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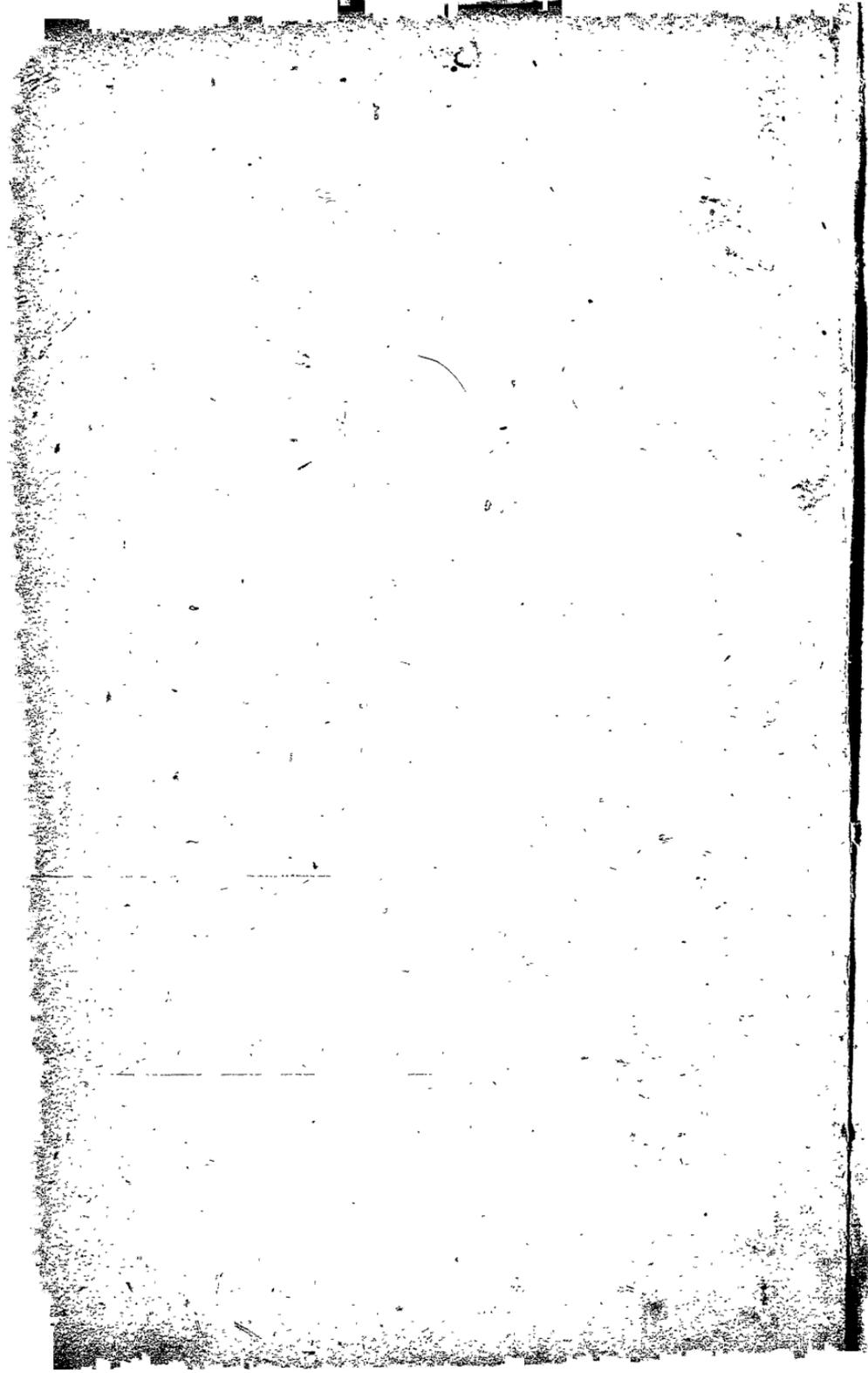
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THE ADMIRAL'S NIECE;

OR,

A TALE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

MRS. EDMUND HEATHCOTE.

VOL. II.

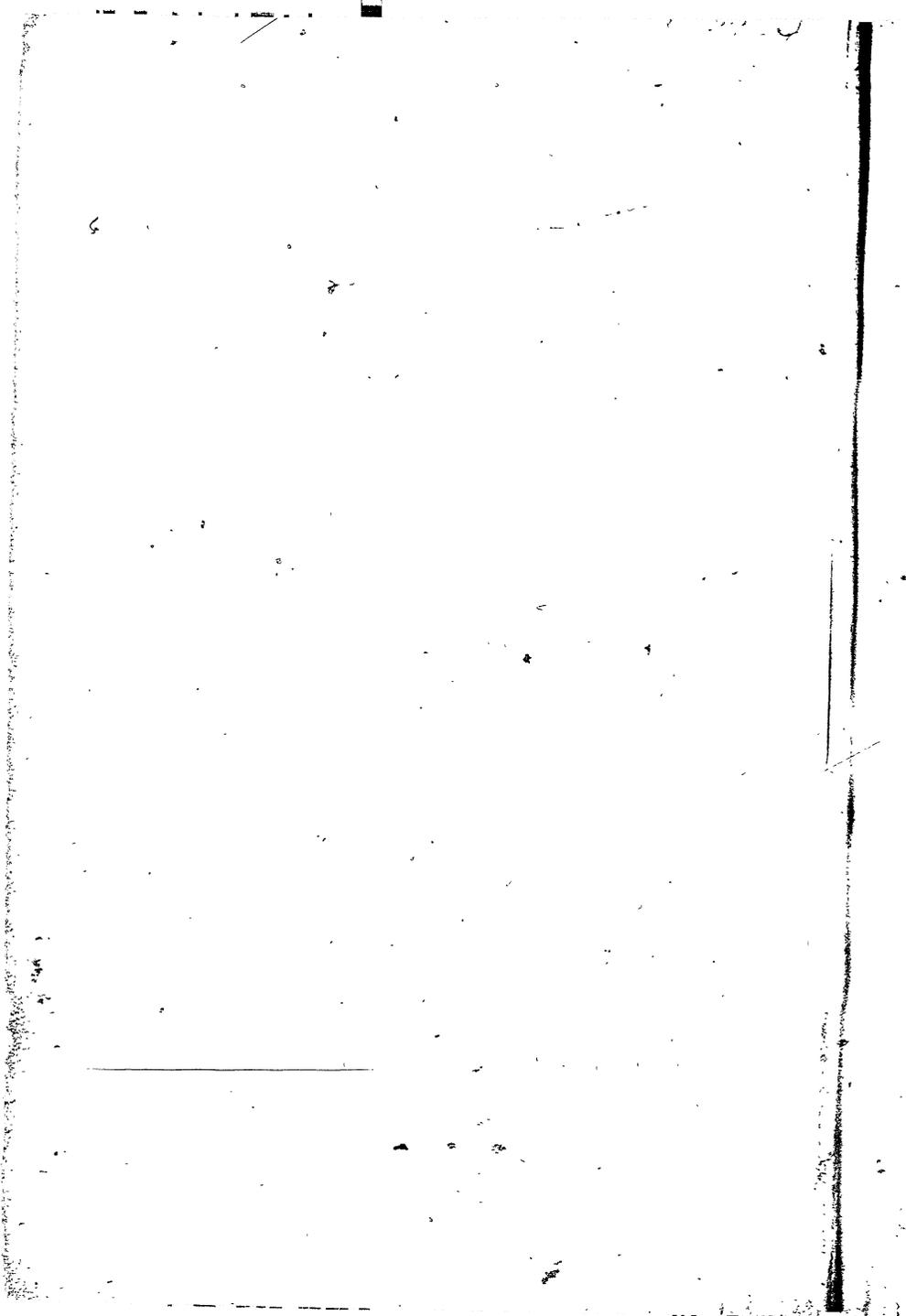
London:

T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,

30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1858.

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THE ADMIRAL'S NIECE.

CHAPTER I.

“I SPEAK for your own good, my dear Kate; do not accuse me of wrong motives; as the child of my dear lost sister, your happiness must be a matter of importance to me, and I dare not trust it to the keeping of the Marquis Guadagni.”

Such were the words of Admiral Rainsworth, as about a week after Ada's departure, he and Kate sat *tête-à-tête* in the drawing room at the Retreat.

A frown gathered on Kate's brow as she replied :

“ Perhaps, uncle, you would be so good as to explain why my happiness cannot be entrusted to the Marquis? You cannot doubt is love for me; he has rank, wealth, and as far as I can see, is everything that one would desire.”

“ Believe me, Kate, you are mistaken; his rank I have always doubted; wealth he certainly appears to have, but Heaven only knows what ill-gotten gain it may be.”

“ Fie, uncle,” interrupted Kate, with flashing eye, “ you are unjust; because you have taken a dislike to the man, you accuse him of all sorts of horrors. I tell you my happiness depends on marrying him, and *that* is a matter of such importance to you,”

and a slight sneer curled her lip, "you will give your consent."

"Never, Kate! You know not what you would do. I have heard much lately of the man; do you know that he is a confirmed gambler?"

"It is false; he told me himself he hated anything of the sort, and wondered how any man could be such a fool as to risk his fortune in that way; people are jealous of him, and so they concoct a parcel of lies, which you, uncle, seem only too ready to believe."

"I wish I could believe them lies, Kate. Unfortunately, that he is a gambler, I know to be truth; aye, and his gentlemen friends are beginning to look with an eye of suspicion on his extraordinary and continued success in winning; take my word for its

Kate, he is not what he should be. You do not really love him, though you fancy you do. You are dazzled by his title, his magnificent style of living, and his being a foreigner. Tell me, candidly, do you really see any real worth in him?"

Kate did not reply immediately, she had thought little about his real merits; he was handsome, fascinating, tender, and devoted to her, and she looked no further; as her uncle had said, she was dazzled by his title and his magnificence; flattered by his having singled her out from a throng of fair-faces, her vanity was touched, but not her heart; in fact, she never had enquired into the nature of her feelings. The Marquis's attentions, his obsequious flattery, had become a matter of necessity to her; she felt dull where he was not, and so fancied her-

self desperately in love. As her uncle waited for a reply she answered flip-
pantly :

“I suppose he is as good as most men ; perhaps you might discover his merits if you sought for them as earnestly as you seem to have done for his faults.”

“Why do you speak to me in that tone, Kate? Have I not been ever a kind uncle to you. In not giving my consent to this union, I can have no motive but your welfare at heart. I am an old man, Kate, and have seen much of the world, and deeply have I studied the human physiognomy, and from the very first I have doubted this Marquis—his eye corroborates not the tale that his mouth tells. It is not an honest eye. I have watched it often Kate, when he thought himself unobserved, and the

more I have watched, the deeper has my aversion grown, and the more confirmed have I become in my suspicions that he is not what he would have us believe; and I feel that time will prove that I am right."

"It is all prejudice, uncle, and therefore it is no use arguing with you. I am to understand, then, that you positively refuse your consent?"

"Positively, Kate! I feel it to be my duty, and I have less scruple in doing so, feeling assured that you do not love the man. I must further beg that his visits here may be discontinued."

"Your wishes in that respect shall be attended to," replied Kate, as she rose and left the room, a peculiar expression fitting over her features.

That night the Admiral, who was a light sleeper, was awoke by the report of a gun; he started and listened:

“Oh,” he said, “it is only the American steamer,” and he remembered that his servant had mentioned that she had come in just as he was preparing for rest.

The old man got up and looked out of the window; it was a lovely night, the moon shed her soft rays lovingly over the water, which sparkled and gleamed in the liquid light; the night was so still that the Admiral could distinctly hear the heavy splash of the paddles as the steamer made her way out of the harbour.

“What a Heavenly night! God speed the good ship,” he murmured, as he closed the window and again retired to rest.

Ah! could he have looked on the deck

of that vessel; there stood two muffled figures, one a woman; the moon shining full on her face as she turned to gaze upon the land they were so quickly leaving, discovered her to be no other than Kate Hetherington; we need hardly say that her companion was the Marquis Guadagni.

The next morning the Admiral sat in the dining-room waiting, though not very patiently, for Kate's appearance.

"What makes the girl so late I wonder," he said aloud; "she is generally down before me;" then, glancing at the clock, he rung the bell violently. "Let Miss Hetherington know that breakfast is waiting," he said, as a servant entered.

The man presently returned with a frightened face, saying:

"If you please, sir, Dixon says she's been up to Miss Hetherington's room, and he's not there, sir."

"Not there! then I suppose she is in the library, or some other room. Go and look for her."

The man hesitated an instant, and the Admiral looked up from his paper, which he had again resumed.

"Well," he said, "what is it?"

"If you please, sir, Miss Hetherington has not slept in her room last night; the bed is just the same as Susan made it up yesterday morning."

"Good gracious! what is this?" said the old man, turning pale. "Send Dixon to me."

"What is this, Dixon?" he said, as the girl, who was Kate's own maid, made her

appearance, with a pale face, on which were traces of tears.

“Oh! if you please, sir, she’s clean gone. I’ve been and looked in her room, and most all of her things are gone too. Oh, dear, oh, dear!” and the girl burst into tears.

Seeing it was vain to question Dixon further at present, the Admiral ascended the stairs himself, and entered Kate’s room. Alas! its confusion showed too plainly the evidences of flight; open drawers divested of their contents, empty boxes, articles of wearing apparel, discarded perhaps as not worth taking, strewed on bed and floor; all, all was too plain. The old man groaned aloud as his eye took in these things, and a tear for a moment trembled on his cheek, but he dashed it away, calling up a stern look into his face as he slowly

turned to leave the apartment; just then his eye caught sight of a letter that stood on the mantel-piece, and on taking it up he found it was from Kate, and addressed to himself; hastily breaking the seal, he read as follows:—

“When you receive this I shall be on my way to New York; my companion, I need hardly say, will be the Marquis Guadagni. I shall be united to him this night before we leave, according to the forms of his church, and according to the forms of the Church of England as soon as we reach New York. In taking this step I have felt that my happiness depended on it. I would rather have married with your consent, but as you thought fit to refuse it, you must not blame me if I have consulted not only my own happiness

but that of one who in another hour will be my husband. No doubt you will disown me for this, but I cannot help it.—Farewell.

“KATE HETHERINGTON.”

“Mad, mad,” murmured the Admiral, as he concluded the epistle; “but I spare her one harsh word; she will live to bitterly repent this irrevocable step. My poor sister, thank God she is spared this hour of misery,” and he descended again to the dining room with a face of stern sorrow, that awed the inquisitive servants into silence; in the kitchen only, their voices sunk into whispers, did they discuss the matter, each and all vowing that they had always had their suspicions “of that there Marquis.”

"No, nor he never looked like a gentleman, which I've many a time said, as Mrs. Dixon can bear witness to," chimed in the butler, just making his appearance from the stairs.

"So you have, Mr. Brown, and such was my very own opinion too; but how does master take it?"

"Take it? Why like a man, and I may say a Briton, though he made a poor fist of his breakfast; such ungratefulness after all his kindness, it's enough to take any man's happeetite away. I wonder what our young missus will say to it?"

"Lor', she'll feel it terrible," said cook; "poor thing, she's had a heap of trouble lately."

"That she has, cook," replied Mr. Brown. "I often feel the tears come into my hies

when I see her face so white and mournful like, to what it used to be—”

Just then the bell was rung violently, and Brown hurried off to answer it, while the other servants, with sundry shakes of the head, dispersed to their different avocations.

CHAPTER II.

SOFT and balmy was the summer air, that blew aside the snowy muslin curtains that shaded the drawing room windows of Briar Cottage; it fanned refreshingly the pale cheek of Helen Somers, who reclined on a sofa; her garden hat, which she had evidently just taken off, was held carelessly in her hand, and she leant back seemingly exhausted with some exertion.

Ada sat on a low chair by her side,

watching her with an anxious air; seeing her friend's eyes close, she started forward saying:

“Do you feel faint, dear Helen? How selfish of me to take you for such a long walk, you are not strong enough to bear it yet.”

Helen opened her eyes languidly, replying with a sweet, sad smile:

“Do not blame yourself, dear, I miscalculated my strength; the day was so tempting, who could resist it? I shall be better presently, when I have rested a little.”

And the weary eyelids closed again, as though she would sleep.

Ada silently took up a piece of embroidery that lay on a table near, and for a few minutes her needle was plied busily. Soon her eyes wandered to the window, and her

work fell all unnoticed to the ground, while her hands sunk listlessly in her lap; but while she looked so earnestly out, she saw not the prospect before her; the bright flowers swayed by the gentle wind, waved their gentle salutations to her in vain; the bee and the butterfly floated by unnoticed; the sweet harmony of the summer songster fell on deaf ears.

Far, far away amid different scenes were her thoughts; like winged messengers they had in a moment sped over land and sea; she heard the roar of the mighty Niagara, she saw its silver spray dashing up to the heavens, and there, gazing on the glorious spectacle, stood one, whose image was yet engraven on her soul. Alas! who can stay the imagination? Who can teach us to forget?

A deep sigh from Helen, who had been apparently sleeping, made Ada start, and recalled her from dream-land to reality.

"Ah, my sigh has startled you, your thoughts have been far away from the scene upon which you were so intently gazing; I have been watching you for some minutes, but I suppose I must not enquire where you have been roving."

"Alas! dear Helen, I fear it is the old subject," replied Ada (she had some days previously made Helen acquainted with the apparent heartlessness of St. John's conduct), "I would forget it if I could, but that is impossible."

"Impossible indeed," murmured Helen, as she rose and seated herself by the window; "I feel less tired now, and I think all the better for my walk," she continued;

then after a moment's pause, during which her eyes rested lovingly on the prospect that met her view: "How lovely it looks to-day, how can I ever have the heart to tear myself away, even for a few short weeks; do you know, Ada, I half regret my promise."

"Do not say that, Helen; your dear mother will be with us also; I feel sure the change and sea air will do you good, and Papa is so anxious you should come; besides, I cannot really part with you so soon."

"Admiral Rainsworth is very kind, and I should not like parting with you either, dear Ada; but cannot you understand the associations that make this place dear to me?"

"I can indeed, Helen, but believe me it

is better to change the scene; new sights and objects may have the power to recall you from painful thoughts."

"Nay, Ada, where were your thoughts just now? Not on the objects before you, new as they are; but I do not intend to break my promise. Mama seems to have set her heart upon our going; I trust her fond hopes may be realized, and that the change may really be of benefit to me."

At this moment Mrs. Somers entered with two letters in her hand.

"One from Halifax, and one^s from Lady D.," she said giving them to Ada, "a groom has brought the latter and is waiting for an answer."

"Ah, I fear this is to announce their departure for town," said Ada, as she opened Lady D.'s note.

Her cheek became of an ashy color, as these words met her view—

“My dear Ada, in consequence of this painful intelligence, instead of leaving for home on Thursday, we shall start to-morrow; I feel deeply for you, but will not express my sympathy here as we shall so soon meet.”

“What is it, oh, what can she mean! Can it be that my dear father is—”

Her trembling lips seemed incapable of finishing the sentence.

