide reach of waste land, pockmarked here and there with the dilapidated shanties of the squatter and hovels of wood. About one-half of this tract has been filled in and laid out in embryo streets, while the other half merges and is finally lost in an immense swamp, through which a sluggish river like a snake wends its slimy way. On the surface of this river is always an iridescent film of oil, and over the whole district an odor caused by the various other ingredients the stream is used to carry away, breeding a peculiar kind of bird that has greater claims to being regarded as national than the eagle, for it is far braver, more ubiquitous, and is much more intimately associated with the ideas of American life. I mean the American mosquito.

Another description of game that the region abounds in is the festive goat, and of wild animals a peculiar ravenous kind of lean, long-legged biped, with great teeth and small stomach, that, under more favorable surroundings and conditions, might develop into the genus man. These, finding little to their taste in the hovels, fight and wrangle with the goats for any lurking sweetness to be found lingering in the disused tomato can.

In addition to the natural advantages previously mentioned, the beauty of scenery is enhanced towards the west by a large building bearing the cheerful sign of "Metallic Caskets Made Here," while towards the east the tall chimneys of iron foundries and oil factories throw a veil of smoke, when they are in blast, over the sweet beyond.

In short, these are the dumping grounds of the closely adjoining city—the waste land of creation, I might almost say. And when Isaiah, the prophet, spoke of a scene of abomination and of desolation, he must have had in his mind's eye a faint counterpart to this.

Yet, pinched and hungry as are the children of "Misery Flats," they are oftentimes the prey of a still stranger kind of bird than the mosquito, and that, flocking down with the night, causes the children to watch for its shadows with the liveliest terror—ill-favored birds, which, if not armed, like the mosquito, with venomous stings, are yet equipped with long pointed hooks. They are the scavenger birds of the great metropolis raking over the refuse that has been so lavishly distributed here. Gaunt, grizzled, unsavory, foreign-looking birds they are for the most part, with carnivorous beaks, and backs bent at the middle because of much stooping. Each one carrying a lantern, they stretch over the flats till they seem an army of fireflies, muttering strange curses and hunting for rags or bones or any stray child that crosses their path, "*per bacco*." And why not, forsooth? Brought out, by contract under alluring promises of labor, they naturally are not averse to square themselves with a civilization that, once they have spent the little they have

landed with, turns them out to beg, to scratch, to steal, to starve, to die. Nevertheless even these ragpickers have a passing gleam of luxury. Along the edge of "Misery Flats" runs a great railroad line, which in part owns and controls these flats, and occasionally a director, in his private car no less sumptuous than the carriage of a marquis of the old régime, flashes out of the night.

Through plate-glass windows ablaze with light they catch a momentary glimpse, of soft hangings and velvet folds, and, sunk in deeply cushioned seat, of some podgy, turtle-fed man, sipping champagne perhaps. Then these ragpickers shake their iron hooks. In some such style as this their kings and emperors go by. "A king or a president," they mutter, "a director or a marquis. Body of Christ! What difference! Tear of Christ! Does not this man 'control' everything there is to control, from the oil that lights our lanterns down to the iron in our hooks? Does he not control these marshes, ay, and the very wheat in that elevator over there that rises against the distant star-speckled horizon like a black coffin to Hope?" And perhaps they recall on some sunny hillside of Bohemia a little vineyard which they have bartered to the emigration agent of this very man to land them here, and whom they now accuse of "the deep damnation of their taking off."

So the director passes on, like the marquis (controller of marches, if not of marshes, too), letting his light shine before all men that they may see his good works and glorify their Father in heaven for allowing things to be as they are on earth. So passes the director, or perhaps

only you; in the ordinary comfort of the dining-room car, sipping, not champagne, but only lager, oblivious that beer is nectar to those that drink of misery's cup alone.

But to return to these flats, instead of passing through them as the rich and turtle-fed are prone to do. Misery Flats has a heart! A heart, geographically speaking, and such a heart as the hub is to the wheel; a chief center of *revolution*, so to speak—remember that—and which, in order to give especial value to it, I have artistically waited till the last to describe. And this heart has pulsations, and it has light. It has oil lamps standing in its windows. In short, the heart of Misery Flats is incased in the flimsy walls of a high city building which stands out, gaunt, ugly, rickety, solitary, in the dreary waste, midway between the oil factories and the metallic casket ditto, and near enough to be reached by hands from the foundries, ay, and also *mouths*. At night time this house with its every window is aflame, and the inhabitants, poor as they are and distressful, pass it on the opposite side of the street with a shudder. All the atrocities of the universe are not confined to the "Pineries of Michigan"—no, nor to the blood-stained course of the New York aqueduct; for many are the legends of hideous sins and nameless infamies perpetrated here, and mingled with the ribald jest and snatches of song that escape its portals are often heard the stifled scream of ravished maidenhood decoyed into the blazing hell; deeds that the public journals could scarcely find sufficiently startling alliteration to describe, and that even cause the festive goat to quake. Here is the rendezvous, in

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truth, of the carnivorous beaked birds with the iron hooks. And also occasionally of a factory hand whom the oil factories or the blast furnaces throw penniless on the community when they have no further need of his services. Also of a still mote mysterious kind of bird, bird of especial ill-omen, of whom I will have more to say later on.

The ground floor of this attractive residence is occupied as a liquor saloon, the second, third and fourth floors are let out in lodgings (God help the lodgers!), while to what purpose the fifth floor is sanctified will soon be seen.

Over the door is the suggestive signboard, "THE HOUSE OF BLAZES."

L.

In a small room on the top story of this house I, Aaron Simoni, found myself lying when I next opened my eyes, with the only light admitted by a grated window too high up to reach. Judging from the way this light struck through, I inferred the hour to be near one o'clock. I felt dazed, exactly as if I had been drugged, with a sickening sensation in the region of the stomach, rendering me incapable of any exertion, whether physical or mental. Though as yet I was unaware of my brother's existence, narcotics had as serious an effect upon me as on him, and a physician who had once applied them to me for a slight operation afterwards warned me against their use, except in cases of the most urgent necessity. They not only temporarily affected my brain, but the action of my heart, and after the occasion to which I refer I was not myself again for a week's time. Though I forgot this circumstance now as I lay there, I deem it only fair to the reader to mention this in behalf of the outrageous scene that follows, the recollection of which may have been colored by the condition my mind was in.

I remembered the circumstances of the past only vaguely, and as if they were removed from the present by the lapse of years. I wondered, however, what was to be my fate, and why its delay? Then I remembered

Edna, and wondered how she would take this second desertion. The thought of Edna made me mad, and then again the cries of those women as they were thrust back into that fiery hell. Ah! God must have been a monster to have endowed man with "memory!"

I lay down on the floor and tried to sleep away thought, and as I lay there I found I was rolling up against something. It was long and black, a sort of box, and it had a familiar shape of evil import. I got up and examined it. It was a coffin. Was it meant for me? My mind, as I say, was still dazed, and I argued about myself as if I were some one else having no part or parcel with me, but only temporarily inhabiting the carnal structure I was in.

The coffin puzzled me rather than alarmed me; I thought its being there peculiar, that is all. The whole of that afternoon I lay there in a semi-conscious state, taking no notice of the lapse of time. I watched the little streak of sunlight that filtered in through the window fade into dusk, dusk change to evening, evening to night, and I finally heard a far-away peal of bells ring out. I listened to them, trying to count the number of vibrations, till they finally died away. Deep silence followed—a dead, ominous silence that you could feel—and then away down in the distance, I heard the tramp of many feet; faint at first, but rising, and gaining in distinctness as if they were approaching; not as of a tumultuous crowd, but as of one that had a fixed common purpose, a unity of purpose proved by the uniformity of tread. There was something solemn in this regularity. Louder and louder it

grew, till the creaking of the timbers assured me that the people whoever they were had emerged at last on the floor on which I lay. Then I could hear the scraping of chairs, as if they were seating themselves, each one with the same order as if taking a place that had been previously allotted to each. I was absolutely without light, and, as I listened, my hand (for I still lay on the floor) came again in contact with the coffin. Its touch for the first time suggested any idea of terror. I had thought of it in an impersonal way, as if it had been intended for another. Now it made my very flesh creep, and I suddenly connected it with this solemn tramp of men. I rose to my feet, and as I did so the portals were thrown open. I felt myself seized and passed out of the room.

The transition from darkness to light was so abrupt that all I could distinguish was that I was being conducted through a loft improvised into a kind of concert hall or place for political meetings. The walls were hung with a few cheap red flags, and here and there the signs of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" met the eye. The further end of the room was raised in a sort of stage, and on this were two men seated, both well dressed in black clothes, one in the middle of the stage and the other at a table on the right. Between these two was a vacant chair, and in this I was strapped down. After the commotion caused by my entrance had somewhat subsided, the man in the middle of the stage, who had a weak but intellectual cast of countenance, rose and looked over the audience. This, as I was now able for the first time to notice, was composed for the most part of the very dregs

of civilization, male and female. Here and there, however, like sheep that had strayed amongst wolves, were a few pallid, long-haired individuals of a social status equal to that of the man who had risen to speak, and I think to these he unconsciously addressed himself.

