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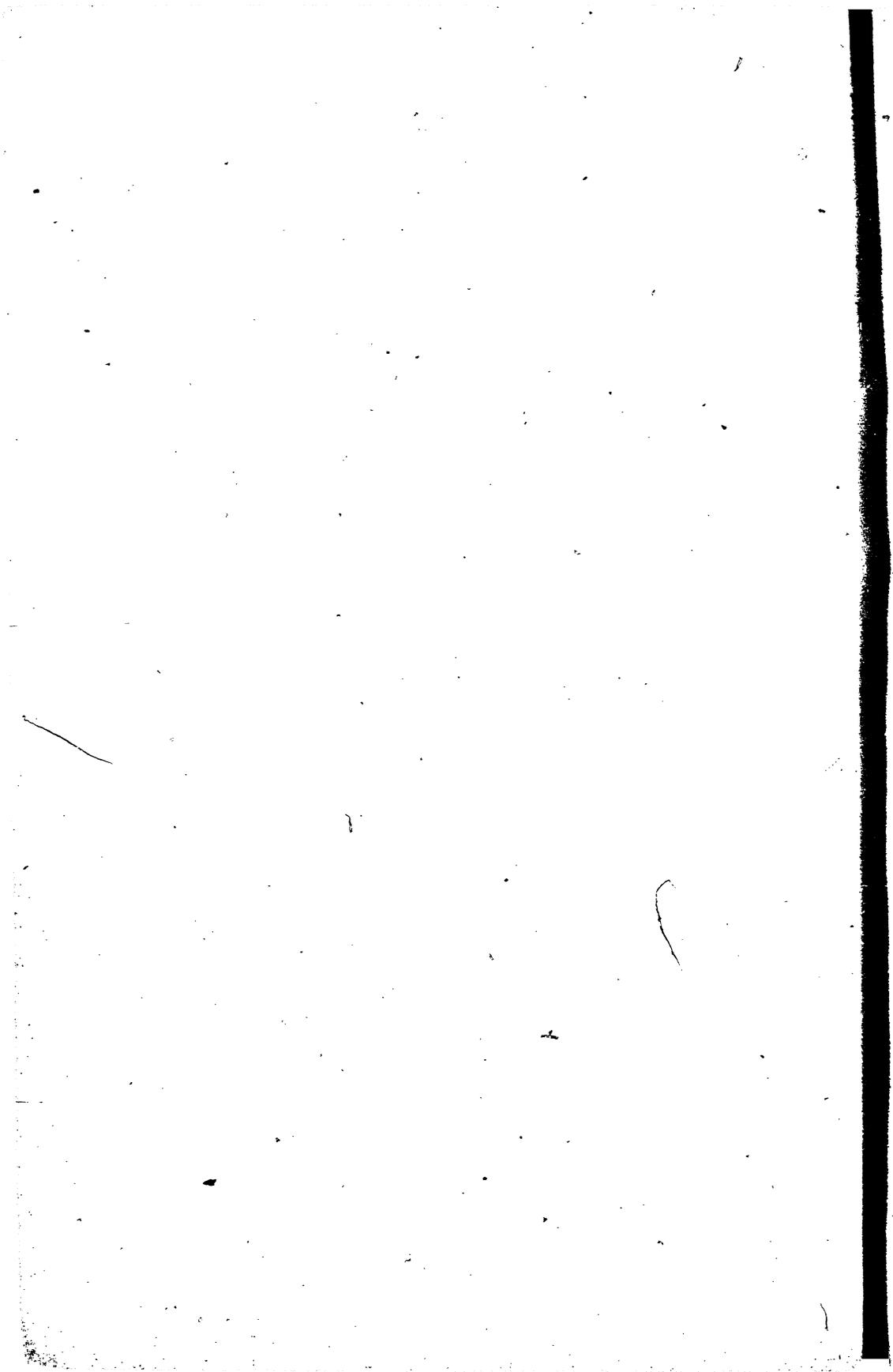
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A

COMEDY OF TERRORS.

BY

JAMES DEMILLE,
AUTHOR OF "THE DODGE CLUB," ETC., ETC.



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11

A COMEDY OF TERRORS.

I.

THE MAN WITH THE CHIGNON.

THE elegant residence of Mrs. Lovell, at Montreal, stood just where Blank Street terminates in Dash Street, and its windows commanded an extensive view of the former thoroughfare. A caller was just leaving the house; while inside was Mrs. Lovell herself, in such a position that she could see out of the window without being visible, and her eyes were fixed upon the caller who was just retiring. This person did not claim her attention long, for he rapidly descended the steps, and, after walking down the street with long, swift strides the length of one block, he turned round the first corner and disappeared.

Upon this Mrs. Lovell withdrew her eyes from the window and stood for a time in deep thought. Standing in this attitude, she showed herself an uncommonly pretty woman. A minute description of her, however, is hardly necessary just now; suffice it to say, that Mrs. Lovell was a widow; a profound and pronounced brunette; young, wealthy, elegant, joyous, and also very well able to take care of herself in every respect.

After standing thus for some time she left the room, and, ascending the stairs, she entered an apartment at the top, by the landing.

"O Maudie dear!" she exclaimed in an excited voice as she entered,

"who do you think has been here? what do you think has happened? O dear, it's such a worry!"

Her abrupt manner and excited words aroused a young girl who was in the room. She was seated in an arm-chair, one hand supporting her head, and the other one listlessly holding a letter.

"Well, Georgie dear," said she, turning her face, "what is it?"

The face which she thus turned was one of extreme beauty and great refinement of feature, and was pervaded by an expression of pensive and quiet sadness. She seemed also as if she might have been dropping a tear or two all by herself. There was a certain family likeness between the two, for they were sisters; but apart from this they were unlike, and when together this dissimilarity was very conspicuous. Both were brunettes, but the fashion of their features and the expression of their faces were different. In Mrs. Lovell's face there was a very decided piquancy, and various signs of a light and joyous temperament; while Maud showed nothing of the kind. At the present moment the sadness of her face might have concealed its real expression; but any one could see in it the unmistakable signs of a far greater depth of feeling than was known to her sister.

"Maudie dear!" said Mrs. Lovell at length, after some silence.

"Well, Georgie," said Maud, languidly.

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

"I'm worried out of my life, Maudie. What in the world I am to do I really cannot say. I'll tell you what I'll do," she added, after a pause, "I'll go to Paris."

"Go to Paris!" exclaimed the other, — "go to Paris! What do you mean? What has happened? What put such a mad fancy as that into your head?"

"I'll go to Paris," said Mrs. Lovell, with a determined tap of her little foot on the floor. "You see, Maudie, I've been thinking of going there so long, and it's so very convenient for me, and you shall go with me, too, you know; and this is just the time, for if we put it off any longer, we'll be too late, won't we, Maudie? and so I think we'd better go by the next steamer. What do you say?"

At this Maud sat upright, and looked at her sister with an expression of intense astonishment.

"What in the world *do* you mean?" she asked. "Go to Paris! and by the next steamer. Why, Georgie, are you mad?"

"Mad! far from it. I'm really in earnest, you know. I'm going by the next steamer. O, my mind is quite made up, — quite. You can easily get ready. We need n't get any new dresses here. It will be so utterly charming to get them in Paris."

"I wonder what in the world you *do* mean," said Maud, in bewilderment. "You can't be in earnest."

"O, but I really am, you know. I'm in trouble, dear, and the only way to get out of it is to go to Paris."

"Trouble!" said Maud, in new surprise; "*you* in trouble! What is it, Georgie dear?"

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

"O well, I'm beginning to be worried out of my life with no end of bothers and torments, and I want to fly from them all."

"Bothers and torments?"

"Yes, bothers and torments."

"What?"

"Why, you know, people fancy I like them, and come and try to get me to marry them, when I don't really

want to; and I'm sure I don't know what I am to do about it."

"People? what people? Do you mean any people in particular? Of course, you must expect to be very much admired; and I'm sure you ought n't to regret it, if you are; but why that should trouble you I confess I'm at a loss to see."

"O, it is n't that; it is n't general admiration, of course. It's an unpleasant sort of particular admiration that I refer to, that makes people come and bother me with telling me how fond they are of me; and I feel so sorry for them, too; and I have to give them pain when I don't want to."

"Why, Georgie dear, you talk as though some one had been making a proposal."

"Of course I do. That's just what I mean; and I'm sure I never gave him any encouragement. Now did I, Maudie darling?"

"Him? Who?"

"Why, Mr. Seth Grimes."

"Mr. Grimes!" exclaimed Maud, with an indescribable accent, staring in a bewildered way at her sister.

"Well! what's the matter?" asked Mrs. Lovell. "What makes you stare so?"

"Why, Mr. Grimes! The idea of Mr. Grimes! Why, Georgie, how could he possibly have ever thought of such a thing? Mr. Grimes!"

And Maud sat looking unutterable things, quite overwhelmed by the one stupendous thought of Mr. Grimes.

"I'm sure I don't see any reason why you should stare so," said Mrs. Lovell. "If people will come on such errands, I don't see why Mr. Grimes should not come as well as anybody."

"Mr. Grimes!" said Maud; "why, it's perfect audacity."

"No, it is n't," said Mrs. Lovell. "It is n't anything of the sort. But I know you never liked him, and your bitter prejudice blinds you to his many admirable qualities."

"Liked him! Why, did you?"

"Well, I have a great fancy for original people, and — and he is one."

"Original he certainly is, but I should use another word."

"He's a man of the people, of course."

"That's a euphemism. For my part, I should use a much harsher word to express my idea of Mr. Grimes, Georgie."

"Well, don't, Maudie dear, or I shall be vexed. At any rate, you see, I liked him because he was so — so original, you know, and you see he has misinterpreted it; and he has thought that because I liked to talk with him I would be equally well pleased to live with him. But that does n't follow, I'm sure; for I know many very, very nice people that I like to talk with, but I'm sure I should n't at all like to marry them. And that's the trouble about Mr. Grimes."

"I'm sure," said Maud, contemptuously, "I do not see why you should tolerate such a person for one moment; and I've often wondered how you ever became acquainted with him."

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

"Well, Maudie dear," said she, "it was very odd, it was really quite an adventure; and I suppose I may as well tell you all about it."

"Yes, do, dear," said Maud. "You've kept awfully close about this, you know, Georgie."

"Well, you know, Maudie dear," said Mrs. Lovell, after a brief pause, which was taken up with collecting her thoughts, "I became acquainted with him last year. I was at Niagara. One day I was out, and it was a dreadfully windy day, quite a gale. I had put on my very largest chignon, — awfully thoughtless in me, of course, but then you know that's the way I always am, — and I pinned it down as securely as possible before venturing forth. The wind proved even worse than I had anticipated; but other ladies were out, and I needed an airing very much, and so I walked on till I found a place which commanded a fine view of the Falls. It was a terribly windy place, but I found a railing where I could

support myself. Several ladies and gentlemen were about, and among them was Mr. Grimes. I was n't acquainted with him at all, but had merely heard his name mentioned. Well, you know, Maudie dear, I was just beginning to conclude that it was altogether too windy for me, when all of a sudden there came a terrific gust of wind, and in an instant it tore away all my head-dress, — hat, chignon, and all, — and whisked it all away over the cliff. I gave a scream, half of fright and half of mortification. I was in utter confusion. It was so shocking. Such an exposure, you know. And what was I to do? Well, just as I was in a perfect agony of shame, and did n't dare to look around for fear of meeting the eyes of people, Mr. Grimes suddenly came up. 'Don't distress yourself, ma'am,' said he. 'T ain't lost. I'll get it in five minutes.'

"He did n't!" exclaimed Maud, indignantly. "What effrontery! O, my poor, dear Georgie, how you must have suffered!"

"Suffered! Why, Maudie dear, it was agony, — yes, agony; and at such a time! Tears of shame burst from my eyes, and I could n't say one word. Well, that was very bad, but it was nothing to what followed. After all, you know, it was the idea of the thing that was the worst. In reality it was not so very bad. You know what an immense head of hair I have, all my own; I could do without chignons, for that matter; so, you know, if nothing had been done, it might n't have been noticed, and I might have retired without making much of an exposure. My hair was all tossing about my head; but ladies often lose their hats, and my appearance would n't have been *very* bad, now would it, Maudie dear?"

"You would have looked perfectly lovely," said Maud. "But go on. This is really beginning to get exciting."

"Well," continued Mrs. Lovell, "there I stood, really crying with shame, when to my horror, my utter

horror, I saw him — O Maudie darling, what do you think he did?"

"What? what?" asked Maud, eagerly.

"Why, Maudie, he began to go over the cliff."

"Over the cliff!"

"Yes, over the cliff. Was n't it awful? Not merely the fact of a man going over the cliff, but going over it on such an errand! And imagine me standing there in public, the centre of such a scene as that! And I hate scenes so!"

"Poor darling Georgie!" sighed Maud.

"Well, you know, Maudie dear," continued Mrs. Lovell, "I was utterly stupefied with astonishment and mortification. Before I could utter one single word he was out of sight. I dared not look round for fear of catching the glances of people. I felt all their eyes on me, and longed for the earth to open and swallow me up. I had a wild impulse to run; but then, you know, I felt terribly anxious about Mr. Grimes. It was an awful thing, to think of a man going down there, and on such an errand. If he had gone down to save a life, it would have been sublime; but going down to save a chignon was too exquisitely absurd. Still, I felt that his life was really in danger, and so I stood there in terrible suspense."

"I really do not know how long I stood there, but at last I saw some wretched people coming forward, looking so odiously amused that I could have almost pushed them over. They looked down, and laughed, and one of them said: 'Hurra! he's got it!' Those few words were enough. They showed me that there had been no horrible accident. In a moment my deep suspense left me, and the only feeling that I had was a longing to get away. For, O Maudie, imagine me standing there, and Mr. Grimes approaching me solemnly with my chignon, after having saved it at the risk of his life, and making a formal presentation of it in the presence of those horrid men! The

thought nearly drove me wild. I turned away, and I really think I must have run all the way back to the hotel.

"Well, on reaching the hotel I went at once to my room, and shut myself up. I had all sorts of fears, and all those fears were fully realized; for after about an hour a gentleman called and sent up his name; and who do you think it was? Why, Mr. Grimes, of course! Now, under ordinary circumstances, his astonishing devotion would have touched me; but that dreadful chignon made it all fearfully ridiculous, and all of the ridicule attached itself to me. What was more, I knew perfectly well that he had brought the horrid thing with him, on purpose to restore it into my own hands. That was an ordeal which, I confess, I had n't the courage to face; so I excused myself and was very ill. I expected, of course, that he would leave it."

"And did n't he?" asked Maud, in wonder.

"Leave it? No indeed, not he. You don't know Mr. Grimes yet, Maudie dear."

"The horrid wretch!"

"He is a noble-hearted man, and you must not abuse him, or I shall really feel quite angry with you."

"But I was only sympathizing with you, Georgie dear! I did n't mean any offence."

"No, of course not, dear. I know you would n't hurt my feelings. Well, you know, he did n't leave it, but carried it off, and that one fact filled me with a new horror. In the first place, I was afraid my chignon would become the public talk; and then, again, I felt sure that he would call again, bringing that horrid thing with him. I was convinced that he had made up his mind to deliver it into my hands alone. The thought drove me to despair. And so, in my desperation, I determined to quit the place at once, and thus get rid of all my troubles. So I made up some excuse to my friends, and left by the early train on the following day for home. And now I'm coming to the end of my story, and you will be able

to understand why I'm so determined to go to Paris.

"About three months ago a person called on me here at my own house. I went down, and who do you think it was? Why, Mr. Grimes; and he had a parcel in his hand."

"O dear!" exclaimed Maud. "Not the chignon! O, not the chignon!"

"Yes, Maudie dear," said Mrs. Lovell, sadly and solemnly, "the chignon. When I entered the room, he was so eager and so excited that I really felt afraid. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I could keep him in bounds at all. Besides, the remembrance of the affair was utterly ridiculous, and this absurdity, together with the fact that he had done a wonderfully daring thing for my sake, combined to make me feel embarrassed. He, on his part, had no end of things to tell me. What he said showed an astonishing amount of devotion. Positively, he had been all over Canada searching for me. He had spent months in this search, before finding me. And now he appeared before me, with joy on his face, exultation in his eyes, and that horrid chignon in his hands. 'Here it is,' he said, 'safe and sound, ma'am, — not a star erased, not a stripe effaced, — to be given to your own hands in good order and condition'; and was n't that a funny speech to make, Maudie darling?"

"Very," said Maud, dryly.

"Well, you know after that he went on in the strangest way. He said he had risked his life to get it; and had kept it for months till he loved it like his own soul; that it had been near him day and night; and that to part with it would break his heart; and he wanted to know if I would be satisfied with another instead of this one. He had got one made in New York, he said, which was the exact counterpart of this; and entreated me to let him keep my chignon, and give me the other. Well, you know, it was a queer thing to ask, but I really felt awfully sorry for him, and he pleaded so hard; and he had done so much; and he had

taken so much trouble; and he made such a point of it you know, that —"

"What?" exclaimed Maud, "you did n't, you could n't —"

"Yes, but I could, and I did!"

At this Maud looked unutterable things.

"There was really no help for it," continued Mrs. Lovell, placidly. "Why, only think, Maudie. He could easily have kept it, if he had chosen, without asking me at all."

"Yes; but don't you see, Georgie, that there is all the difference in the world between taking a thing and having it given to you?"

"O, but in this case, where he had done so much, you know, he really deserved it, and as he made such a point of it, I yielded — and so — he has it now."

"Well," said Maud, "of all the ridiculous stories that I have ever listened to, this is the most absurd. I've heard of lovers wanting a lock of their ladies' hair, but never before did I hear of one who wanted a whole head of it."

"Yes, but then, you know, this was n't my own hair."

"But that only makes it the more absurd," said Maud. "He is cherishing the hair of some other person, — some French peasant, or perhaps the accumulated locks of some dozens of them. And he goes into raptures over this! He sits and gazes upon it in fondest admiration! He devours it with his eyes! He passes his fingers through its dark rippling curls! He —"

"He does n't do anything of the kind," interrupted Mrs. Lovell, somewhat sharply. "Mr. Grimes is quite above such nonsense. Of course he knows what it really is."

"But, Georgie, you did n't take his present, did you. Of course not."

"O yes, but I did —"

"You did!"

"Why, certainly."

At this Maud drew a long breath.

"And what's more," continued Mrs. Lovell, "I've worn it ever since."

"You have n't!" cried Maud.

"I have it on now," said Mrs. Lovell, quietly. "I'm sure it's very becoming, and I only wonder how he could get one so good."

"Georgie, I declare you make me feel positively ashamed of you," cried Maud, indignantly. "It's really quite shocking. And *you* of all people! Why, you are usually so very fastidious, you know, and you stand so on *les convenances*, that I cannot understand how you ever came to forget yourself so far."

"Nonsense, Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell. "I can judge very well for myself, and besides, you know that things that would n't do for you are all very well for me. But let that pass. It happened as I say, and the consequence was that Mr. Grimes saw more in that little piece of good-nature than was actually meant. So, you know, he devoted himself to me, and for the last two or three months I've seen very much of him. I liked him, too. He has many noble qualities; and he was awfully fond of me, and I felt half sorry for him, and all that. I liked to have him for a friend, but the trouble was that was not enough. He was always too ardent and devoted. I could see his face flush, and hear his voice tremble, whenever we met. Yet what could I do? I kept as cool as possible, and tried to chill him, but he only grew worse."

"And the plain fact is," continued Mrs. Lovell, "he never would have done, never. He has noble sentiments, it is true; but then he has such funny manners. He has a large heart, but dreadfully big hands. He has a truly Titanic soul, but his feet are of the same proportions. And all that is very dreadful, you know, Maudie. And what makes it worse, I really like him, and I feel a sense of deplorable weakness when I am with him. It may be because he is so big and strong and brave, and has such a voice, but I think it may also be because I am just a little bit fond of him."

"Fond of him? O Georgie! You don't mean it."

"O, just a *little bit*, you know, only ever so little," said Mrs. Lovell, apologetically. "But at any rate it's really quite shocking to think how I lose control of myself and —"

"And what, Georgie dear?" asked Maud, anxiously, as Mrs. Lovell paused.

"Why, and let him treat me so —"

"Treat you so? How, dear?"

"Well, I'll tell you. It was to-day, you know. Of course you understand how he has been devoting himself to me for the past few months, and I have been trying to fight him off. Well, to-day he came, and he took me by storm, and I could n't fight him off at all; for before I could think, he was in the middle of a most vehement confession, and ended with a proposal. Well, you know, I never was so embarrassed in all my life, and I really didn't know what to do."

"You refused him, of course."

"O, but it was n't so easy. You see I really liked him, and he knew it."

"Knew it? How *could* he know it?"

"O, you know, I told him so."

"Told him!"

"Yes, and that was what ruined all, for he grew dreadfully bold, and began to appropriate me in a way that was really alarming. O dear, I should n't like to have to go through it again. You see, his proposal was not to be thought of, but then it was not easy to decline it in a pleasant and agreeable way. What was worse, I grew embarrassed and lost all my usual presence of mind, and at last had to tell him simply that it could not be."

"And then, O Maudie dear, he was so cut up. He asked me if this answer was final, and I told him it was. Then he sat silent for no end of time, and I felt so dreadfully weak, that I am sure if he had urged me I really don't see how I could have refused him. But he did n't. He was so simple-hearted that he never thought of trying to change my decision. At last he broke the silence by asking me in a dreadfully hollow voice if I loved another; I told him I did n't, and he gave

a great sigh of relief. Then he asked me in a still more doleful voice if I would allow him to keep that wretched thing, the chignon, you know. He said he would like some small token —

"Small token!" cried Maud, "a whole chignon! O dear! Georgie, do you think he intends having it put in a locket?"

"I don't know what he intends. I only know that I feel very, very sad and sorry for him, and did n't dream of refusing. I would n't look him in the face, but sat there looking as silly as possible. So at last he rose to go; I rose too, and felt so very nervous that I could n't even raise my eyes."

"O Georgie, Georgie, how very, very silly you were, poor darling!"

"I know I was, Maudie, and I knew it at the time, but how could I help it?"

"Well, dear?"

"Well, then, you know —"

Mrs. Lovell hesitated.

"What?"

"Why, we stood in that way for some time, and I wondered what he was doing, but did n't dare to look up, and then at last he took my hand and said, 'Good by,' in a shockingly hoarse voice. His hand was like ice, and my hand trembled excessively from excitement, and then, too, I felt dreadfully sorry for him, so I said, 'Good by,' and then, Maudie, he, the poor fellow, stooped down — and put his arms round me — and kissed me."

"He what!" cried Maud.

"O, you need n't be so awfully indignant, Maudie, I say it calmly, he kissed me, on my forehead; but I don't feel quite so calm now, when I think of that hot tear of his that fell on my cheek."

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

Maud looked earnestly at her, and both sat in silence for some time.

II.

THE MISDIRECTED LETTERS.

"You see, Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, after a prolonged silence, "I am really

in earnest about going to Paris, and I'll tell you exactly why. It's all Mr. Grimes. I have refused him, and he went away heart-broken, and all that; but I have a dreadful presentiment that he will be back again, bringing that horrible chignon with him, and making fresh protestations. I like him very well, as I have explained, but I don't want to marry him, of course, or any other person. The trouble is, however, that I have no confidence in myself. I am so shockingly weak; and I'm terribly afraid that he will come again and persuade me to do something very, very silly. Why, Maudie dear, when I think of what I have just escaped, I really tremble. I'm sure if he had only been a little more urgent, I really don't know what would have become of me. And then, think of the name, — Grimes! Mrs. Grimes! Why, it really sends a cold shudder through me. Really, Maudie darling, I'm afraid to stay here any longer than I can help. He will be here again, and I shall have to see him. Of course I will manage so as not to see him alone again, but I cannot always have you with me, and he will be sure to find me some day. And then think of my fate! O yes, I must go, and I shall go immediately. I have made up my mind to leave by the very next steamer. Really I shall never feel safe till I have the ocean between me and Mr. Grimes."

"I think, on the whole, Georgie dear, that it would be a very good plan. You expect me to go with you?"

"Of course, darling; did n't I say so at the very first?"

"Yes," said Maud, slowly, and in the tone of one speaking to herself. "Yes, it is better so, better for both of us, the best thing now —"

She sighed heavily.

At this Mrs. Lovell looked earnestly at her sister and seemed struck by something in her appearance.

"Why, Maudie! what's the matter with you?" she exclaimed.

"With me? O, nothing," said Maud.

"But you're shockingly pale, and you've been crying; and I've been so

taken up by my own worries, that I never noticed it till now; but now as I look at you I see plainly that something is the matter. What has happened? It must be something dreadful. You really look heart-broken about something. Why, my poor, dear, sweet darling Maudie!"

Full of tender pity and affection, Mrs. Lovell went over to her sister, and, kneeling on the floor by her side, she twined her arms around her, and kissed her. Maud sat for a moment as though trying to control her feelings, but suddenly gave way, and, letting her head fall on her sister's shoulder, she flung her arms around her and burst into tears.

"You have some trouble, darling," said Mrs. Lovell. "Tell it to me, tell it to your own Georgie." And then she proceeded to kiss Maud, and soothe her and coax her to give her her confidence, until at length Maud promised that she would. But it was some time before she could recover from the agitation into which she had fallen. She raised herself, and tried to control her feelings; but having yielded to them once, it was not very easy to regain her composure, and it was some time before she could speak.

"O Georgie," she said, at last, "I'm in such dreadful trouble, and I'm sure I don't know how it happened or how it will end, or what I ever shall do."

"Oily fancy!" said Mrs. Lovell, "and I've been so selfish that I never noticed this; but then, I'm sure I should never have thought of *you* being in trouble, darling. How can trouble ever come near *you*?"

"I'm sure I don't understand it," said Maud, mournfully.

"But what is it all about? Tell me what it is, as far as you know. For my part, I can't imagine even a cause for trouble to *you*."

"I'm in dreadful, dreadful trouble," sighed Maud. "Mr. Carrol, you know."

"Mr. Carrol!"

"Yes. He—he—" Maud hesitated.

"What? he did n't propose, did he?"

not another proposal? Mr. Carrol! Well, Maudie dear, I remember having a vague suspicion that he was fond of you; but then, I was so bothered, you know, that I did n't think very much about it. So he proposed, did he? Well, I always liked him, and I think you did too."

"Yes," sighed Maud; "I did, I really liked him."

"But when did he propose? It's very strange. How very sly you've been, Maudie dear."

"Why, he wrote a letter."

"Wrote? What! wrote? O dear! I thought it was only old men, weary of the world, that wrote when they proposed. To think of Mr. Carrol writing! Only fancy! I'm sure I never would have thought that of him."

"Well," said Maud, mournfully, "he apologized for writing, and said the reason was that he could never see me alone, and was anxious to know his fate. You see you and I were always together, Georgie dear, and so he chose to write to me about it."

"Well, that is certainly a justification, Maudie, for we always are together, as you say; and now that I think of it, I don't see how any one could have ever had a chance to see you alone. But I was always thoughtless. Well, Mr. Carrol proposed, as you say; and what did you say? Did you accept him? I suppose you did, I even hope you did; for now, when I come to think of it, he seems to me to be admirably suited to you. He is young, handsome, and evidently very fond of you; he's rich, too, but of course I don't care for that, for reasons which I have already explained, you know. So I really hope you did accept him."

Maud drew a long breath.

"Yes, Georgie dear, but that was n't all. I received another proposal at the same time."

"Another proposal!"

"Yes, and who do you think it was from? Why, from that odious Frenchman who calls himself the Count du Potiron, and a very suitable name it is for such a man."

"The Count du Potiron!" repeated Mrs. Lovell. "How perfectly preposterous!"

"Perfectly," echoed Maud. "Why," really I had scarcely ever spoken to him, you know. I noticed, of course, that there was a great tendency on his part to those *galantries* which every Frenchman considers himself bound to offer; but I really never suspected that he meant anything by them. Even when I received his proposal, it only amused me, and I scarcely gave it a thought until to-day."

"To-day?" said Mrs. Lovell; "well, what happened to-day?"

"Why," said Maud, "to-day I find that some dreadful mistake has been made; but how, or why, or by whom I cannot quite make out."

"Tell me all about it, dear," said Mrs. Lovell, earnestly; "perhaps I can help you to find out."

"Well, Georgie, you know, of course, I like Mr. Carrol, and so, — why, when he asked me, — I — I wrote him that — well, I accepted him, you know, and at the same time I wrote that absurd Frenchman a civil note, declining his proposal, of course. Well, Georgie dear, I waited, and waited, and for two or three days I expected to see Mr. Carrol. You know how often he used to come. Well, he did n't come at all, but yesterday that odious Frenchman called."

"I remember," said Mrs. Lovell.

"Well, I would n't see him."

"Yes."

Maud was silent for a time, and at length continued: "This morning I received a most singular note from him. He addressed me by my Christian name, and told me that my acceptance of his proposal had overwhelmed him with the profoundest joy. My acceptance of his proposal! Think of that, Georgie! And I had rejected him positively, and almost contemptuously."

"Good heavens! Maudie, dearest, what is the meaning of it all?"

"Wait a moment," said Maud, drawing a long breath, and speaking in an excited manner. "Wait till you hear

all. Such a letter, of course, surprised me, and at the same time excited all sorts of fears. I could n't understand it at all. I suspected that I must have made some horrible mistake of the most stupid kind. My anxiety was increased by the silence of Mr. Carrol. I had accepted him, but he had neither called on me nor written. I was bitterly mortified, and afterwards dreadfully anxious; and though I began to fear that some mistake had been made, I really did not believe it till I got that dreadful letter from the Frenchman."

"Maudie darling, you really terrify me," said Mrs. Lovell. "I have a suspicion that is positively quite shocking."

"This afternoon, said Maud, in a tremulous voice, — "this afternoon, just after lunch, I got this letter. It's from Mr. Carrol. Read it, and tell me what you think about it."

With these words she handed to Mrs. Lovell the letter which all this time she had been holding in her hand. Mrs. Lovell took it in silence, and, opening it, she read the following: —

"DEAR MISS HEATHCOTE: If you wished to crush me, your wish is gratified. I am crushed utterly, and am now in the lowest state of prostration in which even *you* would wish to see me.

"I received your reply to my letter two days ago, and would have acknowledged it before, but I did not do so, partly because I supposed that any further remarks from me would be unwelcome, but more particularly because I did not feel altogether able to write.

"I expect to leave this place to-day, and forever. All my arrangements are made, and you and I will never meet again. Under the circumstances, therefore, I hope you will forgive me for saying that your rejection of my offer might have been made in terms a little less cruel and cutting. *After all that has passed between us*, I think I deserved something more than a note such as the one you thought fit to send me. It seems to me that any one with ordinary

kindliness of heart would have been more willing to save one from pain and mortification than to inflict it. After all, my offence was not so very great as to be unpardonable. It only consisted in the avowal of my love for you.

"I might say very much more, but I think it is better to leave it unsaid. At any rate you and I now part forever; but whether your peculiar mode of dealing with me will make you very much happier or not, the future alone can determine.

"Yours truly,
"PAUL CARROL."

Mrs. Lovell read this letter over twice. Then she sat and thought. Then she read it again. After this, she looked fixedly at Maud, whose pale face confronted hers with an expression of utter woe that was pitiable to witness.

"This is horrible, simply horrible," said Mrs. Lovell. "My poor darling, how could it have happened? It's all some frightful mistake."

"And, O Georgie dear! I wrote him the very kindest, kindest letter," said Maud. "I told him how I—" But here a great sob burst from her, and choked her utterance, and she buried her face in her hands and wept aloud. Mrs. Lovell drew her towards her, and tried to soothe her with loving caresses and gentle words; but Maud's grief was too great for consolation, and it was very long before she was able to overcome it.

"He's gone, gone forever, and I'll never see him again!" she murmured over and over again amid her tears. "And I was expecting him, and wanting to see him so!"

"Poor dear darling!" sighed Mrs. Lovell; after which she sat for some time with an expression of deep perplexity on her pretty face, endeavoring to fathom the mystery of this somewhat singular affair.

"Of course, Maudie dearest," said she, at last, "there has been some mistake, and you yourself must have made the mistake. There is only one thing

possible, yet it really seems too absurd. After all, though, it is positively the only thing that can account for it, and it is just possible. Don't you think so, darling?"

"Don't I think what? You don't say what it is?"

"Well, I was thinking that it was just possible that you, in your excitement, which was very natural under the circumstances, you know,—that you might have made a dreadful blunder in the address, and directed the Count's letter to Mr. Carrol, and Mr. Carrol's letter to the Count."

"And that's the very thing I have been suspecting," exclaimed Maud, in a tone of dismay; "but it's so shocking that I don't dare to think of it."

"Well, darling, won't you acknowledge that it is possible?"

"Certainly, it is possible, but not probable."

"Well, now let us see about the probability of it," said Mrs. Lovell, putting herself in an attitude of profound reflection. "In the first place you answered the Count's letter."

"Yes."

"And then Mr. Carrol's."

"Yes."

"Now do you remember whether you addressed each one immediately after writing it, or waited till you had finished your writing and then addressed both?"

"O, I remember that perfectly well. I did not address the letters until after I had finished both. I never do when I have more than one to write."

"Well, of course, you were a little agitated, particularly after your last effusion to Mr. Carrol. It was very natural. And you were excited, you know, Maudie dear. You know you were."

"I suppose I may have been a little excited."

"Well, is n't it possible, or even probable, that in your excitement you may have put the letters in their envelopes and addressed each of them to the wrong person altogether?"

Maud gave a heavy sigh, and looked despairingly at her sister.

"Well, now, Maudie dear," continued Mrs. Lovell, "there's another thing I should like to ask. I should like to know the general nature of each letter, so as to see if there was anything in either of them which might show the recipient that it was a mistake. A great deal depends on that, you know. Tell me now — I don't want to get your secrets, you know, I only want to help you. Let us begin with the one you wrote first, what did you say to the Count?"

"Well, Georgie, it was a very cool and civil rejection, that was all. At first I thought of writing in the third person, but I concluded that it was better to do so in the first; so I told him that I regretted that he had written to me in that way, and hinted that there had been nothing in our mutual relations to warrant his sending such a proposal to me; and I very civilly hoped that he would not feel disappointed."

"And there was nothing more?"

"No."

"Nothing which might show that it was not for Mr. Carrol; no allusions to his being a foreigner, for example?"

"Certainly not. It was so very general in its terms that it would have done to insert in a Complete Letter-Writer. But then, Georgie darling, that is the very thing that should have excited Mr. Carrol's suspicions, and made him sure that such a letter could not have been intended for him."

"Well, Maudie, men are such odd, unreasonable creatures, you know, that there's no knowing how they will act, particularly in love affairs. I'm afraid he must have accepted the letter as your own actual answer to his, or else how could he have written in such a very shocking way? But now tell me about the other."

"Well, I wrote to Mr. Carrol the very kindest, kindest letter that I could compose. I'm sure I said everything that he could expect, and I even expressed a wish to see him soon."

"Did you make any very particular allusions to any particular incidents?"

"O no; it was only a general expression of — well, you know what, and all that sort of thing."

"How did you begin it? Not with 'Dear Sir'?"

"No. I said, 'My dear Mr. Carrol.'"

"And how did you begin the Count's?"

"Simply with 'Dear Sir.'"

"Not 'Dear Monsieur le Comte,' or 'Dear Count'?"

"Certainly not. The first was French, which would be out of place in an English letter, and the other seemed a little familiar, so I took refuge in the simple formula of 'Dear Sir.'"

"Well, the Count got the letter which began, 'My dear Mr. Carrol.'"

"He must have, if I did make the mistake."

"You are sure that you began it in that way?"

"O yes."

"Well, if you did, I don't see what the Count could make out of it. He must have seen that it was not for himself. He's acquainted with Mr. Carrol, too, and must have understood that it was for him. But then again he must have believed that it was for himself. Even French assurance could not make him appropriate a letter which he could see so plainly was addressed to another man."

"There is only one thing that I can think of," said Maud, dolefully, "and I've thought of it frequently; for all this was on my mind before you came in."

"What is that?"

"Well, it is this. I have thought that it is just possible for my writing to be a little illegible; my hand is very angular, you know, and the o's are open, and I don't cross my t's, and all that sort of thing. I find now that in writing the name of Carrol rapidly, it does bear a remote resemblance to the word 'Count.' I dare say you would show the same resemblance if

you were to write it. Now look at this."

And Maud went over to her writing-desk, and wrote the name "Carrol" several times.

"There certainly is a resemblance, as you say," remarked Mrs. Lovell, as she looked at the writing, which was in the most pronounced angular "lady's hand." "There really is quite a resemblance," she repeated, "though the words are so unlike. But then, you know, Maudie dear, you say you wrote 'My dear Mr. Carrol'; would n't it seem a little odd to him to read 'My dear Mr. Count'?"

"O, he would have no trouble about that," said Maud, mournfully. "He might, in the first place, attribute it to my ignorance of the proper style of addressing him, or, what is still more likely, he would probably take the 'Mr.' as a plain 'M,' and would read it, 'My dear M. Count,' which would n't seem to him so very much out of the way, you know. See here."

And Maud, taking up a sheet of note-paper, wrote the words, "My dear Mr. Carrol." Mrs. Lovell looked at it thoughtfully for some time.

"There's a great deal in what you say, Maudie," said she. "I confess that you may really read those words as 'My dear M. Count,' or even, 'My dear M. le Count.' In fact, I think you could even turn it into 'My cher M. le Count'; and if a pressure were put on one, I would not say that one could not read it as 'Mon cher M. le Count.' In fact, I dare say he reads it that way himself."

Maud sighed heavily, threw down the pen, and retreated to a chair, where she rested her head on her hands, and sat looking gloomily at the floor.

III.

REJECTED ADDRESSES.

At the very time when the two ladies were carrying on the foregoing conversation, one of the subjects of

that conversation was in his room engaged in the important task of packing a trunk. Mr. Seth Grimes was a very large man. He was something over six feet in height; he was broad-shouldered, deep-chested, well-knit, muscular, and sinewy; he had a large face, with small, keen gray eyes, short beard, mustache, and shingled hair. About his face there was an expression of *bonhomme* mingled with resolution, to which on the present occasion there was superadded one of depression. The packing of his trunk, however, appeared at the present time to engross all his thoughts, and at this he worked diligently, until at length he was roused by a knock at the door. He started up to his feet, and at his invitation to come in a young man entered.

"Hallo, Carrol!" said Grimes, "I'm glad to see you, by jingo! You're the very fellow I wanted. It's a thunder-in' piece of good luck that you dropped in just now, too. If you'd come half an hour later I'd been off."

Carrol was a good-looking young fellow enough, with a frank, bold face and well-knit frame. But his frank, bold face was somewhat pale and troubled, and there was an unsettled look in his eyes, and a cloud over his brow. He listened with a dull interest to Grimes's remark, and then said, "Off? What do you mean?"

"Off from this village for good and all."

"Off? What, from Montreal? Why, where are you going?"

"Around the globe," said Grimes, solemnly.

"I don't understand you."

"Wal, I'm packin' up just now with the intention of startin' from this village, crossin' the plains in a bee-line for Californy, then pursuin' my windin' way per steamer over the briny deep to China, and thence onward and ever onward, as long as life pervades this mortal frame. I'm off, sir, and for good. Farewell forever, friend of my soul. Think of me at odd times and drop a tear over my untimely end."

"Hang me if I understand a single

word of all this," said Carrol. "I see you're packing your trunk, but I had no idea you were going off so suddenly."

"Wal, sit down, and I'll explain; sit down. Fill the bowl. Here's lots of pipes, make yourself comfortable, and gaze your fill at the last of your departin' friend."

At this Carrol took a chair, and sat looking at the other with dull inquiry.

"First of all," said Grimes, "I'm goin' away."

"Really?"

"Honest. No mistake. Cut stick, vamoose, never again to come back, to go like ancient Cain a wanderer and a vagabond over the face of the earth, with a mark on my forehead, by jingo!"

"Look here, Grimes, don't you think you're a little incoherent to-day?"

To this Grimes returned no immediate answer. He stood for a few moments in thought, then looking round he selected a chair, which he planted in front of Carrol, and then seating himself there he stooped forward, leaning his elbows on his knees, and fixing his eyes upon the other's face.

"See here, Carrol," said he, at last.

"Well?"

"You've known me for several years, you've watched my downrisin's and my upsettin's, and ought to have a pooty good insight into my mental and moral build. Now I'd like to ask you as a friend one solemn question. It's this. Have you ever detected, or have you not, a certain vein of sentiment in my moral stratum?"

"Sentiment?" said Carrol, in some surprise; "well, that depends on what you mean by sentiment."

"So it does," said Grimes, thoughtfully; "'sentiment' 's a big word, embracin' a whole world of idees extunnel and intunnel. Wal, what I meant to ask was this, — have you ever detected in me any tendency to lay an undoo stress upon the beautiful?"

"The beautiful; well, no, I don't think I have."

"The beautiful in — in woman, for

instance," said Grimes, in a low, confidential voice.

"Woman? Oho, that's it, is it? What, do you mean to say that you've got a shot from that quarter? What, you! Why the very last man I should have suspected would have been California Grimes."

"Man," said Grimes, in a meditative way, "is a singular compound of strength and weakness. I have my share of physical, mental, and I may add moral strength, I suppose; so I may as well acknowledge the corn, and confess to a share of physical, mental, and moral weakness. Yes, as you delicately intimate, I have been struck from that quarter, and the sole cause of my present flight is woman. Yes, sir."

And, saying this, Grimes raised himself to an erect position, and, rubbing his short shingled hair with some violence, he stared hard at his friend.

"A woman!" said Carrol. "Queer, too. You, too, of all men! Well, I would n't have believed it if you yourself had not said so. But do you mean to say that you're so upset that you're going to run for it? Why, man, there must have been some difficulty. Is that it?"

"Wal, somethin' of that sort. Yes, we'll call it a difficulty."

"May I ask who the lady is?" asked Carrol, after a pause.

"Certainly. It's Mrs. Lovell."

"Mrs. Lovell!"

"Yes."

"The Devil!"

"Look here," said Grimes, "you need n't bring in that party in connection with the name of Mrs. Lovell; but at the same time I suppose you don't mean any harm."