“My dear Ada,” said Mrs. Somers, taking up the other letter, “this I am sure is your father’s writing, and was posted yesterday, so you see he is all right.”

Somewhat re-assured, Ada, with shaking fingers broke the seal. The feeling of relief at finding her father was safe, made

severely than she otherwise would have done; though her tears flowed copiously as she read. Placing the letter in Mrs. Somers' hand, she sat down and wrote a few hurried lines to Lady D., saying she would be ready to accompany her at an early hour the next morning; having despatched her epistle, she once again, and with more calmness read the Admiral's letter.

“How unkind, how ungrateful; but I feel, Mrs. Somers, that papa is right, the man is an impostor; oh, what a fate has she chosen!”

“A wretched fate indeed, dear Ada; she will need no reproaches but those of her own conscience. Heaven pity her, but this unhappy event will prevent Helen and me from accompanying you at present,” con-

tinued Mrs. Somers, "we will not intrude on the Admiral's grief."

"Perhaps you are right," replied Ada, "but pray do not defer your visit longer than next week; I shall be all alone now, and shall miss dear Helen so much; promise me you will come then; I know that your society will cheer and comfort papa, after the first shock is over."

Mrs. Somers readily promised that if all went well, next week should see them at the Retreat, and then accompanied Ada to her room, to assist her in preparing for to-morrow's journey.

The next evening saw Ada again at home; tender had been her father's welcome, and as he pressed her to his heart, he thanked God for such a daughter. Kate's elopement had been discussed and

put aside as a thing done with; while Ada gave an account of her friends at Briar Cottage.

“You have made me quite anxious to know them, my child; I shall write to-morrow, and beg them to come as soon as possible; and you think Helen the better for your visit?”

“I do indeed, papa; she seemed quite a different being when I left, though she is still I fear very weak—when I first saw her she looked so fragile, as if a breath of wind would extinguish the spark of life, and now she declares she is beginning to feel like her old self.”

“I am very glad to hear this, Ada, but do you think she still cares for Edward? Have you ever spoken to her on that subject?”

“I fear she does, papa; unfortunately where women have once loved, they cannot forget; but,” she continued, checking a sigh, as her father’s eyes were fixed anxiously on her face, “she was very shy when first I mentioned Edward’s name, and seemed to shrink with pain from the subject, but after a few days I won her confidence, and with bitter tears she confessed her inability to shake him from her thoughts; I think it was a relief to unburden her mind, for from that day she appeared to improve a little in health, and became more cheerful. She is very lovely, papa; I think I never saw so sweet a face, the longer I was with her the more I wondered at Edward’s cruel conduct.”

“Do not speak of it, Ada, it makes my

blood boil, we must do our best to make her forget him."

Ada shook her head, but made no reply, then complaining of fatigue, with a cheerful "good-night," she left the room.

In the silence of her own chamber, seated as was now too often her wont, in the deep window, gazing out on the clear star-lit water, she thought over the events of the past few days. "Alas!" she murmured, "time brings sad changes to all; happiness even when within our very grasp, eludes us. Poor Helen! her bright days as well as mine are over; and yet we are not to be as much pitied as Kate. Oh, no; and a shudder crept through her frame. Infatuated girl, what a waking hers will be:" and bitter tears for her cousin's fate fell fast and

heavily, till tired and weary with her own emotions, she sought her couch, and for a while forgot in unconsciousness her own and other's woes.

CHAPTER III.

THE Admiral's pressing letter brought Mrs. Somers and Helen to the Retreat early in the ensuing week. They were received most warmly both by Ada and her father, and were soon most perfectly at home; Helen was in raptures with the beauty of the place, and never tired of sailing on the blue sparkling water of the Arm; already the change and the pure sea breeze were begin-

ning to tell on her; the faint blush rose tints once more began to steal into her cheek; her eye less constantly looked sad and heavy as though with weeping, and her step assumed a more buoyant tread.

Mrs. Somers breathed a silent prayer of thankfulness as her watchful eye noted these changes, and her heart became hopeful that Edward would be forgotten. Alas! she knew not the depth of that love, which once planted in Helen's bosom was never more to be eradicated; that although change of air and scene had or the time improved the fair girl's outward health, the disease was still in her heart, from which place death alone could remove it.

The old Admiral was again in his element, Mrs. Somers was ever ready to play cribbage or back-gammon with him, and

with Ada and Helen to sing his favourite songs, his evenings were no longer dull; and laughingly, Ada declared to her friends that she was sure her father would never let them again leave the Retreat. Poor Ada! as Helen's health improved, hers seemed to decline; now that there was some one else to amuse her father, she no longer felt the necessity of straining every nerve to be cheerful; out of his presence, for hours she would sit in a small rustic bower, that was built almost at the edge of the Arm, over which a magnificent elm spread its branches, completely screening it from the summer sun, and gazing far out on the bright waters, forget, apparently, the existence of the scene around her, even of Helen, who sometimes sat by her side reading, and who, from time to time

glanced anxiously at Ada's abstracted brow.

One day, she was sitting thus, seemingly more abstracted than usual, Helen having spoken once or twice, and received no answer, when Mrs. Somers, with a hurried step, and agitated manner, entered their sylvan retreat.

"My dearest Ada," she said, "will you come into the house. I think I have something of the greatest importance to show you."

Both the girls rose and eagerly followed her to her own room, the one which Kate had always inhabited. Closing the door, Mrs. Somers led them to a cupboard in which between the shelves were one or two drawers constructed in the wall; mounting on a chair, she opened the topmost of these

and drew from thence a large packet of letters, which she silently placed in Ada's trembling hands.

"What is this?" said Ada, glancing at the packet of letters, and addressed to me. "Merciful Heaven, it is Herbert's writing," and frantically she burst the band that confined the bundle.

One hurried glance told all; there were her own letters to St. John, and his to her, all unopened; with a wild cry she fell back insensible.

Her sympathising friends applied the usual restoratives, but it was long before the blood again circulated through that ashy cheek and lip; when restored to consciousness she begged Mrs. Somers to explain how she had found them.

It seems that good lady had been dis-

turbed in the night by a noise in the cupboard, which she supposed to be a mouse; going in to her bedroom the next day she bethought her to look if there was a hole through which this small disturber of her peace found egress; not being successful in her search, she espied the drawers which she never before had noticed, and thinking the delinquent might have found a refuge there, drew them out one by one; the last would move but a little way, and feeling that something impeded it at the back, she squeezed in her hand and drew forth the cause, the said bundle of letters.

“I thought at first,” said Mrs. Somers, “they were old papers put by, and was going to replace them, when I saw the seal of the bottom one had never been broken; the thought that something was wrong

immediately flashed across my brain, and glancing through the whole packet, I found all the seals unbroken; I could also see that some of the letters were addressed to you, and some to Mr. St. John; the truth entered my mind in a moment, and I rushed to find you."

By this time tears were running fast down Ada's cheeks, but they were tears of joy.

"Cruel Kate," she murmured, "but I forgive you. It is such bliss to know Herbert is not false after all." Then begging to be left alone, with a full heart she perused one by one the evidences of St. John's faithfulness; once or twice the blinding tears impeded her progress; his gentle upbraidings for her not writing to him touched her very soul, and when in

the last letter his utter grief at her apparent faithlessness was too evident, when in sad and sorrowful words he prayed that she might be happy in the lot she had chosen, and he through life the only sufferer, that he now bade her "farewell for ever," she laid her head on her hands and sobbed violently :—

"Herbert! Herbert, you have not been the only sufferer," she murmured; "Noble heart, how bitter must have been your feelings!"

But soon rousing herself she thought over what was to be done; she did not know St. John's address; but suddenly recollecting that no one was more likely to inform her of it than Lady D——, she sat down and wrote a hasty note to that kind friend, begging her if possible to come at

once to the Retreat, as she had a matter of the utmost importance to consult her about; and having dispatched it with a strict injunction to the messenger to use all speed, she sought her father's private room, where the old man sat busy over his accounts.

Scarcely waiting for his cheery, 'Come in' to her hasty tap, she almost bounded into the apartment, electrifying the worthy Admiral by throwing her arms round his neck and bursting into a violent flood of tears, saying,

"Oh! Papa, I am so happy."

"God bless me, what is all this?" replied her startled father. "What is it, my darling, these tears don't look like happiness; tell me what has happened?"

His frightened and anxious tone recalled

Ada to calmness, and in a few words she told her story.

How bright was her face when she had finished and how full of tenderness and triumph the tone in which she said,

“So you see, dear Papa, Herbert was true after all; how could I doubt him?”

“Under the circumstances it was impossible to help it, my darling—that infamous girl.”

“Hush, papa. May God forgive her as I do from my heart; she will have enough to suffer in the lot she has chosen.”

The Admiral folded her to his heart.

“You are an angel,” he said, the tears gathering fast in his eyes; “I now see how much that little heart of yours must have

suffered; I foolishly thought St. John was forgotten."

"Forgotten! papa, but let us not talk of the past, it were best buried in oblivion, and here is a carriage driving up; it is Lady D——, how kind of her to come so quickly; I must carry her away to my own room, papa: I am sure she will tell me what is best to be done; you had better go and have a chat with Mrs. Somers, who is in the drawing room."

And with a bright eye and flushed cheek Ada flew to receive her friend.

"Dear child, she looks like the Ada of old," murmured her father as she closed the door; then following her advice, he sought Mrs. Somers.

Great was lady D.'s horror at finding the treacherous part Kate had played, and

heartfelt her congratulations that St. John's fair fame was so thoroughly cleared.

"Yes," she said, in reply to Ada's question; "write to him at once, it would be false delicacy not to do so; I will answer for his joy at receiving it; you cannot screen Kate in this matter? Tell him the simple facts, and now, God bless you, dear child, may you be as happy as you deserve to be. You have had a long dark night of sorrow; but your morn of sunshine has, I think, dawned. I will hurry home, and send you the address, which I am sure Henry can get from Captain Athol; who, I know, corresponds with St. John; in the meantime, you can write your letter," and with a warm embrace Lady D—— took her leave.

Ada sat down to her writing table, but

it was long before she could compose her thoughts so as to write coherently; as it was, her letter was blotted with tears which she in vain tried to keep from flowing. Mrs. Somers entered with a note from Lady D——, containing the address, just as she had finished; with a flushed cheek she sealed her letter, and ringing for her maid, desired it might be sent to the post directly.

“I am afraid, dearest Ada,” said Mrs. Somers, “this excitement will be too much for you, your cheek is so flushed, and your eye is much too bright to please me. You must positively lie down, and try to rest before dinner. Helen shall come and read to you.”

“I will try and do so, dear Mrs. Somers, though I fear even Helen’s soothing and

gentle voice cannot still my riotous thoughts, but I really will try and rest, for my brain aches with its weight of joy," and throwing herself upon a sofa, she bade Mrs. Somers call Helen.

"Why, Helen, your cheek is almost as flushed as mine," she said, with a gay laugh, as Helen entered the apartment. "I fear your mother counted too hastily on your placid temperament, when she suggested you as a doctor to soothe my excited nerves."

"Your joy has made me so happy," replied Helen, as she stooped and affectionately kissed Ada. "How pleasant it is to see you looking so bright and cheerful; but I must obey mama's injunction, and read to you; and you must try while I do so, to forget what has happened," taking up a

volume that lay on the table near, she began.

We much doubt, when after an hour she closed the book, and laid it down, whether Ada could have told if Helen had been reading prose or poetry; but the gentle voice had lulled her, the flush in her cheek had died out, and her eye had assumed its wonted expression.

“How much have you heard? Confess,” said Helen, laughing. “I should like to have your opinion of the heroine.”

“Well, if the truth must be told,” replied Ada, echoing her friend’s laugh, “I don’t know exactly what you were reading about; but I can safely say I feel all the better for it, notwithstanding, and am quite ready for our usual stroll; so fetch your hat and we will go.”

Hand in hand these fair girls wandered along the path by the water's edge. How light was the heart of one; the mountain of grief which had so long pressed it down, was lifted off, and buoyantly it sprang back to its wonted position. A stone was added to the burden that pressed on the heart of the other, a newly found friend was to be taken from her; another link from the short chain of her earthly happiness was about to be snapped by the rude hand of destiny; but neither by word nor look did this new sorrow appear; the lip spoke cheerily, and the eye looked bright, and friendship's quick perception found no lack of sympathy where it looked for it.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVINGLY glanced the summer sun on wood and wave, as he sunk down to rest, carrying with him the gentle breeze, that had all the day long been toying with the rich green leaves, and the sweet and lovely flowers. His parting rays seemed to hover lingeringly on a number of wigwams that stretched along the Dartmouth shore, just opposite the south-end of Halifax.

How picturesque they look in the mellow

light, their birch bark coverings, gleaming white as snow, and from one here and there a thin line of blue smoke curling up in the clear atmosphere.

Inside one, pitched almost at the water's edge, sat a young Indian girl busily forming a box with the quills of the porcupine, dyed in rich and various colours; the design of the pretty pattern was evidently her own, and as her small and taper fingers finished off the last stitch, she held it up with a bright look of triumph, while a low musical laugh of satisfaction issued from her parted lips.

Apparently she was about seventeen, with a face, despite its swarthiness, of singular beauty; her jetty hair had evidently had more care bestowed on it than is usual for the Indian indolence to indulge

in, and its glossy masses were confined by a bright and unsoiled ribbon, while the richly embroidered cap with its gay fringe of beads was put on as coquettishly as any civilized maid could have worn it; much time and care too had been bestowed on the embroidery of her tunic and jacket, as also on the tiniest and prettiest of mocassins that covered her feet.

She was still twirling the box round, regarding it lovingly with her large dark eyes, when a shadow falling across the entrance of the wigwam caused her to look round quickly. As she met the gaze of a tall powerful young Indian that had thus come between her and the sun, the bright look in her face died out, and every feature became stolid and inexpressionless.

There was certainly no beauty in the

face of her admirer, for such evidently he was; a deep cunning lurked in his small restless eyes, a sinister expression played round his ill favoured mouth, heightened perhaps by a deep scar that seamed the upper lip, extending to the high cheek bone, the evidence of a gash that must have been deep and dangerous; his figure was good with a chest broad and deep, and limbs clean and active, with no superfluous flesh. Savage was the light that glittered in his small snake-like eyes as he marked the change that came over the girl's face, and rapidly in his own tongue he spoke a few words; one that understood not the Indian language might have gathered the bitterness of them from the tone and expression, as also the scorn with which they were replied to by the maiden,

from whose face now the calm and stolid look had departed, giving place to the working of rage and indignation. A low laugh of triumph issued from the Indian's lips, apparently at having awakened any thing like life in the beautiful form before him.

"Ha! ha," he said, "Olita is moved by that name, the pale face has stolen her heart," then going nearer to her he added fiercely, "Olita, swear by the Great Spirit to me that his image lives not in your breast, swear."

But with a sudden gesture she extricated the small hand that he had seized, and pointing to the entrance of the wigwam she said in haughty tones,

"Olita bids Tecumseh go, how dare he speak such words to her? Her heart is in

her own keeping and for him it holds only a big hatred; go," and she stamped her tiny foot impatiently.

With a dark scowl Tecúmseh retreated towards the entrance; and as he crossed the threshold, he turned and fixing his glittering eyes upon her, "hissed," rather than said:

"Beware!"

Then with swift and bounding steps he sprung over the intervening space and was soon lost in the surrounding wood. A sigh of relief issued from Olita's lips as she saw him vanish, but a grave and unwonted seriousness came over her as she once more resumed her seat on the blanket that was spread over a black bear-skin in one corner of the wigwam.

Her pretty box was forgotten and lay

neglected on the ground; the fingers that had a few minutes before been so busy over it, now lay listlessly in her lap, while sober and troubled thought pervaded her youthful face.

She had sat thus for some time, and the glowing tints left by the departed sun were dying out of the sky, and the soft light of the moon beginning to be visible, when she was aroused by the barking of dogs and the sound of approaching footsteps.

She had hardly sprung to her feet, when with a bound the young Indian boy (whom we introduced in a former chapter), entered. Olita gave him a tender welcome, for he was her brother, and then asked eagerly for her father and the captain.

“Soon they will come,” replied the boy

“and the fire must be ready, for they need food.”

And seizing some dry wood that lay in a corner, he carried it outside the wigwam, and very soon a bright fire was burning, while, gipsy fashion, two stout stakes were crossed, on which could be hung the kettle or pot, to hold the evening meal.

Hardly had these preparations been completed when the old Indian and Edward made thier appearance; the latter we hardly could have recognised, with his unshaven beard, and his tanned complexion, the result of a fortnight's roughing it in the bush; but we question whether the appearance of health and vigour which he had acquired, did not fully compensate for all the refinements of the toilette; certainly he never appeared to more advantage, and so, per-

chance, thought Olita, as having welcomed back her father, she replied shyly to his greeting, while a soft and tender light gleamed in her eyes that the cast down lids scarcely concealed. Soon her dainty fingers were employed in assisting her brother to prepare the needed meal; it consisted of game which the boy had brought slung over his shoulders; savory was the smell thereof, and great the relish with which the hunters devoured it, for many hours had passed since they had tasted food.

“Now I feel a man again,” said Edward as he lighted his pipe. “Come, Olita, let us sit on that log near the sea; it is a heavenly night, and too warm to be shut up in this wigwam.”

With a light step, the Indian girl followed him to the log in question, where

they quietly seated themselves. For a time no sound passed between them; both seemed to be intensely watching the bright ripples of the water that sparkled and shone like silver in the moonlight.

Lazily Edward smoked: where were his thoughts? Were they with the graceful being at his side as were hers on him? Alas! for her, no; they were far away, tracing out in the distance the pretty cottage, which he thought at this moment held the fair form of Helen Somers. How many a night like this had he watched with her the bright stars! Oh! should he never do so again? Vainly had he striven to forget her; the echo of her gentle voice was ever thrilling in his ear, and he was pining now for the actual sound of it. Yes, the being that he had rejected, that he had so heart-

lessly forsaken, he felt now was dearer to him than all else in the world beside; her sweet, pale face (for he knew that it had now grown pale), was ever before him; it was with him amid the haunts of his fellow man; it had followed him into the silence and solitude of the mighty forest; now as he gazed on the placid water before him, still was she there, and he longed with a deep and intense yearning to clasp her to his heart and call her his own Helen. But a barrier was between them, a barrier of his own making, deep and impassable; she must look upon him with scorn and contempt, for the unmanly part he had played; true, he had not spoken of marriage, but had he not day by day, and hour by hour, taught her to love him, and had not his eyes spoken, though his lips had been mute?

The voice of conscience, which (if ever) is stilled only by long years of wickedness and vice, had for months been upbraiding him. Shocked and startled by his sister's disgraceful conduct, like his uncle, he thanked God his mother had not lived to see the bitter day; the thoughts of that gentle mother's words and expostulation then rose up before him, and almost unconsciously he prayed that he might lead a better life. With these thoughts, the vileness of his conduct to Helen seemed to grow and magnify, and his love for her to increase. He became restless and uncomfortable, and sought change in wild forest sports; but, as we said before, the image of the wronged Helen haunted him even there. Alas! she would never think of him more,

or, if she did, it could only be with loathing and disgust.