"Friends and brothers," he said, "I bid you greeting. Without unnecessary preliminaries, it will be sufficient for me to state that I have not called you this evening together without a special object. To fully appreciate this object, and to explain the presence of this man [pointing to me] in your midst, it will be necessary, however, to touch upon the past history of our society. As chairman of the Executive Committee of the Brotherhood for the Rejuvenation of Society, I have lately been laboring, as you are aware, to bring about a closer union between the different elements of the Anarchical and Socialistic parties in this country, and to reorganize them under one head. My efforts in this direction have been frustrated during the last six months, and seemed likely to be brought to naught, by an occurrence the attendant circumstances of which date back to the very infancy of our Society. Five years ago, when the wrongs the people suffered from caused us to band together for the redress of our grievances, and to purchase arms and drill, a member of the Chicago detective force assumed the responsibility of investigating too closely our affairs. On discovering his espionage two courses were open to us : to destroy him or to remove him from the country under such conditions as would make his return unlikely. We adopted the latter course. Our leniency was the more excusable from the fact that at the

time of his banishment we were unaware of the extent of his discoveries. The increased severity of the police, however, to which we became soon after subjected, leaves little room to doubt as to the minuteness of the information which he had left as a heritage in their hands. It is a matter of history, too, how the unrelenting persecutions that ensued led to our frenzied rising in the Haymarket; so if this man cannot be held as accessory to the murder of the seven martyrs who gave up their lives in expiation of the acts of that day, he must be considered as responsible for the oppressions that produced them. Had he chosen to stay away, however, we would not have sought him; but at the very moment when like a phoenix our society was rising again from its ashes, when my efforts to reunite the scattered elements of our brotherhood in one strong, vigorous body promised to be crowned with success, we learned, by a very singular lawsuit brought by his wife for her support, that he had returned and was again amongst us. Leaving out of consideration any question of retribution, leaving out of consideration the fact that he returned with his eyes open, knowing exactly what to expect, could we countenance his return from the standpoint of our own self-preservation? Could we hope, in face of his intimate acquaintance and thorough familiarity with our methods and our aims, to bring about our long-dreamed-of union? What is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh, and in spite of, or perhaps because of, the danger he realized the publicity of his lawsuit drew upon him from us, he put himself in communication again with his old friends, the police. At all events,

he became a standing menace to us, threatening not only our hoped-for reorganization, but the lives of each and every individual among us. Thus it became imperative to put him beyond the possibility of causing us further mischief. This we endeavored to do, not instigated by any desire of revenge, or even that of making an example of him to others, but simply in the interest of our own self-preservation, which is an instinct that actuates all bodies of men, the most highly as well as the least civilized, when their existence is at stake.

"Finding that we were on his track, however, he continually eluded us and moved at last into a secluded part of the country. His choice of retreat played into our hands. The isolation of the neighborhood enabled us to apprehend him, which I, for one, vastly preferred to do, so that the matter of his disposal might be left to you all at a full meeting. There he is before you."

Loud murmurs greeted this speech, and I detected here and there the handle of a knife ominously steal from its place of concealment.

It was at the moment when these murmurs were at the loudest that a woman in the rear of the audience rose and walked down the middle aisle. She wore a hood over her head which concealed her features, but something in her gait, her figure riveted my attention, and before she had reached the foot of the stage *I had recognized my wife.*

LI.

SHE was under the influence of mesmerism, and a curiosity wild and inordinate took possession of me, which mitigated my horror at beholding her in such a place. Instead of mounting the platform she turned to the audience.

“My friends,” she said, “I have been sent from Chicago to tell you the meaning of anarchy. It is destruction, of course, but only that reconstruction may be possible. If the tree is rotten, cut it down, says the Bible. Is society not rotten also? Take America, where the experiment of democracy has had the best opportunities of trial. Why is it that here we are especially called upon to push the good work on? Because democracy, through its hypocrisy, is the greatest foe to the real equality of men, by giving cover to abuses that no other description of government could afford to tolerate. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Have such enormous differences grown up between wealth and poverty in any monarchical country in Europe within the same period as here? Nay; democracy is directly responsible for this, because the class of men whom a democracy raises to power make common cause with the capitalist. He becomes the co-partner in his ventures by which the public are the losers. Why, the franchises sold by our legisla-

tires and our boards of aldermen—franchises that are the foundations of these enormous fortunes—ought to have paid the entire taxes of an economically administered state.

“ John Swinton, in a little book he wrote of his travels through France, speaks in glowing terms of the comparative brightness of the lives of the French working people. Why, let me ask, can we not have some of this brightness here—the brightness of large green spaces for our brick-and-mortar-imprisoned poor, the brightness of public bands of music for those in whose lives little music enters, and at least the cleanness of well-paved streets for those who find the streets their only home? Why not, do I ask? Why, simply because the money is continually being diverted. From New York to California, from Maine to Oregon, in every paper one takes up, fraud, fraud, meets the eye—fraud in high places, fraud in low; fraud in the ermine as well as fraud in the cell; fraud in the names of rings and of trusts that control and put up in price everything that you use—rings in wheat that make your bread dearer, rings in beef that makes your muscle hard, rings in coal in the depth of arctic winters, rings in the oil that lights you on your way, rings in the very coffins that finally you are buried in. We are fairly ringboned with corruption through and throughout, and no country has tolerated it, nay, encouraged it, as it has been encouraged here. But some say we have no noblemen above us, as they have in Europe. Alas! is the day of bosses passed? We have no ‘noblemen’ above us in the ordinary sense of the word, but titles have lost their political significance

in most European countries, and are little more than names. Consequently, the difference between the people who rule us here, and those who rule in Europe, is but nominal, imaginary, a fiction.

“Perhaps some will say, at least the poor man here has equality with his master before the law. All I will reply is, he had better go to Albany, where our laws are made, and try the issue with some railroad lobbyist. On the contrary, there is less ‘equality’ before the laws for the poor man here than almost anywhere else, for the simple reason that our legal proceedings are so long drawn out, and offer, too, such advantage to the clever—that is, the most expensive—lawyer, that recourse to law, for the poor man, is daily becoming more impossible. Indeed, barring his wages, with which the government has nothing to do, and which is more than compensated for by greater cost of living, I will venture to say that the government here gives him less for his money than any other government raised above that of the Hottentots.

“For the indirect tax he pays on everything, from his shoes, his clothes, his liquor, down to the nails in his coffin—yes, down to the direct tax he has to pay for his burial—he scarcely gets a well-paved street in which he can walk with his wife, in any city, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. For the enormous tax he indirectly pays in high rent, through the undue assessment of city property, he scarcely gets a park for his children to play in that is not a hole for malaria like the Central. Forced into narrow alley-ways, his children seek their amusement about the festering garbage pile, and are sickened by the

rotting carrion that their father has paid so dearly, by expensive lodgings, to have removed from the streets.

“I have dwelt more particularly on cities, so as to bring my remarks more home to you. Besides, we are a nation of cities, in a way, that no other people can understand. Turn, however, to the country districts; what do you see? We are no longer a body of small and independent landholders, for, at a low computation, two-thirds of our farms are mortgaged. Further than this, while we send over money to break up the system of landlord and tenant in Ireland, behold, we have 265,408 more tenants paying rent to landlords in the United States of America than in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales united.

“And how do your guardians meet this situation? They prate about Washington and Jefferson, and the glorious Fourth of July. Why, Washington and Jefferson died a hundred years ago. The issues that existed then have changed. Not o-rations, but meat-rations, are the living, burning questions of to-day; not fire-crackers, but flour crackers.

“It is to change a condition of affairs that has become intolerable that the revolutionary party was organized. Now, my friends, this is the evening of the formal union between the two great divisions of this party. It is necessary that an example should be given you of the danger of breaking the oaths you will be called upon to make. It is also essential that we should be all bound together by a danger that will be common to us all. The chairman of this society has refused to assume the responsibility himself of ridding us of this man's interference,

- and has preferred to throw it on your shoulders. None of you seem ready to assume that responsibility. Very well, I will assume it for you. My name is Spies. Nine months ago, the night before my husband mounted the scaffold in Chicago, he gave me this." And she removed a jewel-mounted dirk from the bosom of her dress. " ' Keep it,' he said, ' till the occasion requires its use, and then sink it in the breast of that man, whether innocent or guilty, whose blood will most advance the interest of the cause.' I have kept it until now, and now will I follow out his dictates. Audacity, and still more audacity, and yet again audacity is the watchword of our creed."

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LII.

So perfect was Edna's impersonation of the well known young widow of the Chicago Anarchist, that I doubted whether there was a single person in the audience that so much as suspected her to be otherwise than she claimed. All human assemblages, however, of whatever nature they may be, whether legislative or other, always divide into two parts, the one conservative, the other progressive. The gathering may seem the most radical in its instincts that is possible, but there will always arise an "opposite wing" which will appear conservative by contrast. It was so in the present case, for I could see that while one portion of the audience sympathized with, the other dreaded, if not opposed, the contemplated act. Women clung to woman, and men rose to their feet.

When it was palpable that her threat was not made in mere bravado, this difference became accentuated. While one side cheered her on, the other tried to retard her with murmurs of disapproval.

I have always believed, too, that the most dramatic situations have an element of the ludicrous. Perhaps it is that the mind, being highly strained, is more apt to accept as a relief any circumstance that offers an opportunity to break the tension.

She had advanced to the stage, and was about to mount it, when a great brawny man, in a red flannel shirt and a strongly marked Hibernian face, jumped ahead of her and barred her passage.