"Of course not. Excuse me, old boy, but I was astonished."

"That's the lady anyhow."

"Of course," said Carrol, "I knew you were acquainted with Mrs. Lovell, but I never dreamed that you were at all affected. How infernally odd! But how did it all come about?"

"Wal," said Grimes, "I got ac-

quainted with her in a very queer shape. You see I was in the cars once goin' to Buffalo and saw her aboard. That's the first sight of her. I was on my way through to Frisco, but turned off after her to Niagara, lettin' my baggage slide. I watched her there for about a week, and at last one day I saw her goin' out alone for a walk. I followed her at a respectful distance. Wal, distance lent such an enchantment, that I ventured nigher, like a darned fly to a lighted candle. Suddenly a great gust of wind came and made my candle flare tremendously. By this I mean that the wind lifted her hat and fixin's from her head, and blew the whole caboodle clean over the cliff. In a moment I jumped after it—

"What!" interrupted Carrol, "not over the cliff?"

"Yes, over the cliff. I tell you it was a sight that might have sent a fellow over a thousand cliffs. There she stood, as lovely as a dream, with her nat'ral hair all swingin' and tossin' about her head, like a nymph and a naiad and a dryad all rolled into one; and the sight of her was like a shock from a full-charged, double-barrelled galvanic battery, by jingo! So over the cliff I went, as I said, just stoppin' by the way to tell her I'd get her hat and things. Now I tell you what it is, if it had been the falls of Niagara I'd have gone over all the same; but as it happened it was only the cliff, a mile or so below, and for a man like me it was easy enough goin' down,—a man like me that's got nerve and muscle and sinoo and bones and a cool head; though, mind you, I don't brag much on the coolness of my head at that particular moment. So over I went, and down I went. I found ledges of rocks and shelves; and it wa' n't hard climbin'; so I did the job easy enough: and as luck would have it, I found the hat not more than thirty or forty feet down, jammed among the rocks and trees where the wind had whirled it. Along with the hat I found the usual accompaniments of a lady's head-gear. I secured them all and worked my

way back, carryin' the prize in my teeth.

"Wal, I got up to the top and looked around. To my amazement the lady was nowhere to be seen. She was gone. I then institooted a series of delicate inquiries round about, and found out where she was livin', and went there to return her the hat and fixin's. She wa' n't able to see me. Too agitated, you know. The agitation had been too much for her, no doubt, and had brought on a fever, accompanied by spasms and hysterics and other feminine pursuits. So I retreated, and on the followin' day called again. And what do you think I learned? Why she was gone, gone, sir, and for good; left, fled, sloped, vamoosed,—none of your transitory flights, but an eternal farewell to California Grimes. And I never in my life experienced the sensation of being dumbfounded until that moment.

"Wal, I wa' n't goin' to give her up. It ain't in me to knock under, so I set myself to find her. That job wa' n't over-easy. I did n't like to ask her friends, of course, and so in my inquiries after her I had to restrict myself to delicate insinuations and glittering generalities. In this way I was able to find out that she was a Canadian, but nothing more. This was all I had to go upon, but on this I began to institoot a reg'lar, systematic, analytic, synthetic, and comprehensive search. I visited all the cities of Canada and hurted through all the Directories. At length, in the course of my wanderings, I came here, and here, sure enough, I found her; saw her name in the Directory, made inquiries at the hotel, and saw that I had spotted her at last.

"Wal, the moment I found this out, that is, the day after, I went to see her. I found her as mild as milk, as gentle as a cooin' dove, as pleased as pie, and as smilin' as a basket of chips. She did n't really ask me in so many words to call again, but I saw that she expected it; and if she had n't, it would have been all the same, for I was bound to see more of her.

"Wal, I ain't goin' to dilate upon love's young dream now, but simply state that I indulged in it for several months, and it was not till to-day that I was waked out of it. It was a very rude shock, but it broke up the dream, and I'm now at last wide awake and myself again."

"By this I suppose I am to understand that your sentiments were not reciprocated."

"Very much. O yes; that's the exact definition," said Grimes, dryly. "Yes — Wal — You see it wa'n't more than two hours ago. I went to see her. I told her all."

"Well?"

"Wal, she listened as patient as a lamb, and did n't interrupt me once. Now, as my story could n't have been very particularly interestin', I call that very considerate of her, in the first place."

"Well, and how did it end?"

"Wal, she did n't say anythin' in particular for some considerable time. At last I stopped. And then she spoke. And she presented me with a very sweet, soft, elegant, well-shaped, well-knit, dove-colored, tastefully designed, and admirably fittin' — mitten."

"And that was the end, was it?" said Carrol, gloomily; "jilted? You might have known it. It's always the way."

"What's that?" exclaimed Grimes; "always the way? No, it ain't, not by a long chalk. On the contrary, people are gettin' married every day, and never see a mitten at all."

"O, confound all women, I say!" growled Carrol. "It's always the way. They're so full of whims and fancies and nonsense, they don't know their own minds. They've no sense of honor. They lead a fellow on, and smile on him, and feed their infernal vanity, and then if the whim takes them they throw him off as coolly as they would an old glove. I dare say there's a way to get around them; and if a fellow chose to swallow insults, and put up with no end of whims, he might eventually win the woman he loves,

and to do that a man must lose his manhood. For my part, if a woman jilts me, she may go to the Devil."

"It strikes me," said Grimes, "that you use rather strong language about the subject."

Carrol laughed bitterly.

"Well, old fellow," said he, "you've been jilted, and whatever you feel you appear to take it quietly. Now, I'm not so much of a philosopher, and so I take it out in a little swearing."

"You!" said Grimes, staring at the other in surprise. "What have you got to do about it?"

"O, nothing, — a little affair of my own. They say misery loves company, and if so, perhaps it'll be a comfort to you to know that I'm in the same box."

"What's that?" said Grimes; "the same what, — did you say 'box'?"

"Yes," said Carrol, while a heavy shadow passed over his face.

"What! not jilted?"

"Yes, jilted."

"Jilted? Good Lord! Not by a woman!"

"Well, I don't exactly see how I could have been jilted by anybody else," said Carrol, with a short laugh.

At this intelligence from Carrol, Grimes sat for a few moments in silence, staring at him and rubbing his hand slowly over his shingled hair.

"Wal," he said at length, "it strikes me as queer, too. For you see I'm kind o' modest about myself, but I'm free to say that I always regarded you not merely as a man, but also as one who might be a lady's man. A fellow of your personal appearance, general build, gift of gab, and amiable disposition hain't got any call, as far as I can see, to know anythin' whatever of the nature of a mitten."

"In spite of all these advantages," said Carrol, quietly, "I've got my own particular mitten in my own possession. I've got it in the shape of a beautiful little note, written in the most elegant lady's hand imaginable."

"A note? What do you mean by a note?"

"O, nothing; my affair, as it happened, was done up in writing."

"Writing! Do you mean to say that you wrote a letter about such a matter?"

"Yes, that was the way it was done."

"A letter!" exclaimed Grimes, in strong excitement. "What! Do you mean to say that you, with all your advantages, descended so low as to write a letter to the woman you pretended to love about a thing of such unspeakable importance. Good Lord! Of all the darn'dest —"

And Grimes sank back in his chair, overwhelmed by the idea.

"Well," said Carrol, "I acknowledge that a letter is a very inferior sort of way of making a proposal, but in my case there was no help for it. I had to do it, and, as it's turned out, it seems to me to be a confoundedly lucky thing that it was so, for it would have been too infernally mortifying to have had her tell me what she did tell me, face to face."

"Who is the lady?" asked Grimes, after a solemn pause. "Is it any secret?"

"O no, I'd just as soon tell you as not. It's Miss Heathcote."

"Miss Heathcote!" said Grimes, in surprise.

"Yes."

"What! Mrs. Lovell's sister?"

"Yes."

"Good thunder!"

"It's deuced odd, too," said Carrol.

"You and I seem to have been directing our energies toward the same quarter. Odd, too, that neither of us suspected the other. Well, for my part, my case was a hard one. Miss Heathcote was always with her sister, you know, and I never had a decent chance of seeing her alone. I met her first at a ball. We often met after that. We danced together very frequently. I saw her two or three times by herself. I used to call there, of course, and all that sort of thing, you know. Well, at last I found myself pretty far gone, and tried to get an op-

portunity of telling her, you know; but somehow or other, her sister seemed to monopolize her all the time, and I really had n't a fair chance. Well, you know, I could n't manage to see her alone, and at last I could n't stand it any longer, and so I wrote.

"Now, mind you, although I had seen her alone only two or three times, yet I had very good reasons to suppose that she was *very* favorable to me; a woman can give a man all sorts of encouragement, you know, in a quiet way. It seemed to me that there was a sort of understanding between us. In the expression of her face, in the tone of her voice, and in other things which I cannot mention, I saw enough to give me all the encouragement I wanted.

"Very well, I wrote as I said, and I got an answer. It was an answer that came like a stroke of lightning. Now, under ordinary circumstances, if a woman rejects a fellow, there is no reason why she should not do it in a kind sort of a way. Her very nature ought to prompt her to this. If, however, there had been anything like encouragement given to the unfortunate devil who proposed, it certainly would not be presumptuous to expect some sort of explanation, something that might soften the blow. Now in my case the encouragement had really been strong. Very well; I wrote, — under these circumstances, mind, you, — I wrote, after I had been encouraged, — actually encouraged, mind you, after she had given me every reason to hope for a favorable answer, — and what — what do you think was the sort of answer that I really did get? What? Why, this!"

And Carrol, who by this time had worked himself into a state of intense excitement, snatched a letter from his pocket and flung it toward Grimes.

The act was so suddenly done that Grimes had not time to raise his hand to catch it. The letter fell upon the floor, and Grimes, stooping down, raised it up. He then read the address in a very solemn manner, after

which he slowly opened it and read the following:—

"DEAR SIR: I have just received your letter, and regret *very deeply* that you have written to me on *such a subject*. I'm sure I am not aware of anything in our mutual relations that could give rise to a request of such a nature, and can only account for it on the ground of sudden impulse, which your own good sense will hardly be able to justify. I trust that you will not think me capable of giving unnecessary pain to any one; and that you will believe me when I say that it is *absolutely impossible* for me to entertain your proposal for one moment.

"Very truly yours,

"MAUD HEATHCOTE."

"Short, sharp, and decisive," was the remark of Grimes, after he had read the note over two or three times; and with these words he replaced the paper in the envelope and returned it to Carrol.

"Now, mind you," said Carrol, "she had given me as much encouragement as a lady would think proper to give. She had evidently intended to give me the idea that she was not indifferent to me, and then—then—when I committed myself to a proposal, she flung this in my face. What do you think of that, for instance?"

"It's a stunner, and no mistake," said Grimes, solemnly.

"Well," said Carrol, after another pause, "I've found out all about it."

"Found out?"

"Yes, her little game. O, she's deep! You would scarcely believe that so young a girl had such infernal craft. But it's born in them. The weaker animals, you know, are generally supplied with cunning, so as to carry out the great struggle for existence. Cunning! Cunning isn't the word. I swear, of all the infernal schemes that ever I heard of, this one of Miss Heathcote's was the worst. A deep game, yes, by heaven! And it was only by the mere chance that I found it out."

Carrol drew a long breath and then went on.

"You see, in the first place, she's been playing a double game all this time."

"A double game?"

"Yes, two strings to her bow, and all that, you know."

"O, another lover!"

"Yes, that miserable French vagabond that calls himself the Count du Potiron."

"Potiron! What! that infernal skunk?"

"Yes."

"What! Do you mean to say that Miss Heathcote would condescend to look at a fellow like that? I don't believe it. She would n't touch him with a pair of tongs. No, by thunder!"

"Well, it's a fact, as I know only too well."

"Pooh! you're jealous and imagine this."

"I don't! I have proof."

"What proof?"

"What proof? Wait till you hear my story."

"Fire away then."

"Well, this fellow, Du Potiron, has only been here a few weeks, but has managed to get into society. I saw him once or twice hanging about Mrs. Lovell's, but, 'pon my soul, I had such a contempt for the poor devil that I never gave him a thought beyond wondering in a vague kind of way how the Devil he got there. But, mind you, a woman is a queer creature. Miss Heathcote is aristocratic in her tastes, or, rather, snobbish, and anything like a title drives her wild. The moment she saw this fellow she began to worship him, on account of his infernal sham nobility. The fellow's no more a count than I am, I really believe; but the name of the thing is enough, and to live and move and have her being in the presence of a real live count was too much for her. At once the great aim of her life was to become a countess."

"Wal," said Grimes, as Carrol paused, "you seem somehow or other to have

got a deep insight into the inner workings of Miss Heathcote's mind."

"I tell you I know it all," said Carrol, savagely. "Wait till you hear all. Mind you, I don't believe that she was altogether indifferent to me. I think, in fact, she rather liked me; and if I'd been a count, I don't know that she would have turned me off, unless she'd met with some member of a higher order of nobility. Besides, she did n't feel altogether sure of her Count, you know, and did n't want to lose me, so she played fast and loose with me; and the way she humbugged me makes my blood boil now as I think of it. There was I, infatuated about her; she, on her part, was cool and calculating all the time. Even in those moods in which she pretended to be soft and complaisant, it was only a miserable trick. She always managed to have her sister around, but once or twice contrived to let me be alone with her, just in order to give me sufficient encouragement to keep me on. But with the Frenchman it was different. He had no end of privileges. By heaven, I believe she must herself have taken the initiative in that quarter, or else he would never have dared to think of her. In this way, you see, she managed to fight off any declaration on my part, until she had hooked her Count. O, it was a deep game, and many things are clear to me now that used to be a puzzle!

"Well, you know, so the game went on, she trying to bag her Count, and at the same time keeping a firm hold of me, yet managing me so as to keep me at a distance, to be used only as a *dernier-recours*. Well, I chafed at all this, and thought it hard; but, after all, I was so infatuated with her that I concluded it was all right; and so it was that no idea of the actual fact ever dawned upon my poor dazed brains. But at last even my patience was exhausted, and so I wrote that letter. And now mark this. She had managed the whole affair so neatly that my letter came to her just after she had succeeded in her little game, won her Count,

and was already meditating upon her approaching dignity. What a pretty smile of scornful pity must have come over her face as she read my letter! You can see by her reply what she felt. The prospect of becoming a countess at once elevated her into a serene frame of mind, in which she is scarcely conscious of one like me; and she really does n't know of anything in our mutual relations which could give rise to such a request as mine.' Is n't that exquisite? By heavens! I wonder what she would have said if I had happened to write my letter a fortnight ago. I wonder how she would have wriggled out of it. She'd have done it, of course; but I confess I don't exactly see how she could have contrived it without losing me altogether. And just then she would n't have lost me for the world. I was essential to her. She wanted me to play off against the Frenchman. I was required as a decoy-duck —"

"See here, my son," interrupted Grimes, "these are terrible accusations to bring against a woman that you'd have laid down your life for only a week ago. It's all very well for you to talk, but how do I know that this ain't all your infernal jealousy? How am I to know that these are all facts?"

"In the simplest way in the world; by hearing me out. I have n't come yet to the point of my story. It was only last evening that I found this out. And this is what I'm now coming to. You see, after I got her letter I was so confounded that I really did not know what to think or say. I had a vague idea of going to see her and have a personal explanation."

"That would have been sensible and manly," said Grimes.

"No, it would n't," said Carrol, sharply; "and as things are, it's well I did n't. Besides, I could n't. I felt too much cut up. I was stung to the soul, and it seemed as if all the light of my life had suddenly gone out. No; fortunately my pride sustained me, and I was saved from making an infernal ass of myself by exhibiting my weakness

for her to laugh at. Well, I won't dwell upon this. I'll only say that I did n't feel equal to anything for a couple of days, and then I sent her a few words of farewell.

"Very well. Last evening I sent this letter of farewell, and then went off to the Magog House, in order to make some arrangements for quitting town this morning. I had made up my mind to leave at once and forever. I was going off for good. I did n't know where, and did n't care, so long as I had this place behind me. So I went to the Magog House. After attending to the business for which I had come, I went to the bar, and sat down with a cigar, thinking over my situation. Well, I had n't been sitting there long, before a couple of fellows came in and went up to the bar. One was Du Potiron. He was talking very volubly, and was evidently in a great state of excitement."

"Was he drunk?" asked Grimes.

"No, quite as usual; only excited, you know."

"Ah, well, it's all the same. Frenchmen never get drunk, because they are naturally intoxicated. A sober Frenchman is a good deal like a drunken Yank."

"I did n't pay any attention to what he was saying," resumed Carrol. "My back was turned to the bar, and I was taken up altogether with my own thoughts, when suddenly I heard Du Potiron mention the name of Miss Heathcote. Now, you know, all his excitement had been about some wonderful good fortune of his, for which he was receiving his friend's congratulations, and in honor of which he had invited him to take a drink. It is n't a French custom, but Du Potiron has evidently been long enough in America to know American ways. So Du Potiron had come in to treat his friend. Now I heard all this congratulation in a vague way, and understood that it had something to do with a lady; but when Miss Heathcote's name was mentioned, the whole diabolical truth flashed upon me. I was perfectly

stupefied, and sat for some minutes not able to move, and scarce able to breathe, listening to the fellow's triumphant boasts. He boasted of his good fortune, — how she had favored him, how his whole acquaintance with her had been one long triumph, and how she had fallen at last like ripe fruit into his hands. And this rat I had to listen to; for I tell you I could n't move and could scarcely breathe. I was suffocating with fury.

"At last I got up and went over to him.

"'Look here,' said I, 'you're talking about a lady who is a friend of mine, in a public bar-room, and it seems to me that it is time to call you to account.' I said this very coolly and quietly, for I did n't want the Frenchman to see how excited I was.

"He looked at me in great surprise, and then said, 'Excuse me, sare, de lady that I haf spik of haf commit her name an' her honneur to me, an' no person haf any claim to champion her but only me.'

"'Pooh,' said I, 'I don't believe you have any claim of the sort. When I saw her last, she had n't the remotest intention of anything of the kind.'

"I dare say my tone was very offensive, for the Frenchman turned very pale, and his eyes blazed with fury.

"'You don't believe,' said he. 'Aha! You insulta me. Ver' well. I sall haf satisfaction for de insult. An' so you don't believe. Ver' well. You sall believe dis. Ha! Ef you are so grand friend an' champion, you sall tell me wat you tink of dees!'

"And with these words he tore a letter from his pocket, and flourished it before my face. I saw the handwriting. It was hers. The letter was addressed to him. And in that one instant every boast of his was confirmed by her own signature, and I saw at once the infernal depth of her crafty, scheming nature. And, by heaven! she'll find that she's got things before her that will interfere a little with her brilliant prospects."

Carrol paused. His face grew dark,

and there was that in his eyes which showed that his words contained something more than empty menace.

"Well?" asked Grimes, anxiously.

"Well," said Carrol, "at that I lost all control over myself, and I knocked him down. He jumped up, and turned upon me in a fury.

"'You sall gif me sateesfaction for dis!' he screamed.

"'Certainly,' said I.

"'You sall hear from me, sare.'"

"'Very well,' said I; and then, as I did n't see any use in staying there longer, I went off. Well, this morning I got a challenge from him, and this is the thing that has prevented my departure, and has brought me to you. Otherwise, it is n't likely that we should have met again, unless, indeed, we had happened to turn up together at the same place in the middle of Crim Tartary. You see, I want you to be my second."

"Your second?" said Grimes, and fell into a deep fit of musing.

IV.

DEALINGS WITH "MOOSOO."

GRIMES sat for some time in profound silence.

"Of course, you'll oblige me," said Carrol, at length, somewhat impatiently.

"Me? O, you may rely upon me; but, at the same time, I want you to understand that there 's difficulties in the way. Besides, I don't approve of this."

"Difficulties? Of course. Duels are against the law, and all that. No one fights duels here; but sometimes nothing else will do."

"So you want to fight?" asked Grimes.

"Yes," said Carrol, fiercely. "Law or no law, I want to fight—to the death. This is now the only thing that I care for. I want to let *her* see that she has n't been quite so successful as she imagines, and to put some obstacle in the way of that serene and

placid joy which she anticipates. She shall learn, if I can teach her, the old, old lesson, that the way of the transgressor is hard."

"Are you a good shot?" asked Grimes, in a mild voice.

"No."

"Then how do you propose to pop Moosoo?"

"Well, I'll have a shot at him."

"Are you aware that while you are firin' he'll be firin' too?"

"Well?"

"Are you aware that Moosoo is a first-rate shot?"

"I did n't know it."

"Well, I do know it, for I happen to have seen somethin' of it!"

"O, I don't care a curse whether he's a good shot or not."

"Wal, it makes a good deal of difference, as a general thing. You don't know anythin' about fencin', I s'pose?"

"No."

"Wal, you've got to be precious careful how you enter on this dool."

"I tell you," cried Carrol, impatiently, "that I don't care a curse whether I'm shot or not."

"And I tell you, you do care. If Moosoo hits you, it's another feather in his cap. He'll return to the lady covered with laurels. 'See, the conquerin' hero comes.' She'll receive her warrior home from the wars. 'Gayly the Troubadour touched his guitar.' He'll be 'Gayly the Troubadour,' and you'll be simply contemptible. What'll become of all your fine plans of retaliation, if you have to hobble about for thirteen months on a broken leg, or move in society with your arm in a sling? What'll become of you, if you're suddenly called upon to exchange worlds, and pass from this festive scene to become a denizen of the silent sepulchre? Answer me that."

Carrol said nothing. But his face flushed, and it was evident that these suggestions were not without effect.

"Secondly, my brethren," continued Grimes, "I desire to call your attention

to this important point. It's unfair. You, who can't shoot, go to meet a man who can. What do you call that? I call it simple suicide. Has Moosoo such claims on you that you are ready to offer up your life to him? You'll fall. He'll fly. The lady'll join him in New York, an' he'll convey her to his home in Paris. Unfair? Why, it's madness to think of it?"

"It's deuced odd if I can't hit a man at such a short distance."

"Tain't so easy. Have you ever tried?"

"No."

"Wal, I have, and I know what I'm talkin' about. I tell you, you won't hit him; and that's why I have my prejudices against the orthodox dool."

"What do you mean by the orthodox duel? There's only one kind."

"Excuse me," said Grimes. "There are other ways,—dools with knives, dools with rifles, dools with axes, and so forth. By the orthodox dool I mean the fashionable sort, that they originated in Europe. Now I want you to understand, in the first place, that the orthodox dool is unfair, unjust, and unwise. Secondly, I want you to know that the dool is not restricted to any one mode, but that it has many forms throughout this green earth. And thirdly, I want you to see that in this particular case we must originate a dool which shall be adapted to said case in all its bearin's."

"Originate a duel? What do you mean?"

"Wal, I mean this; you're the challenged party."

"Yes."

"Wal, the challenged party has the choice of weepins."

"Yes."

"And that means, furthermore, that the challenged party has the choice of modes."

"Modes?"

"Yes,—the when, the where, and the how; and the what, and the which, and the whuffore; so you see it becomes your proud privilege to select

for yourself the mode that shall be most in accordance with your own peculiar situation."

"Well," said Carrol, "I certainly don't want him to have *all* the advantages."

"Just so, and so it remains for us to consider the various kinds of dool, and to decide upon that mode which shall best secure a perfect equality between you two combatants. Now I happen at this moment to think of a plan by which both parties are on terms that are as nigh to equality as is ever permitted in this vale of tears. It is this. The two doolists either sit or stand close beside one another, and each one holds the muzzle of his pistol close to the forehead of the other. The word is called, 'One! two! three!' and at the word 'three' both fire. The result, as a general thing, is that neither one has any occasion to complain that the other had any undoo advantage over him. Now how does that strike you?"

Grimes asked this question with an air of paternal interest; with the manner, in fact, which a fond father might assume in asking his son's opinion about some particularly pleasant mode of going to Europe for a year's ramble.

Carrol's brow lowered darkly, and an air of steady and stern resolve came over his face.

"I'll do it," said he; "I will, by heaven. That is the mode I'll choose. He shall not take refuge in his skill, and I will not give him the chance of surviving me. It shall be a life-and-death affair. If I die he shall die also. Then my lady will learn that I am a subject for something else than jeers and laughter. By heaven!" he continued, starting to his feet, "that shall be my choice, and I'll have it settled at once."

"O, come now," said Grimes, "not so fast! We must n't snatch at the first suggestion. Let's talk the matter over further. Come, sit down again, and let's talk it over like Christian men. For my part, I'm not altogether

in favor of this plan. There's too much downright butchery in it; and it don't afford a ghost of a chance for the display of the finer feelings and instincts of humanity. Sit down again, my son. Don't be in a hurry. It's an important matter, and our deliberations should be grave and solemn."

At this appeal Carrol resumed his seat, and waited somewhat impatiently for further suggestions.

"The orthodox dool," said Grimes, "gives you no chance; the one just mentioned is downright butchery, and may be called the slaughter dool. These are both at the opposite extremes. Now we want to hit upon the golden mean; something that may combine the perfect fairness of the slaughter dool with the style, grace, sprightliness, and picturesque force of the orthodox dool.

"Now how can the problem be solved?" continued Grimes, after long and patient thought, the effects of which were visible in the numerous wrinkles of his corrugated brow. "How can we get the golden mean? Methinks I see it,—O, don't be impatient! Methinks I have it, and I'll give you the idee.

"You see, it's this, my son. If a good shot meets a bad shot, the fight is unfair; but there are circumstances under which this inequality can be removed. If they fight in the dark, for instance, what advantage has one over the other? None whatever. Now I contend that darkness is every way suited to a dool. In the first place, a dool is a deed of darkness. In the second place, the combatants are on an equal footing. In the third place, it is secure from interruption. In the fourth place, it prevents any identification of the survivor in a court of law in case of his arrest. Seventeen other reasons equally good are in my mind now, but I forbear to enumerate them. But you yourself must see the immense superiority of a dool of this kind over any other. You must see how it answers the demands of the present occasion. Take your enemy into the dark.

Deprive him of the advantages which accident gives him. Put yourself and him on an equal footing. Stand there, face to face and front to front, in the dark, and then blaze away. Them's my sentiments."

Grimes stopped, and watched Carrol in silence to see the effect of his suggestion. Not a word was spoken by either for a long time.

"A duel in the dark!" said Carrol, at length. "It's a new idea to me, but 'pon my soul, my dear fellow, I must say it strikes me rather favorably just now. I don't relish the idea of being nothing more than a mere target, and of letting *her* have it all her own way; and then again, though I'm willing to accept what you call the slaughter dool, yet I confess I should prefer a mode of fighting in which death is not an absolutely inevitable thing; and so, on the whole, it really seems to me as if the plan might not be a bad one; and I think we had better decide upon it. But where could it come off? Are the nights dark enough?"

"O yes, there's no moon now."

"The best place would be under the shadow of some woods, I suppose."

"O no, the room of some house would be the best place."

"What! a house? inside a house?"

"Yes."

"Why, where could we find one that would be suitable?"

"Wal, that is a matter which we must see about. I can undertake that job, and I'll go about it at once. I've got a place in my mind now. Would you care about takin' a walk and seein' it?"

Carrol made no reply, but rose from his seat and prepared to accompany his friend.

Quitting the house, the two friends walked down the street, and took a direction which led out of town. They had not gone far before they saw a carriage approach, and both of them at once recognized the elegant barouche and spirited bays of Mrs. Lovell. Two ladies were in the carriage, and they

knew them to be the very ones whom they did not care to meet at this particular moment. But retreat or even evasion was quite out of the question. The carriage was coming toward them at a rapid pace, and the next corner was too far away to afford a way of escape. Of course they could not think of turning round and walking back, so they kept on in the direction in which they were going.

The ladies saw them at once and looked fixedly at them. Mrs. Lovell's face was slightly flushed, and there was on it an air of embarrassment; but in spite of this there was a pretty smile which curved her rosy lips and dimpled her rounded cheeks in a highly fascinating way. But Maud was very different. Her face was pale, and her sad eyes fixed themselves with mournful earnestness on Carrol, throwing at him a glance of eager, wistful entreaty.

As the carriage came up, Grimes looked toward it, and caught Mrs. Lovell's glance, and saw her smile. She bowed in the most marked manner possible; and Grimes removed his hat and made a very low bow in return. While doing this he stood still, and after he had performed this ceremony he turned and stared after the carriage with a flushed face for more than a minute. Then with a sigh he resumed his walk, but found to his surprise that Carrol had walked ahead for some considerable distance.

If there had been a difference between the expressions of Mrs. Lovell and Maud, there had certainly been a corresponding difference between the demeanor of Carrol and that of Grimes on this momentous occasion. Each had been equally agitated at this unexpected meeting, but each had shown his emotion in a different way. The way of Grimes has already been described. But while Grimes allowed his eyes to be drawn to the spot where his idol sat enthroned in her chariot, Carrol refused to let his eyes wander at all. At that moment he was like the gladiator on his way to the arena passing before the throne of Cæsar. *Moriturus*

te salutat was the thought of his despairing and imbibtered soul; and deep within his heart was a conviction of the utter baseness of that beautiful girl who had betrayed him. Had she not encouraged him with false hopes? Had she not led him on? Had she not made him her tool, her decoy-duck, through whom she might gain the object of a vulgar and contemptible ambition? Was not all his life ruined through her? Was he not going even now to his death, — he, the doomed gladiator? *Moriturus te salutat?*

He looked straight ahead, not allowing his eyes to rest on her, — his pale features set in an expression of icy calm, an expression very different from the frank joyousness which Maud so well remembered. Yet he did not forget the salutation, — even though he was going to die, — but as the carriage rolled by he raised his hat and so walked on.

After a time Grimes caught up to him, and the two walked on together. Neither one said a word, for each one had thoughts which he did not feel inclined to express in words. At length, after about an hour's walk, in which they had gone about two miles out of the town, they came within sight of an old house.

"Thar," said Grimes, "that's the place; what do you think of it?"

"O, I dare say it'll do well enough," said Carrol, in an absent way.

"I say," said Grimes, "gather up your wits, and be a man. It was an infernally unlucky thing that we met them, but it could n't be helped, no-how, and I've been upset ever since; but what's the use of miaulin like a darned cat over a drowned kitten! I won't, for one."

Saying this, Mr. Grimes drew a long breath, and then proceeded to pound his chest vigorously with his two brawny fists, in the fashion which Mr. Du Chaillu ascribes to the cheerful gorilla. This pleasant exercise seemed to do Mr. Grimes a world of good; for after he had struck a number of blows, each of which, if dealt upon an enemy,

might have reduced that enemy to a state of pitiable harmlessness, he said briskly and sharply, "Wal, now let's get to business."

The deserted house stood about a hundred yards from the road. Carrol followed his friend in silence as he passed through a broken gateway and over what had once been a garden to the house. There were no doors or windows in the house, and there was a general air of desolation about it that was oppressive.

"Wal," said Grimes, "will this suit?"

"Anything 'll suit," said Carrol, coldly.

"You agree to this kind o' fightin'?"

"I agree to anything," said Carrol.

"We've talked all that over."

"So we have, but this sort of fightin' presupposes a desperate mind."

"Well, I tell you, I *am* desperate. I don't care whether I live or die. I've seen the last of that treacherous she-devil, and only want to live long enough to put one drop of bitterness in her cup. But what's the use of talking? Give me that Frenchman and put me in here with him. That's all I want."

"Darkness," said Grimes, solemnly. "sometimes has a depressin' effect on the human nerve. Can you stand that?"

"O, damn the human nerve!" growled Carrol. "I tell you I can stand anything."

"I'm afraid you're just a mite too excited, my son; but then, temperaments differ. Now the prospect of a good, rousin' fight has a kind of cheerin' effect on me, and makes me a Christian in one sense, for I get almost to love my enemy."

"Well, I've a different feeling toward my enemy," said Carrol; "so now let's go and finish up this business as soon as we can. It must be done up to-night."

"So say I; for I've *got* to go," said Grimes. "I'll go now after Moosoo. Where shall I see you?"

"At your rooms. I won't go back

to mine, I don't want to see any fellows."

On reaching the town again Grimes went off, and Carrol went to the rooms of his friend, where he awaited the result.

In about two hours Grimes came back.

"Wal," said he, "you're in the dark here. Suppose we have some light on the subject." And he proceeded to light up. "Won't you smoke?"

Carrol said nothing, but began to fill a pipe in an abstracted way, while Grimes filled another.

"Wal," said he, "I've been and seen 'em; and a precious hard time I've had of it, too. They're both Moosoo's, and your Moosoo and his friend, bein' foreigners, had a most unnatural prejudice against the mode of combat decided on by you. And it's taken me full two good hours to beat into their frog-eatin' heads that this is the only fair, just, equitable, impartial, and reasonable mode of fightin' recognized among high-toned men. And so it is. For look at me. I'm a high-toned man. Wal, I give my vote clean in favor of it.

"Moosoo's friend is a fellow-countryman of his who came out with him to America; and as they have neither of them been here more than two or three months, they show an ignorance and a prejudice and a stoopidity that is incredible. Why, they actilly had the audacity to quote their infernal frog-eatin' French customs against me, — me that's been brought up on the Californy code. But I managed precious soon to show them that their small Paris fashions wa'n't a circumstance out here.

"You must understand that first of all I saw only his friend, but he found my proposition so disagreeable, and, as he called it, so monstrous, that he had to consult Moosoo himself, and gradually I was worked into the conversation with the principal. Fortunately, I can talk their language as fast as they can, with a good, strong,

honest Yankee accent, which I may add is the only safeguard to the moral nature of a free American when he doos speak French.

"Wal, I found Moosoo as venomous as a rat, and as thirsty for your blood as a tiger. He felt confidence in his own skill, and was as sure of you as he would be of his dinner, yea, perhaps more so. And this was the very thing; I tackled him about at the outset. I showed him that we, bein' the challenged party, had a right to define our weepins and locate the scene of action. I showed that we were bound to look after our rights, privileges, and appurtenances, and not let him have it all his own way. I then went on to show that the proposed mode was at once sound, just, fair, wise, equitable, and honest. Wal, the blind prejudice of Moosoo was amazin', I never saw anythin' like it. All my arguments about fairness, equity, and abstract right were thrown away. So, then, I had to bring before him my second point, namely, that this is the custom of the country."

"What, to fight duels in the dark?"

"Wal, no, not precisely that, but to fight accordin' to the will of the challenged party. As for fightin' in the dark, I showed that this of itself was not *the* custom, but still it was a custom of the country, and as such deserved to be regarded with veneration by foreigners, and adopted by them whenever it was the desire of an American who might be the challenged party. This argument was one which they did n't find it so easy to meet. They fit against it like all-possessed; but my position was an impregnable one, and they could no more shake me from it than a couple of bumblebees could uproot the giant tree that lifts its gorgeous head from the midst of the primeval forest. No, sir. And finally, as a settler, I brought up Californy. I described its wealth of resources, animal, vegetable, and mineral; its giant mountains, its sunless valleys, its broad plains, its stoopen-dous trees; I dilated upon the Yosemite;

I portrayed the Golden Gate; I gave them estimates of our annual commerce; I explained our school law, our criminal law, and our specie currency. I informed them that Californy was at once the brain, the heart, and the right arm of the broad continent; that Californy usage was final throughout America, and that Californy sanctioned the mode proposed.

"Wal, now, Moosoo was dreadful disinclined to fight a duel in the dark. He was bloodthirsty and venomous, but at the same time I detected in him a dash of timidity, and the prospect of this kind of a meetin' upset him a little. It's either natural timidity croppin' out, or else it's a kind of superstition, perhaps both; and whatever it was it made him refuse this dool for a long time. But Californy settled him. The supreme authority of America was somethin' they could n't object to.

"Wal, I redooiced them to submission, and then it only remained to settle the details. Wal, first and foremost, we are to go there,—all of us together. Wal, then the seconds are to put the principals in the room whar the business is to be transacted. Wal, then the seconds are to take their departure and fly."

"What's that? what?" asked Carol, who had thus far listened without showing much interest. "Why should the seconds go?"

"Why should they stay?"

"Well, I don't know, except to see fair play."

"Wal, in the first place, as it's goin' to be pitch dark the seconds won't be able to see anything; in the second place, the very essence of the whole thing is that the fighters be left to their own natural instincts; and in the third place, if no one sees it there won't be any witnesses for the lawyers to get hold of in case the survivor is tried for his life."

"And do you really mean to say that you're going away? Won't you stay till — till —" Carol hesitated.

"Stay?" echoed Grimes. "Stay? Me!—me stay! And here! What, here! Are you mad? Don't you see my trunk? Have n't you heard my mournful story? Ought n't I even now to be rollin' along on my windin' way? No. I leave this place at once and forever; and I'm only waitin' to be of service to an old friend in the hour of need; and, my son, I'll shake hands with you when we part, and bid you good by, with the hope that we may at last meet again whar partin's air unknown."

Midnight was the hour settled upon for the duel, and about half past eleven Grimes and Carrol called on the Frenchmen. They were ready. Du Potiron looked pale and nervous; in which respect Carrol was fully his equal. Du Potiron's friend looked dark and sullen. Grimes alone showed anything like ordinary good feeling. He was calm, urbane, chatty, and at times even jocose. He had the manner of one who was putting a strong restraint upon himself, but underneath this restraint there was an immense pressure of riotous feeling that at times surged up mightily. The feeling was the furthest possible from grief or anxiety. Was it natural cold-heartedness in this man that allowed him at such a time to be capable of such levity, that permitted him, while accompanying an intimate and trusting friend on such an errand, to have no thought of that friend's impending doom?

So they marched on, the four of them; first Grimes and Carrol, then the two "Moosoos." After finding that his companions declined conversation, Grimes gave it up, and walked on in silence. Sometimes his huge frame would shake from his hat to his boots; and on one occasion he even went so far as to beat his breast, gorilla fashion,—a proceeding that excited much suspicion and anxiety in the minds of the foreigners.

Carrol noticed this, but did not think much about it. He was well acquainted with the eccentricities and extravagances of his friend, and did not see

much in his present conduct that was very different from usual. Once or twice, it is true, he could not help feeling that repressed laughter was a little out of place, but he accounted for it on the ground that Grimes was really troubled in his mind, and took this way of struggling with his emotion.

On the whole, however, Carrol did not give much thought to Grimes. As he walked on, his mind was occupied with the events of the last few days, and the dark rendezvous before him. In those few days were comprised all the real trouble he had ever known. He had never in his life quarrelled with any one, much less fought a duel; yet here in three days his heart had been filled with bitterness and hate and despair.

Nor amid these contending feelings was he least affected by a certain horror of soul arising from the meeting before him. He was going at that midnight hour to meet death or to inflict it. That gloomy, deserted house, under the midnight sky, was to be the scene; and in that house even now there awaited one of them, perhaps both, the King of Terrors.

Was it wonderful, then, that at such a time and on such an errand, there should have come over Carrol's soul a certain overwhelming and shuddering awe? Has not the greatest of singers shown this feeling in the soul even of Ajax while fighting in the dark? Carrol going in broad day to meet his enemy would have been animated solely by that vindictive hate which he had already manifested, and would have soothed himself by the hope of inflicting sorrow of some sort on Miss Heathcote; but Carrol at midnight, in the dark, on his way to that place of meeting, to encounter an unseen enemy, found himself a weaker being. He was unable to maintain his fierce vindictive hate. Wrath and fury subsided at the presence of that one feeling which in all human hearts is capable of overmastering all else,—the unspeakable sense of horror.

V.

DESPISED LOVE.

AFTER that unexpected meeting with Grimes and Carrol, the ladies drove home, and not a word was spoken by either. The house was not far away, and the drive was not long enough to allow them time to recover from the emotion which this meeting caused them. But over Maud's pale face, there came a hot angry flush, and her brows contracted into an indignant frown. She remained in her room longer than was strictly necessary for disrobing herself, and when she joined her sister she had become calmer.

"O Maudie darling," said Mrs. Lovell, "I thought you were never coming. I do so want to talk to you. Only think how very odd it was that I should meet him in that way. And he looked so awfully embarrassed. Did n't you notice it?"

"No," said Maud.

"Why, how strange! Well, you know, I never felt so cut up in all my life."

"Did you?"

"Positively. I assure you I believe I'm growing prematurely old, and rapidly getting into my dotage. But how really magnificent he looked! I'm so glad I saw him, and I'm so glad he is n't coming here any more. Do you know, darling, I'm more afraid of myself than ever? Really, I sometimes think that I'm weaker than a child. How very fortunate for me it is that he has such real delicacy, and is so very punctilious and all that! Why, if he were different, one really could n't tell what might happen. O dear, how very fortunate it is that I'm going to Paris! But, Maudie dear, did you notice what a leonine aspect he had?"

"Who?" asked Maud, languidly.

"Who? Why, how stupid! Why, he, Mr. Grimes, of course. You can't suppose that I meant Mr. Carrol. He looked anything but leonine. He was as white as a sheet, and as stiff as a statue."

Maud sighed.

"Well, I'm sure," resumed Mrs. Lovell, "it's particularly fortunate for me that I'm going to Paris. I feel that I'm shamefully weak, and if I were to stay here I really don't know what would become of me. As it is I shall escape from him. Of course he will be here immediately, but I shall evade him. But, poor fellow,"—and Mrs. Lovell sighed,— "how terribly cut up he will be when he finds that I am gone! And he won't know where in the world I have gone to. He would follow me, of course, to the world's end, but he can never, never think of Paris. Only he might think of it, and, O dear, if he were to find out, and follow me, what would become of me, Maudie? Do you know? I'm sure I don't, or, rather, I do know, but it's really too horrible to think of. I've an immense amount of strength of character, and all that sort of thing, Maudie dearest, but really if I should see him in Paris I'm afraid I should quite give up. I really do not know what resource I should have, unless I might fly home and take refuge with poor dear papa, and I'm sure he's had worry enough with me, and then only think what worry he'd have if Mr. Grimes should pursue me there and see me again. What could poor dear papa do? He's so awfully fond of me that he's quite unreliable. He always lets me do just what I choose. Really, do you know, Maudie, I sometimes think it is quite heart-rending for one's papa to be so very, very weak. I do really."

"Poor fellow!" said Maud, with a sigh.

"Poor *what*?" exclaimed Mrs. Lovell, looking in astonishment at Maud. "Really, Maudie, it strikes me that you have a very funny way of alluding to poor papa."