"Fool! fool!" he muttered aloud, striking his clenched hand on his knee.

His silent companion started and looked up anxiously in his face. "Why you say 'fool?'" she said in a low soft voice.

"Because I am the biggest one that ever lived," he replied; "but I quite forgot you were by my side; did I startle you?"

"Not startle," she said quietly. There was a sadness in her tone that struck upon Edward's ear.

"You are sad, Olita, to night, what is the matter?"

The girl lifted her large soft eyes to his but replied not. What was there in their expression that made Edward start? Surely it could not be: the Indian girl did

not love him. He had never sought to win her love ; no, thank Heaven, his conscience was clear on that score. He had known her since she was a child, a pretty playful thing, that would gambol with him when, as now, he returned from some hunting excursion with her father; she had always interested him, and many had been the strings of bright beads and the knots of gay ribbon that he had bought for her. Alas, the poor untutored heart had learnt to love the donor, and now the beads and the ribbon were only valuable as being his gifts.

Poor heart! when he said so calmly, "I quite forgot you were by my side," she felt that he had really forgotten it, and that she was nothing to him, that she never had been anything. How could she have

dreamt such a thing? In her inmost soul she echoed his words, "fool, fool."

"Olita, what is this," said Edward abruptly, "you love me?"

She started, but answered calmly, "Olita does. Me know," she continued quickly, as Edward was about to interrupt her, "me know your heart is far away; me see in your face to night, that it holds no love for Olita."

"I am not worth your loving, Olita, I am a bad man."

"You not bad to me," she simply replied. "Tell Olita where your heart is?" she abruptly added.

Edward hesitated a moment, then thinking it might be best, he as explicitly as possible related his story. He did not spare himself, but spoke vehemently

of the atrocity of his conduct towards Helen.

Olita's eyes were filled with tears when he had finished. "You very much unhappy," she said, "but she, Oh! she, much more so."

"No, no," said Edward quickly, "not now, she has long since forgotten me."

"Once love, she forget never," replied Olita. There was a quiet misery in the tone that touched Edward to the heart.

"My poor Olita," he said, "I would give much that you had never met me, it is an unlucky fate that brought us together; from my soul I pity you."

"Olita no want pity," she proudly replied, "she not pity herself." Then after a few minutes' silence, she asked for a description of Helen.

"Oh!" she said, "beautiful as the wood flowers," as Edward finished a glowing and lover-like description. "No wonder she got your heart; when she your squaw, Olita come see her."

"I fear she will never be my squaw," replied Edward sadly.

"Some day, yes," said Olita, "me know it, me feel it here," and she pressed her hand on her heart.

A glad thrill passed through Edward's frame, for her words sounded like a prophecy. "God grant it!" he murmured, taking Olita's hand within his own, he pressed it kindly, saying, "I have been wrong to come here so much, and blind not to have seen this before. "You must forget me, Olita, and be the squaw of Tecumseh; he loves you very much."

“Olita hate him,” she answered, and there was force and sincerity in her tone.

As this moment, a sharp crack of a rifle, followed by a piercing scream, brought the old Indian out of his wigwam. In a minute he was by the side of the old log—there lay Edward on the ground, pale and insensible, while Olita was distractedly trying to unfasten his coat and waistcoat.

A hurried question and answer passed between father and daughter, the latter pointing to the wood. The old man made a few steps in the direction indicated, then suddenly turned and came back to the girl, saying, “Tecumseh swift of foot, no good try catch him now,—must wait.”

In the mean time Olita had succeeded in discovering the locality of the wound, which was in the chest; the front of the

shirt was saturated with blood, which deeply dyed the trembling girl's fingers.

What next was to be done? he still remained insensible, though his head and face had been copiously bathed with cold water, and he only by a low moan now and then gave consciousness of life still remaining. If medical assistance was not rendered, most likely he would be dead before morning.

Olita seemed to feel this; one moment of hesitating thought; then she spoke eagerly to her father, pointing to a canoe that lay on the beach, and then in the direction of the Arm, where she knew Edward's uncle lived.

A minute more and the canoe floated on the moonlit water, and Edward was carefully and tenderly laid in the bottom

of it; Olita placing herself so as to receive his head in her lap; there was now no room for the father, but with his son's assistance, who had also been aroused, another canoe which lay at some little distance was brought, and the two being lashed together, both Indians sprang into the foremost, and seizing the paddles they stoutly and steadily made their way over the water; their whereabouts being long visible by the feathery white track that gleamed like snow beneath the moon's rays.

It was a long and tiring pull; Olita groaned impatiently as the distance seemed to increase; however the canoe was at last run on the beach just below the Admiral's house.

All was as still as the grave, no light

gleamed from the windows for it was now long past midnight; all seemed sunk in deep sleep. But there was one head that rested not on its pillow; the eyes of Helen Somers were not closed in slumber; she had retired to bed as usual, but finding herself very restless and wakeful, had risen, thrown on a loose robe de chambre and seated herself by the window, which she threw up, the night being extremely warm. She had sat there some time and the calm serenity of the outer world had in a measure stilled her restlessness, when a clock striking the first hour of morning, warned her again to retire to rest.

Her hand was on the window to close it, when the quick stroke of a paddle or oar fell on her ear; she listened while it

came nearer, and then there was the grating of a boat on the beach.

Who could it be at that hour? She heard some one land and then a low murmur of voices, but a clump of trees intervened between her and the spot whence the sounds came.

Her heart beat quickly; she knew not why; the occurrence was unusual.

Presently she saw the dark figure of a man emerge from the clump, and walk rapidly towards the house; as he came near and the bright rays of the moon fell full upon him she recognized "Old John," for by this name was the Indian also known at the Retreat.

His quick eye at once perceived the half retiring figure of Helen, but he took her for Ada; gaining the house directly

under her window, he said in a low voice: "Young Miss not be frightened, we bring Captain Edward in canoe, him shot bad; most dead."

A suppressed scream and a convulsive grasp at the window sill, as though she were about to faint, and the strong necessity for immediate action nerved Helen's trembling limbs. With a quick step she sought her mother's room and rousing her, informed her of what had happened.

Mrs. Somers' nerves had been strengthened by adversity; she quickly but calmly dressed herself, desiring Helen to do the same, and then roused the Admiral and the household.

Admiral Rainsworth's was a tender heart; the moment he heard Edward was

wounded, perhaps dying, the past was forgotten, and tenderly as a father did he superintend the removal of the still insensible body from the canoe to his house, every now and then interposing with a "Gently, my man—softly; poor fellow, how he groans!"

The moving had restored a slight degree of consciousness, just sufficient, probably, to feel pain; for every now and then a deep moan issued from Edward's lips, making the heart of poor Helen ache, for she, with Mrs. Somers and Ada, not being able to restrain their anxiety, had gone down to meet the sorrowful procession.

Olita, who had been helping tenderly to remove the sufferer, the moment Helen's face, pallid with intense feeling, met her view, shrank back and resumed her seat in

the head of the canoe; she felt as if by inspiration that this was the being that Edward loved so intensely.

Silently she watched her taking an active part in the endeavours to make the wounded man's position as comfortable as might be; she read a world of love, grief, and pity in those deep, earnest eyes, and felt she was not mistaken.

She made no attempt to follow as the men moved off with their sad burden, but watched till it had entered the house.

Then, with her hands pressed tightly on her heart, and her head bowed, she sat immovable, till the arrival of Old John and his son; nor did she move from that position till once more the canoe grated on the beach, close to her own wigwam.

In an hour more no sign of the Indian

encampment was visible; they had vanished as though they had never been, and far away in the deep forest Olita hid her love and her sorrow.

CHAPTER V.

DOCTOR ORDMAN shook his head.

“It is an ugly wound, and extracting the ball will be a painful operation; you must retire, Admiral, and send your butler here; I know him to be a cool and steady hand; Mrs. Somers would also be of use if her nerves are strong.”

“Whose nerves, doctor?” said Mrs. Somers, at this moment re-entering the

room, which she had only left for a minute.

"Yours, madam; have you the courage to remain here while I extract the ball? It will be both a tedious and painful operation, and no doubt will cause Mr. Hetherington much suffering. Can your nerves bear it? You can be of great use to me."

"Try me, doctor; only give me something to do, let me be of use, and I can go through it unwaveringly."

"That is right, madam. Now, Admiral, you had better go; I will send you word how we go on as soon as possible."

It was indeed a painful and tedious process extracting that ball; the perspiration stood in pearl like drops on the good doctor's brow, and though Mrs. Somers unflinchingly stood to her post, her cheek

grew deathly white as groan after groan of intense agony issued from the quivering lips of the patient.

That night, in the servants' hall, Brown said at intervals, with a long drawn breath:

"It was awful; the Lord forbid I should ever see the likes again."

It was over at last, the bandages all applied, and Edward, who, during the operation, had gained consciousness, having swallowed a draught administered by the doctor, was apparently sinking into sleep.

Doctor Ordman stole on tiptoe out of the room; ere seeking the Admiral, he entered the dining room, and helped himself to a bumper of port wine, then with a sigh of relief, he entered Admiral Rainsworth's room.

The old man started forward to meet him.

“How is he, doctor? Is there hope?”

“I think he will do now, my dear sir; he is just sinking to sleep, which will refresh and strengthen him; it has been a narrow squeak; a few inches further, and there had been no need or use in extracting that ball; but now tell me how it happened.”

“Happened!” replied the Admiral, “in the confusion I never thought to enquire; I took, as a matter of course, that it was an accident. Where is old John? he can enlighten us.”

The bell was rung, but no one had seen old John since Edward had been carried into the house; he had vanished mysteriously, the butler said, “and never waited

even for a drop of drink, which, by the same token, sir, he is huncommonly fond of, and that makes me the more wonder why he ran away in such 'aste."

"We must enquire into this to-morrow," said the Admiral, but the next day neither old John nor any of his tribe were to be found, and all had to wait with what patience they could till Edward was able himself to account for the wound that had so nearly cost him his life.

It was long before he was capable of doing so; for days he was in a high fever. Mrs. Somers had constituted herself chief nurse, and wisely admitted neither Helen nor Ada into the room, for the ravings of his delirium would have shocked and pained their tender hearts. In the dead of the night he would start up and call for

Helen, begging in such piteous tones for her forgiveness, that Mrs. Somers' heart was melted with pity, and she would speak to him soothingly, saying Helen had forgiven him, and then he would sink to sleep again for a few moments, only to start up and renew his cries and petitions.

It was a hard tussle with that enemy of mankind, Death; but youth and a strong constitution conquered at last, and for the time the enemy was driven back.

On the third or fourth day after a long sleep, the first quiet one he had known, Edward awoke, weak as an infant but in his right mind; he tried to lift himself in the bed, but sank back helplessly. Mrs. Somers, who just at that moment entered the room, flew to his assistance; he gazed

at her in astonishment, and was about to speak, when she stopped him.

“Not one word, you have been very ill, and the doctor gave me positive orders that when you awoke you were not to utter a syllable.”

He looked at her beseechingly, and the word “Helen” formed itself on his lips.

“Hush,” said Mrs. Somers, “she is well. I see I must leave the room to enforce you to silence,” she continued, seeing him about to speak, which she accordingly did.

Meeting the doctor on the stairs she informed him of the state of the case.

“You have acted with your usual judgment, madam, and by my advice you do not enter the room again till to-morrow; any conversation at present would be madness. I will inform him of the few facts that

are necessary, perhaps, to set his mind at ease, and for the rest Nurse Belbin is fully competent to take sole charge; the Admiral must also be prevented from seeing him to-day. Will you go to him and convince him of that fact? I will come to you after my interview with the patient."

As he entered the room Edward smiled faintly and held out his hand.

"So, so, we are better to-day," said the worthy doctor, pressing it. "Hush, not a sound—" as he saw him about to open his mouth; "I know what you would ask; you have been desperately wounded, and are now in your uncle's house. Mrs. Somers is here on a visit; there, that is all I shall tell you at present; you will see no one to-day except the nurse, and it depends on your obedience to my wishes, in keeping

perfectly still, whether you see anyone tomorrow. Here, swallow this." And the doctor poured something gently down his throat.

After having shaken up his pillow, and made him as comfortable as possible, with an exhortation to try and sleep, he took his leave, to call in the evening.

Nurse Belbin was apparently without the power of speech, and after one or two attempts to extract a word from her, Edward gave it up as hopeless, and resigned himself to his fate, and before many minutes was again quietly sleeping; no doubt the effects of the draught, combined with the exhaustion consequent on the slight exertion he had made. As Doctor Ordman entered the library the Admiral asked nervously :

“What news, doctor, is he all right?”

“He will be, I hope, by the morning; his life now depends upon perfect quiet and freedom from any excitement whatever. I think I can trust to Mrs Somers that no one except the nurse is allowed to enter the room till to-morrow. I have given all the necessary instructions to her, and I know she will carry them out to the very letter; so you may set your mind at rest as to his being well taken care of. At present I only want him to sleep.”

And saying he would look in again before night Doctor Ordman departed.

Mrs. Somers then sought Ada's room, for she knew she and Helen were waiting there anxiously for the doctor's opinion; as she entered the room Helen sprang towards her—

“What is it, mamma?”

“All right, my darling, he is awake and conscious, and if he is kept perfectly quiet, Doctor Ordman says by to-morrow he will be out of danger.”

Helen burst into tears. Mrs. Somers drew her towards her.

“What is this, Helen? Is he still so dear to you?”

“Oh, mamma!” was all the weeping girl could reply.

There was no need of more words, Mrs. Somers felt that not for a moment had Edward been forgotten; that his image had never for a moment been effaced from the poor heart that had borne its sufferings so uncomplainingly; and her own tears fell in sympathy as she clasped her daughter in a closer embrace.

The world may prate of woman's inconstancy, but let her once really love, what shall erase that love from her heart? Can sorrow or sickness? They but bind her the closer; not toil or hardships, nor crime or humiliation, nor cold or hunger, nay, not even cold indifference, contempt or hatred, can cause her to change; she may weep bitter tears, but she will still love on, aye, even to the hour of death, and perchance through all eternity.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the singular hollow formed beneath the rocky ledge over which the mighty Niagara pours its stupendous flood, stood Herbert St. John; in front of him dashed the maddened waters, lashed into clouds of fleecy foam, with a roar that all pens have failed to describe. A few minutes before, he had been standing on the Table Rock, from which one is supposed to obtain the best view of the fall, but after standing there

some time, watching the brilliant rainbows that glittered amidst the clouds of spray (much to the horror of his sister-in-law, who, even with her husband, had been with difficulty induced to go as near as the said rock), he announced his intention of going beneath the fall, as he wished to see it in every possible light. Emily shuddered as she saw him, despite her remonstrance, descend the spiral staircase; but she would have shuddered more had she seen him creeping along the narrow slippery path that leads to the very foot of the Horse-shoe fall, clinging every now and then to the hand of the guide, a powerful negro; but not even satisfied with this, he must stand where we found him, in this singular hollow. How long he would have stood there we know not; he seemed fascinated,

though saturated with spray that dashed over him incessantly; he seemed to feel it not, till a touch on the shoulder from his sable guide recalled him to himself.

The power of speech was useless here, and the deep booming sound of that great cataract would have drowned a salvo of the heaviest artillery; so the man, by dumb show conveyed his opinion that he thought it quite time to revisit the upper world, and St. John reluctantly quitted this grand and interesting spot.

On again ascending the spiral staircase, he met his brother, who wore a look of relief at his appearance.

“What a time you have been, my dear fellow, I was really beginning to feel anxious; I have taken Emily back to the hotel; had she been waiting here all this

time, she would have worked herself into a fever; you must come with me for a few minutes just to show her you are safe."

"I had no idea how long I had been," replied St. John; "I believe awe chained my feet and kept me stationary; but come, Emily must be released from her alarm."

And they wended their way back to the hotel.

Emily was standing watching in a balcony that extended in front of their sitting rooms; she uttered a little exclamation of delight when she saw them.

On entering the room, Herbert went up to her, and taking both her hands in his, said:

"Why what a frightened little thing it is; look, Arthur, she is quite pale, as though my ghost, in dripping garments,

had appeared to visit her. There was really no danger, Emily."

"That is what you men always say," she replied. "I think it was very unkind of you to go, when you knew how frightened I should be."

"Indeed, dear Emily, I am very glad I did go; I would not have missed the sight I have seen for anything. While there I forgot the whole world, myself included."

"Very complimentary, sir, upon my word," said Emily with a pretended pout; "but it seems the whole world has not forgotten you, if one may judge by these," handing him a whole budget of letters; "I had half a mind to hide them for a punishment, but my heart relented when I saw a lady's handwriting amongst them; this is it," she continued, singling out one

from amidst the bundle, which St. John had thrown carelessly and with an air of indifference upon the table. "What, have you no curiosity? I have a great mind to open it myself; see what a pretty hand it is." And she held it playfully before him.

Great was her surprise and terror, when his eye lighting on the writing, he snatched it eagerly from her, and having examined it for a moment, sank pale and trembling into a chair.

"Arthur, Arthur!" she exclaimed, in accents of dismay to her husband, who had stepped out on the verandah to enjoy a cigar, "oh, come here, Herbert is dying!"

As his brother quickly entered, Herbert tried to speak, but, for the moment was incapable, and could only hold up the letter in his hand, but having swallowed a glass

of wine that Emily's shaking fingers poured out, he, in a measure, recovered himself, and in a voice trembling with emotion, said:

"This letter is from Miss Rainsworth, I will read it in my own room," and he rose and left the apartment.

Emily and her husband exchanged looks.

"What can she have to say to him, Emily?"

"Heaven only knows, I was beginning to hope that he was getting over it; but his feelings on that point I now see are unchangeable; that false girl little knows the worth of the heart she has so lightly cast away. What can she possibly have to write about? I am dying of curiosity. You must take me out for

a stroll, or I shall break into Herbert's room and seize the mysterious epistle."

She would have found that not such an easy task, for when he entered, Herbert had locked the door behind him; and then throwing himself on a sofa, with trembling and eager fingers broke the seal.

Who shall describe his feelings as he read? when he came to the last word, he started up, saying:

"Oh, Ada! Ada! how I have wronged you. If I have suffered, what must have been your feelings?" And throwing himself again on the sofa, he buried his face in the cushions.

What was the noise that echoed through the room? Was it a sob? Hush! let us retire, we are treading on sacred ground.

When Emily and her husband returned

from their short walk, they found Herbert with a flushed, but intensely happy face in the midst of boxes and portmanteaus busily packing.

“I am off immediately to Halifax,” he said in reply to their astonished looks. “Come into the sitting-room, and I will tell you all about it. Go on packing, Jeffries, I will be back in a minute,” he added, as he followed them out of the room.

Great was the astonishment of Arthur and Emily, when they had heard the contents of Ada's letter, and heartfelt their congratulations on the turn events had taken.

“Poor girl, how much she must have suffered,” said Emily, the big tears filling her eyes.

“Do not speak of it, my dear sister,



I cannot bear even to think of it; but please God! my life shall be devoted to making her forget that she has ever known such misery."