"Frinds, brothers, and ladies," he said, "I've listened to this yere talk about socialism and arnica till it's about soured on me stomach. I may be a dinimiter, but it is only the honorable imployment of dinimite and sich as is in use amongst gintlemen that I favor. I don't moind a shindy wid the police or any one else, if the thruth must be told, and O'll be the last to put on me coat atther a foight, be it wid frinds or foes. But when it comes to stabbin' a man as is toid down and can't strike back, sez I, that's murther, and any one as is goin' to troy it must walk over the body of Patherick McGordy first."

The exact circumstance that precipitated matters, was this, at least as well as I could distinguish: A man, short and stumpy, whom, in spite of his workman's clothes and a long false beard, I instantly recognized as Doctor Henry, hurried to the front and tried to push the Irishman aside so as to permit of Edna's passing. He whispered something in his ear, as he did so, the import of which was alone to be inferred by the expostulations of the Irishman.

"Oh! it's only in the intherest of scoience, is it?" he ejaculated. "An' she can't really hurt him, because you'll intherfare in toime? Begorry, it's the right toime now to intherfare, and if its scoience you're so fond of O'll give yez a touch of a koind that's in practice down in the Sixth Warrud."

Whereupon the speaker's ponderous fist fell full upon the doctor's face.

The scene that followed beggars all description. In an instant the room was in an uproar. Then, with a shout of "Frinds of Ould Oireland, rally to the riscue and Divil take the hindmost!" the son of Erin seized the bench on which he had been lately seated, leaped to the stage, and, placing himself before me, with admirable impartiality swept down friends and foes alike as they tried to gain a footing beside him, either to assist him or to pull him down.

In the confusion I saw Dr. Henry rise and draw Edna away, and only just in time, for the tide of battle was not confined to immediately in front of the stage, but extended back into the room. Besides, as it ebbed and flowed hither and thither there would seem to be three, nay, four, factions all fighting—the Anarchists, the Socialists, some half dozen Irishmen, and the captain of Erin fighting them all. Even this distinction of parties before long was lost, and at last but one grand principle reigned supreme—namely, for every one to hit every head that was the nearest. Such dust and confusion, such a medley of different cries and noises!—which last, however, could be explained by the mixture of nationalities engaged in the fight. Shrieks of women and curses of men, in every known language, blending in with the sharp crack of revolvers and the thuds of the falling, while rising high over all would every now and then be heard the loud vociferation of "To hell with Arnica and chape Oitalian labor!" followed by "Frinds of Oireland, rally to the call!"

then down would come the bench again upon the heads of those struggling up to answer.

The stage had long been cleared by the sweep of the terrible weapon of all upon it but myself and my champion, when, as if desirous of fresh conquest, he descended into the body of the house. At the very moment that he did so the doors opened, and supposably those who had served as sentries down below burst in, crying out, "The cops!"

What followed after this passes like the troubled views of a kaleidoscope before my eyes, but I will endeavor to give the incidents as accurately as I can. I was just looking at the struggling mass before me, which, so far from desisting from the contest at the warning they had received, appeared to have redoubled their fury, when I detected a man separating himself from the combatants and stealthily approaching the stage. The moment my eyes fell upon him I recognized him as the organ-grinder who had cursed me at Mr. Crummels' gate. How he had escaped my observation up to now I do not know, but he had a long knife in his hand, and the blood trickling from it showed me that during the *mêlée* it had not been idle. He climbed to the stage with the same stealthy air, and when he got about ten feet from me he stopped. "Ha! ha!" he said, "ze cops is coming, is they? But zey vont save you dees time, for if ze voman deedn't strike, Baptiste Diavolo vill. Ha! ha! you set ze dog on Baptiste; vell, Baptiste pizen ze dog. Baptiste vill now fix ze master."

There was a wicked leer on his face, a hideous glitter

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in his eye, that assured me that he would be held back by no feeling of compunction. "Vone!" and he made a significant gesture, as if to sharpen his knife on his coat sleeve. "Two!" and he raised it up aloft. "Tree!" and he was in the act of springing at me like a serpent when a report rang out clear and distinct and he tumbled, a confused mass, at my feet. I turned my head as well as my bonds would admit, and beheld my own shadow, the living reflection of myself, my Alter Ego, in a cavalier hat, and with a smoking pistol in his hand, advancing towards me through the crowd. He had entered the loft from the door behind them, and alongside of him was Theophilus, perfectly beside himself with excitement. After these two came a file of bluecoats, with their buttons gleaming brightly in the light. With the precision that actuates a trained force, they filed right and left through the loft with their pistols drawn, while the people, at last realizing their danger, stood stock-still for an instant, and then like frightened sheep fled before them. Such a sudden stampede of ruffians could scarcely be imagined. In their blind terror they actually knocked their heads, like birds, against the wall as they rushed down to the other end of the room, and then, rebounding back, rushed to the windows, entirely oblivious of the height from the ground, trampling down each other in their frantic efforts, till at last men and women were all huddled together in a heap on the floor, a palpitating, writhing mass of inhuman humanity. Only one, and she a woman, retained a vestige of courage, and rising from the floor, Edna, my wife, my self-ordained executioner,

majestic in her fury, gazed with glaring eyeballs on the intruders.

I learned afterwards that she had escaped from Dr. Henry and had returned to the scene of confusion just before the arrival of the police, when my attention was taken up with the organ-grinder. Be that as it may, she was here again and stood pressing one foot on the valiant champion, the Irishman, who had fallen with a knife thrust in his back. Then, as I stared at her, the stranger with the cavalier-like hat advanced to my side and cut my straps.

"Well, old boy!" he exclaimed in a matter-of-fact tone, "so I've found you in the nick of time—Henry Simoni, very much at your service, whom you would consider as dead."

A crash, followed by a loud explosion, interrupted my reply. "Good God!" he cried, "she has fired the place."

It was too true. As Samson pulled down the temple on himself and foes, Edna, true to her assumed character, had seized with all her force the bench the poor man at her feet had used in my defense, and, raising it aloft, had struck down the oil chandelier at one blow. The entire room was now aflame, the burning oil, because of the unevenness of the floor, however, running down principally to one side and setting fire, as the flames leaped up, to the bunting and the cheap flags decorating the walls. Then, as my deliverer put his arm around my waist and tried to drag me with him, a great horror seized me—a horror that nothing I had gone through could near

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approach; a horror greater than I had experienced on recognizing Edna; a horror greater than that caused by the smoke and the flames, and the agonized shrieks of the terrified people about me.

"If you are Henry Simoni," I cried, "leave me here otherwise Edna Dalzelle will have twin brothers for husbands."

LIII.

How the people got out of that burning building is a mystery only to be solved by the presence of a force of men who, when it comes to a case of action, justly deserve the title of the "Finest." As it was afterwards explained to me, my brother and Dr. Henry rescued Edna, while the police were obliged literally to club the rest out and down the stairs before them—a feat that would have been attended with even greater difficulty had the fire not been confined to the top story of the building, leaving the stairways for some time intact. Thus not only the women but the wounded were rescued, and if there were any killed I could never learn it.

Some one—exactly who I was too much confused to remember—assisted me out of the house and deposited me in a carriage ; but as we started off, and my eye caught sight for the first time of the signboard over the door of my late prison, I was not too dazed to reflect, as the flames lighted it up, how suitable was the designation "The House of Blazes." Though I neither knew nor cared whither I was being taken, I shall never forget the drive. The people were crowding out to the Flats to see the fire, and the light fell upon their hungry, inquisitive faces. As we left the suburbs and entered the labyrinth of built-up streets, it was more the sufferings, however, of the people

that struck me; for the air, besides being insufferably hot, was heavily charged with electricity and had that dense, closeness that precedes a thunderstorm. It seemed to weigh you down and to oppress you, and the windows and doorways of the lofty tenements were fairly thronged with humanity gasping for breath. Many had taken their bedding to the roof tops, and even the sheds over the sidewalks were packed—men, women, and children, only partially dressed, and in that frightful and heterogeneous crowding to which the poor in our great cities are subjected, giving the lie to our boasted civilization, and gradually blotting out manhood, womanhood, ay, humanity in those whom civilization ought to raise.

Had not Edna, struck off some sparks of truth? Where was the equality we talk so much of here? Ay, go to Albany and ask! "Forced into narrow alleyways, your children seek amusement about the festering garbage pile, and are sickened by the rotting carrion you have so dearly paid to have removed."

Every alley reeked with filth, with putrefaction, with degradation, and pallid faces glared vindictively at seeing a carriage passing there. Indeed, owing to the strikes and the consequent number of unemployed, the highways were more than ordinarily crowded, and as I thought of the lateness of the hour, I recalled her statement about the people who found the streets their only home.

Brought up on the plains, far away from cities, I was unused to such sights, and they rendered logical, I thought, the circumstances which I had so lately witnessed.

By the time we reached the ferry—for I now saw we

were journeying to New York—the closeness was actually intolerable, and I asked my companion to assist me to the deck, and we walked forward. At the moment we reached the front part of the boat and faced New York, a flash of lightning, followed by a peal of thunder, shook the vessel till I thought she was struck. For an instant the whole city stood out in bold relief like a golden picture in the sunlight—all, everything, brought out, down to the minutest detail: her church steeples raising their fingers to God, her halls of justice and her temples of trade, her palaces, her lofty buildings—ay, and her prisons. Then all was black again. Looking backwards, however, just beyond the Statue of Liberty, there was still a red glow from the burning building, and in this lurid lettering written across the sky I read a warning I will not farther emphasize.

LIV.