"Papa?" said Maud, "I did n't mean him. I meant—Mr. Carrol."

"O, Mr. Carrol. Well, Maudie, now that you remind me of him, it seems to me very odd. I thought he had bid you an eternal farewell, and all that. But it's always the way with

men. You don't know how to take them. Really, you can never know when they are in earnest. For my part, I don't believe they know, themselves. I really don't."

"He did n't speak," said Maud, in a voice of indescribable sadness, "he did n't even look at me, and I was so—I thought so much of him. And then you know I really was n't to blame."

"You, darling! you to blame! You never were to blame in your life, my sweet Maudie. And it breaks my heart to see you so sad. And I hate him. I really do. But that's the way with men. Fickle, variable, creatures of mere impulse, prone to wander, obeying nothing but mere passion, whimsical, incapable of careful and logical thought. Really, Maudie dear, I have a very, very low opinion of men, and my advice to you is, never, never allow yourself to think too much of any one man. He'll be sure to give you many a heart-ache. You follow my advice and do as I do."

"He looked so dreadfully pale, and sad, and careworn. It breaks my heart to think of it."

"Pale? Why, Maudie dear, you need never imagine that his paleness had anything to do with you. Do you know what such a fancy is? Why, it's morbid."

"He would n't even look at me," said Maud. "And I longed so to catch his eye. I should have spoken to him."

"My dear Maudie, how very silly and unladylike! As to his paleness, that is all assumed. These men, dear, are really all actors. They wear masks, Maudie, they really do. You can't trust one of them. As for his paleness, I have no doubt it was simply indigestion,—or perhaps dissipation."

"Mr. Carrol is not at all dissipated," said Maud, indignantly.

"Well, dear, you need n't take one up so, and really, you know you don't know much about him. I dare say he's very, very dissipated. At any rate, he's very, very deceitful."

"Deceitful!"

"Yes; did n't he bid you an eternal farewell, and say he was going away? Well, the first thing you know, you meet him calmly strolling about the streets."

"O," cried Maud, fervently, "if I had only known it, I should have written him at once and explained it all. But, O Georgie! I was so sure that he had gone away, and that thought filled me with despair."

"Really, Maudie, you use such strong language that I feel quite shocked. Despair? What do you know of despair? Wait till you've had my experience."

And Mrs. Lovell sighed heavily.

"At any rate, Maudie," said she, after a brief silence, "one thing is quite plain to me, and that is, that he is at least very undecided. He really does n't know his own mind. He pretended to want you, and then he gave you up on account of a slight mistake. He wrote you solemnly, announcing his eternal departure, and yet he stayed here and wandered about on purpose to meet you and give you distress. And he does n't know his own mind at this moment."

Maud was silent.

"O yes," resumed Mrs. Lovell, "you'll find it so, when you gain more experience, Maudie dearest, you'll learn to think very little of the men. They are all so very undecided. Quite worthless, in fact. Now you'll find that a man is never really worth anything till he gets a wife. And I suppose that's one reason why they're all so eager to be married. Quite unsettled till then. Why, look at Adam," continued Mrs. Lovell, speaking of the father of mankind in the same tone in which she would have alluded to some well-known friend,— "look at Adam. He was quite worthless, O, I assure you, he was really *quite* worthless; till his wife was presented to him. But, Maudie, when you think of it, what a very awkward meeting it must have been! Only themselves, you know, dear, and not a single soul to introduce them. I wonder how they managed it."

And Mrs. Lovell paused, quite overcome by the inscrutable problem which was presented by this one idea.

To all of her sister's somewhat desultory remarks Maud seemed to pay but little attention. She sat with an abstracted look, occupied by her own thoughts; and so after Mrs. Lovell's daring flight of fancy on the subject of Adam, she sighed, and said: "I do wonder what kept him here. If I had only known it!"

"My dear," said Mrs. Lovell, "I'll tell you what kept him here. He did it to tease you. Men do so love to tease, and worry, and vex, and annoy. Men are always so. Really, when I come to think of it, I wonder why men were created, I do positively, though of course it's awfully wicked to make a remark of that kind, and seems almost like flying in the face of Providence. But perhaps it is the wisest plan in this life to try to make the best of our evils, instead of fighting against them, and I dare say it would be best for us to act on that principle with regard to men."

Maud took no notice of this. She rose from her chair in an excited way and said, "Georgie, I *must* write him."

"Write him! Why, my precious child!"

"I must, Georgie, I really must write him. It's been a terrible mistake, and my mistake, and I cannot let another hour pass without an explanation. It may be all too late, yet I must do it. I can never, never have any peace till I have explained it all."

"Well, Maudie, I must say I feel quite shocked at such a very unlady-like proposal; but, darling, if you really feel so very disturbed, and agitated, and all that, why, I won't say one word; only do try to calm yourself, dearest; you are so pale and sad, and have been so utterly unlike yourself ever since that horrid letter, that it quite breaks my heart to look at you. So go, Maudie, and do whatever you like, and try to get that wretched man off your mind if you possibly can."

Maud sighed again, and left the room, while Mrs. Lovell leaned her head upon her hand and gave herself up to her own meditations.

After about an hour Maud came back with a letter in her hand.

"Well, darling?" said Mrs. Lovell, in an interrogative tone.

"Well," said Maud, "I've written him."

"Mind, darling, I don't approve of it at all. I only yielded to you because you were so sad. I believe that he has treated you in a shockingly cruel manner, and is now trying his best to make you miserable. This letter will only draw another one from him worse than the last."

"I cannot help it," said Maud, mournfully. "I had to write. It was my mistake. I owed him an explanation."

"You owed him nothing of the kind, Maudie darling. Women never owe men any explanations of any kind. You are too weak altogether. But that's always the way with women. They are always too magnanimous; they are never petty and selfish; they are too just; they allow themselves to be influenced too much by reason, and would often be better for a little dash of passion, or temper, or proper pride; and, Maudie dear, I do wish you wouldn't be so absurd."

"I have my share of proper pride," said Maud, quietly, "and enough to support me in the hour of trial. But I had to write this. I owed it to him. It was my own unfortunate mistake. I must explain this wretched blunder to him. If he will not receive this, why then I feel that my own pride and proper self-respect will sustain me, under all possible circumstances. And, Georgie dear, though I never suspected till now the real strength of my feelings, yet I am sure that if he should prove to be unworthy, I shall be able to overcome them, and succeed in time in casting him from my thoughts."

"You're too tragic, Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, anxiously; "and I don't like to see you in this mood. But what

have you written? Of course, I only ask in a general way."

"Well, I explained the mistake, you know," said Maud.

"It was not at all necessary," said Mrs. Lovell.

"I told him how it happened," said Maud, without noticing her sister's remark,— "the two letters, my own excitement and agitation, and all that."

"Well, did you give him any reason to suppose that he would still be welcome?"

"I certainly did," said Maud. "I wrote him in the same tone which I had used in the first unfortunate letter."

Mrs. Lovell shook her head.

"That was very, very unwise, Maudie dearest," said she, "you should have been more cautious. You should have shown him how cruel he was. You should have written your letter in such a way as to show him that *he* was altogether in the wrong, and then after making him feel proper repentance you might have hinted, merely hinted, you know, that you would not be altogether indisposed to forgive him, if he—if he showed himself sufficiently sorry for his fault."

"Well," said Maud, "I had to write as my heart prompted. I am incapable of any concealment; I am anxious to explain a mistake. I don't want anything more from him than—than an acknowledgment that he was mistaken in his cruel letter."

At this juncture a caller was announced, and Maud, not feeling equal to the occasion, and being also anxious to send off her letter, took her departure.

When the caller had departed she rejoined her sister.

"O Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, "who do you think it was? Why, Mrs. Anderson. And she told me such a shocking story about Mr. Carrol."

Maud's face turned whiter than ever; she could not speak.

"All the town's talking about it," said Mrs. Lovell. "I told you he was dissipated, you know."

"What—what was it?" said Maud, in a choked voice.

"Well, you know, it was last night. He had been with a party of his boon companions at some bar-room or other, and they had all been dissipating and carousing, and they all began to fight, and Mr. Carrol was the worst of them all, and he knocked them all down, and behaved-like a perfect fiend. O, he must have behaved fearfully; and so you see, Maudie dear, there was very good reason why he should be pale to-day and not dare to look you in the face. He felt thoroughly ashamed of himself, and for my part I wonder how he dared to walk the streets."

"I don't believe it," said Maud, indignantly; "Mrs. Anderson is an odious old gossip."

"Well, all the town believes it," said Mrs. Lovell, in a resigned tone; "and so you see, Maudie, it's quite true, as I've always said, that you are very fortunate in getting rid of Mr. Carrol, and the time will come, and very soon I hope, when you will feel very glad that this has happened."

"I don't believe it," said Maud, again, but in a tone that was a little less confident; yet as she said this she thought that it was not unnatural for a disappointed lover to seek solace in dissipation, and outdo his companions in extravagance, and as she thought of this her heart sank within her.

"Well, I believe it," said Mrs. Lovell, "every word of it. For you know, Maudie dearest, that's the way with the men. They are so weak, so childish, so impetuous, so wayward; and you know they are all so fond of getting intoxicated. Now we women never get intoxicated, do we, Maudie? O, I assure you, if it were not for men the world would be a very different sort of a place, really it would, Maudie darling!"

The profound truth of this last remark was so evident that Maud did not seem inclined to dispute it; she sat in silence, pale, sorrowful, agitated, and wrapt up in her own mournful thoughts.

This explanatory letter was written

on the day after Maud had received Carrol's farewell. Before she sent it off, she wrote another to Du Potiron which was intended to make things clear to his mind. Having done this she waited for an answer.

She expected one on the following day, or rather she expected Carrol himself.

But the following day passed, and neither Carrol nor a letter came. Nor did one come from Du Potiron.

Maud felt more despondent than ever.

The next day passed, and no answer came from either.

This deepened Maud's despondency.

Then came the third day. No answer came. Maud began to feel resentful.

The fourth day passed. Still not a word came. By this time Maud's pride rose up in rebellion at such a wrong. She felt sure that Carrol was in the city, that he had received her letter and refused to answer it. So she determined to be as proud as he was. And this task she did not find a difficult one. To a nature like hers pride was the sure antidote to wounded affection.

On the fifth day she had lost all her despondency and sadness. Her pride sustained her fully, and a bitter mortification took the place of her former melancholy. She deeply regretted having written any explanation whatever.

On the sixth day they left Montreal for New York, to take the steamer for Europe; and as she took her departure, Maud's chief feeling was one of deep self-contempt and profound resentment against her false lover.

I will forget him, she thought to herself, as utterly as though he had never existed.

VI.

A DUEL IN THE DARK.

At length the party reached their destination.

It was past midnight. There was no moon, and overhead the sky was

covered with clouds that shut out even the stars. It was intensely dark. Around them there arose a grove of trees, through which the night wind sighed gently in a drear and mournful monotone. Beneath these trees the shadows fell darker, and the old house which stood near them was enveloped in a deeper gloom.

The house stood apart from the road, and from all other habitations. In the distance the city lay still and asleep. No wagons rolled along the highway; no familiar noises greeted their ears. The silence was oppressive.

The seconds had brought out all that might be needed, and among other things a lantern. This Grimes proceeded to light, and then the whole party entered the old house.

The front door was gone, as has been said. Entering this, they found themselves in the hall from which a stairway went up, and on each side of which were rooms. On the left was one large room extending across the house, while on the right there were two apartments. The party entered the large room on the left. Two doorways led into this apartment; the one in the rear was closed and the rusty lock still secured it, but in front the door was hanging by one hinge. There were four windows, two in front, and two in the rear. From all of these the glass was gone, and one of them had no sash at all. This one opened out on the rear of the house. The room was divided by an archway in the middle, in which there was an opening for sliding doors, but these had been taken away. It had a general air of the most forlorn kind. The paper hung loose upon the walls; the floor was damp, and rotten, with fungus growths visible along the surface; plaster had fallen from the ceiling, lying in heaps, and disclosing the laths above; the grates were gone, and in front of each chimney was a pile of soot.

One glance was sufficient to reveal all this and to show this room in its most forbidding aspect, even down to trivial details. Carrol stood with a rigid stare. Du Potiron glanced

around with feverish haste, and a tremor passed through his frame. He drew his second off to the back part of the room, and spoke a few words to him in a low voice. While they were speaking Grimes drew Carrol out into the hall.

"Several small details," said Grimes, "have been omitted in this here business, but you know what a devil of a hurry you were in. Besides we could n't bring a doctor, for the first thing requisite is secrecy. Whoever falls will have to put it through, and the other fellow 'll have to run for it 's quick as his darned legs 'll carry him. So now go ahead, my son, and I 'll just shake hands for good by."

"But you won't really leave a fellow," said Carrol, ruefully.

"Leave you? By jingo! I've got to. Why look at me. Think of the state of my mind, and my trunk. O, I must go. — right straight off. — in a bee line for some place or other. I 'll just take a start, and where I pull up circumstances 'll have to decide. I 'm sorry I 'm not goin' to Californy, or I 'd ask you to drop in if you ever go that way. But I don't know where I 'll pull up. I don't know where I 'll go, the South Sea Islands p'aps, to civilize the natives, or China to export coolies, or Central Asia to travel; or p'aps up North to hunt up the North Pole. It 's all the same to me anyhow. So now, good by, till we meet to part no more."

With these words he seized Carrol's hand, wrung it heartily, and then went back into the room. Carrol followed in silence. On entering it again it looked worse than ever. Du Potiron was still talking, and he gave a hurried start as the others entered.

"You won't have much trouble with that Moosoo," whispered Grimes. "He 's as near dead now as can be."

"Well," said Carrol, in a stifled voice; "make haste."

"All right," said Grimes, and, calling the other second, he offered him one of two pistols.

"You see they did n't bring their

tools to America; and as I happened to have a pair, I offered to loan them for the occasion. You need n't be particular, though, about returnin' them. I 've got more."

Du Potiron's second took one of the pistols with a bow, and gave it to his principal. Grimes gave the other to Carrol.

After this Grimes went over to Du Potiron, and held out his hand. The Frenchman took it. Whereupon Grimes made him a speech, brief, but to the point, in French, which, as he himself said with honest and patriotic pride, had a strong Yankee accent. He informed him that he was in a free country, and in the society of free men; he exhorted him to be true to the immortal principles of '76, and visit Californy before his return to France. After which he wrung the Frenchman's hand hard, and left him.

Du Potiron gave a sickly smile, and bowed, but said nothing.

"His hand's damp as a wet rag, and as cold as a corpse," whispered Grimes. "If it were daylight now he'd be as venomous as a serpent, but the darkness takes away all his pison. And now, my son, for the last time, farewell forever."

With these words Grimes went out, carrying the lantern. Du Potiron's second followed.

"We will shut the door and call — one — two — three. Then you may blaze away whenever you darn like."

There was no answer.

The fallen door was then raised to its place, and shut, hanging by one hinge, and by the latch of the rusty lock. All was now darkness in the room. Some time was taken in adjusting the door, and much pulling and pushing and hammering and pounding was required before it could be properly fixed. The banging at the door echoed dismally through Carrol's heart, and seemed to shake the whole house. The night air sighed; the loose paper rustled; there seemed footsteps all around him. He thought Du Potiron was stealing toward him

so as to be within reach of the place where he was, and thus be able to fire at once. There seemed a stealthy footfall, as of one cautiously advancing.

Carrol hastily retreated from the middle of the room where he had been standing, and moved backwards toward the wall. Once he stumbled and nearly fell over a heap of plaster, but recovered himself. Gropping with his hands he found the partition for the sliding doors, and cautiously took up a position in the angle which it formed with the wall of the front room. Here he waited in feverish suspense, with his left hand stretched forward, his right holding forth the pistol, and his body bent in a wary, anxious, vigilant position, while his eyes strained themselves to detect through that gloom the advancing figure of his enemy.

But now the noises ceased, the door was secured, and he heard the voice of Grimes.

"One!"

A pause.

"Two!"

Another pause.

"THREE!"

After this there came the shuffle and tramp of footsteps; and the footsteps retreated from the house, till their sound died away in the distance.

Then silence remained.

For a time the silence was utter, and the only sound distinguishable by Carrol was the strong throb of his own heart. Other than this there was not a sound, not a breath, not a rustle. Eagerly he listened and anxiously for a renewal of that stealthy footfall which might announce the approach of his lurking foe. In vain. That foe now gave no sign. Evidently he had lost all trace of Carrol's position, and after moving forward he had been baffled by Carrol's retreat.

He stood in the attitude which has been described, not daring to move, rooted to the spot, with every muscle and every sinew and every nerve awake and on the alert to guard against his hidden foe; and stilling even his own breathing, lest it should reveal the se-

cret of his hiding-place. And all the time he watched and waited and listened for some sound that might indicate the approach of his enemy. But the sound came not. Why should it? Would his enemy be rash enough to attempt to move further amid the rubbish that lay on the floor, over which it was not possible to walk without disclosing one's position? His enemy had attempted it only while the door was being secured, and while the noise attendant upon that operation might drown the lesser noise of his own footsteps. In that first attempt he had evidently been baffled. It was not likely that he would try it again.

The silence at length was broken by the gentle sighing of the wind. It came through the open windows; the loose paper on the walls again rustled and rattled as it swayed to and fro; and the solemn sound of the wind without, as it murmured through the trees of the grove, was wafted to his ears. Then the wind grew gradually stronger; and overhead he heard long moans and sighs, as the night blast passed through the halls and chambers of the deserted house. Coming through the windows it seemed to enter as if in search of something; and in that search to pass through every room, moaning in grief because it sought what it could not find; and then wailing out its long lamentation as it passed away in despair. And then there came other sounds; there were loose doors that creaked, and loose window-sashes that rattled, and the combined effect of these was sometimes such that it conveyed the idea of beings wandering overhead, the patter of whose footfalls was audible on the floor. And thus, in that tension of his quickened senses, every sound became exaggerated; and the aggregation of these grew at length to such proportions, that the reverberations of long-continued thunder would not be more manifest to the ordinary man than were these accumulated sounds to him.

To his eyes also, as they stared into the dark, the gloom seemed gradual-

ly to lessen, and there arose visible things which appeared and disappeared, the phantoms of night which chased one another across his perturbed vision. First there came the outlines of the windows gradually less indistinct, and growing more defined; while beyond their bars hung the sky, whose former blackness seemed lessening, till on the horizon which was visible to him it changed to a dull gray hue. But it was only through the windows that images of visible things could come to his eyes. Within the room was nothing but thick darkness, and the opposite wall, whose loosened paper-hangings rustled at the night blast, could not be discerned.

Now, out of all this state of things, in which the ears were overwhelmed by the exaggeration of minute sounds, while the eyes were baffled by the impenetrable gloom, there came upon him that feeling of which he had already known a foretaste, a feeling which was the sure result of an imagination quickened by such surroundings as these, a horror of Great Darkness; and at the touch of that horror his whole being seemed to sink away. Since material images no longer satisfied the craving of his eyes, his excited fancy supplied other forms, fashioned out of the stuff that dreams are made of. The enemy for whom he watched stood before him in thought, with vengeful face, cruel smile, and levelled pistol, ready to deal his doom, while lurking behind the form of his enemy there rose the Shadow of Death. Before that horrid apparition his nerveless hand seemed to lose control of his weapon; he shrank down, and, crouching low to avoid the blow, he fell upon one knee. But the blow did not fall, and the noise which arose from this change of position awakened no response.

Had there been a response, had any answering noise made known to him the neighborhood of his enemy, it would have been a consolation; but the utter silence only bewildered Carrol all the more, adding to his consternation and increasing his horror. His excited

imagination was rapidly overpowering every other sense and feeling. He found himself now no longer in possession of that thirst for vengeance which had animated him. Revenge itself, a passion which is usually considered the strongest of all, fainted, and failed, and died out before this new and terrific feeling which had taken possession of him. His baffled and despised love, his wrongs, his insults, all the things which had fed his hate and nourished his revenge, were now swept away into oblivion. High over all these towered up that overmastering horror, to which the darkness and the Shadow of Death had given birth. Over his soul there came a pitiable sense of utter weakness, and in his heart there arose a wild, mad longing for escape, an impulse of flight, a feeling which urged him to seek some refuge from the danger unseen, the strongest and most selfish of all human instincts, — that of self-preservation. But in the midst of this, as his soul thus sank back within itself, and every ordinary passion died out, its terrified retreat was for a moment arrested. By a mighty effort Carrol summoned up all the pride of his manhood. He recalled his thoughts, dispelled his fears, and tried to sweep away the grim phantoms which had almost overpowered him.

For a time the horror passed. He regained some of his self-control and presence of mind. He looked forth into the dark more calmly. He wondered whether the experience of his enemy had been at all like his. He cursed himself for his weakness, and tried to fortify himself against a recurrence of anything of the sort.

He looked forward into the darkness. It was as intense as ever, and for the moment was less oppressive because he no longer was a prey to his excited fancy. During that moment he had time to think over his situation.

Where was his enemy? He could not tell. There was not a sound. He could not be near. Doubtless he was in the back room somewhere concealed, like himself, and like himself waiting

for some sign. He remembered that he had already given a sufficient sign of his own position, but perhaps his enemy misunderstood it, or perhaps he was waiting to make assurance doubly sure, so as not to throw away his shot and render himself defenceless. One thing was evident, and that was that his enemy must have the advantage over him. That enemy must have some idea of his position, but he himself had no idea whatever of the position of his enemy. He could not imagine in what part of the room he might be. He knew not from what quarter to expect an attack, or where to be on his guard. And how long was this to last?

Already he felt the time to be prolonged to an intolerable degree. Such had been his sufferings, that it seemed to be hours since the footsteps of the departing friends had died away in the night. It might have been only minutes, but if so, it showed him how it was possible for a whole night under these circumstances to lengthen itself out to an infinity. Such a prospect was black indeed. Could he endure it? The very thought was intolerable.

Although for the moment the horror had passed away, yet Carrol had now no confidence in himself, and no assurance against its return. Could he bear it? Or if he should meet it, and master it once more, how many times could he repeat the process in the course of the night? One more such experience was terrible; many more would be worse than death. Rather than carry on such a struggle, he would meet his enemy, and rush upon his weapon. Better instant death than an unlimited repetition of such shame and anguish. If his enemy were only less wary, there might be some chance, but as it was, that enemy lay concealed, crouching low, watchful, patient, and biding his time. And doubtless that enemy would lie concealed thus, with unremitting vigilance, until he could gain his desires. In comparison with such an enemy, Carrol felt himself to be weak indeed. How much longer could he

endure this? Certainly for no great length of time. But his enemy might be prepared or even resolved to maintain his patient watch until the dawn of day, when he might have the game in his own hands. But could he wait till then? He felt that he could not.

Even while meditating thus, Carrol began to feel the pressure of the old horror. It was once more returning. The hour and the occasion; the darkness and the Shadow of Death all once more became manifest. He struggled against his feelings; he sought to call up his courage, to fortify that courage by pride. The struggle within him became an agony. Over him descended the horror, while he fought with it, and tried by means of reason and manhood and pride, to arrest its descent. In the midst of this dread contest a sound arose. It came from the side of the room immediately opposite. It was a sound of trampling and crushing.

In an instant Carrol's mind had decided what it was and what he should do. At last the moment had come. The enemy had betrayed himself. He pulled the trigger of his outstretched pistol.

The report sounded like a peal of thunder in his sharpened and excited sense of hearing. There was a rush and a fall of something.

Then all was still.

Carrol started up, trembling from head to foot, while the sweat started in great drops to his brow. For a few moments he waited in vague expectation of an answering shot, with his brain reeling in anticipation of his doom. But the doom was delayed, and the response came not, and no lightning flash burst forth again into the darkness, and no thunderous report again broke the stillness of the night.

"Are you hit?" he cried, in a hoarse voice.

There was no reply.

"Du Potiron!" he cried again in a yet hoarser voice.

Still there was no reply.

"O my God!" groaned Carrol. "I've killed him! He's dead! I'm a murderer. O my God!"

For a moment there arose a faint desire to go over to his victim, and examine him. But it was only for a moment. The next instant all desire, all thought of such a thing passed away.

For then, sudden, and sharp, and terrific, and unspeakable, there descended upon him the full power of the horror against which he had been struggling; bringing with it the abhorrent thought that the Dead was here. — the Dead, his own victim. And the thought was intolerable.

Chilled to the very marrow, and with that horror now supreme in his soul, Carrol dropped the pistol from his nerveless hand, and sprang to the door. He tore it down, he burst through into the hall and leaped forth out of the house. He fled like a madman, with a frightful feeling that his victim was following close behind.

Such was the horror that overwhelmed him, that for some time he fled blindly, not knowing in which direction he was going. Of one thing alone he was conscious, and that was the overmastering feeling that had taken possession of him; a hideous sense of being pursued, and a fear of being overtaken. The nightmare, Life-in-Death, which thickens man's blood with cold, had been revealed to him within that gloomy house, and it was from this that he fled, and it was this that pursued.

At last lights flashed about him. He was in broad streets, whose lamps extended on either side far away before him. The sight of these at once brought relief and dispelled his panic; and the long lines of twinkling lights, together with the commonplace figure of a policeman steadily pacing the sidewalk not far away, brought him down suddenly from the wild flight of morbid fancy to hard prosaic fact. He slackened his pace to a slow walk, and wandered onward, thinking over his situation.

Fancy had departed, and simple Fact alone remained; yet now this simple Fact that confronted him seemed not much less terrible than the wild Vision which had lately pursued him.

And the fact was simply this, he was a murderer!

Under these circumstances one course only remained for him, and that was instant and immediate flight.

VII.

A BAFFLED FLIGHT.

CARROL fled from Montreal in disguise, and concealed himself for some days in New York. Even here, however, he did not feel safe from the consequences of his crime, and so he resolved to fly to Europe. After some consideration, he decided to take the steamer to Havre, and go to Paris first. On the day for her departure he went on board at an early hour, and shut himself up in his state-room, waiting for the vessel to start. Here he remained for hours, listening to the noises around him, and peering stealthily through the glass to watch the movements on the wharf, while all the time he was tormented by an agonizing dread of arrest.

But the long-delayed moment of departure came at last. The lines were cast off, and the steamer, leaving the wharf, moved on down the harbor. Then Carrol ventured forth, and went up on deck.

Just as his foot touched the deck, he found himself face to face with a passenger who was on his way to the cabin. The passenger stopped short, and so did Carrol, and the two gazed at each other with unutterable surprise.

"Carrol! by Jingo!"

"Grimes! Good Lord!"

At such an utterly unexpected meeting, it is difficult to say which of these two felt the greater astonishment. The peculiar circumstances under which they had parted made a future meeting seem among the remotest of possibilities for many a long day. Grimes had

characterized it as an eternal farewell, and Carrol, in all his thoughts of the possible acquaintances whom he might encounter, had never dreamed of this one. Yet this one was actually the only one whom thus far he had met; and he found him in the very place where he had not expected to meet any acquaintance at all. He had hoped that his parting from the shore would rid him of everything connected with the most terrible event of his life; yet here, the moment that he ventured to emerge from his hiding-place, he found himself confronted by the very man who was most closely connected with that event; not merely one who was acquainted with it, but its very prompter and instigator. Yet in Carrol's mind the meeting caused pleasure rather than pain. He had been alone so long, brooding in secret over his troubles, that the sight of one whom he could trust was inexpressibly soothing; and he wrung Grimes's big hand as he had never before wrung the hand of any man.

"Wal," cried Grimes, "of all the events that have ever occurred, this strikes me as about a little the darn'd-est that I can think of; I declare, if it ain't the cur'ousest coincidence —!"

And Grimes paused, fairly overwhelmed.

"I took this steamer," said Carrol, hurriedly, "because it happened to be the first one that was leaving."

"Wal, for that matter, so did I; but who'd have thought of you goin' to Europe?"

Carrol's face, which for a moment had lighted up with a flush of pleasing excitement, now grew dark again, and the sombre cloud that had hung over it ever since that night of horror once more overspread it.

"I've come," said he, with some hesitation, "because Europe — seemed to me the — the best place that I could go to."

"Wal, so did I," said Grimes; "especially France. That's the country for me. I've thought all the world over, and decided on that one spot."

"When did you leave Montreal?" asked Carrol, after a pause.

"Why, the very mornin' after I left you."

"The morning after? Why, I left then."

"You did? What train?"

"The first one."

"Why, that's the very train I travelled in."

"Was it?" asked Carrol, drearily.

"Yes, it was, and I can't understand why I did n't see you."

"Very strange," said Carrol, in a low voice, raising at the same time his white face, and glancing furtively around.

"Wal, it's darned queer, too," said Grimes; "and I've been in York ever since. Have you?"

"Well — yes — that is — I've had some — some business — you know," said Carrol, in a confused way.

There was something in Carrol's manner that struck Grimes. Thus far he had been too much occupied with the surprise of this unexpected meeting; but now that the first surprise was over, he was open to other feelings; and the first feeling that came to him was simply a repetition of the former emotion of surprise, suggested, however, by a different cause. His attention was now arrested by the change in the tone, manner, and appearance of Carrol; and he looked at him earnestly, searchingly, and wonderingly. He saw a face of extreme paleness, which already bore marks of emaciation and of suffering. His hair, as it straggled from beneath his hat, did not seem to have been brushed; his mustache was loose and ragged; there was a certain furtive watchfulness in his eyes, and a haunted look in his face, that gave to him an appearance totally different from that which had characterized him in the old easy days of yore. All this was taken in by Grimes at one glance.

The result of this one glance was very marked in Grimes himself. A change came over him in an instant, which was as marked in its way as the

change that had come over Carrol. The broad content, the loose *insouciance*, and the careless *bonhomme* of his face were succeeded by an expression of deep concern, of anxiety, of something, in fact, that looked like self-reproach, and seemed to verge upon that remorse which was stamped upon the face of his friend. His teeth compressed themselves, he frowned, and the trouble of his soul could not be concealed.

"What's the matter?" asked Carrol. "Why do you look so?"

"Why, man, it's *you* that looks so, as you say. What's the matter with *you*?" said Grimes, in a hesitating voice. "You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

Carrol shuddered.

"What has happened?" asked Grimes, anxiously. "How did it end? Is this what sent you away?"

Carrol looked wildly around, and then said in a hurried voice, "Hush! Come away from here. Come down to my state-room. I'll tell you all about it."

A terrible secret borne in one's own heart will always bear down that heart by its weight; and it was this that Carrol had endured. The meeting with his old friend had been instinctively welcomed; and now that he had him alone, he availed himself eagerly of that precious and soothing relief which is always found when the dread secret can be revealed safely to one who is trusted. And so, in the seclusion of his state-room, he told Grimes his story, omitting those unnecessary particulars about his own superstitious fancies, and confining himself simply to what he considered the facts of the case.

To all this sad confession Grimes listened with a strange and a disturbed countenance. There was in his face true sympathy and profound compassion; but there was something more. There was perplexity and bewilderment. Evidently there was something in the story which he did not comprehend, and could not. He felt puz-

zled. He looked so; and as Carrol approached the crisis of his story, he interrupted him with frequent questions.

"Do you mean to say," he asked, as Carrol ended, "that you really believe you killed him?"

"Have n't I told you that?" groaned Carrol.

"But — but — is n't there some darned mistake about it all?" asked Grimes.

"Mistake! O heavens! What would n't I give if I could only hope that there might have been! But that is impossible. O no! There is always ringing in my ears that horrible rushing sound of his fall."

"But it may have been something else."

"Something else!" repeated Carrol, in a despairing tone. "O no; my senses could not have deceived me!"

"Now, look here," cried Grimes, with a certain sort of feverish impatience, "did you *see* him?"

"See him? What nonsense! How could I?"

"The flash of the pistol would show him."

"Flash of the pistol! I tell you my brain was full of a thousand images, and every one of them represented him."

"Had you been drinking much that day?" asked Grimes, after a thoughtful pause.

"Yes; of course. You might have supposed that."

"Very much?"

"Yes."

Grimes paused again.

"Did n't you go over," he asked, "to find out whether it was him or not; to assure yourself of the fact, you know? Did n't you touch him?"

"Touch him!" cried Carrol, in a voice of horror. "What! *Touch him!* Good heavens!"

"Wal," said Grimes, "you really don't know this."

"As sure as there is a heaven above us, I *do* know it," said Carrol.

Grimes said no more. He leaned

forward, and buried his face in his hands. Carrol reclined back against the wall of the state-room, and gave himself up to the terrible memories which had been once more aroused by his narration. At last he gave a heavy sigh, and started to his feet.

"Come," he said, "I can't stand this. Let's go out. I'm suffocating. Come out on deck. I must have some fresh air. Come."

Grimes rose to his feet without a word, and followed Carrol as he led the way. On his face there was the same expression of anxiety and bewilderment which has already been mentioned. In this mood he followed Carrol to the upper deck.

"Come," said Carrol, "let's go aft. There are fewer people there, and we'll be more by ourselves."

He led the way aft, and Grimes followed.

As they approached the stern, they saw two ladies sitting there whose backs were turned towards them. The ladies were gazing in silence at the receding shores, and Carrol drew Grimes to a place on the side of the steamer which was about a dozen yards away. Standing there, the two friends instinctively turned their eyes toward the land behind them, and looked at it in an abstracted way; for each one was so absorbed by his own thoughts, that his gaze was fixed rather upon vacancy than upon any definite object.

At length, one of the ladies said something to the other, after which they both rose, and turned as if with the intention of leaving the place. As they turned, their eyes wandered about and finally rested for an instant upon Grimes and his companion.

It was only for an instant that their glance fell upon these two men, but that instant was enough to allow of a profound sensation. The deep rich complexion of one of the ladies grew deeper and richer, as a flush passed over all her beautiful face; while at the same time that beautiful face assumed an expression of astonishment, embarrassment, and almost dismay,

that was very much in contrast with its former air of good-natured content. For a moment she hesitated in her confusion, and then bowed. The other lady showed equal feeling, but of a totally different kind. Her face was very pale and very sad; and as she saw the two friends, a flush passed over it, which was followed by a mournful, earnest look of mute inquiry and wonder.

Grimes looked amazed, but took off his hat and bowed; after which he hesitated, and seemed on the point of approaching the ladies. But he looked around for a moment to see Carrol. Carrol, on his part, had seen the ladies, and certainly his amazement was fully equal to that which was felt by any of the others. Already he had experienced one surprise at meeting with Grimes. This meeting was a much greater shock, for he had not the faintest idea that Mrs. Lovell and Miss Heathcote had contemplated leaving Montreal. But the sight of Miss Heathcote's face, after the first surprise, only served to deepen the darkness that had closed around his soul. For a moment he regarded her with a hard, cold stare of wonder; and then, without a word, without a sign, he turned abruptly and walked away. As Grimes looked around after his friend, he saw him thus walking off; for a moment he hesitated, and then, with another bow to the ladies, he walked off after him.

VIII.

AT HIS MERCY.

MRS. LOVELL and her sister stood for some moments in silence, with their eyes fixed upon the retreating figures of these two men, and varying feelings animated them at this sudden and unexpected meeting. Mrs. Lovell at length flung herself impatiently into a seat and patted the deck with her little foot; while Maud stood like a statue, erect, rigid, with every trace of color gone from her face.

"Have you your salts, Maudie dearest?" asked Mrs. Lovell, at length.

Maud did not seem to hear her, for she made no reply.

Mrs. Lovell repeated the question.

"No," said Maud, abruptly.

Mrs. Lovell heaved a deep sigh.

"I'm sure," said she, "I'll never get over this; but, at any rate, we may as well carry out our intention of going below. We're safer there, you know, Maudie. And who'd have thought it! Who *would* have thought it! O dear! of all the strange and unfortunate coincidences! O dear me, Maudie dearest, what *shall* I do!"

To this appeal, which was uttered in quite a heart-rending tone, Maud made no reply. Indeed, she did not seem to have heard it. She stood as statuesque as before, with her face turned toward the retreating form of Carrol. She watched him till he was out of sight, and even after he was lost to her view she stood looking in that direction.

"Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, at last, in as impatient a tone as was possible for her to use.

Maud sighed.

"Well," said she, turning around, and looking at her sister in an absent way.

"O Maudie darling, what in the world *am* I *ever* to *do*!" said Mrs. Lovell, mournfully.

"I suppose," said Maud, in a deliberate voice, "we may as well go below, as we first proposed."

"You are so awfully cold and unsympathetic," said Mrs. Lovell, in a reproachful tone.

Maud said nothing.

Mrs. Lovell, thereupon, rose to her feet, and stood for a moment looking forward along the line of retreat of Grimes and Carrol, with an expression of refined and ladylike despair that was uncommonly becoming to her.

"Well," said she, with a sigh, "I see no signs of them now; I dare say they will have the good taste to keep out of the way for the present; and so, Maudie, I think we had better go below at once."

"Very well," said Maud, in a low voice; and thereupon, the two ladies sought the seclusion of their stateroom, which they reached without again encountering the two gentlemen.

Here a long silence followed, which was at length broken by Mrs. Lovell.

"O dear!" she said, with a little sigh. "He has tracked me after all, and how he *ever* managed to do it is more than I can tell, I'm sure. And the worst of it is, it was the very thing I was afraid of. You remember, Maudie dear, I proposed at first to take a Cunard steamer to Liverpool. And you remember that I changed my mind and took this one. You know I told you that I changed my mind because I preferred going to France direct. Well, you know, Maudie darling, it was nothing of the kind. That was n't my reason at all, you know."

"What was it?" asked Maud.

"Why, you know, I really was quite frightened at the idea that Mr. Grimes might manage to find out how I had gone. I felt sure that he would follow me. He's one of those dreadful men of one idea, you know; and I know that I'm the only idea he has in his poor old head. Well, I was so dreadfully frightened at the idea of his following me, that I changed my plans and took this steamer. I thought it was a very lucky thing, and I felt quite sure, you know, that he would n't find me at all. If he attempted to follow me he would be carried to Liverpool, and I would go to Havre, and I knew that he could never track me from one place to the other. He would have to go all the way back to America, you know, before he could gain the slightest clew to my proceedings; and even then it would have been very, very hard. But, O dear! how foolishly sanguine I was! I come here. I embark. I am just leaving the shore, and thinking with a kind of pity about the poor fellow,— who really has no end of claims to my esteem,— when suddenly I turn round, and as I live! there he is, standing just before me. I declare to you, Maudie darling, it was a perfect wonder that I

did n't drop down senseless. I'm sure, my heart never beat so fast in all my life. Did n't I look dreadfully discomposed, Maudie dear?"

"O no, I think not," said Maud, absently.

"Well, I really felt so, you know, — as embarrassed as possible; quite like some raw school-girl, detected in some fault, you know. And now — O dear! what *am* I *ever* to do! what *am* I *ever* to do! I'm sure, it's really quite cruel in you, Maudie dear, to be so very, very indifferent. You are far, far too self-absorbed."

To this Maud made no answer.

"The worst of it is," continued Mrs. Lovell, "we are out at sea, positively on the ocean itself. If we were only at the wharf, I would go ashore at once, and leave all my luggage behind, — I positively would. Now, would n't you, Maudie, if you were in my place? Would n't you, now? Say."

"Yes," said Maud, dreamily.

"But no; there's nothing so good as that. Here I am, positively at his mercy. Did you notice, Maudie dearest, how very, very triumphant he looked?"

"No."

"Well, he did then; and very, very unpleasantly so, indeed. It's bad enough, I'm sure, for one to have power over one, but to go and assert it in such a particularly open way is really cruel. It really reminds me of those lines of poetry that some one made, that it was something or other to have a giant's strength, but very, very naughty to use it like a giant. I dare say you remember the lines, Maudie.

"But I know another reason," said Mrs. Lovell, after a thoughtful pause, — "another reason why he looked so triumphant. He's got that dreadful chignon with him. I saw it in his face. It was just as if he had said so to me in so many words. And how dreadful it is, Maudie, for a discarded lover to be carrying about a lock of his lady's hair. It's really awful, you know."

"O well, you know, it is n't your own hair."

"Well, it's as much mine as most people's, you know. Really, one hardly knows what really is a lady's hair now, and so it's all the same; but I do wish, Maudie, that it was n't so very much. It's a whole head, Maudie dear. And only to think of his having it now in his trunk, or his valise, or his carpet-bag. But I dare say he has a casket made on purpose to keep it in. Really, Maudie dear, do you know, it makes me feel quite agitated when I think of it. It's so very improper. And I could n't help it. I really had to give it to him. And it makes me feel as though it gave him some sort of a claim on me."

"I'm sure, your fears seem quite unnecessary to me," said Maud. "You can do as you please."

"O, it's all very well to talk that way, Maudie; but then, you know, he has such a strange power over me, that I'm afraid of having him near me, and I know that I shall be in a state of constant terror all this voyage. Of course, he'll bother me all the time; and I'll have to be always planning to keep out of his way. And how *can* I do that? I must shut myself up here, a prisoner, and what good will that do? Besides, I can't make a prisoner of myself in that way; I really can't. I *must* go about on deck, and so I shall constantly fall in his way. And I can't help it. Only, Maudie dear, you must always, always be with me. You must never, never let me be alone."

"O, we shall be always together," said Maud. "As to staying below, that is absurd."

"Well, really to me," continued Mrs. Lovell, "there is something perfectly appalling in this man's mysterious knowledge of my movements. Think how he tracked me all through Canada to Montreal. That was wonderful enough, but it was nothing to this. For you see I tried as hard as I could to baffle him completely. I really cannot think of one single trace that I could have left. My friends all think that I

have gone in the Cunard steamer, and I myself did not really know that I was going in this one till yesterday, and I did not take my passage till the last moment. Really, Maudie, it frightens me. I'll tell you what I think, — I think he must have agents."

"Agents?"

"Yes, agents. I don't know what agents are, but I know they're something dreadful, something like spies or detectives; only they are in private employ, you know. And he must have quite an army of them. And only think of an army of those terrible agents watching all my movements, spying my actions, listening to my words, and reporting everything to him. It's awful."

"Well, really now, Georgie," said Maud, "you are going too far, you know. He could easily have found out this by himself."

"I'm sure I don't see how he could."

"Why, he could easily have gone about and seen the lists of passengers on each boat, before starting. I dare say he heard in Montreal that you were going to Europe, and so he has watched the principal steamers; and as he found your name on the passenger-list of this one, he sailed in it himself."