"What an odious creature that Kate must be, it makes my blood boil to think of her duplicity. It will serve her right if her Italian Marquis turns out to be what they seem to feel sure he is, a needy adventurer."

"Hush! Emily," said her husband, "your feelings are running away with you. If this Marquis Guadagni is (as I greatly suspect may be the case) the fellow that tried to pass himself off for a Spanish Count, in Devonshire, she will have a life such as the most heartless might pity. I wonder if it is the same fellow? I once

saw him in Plymouth, and I think I should know him again under any disguise. His style of living, and magnificent entertainments made a great talk in and about that neighbourhood; but he suddenly disappeared one fine morning, leaving no tidings of his whereabouts, and not a bill paid. He had with him then a wife, or a woman that bore the title. I should like much to know if it is the same man."

"I hope not, for the sake of her relations, as well as herself," said Herbert; "though she has deeply injured me, I cannot wish her so wretched a fate."

Jeffries at this moment entered to say he had finished packing, and all was ready, Herbert having made arrangements with his brother, that he and Emily should fol-

low him as quickly as possible to Halifax, set off with a lighter heart than he had known for many a day, to seek the home of his beloved.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT evening there was a new arrival at the Hotel. Distinguished foreigners, the waiter informed Arthur and his wife, as they took a quiet meal in their own room, not feeling inclined for the noise of the table d'hote, besides having arrangements to make for following Herbert as soon as they possibly could. The next evening, however, they descended to the saloon, but before entering, stopped to listen to a

woman's voice within, singing most exquisitely.

"That must be the new arrival," said Emily. "What a lovely voice."

It stopped, and a perfect storm of applause followed, in the midst of which they opened the door and walked in unobserved.

They could not for some time catch a glimpse of the syren at the piano, for she was encircled by a crowd of eager admirers, and many voices were begging that she would honor them with another song.

She complied, and again that wondrous melody floated through the apartment. There was not a whisper amongst the numerous listeners; all seemed spell-bound and entranced.

Emily, who was by no means an inferior

singer herself, and devoted to the art, drew a deep sigh as the last notes died away.

"The pleasure of such music is almost painful," she said, looking up at her husband, who was also entranced.

"It is perfect," he replied. "We shall get a peep at this nightingale now; she refuses to sing any more, and is leaving the piano."

As the crowd opened they caught a view of her.

"By Jove! she is a splendid-looking woman," said Arthur.

Emily for a moment did not reply, but kept her eyes fixed on the stranger's face, at last she said, with a puzzled air:

"I feel sure I have seen that face somewhere, but I strive in vain to recall where?"

"I think you must be mistaken, dear," replied her husband. "Perhaps she is like some one you have seen; her face is quite new to me."

"No, I am sure I have seen it; let us ask who she is;" and turning to an American lady who sat near them, she enquired.

"Oh, that is the new comer who arrived last night, the Marchioness Guadagni; her husband is so handsome and so charming."

Emily started, and the bright colour mounted to her cheeks as she whispered to her husband—

"How strange that we should have met them. I should not care to listen to her singing again now, exquisite as it is."

But Arthur did not seem to hear her; he was gazing intently at a black whiskered, dark-eyed man, who seemed to be

conversing gaily with a pretty young girl, who by her manner appeared not a little delighted at having secured the attentions of such a handsome beau.

“Who is that man?” he said to a gentleman who was at that moment passing, and with whom he was slightly acquainted.

“Why, where have you been since yesterday not to know the great and distinguished foreigner, the Marquis Guadagni,” was the the reply, with a slight laugh. “I am just going to pay my respects to the Marchioness; will you come and be introduced?”

Arthur declined the honor, and the gentleman passed on.

“Emily, it is as I thought; the very man,” he uttered, in a low voice, as the individual he had been so closely watching

left the side of the young lady he had been so playfully conversing with, and sauntered along the room in the direction they were standing. "The audacious swindler! I shall give the landlord a hint as to the true character of this, his high and mighty guest. I suppose you are right, Emily, about having seen that unfortunate woman before; you must have met her at that ball the night we stopped in Halifax."

"Yes, of course that was it," replied his wife. "I recollect now Herbert pointing her out to me; she is a magnificent creature. Come, let us go a little nearer, I should like to have a close view. I don't suppose she saw me at the ball, as I was there such a short time; or if she did, will hardly recognize me again."

And taking her husband's arm, they

walked slowly and carelessly towards the part of the room where Kate sat.

She was the centre of an animated group, who were merrily talking, and as Arthur and his wife came up, a perfect shout of laughter rang through the room, called forth evidently from some witty remark made by her, but what it was, they were just too late to catch.

Perhaps Kate had never looked so strikingly handsome as she did at this moment. She was dressed with exquisite taste in a rich maize coloured silk, which harmonized perfectly with her brunette complexion and glossy black hair; a wreath of deep violet pansies encircled her finely shaped head; a bouquet of the same flowers ornamenting the front of her boddice, while lightly and gracefully thrown around

her was a rich lace mantilla, such as is worn by Spanish ladies; as she thus beheld herself the centre of attraction, the admired of all, gratified vanity lighted up her eyes to an almost startling brilliancy, while a warm soft tint diffused itself through her usually colourless cheeks. The bad expression in her mouth, which, when closed, as we said when we first introduced her to the reader, marred and spoilt her beauty, was lost as her lips parted in a gay laugh. Who, as they gazed upon her now, could have dreamt of the evil passions that lurked beneath so fair a surface? To the outward beholder she was everything that was loveable. The mind, as far as they could judge, was as beautiful as the outer form. Alas! how little do we know of the hidden feelings of

the heart; like whited sepulchres, how often does an outside of fairness and purity cover all that is loathsome, all that is revolting to the feelings.

Emily and her husband joined the group unobserved.

“Is it possible,” said Emily in a low voice, “that a being so lovely can have the heart of a fiend?”

“It would be hard to believe it,” replied Arthur, “did we not fully know it to be a fact; I am lost in wonder as I look at her and think of her atrocious conduct.”

At this moment some member of the group moved on one side, leaving Arthur and his wife full in view. Kate glanced in that direction, her eye fell upon Emily, who, with her head slightly advanced, was gazing full in that treacherous face.

Was St. John's companion on the night of the ball recognised? A casual observer would have thought not; but to one watching closely, a rapid glance of intelligence might have been detected in Kate's large eyes, a glance answering as it were to some inward question; as to "Who is that? where have I seen her?" The eye for a moment showing the quick reply of memory; "Oh, that is the wife of St. John's brother; I recollect now." The next moment the look of recognition had disappeared, and her gay conversation resumed with those around.

"She don't recollect me," whispered Emily, "I am glad of it; let us go, it is oppressive to be in the same room with her. Stay a moment," she resumed, as her husband was about to comply with her request. "Is that the would-be Marquis?"

"Where?" said Arthur.

"There he is, standing just behind his wife's chair."

"Yes, that is the villain, he little thinks I know him so well."

"That will do," said Emily.

And they turned to leave the room, but just at that moment Kate dropped a magnificent bouquet that she had been toying with during her conversation, and a gentleman at Emily's side starting eagerly forward to restore it, found himself entangled in some lace trimming that adorned the loose and floating sleeves of her dress; he backed and begged pardon, which Emily smilingly accorded, while Arthur stepped forward to assist in the dis-entangling.

In doing so he was placed directly in front of Kate and her husband.

The eyes of the latter had no sooner fallen upon him than he gave a convulsive start, and a deadly palor spread over his face. Fortunately for him, all were for the moment engaged in the trifling scene just mentioned, and the ghastly change in his countenance was unobserved.

Emily having been released, with her husband left the room; a few minutes after, the marquis (as we shall still continue to call him), stooped and whispered a few words in his wife's ear.

A look of displeasure darkened her brow as she replied :

“Nay, it is early yet, and I am not at all tired.” He frowned as he again spoke, still in a low tone,

"But I wish it, I have reasons."

There was that in its expression that made her rise immediately, and waving a graceful "Good night," to those around her, leaning on her husband's arm, she retired.

"What is this, Adolphe?" she said as they entered their own private rooms, "are you ill? Your face quite frightens me."

"It is nothing," he answered hastily, "but we must leave here to-night; sudden business has called me away."

"Leave here to-night!" echoed Kate, "you said nothing of this before; have you had a letter? But no, you could not, there is no mail comes in after three o'clock. Tell me what it is, Adolphe. You cannot deceive the eyes of affection, and I see that something dreadful has happened."

"I assure you my love, it is nothing; I was told to night that a countryman of mine, whom I have long been anxious to see about family matters, is now at Boston, and purposes starting immediately for the far west; and if I should lose even one day, I more than probably shall miss him."

Kate still looked unsatisfied. "I cannot think this is your real reason," she said, "however, I suppose if you insist on going at this untimely hour, I must go and see about packing," and with no very pleasant face she entered the adjoining bedroom.

The Marquis did not follow her, but with his arm leaning on the table, sat lost in gloomy thought. "I wonder if he recognized me?" he murmured to himself in a low tone; "perhaps not, he only saw me once; and he got up and closely surveyed himself in

the mirror over the chimney piece. "I don't look like the same man," he resumed, and for a moment a ray of hope flitted over his features, but quickly it disappeared again, giving place to the old look of gloom and depression: uneasily he paced the room for a minute, and then rung the bell; on its being answered by a waiter, he desired that the landlord might be sent to him immediately.

That functionary, having hastily made his appearance, wondering greatly for what he could be wanted at that late hour, was received most graciously by the marquis, from whose face all traces of gloom and annoyance had disappeared. "I sent for you, my worthy host," he said, as the landlord entered the room, "to say, that in the Saloon just now, I received intelligence

that a most particular friend and countryman of mine, the Chevalier de Neutville, whom I have been for months longing to see, is in Boston, on the point of starting on a hunting excursion to the far west; to-morrow afternoon, my informant thought, was the time the Chevalier had fixed to be off, and as I am most anxious to see him, if it is only for an hour, I am determined to start for Boston to night."

The face of mine host looked blank at this intelligence, he did not like parting so soon with these grandees.

The marquis caught the expression, and with an encouraging smile continued, "We shall not be away long, (mine host brightened); indeed, I think you may expect us back to-morrow evening, (mine host smiled blandly); but as we purpose in

the course of a month to make a trip to the far west ourselves, and this will be a good opportunity of sending on a servant and our heavy baggage, I shall take that with me, only leaving the light baggage here, where of course I know it will be perfectly safe till our return."

The landlord with many profound bows answered "it would be as safe under my roof as tho' it were in a bank."

"Well then, that is arranged," said the marquis, then lowering his voice he added, "I have been trying hard to persuade the marchioness to remain here till I return, but she won't listen to such a thing; she is young and timid, and dreads being left among strangers, besides we have been married so short a time. I have not the heart to refuse her request, tho' I had much rather

she were in a comfortable house, than in an uncomfortable railway carriage, where we shall be most of the night. However as I said before, I cannot refuse her request, but I must try and make her eat a hearty meal before we start, and beg you will send up any delicacies you may have, with a bottle of champagne, and that as quickly as possible."

The landlord with many regrets, that the marquis and his lady wife had to turn out at such an unseasonable hour, after sundry low bows, left the apartment to send up the delicacies and the champagne the marquis had ordered.

In the mean time, Kate had summoned her maid, (a French girl, whom she had picked up on their first arrival in the United States) and ordered the astonished

woman to begin to pack, as they intended starting off for Boston that night.

"But, mi lady, we only just come here," remonstrated the Abigail, who had made up her mind for a sojourn of some weeks in these pleasant quarters.

"What has that to do with it?" answered Kate sharply; "you must pack up at once, and not be very long about it either."

The maid, though evidently with a bad grace, set to work; she had nearly completed her task when the Marquis having dismissed the landlord entered.

"You will not want all these smart things for such a short trip, my love; had you not better leave them here till we return?"

The maid pricked up her ears and rested from her work for a minute.

“On second thoughts though,” he continued, “it will be as well perhaps to take them; we know not what might turn up to detain us.”

Kate bent her eyes with a scrutinizing look upon him, but said nothing.

“My love you can leave the rest now to Louise; I have ordered a charming supper for you which you must come and partake of;” and he led her into the sitting room.

The little delicacies supplied seemed not to be amiss to either, judging from the rapidity with which the dishes were emptied; the champagne too (which was of the very best), was swallowed with an infinite relish. The Marquis smacked his lips after every glass, while a peculiar expression flitted over his face and the

corner of his mouth twitched as though suppressing a smile.

Supper finished they were now ready to start; the landlord stood at the entrance as they passed out, bowing almost to the ground; as the Marquis was about to follow his wife into the carriage, he stepped back and taking the landlord aside said in a low tone:

“One of the trunks I have left in my bed room contains old family plate; you will oblige me by taking it under your especial charge.”

Mine host assured my Lord Marquis that his wishes should be carefully attended to; then the great man with a graceful *au revoir* enters the carriage; the door is banged to; the comprehensive “all right” spoken and they are off.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER leaving the saloon, Arthur St. John and his wife did not immediately retire to rest, but sat conversing earnestly in their most comfortable apartment.

“No, no Emily, I feel it my duty to denounce this man; I cannot stand by and see our good landlord made the dupe of a swindler; I can quite understand your wish to screen the unfortunate wife, but I have only one way open to me, which is

to go direct to the landlord and tell him all I know."

"I suppose you are right, Arthur, but surely there is no need to inform the landlord at this late hour of the night? no doubt by this time, he and most of the inmates of the house have retired to rest."

"Well I suppose there is no occasion to wake them from sleep; I can send for the landlord to come to my dressing room the first thing in the morning; be off to bed now, Emily, late hours are very prejudicial to beauty."

After his wife had left the room, Arthur sat for some time buried in thought, till the striking of a deep toned clock warned him that morning was fast approaching; then lighting a chamber candle he

sauntered in a musing mood to his dressing room, murmuring as he went:

“No, it must be done, I see no way out of it.”

The astonishment of the landlord was only equalled by his indignation, the next morning, when, having obeyed Arthur's summons, he was informed of the true character of the distinguished Marquis, who (as he had expressed it) had honoured his house with his presence.

In reply to Arthur's question of what he should do, he put on a rueful face.

“Do,” he said, “why the villain left last night; he must have got scent of something wrong.”

It was now Arthur's turn to be astonished.

“Left last night!” he repeated, “why

he was in the saloon when my wife and I retired, and then it was pretty late."

"Nevertheless, sir, he summoned me just as I was going to bed, and said he had met a friend in the saloon, who had given him information that made it imperative for him to start for Boston without a moment's delay, to meet some one he was most anxious to see, and who was on the point of starting for the far West; but that he expected to be back, if not the next day, certainly the one following."

"Did he take his wife with him?" asked Arthur.

"That he did, sir, and all his baggage; but stay, he has left two trunks in his room; one, he informed me, contained plate, so after all perhaps he does not intend cheating me out of my money."

"Are you sure the trunks really contain anything?" said Arthur. "These sort of people are up to all sort of dodges, and the trunks may be empty."

"I will soon see if it is so," replied the landlord, and he left the room.

Presently he came back.

"They are certainly not empty, sir; one is particularly heavy. I really believe it has plate in it, as he said."

"Well," said Arthur, "perhaps he intends coming back, as he said; he may have really had occasion to visit Boston suddenly, I certainly don't think he saw me last night; or if he did, I doubt, as I only came in contact with him once, whether he would have recognized me."

"Are you quite, quite sure that you have not mistaken the man?"

“Perfectly certain,” replied Arthur; “though he has changed the colour of his hair and whiskers, I should know him anywhere; if there had been a shadow of a doubt in my mind I should not have spoken.”

“Well, sir, I am much obliged to you for having done so; will you still further oblige me by not speaking of this to any one for the present? I shall wait quietly for a few days to see if the fellow means coming back.”

Arthur having given the desired promise, the landlord left the room.

Great was the regret expressed, and many the questions asked by the numerous inmates of the hotel assembled at breakfast, as to the very sudden departure of the fascinating Marquis, and his still more fas-

cinating wife. The morrow was eagerly looked forward to, as the landlord had announced he expected them back then.

Arthur delayed his departure for a few days to see the result.

But a week passed away, and those waiting anxiously for their return still deplored the absence of the Marquis and his wife. In the meantime the landlord had written to a brother landlord, who was at the head of the best hotel in Boston, to enquire if a person bearing that title was there, describing his person, as well as that of the Marchioness. The reply was most unsatisfactory, stating that no such people had been heard of in any of the principal hotels there.

“What is to be done now?” said the worthy host, appealing to Arthur on the

morning of the eighth day after their abrupt midnight departure.

“There seems no chance of this villain’s return, and little chance of my getting paid; fortunately the sum is not large, as they were here so short a time, but I shouldn’t like to lose it; besides, I have kept the rooms, and refused several people who would have taken them.”

“As you can get no tidings of them,” replied Arthur, “I should advise you to open the trunks left; but, to be on the safe side, I should do so in the presence of one of the members of the police.”

“I will follow your advice, sir,” said the landlord.

And having sent for one of the superintendents of the police of the district, in his presence, as well as in that of

Arthur, the locks of both boxes were picked.

Intense was the rage of the landlord when, on removing some sheets of brown paper that covered the top of the largest and heaviest of the boxes (the one that was supposed to contain plate) and opening one of the numerous green baise bags with which it was filled, he found the contents to be a large stone, a similar treasure filling each of the others: but the smaller box, instead of stone, was filled with blocks of wood.

Of course there was now no doubt of the character of the individual to whom these trunks, with their valuable contents, belonged. The policeman receiving all information that Arthur could give him, departed, promising to use every exertion to

find out the whereabouts of this clever swindler. The news was soon blazoned through the hotel, and the eyes that had looked so sweetly in the face of the grand marquis and his wife, now opened with horror and indignation; but like every thing else, in a few days the wonder was over, something new having claimed the attention of the multitude.

Arthur having now nothing further to detain him, set off with his wife to join Herbert in Halifax, the landlord reiterating his thanks on even the very step of the carriage that bore them from his most comfortable abode.

CHAPTER IX

THE day after reason had assumed her sway over the chaotic darkness of Edward's mind, and he was pronounced by Dr. Ordman to be out of immediate danger, though still to be kept quiet and free from excitement, Ada and her father sat conversing in the drawing-room. It was a bright sunny day, a gentle breeze laden with perfume stole in through the

open window close to which Ada had placed her chair; she had been sitting there for some time alone, her eyes resting on the placid waters, which the gentle summer breeze scarcely rippled, but her thoughts had roamed many miles from the spot on which her eyes were fixed.

It was the first calm and undisturbed hour she had had for some days. The excitement attendant upon Edward's precarious situation, the necessity of devoting herself to the soothing of Helen, the comforting and occupying of the mind of her father, had left her but little time for quiet thought over her own affairs. Now that the doctor had pronounced the danger to be over, and the household had resumed their usual avocations, she gave herself up to the enjoyment of her own musings.

She pictured Herbert's astonishment at receiving her letter.