I HAVE said that I am particularly sensitive to narcotics and to this I think is due the fact that many of the circumstances related in the past chapter, though noticed with sufficient accuracy to be remembered afterwards, failed to make at the time the impression on me that they otherwise might. But my sensibilities and my senses, except sight and hearing, were benumbed, and while Edna's sudden appearance was a prominent factor in my trying ordeal, the dramatic situation was only recognized at its true worth later on.

That she had taken a character so foreign to her nature failed to strike me with full force when she was before me, nor did I then appreciate how strange it was that she should have been able to discuss subjects I had no reason to suppose she was otherwise than completely ignorant of. My explanation of this last phenomenon is that every item that she had ever gleaned from the public journals, every fact that she had ever heard in conversation touching the subject of public grievance, though forgotten, had been unconsciously assimilated and rushed to her lips with the character she had been made to assume.

To return to myself, I had braced up, so to speak, during the terrible scene of which I had been the central

figure; yet when it was over I reverted to my previous lethargy, becoming, in fact, unconscious soon after reaching New York. For nearly sixty hours I lay in this condition, but when I opened my eyes my mind was clear as crystal. Indeed, the past in all its details was before me as fresh and vivid as if reflected in a mirror, or, to carry out the simile, my mind was like a mirror that had just been freed from a thick incrustation of dust. I found myself lying in my brother's quarters, and even remembered now having been brought here direct. He was at a table writing, and he wore a look of deep, impenetrable sadness. I recalled my words to him at the time of our meeting, and I attributed his expression to the realization of the unhallowed position we bore to each other as the husbands of the same woman. At last he looked up and caught my eye. He put down his pen, and, coming over to the side of the bed, took a seat near me.

"I have been writing a statement for your lawyer," he said very gravely, after having congratulated me on coming to. "When you are sufficiently restored to health I will read it to you, and it will explain everything that is yet shrouded in mystery."

I appreciated his delicacy: there are some things that defy expression in language.

"But how was it you thought me dead?" And he looked up wistfully.

"After the battle of White Bluffs," I answered, "we read in the list of killed the name of Henry Simmons. We naturally inferred it to be you, as the regiment was the same we heard you had joined. We supposed, in the

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hurry and confusion of taking down the names, the 's' at the end had been intended for an 'i,' and our impression was confirmed by the fact that you never returned or wrote to contradict it."

"I was captured and unable to communicate with you. Now that I remember, there *was* a young fellow in my regiment named Henry Simmons whom I saw shot down before my eyes. Tell me, however: I learned when I returned home that my father was dead, but how was it that I could get no tidings of either you or my mother?"

"She remarried, and I moved with her to her second husband's home in Vermont."

"I see; and through her change of name I was unable to trace her. Now, there is one fact that I consider it only due to myself to inform you of at the earliest moment, and, if you are sufficiently strong to hear it, I will tell you now. The rest can wait your complete recovery. What I wish to state affects our position as regards Edna Dalzelle."

He winced as he spoke her name, and I on my part felt a shiver pass over me that was impossible for me to conceal.

"My desertion of her was not voluntary," he continued, and thereupon he briefly outlined his own abduction. "During the voyage to Valparaiso I had time to weigh my conduct calmly, and I realized at last that it was open to severe condemnation. On my arrival, therefore, I wrote to my wife the full particulars of my abduction, and told her besides that after due consideration I reproached myself for having induced her to marry me be-

fore she could have had time to feel assured of her own mind. I told her in addition that, although I was well born, I had sunk to a social position inferior to her own, and that I had here an opportunity to begin the world afresh; that if her affections were really engaged, I would work my way home to her and bring her back with me, trusting to luck to find the place I had secured still open to me. Under no circumstances, however, would I be dependent on her father's charity. If this proposal did not meet her approval, she might take advantage of our separation as a definite parting. The ceremony was clandestine; it had not been consummated by even one night of married life; and, further, I wrote her that on applying to the American Minister, who happened to have been a Rhode Island lawyer, he assured me that there would be a grave question of doubt whether our marriage was strictly a legal one."

"Not legal!" I cried, rising from my bed.

"No, because the laws of Rhode Island expressly and emphatically state that the person who performs the ceremony must be a clergyman domiciled in that particular State, whereas the man that had married us was a resident of New York, a guest at the Ocean House where we were both stopping."

I wiped the perspiration off my brow with the cuff of my pajama.

"I advised her, therefore, if she was not prepared to accept the vicissitudes of a poor man's life, that she had better let the matter drop, and she would never hear from me again. I never felt so utterly heart-broken as when I

mailed that letter. But I could not bear to have her feel herself tied to a man in my condition. I wished to give her a loophole of escape, as I knew I had made her act with inordinate haste. Never receiving any reply, I concluded she had deemed it better to forego the sacrifice."

"Then you make no claim upon her?" I cried in great joy. "She is mine! Your marriage with her being illegal, she is mine! mine! mine!" And I threw my arms about his neck in an agony of relief.

Sadly he disengaged my arms. "And after your last meeting with her, are your feelings towards her still the same?"

"They are intensified," I answered. "It shows me how much she needs a protector."

"I fear she then is destined for neither of us," he answered, as he turned away his head.

His manner terrified me.

"What do you mean?" I cried.

Seeing him still hesitate, a great, chill shadow fell athwart me.

"Tell me what it is—tell me, man, at once!" And I shook his shoulder violently.

"I can't! I can't!" he cried, and he sank his head in his hands.

"But I insist! Is she not well? Is she—is she—"

The pitying expression of his face, as he looked up, gave the reply my lips refused to form.

I was already pulling on my clothes with trembling

hands, tearing a shirt from end to end as I tried to get it over my head. I would go to her at once.

I rang the bell violently, and ordered a carriage.

At last I was ready.

"Now," I said, "you may as well tell me all."

"She has gone, I fear, to a land," he replied solemnly, "where there's neither marrying nor giving in marriage."

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LV.

HAVE you ever walked through the lines of wounded after a battle? If so, you may have remarked that the cries of anguish and the writhing of pain rather indicate the less severely hurt. Where the blow is fatal, a deep calm indicative of the grave takes possession of the injured.

So it is with the spiritually afflicted.

I was perfectly calm, and, though I rose from a sick-bed, I walked down-stairs and entered the carriage without any assistance, assisting rather my brother, who appeared thoroughly prostrated.

On our drive to her residence I even persuaded him to enter into fuller particulars, heroically trying to relieve his distress by making him talk.

Thereupon he explained how, on the morning of his arrival here after stopping at Mr. Slocum's, he had proceeded to Mr. Dalzelle's.

"Being advised by the porter to go up-stairs, I did so, and was confronted with your—with my wife. Tell me once more, did you love this woman?" he stopped to inquire. "I mean, did you love her as you never loved woman before?"

"I loved her better than my own life," I answered. "I loved her in a way that the greatest boon I could ask of Almighty God would be to change places with her now."

"Then I ought not to tell you."

"Tell me all; tell me what she said to you at that meeting."

"Well, perhaps it is best. It will lighten your loss. She fell into my arms," he continued, but with an expression on his face I shall never forget; "she told me she loved me alone, and that all the time I had been away had seemed a hideous nightmare to her. She begged me to take her with me and to save her from you."

"Enough!" I cried. "We are here."

We had indeed arrived at our destination, but my brother declined to accompany me. I ascended the stairs alone, therefore, and as I went up each flight seemed a separate stage, so to speak, of my own life—the first my infancy, the next my boyhood, the third my youth, my manhood, and my great despair. What was life, after all? A stairway to be climbed with infinite toil, and leading whither? To think that now, now when I had the right to possess her, now when she was relieved of the bonds that held her to another, the demon called God came in to wrest her from my grasp! I crouched down almost on my knees, not to pray, but to bring myself so low on the stairs that I could not look over the banisters; crowding close to the wall, away from that great temptation, I crept onwards, upwards, nearer the woman who, though dead, was my life.

On being admitted into the sick-room I closed the door behind carefully, jealous even of the breeze that might come and disturb her sanctuary. There she lay as I had once before seen her lying, the beautiful hands crossed

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and folded upon the breast, and an expression of beatitude on her countenance. Great God! What becomes of the spirit that is in humanity? There she lay, weighing the same, occupying the same space as ever, but the animation, the spirit, the humor, the sparkle, the brightness, the life—where were they? Were those lips *never* to smile again? Were those eyes *never* to light up, were they *never* to weep again, nor those lips to speak? O ye gods! It was *too* hard, *too* hard! And I threw myself on my knees before her and wept and wept again.

By her side was her father. He gave neither sign of recognition nor sympathy, and moving about the room was the same Sister of Charity I had seen there once before.

I hurried out of the room, quite unable to bear the sight. On reaching the hall I was unexpectedly confronted by Dr. Henry coming in.

I could have throttled him, but, resisting the temptation I took him by the arm and demanded an explanation of his extraordinary conduct. He was disconcerted, but by dint of much persistency I gained from him the following particulars: That Edna, after her first interview with my brother, had flown to Rebecca for consolation and advice, as she had been in the habit of doing when in any trouble. That Rebecca had elicited from her the full story, and, finally soothing her distress had sent her up-stairs to the room she usually occupied when under her roof. That he, the professor, happened to be on the premises during Edna's visit, talking with Rebecca about her bail, and that after Edna's departure to her

room Rebecca had admitted knowing where I was confined. She, however, refused to raise her finger in my behalf. That her information suggested to the professor the idea of the Spies woman as a means of rescuing me and at the same time as a final test of the power of mesmerism. "For to persuade a woman," went on the doctor, "into the necessity of killing her husband for the sake of a cause to which she only imagined she belonged would be the crowning achievement of my investigations. I therefore persuaded Rebecca to assist in the experiment and to furnish us with the proper passwords."