"Well, then, all I can say is, I think it is really very, very rude in him. I thought he had such delicacy, you know, and such a fine sense of honor, — really exquisite, you know. He seemed to be so very delicate in his sense of propriety and honor and all that, — on one occasion, — when he might have — might have acted so very much more for his own interest, by being a little less punctilious, you know. And I really don't know how to harmonize such delicate conduct on one occasion with the very inconsiderate and really alarming behavior of this."

"I think, perhaps, you have given him credit for what did not belong to him," said Maud. "What you considered a delicate sense of honor may

have been a kind of obtuseness, or bluntness of perception, or honesty, or something of that sort, you know."

"O, well, it would n't interfere with my esteem for him, you know. I would n't lay very *great* stress upon a very fine sense of honor; that is, I mean, I don't think that it is necessary for a man to form his conduct toward ladies after the fashion of Sir Charles Grandison. And do you know, Maudie darling, I really don't know but that I should rather prefer having him just a little dishonorable. I really think it's rather nice, you know."

"Nice!" exclaimed Maud, in a strange tone.

"Well, at any rate, they are all so," said Mrs. Lovell. "The men, I mean. What they are chiefly wanting in is that peculiar sense of honor for which we women are distinguished. Men never form strong and intimate friendships like women. They never can thoroughly trust one another. They never defend the weak of their own sex. They can never keep one another's secrets. They take a spiteful and malicious pleasure in tearing one another's reputations to pieces, and in displaying their weakness to the world. Petty spite, small scandal, and ungenerous and censorious observation of one another are almost universal among them. They are terribly inclined to jealousy, and are fearfully exigent. O, I assure you, I have always had a very, very low opinion of men! When I was a little girl, my governess gave me a proof-book. Each page was headed with a statement about the nature of man. The first page was headed, "Man is corrupt"; the second, "Man is sinful"; the third, "Man is a child of wrath"; the fourth, "Man is weak"; the fifth, "Man is desperately wicked"; and many more. Now, you know, Maudie, I had to find texts from the Bible to prove all these; and I found no end of them, and I filled the book; and really, when I had finished, the impression that was left on my mind about man, Maudie dar-

ling, was that he was very, very shocking, and that it was a great pity that he was ever created. And I don't want ever, ever to be married again. And I'm dreadfully uneasy; for, you see, Mr. Grimes is so awfully determined, and so fearfully persevering, and I'm so wretchedly weak, that really I almost feel as though I am lost. And now, here he is, and what *am* I to do? You must stay with me always, always, you know, Maudie dear; and not leave me alone for even so much as five minutes."

"O well, Georgie, you know, I am always with you, and I'm sure you need never be alone, unless you run off by yourself."

"Yes, but that's the very thing I mean. You must never let me run off by myself. I can't trust myself. I have no end of foolish impulses; and you see Mr. Grimes has me here quite in his own power. Here he is, with his great face and beard and voice, and his great, big eyes, carrying my chignon with him; and I know exactly what he's going to do. He'll put himself where I can see him, and pretend not to annoy me, and then he'll look so pathetic that he'll make me awfully sorry for him; and then, you know, I'm so good-natured, and I'll feel so sorry for him, that I'll manage to draw him to me; and then he'll begin a system of silent adoration that will be simply intolerable. I can't bear to be adored, Maudie dear."

"I'm sure, Georgie," said Maud, with a weary sigh, "I'll do all that I can. I think you are really giving yourself a great deal of unnecessary trouble. I'll always be with you, unless you choose to run away."

"Yes, but, Maudie dear, you must watch me, and follow me up, for, you know, you would n't like to lose me, — now, would you, Maudie? and I'm the best sister you have and the most loving. To be sure, you have no other sister; but then, you know, I mean, even if you had twenty sisters, none of them could love you as I do. Now could they, Maudie? But, my poor

darling! what is the matter with you?"

And Mrs. Lovell, whose protestation of affection had caused her to turn her thoughts more particularly to her sister, now noticed something about her which shocked her. She was excessively pale, and there was a suffering visible in her face which was more striking than the ordinary expression of mere dejection which had characterized her recently. In an instant all Mrs. Lovell's fears for herself fled away in deep anxiety about her sister.

"You poor darling!" she cried. "How foolish I have been! I have n't thought of you. And I might have known. Really, Maudie, I did n't think of Mr. Carrol being here too. But how very, very odd! And how cruel it is too! What in the world could have made *him* come! With him it is different; he has treated you most shockingly, and has shown no desire to make amends. Why should he follow you?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Maud, with a dreary sigh.

"He's a heartless, cruel, miserable man," cried Mrs. Lovell, vehemently. "Just at the very moment when you might hope for change of scene and all that to distract your thoughts, *he* comes forcing himself upon your notice, to show you how indifferent he is. The wretch! O Maudie, never, never can I forgive him for the grief he has caused you. Of course this is all his mean and ungentlemanly spite."

Maud was silent.

"After you had stooped so low too, Maudie. You actually descended to an explanation, and he did n't deign to answer it. He could n't forgive the offence to his dignity, even after he must have seen that the offence was never really committed. Or perhaps he knew he had done you a deep wrong, and was too proud to acknowledge it. Of course that was it, unless, indeed, he may have repented of his proposal altogether, and chose this way of getting out of it. But what makes him follow us? In any case it seems a strange course. Nothing but

petty spite can account for it, and that is the most probable cause; for do you know, Maudie, that is the way with men. O, it is, I assure you! They are very much influenced by all the smaller passions, such as jealousy, envy, malice, and miserable spite. Nearly all men are more or less spiteful; and it is this feeling of spite that has brought him here. But, Maudie dear, will you really allow yourself to be made unhappy by such an unworthy creature? Can't you fall back upon your pride, and look at him with that utter indifference which he deserves? O dear, Maudie, how I wish I could give you a little of my strength of character!"

Maud said nothing for some time, and when at last she did speak it was in a low monotone, which sounded rather as if she were uttering her thoughts aloud, than as if she were addressing a remark to her sister.

"Yes, he must have received my letter. He must know now exactly how it happened. I expected that he would have come at once to me. But he would n't; and I waited for days that seemed ages. He was offended perhaps because even a mistake had arisen; and his pride could not bend so far as to come to a reconciliation. He has thought of me ever since with the resentful and angry feeling that he expressed in his last letter. Having written that, he could not retract it. It seemed to him as though he might be confessing that he had been in a wrong. He has chosen rather to let the error remain, and for the sake of a foolish and frantic self-conceit, to sacrifice me. It was that which I saw in his face to-day. Why he has followed me I can't imagine, unless he has been prompted by that same self-conceit which now leads him to show himself to me, so that I may see how indifferent he is to me. No doubt he wants me to feel that he is ashamed of the love that he once professed. He has evidently followed me with a purpose, and it could not possibly have been an accident, for he came deliberately to show himself almost as soon as we had left the wharf. He put

himself in a place where I should be sure to see him, and as I turned round he fixed upon me that cold, cruel stare, the remembrance of which haunts me even now. But O, Georgie! did n't you see how fearfully he has changed? How pale, how awfully pale he is!"

"Is he?" said Mrs. Lovell, in an indifferent tone. "Well, really, I scarce noticed him at all. I was too confused, you know."

"Well," said Maud, after another long silence, "I am not one of those who can be meek under open insult and contempt. He shall find that the scorn which he is so eager to show can be met by equal scorn from me. He shall see no weakness in me. I will show him that life has other things for me of far more value than a silly sentiment."

"O Maudie! my dear darling!" burst forth Mrs. Lovell, enthusiastically. "How I love to hear you talk so! That's right; be a grand, great, bold, brave, wise woman. Do you know, darling, that is my highest ideal of humanity? And only to think of *you* being all that! I'm sure *I* try hard," she continued in a plaintive voice, — "I try hard to be that myself, but I'm sometimes a little afraid that I don't succeed so well as I wish to. But I intend now to begin again; let's both of us begin, Maudie; let's be both of us great and grand and bold and brave and wise. Will you, Maudie dearest? Say yes, darling."

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Maud, absently. "I'll do whatever you wish, Georgie, of course."

"And so you do, you precious; and so we'll both of us make our lives sublime. For my part, I despise men more than ever," continued Mrs. Lovell, suddenly darting aside from the idea with which she started, and reverting to her favorite topic; "but then if they are false and fickle and weak, why, we should remember that it is the common failing of their sex, should n't we, Maudie dear? But, Maudie, do you intend to avoid him?"

"Avoid him?" asked Maud.

"Yes; do you feel at all weak about seeing him?"

"There is no danger," said Maud, "but that I shall always have pride enough to sustain me against the open scorn of any one. He shall not find me trying to avoid him; I shall let him see that he cannot persecute me, for the simple reason that I will not allow myself to be persecuted. And he shall find that his presence in this boat will not make me vary one hair's breadth from my usual course."

IX.

AN APPARITION.

WHEN Carrol turned away at that unexpected meeting with Miss Heathcote, he was quite overwhelmed with the new emotion that it called up within him, and had the most indefinite idea in the world of what he was to do. He wandered, therefore, in a blind, vague sort of a way, until he found himself in his state-room. Grimes, too, who was equally confused, indulged in an equally vague course of wandering, and instinctively following his friend, he entered the same enclosure, and then, shutting the door, the two sat in silence, looking at one another.

"Wal," said Grimes, at length, "ain't this rich! Of all the darn'dest! Only to think of everybody tumbling in here together in this here boat, and at the very beginnin' of the voyage, too! It does beat all creation!"

"I don't understand it all," said Carrol, moodily. "How the Devil did *she* get here, of all places? When did they leave? What did they leave for? Where are they going?"

"You need n't ask any more questions of that sort," said Grimes, "I give it up at the outset. I'm nowhar. Don't direct any of your observations to me."

And Grimes began to rub his shingled hair in a most violent manner, and then a long silence followed.

"I see how it is," said Carrol, at length. "It's beginning to be intelli-

gible, though the Devil himself must have contrived that she and I should find ourselves in the same boat. But I see how it is. She has heard about — about *that affair*, and has got a bad fright. She is in deep affliction. She looked sad enough, by heaven! and had enough sorrow in her face to suffice for a dozen Frenchmen; she's mourning over her vanished coronet. This great calamity has spoiled her game. She finds that her comedy has become a tragedy. It's the town talk; she has fled from people's tongues. Aha! what a fright she must have had when she saw me! Perhaps she will inform on me; I should like that; I should have *her* hauled up as chief witness; but there's no danger of that; she would n't dare to do it. O' no, she'll pray for my escape from a trial, out of consideration for her precious self! By heaven! she'll begin by this time to learn that she made a slight mistake when she first undertook to make a decoy duck of *me!*"

"See here, my son," said Grimes, "listen to me for a moment. I don't like this. I acknowledge that you've had a hard row to hoe, but at the same time I swear I won't set here and hear you abuse a young woman in that infernal fashion. What's the use of bein' a live man if one's goin' to talk like a darned jackass? Now I dare say she's not acted altogether on the square; but at the same time that does n't give you any right to use such language as you do. I don't believe anythin' of the sort. I judge her by her face, and I say that a woman with a face like hers can't be the infernal fiend that you make out. She can't do it, nohow. Besides, even if she was, she's a woman, and for that very reason she had ought to be sacred from abuse and slander and defamation. My idee is that women as a general thing have a precious hard time of it on this planet, and if one of them doos n't happen to turn out just as we like, we had n't ought to pitch into her in that red-hot style. And finally, let me impress upon you the fact, which has been made

known to me by a long and profound study of human nature, that no human being that has given himself up to iniquity and meanness and baseness can ever have such a face as the face that belongs to that young woman. It can't be done, nohow."

During these remarks Carrol stared gloomily at Grimes, but the latter took no notice of him. Grimes himself had on his broad honest face a gloom but little inferior to that of Carrol. There was once more visible in his expression that bewilderment and perplexity which had shown itself before on listening to Carrol's story. The encounter with the ladies had evidently created a new puzzle which had joined itself to the former one, and complicated it. So he sat in silence, involved in his own thoughts, and struggling to emerge from his bewilderment.

Carrol meanwhile sat with his head buried in his hands. At last he raised it, and said as if to himself, "What are they doing here? How did they happen to come on this boat?"

Grimes started up.

"Wal," said he, "that's easy answered. In the first place, they have as much right here as you or me. In the second place, I beg leave to call your attention to the fact that this is a free country. Women have a hard time of it as a general thing, but after all they have certain inalienable rights, among which may be mentioned as self-evident truths their natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the privilege of travellin' wherever they darn please, so long as they're able to pay their way."

"It's hard to have them here. It's damned hard," said Carrol.

"O, you need n't blame her. 'Tain't likely she did it on purpose."

"I should hope not."

"Depend upon it, she would n't have come by this boat if she'd 'a' known you were on board."

"No, I don't see how she could wish to be so close to me."

"She came because this boat was the first and directest, and because her

sister brought her. As for you, my son, don't be alarmed. The boat's large enough for you two. You can avoid her. Go forward when you are on deck, and let her stay astern. And at the same time, let me advise you to try and get out of that infernal habit of vilifying her. For my part, I think there's a mistake somewhere or somehow, and so I never believe half of what you say on that subject. Your suspicions are false somehow, I do believe. Why, man, that face of hers is enough for me; I believe in faces, I do; and I tell you what, if ever there was nobility of nature stamped upon any face, it's on hers. How is it possible that any one with such a face can be what you say?"

"O, damn it, man!" burst forth Carrol, "don't talk to me about her face. Don't I know it better than you do? Don't I know every feature by heart? Won't I always have to remember it? Have n't I thought all the time of the horrible contrast between her face and her nature? I tell you, it was her face that lured me to destruction. Destruction? Yes; and mind you, when I say that word I mean it. Look at me. Have you forgotten what I told you a short time ago? Let me tell you now, what I owe to that face of hers, which you think so noble. I'll speak of her for the last time, and promise never to mention her again."

Carrol drew a long breath. His agitation was excessive. He spoke quick and short. His face was white, and his lips bloodless, while his gestures, which were formerly few and far between, were now vehement and frequent.

"First of all," he continued, "she encouraged me, and led me on. — she led me on," he repeated savagely, "till I was too far gone to haul off easily, and then picked up that Frenchman. She encouraged him too, and secretly. She fought *me* off judiciously, so as not to lose me, and at the same time she stealthily cultivated *him*. She used *me* as her infernal decoy to work upon *him*. She played with my

most sacred feelings and trifled with my life for no other reason than her own insatiable but silly vanity. At last I proposed. She rejected me, but accepted the other. You know the result. I need n't go over that again."

Carrol paused, in terrible excitement; his breathing was quick and spasmodic; and his set brows and clenched hands showed the intensity of his feeling.

"Here am I," he exclaimed. "Look at me now. Look at me. What am I? Think of my position a few days ago, and then think of me now. What am I? What?" he repeated. "Why this, — I'm an outlaw, — a fugitive, — hunted down, — forced to fly, — an exile forevermore, — my life forfeited. Life is for me only a curse. Death is welcome. What am I?" he continued. "I'm a murderer!" he answered, in a low, thrilling voice. "That's what I am. I bear on my brow the mark of Cain. A murderer! A murderer! Abhorred of man, and accursed of God!"

He stopped, overwhelmed by his agitated feelings, and again buried his face in his hands.

To all this Grimes had no answer to make. In fact, as he sat there, erect and rigid, with his eyes fixed upon the bowed form of his friend, there seemed in him some portion of that emotion which convulsed the other. His old look of bewilderment came over his face, and with it there came an expression of trouble, and grief, and deep concern, and self-reproach. He did not utter one single word.

At last Carrol started up.

"I can't stand this," he exclaimed, "I feel half suffocated. I must go on deck."

With these words he opened the door and went out. Grimes did not follow him, but sat there, motionless and thoughtful. He only moved once to shut the door, and then, resuming his former position, he gave himself up to his perplexed thoughts.

When the steamer left the wharf it was midday, but hours had passed

since then. It was now twilight. All around extended the broad surface of the ocean, over which the steamer forced her way, urged on by the mighty engines whose dull rumble sounded from below. Carrol reached the deck, and stood for some minutes looking around. Overhead was the clear sky; all around was the dark water. The sun had set, and the shadows of night were descending, but objects were still discernible.

Carrol looked around, and then strolled slowly forward about half the length of the vessel. There he stopped and sat down, and gave himself up to his gloomy thoughts.

His sudden meeting with Grimes had been a relief to the strain of his feelings, and even the excitement of seeing Miss Heathcote had only served to distract his mind from the one dark subject on which it incessantly brooded. But now the relief and the distraction had passed, and the old inevitable remorse returned, and with the remorse came the harrowing fear of retribution; such feelings as these now filled his soul as he sat here, and withdrew his attention from the scene around. The darkness which was descending over that scene was analogous to the darkness that was overshadowing his mind.

Bitter indeed were his thoughts, and dark and sad and despairing. This, then, was the possibility of life, that the folly of a moment could blight it all, a short instant of self-forgetfulness, and then came inexorable Fate, dragging him down to crime and remorse and ruin and despair. For him there was absolutely no remedy. No sorrow, no repentance, could now avail. The deed was done. The inevitable consequences must be his. The wages of sin are death, and so, it seemed, are the consequences even of folly.

From these meditations he sought refuge in that which was now his chief resort from the gloom of his soul, — his brandy-flask. As he unscrewed the stopper he thought grimly of a saying which he had once heard from Grimes.

"A murderer," said he, "always turns out bad. You see most people after murder take to drink; and they do, as a general thing, drink *hard*, and turn out poor cusses. Therefore I would n't advise anybody to commit murder if he can help it."

The flask was slowly uncorked. Holding the stopper in his right hand, Carrol raised the flask in his left. At the same moment he raised his head, and his mouth was already parted to receive the approaching liquor, when suddenly in the very crisis of this act his attention was arrested by a figure that stood on the opposite side of the ship, directly facing him.

He was sitting about a half-dozen yards aft the funnel. Behind the funnel a lamp was suspended, whose light shone down through the gloom. It shone upon Carrol, and it shone also upon the figure which had arrested his attention at that critical moment.

Human experience has taught us that there is many a slip between the cup and the lip; and human experience also teaches us that when a slip takes place under such circumstances, it is the result of something serious. Now, when the cup is of such a nature as this of Carrol's, and when the lip belongs to a man who is filled with a desperate craving for this cup, as the only solace to his despair, why, then, it stands to reason that the union of the two can only be prevented by something of the most astonishing kind.

It was evident that Carrol saw in this figure something that was sufficiently astonishing to arrest the progress of his hand.

The figure stood there, indistinct in the gloom; but the light from the lantern shone upon its face, leaving the rest of it less visible. On its head was a very commonplace felt hat; but the face that was revealed beneath it was not at all commonplace. It was a very pale face; it had a short beard and a mustache; and the eyes were wide and staring, and fixed on Carrol. To Carrol there seemed a horrible meaning in

those wide-staring eyes, with their fixed gaze; something not of this earth, something that was the natural result of his crime. In an instant there flashed through his mind the memory of that Night of Horror, in the old house, face to face with his enemy; again the agony was renewed, his senses again were maddened by that dread scene; once more there resounded the thunder of the exploding pistol, followed by that abhorrent noise of the fall of the victim. The renewal of that horror unnerved him. The flask fell from his hand. He started to his feet, and staggered forward toward the figure, under the influence of a terrible fascination.

X.

THE HAUNTED MIND.

CARROL rushed forward toward the figure, under the influence of a terrible fascination. The Horror, which had oppressed him once before on that memorable night, now seemed to renew its power over him. He obeyed mechanically a blind impulse, the creature of that Horror, and sprung toward the figure that thus showed itself, without any well-defined thought or motive whatever. He had scarcely taken two or three steps, however, when his foot struck against an iron rod, that ran across the vessel about two inches above the deck. He stumbled, and fell heavily downward, and the force with which he struck was so great that he lay motionless for about half a minute.

At length he gathered himself up, slowly and painfully, and scrambled to his feet. The fascination of that figure's basilisk glance was still strong enough to influence his movements; and he glanced fearfully toward the place where it had stood.

It was no longer visible.

He looked all around with a shudder, expecting to see it in some new position; but nothing of the sort met his view. Then he drew a long breath, and without stopping to pick up his flask,

he hurried below. His appearance was singular enough to have excited attention in any other place than the saloon of an ocean steamer. His face was fearfully pale, his jaw was hanging down, his eyes fixed and glaring, and he walked with staggering steps. But at sea such beings as these are constantly visible at all times, and poor humanity takes on even worse forms than this as the ocean asserts its mastery over man. So the wild appearance of Carrol excited but little attention, except on the part of Grimes, who happened to be in the saloon as Carrol entered. He was still troubled in his mind by the thoughts that had arisen from Carrol's story; and now that he entered in such a way, he could not help imagining that some new event had occurred in connection with his friend's troubles. So he at once rose, and, following Carrol, came up to him just as he was entering his state-room.

"What's up?" asked Grimes, as he stood in the doorway.

Carrol said nothing, but flung himself on a seat, and buried his head in his hands.

"Shall I light the lamp?"

Carrol made no reply.

Upon this Grimes acted on the principle that silence gives consent, and, entering the state-room, he lighted the lamp, and then closing the door, he sat down and looked earnestly at his friend.

"Come, my boy," said Grimes at last, in a voice full of kindly sympathy, "you're overdoin' it a little. Don't go on in this style. Somethin' new has happened. What is it?"

Carrol gave a heavy sigh, but said nothing.

"It's somethin' more'n sea-sickness anyway," said Grimes, in a tone of deep conviction. "If it had been any other chap, I'd say it was sea-sickness, but I know you're not given that way. Come now. Out with it. If there's anythin' new turned up, it won't do any good to keep it to yourself. So out with it."

Upon this Carrol made a nearer approach to speaking, for he gave a groan.

"What did you remark?" asked Grimes.

Carrol raised his head and drew a long breath.

"Grimes," said he.

"Well, my son."

"I've seen him."

"What's that? You've what?"

"I've seen him," repeated Carrol, in a hollow, sepulchral voice.

"You've seen him! — seen him! Seen who? Who's him?"

"There's only One," said Carrol, solemnly, "that I could mean, — only One, — the One that haunts me always, the One who fell beneath my hand."

"What! that infernal frog-eatin' Frenchman?" said Grimes, contemptuously. "O, come now, that's all infernal rubbish."

"I've seen him," moaned Carrol, going on in a way that sounded like the monotonous croon of an Irish lady at a wake, — "I've seen him."

"Well then," said Grimes, "all that I can say is, that I'll be darned if I can understand why the sight of a miserable frog-eatin' Frenchman should produce such an effect upon any one who calls himself a man. Come now, Carrol, shake yourself. Be a man."

"I saw him," said Carrol, once more taking up the burden of his song, — "I saw him. There was no mistake. It was by the smoke-stack."

"By the smoke-stack?"

"Yes, just now, by the smoke-stack. I saw him. It was he. There was no mistake. I could not be mistaken in that death-pale face, — the face of a corpse, — in the terrible glare of those glassy eyes —"

"It's evident," said Grimes, after a brief observation of the state of his friend, — "it's evident that something has become visible to you, and it's also evident that you've been considerably agitated."

Carrol said nothing, but sat with his eyes fixed upon the floor, and his brows contracted into a frown.

"My idee," said Grimes, after another thoughtful pause, — "my idee is this, you've been drinkin' altogether

too much. It's more 'n flesh and blood can stand. Now I've noticed since we've met you've been on one prolonged tippie; never could five minutes pass without a pull at your flask; and a man that's got to that has simply reached a point where he is liable to be visited by all the devils in Pandemonium. If you've been goin' on at this rate since you left your home, all I can say is, that you're in a darned bad way, and you're now just about inside the borders of the territory of Delirium Tremens."

"O, that's all very well," said Carrol, rousing himself by a strong effort, — "it's all very well, and I don't doubt that there's something in what you say. I do take a little too much, I confess. I've never been a drinking man, and this last week I've done a good deal in that way, I know; but at the same time the event of this night had nothing at all to do with that. And what I saw had nothing whatever to do with fancy or excitement. I was perfectly cool. I was dull and depressed, and I saw him, — I saw the Frenchman that I killed, — I saw him — not ten feet from me. It was no fancy; it was reality."

Grimes looked hard at Carrol, and his brows knit together in a frown of perplexity.

"You'll have to tell me some more about it," said he, at last, "for I'll be darned if I can make it out."

Carrol mechanically felt for his flask. But he could not find it, for the simple reason that he had left it behind him in his flight. On discovering this he leaned back in a resigned way, and, drawing a long breath, he began to tell his story. He narrated the story very circumstantially indeed, omitting no incident, until he reached the point where the dread figure had appeared before him. Here he began to work into his story details that belonged rather to fancy than to fact, and threw around the figure that he described all the terrible accessories that had been created by his own feverish imagination. To all this Grimes listened with profound silence.

And as Grimes listened a great change came over him.

Mention has already been made of that singular anxiety and that ill-concealed remorse which had appeared in his face as he listened to Carrol's first story. The feelings that were thus expressed had agitated him ever since, making him preoccupied, troubled, and ill at ease. He had been brooding over this at the very time when Carrol had rushed into the cabin. But now, as he listened to this new story, the effect that it produced upon him was of such a nature that it led to a complete overturn of his feelings; and the change was plainly visible in his face and manner. The dark shadow of anxious care passed away from his brow. Over his face there came its natural expression, that air of broad content, of bland and philosophic calm, of infinite self-complacency and heartfelt peace, which formed the well-known characteristics of California Grimes. But there was even more than this; there came over his face a positive joyousness, — a certain hilarious glee, which seemed to show that Carrol's story conveyed to his mind a far deeper meaning than any which was perceptible to the narrator. There were indeed moments in which that hilarious glee seemed about to burst forth in a way which would be perceptible to other senses than that of sight; but Carrol did not notice it at all; he did not see the shakings of soul that communicated themselves to the vast body of his friend, nor did he mark the smile that at times deepened into a grin, and threatened to make itself known in a peal of stentorian laughter. For Carrol's eyes, as he spoke, were solemnly fixed upon the floor, nor was he conscious of anything else but the remembrances of that terrific visitation which he was describing to Grimes.

At length he ended his story, and then there was a long pause.

It was at last terminated by Grimes.

"Wal," said he, "you've made up a pooty tough story, but, looking at it in a calm and rational manner, I can come to only one of two conclusions. The fust

conclusion is that you had been drinkin' too much. This is confirmed by your own confession, for you were just going to take a further drop when the flask took a drop of its own accord. Think now, might n't you have been a victim to some infernal hallucination or other, brought on by *delirium tremens*?"

Carrol shook his head impatiently.

"You don't allow it? Very well then. What is the other of my conclusions? The other one is this. It was not a fancy; it was not a deception. You actilly saw him. And mind you, when I say that you *saw* him, I mean that you actilly saw *him*, that is, the Frenchman — Du Potiron — himself — and no other. And when I say himself, I mean himself in the flesh. Yes, you saw him. And what does that mean? Why, it means that he is aboard of this very boat, and hence we have one more surprise to add to the other surprises of this eventful day."

At this Carrol raised his eyes with a reproachful look, and disconsolately shook his head.

"I tell you," cried Grimes, energetically, "he ain't dead."

Carrol sighed heavily.

"O, you need n't sigh and groan in that style," said Grimes. "I tell you again, he ain't dead; and you maybe have seen him. And I dar say the miserable frog-eatin' cuss was as much frightened at the sight of you as you were at the sight of him."

"O, as to that," said Carrol, moodily, "that's impossible. I tell you I heard him fall. He fell — at — the — first — shot."

As he said this a shudder passed over him.

"How do you know?" asked Grimes.

"Know? Why, I heard the terrible sound of his fall."

"Sound? sound?" said Grimes. "Why, that's nothin'. No one can tell anythin' from a sound. A sound may mean anythin'. No; you did n't see him, and so you don't know anythin' about it. You're givin' way altogether too much to your imagination. It's my opinion that either you were a

victim to your own fancy, or else that this Frenchman is aboard this here steamer. Come, now, what do you say? Let's go for'ard, and take a look through the second cabin. Let's hunt up the miserable devil, and ask him all about it. Come, what do you say?"

At this proposal a shudder passed through Carrol.

"I won't," said he, abruptly, "I'll stay here. I can't go, and I won't. It's too much. Let me wait till I get over 'this. I can't stand it. You're too hard on a fellow. You don't understand."

Grimes leaned back in his chair and made no reply.

For several days the effect of this "visitation" was very strong on Carrol. Grimes went forward and inspected all the passengers carefully, but saw nothing of Du Potiron, nor could he learn anything that might lead him to suppose that he was on board. Gradually, therefore, he fell back from this belief to the other, and concluded that it was an hallucination, superinduced by a diseased brain, consequent upon excessive indulgence in liquor. He still continued, however, to spend nearly all his time forward, out of a feeling of delicacy. He feared that his presence might be embarrassing to Mrs. Lovell, and therefore determined to keep out of her way.

After a few days Carrol ventured upon deck. He had as good a reason as Grimes for avoiding the after part of the vessel; for he did not care about encountering Maud. If he thus avoided her, it was certainly out of no regard for her feelings, but simply out of the strength of his own aversion. He was still a prey to those dark and vindictive feelings which had thus far animated him; which were intensified by every new trouble, and which led him to consider her as the unprincipled author of all his woes. The time that he passed on deck he chose to spend with Grimes forward, in those parts where ladies seldom or never venture; and he concluded that these ladies would have their own reasons for not coming there.

As to the ladies they kept on the usual tenor of their way. Maud had resolved that she would not change her plans of action for the sake of avoiding Carrol; and so she went up on deck whenever she chose, generally establishing herself near the stern. Mrs. Lovell never made any objections; nor did she ever express any fear about meeting with Grimes. The ladies were very respectable sailors, and, as the weather was fine, they were able to avail themselves to an unusually large extent of the freedom and breeziness of the upper deck.

Grimes and Carrol were very early risers, and it was their habit to go up before sunrise and wait until breakfast-time. At this hour they had the freedom of the ship, and could go to the stern if they chose.

One morning it happened that Mrs. Lovell expressed a great desire to see the sun rise; and she and Maud made an arrangement to enjoy that rare spectacle on the following day. As the day broke they were ready, and left their room and ascended to the upper deck. It was a glorious morning. They stood for a moment as they first emerged, and inhaled the fresh, invigorating sea air, and looked with rapture at the deep blue sky, and the wide expanse of water, and the lurid heavens in the east all glowing with the splendor of the sun's first rays. After enjoying this sufficiently they turned and walked toward the stern.

When they had traversed about half the distance, they noticed two men standing there, the sight of whom gave a separate and distinct sensation to each of them. At that very moment the two men had turned, and appeared about to walk back toward them. The moment they turned, however, they saw the ladies. They stopped for about five seconds, in evident embarrassment. The ladies were perhaps equally embarrassed, but they walked on mechanically. Then one of the gentlemen turned abruptly, and, descending some steps at the stern, he went down to the main deck. After a moment's hesi-

tation his companion followed him. They walked along on the larboard side of the vessel, and as they went the ladies could see the tops of their hats, and almost involuntarily they turned and watched the two fugitives. As they did so they saw a figure standing near the smoke-stack, with a heavy cloak flung around him and a felt hat on his head. His face was turned toward them, but he was watching the two men. As these latter approached him and reached a place amidships where steps led to the upper deck, he suddenly turned, and, walking forward with swift steps, he disappeared.

"Did you see that man?" said Maud, in a low, hurried tone.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovell.

"It's Du Potiron!" said Maud, in some agitation. "How perfectly unaccountable!"

"I'm sure I don't think it's unaccountable at all," said Mrs. Lovell. "I don't think anything's unaccountable now. Did n't you notice Mr. Grimes? Did n't you notice his extraordinary behavior. After such conduct on his part, I decline to be astonished at anything."

"But only think," said Maud, "of Monsieur Du Potiron being here, and the others also! Why, it seems as though what we thought to be such a great secret was known to all the world."

"I should n't at all wonder," said Mrs. Lovell, "if all our friends and acquaintances were one by one to appear and disappear before us in the course of this voyage. I have given up wondering. The thing that has exhausted all my capacity for wonder, and shown me the utter hollowness and vanity of that emotion, is the shocking behavior of Mr. Grimes. Do you know, Maudie dear, he has fallen terribly in my estimation. Such rudeness, you know! Why, it fairly takes one's breath away to think of it! Positively, he ran away from us. And yet he professes to be my great friend. Why, do you know, Maudie dear, I really begin to be ashamed of him!"

"I should think that you ought to have been ashamed of him all along," said Maud.

"I ought to have been nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Lovell, "and it is very, very unjust in you to use such language, Maudie. For after all, when one thinks of it, his conduct is very natural and very delicate. His weak point is his utter delicacy. He is afraid that he will be intrusive if he speaks to me. That is the reason why he avoids me. Don't you see how carefully he keeps himself out of sight? The poor fellow has tracked me secretly, and is determined to follow me to the end of the world, but is afraid of showing himself. It is his utter devotion, combined with his entire self-abnegation. Now, do you know, Maudie dear, I see something uncommonly pathetic in such a situation as that."

At this Maud subsided into silence, and the ladies walked slowly toward the stern.

XI.

AT SEA.

AFTER they had been out about a week they encountered a gale which was violent enough to keep most of the passengers below. On the second day it began to subside, and Mrs. Lovell determined to go on deck. Maud, however, was not in a position to make the attempt, and so Mrs. Lovell was compelled to go alone. In spite of the fear which she had expressed of the dangers that threatened her apart from Maud, she showed no hesitation on this occasion, but after declaring that any further confinement below would be her death, she ventured forth and gained the deck.

The storm was subsiding, the sky was clearer, and the wind blew less violently; but the sea was exceedingly rough, even more so, in fact, than it had been at the height of the gale. The steamer pitched and rolled excessively, and the miserable passengers who had felt the horrors of sea-sickness had no prospect of immediate relief as yet. Mrs. Lovell, however, was among the fortunate few who can defy those hor-

rors; and if she had remained below thus far, it was more on account of the rain than the motion of the vessel.

On reaching the deck Mrs. Lovell stood for a few moments holding on to the railing, and looking around her for some place to which she might go. Having at length chosen a spot, she ventured forth, and letting go her hold of the railing, to which she had thus far clung, she endeavored to walk toward the point which she wished to reach. It needed but a few steps, however, to show her that this journey, though very short, was very difficult and very hazardous. The vessel was pitching and tossing as it moved over the heavy seas; and to walk over its decks required far more skill and experience than she possessed. She walked a few paces; then she stood still; then she crouched as a huge wave raised the vessel high in the air; then as it fell she staggered forward a few steps, and stood there looking around. She looked around helplessly for some place of refuge; and as she stood there her face assumed such an expression of refined woe, of elegant distress, and of ladylike despair, as might have touched the heart of any beholder who was not an absolute stock or stone. One beholder's heart was touched at any rate, and he was anything but a stock or stone.

As Mrs. Lovell stood in her picturesque attitude, in all the charm of her helplessness, there was suddenly revealed a stalwart form, which rushed to her assistance. It was no other than Grimes, who had taken advantage of the stormy weather to air his manly figure at the stern of the vessel, which thus far he had so carefully avoided. The sudden and unexpected appearance of Mrs. Lovell had transfixed him with astonishment; but the sight of Mrs. Lovell in distress had called forth all the more chivalrous instincts of his nature. Her helplessness, and the mute appeal of that beautiful face, had at once roused his warmest feelings, and accordingly he sprang forth from behind the mizzen-

mast, where he had been standing, and rushed to her relief.

Grimes was not the man to do things by halves. As he had come to rescue her, he determined to effect that rescue thoroughly. He did not, therefore, offer his arm, or his hand, or anything of that sort, but quietly yet firmly passed his left arm around her waist, and with his right hand seized both of hers, and in this way he carried her rather than led her to what he considered the most convenient seat. But the most convenient seat in his estimation happened to be the one that was most distant from the particular spot where he had rescued her; and so it happened that he had to carry her thus in his encircling arm all the way from this place to the stern of the vessel. Arriving here, he retained her for a moment in his grasp, and seemed as though he was meditating a further journey, but Mrs. Lovell struggled away and subsided into a seat.

"O thanks, Mr. Grimes!" she said. "How very fortunate it was that you were here to help me! I'm sure I have n't any idea what would ever have become of me, if you had n't come to my relief. I was just beginning to give up. Positively I was in actual despair—"

At this an awkward silence followed. Grimes took a seat by her side, looking perfectly radiant, but he did not appear to have anything in particular to say.

"I'm sure," continued Mrs. Lovell, "I don't see how you ever managed to walk so very straight, and especially with— with—that is," hesitated Mrs. Lovell, "under such very peculiar circumstances. I'm sure I could not have made any progress at all. And so, you know, I think you must have been a great sailor, Mr. Grimes."

"O no, 'm," said Grimes, "nothin' much; only I certainly have got on my sea legs, though I don't brag on my seamanship."

"O, but you know," said Mrs. Lovell, in a vivacious manner, "you really must be; and then, poor me, I'm

so horribly awkward when it is at all rough, Mr. Grimes."

"Wal," said Grimes, in a tone which was meant to be consolatory and sympathetic, and all that, "it's a lucky thing for you that you ain't sea-sick. Why, there's people aboard now that'd give any amount o' money to be able to sit down as you do without feeling qualmish."

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mrs. Lovell, in a sweet voice, "what would ever have become of me if it had n't been for you, Mr. Grimes."

"O, don't mention it, 'm, I beg," said Grimes, earnestly. "Just as if I did n't like to do it. Why, I—I—I enjoyed it,—I fairly gloated over it. I—"

"But, O Mr. Grimes," said Mrs. Lovell, interrupting him and looking afar out over the boisterous sea, "is n't it really delightful? I enjoy this so very much. Don't you think those waves are really quite magnificent? And that sky! why, it's really worth coming miles to see. Those colors are perfectly astonishing. Do you notice what a very vivid red there is over there among those clouds,—very vivid,—just a trifle vulgar, you know; but then really fine,—an air of barbaric grandeur,—it is really wonderful. Don't you think so, Mr. Grimes?"

Grimes looked earnestly toward the scene which Mrs. Lovell admired so greatly, and saw a gorgeous display of brilliant sunshine contrasting with gloomy storm-clouds, forming one of those grand spectacles that often present themselves upon the ocean, where light and shade are all at war, where a flood of burning fire pours down upon the sea, and the wild waves toss and rage and chafe amid wide seas of purple foam. This was on one side of the horizon, but everywhere else there were dark waves and gloomy clouds. Grimes looked upon this with a feeling of admiration which was natural under the circumstances, and tried hard for a time to express that admiration. But whether his admiration was not up to the mark, or whether it was that lan-

guage failed him, certain it is that no words were forthcoming; for Grimes contented himself at length with making the following very simple yet rather inadequate remark:—

“Yes, 'm.”

“Yes, it really is,” continued Mrs. Lovell, “and it's so nice for me; for do you know, Mr. Grimes, I'm never afraid at sea, only about the boiler? If it should burst, you know; and in that case,” continued Mrs. Lovell, with an air of mild dejection, “I really don't know what I should do. Boilers are really such awful things, and I really do wish they would n't have them; don't you, Mr. Grimes?”

“Well, I don't know, 'm,” said Grimes, slowly and hesitatingly, as he saw Mrs. Lovell's eyes fixed inquiringly on his, feeling also very desirous to agree with her, yet not being altogether able to do so, — “I don't know, 'm. You see we could n't very well do without them. They're a necessary thing —”

“Now, how really nice it is,” said Mrs. Lovell, in a tone of profound gratification, — “how really nice it is to know all about such things! I really envy you, and I wish you'd begin now and tell me all about it. I've always longed so to understand all about boilers and things, Mr. Grimes. Now what are boilers?”

“Boilers? boilers?” said Grimes, — “boilers? why, 'm, they're — they're boilers, you know —”

“Yes, but what makes them explode so, all the time, and kill people?”

Thus challenged, Grimes gathered up all the resources of his powerful brain, and entered upon a full, complete, and exhaustive description of the steam-engine; taking especial care to point out the important relation borne by the boiler to the rest of the machine, and also to show how it was that under certain circumstances the said boiler would explode. He gave himself up completely to his subject. He grew earnest, animated, eloquent. He explained the difference between the locomotive engine and the steamboat engine, between the fire-engine and

the stationary engine. He then went off into generalities, and concluded with a series of harrowing accidents.

To all this Mrs. Lovell listened in silence and in patience. She never uttered a word, but sat with her large dark eyes fixed on his, and an earnest expression of devout attention upon her face.

At length Grimes came to a conclusion.

“O, thanks, very much!” said Mrs. Lovell. “It's really so very kind of you, and I'm so very stupid, you know; but is n't it very odd that you and I should meet in this way? I'm sure I was never so astonished in all my life.”

At this most sudden and unexpected turn of the conversation, which in an instant was switched off from the line of science to that of delicate private affairs, Grimes looked fairly stunned with embarrassment.

“I — I — I,” said he, stammering, — “I'm sure I can't account for it at all.”

“How very funny! Only fancy!” sighed Mrs. Lovell.

After this there was a silence, and Grimes began to murmur something about its being an accident, and about his astonishment being the same as hers. To all this Mrs. Lovell listened without any particular attention, and at length asked him abruptly, “You're going to Paris, I suppose?”

“Yes, 'm,” said Grimes, solemnly; and then he added in an explanatory way, “You see, 'm, Paris is a fine place, and the French are a fine people.”

“How very funny!” said Mrs. Lovell again, not, of course, meaning that the character which Mr. Grimes attributed to the French was funny, but rather referring to the fact that Paris was his destination.

At this point, however, Mrs. Lovell made a motion to return to the cabin. The conversation of Mr. Grimes about the steam-engine, or rather his lecture on that subject, had taken up a good hour, and she did not feel inclined to remain longer. As she rose to go, Grimes made a movement to convey her back in the same manner in which

he had brought her to this place; but this time Mrs. Lovell was more on her guard and dexterously eluded him. She declared that the vessel did not roll at all now, though the motion was quite as violent as it had been before, and that she was able to walk without any difficulty. So she clung to the railing; and though Grimes walked by her side all the way, she managed to struggle to the cabin without his assistance.

On reaching the state-room she burst forth at once.