"Would he come at once?" Her heart beat more rapidly at the very thought. But no, she would not allow herself to indulge such a hope. He might have left Niagara, and her letter might have to follow him about from place to place; besides, he was not travelling alone, and a thousand things unconnected with self might have happened to detain him. No, no, she could not expect to see him for some time yet, but he would write. "And the steamer from New York is expected to-day," she murmured. "I wonder what he will say? Oh, how I wish it would come—;" here she started violently, and the warm blood rushed to her cheek as the handle of the door turned, and her father entered.

“Well, my darling,” he said, “all alone? Do you know that the New York steamer is signaled?”

Ada half started from her seat.

“Oh, papa, I am so glad; when will she be in?”

“Not before a couple of hours,” replied the Admiral. “The day is so clear she has been seen from a great distance.”

“Then we shall not get our letters till the evening,” said Ada in a tone of disappointment.

“Our letters!” answered the Admiral, with a sly look; “what letters are you expecting! I expect none.”

Ada blushed, and pretended to arrange some flowers that stood on a table near: presently she looked up, saying:

“Have you seen Edward, papa? How is he looking?”

“Better than I expected, dear, but still very pale and emaciated; he was not allowed to speak much, and I stopped the thanks he was eager to pour forth; but he appears to me a changed man in heart and feeling, which I thank God for. His gratitude to Mrs. Somers is unbounded; it needs no words to show that, his eyes tell the tale. I know he is dying to ask about Helen; as yet he does not know she is here; from what Mrs. Somers told me of the ravings of that delirium, I feel convinced that after all, he loves that sweet girl dearly. Mrs. Somers feels that too, so if Helen will only look upon him again with an eye of favour, I think it will be a match after all. What think you, Ada,—

does she ever talk of him? Will she ever love him again?"

"Love him again, papa," replied Ada, smiling, "do you think love can be put on and off at our bidding? Take my word for it, papa, though she has never said so, that never for a moment has she ceased to love him, and that perhaps the more intensely from having had to secrete the feeling in the inmost recesses of her heart."

"Well, you are a queer lot," said the Admiral, "and it would take a long time to fathom your real feelings and sentiments. Here have I been for some months quietly congratulating myself that Helen had completely conquered her love for Edward, and was even casting about in my mind where I should find a suitable partner for her, when she has been quietly thinking of him

all day, and if the truth, were known, I daresay half the night too. Oh, woman, woman! how can a poor simple-minded man find you out?"

Ada laughed gaily as the Admiral finished the last sentence with a grave shake of the head.

"Ah, papa, you need not shake your head so solemnly; what would you men do, if, like Helen, women were not constant through good report and through bad report?"

"Or like some one else I know," he answered, drawing her to him, and impressing a fond kiss on her brow. "God grant, my darling child, that your faithfulness may be rewarded, and your anxiety ended before another day draws to a close!"

A bright tear glistened in Ada's eye as she warmly returned her father's caress.

"Herbert has been faithful, too, papa," she murmured in a low voice.

"I feel sure of it, my darling; but see there is Helen in the garden, I dare say she is anxious to hear the result of my interview with Edward, you can tell her best;" and stepping to the window he called her in.

A few minutes after she had entered, declaring he had promised the old boatman to go for a sail, the Admiral left the room by the open window and strolled down to the beach.

"What news of Edward, dear Ada? has your father seen him? how did he look? what did he say?"

"One question at a time if you please,

Helen," answered Ada smiling, and she then related all that her father had told her.

"I knew, I knew he had not a bad heart," murmured Helen, when Ada had finished her tale, the big tears rolling down her cheeks, "but you have not told me how he is looking; is he much altered?"

"Not so much as papa expected to find," replied Ada, "though we cannot expect him to look strong and well all at once; this lovely weather is in his favour, and I have no doubt that in a few days he will be able to get up."

"God grant it!" said Helen in a low earnest voice, and for a moment she seemed lost in thought; then turning to Ada she said:

"How selfish I have been to talk so long

on my own affairs, while you must be in a fever of excitement about your expected letter; of course you know the steamer is signaled?"

"Yes," said Ada, "papa told me, but he thinks it will be some time before she gets in, so I do not hope to get my letter before late this evening; I am as you say, dear, in a fever of excitement about it, and hardly know what to do with myself. I cannot sit here quietly, suppose we go out with papa for a sail; I see the boat getting under weigh, and there is a little breeze springing up; what say you?"

"Willingly," replied Helen, "I see you have your hat here, I will run up for mine, and tell mamma where we are going; at the same time give her these flowers" (pointing to a lovely bouquet that she held in her

hand) and which she was in the act of gathering when the Admiral called her in.

No doubt the flowers were intended for other eyes besides her mother's; however she did not say so, as she handed them to that worthy person, and received a kiss in exchange; then seizing her hat she ran quickly down stairs, and joining Ada, they sauntered down to the landing. The Admiral was just on the point of starting, but seeing them coming towards the boat he waited. "Holloa, are you coming with me?" he shouted, as they waved their handkerchiefs for him to come close and take them in. "That is right," as he comfortably seated them, "I thought you would hardly stay in the house such a day as this; we shall have a breeze presently, and go along like a bird; you will come

back with such roses. There it comes," he continued, as the sails began to fill, "now we go along; this is jolly, is it not, Helen?"

"Charming," she replied, "how I do love the water, I fear I shall miss it sadly when we go home."

"Go home," echoed the Admiral, "I hope you are not thinking of such a thing yet, because if you are, it is of no use; I have not the slightest intention of letting you go for some months to come."

"Well," said Helen, laughing, "if you have made up your mind, I fancy we must stay here, whether we will or no. I must say I have no very great objection; tho' our visit has been a very long one, it has passed so pleasantly, that it appears only like a few days. I don't know how we can

ever thank you enough for your kindness to us."

"Pooh, pooh," interrupted the Admiral, "the kindness has been all on your side, in coming to us, has it not, Ada?"

"Indeed it has, papa," she replied; "we owe them a world of gratitude, I at least," she continued in a lower tone, "if it had not been for Mrs. Somers, those letters most probably would never have been discovered, and then —" here she stopped, and her listeners did not hear what would have been the probable consequence had the discovery not been effected; "but, Helen," she added, after a few moments' pause, "what put the idea of going home into your head; has your mother been talking of it?"

"Not lately, but just before Ed——,

Mr. Hetherington's accident, she said we must begin to think of it, as we had trespassed already long enough: but of course she will not go now till Mr. Hetherington is quite recovered."

"No, nor for a long time after that," said Ada; "papa has vowed it, therefore you have no longer any say in the matter, so the best thing you can do is to submit with a good grace; you will not find it very disagreeable shall you?" and she affectionately encircled Helen's waist with her arm.

A kiss, and a glance from Helen's lovely eyes was her only answer.

"Then that is settled," said the Admiral, "you must not speak of going again till I give you leave."

After sailing some time, the Admiral said, "I think it is time to go in now, and I

shall have a conversation on the subject of going home with your mother this very day." The boat's head was turned, and very soon they had landed, and were sauntering up to the house. On reaching it, the Admiral walked off in the direction of the wood, saying he wanted to superintend the cutting down of some trees, and Helen volunteered to be his companion. "I must go with you," she said, "in order that you do not touch any of my favourites; I have one or two old friends that I would not have touched for anything."

"I promise you their lives," he replied, "but will you not come also, Ada?"

"I would," she replied, "only I have one or two letters that I must write; I have put them off from day to day, till I am quite ashamed of myself: perhaps I

may follow you when I have finished them."

They departed without her, and stepping in again through the drawing room window she threw off her hat and prepared to write. Having finished one letter, she seemed to be seized with a restless fit, and throwing down her pen, walked towards the window, and stood for a few minutes gazing on the sparkling waters, apparently listening to the music of their gentle rippling on the beach—then throwing herself on a low couch she took up a book, but though she held it before her, no page was ever turned.

Presently it was dropped gently in her lap, and she gave herself up to a deep reverie.

How lovely she looked as she sat there, her golden hair thrown back from the fairy face on which the excitement of expectation

had called forth the softest and loveliest tinge of colour, the large violet eyes, so lovely with that dreamy sort of light in them, and the sweet mouth slightly opened by an unconscious smile. Her thoughts, no doubt, were on the expected letter, how she longed to hold it in her hand. "Oh, that it would come!"

She had sat thus for about an hour, and still her abstraction was so deep that she noticed not a shadow darkening the window, and saw not the figure of a man who stood just at the entrance, spell-bound as it were, for he moved not, and scarcely seemed to breathe. His gaze was riveted on her with a look of deep intensity, while the color went and came in his face as though some powerful emotion moved him. Once he seemed on the point of speaking, but the

power of utterance had fled. He had stood thus for some minutes, when a sigh from his overcharged heart, unconsciously found vent. Ada started and looked round:

“Merciful Heaven! Herbert,” and with a wild cry she sprang into his arms.

“My Ada! my own!” he murmured, pressing her closely to his beating heart. “Oh, this repays one for all.”

But his impassioned words fell on unheeding ears—the surprise—the intense joy had been too much for Ada’s weak frame,—she had fainted.

CHAPTER X.

It was but a momentary insensibility, scarcely had St. John laid her tenderly on a couch, with the intention of seeking a restorative, when the blood again began to circulate through cheek and lip, and her eyes unclosed; for a moment, they rested bewilderingly on St. John, who was kneeling by her side; but suddenly the haze lifted from her mind, while a deep blush

added new beauty to her lovely face, as rising, she held out her hand, saying :

“What an unkind reception, but your coming was so unexpected; I had not dared to hope for such a pleasure,” she added in a lower voice.

“Did you think I could tarry one moment after receiving your letter, dearest Ada?” he replied. “No, I barely gave myself time to collect the few things necessary for my journey, and started immediately; but I was wrong to come upon you so suddenly, and without warning; forgive me for it, dearest. My impatience to see you must plead for me. I saw the drawing-room window open; but hardly hoped for the bliss of finding you here alone. Oh! Ada! how long have seemed the hours since we parted. Have you felt them so?” and

he gazed enquiringly in her deep blue eyes.

For one moment, the long lashes fell over them, the next they were raised, and looking full in his face, she answered:

“May God help all those, Herbert, who have felt them as long, or as weary!”

He drew her closely to him while the deep emotion of both, for a time, forbade all further words.

We will no longer intrude on their happy interview, nor intermeddle with the joy of two such true hearts. Little did the Admiral and Helen dream of what was going on as they sauntered slowly through the wood—the former every here and there marking a tree that he wished felled.

“No, no,” said Helen, as he was about to put the death-warrant on a fine old beech.

"This is one of my especial pets. I often bring my book here and sit in the shade of its wide spreading branches."

"Ah, but I daresay you do not read much," said the Admiral slyly.

Helen blushed as she answered :

"I confess that in such a pretty spot my book very often lies in my lap forgotten."

"Helen," he said, taking her hand, and looking upon her with a fatherly affection :
"Tell me candidly, while sitting here, are not your thoughts bent on one not very far distant?"

She started and tried to withdraw her hand while the crimson blood rushed o'er cheek and brow.

"Nay," he continued, "I cannot let you go until you answer me; believe me, dear Helen, I do not ask this from idle

curiosity, or a desire to teaze you; tell me, were Edward penitent for the past, could you forgive him? . Could you ever regard him again with affection?"

"I have from my heart forgiven him long ago," she replied in a low and trembling voice; "but, oh! ask me nothing more, I cannot answer you."

"I am content, Helen; you have answered without words, and I will say nothing more on the subject; only believe that I have your happiness at heart, and will do all in my power to secure it."

She pressed his hand gratefully as the tears started to her eyes, but made no further reply. Seeing a woodsman in the distance the Admiral, saying he wanted to speak to the man left her alone for a short time; when he returned she had

quite recovered her serenity, and taking his arm, they slowly sauntered back to the house chatting gaily on different subjects.

Just as they reached it, Helen said:

“I wonder if dear Ada has her letter.”

“Hardly,” replied the Admiral, “it is early yet to expect it; I daresay we shall find her in the drawing room; let us come and see.”

Stepping through the open window while he spoke, he stood for a moment paralyzed as his eyes fell upon St. John; then rushing eagerly forward, he seized him by both hands, saying:

“Ten thousand welcomes, my dear fellow; God bless me, this is a surprise! Ah! Ada we were wondering why you did not come to meet us;” and drawing her to him he embraced her affectionately.

The bright tears mingled with Ada's smiles as she returned his caresses, and in a low voice murmured:

"Oh! papa I am so happy."

"Well, my boy, you lost no time," again turning to St. John, "But where is Helen? I must introduce you."

He looked round in vain; Helen had vanished:

"A wise girl," said the Admiral laughing, "I daresay you can dispense with my presence also; of course you will put up here, St John? I shall have a talk with you in the evening; God bless you both!"

And with a glad face the old man left them to resume the deep and interesting conversation that he had so unconsciously interrupted.

Helen had flown to tell her mother, who after some hours' attendance on Edward, was lying down in her own room.

"Mr. St. John here!" she said starting up; "Oh! I am so glad; dear Ada, how happy she must be; but how and when did he come? I heard nothing."

"I don't know, mama; the Admiral and I returned this moment from a walk and we found him with Ada in the drawing room; I did not see him, as on hearing the Admiral's exclamation of astonishment at finding him there, I thought it best for the present to keep out of the way."

"You were right, dear," replied her mother, "for a time they will have neither eyes nor ears for a third person."

"How is your patient, mama?" asked Helen timidly.

“Very much better, my love ; he enquired after you to-day ; I replied that you were well, but did not tell him you were here, though I think he suspects it ; in fact this morning when you called Ada from the garden, we heard your voice distinctly in his room, the window being open ; he made no remark, but I saw him start, and his cheek grew deadly white for a moment, and for a long time after, he appeared to be listening intently ; but you went away, and we did not hear you speak again. It will all be right yet, my darling,” she continued, pressing a kiss on Helen’s brow ; “I acknowledge that deeply as Edward has offended, he is fast winning back my favour ; his sorrow for his past conduct is so sincere ; he says he loathes himself when he thinks of it, and

these I feel are no idle words consequent on his present weak state; I have heard him murmur your name in his dreams in tones of such earnest entreaty that it quite made my heart ache, and his emotion was so great when he spoke of you to-day that I was obliged to forbid the subject for the present."

Just then the Admiral knocked at Mrs. Somers' door to know if he might go and sit with Edward for a little.

"But do come down and have a chat, my dear madam, for a few minutes first," he said, "I have much to say to you."

Mrs. Somers complied, and followed him to the library, leaving Helen to muse over the blessed words her mother had spoken.

Happy and bright were the faces assem-

bled in the drawing room of the Retreat that evening, and oh! how intensely happy were two hearts. Long had been the conversation between St. John and Ada, and deeply painful the explanations of the latter regarding Kate's conduct, but now that was over, St. John knew all, and the bright sky of their fate was for the time divested of every cloud.

Quickly sped the hours till the moment of retiring. The heartfelt "Good night" over, Ada sought her own room; she was in no mood even for a quiet chat with Helen; her heart yearned for solitude, to think over the day's thrilling occurrences; she knew it was vain to lie down to rest, sleep for the time had fled far from her; St. John's words and tones kept ringing like sweetest music in her ear, and with

clasped hands she sat for hours immovable, recalling all he had said.

Presently the noise of a door, opened cautiously below, recalled her from her reverie, and then she heard a step on the gravel underneath her window; she approached cautiously and looked out, screening herself behind the curtain.

The warm blood rushed to her cheek as, in the figure of a man gazing up intently at her window, she discovered St. John; he stood there but for a moment, and then walked down towards the water. Ada's heart beat quickly as she listened to his retreating steps; she could not see him, for she had drawn back for fear of being herself seen.

"Like me," she murmured, "he finds sleep to-night impossible."

And a soft smile played round her mouth.

The danger of detection past, as the footsteps grew gradually more indistinct, she again drew near the window; the night was warm, and no doubt the day's excitement had driven the spirit of slumber far from St. John's pillow.

Ada watched him for nearly an hour as he passed up and down by the water's edge; then he turned and walked towards the house, as before, pausing for a moment to gaze on the window of his "ladye love."

This time (the window being open) Ada heard the low murmured words, "God bless her," and then St. John entered the house and retired to his own room.

"My own, own Herbert," she whispered gently to herself.

And thanking God fervently on her knees, for his mercy in removing the dark clouds that had so long hung over her path, she laid her head on her pillow, just as the early summer dawn was about to break, and calmed and soothed by her devotions, soon fell into a sweet and happy sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

A WEEK had passed, the marriage between St. John and Ada was settled to take place as soon as circumstances would admit; Edward was quickly recovering, he had begged for an interview with St. John, which had been granted; it was a long, and perhaps on both sides a painful one, but at its termination hands were shaken, and kind and friendly words interchanged; and though Edward was weak and exhausted for the

remainder of the day, he looked more cheerful and happy than before it. Mrs. Somers entered just as St. John left the room.

"This will never do," she said, fixing her eyes on Edward's flushed face, "I see you are not strong enough for any excitement yet, and I think I must withdraw my permission for your going down stairs to-morrow. I don't think it will do; you look so flushed and exhausted with this interview."

"Nay, my dear Mrs. Somers, believe me I feel all the better for it; when this little excitement is over you will see that I am so, and I cannot let you off your promise; I have been looking forward to leaving this dismal room for so long; I shall never get strong if I stay here any longer;

you cannot be so cruel as to prevent me. Oh, I do so long to be released!"

"Released from what, Edward?" said the Admiral who at this moment entered.

"From my room, uncle, I am pining for change."

"Well, so you shall be released, my boy; to-morrow is the day fixed for your coming down, and we are all anxiously looking forward to it. Ada thought you looking quite strong and well this morning."

"So he was," said Mrs. Somers, "but he has been having a long talk with Captain St. John, which I fear he will feel the effects of; however, if he will be a good boy and remain quiet for the rest of the day, I will not withdraw my permission for to-morrow."

Edward promised scarcely to move hand

or foot, and lying back on the sofa where he had been sitting, closed his eyes.

"There, that is an obedient child," said Mrs. Somers, smiling; "now, Admiral, to prevent his trespassing, you and I will go out for a walk."

And together they left the apartment.

Edward remained for some time in the position they had left him, but there was no rest within. His thoughts were with Helen. Oh, should he see her to-morrow! He had never dared to ask if she were really in the house, and Mrs. Somers had never volunteered the information; but he felt she was there. He could not mistake her voice on the morning he had heard it in the garden, calling Ada; it had been far too long echoing in the inmost recesses of his tortured heart for him to mis-

take now its faintest whisper. "No, he felt she was there, and his heart throbbed at the thought that perhaps he should see her to-morrow.

"But why should I look forward to this meeting joyfully," he murmured to himself, "she must despise, perhaps hate me; her mother, it is true, seems quite to have forgiven and forgotten the past, but can I hope that Helen will do the same; do I deserve that she should? Fool, madman that I was to slight a being like that!"

And forgetful of his promise to be quiet, he started up, pacing the room with a quick, nervous step.

He had not done so long, when a sudden giddiness warned him of his imprudence, and he again threw himself upon the sofa.