"But how was I to be rescued?" I asked, astounded by the cool complacency of the man.

"Why, simply, I intended stepping over to the Jersey City police department and getting them to send around a file of men to wait outside the building till I made a signal from the window."

"Then I have to thank you for my liberation, at all events."

"Well, hardly. You see I found myself behind-time, and I scarcely thought it right to risk the experiment for a little matter of detail. I trusted to luck to get you out of your fix unassisted. As your brother has subsequently told me, he had got wind of my intentions and actually drove Edna and myself over to Jersey City. On depositing us at our destination, he galloped his horses around to the nearest police station and secured the men with whom he broke up the meeting. Fortunately, owing to the delay in procuring them, the experiment was in every way satisfactory."

I looked at him in wonder. Was ever devotion to science so perverted?

"But Edna!" I at last ejaculated.

"Ah, Edna, poor girl! Well, you see, the excitement of her hurried waking, or the terror at the fire, was too much for her. Your brother and myself got her out of the burning building and brought her home, but she has never spoken since her arrival here."

"Has Rebecca seen her?" I asked bluntly.

"She has been here several times, but could do nothing. I also thought it well to call in the family physician, with the only result of a collision between them on the subject of professional etiquette."

"Would you mind going for Rebecca and getting her to come around again?"

"Certainly not, but it can be no use."

"My brother is down-stairs. Send him up to me and take his carriage to fetch her."

LVI.

DR. HENRY descended, and a few moments later I was joined by my new-found relative. We sat down together on the landing and silently awaited Rebecca's coming. At the end of half an hour I heard her heavily mounting the stairs and remonstrating with the professor as to the uselessness of her mission.

When she arrived where we were, we rose to meet her. Though she must have been prepared to find me here, she scarcely deigned to cast on me a glance. All her attention seemed concentrated on my brother. And the more she looked the more he seemed to attract her.

"So you've got the power, too," she cried. "I can tell it by your expression."

"What power?" he asked.

"Why, mesmerism. Did you ever learn it?"

He hesitated from surprise.

"Down in South America the Indian doctors frequently employ what I suppose you might call mesmerism on their patients. One of them, to whom I did a trifling service in the mines, taught me the trick."

"Have you ever practiced it?"

Again he hesitated. "Occasionally," he at last replied.

"Tell me exactly what occurred after you brought

this young woman out of the burning building as I heard you did."

"I deposited her in a carriage. She was hysterical and I tried to calm her."

"By making any passes over her?"

"I may have."

"Then you mesmerized her. Did you think to bring her back by reverse passes?"

"I don't believe I ever thought of mesmerism. Once having quieted her, I left her at home supposing that she would soon come to of herself."

"Then there is a chance to save her even yet; not a very good chance, but one in a million, for it is just within the bounds of possibility that the condition you threw her into resembles catalepsy, and that no one besides yourself can bring her out of it."

"Impossible! It is contrary to all the cases I have ever heard. A person that was mesmerized, even if not brought to by the mesmerizer, would simply sleep off the effects, as in the case of wine or opium. I have seen such cases a dozen times, when the Indian doctor of whom I spoke mesmerized a patient to perform some trifling operation, or to relieve pain generally."

"It is not impossible, for there are three such cases on record: one in the Paris hospitals—Henrietta Defoy—another in New York, and one in Chicago. Indeed, if you come to that, my own experience with this sweet girl might make a fourth; for though she had not been in it so long, the reg'lars were unable to get her out of it and I had to be called in again. Indeed, if the truth was ever

known, I believe more than one case of so-called trance, particularly when the subject was hysterical, has been caused by their falling under the influence of some other person, even unbeknownst to 'em, and who might bring them to if it was only suspected."

"What do you want me to do, then?"

"I want to see you make some passes."

He did so.

"Try again."

He repeated them several times. Here and there she would correct him, telling him to turn his hands outwards a little more, or his thumbs upwards.

"That will do," she said at last. "And now if Professor Henry will go down-stairs and wait for me in the carriage, we can enter the chamber."

"Why shouldn't I go in, too? In the interest of science I should like to see—"

"That for your science!" she exclaimed, snapping her fingers. "You let this young girl be mesmerized without knowing it, and you've muddled everything you've touched. You're nothing but a bungler."

The crestfallen professor turned on his heel and abruptly descended the stairs, while we re-entered the apartment, and she led my brother up to the bedside.

"Now," she said, "make the passes for all you're worth."

For some ten minutes I watched him intently, hoping against hope. At last she went over to him, and was saying something in his ear, when she stopped suddenly.

"Great God! here comes the reg'lars," she cried aloud.

I looked up and perceived a gentleman of grave, not to say pompous, mien entering the chamber, accompanied by a young man of intelligent but ascetic appearance.

"I feared we would find her here," the elder declared, with a cynical curl of the lip, and he addressed his partner. "You see it was well we returned."

"Now, my good woman, may I ask you once more, and for the last time, to retire?" he continued.

"Doctor," she replied, with a greater control over herself than I could have looked for, "tell me whether you are perfectly certain this is not a trance."

"I am ready to sign the certificate of decease," he replied in the same supercilious tone.

"Then, in that case, there's no harm in our trying what can be done."

"I returned with Mr. Smith, my assistant," he answered, "to see that she suffered no desecration. My reputation suffers from being in any manner mixed up with one the faculty," he added with a low bow, "fails to recognize."

During the above colloquy I had stood between the bedside and the new-comers, shocked beyond expression by the controversy, yet relying with a wild, inordinate hope on the female physician. At last she turned upon them.

"You gave her up once to save your professional reputation. We're going to try and see if you ain't mistaken a second time. If there is any one here who has the right to refuse us permission, I will retire."

I looked over towards Mr. Dalzelle, whose stupor was too deep to permit his understanding what was going on.

"I assume the responsibility. You shall stay," I exclaimed. "Do what you can. These gentlemen shall in no wise disturb you."

"And who are you, sir?" the elder inquired, raising his glasses.

"I am her husband," I answered. "I think you will scarcely question my right."

"Then, sir, our only course is to retire." And he took his assistant by the arm.

"I insist upon your remaining," I cried. "This is a case that rises superior to professional etiquette, and we may need your assistance."

I could see that in spite of their words they were more anxious to prevent any tampering with the patient than to depart, so I placed myself in such a way before them as to argue that nothing short of physical force would stop the experiment. Indeed, my opinion is that curiosity detained them, or possibly a lingering doubt as to whether there might be any question as to the extinction of the vital spark.

In the meanwhile Rebecca Seaton had drawn my brother over again towards the bed—for he had risen—and had made him kneel down beside it.

I could see the repugnance her conduct caused him and the hopelessness in his own mind of any success. All the same he began to make the passes anew, but at last, with a shudder, arose.

"It is a desecration," he muttered. "These gentlemen are right. I positively refuse to continue."

"Go on for just five minutes more!" exclaimed Re-

becca Seaton, and her voice seemed to come from a deep chasm, so hollow it sounded. "Just for five minutes more!"

Reluctantly he acquiesced, and resumed his occupation, making the motions deliberately and slowly, though still with the same air of doubt. At the end of a few minutes, that seemed to me as many ages, he got up again; while Rebecca bent over the fair form, and, lifting up the lids, closely examined the eyes.

"There's movement here. I saw them twitch. For the love of God, go on, go on, man! In the name of the Almighty go on with them passes!"

"I can't, I can't!" he cried.

At this moment the elder of the two physicians stepped forward, and, stooping down, closely examined the pupils of Edna's eyes. There was something there that changed his former superciliousness to doubt. He called over his partner and together they made a searching examination. Suddenly the younger rose, and, grasping my brother by the arm, "This is a case that certainly *does* rise superior to professional etiquette," he cried, "and I insist that it be left in your hands."

His conduct inspired my brother with hope. I could tell it by the way he resumed his passes and the increasing intensity of his interest. I turned away my head, however, quite unable to bear the strain of my mental anguish. What happened after this I can hardly say. I remember struggling with the physicians to prevent their interference though now they were ready to lend their cooperation, and I remember imploring the nurse to keep quiet, though she was standing stock still. When I regained

my senses and looked around Edna was sitting upon the bed. For an instant absolute quiet reigned, then with a loud cry the Sister of Charity fled the chamber, leaving the physicians and myself rooted to the floor, while over all towered Rebecca Seaton giving with pantomimic gestures a cue to my brother as to what passes he should make.

The silence of the elder of the two physicians, however, was but momentary. "In common justice to ourselves," he said, turning to me, "I must take the present occasion to state that this case possessed certain features that puzzled us both. For this reason we hesitated signing the certificate of decease, and when we arrived we were just consulting over the advisability of a further delay."

In the meanwhile the subject of these remarks was staring about her with the same unconscious look.

"Draw yourself away from the bed," exclaimed Rebecca to my brother; "she will follow you."

Slowly Edna rose, and, with her long garments sweeping behind her, advanced towards us.

"Now bring her more out into the middle of the room, if only to make her walk."

Slowly she followed him as he retreated before her.

"Now talk to her—tell her anything you like; it will excite the action of the brain."