"O Maudie dear, who do you think I saw? and I've been with him ever since."

Maud had been lying in her berth in that quiescent and semi-torpid state which is generally affected by the average passenger in rough weather; but the remark of her sister roused her. She started up, leaning on her elbow, and looking at her with intense earnestness.

"Not — Mr. — Mr. Carrol," she said, slowly and hesitatingly.

"Mr. Carrol? No, of course not; I mean Mr. Grimes."

"Mr. Grimes? O, is that all?" said Maud; and with this she sank back to her former position.

"Is that all?" repeated Mrs. Lovell. "Well, do you know, Maudie, I call that a great deal," she continued, with some warmth; "especially when you bear in mind that he was waiting for me, — really lying in ambush, — and the moment I appeared he seized me in his arms."

"What!" cried Maud, in amazement, roused at once and completely out of her indifference and her torpor, and starting up as before upon her elbow, — "what! seized you!"

"Well, you know, Maudie, there was some excuse for it, for it was so rough that I could n't walk very well, and so he carried me to the stern."

"Carried you!" exclaimed Maud, in a tone of horror.

"O, I assure you, it was quite natural; and, what's more, I'm sure it was very kind of him; for really, one could no more walk than one could

fly. For my part, I really felt quite grateful to him, and I told him so."

"O Georgie! how very, very silly you are about that person!"

"He isn't a person at all," said Mrs. Lovell; "and I'm not silly, — I'm simply capable of common gratitude."

"O dear!" sighed Maud. "And so it's all beginning again, and we'll have it all over and over, and —"

"It is n't doing anything of the kind," said Mrs. Lovell. "Mr. Grimes is a very different sort of a man from what you suppose him to be. He's perfectly abominable, and I wish people would n't be so high-minded and consistent."

"Abominable — high-minded — consistent? What do you mean, Georgie?" said Maud, in deep perplexity.

"Why, I mean Mr. Grimes."

"Mr. Grimes? Of course. But what do you mean by talking in this confused way?"

"Why, I mean that his treatment of me was abominable, and that he is so changed that he seems quite like a different person."

"In what way is he changed?"

"O, you know, he does n't take any notice of me at all now! I'm nothing. I'm no more to him than — than — than the captain of the ship."

"Why, I'm sure," said Maud, "that's the last thing you ought to charge against him. Seizing you in his arms seems to be taking sufficient notice of you, and something more, in my humble opinion."

"O, but that was nothing more than common civility, you know!"

"Common civility!" exclaimed Maud.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovell, "I don't mean that. I allude to his general manner when we were sitting down, when, if he had a spark of friendship left, he had every chance of showing it. Now, what do you think he talked about, — after tracking me all over North America, and following me over the Atlantic Ocean, what do you think he chose to talk to me about?"

"I'm sure I can't tell," said Maud; "I have no patience with that man."

"Why," said Mrs. Lovell, indignantly, "he talked to me about nothing but tiresome steam-engines. And O, how he did go on! I'm sure he might as well have talked Chinese. I did n't understand one word. Steam-engines! Think of that, Maudie. And after all that has passed between us!"

"Well, I'm sure, Georgie, I'm very, very glad to hear it."

"Well, for my part," said Mrs. Lovell, in a tone of vexation, "I have no patience with people that go on the theory that everybody is like the Medes and Persians, and never change their minds."

"Change their minds!" exclaimed Maud, in strong agitation; "O Georgie! what frightful thing do you mean by that? Do you intend by that to hint that you are changing your mind, and are willing to take back your refusal of that man? O Georgie! don't, don't, O, don't be altogether insane!"

"Don't be alarmed, Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell. "It's all over. Mr. Grimes has become very, very commonplace. There used to be quite a zest in him. That is all over now. He is totally uninteresting. He has taken to lecturing on steam-engines. But then," continued she, in a doleful tone, "the worst of it is, I know it's all unnatural, and he does n't take any real interest in boilers and things. He only talks about such things, on account of that wretched constraint he exercises on himself, you know. And all the time there is n't any need for any constraint at all, you know."

"O my poor, silly Georgie, how in the world would you wish him to be?"

"Why, I should like him to be ordinarily friendly, of course; but as he is now, he is nothing. It's Grimes, but living Grimes no more. We start, for life is wanting there. He's like a piano that won't play. He certainly can't expect *me* to take the initiative. I wish he would n't be so stupid; and do you know, Maudie dear, I

really begin to think that his conduct is really almost immoral."

"I hate to have you talk about him so," said Maud, impatiently. "He is nothing but a coarse, vulgar, commonplace man."

"But I like vulgar men," said Mrs. Lovell. "Refined people are so dreadfully commonplace and tiresome, — just a little dash of coarseness, you know, to give a zest to character. I don't mean very vulgar, of course, but only a little. I'm sure, everybody is refined, and I'm sure it's very hard if one can't occasionally take refuge in a little slight vulgarity."

At this Maud groaned, but said not a word in reply.

XII.

IN PARIS.

THAT certain persons who had every reason to avoid one another, and who were actually in one sense running away from each other, should all find themselves on board the same ship, was certainly a strange coincidence. Under such circumstances, a meeting was of course inevitable; and hence they stumbled upon one another unexpectedly yet naturally enough, in the manner already described, and in a way more embarrassing than agreeable.

After this last meeting between Mrs. Lovell and Mr. Grimes, the weather continued stormy for some days. Maud remained below, partly on account of the weather, and partly for other reasons. The sight of Carrol had produced upon her a new dejection of mind, and his persistent aversion not only wounded but astonished her. In the narrow limits of a ship, while he was so near, it was not very easy to banish his image from her mind; and in spite of the appeals which she constantly made to her pride, the melancholy that arose from wounded affection was too strong to be overcome. Mrs. Lovell, however, was subject to no such weakness; and while Maud moped in her state-room, she sought

as usual the breezier atmosphere of the upper deck, where she would sit gazing forth upon the dark heaving sea, looking upward into the unfathomable depths of ether, and generally feeding her soul with thoughts of the Infinite and all that sort of thing; for as a matter of course, when a pretty woman chooses to sit alone gazing into space, the kindest conjecture which one may make about her thoughts is the above; all of which is respectfully submitted.

The result of Mrs. Lovell's profound speculations while thus sitting and gazing into space was not, however, of that elevated and transcendental character which may be fairly considered as the natural outcome of the Infinite. On the contrary, it generally had reference to the finite, the concrete, the visible, and the tangible, in short, to Mr. Grimes.

"He is a failure," she would say, very confidentially, to Maud, after a return from her meditations on deck, — "a total failure. And, Maudie, whenever you choose a friend; do not allow yourself to dwell too much upon him. For you see," Mrs. Lovell would continue, as Maud made no answer, speaking all the time in an abstracted tone, — "you see, Mr. Grimes is so very set, so obstinate, and so perfectly unreasonable. He is altogether too consistent, and he knows nothing whatever of the true spirit of chivalry."

"Chivalry!" exclaimed Maud, on one occasion, "what possible connection can there be between chivalry and a — a person like that."

"Chivalry!" said Mrs. Lovell, with some warmth; "I would have you know, Maudie, that Mr. Grimes is as perfectly chivalrous a man as ever lived. Why, only think how he rushed to help me when I was really almost on the point of being swept overboard! Positively he almost saved my life. And you have so little affection for me, that you sneer at him for that, — for saving my life, — for that is really what he did. Why, Maudie," continued Mrs. Lovell, solemnly, "I do

believe you're made of stone, — I do really."

To this Maud made no reply, and Mrs. Lovell, after waiting for a moment, found her thoughts reverting to their former channel and went on: "Of course, he's chivalrous and all that, as I said, but then he's so provoking. He's so fickle, you know, and changeable. But that's the way with men always. They never know their own minds. As for Mr. Grimes, he's so absurdly backward and diffident, that I really wonder how he manages to live. O, he would never do! And really, Maudie, do you know, I've come to the conclusion that Mr. Grimes is a gigantic failure."

To this Maud made no reply, and Mrs. Lovell gradually wandered off to other subjects.

So the voyage passed away, and neither Mrs. Lovell nor Maud saw anything more of either Grimes or Carrol.

It was near the end of August when they arrived at Havre. Here they took the cars for Paris.

On reaching her destination, Mrs. Lovell drove at once to a place where she had lodged during a previous visit, some three or four years before, and where she expected to find a home during her stay in Paris. She was not disappointed. The house was under the management of a lady who was still at her post, and Madame Guimarin received her former lodger with a mixture of courtesy, and enthusiasm that was at once impressive and seductive. To Mrs. Lovell's great joy, she found not only that there were vacant apartments, but that the best rooms in the house, in fact, all the rooms in the house, were entirely at her service. She had only to make her own selection. That selection Mrs. Lovell did accordingly make; and she chose the rooms which had become in a certain sense hallowed by the associations of her former visit, in which rooms she might find not so much a lodging as a home.

Such a reception was most unex-

pected and most delightful to Mrs. Lovell, who could not but wonder at her good fortune. She told Maud about her previous visit, when it was difficult to get a lodging-place at all, and when the landlady seemed to be granting a favor on admitting her. Now all was changed, and the demeanor of Madame Guimarin seemed to show that the favor was all on Mrs. Lovell's side. The change was wonderful; but what the cause of that change might be, Mrs. Lovell did not stop to consider. She simply settled herself down under the hospitable care of Madame Guimarin, without seeking to know what might be the reason of such cordial and unwonted hospitality.

On reaching Havre, Grimes and Carrol had landed in such an unobtrusive way that they had not been seen by the ladies. At the same time they had no idea of stopping at Havre, and had accordingly started by the very first train for Paris. This was the same train which the ladies had taken, but in the confusion they had not been noticed. And so it was that they reached Paris at the same time, without either party being aware of the proceedings of the other. Nor was it difficult to elude observation, for at every station on the road there were too many objects to attract the attention and engross it. At every station there seemed to be a general haste and uproar which seemed like the wildest confusion, — a gathering of great crowds, and a Babel of many tongues. The train itself seemed an object of interest to many; and as the passengers stared out of the windows, the crowds at the station stared back. The train was a long one at starting, but it received constant additions as it went on, chiefly of a military character, until at length when it arrived at Paris the crowd that poured forth was immense.

In flying to Paris as his city of refuge, Carrol had relied upon two things: the first being the natural safety which any one would have in a city which is the common resort of fugitives from all

parts of the world; and the second additional security which an obscure person like himself would have amid the exciting events of a great war.

Now no sooner had he reached Paris and taken one look around, than he found the war at its height, and the nation in the crisis of its great agony. His own affairs had thus far attracted all his thoughts, so that he had none to spare for the struggle between France and Prussia: but now that he had arrived here, he found himself in the presence of a nation to whose heart a mighty pang of anguish had been flung, in comparison with which his own sorrows were the mere evils of a day.

For this was the beginning of September. The first blows of the war had been struck. France had been defeated and dishonored, and the Prussians were far in the land. Paris was in a state of siege. The armies of France were scattered: the Emperor was wandering about, no one knew where and no one cared. A frantic Ministry was trying to buoy up the hopes of a frantic people by inflated lies. The information which they gave was suspected by all; yet every one tried to force himself to believe it, and every one spoke confidently of the approaching vengeance of France, when she should clothe herself in consuming terror and in her fiery indignation devour the adversary.

Paris was in a state of siege, and preparations were being made by the authorities which showed that to them at least the approach of an enemy did not seem impossible. The environs were devastated; the forts prepared; the bridges blown up; the trees cut down; but this belt of desolation was not visible to the crowds inside the city, and the change was chiefly manifest to those who found themselves cut off from their usual recreation in the Bois de Boulogne.

But to the people who were thus surrounded by this ring of desolation and defence, it was as though these things were not; and the crowds in the streets

spoke all day long of nothing but victory and vengeance. Every one had his own theory as to the movements of the French armies. Whether Bazaine's strategy or that of McMahon were the more profound, was a keenly disputed point. So profound was the strategy of each, however, that every one seemed to lose himself in a bottomless abyss whenever he ventured to discuss it. Still the confidence in their hearts was certainly not equal to that which their lips professed, as might easily be seen by the wild rumors that arose from time to time, the tales of sudden disaster, the tidings of fresh defeats, the panic fear that sometimes flashed simultaneously through vast multitudes, blanching their cheeks and stilling to awful silence the uproar of the people. —

"While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispered with white lips, 'The foe
They come! They come!'"

Still, these panics, though they were quick to rise, were equally quick to subside; and after each sensation of this sort, the volatile people roused themselves anew to hope and to confidence. And the uproar sounded forth again, and the song arose, and the battle hymn, and the shout, and vengeance was once more denounced upon all the enemies of France.

Everybody was in uniform. There were the citizens who were National Guards. There were the peasants brought in from the country as *Moblots*. There were the marines, and sailors from the fleet. There were also the members of the ambulance corps, who served to remind the ardent citizen of the darker side of war.

The crowd that had been at the station when Carrol arrived had been immense, but not any larger than usual. For now there was always a great crowd there and at every railway station. There were those who were pouring into the city at the order of the government, soldiers from the field of battle, and peasants flying here from their deserted fields for refuge. There was also another crowd, consisting of

those who were desirous of escaping from the city; many of whom were foreigners, but many more of whom were the wives and children of citizens, sent away so as to be out of the reach of that siege which was already anticipated by the citizens, in spite of their confident boasts.

In all these scenes, in the excitement of alternating hope and fear that forever reigned in the thronged streets, and in the perpetual presence of one dominating and all-pervading idea, Carrol found that distraction of soul which formed the surest relief to his anxiety and remorse. He had so long brooded over his own griefs, that the presence of some engrossing subject outside of himself produced upon him an unmixed benefit. Grimes saw this with great gratification, and declared that Paris was the very place for Carrol.

He also asserted that Paris was the very place for himself. The excitement communicated itself to all of his sympathetic nature. He glowed under it; he revelled in it; he lived in the streets. He flung himself into the life of the people, and shared all their alternations of feeling. His opinion about the fortunes of the war, however, was certainly a little different from that of the average Parisian.

"The Prussian invasion," said he, "is a wholesome thing. It's good. King William is a fine man. So is the average Prussian. The French are too frivolous. Life can't be got to be made up out of nonsense. You can't do it. The French have got hold of somethin' serious at last, and, mark my words, it'll do 'em good."

But the day soon came which put a stop to all hope of victory, and in an instant dissipated the vast mass of lying rumors with which the atmosphere of Paris was filled. It was the day of Sedan. The tremendous intelligence could not be concealed or mitigated. It was a revelation of the whole of that black and dismal truth against which the people had shut their eyes. Down to the very last moment they

sustained themselves with wild fictions, and then that last moment came and all was known.

Then all Paris rose. Away went the government in flight. The Empress Regent disappeared. The Republic was proclaimed. Down came the Imperial cipher and the Imperial effigy, and every Imperial symbol from every public place; while in their place appeared the words which the Empire had obliterated eighteen years before, "Liberté, Fraternité, Egalité." And the old Republican leaders came forth and volunteered to become the leaders of the nation; old men came back from exile; and the irreconcilables seated themselves upon the throne of their fallen enemy.

Then too the panic, which thus far had been fitful and intermittent, spread itself broadly over the city, till it took possession of every heart. The terror for a time drove out every other feeling. Those who could fly did so as hastily as possible. The peasantry came pouring in from the country in greater numbers. The railroads were taxed to their utmost possible capacity; for now it was known that the conquering Prussians would soon arrive, and then what escape would there be?

But the panic could not last, and did not. Like other sensations, it had its day, and passed; and the new sensation which succeeded it was one universal enthusiasm over the Republic, combined with boundless confidence in the ability of the Republic to atone for the disgraces of the Empire, and to avenge them. The enthusiasm was also for a time accompanied by a pleasing hope that the Prussians would be satisfied with the fall of Napoleon, and come to easy terms with regenerated France; nor was it possible to quell this hope, until they had been very rudely disillusioned.

All these new and startling events only served to increase the effect which Parisian life had produced upon Carrol; and in the excitement that never ceased to be kindled all around him, he found an occupation for his mind that

was always new and varied. In the overturn of the government he also found the assurance of greater safety for himself; for with the revolution the old machinery would become a little disarranged, and the French police would necessarily be changed or modified, so that the chances for his escape from capture were greatly increased. His haunting dread of pursuit and arrest was now very much lessened, and a sense of comparative security came to him.

Grimes and Carrol generally separated for the day. Each made it his sole occupation to saunter about the public places, taking part in the general excitements and sharing in the sensations that from time to time might arise; but each preferred to go alone, and follow the bent of his own inclinations. On one such occasion Carrol was slowly sauntering down the Champs Elysées, looking dreamily around upon the scene, when suddenly he caught sight of something which gave him a greater shock than any that he had felt since his arrival. It was a carriage which was rolling along among many other carriages. In it were two ladies, and in the first glance that he gave he recognized Maud and Mrs. Lovell. In an instant they had rolled by, and he was left standing there, filled with amazement.

Ever since his arrival at Paris he had thought of Maud as being far away. On board of the steamer he had supposed that she was on her way to this city, but after his arrival he had taken it for granted that the perilous situation of the city would of course deter the ladies from coming to it at such a time, and that their most natural course would be to go to their friends in England. Yet now he found them actually here, and saw that they must have come at once to the place. He saw that they were still remaining, and that, too, after the great events that had occurred; after Sedan; after the Republic; at the very time when the minds of all were becoming familiar with the grim prospect of a siege. What this could pos-

sibly mean became a problem which occupied his thoughts all the remainder of that day, without his attaining to any satisfactory solution. Could they be aware of the facts of their situation? Of course they must be. What then could make them remain? He could not imagine.

In the evening he mentioned the subject to Grimes. As this was the first time that Carrol had volunteered to talk upon any subject, Grimes regarded this as a very favorable sign, and felt highly gratified.

"See here," said Carrol, "did you know *they* are here?"

"They? Who's 'they'?" asked Grimes.

"Why, the ladies."

"The ladies? O yes. I knew that. I saw them myself the other day."

"You saw them! Why, you did n't say anything about it. I should think you would have mentioned it."

"O no," said Grimes, coolly. "I did n't seem to see any necessity for mentioning it to you. I knew that it was an exciting topic, and that if I introduced the subject you'd at once proceed to flare up. You see you always pitch into Miss Heathcote so infernally strong, that I can't stand it. She's a person that I can't help respectin' somehow, in spite of your tall talk. Mark my words, there's a mistake somewhere."

Carrol's face flushed at these last words, and he stared sternly at Grimes; but as the other looked away quite indifferently, he said nothing for a few moments. At last he remarked in a low thoughtful voice, "It's queer, too, — confoundedly queer."

"What's confoundedly queer?" asked Grimes.

"Why, that they should stay."

"Queer? Why, what is there queer about that?"

"What, don't you think it's queer for two ladies to come to a city in such a row as this, and stay here through a regular revolution, when the enemy is approaching, and the siege may begin at any time?"

"Queer?" cried Grimes. "Why, I should think it most infernally queer if they did n't stay. This is the very time to be in Paris. Queer? Why, what makes us stay here, and what could induce either you or me to leave this place now and go away?"

"Pooh! Why, there's all the difference in the world. They're women."

"Women! and what then? Ain't women human beings? I think so. You'll not deny that, I suppose. Yea, more. Have n't women got curiosity? Some. Have n't they got a slight tendency to excitement? Methinks. Don't they occasionally get their feelings roused and grow enthusiastic? Rather. Now, for my part, I imagine that Mrs. Lovell and Miss Heathcote find just as much fun in these proceedin's and in the general row that's goin' on as either you or I. Yea, more. I don't believe any earthly indocement would make them leave. Stay?"

"Why, everybody ought to stay. Everybody ought to come here. Now's the time to visit Paris. There has n't been such a time since the downfall of ancient Rome, and there won't be such another occasion for ever so many hundred years. Mrs. Lovell leave? What! And now? And after takin' all the trouble to come here? No, sir. Not she. Not if she knows it. I'll bet on her. I tell you what, that woman's bound to see this thing put through."

"O, come now, really now," said Carrol, "you don't suppose that Mrs. Lovell is superior to all the usual weaknesses of woman. She is as timid as women generally are."

"I deny that women are timid," said Grimes, solemnly.

"O, if it comes to that, why, there's nothing more to say."

"I deny that they're timid where their feelings are really concerned. You get a woman regularly excited, and she'll go through fire and water. She'll go wherever a man will."

"O, that's all very well, in a few rare cases, when their affections are engaged, and they get half insane; but

there's really nothing of the kind here, you know, and for my part I confess I'm puzzled."

"Well, for my part," said Grimes, "I glory in it."

"There's some mysterious motive," said Carrol, "something under the surface."

"There's nothing but pure, real, genuine pluck," said Grimes. "She's clear grit."

Carrol shook his head suspiciously, and finding that Grimes would not help him to discover this supposed dark motive that actuated the ladies, he subsided into a somewhat sullen silence.

XIII.

AN UNEXPECTED CALL.

THE place in which Mrs. Lovell and Maud had taken up their quarters was somewhat remote from the busy centres of Parisian life, and if there was any change in the appearance of the city it was not generally visible. It was only when they went out for a drive that they saw the unusual animation and excitement of the streets, and even then the change did not seem so great as it actually was.

Upon Maud, Paris did not produce that exhilarating effect which it generally does on the new-comer. In fact, since her arrival she seemed to have sunk into deeper dejection. On board the steamer, as long as Carrol was near her, there was a kind of excitement in the idea of that neighborhood which acted as a stimulus to her mind, and was involuntarily associated with faint hopes of a reconciliation. But now he was gone, and her life became dull and dead. There was no longer any hope of reconciliation, nor any expectation of seeing him. She wondered whether he had come to Paris or not, but concluded that he had not. Why, indeed, should he? His hatred of her was so bitter that his only motive would be to avoid her. True, he had followed her to the steamer, but she began to think now that this might have been an acci-

dent, and as the days passed by she gradually lost hope.

Mrs. Lovell saw this dejection, and remonstrated with Maud about it.

"Why, really, Maudie," she would say, "I thought you had more pride; after all, your condition is n't as bad as mine. Look at me. Only think how I've been deceived in Mr. Grimes. Now, I know very well that you're moping about that wretched Mr. Carrol, but it's very weak in you. Be like me. Do as I do. Conquer your feelings, and be bold and brave and heroic."

In the effort to assist Maud to become bold and brave and heroic, Mrs. Lovell urged her to drive out, and so they used to drive out nearly every day. During those drives, Maud's mind was not much impressed with the striking scenes which the great city presented, but was rather occupied by one controlling idea that made her blind to the charm of Parisian life. As she drove through the streets and boulevards and looked out upon the crowds, the idea of Carrol never left her, and she was always searching after his face. She noticed nothing and thought of nothing in all her drives but this, and the noise and the tumult and all the busy preparations for war were disregarded.

But at length, as time passed on, this noise and tumult and these preparations for war grew to such proportions that they forced themselves upon her attention. She saw the doors and windows of the Louvre gradually closing up behind protective barricades. She saw those barricades arising around the statues and monuments of the city, and beautiful groves changing into fields of stumps. A drive to the Bois de Boulogne was sufficient at length to arouse the attention of the most preoccupied soul, and this drive did not fail to impress Maud.

"What can be the meaning of it?" she asked in surprise.

Mrs. Lovell confessed her inability to account for it.

"Something must be going on."

"Perhaps the trees died, and had to

be cut down," suggested Mrs. Lovell; "and if so, what a pity! They were so beautiful."

"O no, it must have something to do with the war. Is it possible that they can be preparing for a siege of Paris?"

"A siege of Paris! what utter nonsense! How can there be a siege of Paris?"

"Why, this war may be unfortunate for the French."

"O, that's absurd! The French made the war for political purposes. It's all the Emperor, Maudie. He's a wonderful man. And it was only for political purposes. It's just the same here as an election is with us."

"I wish I'd seen some of the papers. Have you seen any, Georgie?"

"The papers? O dear, no! I never read the papers."

"I remember," said Maud, thoughtfully, "I saw a paper the other day and read a little in it. I did not take much interest in it at the time, but I remember now that something was said about some defeats of the French, and that the defeats would be made good."

"Defeats? Of the French? O, nonsense! The Prussians, you mean?"

"O no! I mean the French. Something of that sort must have happened. And now, when I think of it, the paper certainly spoke of the Prussians being in France,—for it said that none of them should ever escape."

"The Prussians in France?" said Mrs. Lovell, thoughtfully. "Well, really, Maudie, that is better than I expected. How very nice that would be, if it were really so. Why, we would have a chance to see a battle, perhaps, who knows? Why, do you know, Maudie, the greatest desire of my life has always been to see a battle. I think I'd go miles to see one. Yes, miles. Why, if I really thought the Prussians were here, I think I'd try to find out in what direction they were coming, and engage rooms there to see the battle. That's the way Byron did at the battle of Waterloo, and he wrote such a lovely poem; not that I could

write a poem, but then, really, Maudie, I sometimes think, do you know, that I have the soul of a poet."

Maud did not seem to be listening. An anxious expression was on her face.

"It's horrible," she exclaimed,—"it's too horrible."

"Horrible! What's horrible?"

"Why, if the Prussians should really be coming to Paris."

"Nonsense."

"Well, I really begin to think that there must be some danger of it. The more I think of it the more certain I feel. The papers spoke so very strangely."

"The papers! But, Maudie, I hope you don't think anything of what the papers say. They're always saying all sorts of things, you know. For my part, I never believe anything that the papers say, and I never read them."

"But look at all these preparations. Don't they look as though the people here expected a siege or something?"

"My dear Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, confidently, "the people, as you call them, have nothing whatever to do with these preparations. It's all the Emperor. He does it for effect. He has some deep-laid plan. He's always contriving something or other to excite the Parisians. The Parisians need some excitement. Now the Emperor sees that they are tired to death of *fêtes* and shows and splendor, so he is defacing the statues, putting up barricades, and chopping down the trees to create a grand sensation. He intends to make himself very popular by all this. He is getting up the pretence of a siege, and then he will come and pretend to save Paris. Something of that sort is his intention I know. That's the way he always does, you know, and that's the only way he can manage to retain his power over such an extraordinary people as the Parisians."

To this somewhat singular theory Maud had no objections to make, and Mrs. Lovell, finding the course clear

before her, expatiated upon this theme till they returned.

Not long after reaching the house, a gentleman called. He did not give his name, but as this was the only caller they had thus far known, both of the ladies were filled with an excitement which, under the circumstances, was not at all unnatural. At first, Maud thought of Carrol; but a little reflection showed her that such a thing could scarcely be; and so she checked at once that rush of eager emotion which was hurrying her away to greet the caller, and experienced such a reaction of feeling that she resolved not to go down at all. But with Mrs. Lovell the excitement was unalloyed, and there was nothing to disturb the pleasing expectation that filled her mind.

"So you won't come, Maudie," she said, as she was leaving the room. "Well, perhaps you'd better not. You never could bear him, you were always so prejudiced; though, for my part, I really think that you do injustice to Mr. Grimes's many admirable qualities."

There was a sweet smile on Mrs. Lovell's face as she entered the room, and her face had an expression of quiet yet cordial welcome as she looked toward the caller. But the moment that she caught sight of the caller, a complete change came over her; the smile died away; the look of cordial welcome vanished; and there remained only a look of cold surprise. For the person before her was not Grimes at all.

He was a sharp-featured man, and was dressed in the uniform of the National Guard, which, however, did not give him, by any means, the air of the true professional *militaire*. On the contrary, his clothes were a little ill-fitting, and he showed some uneasiness about his sword. As Mrs. Lovell entered, he sprang toward her with much animation and an air of the greatest *empressement*.

"Madame," said he, "I am mos happy zat I haf ze honneur to salute you."

And with these words he held out both hands. Mrs. Lovell, however, did not at all reciprocate this ardor. On the contrary, she regarded him coolly, taking no notice whatever of his hands, and then gave a stiffish bow. She said nothing, nor did she offer him a chair, or show him any civility whatever. Now, if it was her disappointment about Mr. Grimes that elicited such rudeness from such a gracious lady, then her disappointment must have been very bitter to her; but if it was merely her dislike to Du Potiron himself that animated her, then her dislike was wonderfully strong to be felt by such a kind-hearted and gentlemanly person.

But Du Potiron did not notice this, or, if he did, he quite ignored it. On the contrary, he proceeded to go through a series of complicated movements, which seemed to show that monsieur was less a gentleman than a dancing-master. First he put his right hand on his heart, then he made a great sweep of his hat with his left hand, and then he bowed so low that he went quite beneath the line of Mrs. Lovell's vision. After which he raised himself, still keeping his hand on his heart, and made another flourish with his hat.

"Madame," said he, "pardon me, but I sall haf to apologizé zat I haf not pay my respects before."

"O, apologies are quite unnecessary!" said Mrs. Lovell, quickly. "I did not expect it at all, I assure you."

"Ze raison haf been," continued Du Potiron, "I haf not been able to find ze place unteel zees moment. Mais à présent, I sall be mos happy."

Mrs. Lovell made no remark at this, but still stood regarding him with a cool and easy stare that would have been embarrassing to any one else.

"Moreovaire, madame," continued Du Potiron, "I haf to offaire mes apologies zat I haf not ze honneur to pay mes respects to you on ze voyage, — mais voyez-vous, madame, cette malheureuse bouleversement et enféblement, cette je ne sais quoi du mal de

mer haf quite all ze taime put him out of my powaire to saluter you. Hein? Comprenez?"

"Your remarks are totally unintelligible, monsieur," said Mrs. Lovell, "and I am still at a loss to understand the object of this visit."

"Moi," said Du Potiron, "I am Frenchman. Un Français is nevaire noting in ze sea, but in ze land he become heemself. Mais vous, madame, I haf ze hope sincerement zat you haf had ze voyage plaisant."

"Quite, thanks," said Mrs. Lovell, whose patience was beginning to give way.

"Et à present," continued the unterrified one, "ees eet youair intention to haf a stay long?"

"We have not decided."

"Ah, you haf ze intention to leave soon, probablement."

"Not that I am aware of."

"Aha, zat is good, foine, brave, sage, noble, magnifique!" cried Du Potiron, in an enthusiastic outburst, which amazed Mrs. Lovell. "Ma foi! So you haf no fear. C'est charmant; so you weel stay. Aha? Bien," he continued, suddenly subsiding from a tone of exultation to the manner of a dry logician, — "bien, for see you, madame, zaire ees no dang-jaire. Zees war sall go on, and la France moos be victor. Ze République Française ees invincible! Eh bien. So you sall stay. Eh? Ver well. Zen you sall see ze triomphe, ze exultation, ze enthousiasme irrepressible! You sall see Guillaume a prisoner, a captif, and Moltke and Bismarck and all ze entire army Prussian —"

All this was more unintelligible than ever to Mrs. Lovell; and as her patience was now quite exhausted, she resolved to retire.

"Excuse me," said she, quietly, "but, really, I know nothing of politics, and I have to go."

"Ah, mille pardons," cried Du Potiron, hastily; "what, you go! Ma foi. Mais, permettez-moi. Ah, I am distracte wit chagrin zat I haf not see ze mees charmante. Villa you haf ze fa-

vaire to kongvay to her ze mos tendaire —"

"I do not understand you," said Mrs. Lovell, in a more frigid tone than ever.

"Ze mees — ze mees —"

"The what?"

"Ze charmante mees."

"This is quite unintelligible," said Mrs. Lovell.

"Mees Mo," persisted Du Potiron, eagerly, "cette charmante Mo."

"Mo, — Mo?" repeated Mrs. Lovell, in a puzzle.

"Yaiss — Mees Mo — Deetcot —"

"Miss Maud Heathcote," repeated Mrs. Lovell, who at length made out the name. "What of her, pray?"

"Oui, oui," cried Du Potiron, eagerly, "le Mees Mo Deetcot; I beg you to kongvay to cette charmante Mo ze assurance of my esteem ze mos distingué, and my affection ze mos tendaire."

At this Mrs. Lovell's face flushed with indignation. She looked at him for a moment as though preparing some severe rejoinder, but finally seemed to think better of it, and then turning without a word or even a nod she left the room.

At this inexcusable rudeness, Monsieur du Potiron stood for a moment staring after her. Then he shook his fist at the door through which she had retreated. Then he painfully gathered up his sword, and in as graceful a manner as possible left the house.

Great was Maud's surprise at hearing from Mrs. Lovell who the caller had been. Great also was her amazement at Du Potiron's impudence in still hinting at the mistaken acceptance by claiming her in that way; and the contempt which she expressed was limitless and immeasurable. But in the midst of all this the thought occurred to her that possibly Du Potiron might not have received the explanatory letter which she had sent, and might still consider her in all seriousness as his *fiancée*. She mentioned this to Mrs. Lovell, but that lady did not deign to consider the matter.

"What possible difference can it make, Maudie," said she, "what that person thinks? He will never come in our way. You know I always disapproved of your explanations, and certainly I should not like you to commit yourself to any more."

In spite of this, Maud was somewhat troubled as to certain puzzling things which Du Potiron's visit had suggested.

On the following day they were out driving when an incident occurred which had the effect of giving a deeper meaning to Du Potiron's call than before, and of increasing those puzzling questions to which his visit had given rise. This was that incident before referred to, — their meeting with Carrol. The surprise was as great to Maud as to him, and so was the embarrassment. Neither one knew that the other was in Paris. Carrol had supposed that the ladies had some time ago fled from this place of danger; and Maud had not supposed that Carrol had come to Paris at all. But now each one knew that the other was here in this city, within reach and within call.

But their discovery of one another's proximity created very different feelings in each. The effect produced upon Carrol has been mentioned. But upon Maud this discovery had a different result. It at once gave a new meaning to the visit of Du Potiron. One thing from that visit was evident, and it was this, that he still regarded her as his *fiancée*. The only conclusion that she could draw from that was that he had not received her letter of explanation. And if that were so, it now seemed equally probable that Carrol had not received the letter which she had sent to him. The very thought of this agitated her most profoundly, and gave rise to a thousand wild plans of finding him out even now, and of learning for herself in a personal interview what Carrol's sentiments really were.

The greatest puzzle of all was in the voyage. They had all come over together. Carrol, as she thought, had evidently followed her, from what mo-

tive she could not imagine. He now seemed to have followed her even to Paris. Du Potiron had come too, and it now appeared as if the Frenchman had come with the purpose of urging his claims upon her. She now began to think it possible that from some cause or other her explanatory letters had not reached either of them, but that both had crossed the ocean under a totally wrong impression. This would account, as she thought, for Du Potiron's pursuit, and for Carrol's inflexible wrath. While thinking of these things she could not help wondering whether they had met or not on board the steamer; but a moment's reflection showed her that they could only regard one another as enemies, and that each would avoid any intercourse with the other. It was therefore clearly impossible that they could have had any explanation.

These ideas created the most intense excitement in the mind of Maud. It was a misunderstanding which could so easily be cleared up. Carrol was only laboring under a delusion. If she could only see him, how quickly she could explain. So now the question of her life became how to see him. Should she write? But she did not know his address. It seemed better to wait, and keep a constant outlook so as to secure a personal interview.

Meantime she kept her thoughts and resolutions to herself, for Mrs. Lovell's want of sympathy with Carrol prevented her from being of any service in securing Maud's desires.

XIV.

AN AGGRESSIVE CALL

At length the long-expected event took place. The last effort to avert it had failed. The Prussians were approaching and the siege was at hand. The preparations for that siege had reached their last stage and their climax. The full measure of the coming trial might be seen in the vast accumulations of provisions, the immense

heaps of grain, and the countless herds of cattle. The flight of the people became more desperate; the influx of the peasantry also reached its height. The overburdened cars carried away all who could go. The government departed. The foreign ambassadors departed, leaving Minister Washburne alone to face the situation. At length the last railroad was intercepted, the last telegraphic wire cut, and Paris lay shut out from the world.

In the mean time Mrs. Lovell and Maud had been living in the same way, varying the quiet of their seclusion by a daily drive. Maud did not again see Carrol in the streets, nor did Mrs. Lovell see Grimes anywhere. Their attention was occasionally arrested by some new construction bearing upon the defence of the city, or by the march of some larger body of troops than usual; but these things did not excite any very deep interest. Mrs. Lovell's opinion as to the state of affairs in Paris, and the perfect safety of that city, she had already given, nor had she changed it; and Maud's one engrossing thought was the discovery of Carrol among the crowds that thronged the streets. And so it was that Paris was shut up at last, without the actual fact being even suspected by either of the ladies.

One day, after they had returned from a drive, a caller was announced. This time their thoughts at once turned to Du Potiron, and they sent word that they were not at home. Upon this the caller, who had not sent up his name before, sent in his card. With some curiosity they examined it. It was simply, M. le Comte du Potiron.

"His impertinence is certainly engaging," remarked Mrs. Lovell, quietly, "but what he can possibly expect to gain by it I cannot imagine."

With this she sent back word that she was engaged.

But the irrepressible Du Potiron was not to be so easily shaken off. He at once sent back a most urgent request for an interview, — just for a little mo-

ment, — it was about matters of great importance.

At this persistence Mrs. Lovell was quite annoyed, but at the same time the message which he sent was adapted to excite a little curiosity, so she checked the reply which she was on the point of sending, and decided on seeing for herself what he wanted.

"I shall see what he wants," she said, "and I must at the same time put a stop to his silly persistency in visiting us. I never liked him. I simply tolerated him at Montreal; but here I don't wish to recognize him."

With these words Mrs. Lovell went down. Du Potiron was waiting there, dressed in the uniform of the National Guard, as on the last occasion. He advanced as before with outstretched hands, and with an enthusiastic smile, just as if he and Mrs. Lovell were warm and intimate friends; just as if their last meeting had been perfectly delightful to each of them, and this one was to be the same.

Mrs. Lovell's cool demeanor, however, had the effect of checking his advance, and, as before, he stopped and bowed very elaborately.

"Allow me to haf ze honneur to saluter you, madame, an to expresser ze gratification eet geefs me to fin you, here. Eet ees an epoch in ze histoire of ze race humaine."

"Will you be kind enough to inform me to what I am indebted for this visit?" asked Mrs. Lovell. "You stated that you had something of importance to speak of."

"Ah — bien — bon — oui — vrai," replied Du Potiron, rapidly. "One moment. I mus congratuler you on your courage. Eet ees sublime, magnifique, colossal, enorme."

"I do not understand you," said Mrs. Lovell, with some show of temper. "You have something more to speak of than this."

"Eh bien. I wish, madame, to know eef I sal haf ze honneur of to see ze charmante Mo —"

"If you mean Miss Heathcote, sir," said Mrs. Lovell, loftily, "I have to

inform you that she declines seeing you."

"Quoi! Grand ciel!" ejaculated Du Potiron. "Declines? Mo! Moi! Mo — la charmante Mo — declines. Madame, zat ees not possible."

"If you have nothing more to say," said Mrs. Lovell, "I shall now excuse myself."

"Mais!" cried Du Potiron. "Mo! — vain sall I see her? Mo — I wish to see Mo."

"You are not to see her at all," said Mrs. Lovell, abruptly.

"Mais, you meestake."

"Not at all. It is you who are mistaken. You do not appear to understand the ordinary usages of society."

"Moi! Ma foi, madame, zees ees incomprehensible. I haf wait too long. I can wait no more. I mus see her some time. She is mine."

"What do you mean by that?"

"She is mine, I say," repeated Du Potiron in quick, energetic tones. "She is my fiancée."

"Your fiancée? What nonsense!" cried Mrs. Lovell. "What do you mean? You are not acquainted with her at all."

"Mais, madame, you meestake yourself. She is my fiancée. I haf propose at Montreal. She accept me. I haf ze lettre of acceptance. She write wit affection and empressement. She confess herself charme wit me, an I haf not seen her since. An so, madame, I now haf to wait for her appearance."

"Why, really, this is too absurd," said Mrs. Lovell. "I am aware that you proposed at Montreal when you really had no acquaintance with her, and she had none with you, and also that she declined your proposal."

"Decline? No, no, no," cried Du Potiron. "She accept."

"Accept? O, you allude to that first letter! But that was a mistake; she explained all that."

"First lettaire?" repeated Du Potiron; "meestake? explain? I not comprehend you, madame. I only know zis, zat ze charmante Mo haf accept me, an to prove eet I haf ze lettaire

veech I kip by my heart toujours. Voilà!"

And with these words he unbuttoned the breast of his coat, and, inserting his hand into the inside pocket, he proceeded to draw forth a letter very solemnly and slowly. This letter he surveyed for a few moments with an air of pensive yet melodramatic devotion, after which he pressed it to his lips. Then he looked at Mrs. Lovell.

"What letter is that?" asked Mrs. Lovell.

"Ze lettaire of Mo, — she accept me. Do you doubt? You sall read."

"O, you mean that first letter. But did n't you get her other explanatory note?"

"Explanation? what explanation? No, madame. Zis ees ze only lettaire I haf receif from ze charmante Mo. Zere ees notin to explain —"

"But that letter was all a mistake," said Mrs. Lovell. "It was never intended for you at all."

Du Potiron smiled.

"Ah, I see," he said, "zat ze charmante Mo haf deceif you, — a ruse. Aha! Eh bien. I inform you now of ze fact."

"Pooh, it's too absurd. Let me see that letter," said Mrs. Lovell, advancing nearer. Du Potiron instinctively drew back his hand, as though he was afraid that she intended to snatch it away, but the action and the fear lasted for an instant only. Then he held out the letter with a polite bow and an air of great magnanimity.

Mrs. Lovell took the letter and read it carelessly. Then she looked at the opening words, and finally at the address on the envelope. After which she said, coolly: "It's rather unfortunate that you never received Miss Heathcote's other note. You left Montreal very suddenly, I think, or you would have certainly got it. The other letter was an explanation of this. For you know this is all an absurd mistake."

"A meestake?" said Du Potiron, with an incredulous smile.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovell. "My sis-

ter explained it all. This was intended for another person."

"Ma foi, madame, you must see zat ees not possible."

"I will soon show you," said Mrs. Lovell; and with these words she directed his attention to the opening words. These words, written in Maud's angular hand, were made up out of letters that were wide-spread, with open loops, and not particularly legible. They were intended to be, "My dear Mr. Carrol." As Mrs. Lovell looked at them now, she saw that they might be read, "My dear M. Count."