"Would that to-morrow were here," he

groaned rather than said, "this suspense is agony; cruelly as I have used her, she would pity me could she read my feelings, could she know the depth and intensity of the love that seems almost to be rending life from this weak frame. God help me if I find her unrelenting, though it will be but what I deserve, a just punishment for my own cowardly conduct!"

And lying back he relapsed into gloomy thought.

Helen thought of the morrow also, as book in hand she sat under the beech-tree, whose life had been granted to her intercession. Her mother had informed her that if all went well, Edward was then to make his appearance down stairs, and her cheek grew pale at the thought of their meeting. There was no resentment in a pure mind

like hers; his sufferings only were vividly before her, and pity mingled with the deep love that from the moment it had been implanted had never left her heart.

“I will soothe! I will comfort him,” she thought, “for now I know he really loves me.”

Just then the Admiral, and Mrs. Somers came in sight; rising, she joined them, and they walked together to the house.

The morrow came at last, a day of bright and unclouded sunshine. Edward thought it a good omen, as he gazed with excited feelings on the deep blue of the sky, and the still deeper blue of the glistening water.

After breakfast the Admiral proposed that St. John and Ada should go with him for a sail, as he wanted to speak to a cot-

tager who lived some little distance up on the other side of the Arm. They readily agreed.

“We shall expect to find your patient quietly ensconced in the drawing-room, when we return,” he said to Mrs. Somers, as they were on the point of starting. “I saw him before I came down, and he seems quite equal to the effort.”

“I think it wiser,” she replied, “for him to remain in his room for an hour or so yet. I found that instead of waiting for his servant this morning, he had completely dressed himself, so I gave him a little lecture, for he was looking quite pale after it; and told him, he must rest till twelve o’clock, then I should come and see if he was fit to make his descent; so to enforce his compliance with my wishes, I shall just run up

to the gardener's cottage; he told me yesterday his wife was ill, and I want to see her; it will not be far from twelve by that time; and Edward will be hardly daring enough to venture down alone."

"You are a perfect tyrant," said St. John laughing. "Heaven preserve me when ill from falling into your hands!"

"You might fall into worse," said the Admiral echoing St. John's laugh, then in a graver tone he added, "God reward her for all her care, and kindness to that poor boy; but, come, we must not dawdle any longer, I see the boat is ready; a pleasant walk to you, Mrs. Somers," and they went on their different ways. The Admiral, St. John, and Ada towards the boat, and Mrs. Somers through the wood-path to the gardener's cottage.

Helen was now left alone, having declined to accompany the water party; and going into the drawing-room, she busied herself in making a sofa comfortable for Edward's reception; then she thought she would put a fresh bouquet on a table near, and seizing a pair of scissors she stepped out, for the purpose of gathering one.

Fastidiously, she rejected one flower after another, gathering only the most perfect; with eyes bent admiringly on the basket which she had at last filled satisfactorily from the different flower beds, she re-entered the drawing-room, and moved towards the sofa, intending to place the treasures there while she prepared a glass for their reception. She had just reached it, when on lifting her eyes, the pale face of Edward met her view—uttering a stifled exelama-

tion, the basket dropped from her hand, and the sweet contents were scattered on the floor.

“Helen—Miss Somers pardon me; I fear I have startled you,” he said in a voice that audibly trembled.

“I did not expect to find you here,” she replied, “and I was so intent on my flowers that I did not see you on entering the room.”

Her voice was calm, but it was a forced calmness; Edward thought it proceeded from coldness and indifference; he could not see the struggle for self command that was going on within her breast. There was silence for a moment, then she asked in a low tone how he was, adding:

“You hardly look as well as I expected, but now that you have once left your

room I trust every day will see you growing stronger."

"I should think you hardly took an interest in my well or ill doing, Miss Somers," he replied in a sad tone.

"Indeed you mistake," she answered, "it has been a great pleasure to me day by day to hear of your improvement."

"I thank you for your interest, Miss Somers; a week at most I trust will see me strong enough to go to my own quarters, and release you all from a presence so disagreeable."

Unconsciously there was a bitterness in his tone as he uttered these words, and Helen's voice shook as she replied:

"You do us injustice, Captain Hetherington; I doubt if one in the house would be glad to lose you now?"

“Helen,” he said abruptly, “am I very hateful to you?”

The blood rushed to her face and she strove to answer, but her quivering lips refused their office, and a flood of tears was her sole reply.

In a minute Edward was at her side:

“Helen, Helen my own, speak; these blessed tears give me hope; oh! say I am forgiven; if you knew how I have hated and loathed myself for my infamous conduct! If you knew the intensity of my love which has almost driven me to madness since we parted, you would not utterly scorn me, Helen; I do not deserve it, but oh, in mercy say you forgive me; say you will love me still?”

Tears filled his eyes as seizing her hand he gazed imploringly in her face.

“ I have forgiven you long ago, Edward,” she replied.

“ Bless you for that, Helen; but oh! say you will try to love me still.”

“ I have never ceased so to do, no not for a moment,” was the reply in an almost inaudible voice.

He started to his feet and folded her tightly in his arms:

“ Now may heaven bless you for those words, my Helen,” he murmured; “ oh how little have I deserved them!”

“ Hush,” she said, gently disengaging herself from his embrace; “ no more self reproaches, the past must be quite forgotten; and now you must really rest on this sofa; I fear you have already over excited yourself.”

His intense excitement had indeed

shaken his present weak frame, and a sick and faint feeling, made him obey Helen's command.

Lying on the sofa he watched her gather up the scattered flowers and place them in a glass on a small table near him.

"Did you gather those for me, Helen?" he said, when she had completed her task.

"Yes," she answered simply; "I remembered how fond you used to be of flowers, and these are so fresh and sweet, I thought you would like them."

Edward's eyes moistened as he took her hand and drew her down by his side. Sit here, dearest Helen, for a little while; I feel much better now and have much to say to you."

She made no effort to remove herself; all past wrongs were forgotten, and with a

heart filled to overflowing with happiness she listened to his low and fervent words. She was seated thus, Edward still holding her hand and talking earnestly, when Mrs. Somers, who had returned and missed her patient from his room, gently opened the door.

There was no astonishment in her face when she saw how matters stood.

Helen was not aware of her mother's entrance, till she felt her arms encircling her. Mrs. Somers did not give either time to speak.

"I see it all, my children," she said, "and am perfectly content. God bless you both!" and tenderly kissing her daughter, and pressing kindly Edward's hand, she left the room, saying she would return in half an hour.

Just as that time had elapsed, the boating party came back; as Helen caught the sound of their voices, she started up and made her escape to her own room.

Here she tried to still her excited feelings, and to think with calmness on what had taken place.

Had she done right in consenting to entrust her happiness for life to one who had so cruelly trifled with it?

Did he now really and truly love her? She recalled his looks and words, and felt that he did so; nay, her mother's assurance had long ago convinced her of that fact; and had she not that mother's consent and approbation?

"I have no fears," she murmured, starting up, and a bright smile played like a sunbeam on her sweet face.

Oh! the confiding heart of youth and innocence, ere the sky of life is darkened by heavy and black clouds. Alas! that it should ever wake to know that the glittering coin is false; the seeming truth, falsehood; that the sweet breathings of friendship are as inconstant as the winds of heaven, which one hour may blow softly, and the next be keen and cutting. That there is no abiding place on earth free from the hauntings of the dark phantoms, pain and sorrow. Alas! that the bright rose-tinted curtain which in the spring of existence covers the great bulk of human deformity, should ever be thrust aside by the cruel fingers of Time, and the once unsuspecting heart be taught that there is no lasting happiness below, that there is no real peace except for those who, leaving the

quicksands of this world, cast anchor on that better shore, where, let the adverse tides of life run ever so strongly, they shall still hold on unscathed, and at last be landed where nothing that can hurt or offend can come.

CHAPTER XII.

LEAVING the affairs of the "Retreat" in their present prosperous state, we would transfer the reader many, many miles away.

The descending sun was deeply dyeing the western horizon with crimson, at the close of an unusually hot day, casting a mellow light on an Indian settlement, picturesquely situated in a wild and unfrequented valley, in one of the western

forests; it consisted of not more than six or eight lodges, or wigwams, formed after the Indian fashion of bark or skins.

Round one of these, situated at a little distance from the rest, a small group of Indians and squaws was gathered, an unusual solemnity sitting on each face, while they spoke together in tones scarcely above a whisper.

Presently the flap at the entrance of the tent was lifted and fastened back, while an Indian boy stepped out and addressed a few words to the assembled group.

Apparently it was an invitation to enter, for one by one they followed him into the wigwam, and ranged themselves round a couch of furs that stood in the centre, and on which lay the wasted form of a young girl. Alas! it was Olita.

At the slight noise caused by their entrance she unclosed her eyes, which were still bright, though now hollow and sunken, and raising herself slightly, she said, in a voice faint from the approach of death:

“My friends, Olita has sent for you to say farewell. The Great Spirit calls her to the happy home where her mother and her forefathers dwell; ere another sun shall rise, she will be with them. What message can Olita take from you to those whom you loved, and who have gone to the happy hunting ground? She listens, and her heart will not forget your words.”

One by one they bent over her, each giving a message in a low voice to some friend or relative departed.

As they finished, she took a hand of each

and pressed it to her heart; then pointing to the entrance, said, in an exhausted voice, "the Great Spirit draws near; farewell, I would spend the few moments left, with those dear to Olita."

In silence their heads bowed upon their breasts; they departed, leaving the dying girl alone with her father and brother.

During the scene that had just taken place, old John, who sat on the floor at the foot of the couch, had not raised his head, which was buried in his hands. Now as the soft voice of Olita called him, he started, and rising, came towards her.

There was a sternness in the grief that sat on his face, which, however, gradually dwindled away, as Olita, taking his hand, said, "my father, sorrow not for Olita, she is going to the happy land, where she will

have no more pain, where cold and fatigue will no more hurt her—where the sun will not shine too fierce, and where no enemy can come. My father has seen many winters, a few more and the Great Spirit will call him to come to his pleasant home, and then we shall never more be separated. Let not sorrow dwell in my father's heart, but let him say what message he would send to the mother of Olita."

"Tell her," said the old man, after a few minutes' consideration, "that when the Great Spirit called her away, the wigwam of Towina was dark; tell her that no other light shone in it, till her child, like the evening star cast her soft rays there; and that now, when that star is set, there will be no ray left to cheer it, and that Towina will day by day ask the Great Spirit

to take him from the dark land, to where Sita and Olita have gone."

"My father," replied the maiden, "it will not be all dark; you have Unamis still left: he is good and kind, and will make the path of your old age easy."

"He is good and kind," said the old man, "but who can be tender like Olita? When Towina is too old to carry his fire weapon, Unamis will shoot the game for him, but he will be often away, and the lodge of his father will be lonely. No, no, when Olita goes, Towina's happiness here is ended, but he will wait patiently till the Great Spirit calls him away," and again the old man covered his face with his hands, as though to shut out his sorrowful vision of the future.

At this moment, the boy Unamis, who had

gone out with the others, re-entered, bearing a horn cup, filled with clear and cool water, which he had brought from a small rivulet that went rippling through the deep shade of the surrounding forest. With a look of deep affection, he presented the draught to Olita's lips.

She received it with a gentle smile, its great coolness seemed for the moment to revive her; pressing her brother's hand upon her heart, she said, "our father is an old man, when Olita is gone, Unamis must be kind and tender to him, for his wigwam will be empty." Lowering her voice she added, "Unamis must watch that he does not drink too much fire-water of the white man, because that is sent by the bad spirit, to make strong men fools."

Then drawing from under the blanket,

that was lightly thrown over the couch, a pair of mocassins, exquisitely embroidered with stained porcupines quills, she placed them in her brother's hands, saying in a voice of thrilling tenderness, "when Olita is dead, let Unamis take these to the Captain, and tell him, that Olita's fingers made them when she was not able to rise from the couch where she died: tell him that she thanks him for all his kindness, and that her last words were, a wish that the Great Spirit might make him and the fair young squaw he will take to his lodge, happy." Here she leant back exhausted, and the hue of death spread itself over her cheek.

Unamis roused the old man, and together they stood watching the light of life flickering in the socket.

The father had resumed his stern expres-

sion, while the face of the boy was convulsed with grief, though not a tear glistened in his eye.

Once more Olita opened her eyes, and taking a hand of each of the sorrowful watchers, she feebly pressed them to her lips, while almost inaudibly she murmured:

“Farewell, I go.”

A slight shudder crept through her frame, and the next moment the clay tenement was all that was left of the once gay and beautiful Indian girl.

The next evening, as the shades of night fell, they laid her in the narrow house appointed for all living, and breaking up their encampment departed to seek a new resting place.

When they had all gone, and the pale

moon was shedding a flickering light on the deserted grave, over which the stately forest trees gently waved their branches, the figure of a man with stealthy steps issued from the thick wood, and glancing cautiously around, made his way to the little mound; throwing himself beside it, he remained there almost immovable till the dawn began to break; then rising, he disappeared into the dense forest, turning as he did so to gaze once more on the spot he was leaving, perhaps for ever. The blanket that had hitherto partially concealed his face dropped, and for a moment gave to view the features of Tecumseh.

CHAPTER XIII.

Two months had elapsed since the events recorded in the chapter preceding the last, and the tints of autumn had again fallen on the maples, and on one or two of the other trees that early lose their foliage, when on a day bright and unclouded as heart could wish, St. John and Ada, Edward and Helen, stood before the altar of the new and pretty Chapel of Ease. re-

cently erected for the accommodation of the increasing population of Halifax.

Never had been seen two more lovely brides; besides the invited guests, numerous were the spectators, the church being literally crowded, and many were the eyes that rested lovingly on these two fair-creatures, as each in turn, in low trembling tones plighted her troth to the beloved one at her side, and visible was the emotion of the venerable Archdeacon, who had known Ada from her childhood, as with a deep and impressive voice he pronounced the blessing. The ceremony over, eager friends pressed forward to tender their warm and sincere congratulations. Bright tears stood in Emily's eyes as she imprinted a sisterly kiss on Ada's lips, murmuring: "God

bless you both, and make you a blessing to each other!"

A month afterward, St. John, Ada, Arthur, Emily, and the Admiral were pacing up and down the deck of a steamer that was bearing them fast towards the shores of old England. Bright and happy were their faces, and cheerful the tones in which they conversed."

"Two days more," said the Admiral, "of this lovely weather, and we shall be in the mother country. How my heart warms toward the old dame! I feel just like a schoolboy going home for the holidays; I only wish Edward, Helen, and her mother were with us."

"So do I, papa," said Ada; "dear Helen, it was a great grief parting from

her. I trust, however, it will not be long before they follow us."

"If I were Herbert," said Arthur laughing, "I should be half inclined to be jealous of Helen."

"You monster of selfishness," replied Ada; "what a lucky thing I am not your wife. Poor Emily, I quite pity her."

"Yes, poor thing," he gaily answered, "she does look like an object of pity; I don't think she dare call her soul her own, and as for having a will belonging to her, she does not know what it means; do you, Emily?"

"Certainly not," said Emily, looking saucily demure, "I gave that up when I promised to obey."

"There, that's what I call a good wife," said Herbert; "mind, Ada, you take pattern by her."

"Not I," she replied with a merry laugh; "a woman without a will is a very insipid piece of clay, a thing not worth owning."

"Not worth owning?" interrupted the Admiral. "Heaven save the mark! why it would be the greatest curiosity the world ever produced. I have seen a good many things in my time, but, hang me! if I've ever come across that insipid piece of clay yet."

Arthur clapped his hands, shouting:

"Well done, Admiral;" and as Emily and Ada, vowing vengeance, turned to go below and prepare for dinner, he declared they were beaten from the field, "flooded

and done for," by that last broadside from the Admiral.

The next day but one saw the good ship making her way into Liverpool; our party stood on the deck, forming a group apart from the rest of the passengers, watching eagerly as they neared the spot where they should disembark.

A tear for a moment glistened in the Admiral's eyes as he gazed earnestly on his native shore; many years had gone since his foot had pressed that much loved soil, that island home where all that remained of his once idolized wife now rested in peace. Fond memories of the past rushed over him. Alas! there was no wife to meet and welcome him now.

"But what matters it," he murmured, unconscious that he was not alone; "though

she may not come to me I can go to her; my ship will not float much longer; it has been a tough bark, aye, and a trim one in its day; but time has made a wreck of it, a few more buffets from his hand and it will sink to rise no more in this world; but, please God, in the world to come it will float on the Sea of Glory, fresh and new, never again to grow old, or be wrecked through all eternity!"

CHAPTER XIV.

SIX years have passed, during which time both the Admiral and Sir Miles St. John, ripe in years, have died and been gathered, we trust, into the Lord's Garner.

Sir Herbert St. John dwells in the old halls of his forefathers.

The days of mourning for the dear departed are over; as on a bright summer's day Ada stands by her husband's side, watching the gambols of two fair children who are playing mirthfully on the lawn; one is a

noble-looking boy of about five years old, with a face full of life and glee; his companion, a golden-haired blue-eyed girl, perhaps two years his junior; they are so much alike that one would at once consider them brother and sister; but it is not so; the boy is the only child of Herbert and Ada, the girl is his cousin, the child of Emily and Arthur; she is their second born, their first, a delicate child from his birth, having died at two years of age.

“Pretty creatures,” said Ada, as she gazed on their bright and glowing faces; “How thankful we ought to be, Herbert, that Charley is so strong and healthy; when I think of Emily’s poor lost boy, my heart seems to swell with gratitude for this great mercy.”

“It is indeed a blessing to be grateful

for, dearest," answered her husband, as he tenderly kissed the lovely expressive face lifted up to his. "Poor Emily, I often see her watching little Agnes with an anxious face, as though fearing she too was to be snatched from her; but the little pet seems full of health. Look! how she runs after Charley. There they go, head over heels, and up again—all right."

Emily at that moment appeared on the lawn, calling:

"Charley, Charley, stop; you are running too fast for little Agnes."

At the sound of her voice the children turned, and running up to her, insisted that she should play with them, and soon the trio were romping merrily.

In the mean time a letter had been handed to Ada.

“From Helen,” she said, as she eagerly opened it; “Oh, I am so glad, they are coming to England next month; listen, Herbert:—

“We are making preparations to leave for England, by the next steamer. Mama is going to accompany us, though she still refuses to become a permanent resident in our house, she says she will take a cottage as near as possible; but she must have a house, she can call her own. Edward and I have tried coaxing and bullying by turns, but it is all of no use, she will not give in. As long as she is near us, however, I shall be satisfied. I am sorry to tell you that all Edward’s searches and enquiries after his unfortunate sister, have been useless; what he has been able to learn is that about three years ago, a person answering to her de-

scription, left Boston with her husband for England, in one of the American liners. Since your dear father so liberally left us the means, Edward has twice visited the States himself, but with no more success than that of the agents he formerly employed. This is the only cloud, dearest Ada, that rests upon our home. I am tended and cared for by my dear husband, like a pet-lamb, and am in great danger of being utterly spoilt. I am dying to see little Charley; give him a fond kiss from cousin Helen, trusting in a very few weeks I may have the pleasure of imprinting the same myself on his rosy lips, as also on yours, dearest Ada.