"Ask her questions, anything; best resume the conversation you had with her when you first met her after your return."

"But I can't do that."

"I insist! Bring her back to that period; she will take most naturally to it."

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"Do you know who I am?" he asked.

A vague look of uncertainty passed over her face.

"Tell me who I am, Edna."

"You are he—he—" she answered, as if trying to place him.

"I am he to whom you plighted your faith," he answered. "Your long-lost husband, who deserted you through no fault of your own."

She partly opened her lips as she continued to stare at him, while I stared at them both, feeling as I have no language to portray.

"Tell me that you know me?" he continued.

An expression of recognition lighted up for the first time in her eyes.

"Now anything you say to her she will believe," cried Rebecca.

For an instant he took deep counsel within himself, keeping his eye, the while, fixed on the patient, then in a voice that, while not loud, was clear and distinct "Edna, though you think I am your husband, you are mistaken. I married you, indeed, but the form was not legal; therefore I am only your mock husband and your affection on me is wasted. There is your real husband," pointing to me. "He loves you in a way no other man can." She looked about her vaguely till her eye caught mine. "See," he continued, "his arms are stretched towards you; you must love him in return. All the affection you have wasted on me give to him; yield him that reverence he deserves."

She came towards me. Then in a louder tone :

"I transfer the affection you have for me to him; love, honor, and obey him for the rest of your life."

She had thrown herself upon my neck and my arms encircled her.

"Open the door very gently, some one," whispered Rebecca. "Draw back near the door," she whispered to me. "Now be ready to go out," she whispered to my brother, "and just before you leave, touch your thumb lightly on her forehead, and then loudly clap your hands."

I retreated gently as she clung to my neck. I saw my brother prepare to leave the apartment; then, touching her an instant on the forehead, he moved to the exit, and, clapping his hands, was gone.

As for her, she was sobbing on my shoulder, and my arms clasped her waist.

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It would be unjust to the reputation of an honorable man did I not add that on the departure of my brother the elder of the two physicians came forward and frankly extended his hand to Rebecca.

"You have taught the faculty a lesson, madam," he exclaimed, "that is well for it to learn—namely, that professional etiquette may be carried too far. I must confess, however, that in all my experience—and it is somewhat extended—that I have never encountered a similar case to this. I have heard of such cases without believing in them, and I am now obliged to admit that the physician's education will hardly be complete till the study of mesmerism is included in his curriculum."

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LVII.

THE next morning I received the following communication from Henry Simoni :

MY DEAR BROTHER :

I inclose at the end of this a couple of documents, one of which will go far to show that mistakes in identity are not unusual, and the other will assist in explaining the deposition I made at the request of your lawyer. On second thoughts I have decided to take my departure without waiting to bid you good-by. My object is to relieve you of a personality that has caused you so much embarrassment, but which I trust has been atoned for by one great service. May you be happy, and if you are ever in want, or inclined to travel, a home always awaits you in the land of flowers. That you may find in Edna the happiness your numerous vicissitudes warrant is the wish of your devoted brother to command,

HENRY SIMONI.

The first document to which he alluded was a cutting from the *New York World* of last August 16th. I give it in full below :

“CRAZED BY HIS MISFORTUNE.”

PORTER, MURDERER PARTIN'S DOUBLE, NOW A WANDERING MANIAC.

The Good News that his Innocence would be proved came Too Late, and his Mind Gave Way under the Fearful Strain—His Fatal Resemblance to the Desperate North Carolina Murderer.

[SPECIAL TO THE WORLD.]

“RALEIGH, N. C., Aug. 15.—Rarely has such a sad case of mistaken identity, resulting in the unjust prosecution

of an innocent man, been revealed as was made plain to the citizens of Raleigh when the *World* reached here yesterday and demonstrated beyond a doubt that Robert Leeson Porter is the victim of a strange resemblance to Scott Partin, a desperate murderer. It was in the *World's* exclusive cable dispatch that the details of this remarkable instance of a murderer's double were first learned. Now that the identity of Porter has been thoroughly established, the startling resemblance he bears to the murderer, Partin, has almost bewildered all who are familiar with the case.

"Thirteen years ago Scott Partin, living near Raleigh, murdered his wife and child. The police never caught him. A few days ago a letter was received from Porter by his sister in Queenstown, stating that he was under arrest in Raleigh, charged with being Partin, the murderer. Photographs of Partin and Porter sent to Queenstown showed a most remarkable resemblance between the men. To make the case more extraordinary, the prosecuting attorney of Raleigh wrote that five distinct body marks on Partin, such as the loss of a middle finger, the location of moles and cuts, were found on the man under arrest.

"Porter's sister lives in the family homestead a few miles from Cork. The family is very well known in South Ireland, with members in the British peerage, and is connected by marriage with Dr. Tanner, M.P. In 1873 Robert Porter emigrated to America. Two years later he wrote letters to Ireland from Fort Preble, near Portland, Me., saying that he was in the United States Artillery. These letters are still undestroyed, and one of them is dated on the day of the murder, though also marked as being sent from a place several hundred miles from where the murder was committed.

"The London correspondent of the *World* has seen United States Consul Platt, and the latter assures him

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that there is no doubt the writing is the same as that of the man imprisoned in Raleigh. The consul has verified every statement written by Porter since his arrest to the British Minister at Washington. In 1887 Porter ceased writing to his friends in Ireland, and his relatives believed him dead. He has been advertised for in vain as heir to land and money. The letter to his sister announcing his arrest was accompanied by a photograph, and his sister and other people who knew Porter express no doubt of his identity. The sister explains that the loss of his middle finger on one hand can easily be verified by the records of the War Department. Before he joined the United States Army he worked in Charles Flood's piano factory at Halifax.

"Since the day of the horrible double murder in 1875 an almost incessant search has been kept up for Scott Partin. The details of the crime were well known in all parts of the State, and the authorities have been vigilant in many sections. From the moment, in June last, when two men saw Porter at Selma and caused his arrest, swearing before a magistrate that he was Partin, until the present moment, the whole affair has awakened the most intense interest. It can be readily seen that when the *World* reached here this morning it was most eagerly read.

"It brought the news that Porter was of good family, was heir to property in Ireland, and had for years been searched for. But, strange to say, that news, instead of reaching Porter while in jail and bringing something of joy into his life, does not get here until Porter is out of jail and a wanderer upon the face of the earth. During the time Porter was in jail in this city fully 5,000 people saw him. Many hundreds were from the country, and of these not a few were willing to swear he was Scott Partin. Some did so who had worked beside Partin some years ago, and their identification of him seemed complete. Day after day the prisoner had to face this terrible public accusation, for such it was.

"One day the *World* correspondent went into the jail to see him. Fifty persons stood near to hear what was said. The interview was direct, and Porter plainly proved his assertion that he was a soldier. Your correspondent said to him: 'You are not Scott Partin.'

"'Thank you, sir,'" said Porter; 'you do me justice.'

"At that moment one of the spectators, John Lee, said:

"'Porter, I am from your own county in Ireland, and when you get out of this jail come to my house and make it your home.'

"On July 26 last proof came here to the solicitor of this district, T. M. Argo, that Porter was all he claimed, and he was released. He had stood the intense strain of imprisonment, of questioning, and of suspicion remarkably well up to that time. He went a free man to John Lee's humble but not less hospitable home and found a welcome there. He stayed there day after day, waiting, he said, for his solicitor to obtain some funds for him with which he might pay his passage to Canada. Last week his manner changed. His mind, never strong while in jail, was entirely unbalanced, and he had to be watched constantly. He was a victim of the delusion that a mob of Raleigh people sought his life. Last Friday night John Lee left home, leaving Porter, who at that time was quieter than usual, in care of the woman and children. Suddenly Porter sprang out of the house and ran rapidly towards the suburbs. He made his way to the woods north of the city. Lee was greatly distressed at his flight, but Saturday afternoon Porter turned up at Rolesville, a little town some ten miles north of here. He was in rags, half wild with fever, and very hungry. He told people who he was, and said his stay in jail had crazed him. He suddenly sprang to his feet and said:

"'Do you hear them after me? This morning early three men attacked me in the woods and tried to hang me.'

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"Porter said he was going North and wanted company on the road. He left Rolesville with a farmer, and yesterday he turned up at Youngsville, a little station on the railway twenty-five miles north of here. There he told a pitiful story to a crowd of people. He said that people sought to lynch him and that a large number of Raleigh people who believed he was Scott Partin were on their way after him and would kill him on sight. Some money was given Porter with which to pay his way North. He said he wanted to get to the Virginia or Pennsylvania coal mines. He left there last evening. This morning Solicitor Argo received the following cablegram from Dublin, Ireland :

" 'Robert Leeson Porter is not Scott Partin. Proofs forthcoming. Porter is wanted as heir.' "

"The solicitor at once set to work to find the lost heir. Telegrams were sent to Youngsville to ascertain which way he had gone, and also to points in Virginia with view to heading him off. Lieut. Charles B. Wheeler, of the Second Artillery, U.S.A., has sent the following descriptive roll of Private Robert Leeson Porter : 'Battery M, Fifth Artillery ; enlisted for five years, Nov. 7, 1873, at Fort Preble, Me., by Lieut. Weir, Fifth Artillery ; age, twenty-three ; height, 5 feet 6½ inches ; complexion fair, eyes brown, hair brown ; born in Queensberry, Ireland ; occupation sailor ; deserted from battery, May 22, 1875 ; surrendered at Fort Preble, July 24, 1875 ; discharged at Barrancas, Fla., Dec. 30, 1877. Personal marks, scar of sabre cut under right shoulder.' "

"The local papers have republished the *World's* cablegram, and interest in Porter's case is very keen. To show how deeply the idea that he was Partin had taken hold on the public mind, it may be stated that many persons thought the authorities should never have released him from jail. Others, when they heard of his flight, expressed belief that he was Partin and had gone to the town-

ship where the murder was committed. They said further that if people in that section found him they would surely lynch him. At this moment, and despite overwhelming evidence that he is not Partin, there are people who believe him to be that infamous criminal.