"What are those words?" asked Mrs. Lovell, pointing to them. "What do you take them to be?"

Du Potiron looked at them for a moment, and then said, "*My dear Monsieur le Comte.*"

"But it is n't anything of the kind," said Mrs. Lovell.

Du Potiron started, and looked at her uneasily.

"It's *My dear Mr. Carrol*," said Mrs. Lovell, "and you have been utterly mistaken."

At the mention of this name Du Potiron started back and gave a hurried look around. His old look of easy self-sufficiency passed away altogether, and was succeeded by an air of trouble and apprehension.

"Carrol!" he repeated. "Am I to understand, madame, zat you say zees lettaire was intend for M. Carrol?"

"Certainly; you may see the name there for yourself," said she.

Du Potiron looked at it earnestly for some time, and then looked at Mrs. Lovell.

"Eet ees not possible," said he. "Zees lettaire was for me, and ze charmante Mo ees mine, an sall be mine. Zees Carrol haf notin to do wis her. Moi! I am ze one she wrote ze lettaire. Bien! an now, madame, I haf ze honneur to reuess ze plaisir of to see ze charmante Mo."

"Very well, sir," said Mrs. Lovell; "since you refuse to take my explanation, I can only inform you that Miss Heathcote has no acquaintance with

you whatever, and will not see you at all."

"Mais, madame, I moos see her. I haf come to take her ondaire my protection."

"*Your protection!*" repeated Mrs. Lovell, in amazement at such prolonged and sustained impudence.

"Oui, madame," continued Du Potiron. "Eet ees ver necessaire. You are bot in danger. Eet ees a time of peril. You haf allow yourself to remain here, and not know zat danger. You haf no protector, an eet ees necessaire for me to interpose to save you from ze enemy."

"Danger! enemy! How perfectly absurd!" said Mrs. Lovell.

"Madame," said Du Potiron, "you are in great danger. Paris is surrounde by ze Prusse. Ze siege haf begun. Ze bombardement moos commencer. Ze shells sall fall on zese houses, an zis cety sall become one grand fortification. Zees ees no place for ladies. You should haf fly before; but since you remain, I mus protect you from ze danger zat you encounter."

Mrs. Lovell was certainly startled at this, though she would not confess it.

"Allow me to remark, sir," said she, after a short pause, "that, even if there should be any danger, which I utterly doubt, I should not put myself under *your* protection. I should be content with the protection of the government."

"Ze govainement?" said Du Potiron; "but ze govainement ees gone."

"Gone!"

"Yes, to Tours; to escape ze Prusse."

"This is absurd," said Mrs. Lovell, in utter incredulity. "But even if it were true, what of that? There is the British Ambassador."

"Ma foi!" cried Du Potiron. "You seem to be ignorant of everytin, madame. Ees eet possible you don't know zat ze British Ambassador haf run away from ze Prusse, an all ze oder ambassadors aussi?"

At this Mrs. Lovell broke down.

"Monsieur," said she, stiffly, "all this is utterly preposterous. It is use-

less for me to prolong this interview. I can only say that, if these statements of yours are true, I shall soon find it out, and I shall know what to do, without requiring any assistance from you."

And with these words Mrs. Lovell retired, leaving Du Potiron a prey to various conflicting feelings, prominent among which was a new interest in Maud's letter, which he scrutinized for some time before he departed.

Mrs. Lovell did not go back to Maud at once. Du Potiron's startling information had quite terrified her. She had not the faintest idea of the real state of things, and was fully conscious of her ignorance. Under the circumstances, her first impulse was to find out the truth; and so she went at once to see Madame Guimarin.

She found the good madame very anxious and very agitated. As she heard Mrs. Lovell's questions her agitation increased greatly, and it was some time before she could make any reply. She burst into tears, and sat sobbing convulsively. At last she was able to find words, and told Mrs. Lovell the whole truth. She informed her that her house had been empty for a long time, most of the boarders having fled in order to avoid the troubles that seemed to be ahead. She had received Mrs. Lovell most eagerly, seeing in these two boarders her last hope of escape from utter ruin. She had always put the best appearance upon things, and had never allowed any of the city papers to lie about. Mrs. Lovell would not have read them if she had seen them; but she did not even see them. Maud had caught a glimpse of one or two old ones, but was not able to get at the truth. Thus Madame Guimarin had kept out of her house all indications of danger, and her two new boarders had remained. But the approach of the final catastrophe had overcome Madame Guimarin herself. She saw a long blockade, high prices, scant markets, shops closed, street-fights, mob rule, and a hundred other calamities. Now that she had begun to tell the truth, she poured it all forth

without reserve, and Mrs. Lovell at length understood the fullest peril that the most imaginative mind could attach to her present situation.

In spite of the landlady's dark picture, Mrs. Lovell was not without resources. "I will send," she thought, "to Lord Lyons, and get a passport from him, so as to leave the city at once." Upon this resolve she acted as soon as possible. On the return of her messenger she found, to her consternation, that Du Potiron's information was correct, and that the British Ambassador had retired from the city. Thus far she had concealed it all from Maud; but now it was neither judicious nor was it even possible to keep up any further concealment. So she told Maud all, and to her great delight Maud listened to the news without being overwhelmed or even dismayed.

"Really, Maudie dear," cried Mrs. Lovell, in a joyous tone, "this is very, very delightful, to find you take it so. I thought you'd be so upset, that I was afraid to tell you. This is really nice of you, and I admire you no end for your bravery and courage and all that. And do you know, Maudie, for my part, I'm not half so afraid as I ought to be; in fact, I don't know but that I feel just a little bit of a kind of pleasant excitement in our situation. I've always had quite a longing to be in Paris during a revolution. It must be so nice. *Coup d'états*, you know, Maudie dear, and all that sort of thing. Such fun! And then, do you know, Maudie, there's another thing that really has a little to do, I think, with my feeling so very free from fear. Do you know, Maudie, I've an idea that poor dear old Mr. Grimes is wandering about these streets somewhere; and, really, the very thought of that great big man gives me a sense of protection and security. Not, of course, that I think of him in any other way than as a possible assistant in case of an emergency, as a last resort, but then what's the use," continued Mrs. Lovell, plaintively, — "what's the use of talking of him as a last resort, when I have n't

the faintest idea where I could find him in case of need?"

Maud had no reply to make to these remarks. Her mind was preoccupied, for she was wondering whether Carrol had fled with the rest, or whether he had remained behind to share the fortunes of the besieged city.

XV.

MEETING AND PARTING.

GRIMES and Carrol, as we have seen, made it their sole occupation to saunter about the public places, for the simple reason that this was at once the best and most attractive thing that they could do; and as neither cared about company, each went by himself. On one of these occasions, Carrol set forth on his daily pilgrimage and wandered to the Champs Elysées.

There was almost always a great gathering of people here, but on this occasion the crowd was much larger than usual. A body of soldiers marched along, apparently on their way to the outside of the city, consisting of foot-soldiers and cavalry and artillery. From time to time the stirring strains of some martial air burst forth from a passing band, and the shouts and exclamations of the people arose without ceasing. It seemed to be the impression of the people that these troops were on their way to take part in a *sortie*; and the remarks that from time to time reached Carrol's ears gave that idea to him. He therefore found something of greater interest than usual in the sight of men who were actually on the way to attempt such a serious thing as actual battle with the beleaguering host; and so he wandered about from one place to another, seeking some position from which he could gaze upon the scene to the best advantage.

As he was thus moving about, he came upon the outskirts of a cluster of people, and hesitated for a moment about penetrating it. As he did so he noticed immediately in front of him a

lady, the sight of whom sent a sudden thrill through every nerve. Her side face only was turned toward him, and she seemed trying to make her way through the crowd so as to go down the Champs Elysées; but the very first glance that he gave showed him that she was no other than Maud Heathcote herself. He stood motionless with surprise for a few moments, and then, as the lady turned towards the spot where he was standing, he shrank back and hastily concealed himself.

The crowd here made way for Maud, and she passed through, walking so close to Carrol that he could have touched her. But he contrived to conceal himself so effectually that she did not see him, and so she walked on without the slightest idea that he was so near. Carrol watched her closely, and then stole away after her. In order that he might not be observed, he got among some trees, and walked behind them, moving from one to the other in a very stealthy and, it must be confessed, a very absurd manner. It was not at all difficult to do this, for Maud walked very slowly, and at times stopped and looked back. Carrol could easily see by the expression of her face that she was looking for some one, but who that person could be he was at a loss to conjecture. Instantly his suspicious nature was aroused. Now, he thought, was the time to find out the mysterious motive that had kept her here in Paris; and though there was a miserable sense of shame in his mind, yet so great was his jealousy, that he kept up his watchful outlook for some considerable time.

At length Maud went on in a direction where the trees could no longer afford a cover to her jealous watcher. He was compelled, therefore, to venture forth, and this he did as cautiously as possible. There was a crowd in the distance, and toward this Maud walked, and into the midst of this she disappeared. Carrol now hastened in that direction very rapidly, fearing that he might lose her altogether. Maud had gone into the midst of the crowd,

but on reaching that place she found it impossible to go any farther. As her wish was to reach the other side, she found it necessary to retreat and go around the crowd, or attempt the passage farther on. She accordingly turned, and came back at the very place where she had entered. Now Carrol had just reached the edge of the crowd, and in his anxious desire to catch sight of Maud again he was looking most eagerly forward, when, suddenly, full before him, close in front, so close that further concealment of himself was impossible, with her eyes fixed on his, was Maud herself.

As she caught sight of Carrol a deep flush passed over her face, and then died out, leaving it as pale as death; her eyes fastened themselves on his with a look of wistful entreaty and unutterable sadness; and he could see that tears were trembling upon those long lashes. The sight of that face was piteous enough to have moved most deeply a sterner heart than that of Carrol. Her look flashed through him to his inmost soul, and at once all his hot rage, his venomous bitterness, his hard and cruel jealousy vanished and went into utter oblivion. He broke down completely. He reached out his hand and grasped hers feverishly. For a moment he could not speak, but at length he found his voice.

"Maud!"

"Paul!"

His voice was tremulous and hoarse; her voice was tremulous too and faint. They stood for an instant looking at one another with their hands clasped, forgetful of the crowd around them, and of everything except each other. Maud saw the change in Carrol's face; she marked how pale and wan he had become, the dark circles around his hollow eyes, the sharp, pinched features, the trembling and quivering muscles of the face. The sight of these, combined with her own deep agitation, affected her still more strongly, and at length she burst into tears and sobbed aloud.

Carrol stood there fearfully agitated.

He was weak and nervous, for his long struggle with sorrow and passion had produced its natural effect, and had greatly undermined his strength and the steadiness of his nerves. The revulsion which he had just experienced, in passing in one instant from a fierce, headlong desire for vengeance, to the tenderest emotion of love and pity, bewildered his brain. The sight of Maud's sadness had wrought this change, and it was intensified by the sight of Maud's tears. There was a choking sensation in his throat; his heart throbbed wildly; his hand still clutched hers convulsively; and he neither moved nor spoke.

A movement now took place in the crowd, and the people pressed against the two as they stood there. This roused them. Maud gently withdrew her hand, and Carrol regained his presence of mind.

"It's too crowded," he said, in a low voice; "come away—with me—to some other place."

Maud said nothing, but as he started she walked by his side, and they went away out of the crowd.

"I—I lost my way," said Maud, at length, first breaking the silence. She spoke hurriedly and quickly. The silence embarrassed her so greatly, that to break it in any way was a relief; and so she naturally alluded to the first thing that came uppermost, which was her singular appearance thus alone in the midst of a crowd. "I lost my way," she repeated, "that is, I lost my sister, and I was trying to find her."

"Your sister?" said Carrol, in an absent voice.

"Yes. Georgie,—Mrs. Lovell; we went out together, you know," said Maud, who now seemed to have found her voice. "We generally drive out, but to-day she thought she would like a walk. We did n't know there would be such a crowd. We were walking about here together, when suddenly a great rush of people took place and we were separated. I've been looking for her for nearly half an hour, but cannot

find her. Have you seen anything of her?"

She raised her eyes as she said this, and caught his gaze as it was fixed upon her. It was earnest and longing and sad, and full of a strange meaning. Her own eyes fell before it, and she was silent again.

"I have not seen her," said Carrol, in a dreamy, far-off tone.

They walked on a little farther in silence. Maud waited, thinking that Carrol would first break it, but Carrol made no attempt to speak. His brain was full of a tumult of thoughts, none of which he knew how to put into words. For this moment was sweet to him beyond all expression, but beneath the sweetness there was a dread memory which could not altogether leave him; and it was this that held his tongue fast bound, and checked the words that were rising to his lips.

Again Maud broke the silence which embarrassed her. But this time it was no commonplace that she uttered, but rather the thought that for weeks had been uppermost in her mind. It was a thing that she longed to know. Upon this all her future seemed to depend. So with a great effort she forced herself to speak.

"You never answered my last letter. Did you get it?"

She spoke almost breathlessly, with intense eagerness, not looking at him, but walking by his side with her eyes fixed upon the ground. Her voice was low, but the words were distinct, and every one was audible to her companion. To him those words were not altogether intelligible as to their meaning, but they had reference to her letter, to that letter which had wrought so much woe for him. In a moment a new change came over him, his dark memories rushed to the surface, overpowering the tenderness which had been born from this meeting.

"Your letter?" said he, in a harsh voice. "I answered it. Did n't you get my answer?"

His tone startled her and shocked her. She raised her eyes in terror;

she saw a gloomy frown upon his face, and the gaze that he now turned upon her was cold and dark and cruel.

"Oh!" she said, with a low moan of irrepressible grief, "you cannot mean this. You don't know. Did you get my second letter, my letter in which I explained? Did you get that? I explained. It was an awful mistake — the first letter. You did not get my last letter."

Carrol started. He stopped and looked at her. A thought came to him which sent a dark look of anguish over his face.

"Last letter!" said he. "I don't know. I only got one letter, and I answered it. I wrote you a — a farewell. Did you write again? What do you mean by a mistake? Was there a mistake? What mistake? O heaven! tell me what you mean. I never got any other letter. What do you mean by your last letter?"

He spoke eagerly, but his tones expressed the deepest anguish. He was eager to know the truth, but beneath his eager desire was the grim consciousness that it was now too late for any explanation to avail. To find out that she after all was true, to have it all explained, was to him like having heaven opened; but at the same time the consciousness of his dark deed of horror formed an impenetrable barrier that lay between him and that heaven.

All this longing and all this fear showed itself in his face and in his voice: forming a strange mixture, which Maud noticed with wonder and deep apprehension. But for her there was nothing else to do than to exculpate herself, and show her innocence and her truth.

"Paul!" she cried, in a voice that was a wail of anguish, "how could you go without seeing me? How could you take that letter as if it came from me and never come to me, when one word would have explained all? It was all a mistake, — a miserable, miserable mistake. When you wrote to me you must have *known* how I would an-

swer. And I *did* answer it as you knew I would. I answered it as you wished me to. But in my excitement and agitation I foolishly wrote on the envelope the wrong address. I did so because I happened to be writing a reply to some wretched creature, who sent me a silly note at the same time. In my agitation I wrote the wrong address on each envelope, and you got what was not intended for you. As soon as I received your reply I understood it all, and wrote you at once explaining it, but I never heard from you again. And, O Paul! believe me — I have — suffered — much."

Maud was a proud girl, and all this was a humiliation to her; but she had suffered so much, that she longed to find peace and reconciliation, and so she made this frank explanation. She made it frankly, because she was confident that it would make all things plain, and drive away the last feeling of suspicion and resentment that Carol might entertain. She stood as she said this, not looking at him, but with her eyes fixed on the ground. A burning flush overspread her face. Her hands clutched one another convulsively. She spoke quickly, and the tones of her voice were tremulous and faint from the deep agitation of her heart. As she ended she could scarcely speak; her last words seemed wrung from her in spite of herself; and when she stopped she waited for a moment, expecting Carol's answer, and then she slowly raised her eyes to his face. Her eyes were full of tears, and in them there was again that earnest, wistful look which had before been seen in them.

Carol had heard every word. The few words of explanation had been sufficient to convey to his mind a general, yet a perfectly distinct idea of the nature of Maud's mistake, and to assure him that she had been perfectly true and faithful; that she had hastened to explain her mistake; that she had suffered greatly; and that his miserable jealousy had excited suspicions in his mind against her which

were foully and frightfully unjust and disgraceful. He saw also that she had not only been thus perfectly true and faithful, but that now at this moment, and here by his side, she stood, herself volunteering this explanation, giving it unasked, and speaking to him words of sweet reconciliation. Thus all the truth burst upon him.

But as the truth thus became known to him, there were manifest to his mind other things which darkened that truth, and shrouded all his hopes in the blackness of darkness. She had explained her mistake fully and frankly, but she did not know how terrible, how fatal that mistake had been. As she stood there in her innocent trust, seeking reconciliation, her very words of explanation showed that she was utterly ignorant of the terrible crime which had been the result of this mistake. She evidently thought him as pure and as unstained as he had been when they had last spoken together. She could not have heard of the murder. She could not know what he was now. She thought that nothing lay between them but a misunderstanding that a word could remove; she did not know that between them there yawned an abyss which must separate them forever. Soon she must know all, and then she would understand; but now — but now —

A thousand thoughts like these rushed through Carol's mind as he stood there. He did not venture to look at Maud. As she raised her tearful eyes timidly and wistfully to his face, this was what she saw. She saw Carol standing with averted face, his brow drawn together in a dark and gloomy frown, his lips compressed, and his eyes staring far away into empty space. On that face there was not the faintest approach to anything like a relenting of that harsh and resentful temper which he had manifested ever since their misunderstanding; not the slightest sign of anything like an acquiescence in her explanation, of a readiness to receive it, or a tendency to meet her half-way and resume the old intimacy.

He stood there as harsh, as stern, as implacable as ever.

Maud's heart seemed to turn to stone as she gazed; and at once there arose within her a bitter sense of wrong and injury; her whole soul roused itself in strong resentment against such abominable treatment, and all the pride of her nature started up in fierce recoil proportionate to the degree in which she had just humiliated herself. She said not a word; she turned, and without another look walked quickly away.

Of Carrol she had now only one thought as she thus walked away from him, and that was the thought of a pride on his part so obstinate as to be utterly irremovable; a pride obdurate, implacable, and utterly devilish; a nature cold, selfish, and altogether devoid of human feeling; a foolish yet frantic self-esteem, which preferred continuance in a wrong course to a candid and frank change of opinion, even though such a course should lead to the shipwreck of a life, to the misery of himself and others. To her Carrol was obdurate beyond all hope of change. But it was not sorrow or melancholy that filled her heart as she left him. Her whole soul swelled with the most intense indignation against him for subjecting her so wantonly to such cruel injustice.

Meanwhile Carrol stood half frantic with the emotions that filled his heart and the thoughts that rushed through his brain. He did not see Maud leave him, nor did he hear her as she moved away; for his sight and hearing were dulled through the deep abstraction into which his feelings had plunged him. But at length he came to himself. He then saw, to his amazement, that he was alone. He could scarcely believe it. He looked all around. Crowds of people appeared assembled together not far away, — men, women, and children, — but where was Maud?

He looked all around, wildly, and full of consternation. Every word that she had spoken was still fresh in his memory. He knew that he had given no answer to her. He saw that she had

left him in anger. But where had she gone? He could not imagine; and so, after looking in all directions, he started off to search after her.

But Maud had already disappeared in the crowd, and was walking toward her lodgings. As for Carrol, he searched after her all that day, never ceasing to reproach and curse himself for his folly; but the day passed, and evening came, and Maud appeared no more.

XVI.

AN IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL.

ON the same eventful day on which Carrol met with Maud, Grimes also happened to be in the Champs Elysées. He had made his daily effort upon Trochu and the American Minister, but in each case the *queue* had again baffled him. Sauntering away, he had drifted up the Champs Elysées, and, as he had nothing better to do, on reaching the Arc de l'Étoile he turned and allowed himself to drift down again.

Though he had been subject to a fresh disappointment, he was not at all depressed in his mind, but his broad face exhibited an expression of serenity that showed a mind at peace within. There was something in the scene which was pleasant in his eyes. His thoughts were stimulated by the sight of the marching warriors. He saw the invincible legions of republican France going forth at last to victory. He longed to make one among them. Every beat of the drum, every blare of the bugle, every tramp of the measured footfall, seemed a summons for him to come and join these ranks.

He was so absorbed that he sauntered on quite oblivious of the scene around him, he was suddenly roused by an exclamation, and the sound of his own name uttered in a lady's voice. He started and stared.

"Why, Mr. Grimes! How very, very odd; but how really nice and fortunate!"

And Mrs. Lovell, for it was she who thus encountered him, held forth, with

a beaming smile, her little hand, which Grimes at once grasped and crushed; while at the same instant, as though the touch of that hand was magical, every thought of Trochu, and the French Republic, vanished from his mind.

"Wal!" exclaimed Grimes. And upon saying that he relapsed into a silence which, under the circumstances, may perhaps have been more eloquent than words.

"It's so absurd," said Mrs. Lovell, withdrawing her hand, not without some effort. "You know, I've really lost my way; and poor Maudie! I'm so dreadfully anxious about her. We were separated by a great crowd, and I've been looking for her everywhere. I'm really quite wild with anxiety, for I'm sure she can never, never find her way home. And do you think that anything could happen to her, and isn't it a shame, Mr. Grimes?"

To this Grimes made no reply, but stood gazing at her with a smile of almost parental indulgence and fondness.

"You see, she does n't know her way about Paris at all; and have n't you seen her somewhere? I thought perhaps I might find her up this way."

Grimes shook his head, without attempting to say anything as yet.

"I'm so dreadfully anxious, and I'm so wretchedly tired," continued Mrs. Lovell. "I've been looking for her everywhere; and I was just going to sit down and rest, when I met you. And don't you think, now, it would be just as well for me to sit down for a little while, Mr. Grimes? Might n't she find me more easily in that way, now? And could n't you find some seat for me, Mr. Grimes, where I could have a good view of the place, and see her if she came anywhere near?"

"Most certainly, ma'am," said Grimes, quickly. "I'll be perfectly delighted, I assure you. I hain't the slightest doubt that that's the best way to find her. Why, 't aint any use to hunt her up in this crowd, no more 'n a needle in a haystack."

"I was just beginning to think some such thing as that," said Mrs. Lovell.

Grimes now led the way out of the crowd to a seat on one side of the avenue, under the trees, in a place from which an extensive view could be commanded up and down. Here Mrs. Lovell seated herself with, "O thanks, very much; it's really so good of you, Mr. Grimes"; while Grimes placed himself by her side.

"Wal," said he, after a pause, in a confidential and friendly tone, "and how are you to-day? Pooty well?"

"O, very well, thanks," said Mrs. Lovell, with a smile.

Grimes paused, and looked solemnly at the ground for a few moments.

"Fine weather we're havin' to-day," said he at length.

"Is n't it perfectly exquisite?" said Mrs. Lovell.

"Fine place, Paris," continued Grimes, cheerily.

"Delightful," said Mrs. Lovell. "Do you know it's my favorite place, that is, generally; of course, just now it's a little different."

"Fine people the French," said Grimes.

"Yes; I always liked them very much; they are perfectly charming. And how very funny it was that I should meet you here. It's really so nice, and so very, very providential, you know. Why, I was just beginning to despair."

Grimes heaved a heavy sigh, and meditated solemnly for a little while.

"Is this your first visit to Paris?" he asked at length, with an air of anxiety.

"O no," said Mrs. Lovell. "I was here once or twice before; and I liked it so very, very much, that I thought I should enjoy it now."

"I find, ma'am," said Grimes, "that you did n't get scared at the siege. You hung on, I see. 'T aint everybody that'd do like that. That's what I call pure spunk. And I tell you what it is, I did n't think you'd 'a' done it. Most women are such cowards."

"O, but I'm a coward, too," said

Mrs. Lovell. "I'm an awful coward. I'm frightened out of my wits. I did n't know there was going to be a siege, you know. There was no regular notice of it given. Nobody told me anything about it. I never was so surprised in my life. There ought to have been some regular public notice; now ought n't there, Mr. Grimes?"

"Wal," said Grimes, "that's queer. It strikes me there was a good deal about it in the papers."

"O yes; but then, you know, I never read the papers. One never can believe the half of what they say. They always contradict themselves the next day. And then they always say such extravagant things. Really, you know, if one went by what the papers say, one could never expect to have any peace at all."

"Wal," said Grimes, "I must say I do admire your style. I've often heard the papers pitched into; but people that abuse them always follow their lead, nevertheless. But you're the very first person I ever met with that deliberately ignored them, and not only despised them, but acted up to it."

Mrs. Lovell took no notice of this, but looked earnestly at Grimes as he was speaking; and when he had ceased, she said, "I wonder why you remained, if you knew there was going to be a siege."

"Me?" said Grimes. "O, I'm goin' to enlist in the French army."

"O, how lovely!" cried Mrs. Lovell, in an animated tone; "how nice, and chivalrous, and all that! Do you know I've always perfectly adored the army? and to think of your being an officer! Only fancy! The idea!"

And Mrs. Lovell fastened her eyes upon space with an expression of wonder beyond words that was exceedingly becoming to her particular style of beauty.

"Yes, 'm," said Grimes seriously, and with very creditable self-poise; "I quite agree with you there. It's what you might consider a high and holy callin' just now in these times, when there is a regular epoch, a moment,

ma'am, when liberty long buried is havin' a resurrection, and the eagle of France responds to the clarion voice of—of—the principles of—of—seventy-six, and the Republic arises great, glorious, and free. And so it's the proud privilege of every man that can wield a sword to strike a blow for the cause of freedom,—and so forth."

"How very, very true," said Mrs. Lovell; "and do you know, Mr. Grimes, I don't think I ever knew anything half so funny as the way you and I meet. Only fancy! First there was Niagara, then Montreal, then, you know, we met so absurdly on board the steamer, and now we have met again in the most unaccountable way in the middle of a besieged city. Really, it's the most wonderful thing. But I suppose you don't think anything of meeting with poor me, now that you are a great French general, Mr. Grimes."

Grimes had already experienced a little of Mrs. Lovell's tendency to an abrupt transition from one subject of conversation to another, but this one bewildered him a little by its suddenness. The hint which she made as to his possible indifference was not, however unpleasant, and more than this it very naturally roused him to a manly denial of any such imputation.

"No, 'm," said he steadily, shaking his head at the same time with a very solemn emphasis. "That ain't my style. I don't forget so easy. When I get a thing I always cling to it. The circumstance that led to our acquaintance at Niagara, 'm, still remains with me here at Paris."

"The—the circumstance?" asked Mrs. Lovell, doubtfully.

"Yes, 'm."

"What a funny thing to call it a circumstance," said Mrs. Lovell, with a light laugh. "And have you really brought that absurd chignon here, with you? Only fancy!"

"Wal," said Grimes, in a tone of candor, "when I said circumstance I meant incident, but as to the other—the apparatus—I'm free to say I have it still—in my trunk—in this town."

"And did you really bring it all the way across the ocean?"

"Yes, 'm."

"How very funny!" sighed Mrs. Lovell; and then after a pause she added, in a low voice, "I don't see why, I'm sure."

Grimes looked at her earnestly, a slight flush passed over his face, his lips parted to utter words which rested there; but he checked himself, and the words remained unspoken. Mrs. Lovell waited patiently, looking at the ground with a sweet air of meek expectation.

"Wal," said Grimes at last, "you see it was a kind of reminder of what I once wanted — and did n't get."

Mrs. Lovell gave a very little bit of a sigh.

"I'm sure I don't see the use of being so awfully despondent," said she.

Grimes looked at her eagerly and earnestly. Mrs. Lovell looked at the ground. Grimes had a sudden idea that there might still be hope for him in this quarter, and the words were already on his lips which this idea impelled. But again he checked himself. It was his innate modesty and self-depreciation that stopped his utterance. No, he thought, she don't mean that; she is only speakin' of despondency in general, and she's quite right. So Grimes said, "Wal, 'm, I'm not that kind. I like one person, and no other. It ain't the most comfortable nature to have, but a fellow can't help his disposition. For my part, I'm a man of one idea, — always was, am now, and ever shall be. I'm a fellow of one feelin' too, I suppose, and so I find if I once get hankerin' after anybody, why, there I am, and I can't get over it. There ain't any use in it, as you say, course, but what can a fellow do if he can't help it?"

At this Mrs. Lovell again gave a little sigh.

"Yes," said she, "that's just the way it is with me; and I think it's awfully nice."

Grimes slowly took this observation

into his mind and turned it over and over therein. It seemed to him at length to be a very gentle reminder, offered by Mrs. Lovell to him, that she was a widow, and was still brooding over her lost love, to which she still persisted in clinging with unchangeable constancy. He accepted it as a kind of rebuke, and in the simple honesty of his heart he found something in such rare constancy which was at once admirable, delicate, pure, holy, touching, affecting, pathetic, tender, and true. "It's rather rough on me," thought honest Grimes, "but, after all, it comes up to my idea of a high-toned woman." He now felt afraid that he had gone too far in talking about his own feelings. He had perhaps offended her, and she had sought out this delicate way of administering a rebuke. He felt anxious to make amends for his error. He felt that an apology would only make matters worse; and so he sought rather to make an ample atonement by introducing some new subject which should at once be most agreeable to her, and at the same time be suggestive of his own penitence. To him there seemed to be only one subject which could fulfil these conditions, and that was the memory of the one to whom she had just professed, as he supposed, such undying constancy.

"I suppose now," said Grimes, with that heavy sigh, and that deep dolefulness of tone which are often employed by clergymen in condoling with the afflicted or the bereaved, — "I suppose now — that is, I dare say you thought a good deal of him."

Mrs. Lovell at this looked up a little puzzled. But she supposed that this was a remark put forth by Grimes to sound her as to her state of mind with reference to himself. So a slight blush passed over her face, and she sighed gently, "I suppose so."

"Liked to have him around?" continued Grimes in the same austere and dismal voice.

"Yes," sighed Mrs. Lovell.

"Missed him — most tremendously now?"

Mrs. Lovell shook her head slowly and emphatically, as though words were incapable of expressing the extent to which she had missed him.

"Die for him, course," wailed Grimes, as his voice grew dimmer and dolefuller.

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Lovell, after a pause in which she began to think that Grimes was making her commit herself altogether too much, but at the same time felt an undiminished desire to rouse him from his evident despondency to a healthier state of mind.

"Loss irreparable?" said Grimes, with a groan.

"Well — yes — that is," added Mrs. Lovell, "to lose him altogether, you know."

Grimes gave another groan. If anything had been needed to convince him of the utter futility of the hopes that he had once cherished it was this, — this touching confession of love stronger than death, — this declaration of a woman's truth and constancy. A new despair came to his own heart, but in the midst of his despair he honored her for such feelings. At length he roused himself and made a final effort.

"Fine man, — I s'pose, — this Mr. Lovell?"

That is what Grimes said. It was an outburst of frank generosity. He was boiling over with jealous hate of this Lovell, but in his tender regard for Mrs. Lovell he subdued his jealousy and his hate, subdued himself, and rose to a display of his better nature. "Fine man, — I s'pose, — this Mr. Lovell?"

At this Mrs. Lovell started as though she had been shot. She stared at Grimes in amazement, utterly unable to understand what he could possibly mean.

"Mr. — Lovell?" she faltered at length. "What do you mean? I don't understand you."

"Why," said Grimes in equal amazement, "we've been talkin' about him all along, have n't we? You said your

loss of him was irreparable, and that you'd die for him."

"I was n't talking about *him* at all," said Mrs. Lovell, rising to her feet. "And I'm awfully anxious about poor Maudie. I have n't seen her yet at all. Have you, Mr. Grimes? And I'm sure, I've been looking all over that crowd ever since I sat down here. You have n't seen her, have you, Mr. Grimes? You did n't notice her, did you, Mr. Grimes?"

"No," said Grimes, who had risen to his feet in a dazed way, — "no, I — I have n't."

"I think I ought to go home. She will probably be there; I'm so awfully anxious about her."

With these words Mrs. Lovell walked away, and Grimes walked away with her. He felt confused, bewildered, and confounded. The discovery that Mrs. Lovell had not been yearning over the dear departed had set his brain in a whirl. Who was the happy man for whom she felt such an attachment? He was too modest to think of himself after what had passed. Was there any other person? If so, who was he? Where did he live? Why should Mrs. Lovell be here in Paris? What did it all mean? All these thoughts served to throw him into such a state of confusion that he could scarcely find any words to say.

Out of this confusion, however, he was at length drawn by Mrs. Lovell herself. She at first had felt excessively vexed at the blunder that she had made, but her good-nature at length chased away her vexation; and besides, she had matters of importance about which she wished to speak. This was her present position in Paris, exposed to the insults of Du Potiron. She had defied him, and smiled at his threats; but in spite of all this she could not help feeling some uneasiness, and she was longing to have the interposition of some one whom she could trust. Now Grimes was the very man for this purpose and the only man.

So as they walked along she told Grimes exactly how it happened that

she was in Paris at this time. The admiration which he had felt for her courage was now exchanged for a more tender sentiment of pity for beauty in distress. The distress also was not trivial or ordinary. She explained to him the more peculiar difficulties of her situation, as well as those general ones which were natural to all who were shut up in the city. She did not mention Du Potiron, for she thought that the mention of his name would be of no service, and would only lead to long and troublesome explanations, involving Maud's private affairs. This she considered quite unnecessary. She confined herself simply to generalities. She expressed a great fear of internal difficulties in Paris, alluded in strong language to the chronic panic of Madame Guimarin, and the dangers of a revolution. The terror which she felt about the Reds seemed to Grimes to be very natural under the circumstances. In that danger he fully believed. Amid all his enthusiasm about the French Republic, he was well aware of the existence of a fanatical and bloodthirsty element in Paris, composed of people with whom the word "republic" meant little else than universal anarchy and bloodshed. Though he himself had no personal fears about the Red Republic, yet he knew that an unprotected lady had every reason for fear, and he was full of fear on her account.

And so it was that Mrs. Lovell's pathetic appeal elicited from Grimes a rejoinder so full of earnest sympathy and zealous devotion that she had nothing more to desire. She informed him plainly that her one and only wish was to escape from Paris. Inside the city she would never feel safe. Safety seemed to her to be outside. To this Grimes responded by a solemn promise that he would effect her escape in some way or other.

Grimes walked with Mrs. Lovell back to her lodgings, and left her there. When Mrs. Lovell reached her rooms she found Maud there already. If she had not been so much excited, she would have noticed that Maud was

even paler than usual, and that she evinced a certain feverish agitation that presented a strong contrast to the dull depression which had characterized her manner for the last few weeks.

XVII.

A DESPERATE PROJECT.

FOR the remainder of that day Grimes wandered about, his mind filled with novel yet by no means unpleasant thoughts. His meeting with Mrs. Lovell had produced a very strong effect upon his thoughts, giving them a tendency altogether different from what they had before, and driving away from his mind all ideas of a general nature. He no longer thought of the French Republic, or of the sublime resurrection of a dead and buried cause; he no longer exhausted his ingenuity in the endeavor to find some way in which he could assist the arms of struggling France; but, on the contrary, he saw before him something more tangible than an ideal republic. Instead of the symbolical figure of Liberty, he saw the real form and face of Mrs. Lovell asking with anxious look and audible words for his assistance.

She wanted his help. Yet what help could he give her? This was the problem that now occupied his thoughts. She wanted to escape from Paris, and how could he assist her to accomplish this? He knew very well that the place was "straitly shut up," and that no one could either enter or depart through that living wall which the enemy maintained around the beleaguered city. The notice of the approach of the enemy had been frequent and alarming, and the warning of the coming doom had been sufficient to drive away all who were in a position to leave. Almost all foreigners had long since left. A few had remained out of hardihood; but there were none except Mrs. Lovell who had remained on account of ignorance. The discovery of the real cause of her stay, though it put an end to the admiration which he had

felt for what he considered her "pluck," did not at all affect his desire to help her.

Yet how could he help her in her desire to escape? This was the problem that took up all his thoughts; and it proved to be a problem which was by no means easy of solution. In this state of mind he returned to his lodgings.

He found Carrol there, gloomy, meditative, and reticent. In such a mood Carrol did not seem to be at all fitted to become a confidant of the thoughts that were troubling the mind of Grimes, and so Grimes did not feel inclined to make any mention to him of the events of the day. To Grimes it seemed that the slightest allusion to the ladies would only madden his friend, and bring on the usual tirade against all women in general, and against Maud Heathcote in particular. If he had come to any conclusion, or made up his mind to any particular plan of action, he might possibly have sought the co-operation of Carrol; but as it was he was all at sea, and had not as yet settled upon anything. The consequence was that he simply held his tongue, and allowed himself to sink into his own meditations. On the other hand, Carrol's thoughts were certainly not of such a character as he would feel inclined to communicate to any friend, however intimate. He was on this occasion overwhelmed with self-reproach for his treatment of Maud. He had met with her, he had listened to her, and he had not only not replied, but he had allowed her to leave him without being conscious of her departure. The remembrance of this made him utterly miserable; and the misery which he felt was of such a nature that he could not hope for sympathy from others, since he could not even find excuse for himself.

Grimes meditated most earnestly over his problem for hours, until at last he fell asleep; and so intense were his meditations that they did not cease even then, but accompanied him. These dreams did not accomplish any-

thing, however, beyond the simple fact that they served to keep his mind fixed all the more intently upon that one idea which had taken possession of it, and so much so that, on the following morn, it was just the same to him as though he had been wide awake all through the night.

On that day he made a final assault upon the American Minister. Fortunately for him there was a tremendous rain-storm. Now it happens that though the people on the continent of Europe can endure many evils, there is one thing that they cannot endure, and that is a thorough soaking. The terrors of rain have never been successfully encountered by any continental people. To the Anglo-Saxon race alone must the credit be given of a struggle with rain and victory over it. To them must be credited the umbrella, the mackintosh, the waterproof, and the india-rubber coat. These Anglo-Saxon inventions are still comparatively unknown to the benighted nations of the Continent, who still show a craven fear of rain, and, instead of boldly encountering it, shrink into the shelter of their houses at the slightest approach of a shower; and so it was that Grimes found the *queue* dwindled to nothingness, and at last a way opened for him to the ear of the American Minister.

The ambassador sent forth by the majority of the nations of the earth generally has nothing whatever to do; and his office is purely ornamental, being used as a brilliant reward for distinguished political merit. He is a luminary that reflects the lustre of his native country, and his only duty is to shine as bright as he can. The one exception to this is the American Ambassador. He has to do everything. He has to be guide, philosopher, and friend to the multitudinous American traveller. He has to supply him with passes to all manner of places, to shake hands with him, to listen to him, to warn, to rebuke, to instruct, to be instant in season and out of season. But of all the American Ambassadors that have ever lived, it may safely be said that not one

has ever known the possibilities of American ambassadorial duty as it was known to the man who represented his country in Paris during the siege. For on that particular occasion the American eagle offered to gather the deserted chickens of all nations under her wings, and Minister Washburne it was who had to officiate as representative of the benevolent bird.

Grimes was able to make a statement of his case in the most effective manner. His errand now was totally different from what it would have been on a former occasion. Then he sought the Minister's aid for himself; now he sought it for the ladies. His former errand would also have been more successful, for then he merely wished to fight, but now his wish was to run away.

The Minister's answer at once chased away all the bright hopes in which Grimes had been indulging, and exhibited to him the utter desperation of his case. There was no such thing as escape possible to any one in the city, no matter what nation they might belong to. The Prussian rules were too stringent to be set aside for any human being whatever; nor was there any influence sufficiently potent to relax the rigor of those rules.

Of course, after such information as this, Grimes had nothing whatever to say. It was clearly a case in which there was no opportunity to make use of any argument or any persuasion. Paris was as entirely isolated from the world as though it had been an island in the midst of the ocean, unvisited by ships and unknown to man.

This is about what the Minister remarked to Grimes, and at the same time he alluded to the fact that the only communication with the world outside had been contrived by the ingenuity of the Parisians; and those who were sufficiently desperate might now try the air and fly away in a balloon.

The suggestion was made in a general way, but the mention of balloons sank deep into the mind of Grimes and attracted all his thoughts at once. He

carried this thought with him away from the embassy, and as he walked away through the crowded streets he lost himself in speculations as to the feasibility of such a plan.

A balloon!

Flight in a balloon!

At first the idea was certainly startling, in fact quite preposterous. But a second thought made it much less so, and a third and a fourth made it seem rather promising.

A balloon? Why not? It was certainly an easy mode of travelling. No jolts, no plungings and rollings; no alternations of rapidity and slowness, but all calm, smooth, yea, even luxurious.

And the management. Simple? Why, no mode of travelling could possibly equal it in this respect. All one had to do was to pull the valve-rope to bring the balloon down to the earth, and throw out ballast to raise it to the skies.

As to undertaking the management of the untried machine, Grimes had no doubts whatever about his capacity. For that matter he felt himself fully equal to any undertaking, however strange or unfamiliar. He felt within his soul a consciousness that he could manage a balloon, just as he felt the same consciousness that he could edit a paper, or preach a sermon, or command an army. "Yes," said Grimes proudly to himself. "Put me in a balloon, and I'll run it with any professional in all the blue ethereal sky."

In fact the more he thought of this the more fascinating did the idea become, and at length it seemed to him not only a practicable mode of escape from Paris, but the easiest, safest, pleasantest, and most delightful mode of travelling that was ever devised. There was only one objection that could possibly be urged even by the most timid, and that was the notorious fact that the balloon could not be guided, but was at the mercy of the wind. But to Grimes this did not seem any disadvantage whatever. It might be taken, he thought, as an objection

against balloons as a universal mode of travelling where the traveller wished to reach some definite place; but to him, where his only desire was to escape from this one point, and where destination was a matter of indifference, this formed no objection whatever. Not the slightest difference could it make to him where the wind might carry him, whether east, west, north, or south. One thing, of course, he saw to be desirable, and that was not to start in a gale of wind. "In any ordinary blow," he thought, "I'm at home, and I'm ready to soar aloft to the everlasting stars."

Over such thoughts as these he finally grew greatly excited, and determined at once to make inquiries about balloons. Already they had become an article of necessity to the Parisian world, and at regular intervals they were sent forth bearing messages or passengers to the world without. Already Gambetta had made his flight, and dropped from the skies in the midst of astonished France to take up the *rôle* of heaven-descended monster.