“Believe me,

“Your ever affectionate

“HELEN.”

“Poor Kate,” said Ada, as she finished. “I fear she has bitterly repented the choice she made, long before this. What Arthur told us of her wretched husband is ever dwelling in my mind; it is too horrible to think of.”

“It is indeed, dearest, but try and banish it from your mind. Come, let us join Emily and the children.”

A few days afterwards, as the whole party sat at breakfast, the butler entered the room, and going up to Ada, said in a low tone:

“If you please, my lady, there is a poor woman below, with a child in her arms, who insists upon seeing your ladyship; she says it is not charity she wants, but she has something very important to say to your ladyship. Mrs. Martin has seen her,

my lady, but all to no use; she says her business can only be told to your ladyship. I fear, my lady," added the man, "the poor thing's mind is a little crazed, leastways, Mrs. Martin thinks so."

"Poor creature," said Ada. "Did you say she had a child in her arms?"

"Yes, my lady."

"Then I will see her presently. Send Dixon to me."

"Yes, my lady."

And the man left the room.

"What is it, Ada dear?" asked Sir Herbert.

"Only some poor woman who seems most anxious to see me. Martin thinks she is not quite sane. I will send Dixon to see."

"Some beggar, I suppose?" said Arthur, "who thinks your gentle heart can be won

more easily than that of your worthy house-keeper's; though Martin has more of the milk of human kindness in her than one would suppose, judging from her appearance. My poor mother was very fond of the good dame."

"She is an excellent woman," said Ada, "and despite her appearance, tender-hearted, and kind, and a staunch friend to all the deserving poor; though I must confess, rather too hard on those she considers imposters."

"Dixon," said her mistress, as at this moment, that worthy abigail entered; "There is a poor woman below, who is very anxious to see me. Go and speak to her, and if she seems respectable, take her up to my sitting-room, and I will see her when I have finished breakfast."

"Yes, my lady."

"And, Dixon," said Sir Herbert, as she was quitting the room, "Do not leave her there alone, as it may not be safe."

"Oh, no, Sir Herbert, I wouldn't think of such a thing," and with an injured look, Dixon vanished.

"How could you offend her dignity, Herbert," said Ada laughing.

"I could not resist it," he answered, "it is so amusing to see that expression of horror and injured innocence, when ever you suggest that there is a remote possibility of her committing an error."

"Well, you must confess you do not often catch her committing one. She is a good faithful soul. I used to wonder why poor Kate never made a confidante of her; but now I know the sort of person she is, I am

not surprised at it. Dixon would never have assisted her. But I had better go up at once, and relieve her of her guard over this poor woman." And Ada arose and left the apartment.

Entering an ante-room that led to her boudoir, what was her horror at seeing Dixon standing there with a face almost livid; as she heard Ada's step, the girl rushed towards her, saying in a low hoarse whisper:

"Oh! my lady; oh! my lady," and pointed towards the door of the boudoir which was closed.

"What is this," said Ada, "what has happened? where is the woman?"

"In there, my lady," said Dixon gasping out the words.

Ada made a step forward:

"I must go and see what all this means," she said.

But Dixon held her by the gown :

"Oh! my lady, wait one minute and I will tell you all."

Ada hastily poured some sal volatile into a glass and gave it to the girl to drink, also making her sit down, for she looked as if she was going to faint.

"Now, Dixon," she said seeing that the sal-volatile had somewhat restored her, "tell me at once the cause of this extraordinary conduct."

"I will, my lady, I will; when your ladyship sent me to see after the poor woman, I found her in the housekeeper's room; but Mrs. Martin said as how she had tried in vain to get any thing out of her; she would'nt say where she come from

nor who she was; only kept on begging and praying that she might see your ladyship; and, my lady," continued Dixon, the colour again dying out of her cheeks, "she had a little baby in her arms, that did not look like a living thing; it was just like a skeleton; oh! my lady, the look of that baby I shall never get out of my mind; Mrs. Martin took it and tried to make it swallow a little warm milk, but it did not seem to have strength to be able to, and only moaned till the mother took it again; then it seemed quiet and contented like. I spoke to the woman telling her your ladyship would see her after breakfast, and she was to come up stairs with me; I could not see her face much, for her bonnet was pulled over it, and she kept her head bent down over

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the child; but she seemed glad when I said your ladyship would see her, and rose at once to follow me up stairs. Well, my lady, I brought her into that room and made her sit down, for she seemed hardly able to stand; when as I was walking away intending to leave the door open between, and stay in this room to watch, I saw her in the glass untie her bonnet and throw it back, and oh! my lady, the face was thin and sadly altered, but I know, I know it is the face of—" the girl stopped and hesitated.

"Of whom, Dixon?" said Ada, trembling all over, "for God's sake speak!"

"Oh! my lady, of—of—Miss Kate."

Ada uttered a sharp cry, and pushing aside the weeping Dixon, hastily entered the boudoir closing the door behind her.

Alas ! what a sight met her view, the wretched Kate (for it was indeed she) knelt on the floor bending tenderly over the wasted remains of her dead child : (as Ada mounted the stairs the last spark of its little life had died out).

Apparently she heard not the opening of the door ; her eyes were fixed on the infant's face, but no tear dimmed them.

Ada noticed that her form was almost as attenuated as the poor child's, and the fingers that wandered lingeringly on the face of the little corpse, wasted and spectre like.

Tears gushed from her eyes as in a voice choked with emotion she pronounced the name of Kate.

The wretched woman started and drew back, as Ada would have embraced her.

"Nay," she said, and her voice sounded strange and hollow; "I am not worthy that you should kiss me. Did I not injure you in every way? but oh! Ada, if you knew how I have suffered, you would forgive."

"I forgave you from the beginning, Kate; oh, why did you not come to me sooner? why wait till you were reduced to this state of destitution. Kate, did you not know me well enough to be sure that I should have given you a welcome."

"I did, Ada, but my pride forbad it, and even now I would not be here, only death is at hand; see how close he is," and she pointed to the dead baby.

Ada shuddered from head to foot.

"Kate! Kate!" she said, "do not speak so; do not look so wild, so despairing; you

are here amidst those who will protect and comfort you. Oh! that you had come sooner, that we might have saved the life of this poor infant," and bending over it, Ada's tears fell fast.

"Weep not for her," said Kate, in a softer tone than she had hitherto used, "she has gone where the cruel world cannot hurt her. Want, hunger, and cold was her portion here; her death is the only mercy that has visited me for many a long and dreary day. Oh! Ada, may you never have to thank God for the death of a child!"

As she uttered these last words, tears for the first time filled her eyes, but she dashed them indignantly away, saying:

"What, is the fount not yet dry? I thought these eyes could never weep again.

Alas! Ada, they have wept rivers since last we met."

"Kate," said Ada, despite all resistance, encircling her with her arms, "Kate, my heart is breaking at the sight of your misery. Oh! whatever the past has been, try to forget it: my home shall be yours, and it shall be my aim to make your future life calm and peaceful."

Kate fixed her sunken eyes on Ada's face as she uttered these words.

"This from you," she said, "*you*, to whom I acted such a traitor's part. Oh! God, what a heart I cast aside; what a fool, what an idiot I was! Ada, listen to me. I have been starved, I have been kicked, I have been beaten,—(and she shuddered visibly)—I have suffered every indignity under the sun, but, believe me, none of these

things have hurt me so much as the kind words that have just fallen from your mouth; for oh! they heap up coals of fire on my guilty head. They show me the contrast between an angel and a demon. Ada, the sight of you has made me human again, and I could almost wish my last hour was not so near. But it is better so; I should be only a cloud in the bright sky of your life, a dark shadow veiling the sun; a few hours more, and the things of this world, for me, shall pass away for ever. I feel, Ada, that ere another day dawns I shall be standing before the tribunal of One who judges not as man judges. If I have sinned in this world I have suffered also—God alone knoweth how deeply. I have but one hope left, and that is, that in His great mercy for the sake of the Saviour

who died for sinners, all unmindful of my great unworthiness, He may freely pardon, and receive me where the pure spirit of my child is gone."

"Amen!" said Ada, in a low and solemn tone; then perceiving that Kate, from the exertion of speaking, was sinking pale and exhausted, she summoned Dixon, and had her cousin conveyed to bed in a room next her own.

That night, ere the midnight hour had chimed, the erring spirit of the "Admiral's Niece" had passed away to the realms of eternity.

As Ada watched its departure, she uttered a fervent prayer that ere it reached the Great White Throne, it might be so covered with the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness, that all its stains and ble-

mishes should be completely hidden, and in a new life of peace and joy the sufferings and sorrow of its sojourn here might be for ever forgotten.

CHAPTER XV.

IN a quiet corner of the little village churchyard, a grave was dug, and without outward show or pomp, the unfortunate Kate and her spotless babe were gently laid down side by side, to rest till the trump of the great Archangel shall bid their spirits once more inhabit the dwellings of flesh, now tenantless and worthless.

Ada leaning on her husband's arm, saw

the coffin, which contained all that was left of the being she had once loved so well, lowered into the cold ground, and forgetful of all past injuries, her tears fell fast and freely.

A shudder ran through her frame as the solemn words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," fell from the lips of the officiating clergyman; but the hope of a resurrection to eternal life, even for one so erring as her lost cousin, was strong within her, and comforted by this thought, when the service was ended, she left the churchyard, striving hard, and not unsuccessfully, to still her deep emotion.

The grass had grown green, and the few flowers Ada's loving hand had planted on the grave had burst into bloom, ere Edward and his wife arrived in England. The

sudden illness of Mrs. Somers had detained them in Halifax a month or two longer than they intended remaining.

Edward's distress had been great on receiving Ada's letter, announcing his sister's death, and the circumstances under which it occurred, and Helen's sympathising tears mingled with his. Alas, she soon had heavy tears to weep on her own account!

Mrs. Somers on reading Ada's letter declared herself to be quite able to start for England by the steamer which was about to leave in a few days. Edward and Helen thought differently, and tried to persuade her to remain another fortnight, but in vain; she persisted in going then, and as their preparations had long been made they at last acceded to her request.

The weather was charming, and at first

the sea air seemed to do Mrs. Somers good; she said she felt greatly invigorated by it, and Helen's heart beat joyfully as she fancied her beloved mother was gaining new health and strength; and casting away all her recent fears, she suffered herself to enjoy the beauties of their voyage.

But how were those fears renewed as one morning, after they had been at sea four days, she entered her mother's cabin and found her perfectly incapable of rising.

The night before they had parted cheerfully; there had been a bright moon and Mrs. Somers, not according to her wont, had remained late on deck, and when Edward had remonstrated with her for doing so, she said she felt so particularly well, and the night was so exquisite, she could not resist the indulgence for once. Helen had ac-

accompanied her below and seen her comfortably in bed, and with no forebodings of ill, the affectionate good night had been interchanged.

But ere the dawn of another day broke, the cry had gone forth throughout heaven, that another spirit was about to quit its tenement of clay; and a throng of bright angels winged their flight downwards, there to wait for the moment of its release, and to be in readiness to bear it back to the happy home where they dwell.

Mrs. Somers' eyes were closed when Helen entered; she opened them at the sound of her daughter's voice, but there was that in their glance that made Helen shiver from head to foot, and the choking tears put a stop to the enquiries she was about to make, as to how her mother had passed the night.

Mrs. Somers, recalled to earth by the sound of Helen's violent grief, drew her trembling child gently down beside her, soothing her, as though she were an infant, with the fond tones of maternal love.

When Helen had in a measure regained her calmness, Mrs. Somers spoke in accents that trembled, not for herself, but for her child.

“My own Helen, I feel that my hour has come; I had hoped to have been buried in the land of my birth, but my Heavenly Father has willed it otherwise; the mighty deep must be my resting place till time has ceased.”

A visible shudder passed over Helen.

“What matters it, my darling,” continued her mother, “where the body may rest till the day of the resurrection; my

spirit will be with God who gave it; I have no fears; Helen, I know in whom I have believed, and though this body shall be destroyed, 'yet in my flesh shall I see God.' Weep not for me, my daughter, a few short years and we shall, by God's mercy, meet again, in a land where there are no partings. Oh! Helen, think of the bliss of that meeting, in a dwelling, not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, 'where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.'"

Helen, as her mother spoke, almost awestricken by the solemn tones of her voice, hushed the wild tumult of her grief, but finding that voice stilled, and seeing her mother close her eyes, and a deadly pallor spread itself over her countenance, she started frantically up, and rushing upon

deck, sought her husband, and eagerly hurried him below.

But ere they entered the cabin, the winged messengers of the King of Heaven had started on their homeward journey, bearing with them a jewel, to place in the diadem of their King's well-beloved Son; a jewel for which that Son gave his life a ransom, deeming it, in his mighty love, worthy of the great sacrifice. Nothing was left but the empty casket, worn and defaced by the buffetings of time.

Edward perceived the state of the case as soon as he entered the cabin, but Helen could not be convinced of the startling fact. Rushing up to the bed side, she seized the now cold hand, calling on her mother by every endearing term to speak to her.

Alas! there was no answering pressure

in the fingers that lay so inanimate in hers. There was no light in the eye upon which she earnestly gazed, and no kind voice gave answer back to her beseeching tones.

As she at last realized the sad truth that her mother was indeed dead, a low cry of anguish issued from Helen's quivering lips, and making a step towards her husband, she fell senseless into his extended arms.

On the next night, as Helen, worn out with grief, was sleeping in happy unconsciousness, while the gentle moon was making a bright pathway across the wide wide sea, causing it to look less dark and dreary, on the still night air went up the solemn and affecting words:

“We therefore commit her body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body (when

the sea shall give up her dead) and the life of the world to come through our Lord Jesus Christ: who at his coming shall change our vile body, that it may be like His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."

A feeling of great awe filled Edward's heart as on the words, "we therefore commit her body to the deep," a heavy splash fell upon his shrinking ear, and he started forward as tho' to save the inanimate corpse, but the kindly hand of a fellow passenger was laid upon his shoulder, and ere the burial service was ended, the good ship had sped far beyond the spot where all that was now left of his almost mother, had sunk.

The parted waters had closed over her

head, sparkling and playing in the moon's rays, all unconscious of the treasure committed to their keeping; tho' in safety it shall remain, locked within their vast store house, where the spoils of ages lie hidden, until the mandate shall go forth, "restore the dead, thou sea."

Till long after midnight did Edward pace the deck, communing in the silent hours of night with his own heart: one by one the sins of his past life rose up before him, a long dreary catalogue. Why was he spared, while one so good and gentle was taken? What was he that he should be blessed with such a wife as Helen? Leaning against the ship's side, his eyes resting on the broad foaming track she left behind her, unrestrainable words of thanksgiving to his Maker for the great mercy shown to

him, burst from his lips, as also an earnest petition for forgiveness for all sins past, and strength to resist all temptations in his future life.

Soothed and calmed, he then went below, and finding his wife still sleeping, he imprinted a fervent kiss on her now placid brow, and retired to rest.

A week afterwards they landed in dear old England, and by slow stages (for neither Helen nor her children could travel fast) they reached Devonshire, and soon, in the kind caresses and sisterly affection of Ada, Helen began to resume her accustomed cheerful demeanour. Both had much to tell and hear, and time flew on rapidly, Edward, who had left the service, and bought a pretty place not more than five miles from the stately castle of the St.

John's, declared at length that he would go and live there alone, or sell it, if Helen did not immediately take up her residence there. She laughingly defied him to put one or other of his threats into execution; but, at the same time, declared her willingness to start for her new home in a day or two, and begged her husband to ride over that very afternoon to announce their arrival, and desire the servants to have everything in readiness for their reception.

Edward, glad to gain his wishes, complied with her request, and ordering his horse, though it was rather late, desiring they would not wait dinner for him, as it would probably be long beyond that hour before his return, and set off on his pleasant journey.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was an afternoon of great beauty, calm and serene, such only as the early autumn knows, and Edward loitered long over the pretty grounds of the "Little Retreat," (for so had he and Helen named there place in memory of days gone by) he then occupied himself in the house, arranging, and re-arranging for the comfort of his wife, when just as he was about to sit down to a somewhat late, and solitary dinner, a

neighbour, and old friend of the St. John's, was announced.

Hearing that Edward was on the premises, he had, as he said, just stepped over to welcome him, and to find out if it was true, that Mr. Hetherington intended shutting up a small path, that led through a remote part of his grounds; and which had been for some years used by the surrounding villagers as a right of way. Edward disclaimed all intention of such an act, at which Mr. Sandford, who was a worthy old bachelor, expressed his delight, saying "that the villagers were a people most peaceable and well-conducted, and would hail with delight the news, which he should tell them in the morning, that their old right of way was still to be allowed."

Edward, much pleased with his guest,

now pressed him to stay and dine with him, saying it would be a real charity his doing so. Mr. Sandford, on that plea, said he could not refuse; though, as he was an old fashioned man he had dined many hours ago; but, this would serve him instead of supper.

The dinner over, Edward and his guest, sat chatting over their wine, never remembering how time was flying, when a servant entered the room to ask if his master wanted his horse again; or if he should remain where he was for the night? Edward declared his intention of returning to the castle, and enquired what the time was. To his own astonishment, as well as that of Mr. Sandford the man replied,

“A quarter to twelve, sir.”

“A quarter to twelve!” echoed Edward.

“I had not the smallest idea it was past ten. How thoughtless of me to stay so long. I am afraid my little wife will be anxious and uneasy, as I told her I should return soon after dinner.”

“I fear I am to blame,” said Mr. Sandford. “I have kept you gossiping about our village matters, and am myself quite startled at the lateness of the hour; and though I have no gentle wife to watch with anxious eyes for my return, my worthy old housekeeper, will, I have no doubt, experience no small alarm at my unwonted absence; the more so, as I did not mention my intention of coming over here to her. She thought I had gone out for my ordinary evening’s walk; poor soul! by this time probably, she has raised a hue and cry in the village, and sent people out to drag all

the ponds in the neighbourhood; but I shall be really distressed if, by any means, Mrs. Hetherington has suffered one hour's uneasiness."

"I shall certainly tell her," said Edward, laughing, "that it was your fascinating conversation that made me forget how time was flying, so prepare yourself for her dire displeasure when you meet; but how shall you get home? I have a carriage here, and shall be only too happy if you will make use of it."

"Not for the world, my dear sir; my grounds touch yours, and I know of a short path through the fields that will take me to my own door in little more than five minutes."

"Then," said Edward, "as I hear my horse coming round, I will say good night."

Proceeding to the front door together, Edward observed that the night was intensely dark.

"I cannot mistake my road," he said, "as it is broad and straight, and my horse knows it well; but I think, Mr. Sandford, you had better let a servant go with you and carry a lantern; it strikes me this is the darkest night I ever saw; pray take my advice and have a light," and Edward turned to give an order to that effect to the groom who held his horse.

But Mr. Sandford interrupted him, saying:

"I assure you, my good friend, I need nothing of the sort; I was almost a daily visitor with your predecessor, and know the path so well that I believe I should not miss it were I blind."