"Earnest efforts are now in progress to find Porter. At one o'clock this afternoon a telegram was received here by Solicitor Argo stating that Porter was between Weldon and Portsmouth. He was given passage on a train from Youngsville to Weldon and spent last night beyond Weldon. He is still traveling northward and is probably near the railway line. It is believed he will be found by to-morrow morning, as warnings have been sent to all places on the line of the seaboard road to be on the watch for him."

The second document to which my brother referred was a letter from an individual who was abducted in a similar fashion to that in which he was. It was a cutting from the *Evening Telegram* of June 16, which curiously enough was one of the journals that contained an advertisement for his own return. It proves more than my own words might that my tale is not extravagant. Instead of being drugged in a carriage, however, the victim was chloroformed in a tavern, whither some acquaintances enticed him. I pick up the story here and quote the paper, word for word :

"After drinking with these men I remember nothing more," says the writer, "till I received a violent shaking up, accompanied by the words, 'Port watch on deck.' I awoke, and after rubbing my eyes I discovered myself on board a ship; my clothing was a mixture between a sailor outfit and that of a common laborer. I reeled around the fore-castle and asked what the whole thing meant,

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A shove from the strong arm of a man, whom I afterwards learned was the boatswain, told me to pick myself up sharp and go aloft and assist in tricing the upper top-sail. Just imagine my surprise, coming partly to my senses, not knowing whether I was among those described in Dante's works, or even some worse place. I asked for an explanation as to what it all meant; this was met with a loud 'guffaw' or laughter from the crew and boatswain. They all saluted me as Brown. I said my name was not Brown. At this they laughed louder and longer, and said the old dodge would not work. I had shipped as A. B. and I could not shift my duty on to others; the best thing I could do was to go to work at once and earn my 'bacca' and good rations. They would stand no 'Charley Pooking' on that ship, reminding me at the same time that a British sailor 'may growl, but "go" he must.'

"I asked to see the captain, a request which was promised to be granted me; but before I could see him I was taken sick, and confined to my bunk for several days, where I was most tenderly nursed by one of my shipmates, who hung a tin of fresh water, with a drinking cup attached, outside my bunk. This is all the nourishment I had for two days, when at last the galley steward, taking compassion on me, brought me some hot coffee, which revived me very much.

"In the course of a few days I was able to appear before the 'old man,' as the captain was called, and to him I explained my surprise at my condition and surroundings, assuring him that there was some mistake, as I was no sailor and had never signed any articles as such. He told me I *had* done so, but had probably forgotten all about it afterwards. He showed me the articles, where my name was signed 'John Brown, A. B. [Able Bodied.]' I protested, and was about to proceed with my history, when he surlily told me to go for'ard and attend to my

duty, informing me that no excuses would be received. He said he had paid \$15 as advance money on me and he was going to have it out of me in good solid work for the ship.

"Then I asked him for my clothes, money, and other articles. He looked at me in surprise and wanted to know if I didn't want the entire ship and cargo.

"Bewildered was no name for my condition. However, I saw I was in a fix, and as I had no alternative I agreed to make the best I could of the situation. Later on, one of the passengers, who took compassion on me, told me I had been brought aboard the vessel stupidly drunk, and had been delivered to the watchman on deck as 'Brown,' but he had an idea I was 'shanghaied,' in which I agreed with him, seeing that I was robbed of over \$500 besides my gold watch and clothing."

Now, the name of the steamer in which this Brown, was kidnapped, was the *Strathern*, and after his letter follows, in the same *Evening Telegram* of June 16, a graphic picture by a sailor's boarding-housekeeper who was interviewed on the subject.

Again I quote the exact words :

"In explaining the manner in which shanghaiing is done on the city front," this same boarding-house keeper says, "it must be remembered that every member of a crew of an English out-bound vessel must appear before the British consul and sign articles. This done, the consul's duty is complete. Now, then, for the crooked work. When sailors are scarce and ships are laden and anxious to sail, there is a great demand for a full complement of hands. The shipping agents get one of their handy men to go before the consul and sign the article as 'John Brown' or 'James Smith.' Then they lie back, and if they can shanghai a poor devil they throw him into a

boat at night and deliver him to the mate or watchman as John Brown. That settles his goose. He has got to stay on board, because the captain has already paid his blood money for his man, and he is not going to get fooled by a fellow claiming that he is not the man he is represented to be.

"I have no doubt in my mind that the man you speak of was put aboard the *Strathern* last November, as I know they were offering as much as \$600 advance for a crew. So much for shanghaiing."

Attached to the end of this clipping I found a few brief words penciled as a postscript from my brother:

"One word as regards Rebecca Seaton. I am convinced she had no hand in your own abduction. She was aware of it, as well as of the exact place of your detention, for these sort of people, I know from experience as a detective, have very wide connections. They have confederates in every phase of society, who keep them informed of what is going on, and with an exactness you would scarcely realize. Indeed, amongst the criminal classes, who are naturally superstitious, they reap their richest harvests, and often through their knowledge of them prove valuable auxiliaries to the police. Therefore, that she knew of your apprehension was natural. Mr. Star is also of the opinion that she not only knew of your arrest on suspicion of the Coney Island assassination, but that she was in some manner a party to it. I have, however, given my word by implication that you would not inquire into this matter nor press any investigations into her past or recent conduct towards Edna. When I tell you that your liberation was largely based on this understanding, I feel assured that you will respect it.

"Once more, and for the last time, your devoted,
"H. S."

LVIII.

My brother's allusion to Mr. Star confirmed my own impressions. I, too, had long been convinced that Rebecca was responsible for my arrest on the charge of the Coney Island assassination. She had seen me on the train coming back from there, and had probably thought to involve me in a web from which my escape would have been difficult. All the previous circumstances of my extraordinary history, too, would have been brought out and would have told against me; and though it is too extravagant to suppose that I could have been convicted of the crime, my probable incarceration and efforts to prove myself innocent would have deprived Edna of my guardianship in the most effectual manner.

That the real assassin should have been caught within a few hours of my arrest, and that he should have liberated me by making a full confession, was a coincidence which she could hardly be expected to foresee. Probably spite, too, rendered her prone to take the chances of my discomfiture. I knew that she disliked me, and I attributed her dislike first to the strenuous efforts I had made to induce Edna to break off her intercourse with her, and, secondly, to the rough usage she had received at my hands.

To do Rebecca justice, however, I think that her con-

nection with Edna was not entirely based on pecuniary considerations. Her power over her was so complete that my opinion is she actually felt a pride in its continuance, and with this pride was probably inwoven no little real affection. This her last conduct certainly went to prove, since to rescue Edna from her critical situation she had been compelled to sink her resentment against me and to present me with a bride. In behalf of this I could take no action against her, but would respect my brother's agreement, and allow the courts, if they saw fit, to punish her or not on the charges for which Dr Henry had secured her bail.

One word more concerning Rebecca, and then I have done with her, I hope forever. My brother's explanations about the wide connections a woman like her usually possessed with the criminal classes accounted for a circumstance that had puzzled me a long time ago—namely, the extraordinary fact of her mentioning my brother's name on my first visit to her. Because of this affiliation she must have been aware of his abduction, too. She probably was familiar also with the circumstances that led to it, and told me just sufficient to excite my curiosity, and so to make me continue my calls upon her at the rate of two dollars each.

I was still pondering over my brother's letter and the thoughts that it suggested when a visitor was announced.

I raised my head and beheld Mr. Crummels. Alas! how selfish, how truly self-engrossed is human nature! Until this moment I had forgotten in my own happiness the ter-

rible blow that I had brought on this man's household. He came to cast me back to earth.

I received him with a gentle pity and a deep commiseration that only inadequately expressed my sorrow. I held out my hand to him and he took it eagerly. Indeed, he took it so eagerly and evinced such unmistakable signs of cheerfulness that a mean, contemptible reflection obtruded itself upon my mind—namely, that the loss of his household had been less crushing than I had expected; that he could dispense with the incessant watch his poor wife had maintained over him, and that his philosophical repose would not be lessened by the silence of the old piano which would never speak again his daughters' touch.

I introduced the subject as delicately as I could, and told him frankly of my recognition of responsibility in the matter. At first he seemed not to understand me.

"Do say!" he observed at last. "You mean the women folks? Why, they is as hale and hearty as kittens; a little scorched about the shins and some'ut hoarse yet for screeching, but otherwise O K."

In my sudden revulsion I squeezed his horny palm till he winced; my cup of happiness indeed was full.

"That yere cellar came in handy after all," he continued, disengaging his hand; "for when they found the door slammed in their faces, they took the door that led down to it and got in one of the outspreading branches. A cellar is very much like a woman, as I once before remarked, and this yere time it took pity on the sex." Then, with an expression I shall never forget, "Don't yer think,

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sir, it would be a good plan to attend a debatin' society together? If you say the word I'm with yer; indeed, an occasional excussion of that sort does every man good, and you needs it quite as much as me."