What Gambetta has done, Grimes can do.

Such was the general conclusion which summed up the workings of the Grimesian brain. He had no difficulty in finding out the locality of the Balloon Depot, and in course of time he reached the place and stood in the presence of Monsieur Nadar.

The establishment was an extensive one. The exigencies of the siege had created a demand for balloons as the one great necessity of Paris, and every aeronaut had flung himself into the business. Prominent among these were Messieurs Nadar and Godard, both of whom were eminent in this celestial profession. Although the radical deficiencies of the balloon as a means of travel can never be remedied, yet much had been done by these gentlemen to make the balloon itself as efficient as it is possible for a mere balloon to be. A new material had been invented, consisting of cotton cloth sat-

urated in india-rubber solution, which formed a substance that was quite airtight and at the same time far cheaper than the silk which had formerly been used, as well as stronger. Thus a better balloon was now made at a very much lower price than formerly. Other improvements had also been made in the netting, in the valve-rope and valve, and in the material used for ballast. Its structure was now simple enough to be understood by a child.

M. Nadar informed Grimes that the weather had been unsuitable for some days past, and that none had left the city, but he hoped after this rain there would be one or two quiet days. He had several balloons ready, which he could prepare on short notice. Grimes asked him his opinion as to the possibility of his managing a balloon himself; not that he doubted it himself, but he was naturally desirous to see what another person might think. To his great delight, Nadar informed him that the mere management of a balloon was very simple, the chief requisite being presence of mind and cool courage.

None of the balloons which were ready could carry as many as four, nor did Grimes feel particularly anxious to take the whole party. He felt confident that he could manage the balloon if he had only one other passenger, — Mrs. Lovell, for instance. As to Miss Heathcote, he felt that it would be safer for her, as well as pleasanter for him, if she went in another balloon. He thought that Carrol might go with her. At the same time he did not think that Carrol would be capable of managing a balloon himself; and so he proposed to engage an aeronaut to navigate the other one. Thus everything, as he thought, would be fair and respectable, and safe and pleasant, and they could arrange a common rendezvous, where they could all meet again in a general reunion, and congratulate one another over their escape.

It was a plan which seemed to him to be so pleasant in every respect and from every point of view, that his whole

soul was now set upon carrying it into execution. His last interview with Mrs. Lovell had produced a very strong and very peculiar effect upon him. Her allusions about constancy were not made with reference to her first husband, and he was too modest to venture to appropriate them to himself; but still, though they were not altogether intelligible, they were suggestive of very pleasant possibilities.

There were two difficulties, however, in the way of his plan, which might prevent its accomplishment. The first was, the possible unwillingness of Mrs. Lovell to make such a journey. The other was, the possible refusal of Carrol to have anything to do with Maud. Each of these difficulties would have to be encountered. As to the first, he trusted very much to his own powers of persuasion. He felt that Mrs. Lovell's prejudices against ballooning were merely idle fears which could be readily dissipated, if he only should explain to her how simple, pleasant, safe, agreeable, and delightful that mode of travelling was, and if he could only induce her to put implicit confidence in him. As to Carrol, he hoped to be able to persuade him also; but as yet he did not bestow much thought upon him. The great difficulty he rightly felt would be to persuade Mrs. Lovell. Strangely enough, in all this he never thought of any difficulty on the part of Maud. This arose from the fact that he was so in the habit of identifying her with her sister, that if Mrs. Lovell should only consent to go, it seemed to him to follow, as a matter of course, that Maud would go with her.

XVIII.

A TERRIBLE PROPOSAL.

OF course such a plan as the one which Grimes had been thus revolving from his profound meditations could not be kept secret from one who was to play so important a part in it as Carrol; and to tell him the plan meant a general narration of

all the events of the day, including his meeting with Mrs. Lovell, and her appeal to him for help. There was a strong repugnance in the breast of Grimes against any such disclosure, and his native delicacy revolted against breathing into another ear the story of his reviving tenderness; but it had to be done. After a faint attempt to discuss the subject in a commonplace manner, he gave it up and launched forth into an enthusiastic description of Mrs. Lovell's candor, her gentleness, her beauty, and her trustful disposition, from which Carrol was able to gather a very correct idea of the state of mind into which his friend had passed. But all this was of far inferior interest to Carrol compared with the one striking fact that Grimes had accompanied Mrs. Lovell to her lodgings, that he knew her address, and that the clew to Maud which he had thought lost was once more recovered. He asked eagerly after their address, and Grimes told him; after which he relapsed into his former silence.

Grimes looked at him attentively for a few moments, and then exclaimed in a cordial tone of approbation, "Wal now, I must say I like that. That has the right ring. You talk like a man. I was afraid that the very mention of the ladies would act on you like a red rag on a bull. But you take the mention calmly, and even show a gentlemanly interest in them. Carrol, my boy, by those words, you've taken a tremendous load off my mind, and saved me about ten hours of solid talk. So you're all right, are you? If so, I say, three cheers."

"O well," said Carrol, "the fact is, I begin to think I was unjust to — to her — and that there was — a — a mistake —"

He would have said more, for he now felt keenly how ungenerous and how base his suspicions had been, and he also felt most profoundly the perfect truth and constancy of Maud. Yet he could not tell any more than this, certainly not to Grimes; so he held his tongue.

"All right, my boy," said Grimes, cheerily. "You've come round at last; I don't care how, so long as you've come. And now I want to tell you about a plan I've been concocting for the escape of the ladies from this prison. They're frightened, no doubt. They want to get away, ere it be eternally too late; and as they've appealed to me, why it stands to reason that I must be up and doin', and help them somehow, and for that matter so must you. You acknowledge that yourself, don't you?"

"Yes," said Carrol.

"Wal," said Grimes, "ordinary means of escape are of no use at all. Paris is a bottle corked up tight. You can't get out nohow, that is by any common way; you've got to try something extraordinary. You're aware, perhaps, that no human being can pass from this village to the world outside, or come from that world to us. For between us and them there is a great gulf fixed. Are you aware of that?"

"Of course! Everybody knows that Paris is blockaded perfectly, and has been for no end of a time."

"Wal, there again you excite my gratitude, for you save me from a two or three hours' talk in the way of explanation. And now let me ask you this. You know there is one way of escape, don't you?"

"One way?" asked Carrol, doubtfully.

"Yes, by doin' the American eagle, and soarin' aloft to the everlastin' stars; in plain language, by takin' to a balloon *à la* Gambetta."

"A balloon!" exclaimed Carrol, in amazement, — "a balloon!"

"Yes," said Grimes. "And now I want to ask you one question. Are you man enough to try it?"

"Good heavens, man alive!" cried Carrol; "what are you talking about? Do you mean to say that the ladies will be willing to go in a balloon?"

"Wal, I don't know yet, for I hain't mentioned the subject to them; but Mrs. Lovell's remarks indicated a

state of desperation that was equal to a desperate undertakin', and so I should n't wonder a bit if I might succeed in persuadin' her to trust herself to the unfathomable tracts of ether. O, could I fly, I'd fly with thee! as the poet says. But never mind what the poet says; what I want to know is, will you go? Will you take Miss Heathcote in one balloon, together with an aerial navigator, while I take Mrs. Lovell in my own personal, particular, and individual car?"

"I? why, of course," said Carrol; "but then, how under heaven do you expect ever to get the ladies to consent to such a journey?"

Upon this Grimes began to explain to Carrol the grounds of his hope, and the plan that he had made, and the way in which he expected to carry it out, and many other things which are unnecessary to report just here.

This conversation with Grimes lasted far into the night, and gave to Carrol the material for agitated thought during the wakeful hours that intervened till morning. The knowledge of Maud's whereabouts opened up to him once more the chance of communicating with her; and now that he was aware of the truth of the case, now that he had seen her tearful eyes, her pleading face, and her tremulous lips, since he had heard her low, sweet voice, as she told her simple and touching story, there had arisen in his heart a strong yearning after her which was intolerable and irresistible. Should he yield to his feelings? Should he seek her out?

"But, alas!" he thought, "why should I go? and for what end, and with what hope? She can never be mine. She does not know it, but there lies between us an unfathomable gulf, over which we cannot pass to join each other. I am a murderer! She will know all some day, soon enough too. Can I go to tell her that? Impossible. Can I go carrying with me this secret? I cannot. I can neither keep my secret in the presence of her pleading eyes, nor have I the heart to tell her that

which would mar her hopes and throw a blight over her young life. She will learn it all herself, and then she will understand me and do me justice. As to this flight, if she is willing to go, I shall rejoice to go with her, and trust myself to circumstances. But till then I must struggle against my desires and keep away from her."

Grimes was naturally prompt, and so on the following day he set forth to call on Mrs. Lovell. He had been somewhat troubled in his mind as to the propriety of mentioning Carrol's name. With him it was a difficult question. For Grimes, it must be remembered, had only heard Carrol's first account of his rejection by Maud. Carrol's long tirades against her had deepened the impression which that story had produced, and he very naturally concluded that the rejection of Carrol's proposal had been done by Maud quite deliberately and seriously. He was aware of Carrol's love for her, he remembered the bitterness of his grief over his rejection, and he knew how unfortunate the consequences had been for his friend in many ways. He never had been able to sympathize with Carrol's harsher views of her motives and her character; but some impression had been made upon him by denunciations so persistent; and he had come to feel as much dislike for Maud as it was possible for a chivalrous man to entertain towards a beautiful girl. His idea was that Maud had flirted with Carrol, and had encouraged him without any intentions of accepting him; and as her own affections had not been enlisted, she had not made sufficient allowance for him. He thought her nature was somewhat cold and callous, and that her rejection of Carrol was owing rather to indifference or to vanity than to anything like downright cruelty.

With such views of Maud's character, he naturally concluded that Carrol would not be a very agreeable companion to her; and, except in a very great emergency, he supposed that she would refuse to go with him altogether. Now

a refusal on her part would spoil his little plan, and he was anxious that nothing should be added to the ordinary unpleasantness of a balloon voyage to make it more disagreeable than it was in itself. And so Mr. Grimes very sagely concluded that it would be best not to mention Carrol's name at all, but to allude to him merely as "a friend." He thought that if Carrol could only be with Maud under unusual and somewhat serious circumstances, her hard and callous heart might possibly be softened and she might relent.

On seeing him, Mrs. Lovell's face lighted up with a glow of genuine pleasure, and she greeted him with a cordiality that was very flattering indeed.

"Wal," said Grimes, "and how are you? Pooty well?"

"O thanks; but how very, very good this is of you," said Mrs. Lovell; "and so thoughtful, too, you know. I was afraid you'd forget all about me."

And with these words she seated herself, while Grimes did the same, looking at her admiringly all the time.

"Fine weather we're havin' to-day," said he, "especially after the rain yesterday."

"It really is quite delightful," said Mrs. Lovell, "though I have not been out yet."

"But it did rain tremendous yesterday, did n't it now!" persisted Grimes, who had a distressing way of prying about the weather, when Mrs. Lovell was crazy to have him talk of other things.

"O yes, I dare say," said she; "but have you heard yet of any way of getting away from this dreadful place? I'm really very, very anxious, do you know. It's very silly, but really one can't help being a coward, and I'm sure there's every reason to be alarmed. Why, I heard guns yesterday, — positively guns. But that's not the worst."

"Wal," said Grimes, "that's the very thing I've come for; that is, next to havin' the pleasure of seein' you, and — and —"

He stopped and his face grew very red.

"O, how good of you!" said Mrs. Lovell. "And have you heard of anything?"

"Yes, 'm," said Grimes. "I have."

"O, what is it?" cried Mrs. Lovell, eagerly.

"Wal," said Grimes, "I've got a plan that I think 's goin' to work, if you 'll only fall in with it."

"A plan?" said Mrs. Lovell, eagerly; "O, what is it? But how really nice, and clever, and kind, and all that! But what is the plan, Mr. Grimes?"

"Wal," said Grimes, "I don't know exactly how it 'll strike you, and I 'm a little mite afraid that you may n't altogether like the looks of it."

"O, I 'm sure I 'll be perfectly charmed! I 'm sure *you* would n't think of any plan which would not be *perfectly* agreeable, Mr. Grimes."

"Wal, I hope you 'll like it," said Grimes, slowly and thoughtfully, "but I don't know about it just yet; you see the bother of it is, in the first place we 've got to divide ourselves."

"Divide ourselves?"

"Yes, that is to say, you've got to separate yourself from your sister, and I don't know how you 'll like that."

"Separate? what, from Maudie?" exclaimed Mrs. Lovell; "what, leave Maudie?"

"O, she 'll be all right. There 's a friend of mine that 's goin' too, and he 'll put her through."

"Maudie! but I can't separate from Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, sadly. "I really can't. Poor, dear Maudie! What would become of her if she went away by herself?"

"O, wal now," said Grimes, "there ain't the least mite of danger. My friend would die rather than have her run any risk. He 's a man of honor, an American, and a gentleman. He 's goin' off himself, and I spoke to him about this matter. It was the only thing I could think of. I 'd trust him as I would myself. Miss Heathcote could go with him, and I thought that I might take charge of you. We 've

got to divide in some fashion, and that seemed to me to be the best way. But, if you feel anxious about Miss Heathcote, why I 'd agree to take charge of her, and you could go with my friend."

This last offer was an act of immense self-sacrifice on the part of Grimes, and it was made in a very doleful tone of voice.

"O, I don't know," said Mrs. Lovell, slowly, "that it is altogether necessary to do that; in fact, the trouble is about Maudie being separated from me. Could n't we manage in any way to go together, Mr. Grimes? It would be so very, very sad to be separated. Could n't that be avoided in any way, Mr. Grimes?"

And Mrs. Lovell turned to Grimes with an appealing look that was really most pathetic.

Grimes hesitated, and all his plan was once more revolved in his mind.

"No, 'm," said he at length, with much decision, — "no, 'm. I don't exactly see how I could manage to fix it that way."

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

"I 'm sure," said she, "I don't believe that poor Maudie would ever consent, but then she is sometimes very, very set, and I really don't know but that she might be brave enough. But how I could ever bear to have her leave me I really do not know."

"Wal," said Grimes, who felt it to be his duty to disarm her fears as far as possible and to soothe her natural anxiety, — "wal, after all, you know, it won't be for long. It 'll only be for a few days at the most. You 'll then be joined again and meet to part no more."

Mrs. Lovell shook her head sadly and solemnly.

"Wal, the fact of the matter is, 'm," said Grimes, "it ~~can't~~ be managed, as I can see; for, you see, it won't hold more 'n two."

"It?" repeated Mrs. Lovell. "What do you mean by it? Is it marriage? Why, I 'm sure I can sit an ~~there~~ here, so

long as I have Maudie, and know that she is safe. Or is it a horse? Are we to go on horseback? And why can't we go together? I'm sure I don't see why we can't go together, Mr. Grimes. Why, I'd be willing to ride behind Maudie, or even to walk so long as I had her with me."

"Wal, 'm, the fact of the business is, it ain't a carriage, nor a horse, nor is it any kind of land conveyance, or water conveyance either. You see, our position is a little peculiar, and to escape from Paris requires very peculiar contrivances. Now, 'm, my plan had reference to a—a balloon."

At this Mrs. Lovell started and regarded Grimes in unspeakable amazement.

"A what!" she said; "a balloon?"

"Yes, 'm," said Grimes firmly, for he felt that the time had come to grapple with this subject, and that the question must be decided at once.

"A balloon?" repeated Mrs. Lovell. "You can't really mean what you say. A balloon? O Mr. Grimes! and I thought all the time that you were my friend."

"A balloon?" said Grimes, who felt wounded by this implied reproach. "A balloon? Why not? Why, 'm, a balloon is the safest and the easiest mode of travel that has ever been invented. I'm aware," he continued with engaging candor, "that there does exist a kind of prejudice against balloons, but I assure you that it's quite unfounded. You only get into your balloon, let the wind be fair, and the weather any ways moderate, and let a cool head have the navigation of her, and I'll bet any money that you go by that balloon easier, pleasanter, quicker, safer, and altogether happier than by any mode of conveyance known to mortal man. Now, I *know* this to be the case as sure 's my name 's Grimes. Fact, 'm."

"A balloon!" exclaimed Mrs. Lovell, upon whom Grimes's remarks had made not the least impression, but who still clung to her prejudices against that mode of travel with unflinching

pertinacity,—"a balloon? Why, Mr. Grimes, you cannot possibly be in earnest. Why, it's downright insanity. A balloon? Why, can you possibly suppose that I could have the rashness to venture into a balloon? Why, I'm sure I'd just as soon think of allowing myself to be fired from a cannon. And is that all that you can do for me? O dear! Then I'm afraid that our case is indeed hopeless, and that nothing remains but to face the worst."

Mrs. Lovell spoke in a despairing tone which deeply affected her hearer. Grimes sat looking quite crushed, with an expression on his face which was made up of deep disappointment and equally deep remorse. But he struggled gallantly against both of these feelings, and at length found voice to speak.

"Wal, now, really, 'm, it strikes me that you 're puttin' it a little too strong altogether. When you speak of despair, and facin' the worst, you see there is a remedy. After all, balloonin' ain't so bad as despair. Lots of people are leavin' Paris all the time by this mode of conveyance. There ain't a single fault you can find with it, except that you can't guide them very straight. That might be an objection if you wanted to go to some place in particular. But you see you don't want that. You simply want to get out of Paris, no matter where you go. Now, a balloon will do just exactly that for you. It'll take you far enough away from here to put you out of reach of battle and murder and sudden death; and plague, pestilence, and 'famine; and sieges, blockades, and bombardments. Now, if a balloon 'll do just what you want to be done, and no more, I don't see why you should find fault with it because it don't do what you don't want it to do, and what it don't pretend to do."

To this Mrs. Lovell opposed the danger of such a mode of travel. Whereupon Grimes hastened to explain that there was no danger at all. Upon this a long conversation followed, in which Grimes endeavored to prove that a balloon was not only free

from danger, but actually safer than *terra firma*. These arguments, however, made but little impression upon Mrs. Lovell, who found herself quite unable to overcome her fears.

The end of it was that Grimes, as he rose to go, informed her that he would call again in two days, and exhorted her to think over his plan. If she could bring herself to accept it, he would be ready to leave at once; if not, then it would be necessary for her to remain in Paris during the siege.

And so he departed, leaving Mrs. Lovell in a state of mind bordering on despair.

XIX.

THREATS CUT SHORT.

THE desire which Mrs. Lovell had expressed for escape was certainly no weaker than it had been, nor had her sense of present danger in any way lessened. This sense of danger arose from various causes which must have fully revealed themselves. One class of dangers were those which were connected with the siege, involving plague, pestilence, famine, battle, murder, sudden death, explosions, bombardments, and red-hot shot, with other things of a similar character; all of which usually go to make up a first-class siege. The other class of dangers were those which arose from the vindictive menace of Du Potiron, and his possible powers for carrying his threats into execution. What these might be she could not exactly know, and these dangers, therefore, became all the more terrible from being mysterious; but among the most prominent of those evils which might be impending from this quarter, her fancy suggested arrests, imprisonment, separation from Maud, trial, condemnation, and, to crown all, the guillotine.

Such fancies as these, whatever might be their cause, were certainly not adapted to promote peace of mind or serenity of soul. Yet such was the structure of Mrs. Lovell's character, that she did not allow any unusual depression of spirit to appear. Her chief desire was

to keep these troubles secret from Maud, for it will be seen by this time that one of Mrs. Lovell's strongest characteristics was a most devoted and self-sacrificing affection for her younger sister. For this reason she had not told her anything about the particulars of Du Potiron's later visits, so that Maud was in complete ignorance of that person's plans and threats.

The next day came, and brought a new trouble to the afflicted lady. This new trouble came in the visible form of Madame Guimarin, who waited on Mrs. Lovell and requested a private interview. With some surprise Mrs. Lovell granted the request, and Madame Guimarin, prepared to make known the object of her call.

With many apologies and much circumlocution she mentioned the fact that she would be compelled to give up her house and seek a new home for herself. She assigned as the cause of this decision, first, the absence of lodgers; secondly, her own ill-health and nervousness; and, thirdly, a dismal apprehension which she had of some mysterious danger which was impending. On being questioned still more closely as to the nature of this danger, it came out that Du Potiron had been tampering with her, and had managed to work upon her fears to such an extent that her only idea now was of instant flight. She had no confidence in anything. Paris was without law, order, or anything else. The whole city might rise any day from its present deceitful quiet, and the whole population might prepare at a moment's warning to cut one another's throats. Madame Guimarin had gone through 1848, and the *coup d'état*; and the Red Spectre was to her a very real and a very terrific apparition indeed. The good lady also warned Mrs. Lovell to seek the protection of some friends if she had any, and not live in this way apart and by herself; for she had good reason to believe that Du Potiron was preparing some very unpleasant combination against her; and she had equally good reason to fear that Du

Potiron's influence in certain quarters was strong enough to enable him to carry it into execution.

All of this sank deep into Mrs. Lovell's soul and intensified her despondency. She now knew of nothing else that could be done except to seek once more the aid of Grimes. She could not remain in her present lodgings much longer. Madame Guimarin had named a week as the longest possible time that her exhausted nature could bear the terrible strain of her present position; and Mrs. Lovell saw that she would have to seek a new home somewhere within that time. Madame Guimarin mentioned one or two eligible places that were still accessible, but Mrs. Lovell concluded to wait and ask the advice of Grimes.

On the following day Grimes was to come again, and in her distress she looked forward to his appearance with an impatience that was quite unusual with her. At length a visitor was announced and she hurried to meet him.

To her intense annoyance she found the visitor to be, not Grimes, but the irrepresible Du Potiron. The annoyance which she felt was plainly visible in her face and manner as her eyes rested on him, and she did not make any effort whatever to conceal it. But Du Potiron took no notice of it whatever, and whether he saw it or not could not be detected from his manner. His manner, indeed, was in every respect the exact counterpart of what it had been on his former visit: that is to say, first, as she entered he advanced to meet her with outstretched hands, eager eye, and enthusiastic smile; then on reaching her he stopped, laid one hand impressively on his heart, and made a most elaborate bow.

"Madame," said he, "I again haf ze honneur of to presenter mes respects, and to lay mes compliments at your feets."

"Really, sir," said Mrs. Lovell, "I think I have a right to call this a most unwarrantable intrusion, after what has already passed between us. I thought,

after what I said the other day, that you would not call here again."

"Mille pardons, madame," said Du Potiron, in a very obsequious tone. "I haf not ze presumption to hope zat I sall be more agreable to you zan before, an' I must explain zat I haf arrive zis time to see ze charmant Mo, to whom I wish you to be kind enough to convey ze assurance of my consideration distingué, and inform her zat I wait to see her."

"If you have come again to see Miss Heathcote," said Mrs. Lovell, "I can only say that it is quite useless, for she positively will not see you."

Du Potiron smiled, and waved his hand deprecatingly.

"Mais, madame, will you not haf consideration? Conceive what ees my chagrin. Moreovaire I haf rights, zey must not be despise and disregard."

"You have no rights whatever, sir, as I have already explained. What you base your very impertinent claim on is a letter which was never intended for you."

"Pardon, madame, it was addresse to me, in response to a letter sent by me to Mo. What more would you haf? Mo haf nevaire taken back her acceptance. Mo still claims me and holds me. She nevaire make any explanation of what you haf call ze meestake. So where was ze meestake?"

"You are mistaken. Miss Heathcote wrote you in Montreal, explaining it all; and it's very strange that you never got it."

Du Potiron at this shrugged his shoulders in incredulity.

"Très bien, madame," said he, dropping the tone of obsequious politeness which he had chosen to make use of thus far, and adopting one of insolent rudeness; "aha, you haf said sufficient, and now eet ees my turn. I haf sometin' to say to you. Listen. I say I *sall* see Mo and you *must* send for her."

"That is absurd," said Mrs. Lovell, quietly.

"Absurd! très bien! You sall see, madame. I haf sometin for you zat

sall make you comprehend me better, and become more complaisant zan you haf been. I haf come zis day as a friend for ze last time; and if you are unraisonable, I sall come again with means zat sall make you surrendre."

"I have already mentioned," said Mrs. Lovell, with unalterable coolness, "the fact that I neither believe in your power to injure me, nor fear it."

"You do not? Aha! très bien! then you sall see it. Aha, yes, you sall see it. You sall be brought before ze sovereigna people. You sall be arrest. You sall be prisoner. You sall be punish."

"Who is to do all this, pray?"

"Who — moi — I — myself; in ze name of l'humanité."

"That is quite absurd," said Mrs. Lovell. "I live quietly here; I never harmed the sovereign people, and they don't even know of my existence. So how they can arrest me, and punish me for doing nothing, is a statement which I confess I am quite unable to make out."

"You not comprehend?" said Du Potiron. "Aha — très bien, zen I sall make zat you sall comprehend ze réalité. Look at mé," he continued, slapping his chest vigorously and elevating his eyebrows, "do you see me? Who am I? Moi! I am a power. I haf command, influence, autorité. The tyrant ees overtroun," — and he made a flourish with his right hand, — "ze peuple haf triumph!" — a flourish with both hands, — "they rise!" — a stamp of his foot, — "I rise!" — violent slapping of the chest, "I haf command!" — another violent slapping, — "I am obey!" — a dark frown and both hands clutching each other convulsively, — "I harangue ze people!" — another flourish with the right, — "I indicate zeir enemies!" — a flourish with the left, — "I anform zem of ze spies, ze myriad spies zat fill Paris!" — hoarse intonations with clasped hands, — "ze spies zat Bismarck employ to effecter ze destruction of la France!" — eyes rolled up and hands crossed over breast, — "zat is

my work!" — a wild outcry, and hands flung forward, — "to labor for ma patrie!" — two or three steps backward, — "and save it from ze insidious spy!" — a groan. "Trés bien," — a smack of the lips, accompanied with a wild glare at Mrs. Lovell and followed by the stamp of both feet, — "and now do you comprehend? Hah?" — a wild gesture with clenched fists, — "do you comprehend ze danjaire zat impends? Hah?" — another fist flung out, — "who is ze next spy to denounce? Hah?" — a step forward with both fists flung forth, — "who is ze spy secret and mystérieuse zat conceal herself here in zis rue, in zis house? Hah?" — A gasp. — "Eef I denounce you, how sall you save yourself? Hah?" — Another gasp. — "Eef I denounce you as a spy, what sall you become in deux or tree day? Hah?" — A yell of maniacal derision, accompanied by snorts, stampings of both feet, and clappings of his hands. — "And zis is what you sall haf! I sall show no mercy!" — A gasp. — "I sall be inexorable!" — A howl. — "You sall be prisoner!" — slappings of the breast, gorilla fashion, — "and Mo — Mo le charmante — le tendre — Mo!" Here his eyes were raised in ecstasy to the ceiling, and the sentence died away in an inarticulate murmur.

So Du Potiron raved to this extent and still further. He had full swing. He let himself loose. He got the one idea in his head, and let his fancy play freely round it. He was excited as a Frenchman only can be, and acted as an excited Frenchman only can.

As for Mrs. Lovell she had never been called on before to behold an excited Frenchman, and the sight of Du Potiron naturally created some surprise. She was not what is called a brave woman, nor did she ever dream of laying any claim to such a character; but on the present occasion she did not show the slightest fear. It may have been because in the appearance of Du Potiron there was less of the terrible than there was of that other quality which lies closely associated with it, — the grotesque, — bear-

ing to it the same relation which the ridiculous bears to the sublime. Mrs. Lovell might therefore have been amused at the pranks which Du Potiron was thus playing before high heaven, had there not been various serious thoughts in her mind which checked all tendencies to mirthfulness.

Mrs. Lovell therefore stood looking at Du Potiron, neither smiling with mirth nor trembling with terror, but regarding him with cold curiosity and mild wonder. She appeared perfectly cool and self-possessed; and it seemed as though the spectacle of this coolness only served to increase the excitement of the visitor. In this position then these two were, Mrs. Lovell cool, calm, collected; Du Potiron lashing himself into greater fury, gesticulating, howling, menacing, taunting, interrogating, denouncing, advancing, retreating, shaking his fists, and going through all those performances which have already been so minutely reported. Now at this very moment and in the very crisis of this scene another person quietly made his appearance, entering the room behind Du Potiron, in such a way that he was not seen by that excitable and too impetuous person. The new-comer was the visitor whom Mrs. Lovell had been expecting impatiently for two long days, for whose appearance she had looked so eagerly, and who, had he tried, could not possibly have chosen a better period for acting the *deus ex machina*, and thus winning the everlasting gratitude of Mrs. Lovell, than this very moment which chance had thus opened to him.

The new-comer was Mr. Grimes.

At the sight of him Mrs. Lovell's heart gave a wild bound, and she felt as if she could have flung herself at his feet in joy and gratitude. Du Potiron's back was turned toward him, so that he did not see Grimes, nor did he see the change in Mrs. Lovell's face; for just at that moment he had thrown his eyes, his fists, and his soul toward the ceiling, and was in the midst of an eloquent invocation of the goddess of

Liberty and the genius of France. After which he once more resumed his strain of menace.

Grimes stood and looked around with an air of surprise; he returned Mrs. Lovell's glance with a benevolent smile that would have done honor to that lady's guardian angel, and then stood listening. He did not see Du Potiron's face and so did not know at first who this eccentric being might be, but finally, after a few moments' listening, he grasped the situation, and made up his mind as to his own course. Du Potiron was just showing Mrs. Lovell how inevitable her doom was, and how dark it would be, when at that moment Grimes walked toward him and laid a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Yes," said he, somewhat dryly, "all that's very well; but, my friend, you've got me to reckon with, and it strikes me that you've left that fact out of the account."

At this Du Potiron started as if he had been shot, and whirling round found himself face to face with Grimes.

For reasons that have already been explained, it is sufficiently evident that the man who now confronted Du Potiron was one of the very last whom he would have wished to see, and he stood staring at the new-comer in dumb bewilderment.

As for Grimes, he too was utterly amazed at seeing Du Potiron, but not at all disconcerted. After the first surprise his glance of astonished recognition was succeeded by an expression of grim satisfaction, of a nature that was not by any means calculated to reassure Du Potiron.

"So it's you, is it?" said Grimes, slowly and with a sardonic smile. "I don't think we've had the pleasure of meetin' with one another since we parted in Montreal. I've got somethin' to say to you, and if you'll be kind enough to step this way, I'll take it as a favor. Allow me."

And with these words Grimes grasped Du Potiron by the collar, inserting his hand in no gentle manner down his neck, and forcing Du Potiron's

head back in a particularly unpleasant way.

"I won't detain you long," said Grimes; "and this lady will excuse us for a moment."

Du Potiron struggled and gasped, but to no purpose. Grimes walked solemnly to the door with a slow, steady step, like Fate dragging his helpless prey after him. Arriving outside, he dragged him along the hall till he reached the top of the stairway. Then he stopped; and, still holding him by the collar, he stood in front of him and glared upon him like some avenging power.

"So, this is the way you pass your time, is it?" he cried, shaking Du Potiron with one hand till he trembled all over, and holding his clenched fist close to his face. "So, you can't find any better employment for your time, can't you, than to come here and bully an unprotected female. You miserably, skinny, lean, lantern-jawed, frog-eatin' Frenchman you! What do you think of yourself now? Hey? You did n't reckon on my bein' round, did you? Rather think not. Don't you feel that you're a poor, lost, guilty sinner by nature and by practice? Look me in the face, you miserable Parley Voo, and tell me what you mean by this."

All this time Du Potiron had been kicking, struggling, and cursing; but kicks, struggles, and sibilant French curses, with the accompaniment of rolling guttural r's, availed nothing to save him from the grasp of Grimes. At this last appeal he gasped forth something about "Vengeance — you sallah soffaie — République — citizens of Paris," and other incoherences.

"So that's all you've got to say, is it? Well now, listen to me," said Grimes, fiercely. "If you ever dare to show so much as the tip of your infernal nose in this place again, I'll kill you! Do you hear that? I'll kill you! And now go."

Saying this, Grimes pushed Du Potiron forward toward the stairs and gave him a kick. Du Potiron went

sprawling down and fell heavily in a confused heap at the bottom.

Grimes then turned back and walked toward Mrs. Lovell's apartments.

XX.

DRIVEN TO EXTREMITIES.

WHEN Grimes came back, he found Mrs. Lovell still there. She was very much excited and began to pour forth a torrent of grateful words. She told him how much she had suffered from the impertinent intrusions of Du Potiron, and how he had threatened her. In her explanation she did not allude to Maud, nor make any reference to Du Potiron's claim on her, for she thought it unnecessary. Grimes, however, had heard Carrol's story, and knew that Du Potiron claimed to be her accepted lover. The presence of the Frenchman in Paris was rather a puzzle to him at first; but as he now recalled the fright of Carrol on board the steamer, he perceived that his own surmises at that time were correct, and that Du Potiron had actually crossed the ocean with them; though how he had managed to conceal himself was a mystery. To Grimes it now seemed as if Mrs. Lovell was fighting off the Frenchman from Maud; for of Maud's own state of mind about the matter he, of course, knew nothing.

Mrs. Lovell all the while evinced much agitation, and this grew stronger and stronger as she went on. It was the result of her intense excitement. After all, that interview with Du Potiron had been a sore trial, and the very calmness which she had maintained cost her no small struggle. Now that it was over, a reaction took place, and her nervous excitement grew worse and worse, until at length, in spite of her efforts, she burst into tears.

At this Grimes was overwhelmed. The sight of Du Potiron had created an excitement in his soul, but the sensation was of an entirely pleasing description. This spectacle of Mrs. Lovell in distress, shedding tears before him, —

actually weeping, — created intense excitement, but of a kind that was altogether painful. He looked at her for a few moments in dumb despair, and a flush passed over his face. Then he started up from the chair on which he had been sitting and wandered in an aimless way about the room. Then he came back to her and implored her not to cry. Then he resumed his wandering career. At length, in the darkest hour of his despair, a bright thought came to him, illuminating all his soul. He at once acted upon it. The thought was in the highest degree natural. The thought had reference to that panacea for all woes which he himself always carried about his person; that generous spirit which he kept imprisoned in his flask, and which was even now in his pocket all ready to exert its benign influence over any sorrowing soul that might stand in need of it; in short, whiskey: so Grimes tore his whiskey-flask from his pocket and unscrewed the stopper, and took the cup from the bottom of the flask and poured out the whiskey till that cup was full and running over. The fumes of the strong liquid arose and filled the room and penetrated to the very soul of Mrs. Lovell, as it wandered far away in the regions of sorrow and tears. It startled her. She opened her eyes amid her tears and stared at Grimes.

He was before her on one knee, with his eyes fixed compassionately upon her, a flask in one hand, a cup full of whiskey in the other. This he was offering her with a mixture of helplessness and anxiety that was most affecting. Now Mrs. Lovell was deeply agitated, painfully so in fact, nerves upset, and all that sort of thing, as was natural, being a lady of delicate frame and slender build; Mrs. Lovell, I repeat, was excessively agitated, and no end of direful forebodings at that time filled her heart, increasing that agitation; but at the same time the spectacle which Grimes thus presented as he held forth the proffered whiskey, together with the fact itself of whiskey of all liquors being offered to her, was so

novel and so droll, that it produced a complete *bouleversement* of feeling. Terror vanished. Panic fled. Fear was forgotten. A long peal of merry laughter, on the healthy side of the hysterical, burst from her, and the refreshing effect of that laughter was such that it restored her to herself.

She declined the whiskey, and declared herself quite well again. It was the excitement, she said, of the late scene with that insane Frenchman, coming as it did upon other exciting scenes.

"And O," she went on, "this awful, awful place! I showed no fear, Mr. Grimes, no, not the slightest; but now, when I think of those dreadful Reds, and this man with his threats, I declare I dare not stay in Paris a moment longer. But how can I escape? O, what a fearful position! In prison here and exposed to danger. What can I do? He may have influence, as he says. Paris is always moved by the basest of the population. Robespierre was a miserable charlatan, yet he ruled Paris, and France too. People that in other places would only be despised become great men in this miserable city. Charlatans and knaves do what they please here. And how do I know but that by to-morrow Du Potiron himself may be governor of Paris?"

"That's very true," said Grimes, as he solemnly returned his whiskey-flask to his pocket. "It's gospel truth, every word of it. The monkey and the tiger go together to make up the Parisian. I am Du Potiron's master to-day, but he may be mine to-morrow. There's no safety, as you say, ma'am, in this here infernal hole; and what you've got to do is this, you've got to fly."

"To fly? O, how glad I would be if I only could!" said Mrs. Lovell, in despairing tones.

"Wal, 'm," said Grimes, "that is the very thing I came to see you about to-day. I want to persuade you to fly, — to fly really, and literally, — to fly in the air, in a balloon. 'Fly with me,'

is a poetic invitation which you find in some song or other, but I now say it to you in sober prose."

"But O, Mr. Grimes, the frightful danger!"

"Danger? why there ain't any danger at all. The balloon affords the easiest mode of travel known to man."

"Easy!"

"Yes, easy. Why, only think, you step into your car. The balloon rises, you don't feel any motion at all. The earth seems to sink away from beneath. Then it glides past you. You seem to be perfectly still. If you look down, you see the country sliding away, while you are motionless. If you are afraid to look down, you simply shut your eyes, and may imagine yourself to be in your easy-chair. You feel no motion, you don't even feel any wind. In this easy and agreeable manner you are carried away from this miserable place; and when you have gone far enough, you descend as gently as a flake of snow, and find yourself in Bordeaux, or Havre, or perhaps London. Easy? Why, it's luxurious. There ain't any such travellin' as this in all the world. Why, you'd never dream of objectin', if you knew all about it as I do."

"But what makes people so afraid about balloons if they're so easy?" asked Mrs. Lovell.

"Ignorance, ma'am," replied Grimes coolly, "mere ignorance. You see, the balloon can't be utilized for ordinary purposes of travel, because it's generally at the mercy of the wind. But for purposes of escape it's invaluable. You get into your balloon on a calm day, and sit quiet, and in the course of a few hours you find yourself far away from all danger, safe and sound, free as a bird possessed of all the inalienable rights of man, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Mrs. Lovell listened eagerly to this, and in spite of herself was favorably affected by the confident tone of Grimes, and the pleasing picture which he drew of balloon travelling.

"But poor Maudie! How can I be separated from her?"

"Why, ma'am, I assure you she'll be as safe as you. My friend that I told you of'll take care of her; and I assure you he'll answer with his life for her safety, just as I will for yours."

"But who is he?" said Mrs. Lovell. "I cannot bear to separate from Maud; but to hand her over to the care of a stranger is really too dreadful."

"Wal, as to that, my friend ain't exactly a stranger —"

"Is n't he? Well, that is more encouraging. Who is he? Do we know him? Does Maudie know him? Is he a friend of yours? Who can he be? It can't be Mr. Carrol."

Mrs. Lovell made this suggestion in the most natural way in the world, for the simple reason that Carrol was the only one that she could think of who was at once an acquaintance of herself and of Grimes. She knew also that Carrol had crossed the ocean and supposed that he might have accompanied Grimes ever since.

As for Grimes, he had not intended to mention Carrol for reasons already stated; but since Mrs. Lovell had asked him directly, he saw no particular reason for concealment, and so he at once informed her that Carrol was the man.

This information excited in Mrs. Lovell's mind thoughts of an important character. The fact that Carrol was here ready to take charge of Maud was in a certain sense very reassuring. If she could bring herself to attempt such a flight, she certainly could not hope to find a better companion for Maud than he would be. She understood the difficulty that had arisen perfectly; and though she had not heard of their recent meeting, she felt sure that the difficulty was a trifling one which could easily be explained. She sympathized deeply with Maud in the sorrow that she had suffered on account of the misunderstanding with Carrol, and longed to have it all cleared up. This seemed to her to be a way

to such an explanation. If a balloon voyage could indeed be ventured on, then Maud might have a chance to explain or to come to an explanation, and the result could not be other than satisfactory to all concerned. One objection still remained, and that was that it was by no means in accordance with *les convenances* of society for a young girl like Maud to be committed to the care of a young man, but the natural answer to this was that in desperate emergencies *les convenances* must give way; and if one is flying for one's life from pressing danger, one must not be too particular about the road.

The result was that Mrs. Lovell began to look more favorably upon the plan of Grimes.

"I do assure you, ma'am," said Grimes with unchanged solemnity,—"I do assure you, and declare to you, that you are not safe here. A balloon? why, you'd be safer almost in a sky-rocket than you are here. Paris is more like a lunatic asylum than anything else that I know of. Everybody is ravin' mad, and you never can tell on one day what they're goin' to do on the next. Paris altogether beats me, and the more I see of the place and the people the more I feel dumbfounded. Now, if I'd only myself to consider, I'd hang on here, and see them put this siege through, for I've never been at a siege before; but as it is, I give up this fancy as an idle piece of curiosity, and I feel that the highest and proudest dooty of my life is to devote myself to the rescue of you ladies; which same, I'm free to say, my friend Carrol feels similar to me, and is likewise ready to be up and doin'. All that I want is your frank and cordial consent. I don't want you to be timid about it; I want you to feel that the thing is safe and easy."

To this Mrs. Lovell had many things to say, all of which tended toward assuring herself further as to the safety of balloon travelling. Here Grimes came out strong. He explained the whole principle of the balloon. He

gave a full, lucid, and luminous description of its construction. He described most minutely the improvements that had been made with the rationale of each. He gave much information about the past history of balloon voyages, and indulged in some speculations as to the future prospects of aerostation. To all of which Mrs. Lovell listened patiently and attentively, willing to believe the best, and to be convinced.

"Your decision," concluded Grimes, "must be made at once. The danger is pressin' and the balloons are ready. A favorable spell of weather has arrived. Now is the accepted time. We can start off at once, and remember that in a brief period of time you will soar aloft beyond these transitory troubles, and find yourself in the midst of a celestial calm. No matter where the wind may blow us, there we may go, and we will find safety and peace. But to do this we must leave at once. In fact, I may as well say that I've actually engaged the balloons. They're mine. We've got to go, and that's the long and the short of it. They're fine machines, not too large. Comfortable even to luxury, and fitted in every way to carry Grimes and his fortunes."