“Well, have your own way,” replied Edward; “but mind the deep excavation I have had made for a sawpit in one of the fields which I think you pass.”

“Oh, I noticed that yesterday when I walked over to know if you had come; it does not lie in my way at all. I should indeed be stupid if I wandered so far from my path as to get near that.”

“Well, a safe journey to you then,” said Edward, and with a cordial shake of the hand they separated, and took their respective homeward routes.

Mr. Sandford acknowledged to himself as he went along that it was darker than he expected, and after getting over a stile into the second field, was for a minute puzzled to find the path; but presently striking into it, as he thought, he walked

briskly on, wondering to himself what Mrs. Wilkes, his worthy housekeeper, thought of his truancy.

After walking some distance he suddenly stopped, muttering half aloud :

“ Surely I should have reached the second stile by this time ; confound it, I fear either the dense obscurity of the night, or the unusual quantity of wine I have taken, has really made me lose the path. It would have been wise had I accepted Mr. Hetherington's offer ; I really believe I have missed the way, but perhaps I may be near the stile now ; I will walk a few steps further at any rate.”

Saying this, he set off again, but had hardly taken three steps, when he was precipitated into the very pit he had thought it so impossible to come near.

Fortunately and almost miraculously he was not hurt; on recovering from the shock of his fall, and finding this to be the case, he could not refrain from a low laugh, muttering to himself:

“ Well, this is a pretty business; a very nice place certainly for a respectable old gentleman to spend the night in. My only chance of getting out is that poor Mrs. Wilkes, in her agony at my non-appearance, may send all round the country, but I daresay the good soul does not know of this pit, and will not think of sending here. Well, I suppose I must content myself till daylight; some one will be sure to come in this direction in the morning. One good thing, the place is perfectly dry, thanks to the want of rain which I have been grumbling so desperately at; and, thank heaven,

I have had my supper, so I must just make myself as comfortable as circumstances will admit of. I don't feel much inclined to sleep in my new bed, but I will lie down and rest at all events; the morning cannot be far off, and I don't feel it cold here."

In this cheerful mood the old gentleman stretched himself along the bottom of the pit, and feeling quite confident that the daylight would bring his release, strove to gain a few moments' sleep. But the spirit of slumber, under such untoward circumstances, was not to be wooed; she fluttered for a moment over the earthy couch and then vanished utterly.

Mr. Sandford, after a time, gave up the vain chase, and rising, leant against the side of the pit, with lifted head listening

intently for the sound of an approaching voice or footstep.

He had remained thus only a few minutes, wondering when the darkness, which now seemed more profound than ever, would be at an end; occasionally touching his watch, as if he would feel what the hour was; when he distinctly heard a rustling above his head; and then a voice speaking in a low tone.

He was on the point of calling out, when a louder voice, as though in reply to the other, said:

“An excellent plan, Bill; we shall be safe in this pit, they are all off on the road now in pursuit; when they are well out of the way, we can steal out through the copse here, and off across the country. By the Lord Harry, what an escape we have had,

the devil of it is, losing the plate; if that fool Hetherington had been in his bed, as he ought to have been at that hour, instead of riding about the country, we should have had it safe and sound; but I gave him something he did not bargain for I guess, and stopped his riding for a time."

"Or his walking either, Jerry," replied the other voice, "If my peepers seed right, that ere ball of yourn knocked his legs clean from under him; Lord it makes me laugh now to think how he tried to pick himself up and couldn't; but I say, Jerry, you got them shiners all right didn't you? I seed the case under your arm as you took that ere flying leap out of the windor."

"Yes, they are all right, Bill, and beauties they are; I took a peep to see it

was the right case I had hold of; I'll show them to you when we get into the pit, as I dare not open the lantern here, but let us get down at once, it is no use waiting any longer for our pals; they're clear off in another direction; hand out the ladder, and I'll fix it at the top so it shan't be seen."

While they adjusted the rope ladder for their descent, Mr. Sandford soliloquised thus:

"Well, this is more than I bargained for, two unexpected and uninvited guests, and from their conversation not over and above respectable either, though the speech of one would lead me to believe he had once lived in better society than the order to which his present companion belongs; my friend Hetherington it seems has come

to grief, as well as myself; these villains doubtless have been detected in a robbery at the castle; but I shall ever forswear this faithful old stick of mine, if it be not the means of getting sweet Lady St. John's diamonds back to her again."

And he grasped firmly a stout walking stick which he had retained in his grasp when he fell."

The ladder was by this time adjusted, and Jerry was told to descend first, and to take with him the dark lantern, and see that all was snug, and comfortable down there.

He had got half way down when he called out:

"I say, Bill, throw down that bit of rope I left up there; may be we'll find it useful down here."

Bill did as he was desired, and the rope descended rather sharply on the head of Mr. Sandford, who seized it, and laid it down carefully by his side.

As the robber reached the bottom he drew back the shade from the lantern and began carefully scanning the dark recesses; just as he was about to throw the light on the spot where Mr. Sandford stood, that gentleman uttered a loud groan, at which the man rushed back towards the ladder, crying that the devil was in the pit, but as he put his foot on the first step, Mr. Sandford aimed a well directed blow at his head, which laid the scoundrel senseless.

As the noise of the scuffle reached the ears of the man above, he took to his heels; quite regardless of what became of his fellow worker in iniquity.

As quick as lightning, knowing that the blow he had given would not stun for long, Mr. Sandford, by the aid of the opportune piece of rope, and the dark lantern, binding both hands and feet, made the man a complete prisoner; then seizing the casket of diamonds, and thrusting it into one of his capacious pockets, with the dark lantern grasped in one hand he began to ascend the ladder made for other feet than his.

On reaching the top of the pit, he drew the means of egress up after him, and with the welcome light in his hand, found his way back to the house. Waking the servants, he told his singular tale, and desired them to make strict search in the surrounding copses as soon as it was light, for the second thief. "In the mean time," he

said, "I will rouse up the bailiff, and tell him to keep watch over the prisoner in the pit, but on no account to have him removed from there, till the proper authorities come."

Leaving the astonished and horror-stricken servants, Mr. Sandford then proceeded to the bailiff's cottage, which was at no great distance from the scene of the night's fracas. It was by this time beginning to dawn, and the worthy bailiff was stirring. On hearing Mr. Sandford's story he said, "then old Bruin didn't bark for nought; I've been up once or twice, the beast seemed so restless like; but I seed and heard nothing, so I got back to bed again. I be mighty glad, sir, you have so nicely trapped one of the villains; I'll warrant he's had his last run for many a day to

come." Then screaming to his wife, he bid her bring his breakfast up to the pit, saying he would go up there right away.

Mr. Sandford then with renewed orders, that the man should in no wise be moved, till instructions were received from the castle, made the best of his way towards home, which he reached without further adventure; making glad the heart of poor Mrs. Wilkes, who at the very moment of his arrival, was in the act of sending off servants in search of him: she had been dissuaded from doing so till the dawn broke, being told that the night was too utterly dark to render the search of any use, so in a frame of mind bordering on distraction, as hour after hour passed, and Mr. Sandford came not, she had wandered about the house, sometimes going to the door to listen,

wishing for the daylight, and vowing that no night had ever been so long.

Great was her joy and relief at seeing her beloved master return unhurt, but her hair almost stood on end with horror, as he recounted where and in what way he had spent the long hours, in which she had so anxiously watched for him.

CHAPTER XVII.

DINNER was over at the castle, and eleven o'clock had arrived, and still no Edward had made his appearance: Helen began to get fidgetty, and expressed her fears that some accident had happened to detain him so long.

Sir Herbert and Ada laughed at the idea, assuring her that in all probability his business had detained him longer than he anticipated, and finding it so late he had

been induced to remain where he was for the night.

“But I am sure he would have sent word to inform me that such was his intention,” answered Helen; “he knows how anxious I should be; besides he assured me he would be back by ten at the latest, and now it is past eleven: no, I really believe he has met with some accident,” and with an anxious face she rose, and walking to the window, drew aside the curtain, and looked out. The appearance of the night did not serve to allay her fears. “Just come here, Herbert,” she said, “did you ever see such a dark night? I feel sure Edward must have missed his way; why it would be quite impossible for him to see an inch before him.”

“Nonsense, Helen, this lighted room

makes it appear darker outside than it really is; and if it were ten times as dark, the mare Edward is riding would find her way here; she has travelled that road over and over again, and knows every inch of it. Pray don't fancy any mischief has happened. I feel sure that our supposition is correct, so just make up your mind that it is so, and be off to bed. I will send over a messenger if you wish it; but as he must go on foot, it will be very late before he gets back; therefore, I advise your going to bed at once. I will knock at your door when the messenger returns, and should you be awake let you know the result."

Helen thanked him, and somewhat pacified, though not thoroughly convinced that all was right, retired to her own room, and Sir Herbert having given orders that one of

the grooms should go over to the "Little Retreat," and enquire if Mr. Hetherington was still there, without any misgivings on his cousin's account, betook himself to rest, leaving the butler to sit up and await the return of the messenger.

Now there was a cosy little fire (the autumn evenings rendering one far from unpleasant) in the butler's pantry, and also close beside it, a by no means uninviting looking arm chair, into which the portly butler, having first looked round the house, ensconced himself, and in a very minutes was fast asleep.

Helen, on reaching her room, had prepared herself for bed, striving while doing so, to drown the busy workings of her fancy: but after lying down for a few minutes, and finding it was in vain she

courted sleep, she rose, and throwing on a warm wrapper, stirred up the declining fire, lighted a candle, and throwing herself on a sofa, took up a book, and tried to fix her attention on it. But this also she found to be in vain; she read over the same passage a dozen times, and yet was unconscious of one word that it contained. Her ears were strained listening to every sound, hoping, yet almost dreading that each minute would bring back the messenger. Several times she laid down her book, and walking softly to the window, peeped forth; but the blackness of darkness still continued without, and with a shudder, she returned to the sofa.

In the stillness and silence of the deepening night, Helen's anxiety and fears were fast growing beyond her control, and she

was just about to make an excursion to Ada's room to ask if the messenger had not returned, when just as she opened her door, a slight noise below in the direction of the dining-room, made her pause. She listened, and heard a stealthy step ascending the stairs. Thinking, of course, it was the butler coming up with the expected message, she took a few steps forward to meet him; but on looking over the balustrade, what was her horror to see by the light of a dark lantern, which the one behind carried, two men having black masks over their faces:

With quick presence of mind while they were still only half way up the great stair case, she drew back into her room (her slippers making no sound on the velvet pile carpet), and locking her door

with as little noise as possible, tried to collect her frightened senses and think of what was best to be done; that they were robbers she had seen, she of course had no doubt, and from the noise she had first heard still continuing below, she concluded there were more of them.

At each side of her bed was a bell rope, one of which led below, the other into her maid's room above; getting on the bed she was able to reach both, and in another second, loud and long were the peals that resounded through the hushed and sleeping house.

Then, there was opening of doors, and hurrying of feet, and presently Helen heard Ada's voice at her door bidding her for God's sake let her in.

On opening it, Ada pale and breathless

in her night dress, a shawl hastily thrown round her, with naked feet; rushed in.

“Oh! Helen,” she exclaimed, “there are robbers in the house; Herbert who had not been long in bed was lying awake, when he fancied he saw a light shining under the door of my dressing room; not knowing what to make of it, he got up, but just as he reached the door and was about to open it, there was a loud ringing of bells and then a hasty rush of feet, through the dressing room door leading into the passage; stepping back to the side of the bed, and seizing a loaded revolver, which is always kept there, he rushed down the stairs after the retreating footsteps, and oh, listen Helen, what a scuffle is going on, I cannot stay, Herbert may be killed, I must go down.”

"Nay, dearest," said Helen, throwing her arms round her, and holding her back; "I hear the butler's voice, and no doubt all the men are there by this time."

As she spoke Dixon came rushing along the passage, crying:

"Oh! my lady what is it? we shall all be murdered."

At this moment Edward's voice was heard calling to Sir Herbert to guard the hall window, and scarcely were the words uttered when the report of a pistol rang out loud and sharp.

Breaking from the bewildered and frightened Dixon, who would have held them, both Ada and Helen rushed down the stairs.

As they entered the hall from whence the sound of the pistol had proceeded, they

perceived Edward, pale and ghastly, stretched on the floor, while Sir Herbert, with an anxious face, was bending over him.

As this sight met her eye, Helen uttered a piercing shriek, at which Sir Herbert started, and rising hastily, went towards her and taking both her hands in his said:

“Calm yourself, dear Helen, Edward has only fainted; the villain shot him through the leg, but I do not think the wound will prove very serious; I have just sent for the doctor, and in the mean time we must get him up to bed.”

“Thank God!” said Helen, “that it is no worse, I thought at first he was dead.”

And as she stooped tenderly over her prostrate husband, a flood of tears came to her relief.

Edward's faint was of but momentary duration; as they lifted him on the mattress to convey him up stairs, he opened his eyes, and seeing the pale and anxious face of his wife, he smiled and said:

“Do not be frightened, dearest Helen, it is only a trifling wound; I shall be all right in a day or two.”

“It was a great relief to poor Helen to hear his voice speaking so cheerfully, and her heart was completely set at rest, when an hour afterwards, the doctor assured her it was a mere matter of rest and quiet; and if *she* would guarantee *that*, *he* would guarantee that her husband in a few weeks should be able to walk over to the Little Retreat and not feel the worse for the exertion.

Helen promised to do her best to keep Edward still, though she laughingly affirmed it would be no easy task.

“Easy, or not,” said the doctor as he took his leave, “it must be done; and mind, Mrs. Hetherington, I shall hold you responsible for your husband’s recovery. I assure you, it all depends upon your discretion and management.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

GREAT was Sir Herbert's astonishment the next morning, at hearing Mr. Sandford's story; accompanying that gentleman to the pit, by the assistance of one or two of the keepers, he had the prisoner removed, and brought up to the castle, there to await the police, for whom he had sent to the nearest town. The prisoner had preserved a sullen and indifferent face, return-

ing no answer to one or two questions asked by him. He was a man of dark complexion, with glossy black hair and whiskers, huge piercing eyes, and but for the fiendish expression of his face, would have been strikingly handsome.

Sir Herbert had ordered him to be kept with a guard in the hall, until the myrmidons of the law should arrive. He had remained there about half-an-hour, still preserving his taciturnity, and Herbert and Ada were seated at a late breakfast, when, the butler entering, announced that the prisoner wished most particularly to speak to Sir Herbert.

Ada begged her husband to be careful and not to go too near such a villain; "who can tell," she said, "what his purposes may be: for all you know he may have that

pistol concealed about him, and perhaps try to shoot you."

"Nonsense, Ada," he replied, "why the man's hands are tied, and if he had fifty pistols he could not use them. I dare say the fellow wants to beg me to let him off; at all events, I will go and hear what he has to say; it is something to get him to open his mouth," and Sir Herbert left the room.

"Well, what have you to say," he enquired of the prisoner as he entered the Hall.

"What I have to say," replied the man, "must be said to you alone."

Sir Herbert hesitated.

"You are not frightened at a man with his hands tied!" said the fellow in a sneer-

ing tone, "if you are, I can say what I have to say before your servants; but you will be sorry for it if I do."

While he spoke, Sir Herbert was busy scrutinizing his countenance. "Surely I have seen that face before," he thought, "but where, I cannot for the life of me recollect."

"Do you know me?" said the man, as according to their master's orders the two servants, who acted as guards, drew out of earshot.

"I have seen your face before," replied Sir Herbert, "and a bad enough one it is too, but I know not who you are, nor can I recall where I have seen you."

"Perhaps you miss the moustache," answered the fellow with a slight laugh; "your memory must indeed be short if you

cannot recollect your illustrious cousin, the Marquis Guadagni."

Sir Herbert started. It was indeed that vile imposter: memory, thus assisted, recalled every feature.

Seeing Sir Herbert's momentary and horrified silence, the villain thought he had gained his point, and coming nearer he said in a low voice, "if you let me off, I will promise to leave the country, and never appear in it again; but if you do not, I will publish our relationship to the world."

"Wretch," replied Sir Herbert, "do you think for one moment I will help you to evade the punishment you so justly merit. You, who brought misery and disgrace upon those I loved! You, who treated

worse than a dog, the unhappy and misguided girl, who vainly imagined herself to be your wife."

"What, she has been to you with her tales has she," interrupted the man; "just let me get hold of her again, and what she has had will be child's play to what I will give her; I'll break every bone in her body; I'll bring her cursed pride down, the she-devil, the tigress," and he ground his teeth, and swore a fearful oath.

"If she were not out of your reach already," calmly replied Sir Herbert, "you should never see her again; but she is in safer keeping than mine, she is where you have sent her, in her grave."

The man started and turned pale.

"Aye," continued Sir Herbert. "She

died here in this house and her child with her, and for their death you will have to give an account to your Maker; my blood runs cold when I think what that poor creature endured; fiend, villain that you are, if you were my own brother, I would not shield you from the law; look for no mercy from me; you have shown none yourself, and shall receive none."

Ere the man could reply the inspector of police, and several of his men entered the hall, and Sir Herbert gave the now pale and crest-fallen fellow in charge.

As the inspector caught sight of his face, he said:

"This is one we have been long looking for, Sir Herbert. He has, we know, been concerned in several large robberies lately, aye and worse than robberies; there

is a hanging matter or two which he'll have to give an account of, and my name's not what it is, if it doesn't go hard against him."

All this time two of the inspector's men were handcuffing the prisoner, who had resumed his sullen and taciturn bearing, and without again lifting his eyes to Sir Herbert, or indeed raising them from the ground, he was led away, placed in a strong van, and in another moment was whirling towards the ——— prison.

The next morning as Sir Herbert rode into the town of ———, he noticed several groups of persons in earnest, and apparently very interesting conversation; stopping near one of these he asked what was the matter?

"Matter, yer honor," answered an

Irishmen, in the group, "sure it's only the prisoner they brought in yesterday, made way wid himself; they say he was jist an out and outer; and was sure to have been hung; but he's done the business hisself and left the hangman in the lurch, bad scran to him."

Quite shocked, and not doubting who the prisoner was, Sir Herbert rode on as far as the prison, where the Irishman's statement was confirmed by the governor himself.

He said, the night before, some supper had been taken to the prisoner, which he seemed glad to get, saying he felt hungry; he had spoken cheerfully and even jokingly with the turnkey, who had inspected his cell, and locked him in for the night; but when the same turnkey opened the cell in the morning, he found the unfortunate wretch lying on his back with his throat cut from ear to ear; a small knife was

lying by his side, with which he had done the deed; "this," he said, "must have been secreted about his person, and had in some way escaped search."

Sir Herbert asked if he were quite dead when they found him.

"Quite," replied the governor. "He must have been dead some hours, for he was stiff and cold."

Months afterwards, when Edward was quite recovered, Sir Herbert informed him of the real state of the case, but Ada and Helen never knew that the prisoner, whose suicide had filled their minds with horror, was the very man to whose assumed title, and false display of wealth, the unfortunate Kate had fallen a victim.

THE END.