Looking back over the past, I could not help agreeing with my friend, and he further enforced his statement, by suggestively drawing the cuff of his sleeve over the corners of his mouth.

LVIX.

AND yet, when I came to think over it, I was not quite happy. Mr. Crummels' visit recalled to my mind another humble friend for whose loss I was indirectly responsible, and who would probably not be resurrected like Mr. C.'s estimable family had been. I mean the Knight of the Bench. Poor fellow! he had in all likelihood been severely hurt, and I reproached myself keenly for having failed to inquire of the police as to his ultimate fate. I was just thinking of the cruel knife sticking like a pin in the cushion of his broad back, when I heard a violent altercation out in the hall, and a moment afterwards the door was burst open. Great heavens! how true it is that all great strokes of luck and ill-luck come in waves. There, to my mixed astonishment and delight, stood Patrick McGordy himself in all the glory of a brand-new coat, a green satin tie, with the Harp of Erin cunningly interwoven as a breastpin.

There was no hesitation about the McGordy. He had pushed aside the officious menial who would have barred his entrance, and stood there, pulling his forelock and bowing at me in the most considerate yet patronizing fashion possible. Then, entering the apartment with outstretched hand,

“Ah! yer honor, an' wasn't it glorious!” he exclaimed.

"Faith, an' it's nuthin' loike it Oiv'e sane since me muther's wake, pace to her bones!"

I expressed my congratulation at his preservation, inquiring to what fortuitous circumstance it had been particularly due.

"Ah! yer honor, it's the chape Oitalian labor that's ruinin' this country that's done it. They can't aven sind a knife home in an honest fashion. I was wavin' me bench about as a shillelah when me foot shlipped, an', assisted by a prick in the back, Oi found meself lying on the floor wid the woman on top. Sez Oi, 'It's at the feet of beauty the McGordy only loies,' an' as I couldn't git up, why Oi sot still. During the foire the perlice—bad luck to 'em!—assisted me down the sthairs wid something more loike a kick than cirimony, and when Oi come to, Oi found meself lyin' in the desert wid a cloud of 'skaters around me to concale me retrait. But Oi'm all rhight now, yer honor, and at yer service ter clane out any more arnica mateins—bad luck to 'em!—when you're inclined for the shport."

I ventured the opinion that it would be exceedingly bad luck for the meetings if my friend should again put in an appearance in the same lively spirit, when his mouth parted in a winsome smile.

"It's right yer are, yer honor. After thinkin' it all over Oi've come ter consult yez on a matther as might bring 'era worse luck sthill. Now, me ould woman, whin I got home and told her about the circumstances, sez she, 'Pathrick McGordy, yer in luck! Sthrike while the oiron's hot!' Sez Oi, 'Mrs. McGordy, it's a quare koind of luck that's

let about two inches of daylight into me back, but, lavin' out last noight's proceedings, Oi've been on sthrike for six wakes.' 'Pathrick McGordy, don't be a fool,' sez she; 'I spake in mitaphor.' 'Well,' sez Oi, 'if yer will spake in a furren language yer musn't blame me if I can't undershtand.' 'Pathrick McGordy,' sez she, 'Oi spake wid me own muther's tongue. When Oi said stroike for the perlice, I meant to say stroike for the perlice force.' 'Begorry, Oi've been sthroikin' for them, or rather agin 'em, all my loife, Mrs. McGordy.' 'Sthroike for a place on the force, yer ijot! is what Oi mane. Yer said as how the gintleman as you assisted, the beautiful gintleman wid the kurlly beard an' the manners of a prince, had been a chief detective or a captain amongst 'em. Git him to use his infloence, an' you'll have all the sthrikin' you want widout the penalty of goin' to prison for it afterwards.' Sez Oi, 'Barrin' the fact that that would rob the sport of much of its ricriation, Oi think there's summat in what yer sez, Holy Father! Oi've been foitin' the perlice so long Oi've got ter look upon 'em quite loike brothers; so if yer Honor will only spake the good word, it's sayin' the McGordy in brass buttons and a locust by his soide as you'll git for yer reward."

I expressed a doubt as to the value of my assistance in the contemplated direction, venturing the opinion, moreover, that with the proposed accession the authorities could afford to disband the force entirely. The McGordy, with a modesty that belongs to the brave, failed to appreciate the delicate flavor of my flattery.

"Wall, sor, if they're that way obstinate, ther's another

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matther as you might asshist me wid, quite on a different loine." And he blushed like a sixteen-year-old school girl as he brushed his brand-new beaver against the grain.

"How is that?" I inquired, as he still hesitated.

"Well, yer honor, sain' that it's amongst friends, Oi may as well tell yez. Oi thought perhaps yer might be writin' up an account of the adventure the other night for the *Perlice Gazette* or some ither koind of hoigh-toned paper, and if I could come in handy, an' didn't spile the iffect, Oid loike yer just ter put me in too. It ain't that Oi'm boastful like, but yer say, sor, Oi never figured much in print, barrin' the perlice rēports—bad luck to 'em!—an' it would plaize the boys, not ter spake of the ould woman, so much down in the Sixth Warrud."

I willingly gave my assent to this request, and as I failed to persuade the authorities as to the value of his services as a guardian of the peace, I have introduced the McGordy to my readers with all the éclat that he deserves.

LX.

AND now, to finish up the history of my fantastic and lurid adventures in the most approved fashion, allow me to state for the benefit of a critical public that I did not fail in that duty which every good and true American seems to consider as the most holy one on every occasion and at every crisis of his life. For what, let me ask, does he do equally when he inherits a fortune, for instance, or when his luck turns against him? What does he do when told by his physician that he is ill and requires rest, or that he is depressed and needs excitement? What does he do when he is jilted, or again when he is married, or is uneasy about the affection of his own wife or some one else's ditto? What does he do when he has eaten too many dinners and fears the coating of his stomach, or has lost his appetite and is unable to eat? What does he do when he desires to regain his voice after too much sermonizing, or wishes to cultivate one for a début at the opera? What does he do when he wishes to secure a nomination for the Presidency without appearing to want it, or, by keeping out of the way, really wishes to avoid it? What, in short, does every good and true American do in every contingency as widely separated as official lightning is from baldness under the most antag-

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onistic circumstances (except when he robs a bank and adopts a nearer alternative)? What does he do? Why, he goes to Europe, does he not? That is exactly what I did, accompanied by my wife.

My object was a change of air and scene, not only on my own account but on hers. So we went—and a grand send-off we had; Mr. Star, Mr. Siocum, Mr. Crummels, and even Dr. Henry coming down to the wharf and wishing us Godspeed. Arrived on the other side, we found what we sought in sketching the tracery of oriel windows in Gothic cathedrals, or in wandering through the long galleries of European art. I had a theory that by a process of dehypnotism I could gradually render my wife proof against the influence of mesmerism. So, consulting Dr. Charcot, the eminent scientist who presides over the Salpêtrière in Paris, I induced him to make a special study of her case, and, acting on his advice, I first got her out of the morbid, hysterical condition Rebecca Seaton was largely responsible for, by travel and congenial pursuits. After this I set myself to strengthening her will power, the loss of which, I believe, is all that mesmerism is based on. This I accomplished by training her to resist the influence under which I put her for her benefit every morning, and by obliging her to fight against it a little more and a little more each day until my power began to wane. In spite of the danger, in a general way, of a newly-married husband training his wife to resist his power, particularly when she is beautiful and emotional, I persevered, and a perfect cure crowned my efforts.

Candor, however, obliges me to acknowledge that my

success may have been assisted by the advent of a pair of twins, whose control and management required the cultivation of no little will power on their own account

One word more and I have done—one word more that will raise me to a pinnacle in the public esteem at home, and atone in the average man's mind for all my past adversities. Poor old Mr. Dalzelle never quite recovered from the effect of the shock his daughter's illness had caused him, and soon after the birth of my children he passed away.

On opening his will I discovered a clue to his otherwise extraordinary neglect of his daughter during the period of Dr. Henry's experiments with her. For it was now apparent that at that very moment the shrewd old wine merchant was engaged in the consummation of that holy confederacy known as the "Whisky Trust," and that his every thought was occupied therewith. This circumstance, combined with an economical manner of living, enabled him to leave us an inheritance that threw into abashed insignificance the largest fortunes of the wealthiest aristocracies of the Old World.

Consequently there remained nothing else to do on our return home than to construct an additional palace in the upper portion of that great city of Gotham, and to join the ranks of that exalted plutocracy whose highest aim is to achieve the double combination of securing seven per cent on their capital and at the same time to escape paying any personal tax. So runs the world away.

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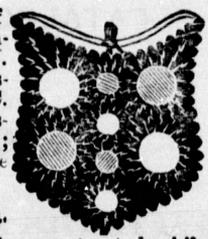
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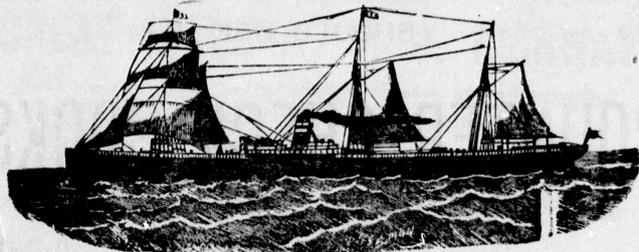
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