Some further conversation followed; but the end of it was, that Mrs. Lovell found her last objection answered and her last scruple removed by the eloquent, the cogent, and the resistless pleadings of Grimes; and, with this understanding, he took his departure.

Hitherto Mrs. Lovell had kept all her troubles and her plans a profound secret from Maud; but now, of course, it was necessary to make her acquainted with her latest decision. The best way to act seemed to her to give a full, complete, and candid narrative of all the events of the past few weeks, so that Maud might understand the state of affairs, and comprehend in the fullest manner the position in which they were. After all, it was Maud who was chiefly concerned; it was for her that Mrs. Lovell incurred the danger that

she dreaded, and consequently she had the best possible means of influencing her by a simple representation of the facts of the case.

She therefore told Maud about the various visits of Du Potiron, his impertinent assertions of a right to call on her, his insolent demands, and his violent threats. She informed her of her own encounter with Grimes on the Champs Elysées, and her appeal to him for help. She enlarged upon her own anxieties and terrors, and explained why she had not mentioned this before. She told her of Madame Guimarin's decision, and portrayed in glowing colors the utter misery and hopelessness of their situation. She then related the scene that had just occurred, where the violence of Du Potiron had been arrested by the appearance of Grimes. After these preliminaries she described the full danger of their life in Paris as it was now revealed to her own mind, and the possible fulfilment of the threats of Du Potiron. All these things served as an excellent introduction to the plan of Grimes, and the novel way of escape which he had proposed; when she reached this subject she endeavored to disarm the possible prejudices of Maud by resorting to the rose-colored descriptions which Grimes had given of aerial navigation. Plagiarizing from him, and quoting him, she presented the subject of balloon travelling in the most attractive manner possible, and thus by easy gradation she reached the particular part of her subject about which she felt the most anxiety. This was their separation, and the association of Carrol with Maud.

Mrs. Lovell did not feel sure how Maud would take this, for she did not know exactly the present state of her mind with regard to Carrol. She at first alluded to him in general terms, and at length ventured to mention his name. Having done so, she quoted Grimes as to Carrol's eagerness to assist, and readiness to answer for her safety with his life; and concluded with an earnest admonition to Maud

not to allow herself to be swayed by prejudices of any kind, but to snatch this opportunity of escape from danger.

To all this Maud listened without one single word. The whole thing came to her like a thunder-clap, but she was in such a depressed state of mind that her dull feelings were not much aroused. She was, in fact, in a mood to acquiesce with perfect indifference in any proposal which might be made, and consequently listened without emotion. But at length, when Carrol's name was mentioned, she experienced an instantaneous change. At once all her indifference vanished. A flush passed over her pale face, her dull eyes brightened, she listened with intense absorption to everything that Mrs. Lovell had to say, and the eagerness which she evinced showed that she was not at all inclined to offer any objections.

In fact, to all those things which had terrified Mrs. Lovell, Maud was utterly indifferent. The threats of Du Potiron, the dangers of Paris life, the perils of balloon voyaging; all these were things of small moment to her. But the mention of Carrol was another matter. The fact that he had shown an interest in her, that he was capable of something like devotion to her, that he had volunteered an act of devotion, — all these things roused her. She did not stop to try to reconcile this professed devotion with the apparent indifference which he had manifested in their last interview; she was not sufficiently exigent to raise objections on the ground of his not calling; the fact of his offer was enough; and the idea of his association with her in an attempt to rescue her, made even a balloon seem attractive. To be taken by Carrol on that adventurous flight seemed to her the most sweet and blessed of conceivable things; and while Mrs. Lovell was wondering how Maud would receive such a startling proposal, that proposal was already accepted in the mind of Maud, and regarded with joy, as something which might alleviate her sorrows,

by putting her once more in communication with Carrol.

And so it was that Maud's answer came clear and unmistakable and most satisfactory.

"O Georgie, what an awful time you must have had! I had no idea of it at all. What made you so close? Of course I'll do anything that you want me to; and as to balloons, do you know I think it would be rather nice? I do, really."

XXI.

LAYING THE GHOST.

CARROL'S knowledge of Maud's address constituted a new temptation, which it was hard to resist. It was very difficult for him to keep away, when he knew that she was so near. In his resistance to the attraction which she exerted over him, he had nothing to strengthen him but his consideration for her, and his conviction that it would be better for her not to see him again. But this very consideration for her arose out of his love for her, which at the same time drew him to her.

For a day or two he succeeded in restraining himself, but at length his desire to see Maud grew uncontrollable, and, after feeble efforts to overcome it, he allowed himself to drift nearer and nearer to the place of which Grimes had told him, until at length he came within sight of the house. It was the day on which Grimes had made his visit; and had he arrived a few moments earlier, he would have seen the manly form of his friend disappearing inside the doorway.

As he came within sight of the house his heart beat fast with feverish excitement, and an intense longing seized him to go in. He hesitated, and a struggle began in his soul, wherein desire on the one hand wrestled with conscientious scruples on the other. Already his scruples were beginning to give way, and his desire was gaining the mastery, when his eyes, which all the time had been fixed upon the door,

caught sight of a figure slowly emerging from it.

It was a man of medium size, thin, dressed in a soldier's uniform; but the dress did not excite any attention on the part of Carrol, whose whole gaze was fixed upon the face. The face was deathly pale; the man held a handkerchief to his forehead, which was stained with his blood, and a stream of blood also trickled down his face. He walked slowly and painfully, and going along the sidewalk he turned around the first corner and disappeared from view.

Carrol had been on the opposite side of the street, but the figure had not turned its eyes toward him at all. It had simply come forth from that door, walked along the opposite sidewalk, and disappeared.

As Carrol looked he felt petrified with utter horror. That face belonged to one and to one alone. It was the face that had never ceased to haunt him ever since that fearful night. Even so had that face appeared to his fancy over and over again as he brought before his mind the events of that night; and even so had the face appeared night after night in abhorrent dreams, ghastly, death-struck, with a blood-stream slowly trickling down from a mortal wound. There was only one thought in Carrol's mind, — his victim! Du Potiron! once more appearing! the dead once more revealed to the living!

For a few moments Carrol stood thus petrified in utter horror, and then in a wild frenzy he hurried away, flying he knew not where, all his brain on fire with the thoughts that came thronging over his mind. All the anguish of that night at Montreal was renewed; and his panic flight was repeated, with all its dread accompaniments. But this time the daylight favored him, and the tumult and roar of the crowded streets assisted him to regain something of his natural composure. But as the immediate terror died out, there remained behind a deep perplexity, a dark misgiving as to the nature and the meaning of this second

visitation. To him in his superstition it seemed now as though the dead could really appear to the living; and here was a proof that the murderer must be haunted by his victim. This opened before him a new horror in life. For if he should be doomed through the remainder of his days to be thus haunted, what was the use of life to him? This time the apparition had come, not in darkness and at midnight, but in the full glare of day and in the midst of a crowded city, walking under the daylight along the paved sidewalk. Where would the next revelation take place? No doubt that warning would be repeated, if he should dare ever again to visit Maud, or to speak to her. Between him and her there now stood this grisly phantom to keep them forever asunder. How could he now hope to assist Maud to escape, or how could he ever venture even to speak to her again?

Starting forth thus from a full belief in the supernatural character of the figure of Du Potiron, and allowing a vivid fancy to play around it in this mad fashion, Carrol soon worked himself into a state of mind that was half despair and half frenzy. The future now afforded no hope whatever. It seemed useless for him to struggle any longer against such a fate as his; and he began to feel that the very best thing for him to do would be to avail himself of the earliest opportunity that offered to escape from Paris, return home, and surrender himself to the authorities. A prolonged consideration of this course of action resulted in a fixed decision in favor of it; and this decision had the effect of restoring to his mind its calmness. That calmness was deep depression and dull despair, but it seemed more tolerable than the madness to which he had just been subject. It was in this frame of mind that he returned to his lodgings. It was now late. Grimes was there, and by his face showed that he had something of importance to communicate.

"Hallo," cried he, "you're back at last. Three cheers! I've arranged

it. I've done it. They've consented. I've got the balloons. We're off tomorrow; and what do you think of that, for instance?"

Grimes paused and looked triumphantly at Carrol, expecting some reply commensurate with the grandeur of the news. But Carrol made no reply; and Grimes, looking at him more closely, saw in his face such pain and distress, that his own feelings underwent an instantaneous change.

"Has anything happened?" he asked hurriedly. "What's the matter? You look more like death than life."

"I've been near death to-day," said Carrol in a low voice. "I've seen it."

"Seen it? Seen what? Death?"

"*Him*, you know — the man that — that — you know. Du Potiron."

Grimes gave a long whistle.

"The dead arise!" moaned Carrol, "and they come to haunt the guilty!"

"Haunt your grandmother," cried Grimes. "What do you mean?"

Upon this Carrol told his terrible tale, enlarging particularly upon the fearful aspect of the spectre. Grimes listened patiently, and at its close he struck his fist heavily on the table.

"See here," said he, "I can't stand this any longer. I begin to think I've been doin' wrong all along, but I swear I did it for the best. Look here, now. It's all infernal humbug."

"What do you mean?" asked Carrol, startled by the tone of his friend.

"Why, Du Potiron ain't dead at all. You did n't kill him. He's alive. You saw the man himself."

Carrol shook his head despondently. "I heard him fall —"

"You heard some rubbish fall, I dare say. You were scared, and a lot of old plaster tumbled down. It was n't Du Potiron, and you never shot that man; that's so, as sure as you're born. You only heard plaster and rats."

"You can never make me believe —" began Carrol, solemnly.

"Pooh, nonsense. Look here, now, I tell you that dool was all a sham."

"A sham?"

"Yes, a sham. There was n't any bullets in the pistols. I loaded them myself. You know that."

"A sham? a sham? no bullets?" stammered Carrol, utterly bewildered.

"I tell you it was all a sham. Du Potiron was aboard the steamer with us; and he's now in Paris; and you saw him to-day."

Carrol sat for a time quite bewildered. There was an immense reaction going on in his mind. He could not help believing Grimes; and yet he had so long dwelt upon his own fancy, that it was difficult to give up his belief. In the midst of these thoughts, however, there began to arise in his mind the idea that he had been tricked and duped, and that Grimes had been amusing himself with his sufferings. A dark resentment arose within him at such treatment, and rising from his seat he looked at Grimes with a gloomy frown.

"If you really mean what you say, and if you've been playing on me a joke like this —" he said, bitterly.

"Stop," said Grimes, rising, and facing him. "Not a word more. Don't say it, or you and I'll quarrel. Wait till you hear what I've got to say about it. Sit down and hear me."

Carrol resumed his seat and waited in stern silence, while Grimes went on with his explanation.

"Now see here," said Grimes. "You remember askin' me to be your second. I saw that you could n't fire, and that you'd only get hit; so I arranged that plan of a duel in the dark. Very well. Now do you suppose I was goin' to have your blood or that other fellow's on my conscience? No. I loaded the pistols, but did n't put any bullets in. I thought you'd both fire, and then you'd think of course that both shots had missed; and so it would all turn out right, and no harm dohe. Was there any practical joke in that?" So you see Du Potiron could n't have fallen at your shot; and, in fact, my idea is that he jumped out of the back window while we were fastening the door; for I thought I heard footsteps

over the rubbish behind the house. You may be sure that was the way of it. Now, I don't see anythin' in that to apologize for; and I did n't do anythin' that I would n't do again. I thought you'd have your shots, and that you'd get over your love-affair in time, and that all would turn out right in the end. So I cleared out and did n't think any more about it till you and I met on board the steamer.

"Wal, I confess I was a good deal troubled when I saw how you took things, and was goin' to tell you the whole truth, especially after you saw Du Potiron, but was prevented by one thing."

"What was that?" asked Carrol. "What possible thing could have made you keep up the miserable delusion, and allow me to suffer such horrors? I swear to you no real murderer could have suffered worse than I did."

"Wal," said Grimes, "the whole trouble arose from the fact that the ladies were on board of the steamer. Now I saw that the sight of Miss Heathcote made you raving mad. You did n't hate her, you know; you were madly in love with her; and her bein' on board prevented your gettin' over your feelin's. She had jilted you, and there she was on board the same boat, and you were goin' crazy about her. Now it struck me that the only thing for a jilted lover like you was to have some other thing to take up his thoughts. You had that in your fancy about Du Potiron, and so I thought I'd let it slide. I did n't dream of anything so childish as a practical joke, but simply acted out of a fatherly consideration for your good. My motive was good, whatever my policy may have been. It was to give you a counter-irritation."

"I think you might at least have told me after we arrived in Paris," said Carrol, in a tone which was now quite free from resentment.

"Wal," said Grimes, "my reason was just the same. The ladies were here, and there you were with your abuse of Miss Heathcote, so that if you

had n't had this dool to think of, you 'd been used up by this time. - But you changed your tone a little lately, and I 'd made up my mind to tell you the fust chance."

"What was he doing there?" asked Carrol, "at her house. So if it is really Du Potiron, it seems that, while I have been suffering, she has been enjoying his society, travelling across the ocean with him, receiving his visits here, while I —"

"Come now," roared Grimes, "no more of that infernal jealous nonsense. Here you go again, full tilt, pitchin' into Miss Heathcote in the old style. I don't know anythin' about her real feelin's for the Frenchman, but I don't think they 're over tender; for what I saw of him to-day did n't lead me to suppose that he was on very agreeable terms in that house."

"You saw him there? You did?" cried Carrol eagerly; "was he — was he visiting them? Did she — did she — seem glad? But how did his head get cut —?"

"Wal, I believe I had some share in that catastrophe," said Grimes. "I 'll tell you all about it."

Carrol heard the whole story, and now learned for the first time the danger that the ladies were in, and the true position of Du Potiron with reference to them. Grimes informed him about Mrs. Lovell's appeal to him for help, his proposal about balloons, and the circumstances which had led to the acquiescence of the ladies in such a dangerous mode of flight. He also gave a very vivid account of Du Potiron's treatment of Mrs. Lovell, and the immediate result of it to Du Potiron himself.

Grimes informed him also of the measures which he had been taking that day to hasten their flight. He had been to M. Nadar and had engaged two balloons. He himself with Mrs. Lovell would embark in one, while Carrol and Miss Heathcote should take the other with an aeronaut to sail the craft. Very many little details had to be arranged, but everything was to be in readiness

on the following night. Night was the time that was always chosen now, for during the day balloons were too much exposed to the bullets of the Prussians. The weather was sufficiently favorable for a start, and if it only continued so nothing would prevent their departure. The ladies were to be ready by the following evening, and Grimes and Carrol were to go to the house for them. They were perfectly willing to go, for they found the terrors of Paris greater than those of the untried voyage in the air; and the confident assurances of Grimes had produced a great effect upon the trustful nature of Mrs. Lovell.

And now the clouds that had for so long a time hung over the soul of Carrol slowly rolled away, and the revelation of Maud's truth, together with that of his own innocence, combined to fill him with the most exultant hope. The little difference that still remained between him and Maud could be terminated by one word. Her resentment could not be maintained, for she had consented to go with him in his care. To the perils of balloon-voyaging he never gave a single thought, his mind being only taken up with the idea of himself seated once more by the side of Maud, with not a cloud to mar their perfect mutual understanding.

But in the midst of his new-found joy there arose within him an intense longing to see Maud, from whom he was no longer repelled either by conscientious scruples or by grisly phantoms. He now remembered his terrors with indifference, and in his delight at the truth he had no resentment whatever against Grimes or anybody else for that matter. Once more he and Grimes resumed the old unclouded air of free and familiar intercourse, and talked over the coming events. Carrol, however, could not help feeling impatient at the time that yet separated him from Maud, and hinted in a vague way at some effort which he might make to call on the ladies earlier in the day.

"Now don't, my good fellow," said

Grimes earnestly, "don't. The ladies won't expect you; besides, they'll be as busy as bees all day arranging for their flight. You see it's such uncommon short notice. Waitin' two or three hours longer won't hurt you, and will be a good deal more convenient for them than if you were to go botherin' around them all the day."

"But don't you think they may be in some danger from Du Potiron? I should think it would be better for one of us to be there."

"O, I don't know! I don't seem to think that one day'll make any great difference."

"But if the fellow can do anything, he'll do it at once. He must have been venomous enough before; but now, after your treatment of him, he'll move heaven and earth to get them into trouble; and, what's more, he'll do it as quick as he can. It seems to me that if there is any danger at all, there'll be as much danger to-morrow as there would be a week from this."

"Wal, I don't know, now that you speak of it, but what there may be a good deal in what you say; still I don't see what can be done. People have got to run some risk, and to-morrow is the risk that the ladies have got to run. They can't be actually safe till they get outside of Paris, or above it, which is all the same."

"On the whole," said Carrol, "I think I'd better keep a lookout in that direction."

"What for?"

"O, to satisfy my own mind!"

"There won't be much satisfaction in looking; and if anythin' was to happen, you would n't be able to do anythin'. On the whole, I should n't wonder but that you'd be doin' better by makin' yourself scarce till the appointed hour."

"Well, I'll see," said Carrol, who, at the same time, was profoundly convinced that he would spend the whole of the next day in the vicinity of Maud's house, and burst in upon her presence long before what Grimes called the appointed time.

XXII.

IN THE TOILS.

THE following day dawned bright and pleasant. The sky was perfectly cloudless, and the clear atmosphere gave promise of a favorable night.

Grimes had arranged everything on the previous day, and M. Nadar had solemnly engaged to be at the Place St. Pierre with two balloons and an aeronaut. There was therefore nothing in reality for him to do; but Grimes was a man who never felt inclined to trust his business to others, and could not feel satisfied unless he himself were present. It was this feeling rather than any actual necessity that led him forth to pass the time with M. Nadar, so that he might see with his own eyes that everything was preparing. He was also actuated by a very natural desire to learn something more, if anything more could be learned, of the aeronautic art. Before starting he informed Carrol that he would call for the ladies at about dusk; but that if the ladies were frightened about anything and wished to leave before then, they might go to the Place St. Pierre.

Grimes then set out on his way to visit M. Nadar. He strolled along in a leisurely manner, meditating on the prospect before him, and quite oblivious to the scene around him. He traversed street after street, and soon left the busier parts of the city behind him, and still went on, feeding his active fancy with very many pleasing scenes, and images and events, all of which were of a highly cheerful and pleasant character. Had he not been so very much taken up with these pleasing fancies, he would not have failed to notice the fact that he was followed by several men dressed as National Guards, but whose evil faces made them seem like *mouchards* of the fallen Empire, who, finding their occupation gone, had transformed themselves into the defenders of the Republic with no very striking success. These men followed him, at first cautiously, but at length, perceiving that he did not take the

slightest notice of them, they went on carelessly, keeping close behind him, and occasionally addressing remarks to one another. At length two of them walked ahead of the others, towards Grimes. He, on his part, was quite unconscious of this new movement, and stalked on before, losing himself in the pleasing fancies with which his mind was filled. The two men hurried on till they caught up to him, when they divided, one going on each side, and at a signal each placed a hand on Grimes's shoulder.

In a moment Grimes was brought back to real life. He stopped and confronted the men. The others meanwhile walked up and surrounded him. There were over a dozen of them, and all were armed.

"What do you want?" asked Grimes in his usual Yankee French.

"Who are you?" asked one of the men, who had first seized him.

"An American citizen," said Grimes.

"Where are you going?"

"On business," said Grimes.

"What business?"

Grimes was about to give an angry reply, but the affair looked too serious, so he was compelled to mitigate his wrath. He hesitated for a moment, but at length concluded that the truth was the easiest statement to make and so he said, "I am going to see M. Nadar."

"M. Nadar?"

"Yes, about a balloon."

"A balloon?—aha," said the other.

"A balloon? You would fly, would you? You would run away? Aha, you cannot escape so easily."

"There is nothing wrong in engaging a balloon," said Grimes. "M. Gambetta and others have gone in them."

"M. Gambetta is an honest and loyal citizen; but you, monsieur, are a traitor and a spy."

"A traitor, a spy? I am not," cried Grimes. "I am a friend of the French Republic."

"You are a Prussian spy," cried the other in excited and vehement tones.

"I am not," roared Grimes. "I am

an American. The American Minister is my friend. I am an American and a Republican."

"Bah! we know you. We have watched you. You have been denounced to us. We know you as one of Bismarck's agents, and we arrest you in the name of the Republic."

"Arrest!" cried Grimes, in fierce indignation,— "arrest me, an American citizen!"

"Monsieur, you are no more an American citizen than I am. You are a German. Your accent betrays you. Come, you are our prisoner. You must come with us. Remonstrance is useless."

At this, Grimes stood suffocated with rage. He glared like a wild beast at his enemies. He thrust his hand into his pocket, and grasped his trusty revolver, and for a moment he meditated a wild rush upon his captors and a headlong flight. He looked up and down the street; but that one look was enough to satisfy him that anything like flight was utterly impossible. He let go his grasp of his revolver.

The sight of the National Guards around a foreigner had already attracted the notice of the passers-by. People stopped and stared. The words "Prussian spy" were heard, and circulated from mouth to mouth. The crowd increased, and at length, in a marvelously short space of time, an immense number of people had gathered there. The rumor of a Prussian spy passed along the street, and people came running from every direction to see the sight.

As Grimes looked around, he saw the crowd, and the faces that were turned toward him were faces full of dark menace and intense hate. Passionate words passed from man to man, and reached his ears. He began to think that he was lost. Once more he subdued his wrath, and endeavored to appeal to the crowd.

"Gentlemen!" said he, elevating his voice, "I am an American citizen. I am a friend of the French Republic. I am a Republican myself. The Amer-

ican Minister is my friend. He will certify that I speak the truth."

The crowd stared, and various murmurs arose. But the man who had seized Grimes turned with a shrug and called out, "Citizens, this man is a Prussian spy. He is very dangerous. We have been searching for him for weeks. He is the worst spy in the place, and the chief agent of Bismarck."

At these words there arose from the crowd a terrific outcry. Yells, shrieks, and execrations, in the midst of which were a hundred cries for immediate vengeance.

Grimes stood overwhelmed. He was a brave man, but the position in which he was made bravery useless. To defy, or to resist, or to offend that maddened mob was to be torn in pieces. He looked out once more upon them, and saw the faces inflamed with frantic rage and eyes glowing in fury. They were more like wild beasts than human beings. To disarm their wrath was impossible; to explain matters, to prove the truth, was not allowed. The mob outside was so insane and so passionate, that the National Guards who had arrested him seemed almost his friends now, since they stood between him and the savages of the street.

The conclusion which Grimes came to was swift and decided. He saw that it would never do to stand there exposed to the wrath of the mob: anything was better than that. With the National Guards there was at least a hope of something like an examination or a trial; but with a street mob there was nothing but a tiger's blind fury. His mind was made up. At all hazards, this scene must be stopped.

"Gentlemen!" said he, courteously, to the National Guards, speaking so that all could hear him, "there is some mistake. I am convinced that you intend nothing but what is fair and right. I trust myself to your hands. Take me to the authorities, and I will submit to any examination."

This was very magnanimous language from a man who was helpless; but the National Guards did not see

the incongruity that there was between his language and his situation. They all drew themselves up in a dignified way and endeavored to assume the airs of so many Rhadamanthuses. Those of the crowd who heard him were somewhat favorably affected, and began to think that there might be some mistake; but the most of them did not hear, and so they kept on howling.

"It's all right," said Grimes. "Let us go. Lead on. Don't be troubled about me. I won't run. It's all right, gentlemen," said he to the crowd. "It's only a mistake. I'm an American. *Vive la République Française!*"

These last words he shouted out in tones loud enough to be heard by all. The mob heard it, and those words arrested the current of the general fury. They had the right ring. They hesitated.

"It is a mistake," roared Grimes in stentorian tones, so that he could be heard by all. "I am an American. I am a Republican. Hurrah for the French Republic! Hurrah for liberty! Down with the Prussians! Down with Bismarck! I am an American Republican, and I love the French Republic!"

As a matter of fact Grimes began to be somewhat disgusted with the French Republic, or rather with French Republicans, and consequently his words were not strictly true; but he was in a very tight place, and he felt that it was his first duty to disarm the vengeance of that howling maniac mob. By giving them lavish doses of the popular cries, he hoped to succeed in this. His efforts were not unavailing. A large number of the crowd caught up his words and responded. The mob, as a mob, began to lose its homogeneity; its unity disintegrated at the impact of those cries; some kept up the call for vengeance; but others hurrahed for the French Republic, and others again for America.

Grimes now moved off, surrounded by his captors and the mob.

The National Guards led him, and the crowd followed him, through many streets. The crowd still showed that

uncertainty of purpose which had been created by the remarks of the prisoner, and followed in a vague way, being now rather curious than inimical. In this way he at length reached a large building, in front of which there were a few men in the uniform of the National Guard. Grimes entered this place with his captors and was conducted to a room in the third story. On being shown in here the door was locked and the prisoner was left to his meditations.

Meanwhile Carrol had left the house and had started off to seek out some way of wiling away the tedious hours. He had wandered aimlessly through the streets, trying to get rid of the hours of the morning, and finding himself incessantly gravitating in an irresistible manner toward the lodgings of Maud. He resisted this tendency as long as he could; for he did not wish to intrude upon the ladies at unseasonable hours; but at length he found it quite impossible to resist any longer. It was about midday when he found himself in the street in front of the house. He then made up his mind to remain in that street and keep up a watch over the house, with a vague idea that by so watching he might be the means of guarding the inmates from evil. For two or three hours he walked up and down the street, never going out of sight of the house; and at length he became wearied of this fruitless occupation, and began to think of entering.

Mrs. Lovell and Maud were both in the room. Maud started to her feet and stood looking at him with a pale and agitated face. Mrs. Lovell advanced and greeted him. Carrol was scarce conscious of her existence. He made some incoherent reply to her, and then turned toward Maud. She stood looking at him with that same expression of entreaty and wonder and mournfulness which he had so often seen in her face; and as he walked toward her she made one or two steps forward. But Carrol's face showed something very different from anything

she had seen there since their misunderstanding; it was full of joy and enthusiastic hope and tenderest affection. He hurried toward her and grasped her hand in both of his.

"O my darling!" he faltered in a low voice; "forgive me! forgive me!"

Mrs. Lovell started, and with some commonplace remark she left the room, and by that act won for herself the fervent gratitude of Carrol.

He was now alone with Maud. He understood at last the whole truth. There was at last no cloud of misunderstanding between them. Carrol was determined that everything should now be cleared up without delay, and so he poured forth the whole story of his sorrows. All was revealed without exception, and Maud was able to understand the whole reason of Carrol's conduct. Even if his explanation had been less ample, she could have forgiven him; but with this she felt that there was nothing to forgive.

Mrs. Lovell's innate delicacy of soul, together with her sisterly regard for Maud and her consideration of her peculiar circumstances, all combined to make her stand aloof and leave the two lovers to come to a full understanding by themselves. At length, however, the time seemed to be sufficient, and she returned, finding Maud's once melancholy face wreathed with smiles, and the face of Carrol in a similar condition.

By this time it was dusk. They began to talk of their approaching journey, and Carrol began to wonder why Grimes did not appear.

Suddenly, in the midst of this conversation, they all became aware of the tramp of feet on the stairway outside and along the hall toward the room. At that sound a feeling of fearful apprehension in one instant started up within the minds of all. The ladies turned pale, and Carrol started up to his feet in dismay.

The door opened without ceremony, and a number of men entered the room. They were dressed as National Guards.

One of these advanced toward the group in the room, while the rest stood by the door. Others remained outside.

The man who advanced looked with sharp scrutiny at Carrol and at the ladies.

"Madame Lovelle," said he, in French, "which is Madame Lovelle?"

"What do you want?" said Mrs. Lovell, in English. "I am Mrs. Lovell."

"Pardon, madame," said the man, who seemed to be an officer, still speaking French; "I am charged with your arrest, in the name of the Republic." And he laid his hand lightly upon her shoulder.

Mrs. Lovell did not understand what he said, but his gesture was sufficiently intelligible. She shrank back in terror. Maud started with a cry, and flung her arms about her. Carrol sprang forward with a menacing gesture.

"Arrest this man," cried the officer, "he is the Prussian spy!"

At this three men came forward and seized Carrol, and at a gesture from the leader dragged him out at once.

"Madame," said the officer, turning to Mrs. Lovell, "you must come. You are my prisoner."

Mrs. Lovell did not understand the words, but she started back with a cry of despair.

"O Georgie! O my darling, darling Georgie!" cried Maud. "O, what can we do? What does it all mean?"

To this Mrs. Lovell made no reply whatever. She simply pressed Maud in her arms, and sobbed aloud in her anguish.

"Pardon, madame," said the officer, "but you must come." And he took her arm and drew her along after him. Maud clung to her, and Mrs. Lovell tried to cling to Maud. Then there followed a pitiable scene,—the sisters clinging to one another, the officer calling to his soldiers and tearing them from one another's arms.

Mrs. Lovell, half fainting, was dragged away by the soldiers; while

Maud, quite frantic, tried to cling to her sister, and implored them to take her also. The soldiers kept her back, and, thus repelled, she stood for a few moments staring at them with a white face of agony, still imploring them to take her too. The men did not understand her words, however, and they coolly went on with their task, which was to arrest in the name of the Republic Madame Lovelle and the Prussian spy. They dragged their prisoners toward the door. Maud stood for a few moments overcome with anguish; she had seen Carrol taken, and she now saw her sister dragged out after him. With a wild cry she rushed after Mrs. Lovell.

But Maud's strength had been severely tried during the last few weeks, and this sudden and overwhelming sorrow was too much for her. Her brain reeled, her limbs failed; and she had scarce taken three steps when she fell senseless on the floor.

XXIII.

FLIGHT.

THE meditations of Grimes during the first few minutes of his imprisonment were by no means pleasant. To have been arrested at any time would have been bad enough, but at such a time as this it was intolerable. What was worse, his captors were citizens of that great and glorious French Republic for which he had been so enthusiastic, and to which he had been seeking to devote his services. This was the unkindest cut of all, and it wounded him to the soul.

Grimes, however, was not the sort of man who could sit still and brood over his sufferings. He had a healthy and hearty animalism, which made him chafe under them, and move restlessly to and fro like a wild beast in his cage. His first impulse was to examine his prison and its surroundings, so as to see what prospects of escape there might be. The room itself was large and lofty, with tiled floor, and two tall

windows that opened with hinges. There was no balcony outside, and the street was too far down to be reached by any process of climbing. The house in which he was formed one in a range that extended all along the street, and, as far as he could judge from a hasty glance, was several additional stories in height.

Although the fact that he was not handcuffed was very gratifying, still he did not see any prospect of immediate escape. If he should be left in that room that night, he might be able to get away; but the night would be or might be too late. Mrs. Lovell would expect him at dusk, and what would she do if he failed her? What his prospects were he could not imagine, for he could not imagine why he had been arrested. Whether he would be summoned at once for examination, or made to wait, was equally uncertain. His experience of French ways made him incline to the belief that he would have to wait for two or three days. The whole thing seemed so abominably stupid to him, and so unmeaning, that it aggravated him all the more; for Grimes had a logical soul; and if there had been any motive whatever in his arrest, he would not have felt so utterly outraged. As it was, even prolonged and heavy swearing gave no relief; and he was compelled at last to take refuge in the silence of disgust.

What the ladies might do in the event of his missing the appointment, he could not conjecture. In the midst of his meditations, which occupied several hours, he was roused by the rattling of keys at the door. Grimes started, and looked up with eager expectation, for now his fate would be decided. His only thought was that he was about to be taken away for examination. Two men came in, one of whom carefully locked the door on the inside, and then turning looked at Grimes with a mocking smile.

It was Du Potiron. In an instant Grimes understood it all. The suggestions of Carrol as to Du Potiron's taking a speedy vengeance were in-

deed fulfilled; and this was the mode that he had chosen. As Grimes saw his face, there came over him a terrible anxiety about Mrs. Lovell; for now it was shown that Du Potiron's threats were not idle menaces; and the same force which had been used against him could be used with far greater effect against defenceless women. The only hope he had was that Du Potiron might not yet have denounced them, and that he might yet escape in time to save them.

Du Potiron's face was pale as usual, and below his kepi might be seen a bit of sticking-plaster, which no doubt covered the wound that he had received when Grimes knocked him down stairs. In his face there was a malice and triumphant malignancy that was quite demoniac. Grimes, however, looked at him calmly, and waited to see what he would do.

The other man, whom Du Potiron had no doubt brought with him for purposes of safety, looked very much like Du Potiron, only slightly inferior, suggesting the idea that he might be an admirer or follower of that great man. He had in his hands a pair of handcuffs, which were no doubt brought here to adorn the hands of Grimes. He also had some pieces of rope, which looked as though they were intended to bind him still more securely.

"Eh, bien monsieur," said Du Potiron, at last. "What you zink now? Hah? You laugh at me now, hah? You attack me now, will you? Hah? Ze table is turn. Eet ees your turn now. Tr-r-r-r-emblez!"

At this, which was spoken very rapidly, very fiercely, and with manifold gesticulation, Grimes made no reply, but sat watching Du Potiron, and occasionally looking at the other man. He was measuring their strength; he was cogitating as to the probability of others being in the hall outside; and listening to hear if there was any shuffling or sound of voices. But there was nothing of the kind, and Grimes began to meditate a desperate deed.

"You not belief," continued Du Pot-

iron, who was evidently a Philistine and had come to crow over the fallen Samson,—“you not belief. Ah hah! You belief now? Hah? Madame Lovelle, she not belief; she belief now. Hah? Come, you are silent. You are dumb. Ha, ha.”

And Du Potiron made a low, mocking bow, spreading out the palms of his hands; after which he raised himself, and once more regarded Grimes, who sat quite still, looking as before.

“Moi, I haf warn ze madame one, deux, tree fois. Mais see you, what ees it now; you are spies. You and ze madame, I haf denounce you bot to ze Central Committee of ze section, in ze nom sacre and august de la liberté. You haf been ze slaves of Bismarck, and conspire against ze security of la gr-r-r-rande République. I haf set ze loyal citoizens to watch, and you afe discovaire. Voilà.”

Du Potiron paused again to see if his taunts would elicit any reply, but Grimes still held his peace, and sat as before in the same attentive and thoughtful attitude.

“Aha,” continued Du Potiron. “You fly in ze balloon? Hah? Monsieur Nadar. Hah? Ma foi. You wish you escape me. Aha? You not escape zees way so easy. I haf set my heart on vengeance, and I haf denounce you as ze enemy of ze sublime République. All ze disloyal must perish. La France will destroy ze tyrant, and ze oppressor, and ze despot. You sall not escape; ze madame sall not escape. I am implacable. Moi, I nevaire forgif, nevaire. You air doom!”

Du Potiron frowned in what he meant to be a terrible manner, shook his clenched fists with melodramatic energy against Grimes, and stood staring at him to watch the effect of his words.

“Aha,” he burst out at last. “You say notin; you dumb; you preten to be calm. But are doom, and Madame Lovelle is doom, and you bo sall sof-faire. I sall nevaire forgive. I am implacable, inflexible, inexorable. You are lost; zere is no hope, no possibilité

of redemption. Aha, does zat make you tr-r-r-emble?”

At this moment Grimes rose quickly, snatched his revolver from his pocket, advanced two steps, and seized Du Potiron by the throat so as to almost choke him, and levelled his pistol at the other man. The whole movement was so sudden and so unexpected, that both were taken by complete surprise.

“If you say a word, I’ll fire,” said Grimes, in a low, stern voice, as he covered the other fellow with his pistol, and held Du Potiron’s throat in his iron clutch. The other man did n’t seem to require any such warning. His face was livid with terror; his knees shook; and the ropes and manacles fell upon the floor.

“Pick them up,” said Grimes, whose Yankee French now came out uncommonly strong.

The man stooped tremblingly, and picked up the ropes and handcuffs.

“Bring them here.”

The man obeyed.

“Now put them on this man,” said Grimes. “If you don’t, I’ll blow your brains out.”

With these words he pushed Du Potiron around so that the other man could get at his hands, while he himself watched every movement. Du Potiron meanwhile had made a few contortions, but the suddenness of this attack, and its overwhelming character, deprived him of all force. The iron grasp on his throat almost suffocated him, and thus he stood perfectly helpless. The other man tremblingly took the handcuffs and put them on Du Potiron’s hands.

“Now,” said Grimes, “take off his cravat and tie it over his mouth, tight.”

The man obeyed. The cravat was large enough to serve the purpose of a gag; and while the man was tying it on, Grimes tested it from time to time, making him tie it tighter, till at length it seemed to him to be safe enough.

Now Grimes seized a piece of rope, and warning Du Potiron not to move for his life, he made the other man turn

round, and then he secured his hands tightly behind his back. After this he took his cravat, and gagged him in the same way that Du Potiron had been served.

But this was not enough. He wanted to put it out of the power of his two prisoners to move; so he made them both lie down, impressing his orders upon them by holding the muzzle of the pistol against the foreheads of each in succession. Resistance was useless. Both lay down; and Grimes, taking some more rope, bound the feet of each. He then made them stand up, fastened them back to back, and passed the end of the line securely around an iron rod that supported a heavy shelf on one side of the room.

All this had been done with a neatness and despatch that showed the practised hand. After the work was finished, Grimes restored his pistol to his pocket.

"Pardon," said he, somewhat grimly, "you will see that I must escape, and, in order to do that, I had to tie you in this way. I may not see you again, and so I will wish you every happiness in the world, and say, adieu."

With these words he turned away, and, picking up the keys which Du Potiron had dropped at the first onset, he went towards the door, and tried each one till he found the right one.

So far all had gone off well, but the question still remained, how was he to get out of the house. He saw that he could not go down stairs, and his idea was to ascend to the roof. His long meditations over balloons had made the upper regions of the air quite a natural subject for his mind to dwell upon, and he thought that if he once got up there he might be safe.

He opened the door cautiously and peeped out. The hall was empty.

He went out and listened. There was no sound at all. It seemed as though the upper stories of the house were not tenanted. The apartments, he thought, might be storerooms of some kind, or perhaps they were deserted on account of the siege.

There was no use in hesitating any longer, so he locked the door behind him, put the keys in his pocket, and walked away with as little noise as possible. Finding that his boots creaked, he tore them off, and thrusting one in each side-pocket of his coat he hastened along the hall.

He soon reached the stairway. Looking up he found the coast clear, and looking down he saw the story below apparently deserted. He ran up the stairs, and continued ascending till he reached the topmost story. Here he found a step-ladder going up to the roof. Climbing this he raised a small trap-door which closed the opening, and stepped out upon the roof. Then he shut down the trap, and seating himself upon it he drew a long breath of relief, and looked around with a comprehensive stare, and then putting on his boots again he began to meditate over the situation.

The houses were flat roofed or almost flat, and were joined together so closely that he could walk on for a long distance without difficulty and without being seen from the street. The difficulty was how he was to get down again. This was a thing that he did not know exactly how to contrive. After some thought he decided on leaving this place and going over the roofs of the houses; such a journey might reveal some practicable way of descending. He might find a ladder or a staging or something of that sort. He accordingly started off and walked on till he reached a corner house, where any further progress in that direction was impossible. He now turned to the right, where the row of houses still extended along the street, and traversed several of these. At length he saw something which suggested a way of escape in case of an emergency. It was a trap-door; something like the one through which he had passed. Here at least there seemed a way to get down, and it was the only way. All the other traps and skylights had been closed. He knelt down by this and looked down. He saw nothing but the

floor of the hall, nor did he hear anything. This encouraged him, and he decided to make his descent here. But to do so by daylight seemed too hazardous, and he thought it would be safer to wait till dusk. He seated himself here and kept a vigilant watch, ready if there appeared any signs of pursuit to plunge down and close the trap after him. But no signs of pursuit appeared, and Grimes thought pleasantly that his efforts to secure the prisoners had been crowned with complete success. They had been unable to free themselves, and had probably not received any visit from their comrades.

Two or three hours passed, and Grimes waited very patiently, feeling sure now that, if he only effected his escape, he would be able to be at the rendezvous in time. At length it grew sufficiently dark for his purpose, — just dark enough for safety, yet also sufficiently light for him to find his way. Once more he removed his boots and cautiously descended. As he reached the attic floor he listened, but heard nothing. Reassured, he descended farther. He met no one. He went farther and farther down, and now discovered that the house was uninhabited. By certain signs of disorder he thought that it had been visited by thieves, who had left the trap open. Reaching at length the door of the *concièrgerie*, he found this locked, but another door had a key in the lock, and opening this he found himself in the court-yard, where he put on his boots again and looked around. Here a gate opened into the street, and was secured by a bar. Grimes removed this, and stepped forth into the street.

A cab was passing. He hailed it, and told the driver to take him to the Place de la Concorde. In due time he reached his destination, and, leaving the cab, he hurried off with a light heart toward Mrs. Lovell's lodgings.

The darkness had now increased, but the moon was shining, and the night was still. All things promised a propitious voyage. On reaching Mrs. Lovell's lodgings, he was surprised to

find that there were no lights. However, he knew his way well enough to her apartments, and he went on, full of confidence, till he reached them. All was still. The door was open. He entered with a strange feeling of apprehension. The moonbeams streamed in through the windows and illumined the interior.

Grimes saw nothing of the general appearance of things, his whole attention being arrested by one sight: It was the figure of a lady prostrate on the floor, lying in the moonlight, face downward. The heart of Grimes gave a wild throb, and he rushed forward and knelt by her side. He raised her up. Her face, but dimly visible in the moonlight, was half concealed by the disordered hair that had fallen across it. Her hands were cold.

Grimes was bewildered. He raised the lifeless form in his arms and kissed the pale forehead, the closed eyes, the cold lips.

What was he to do?

Send for help?

But the house seemed deserted. There was no help to be had. Besides, he dared not wait, for now he felt as though all the National Guards of Paris were on his track, headed by Du Potiron, who would lead them here first of all. Then both would be arrested. There was only one thing, — flight, instant, immediate!

It could only be a faint. She would recover. Ah! he saw it all. She had waited, and he had not come. Carrol had come, and in his impatience taken Miss Heathcote. Mrs. Lovell had still waited. She had been overcome with anxiety about him. She had not thought him false, but she had feared for his safety. She must have divined his arrest and his danger. The thought had been too dreadful.

Grimes's whole nature melted down into utter softness beneath the power of such piteous thoughts.

"We must fly," he murmured. "We must get to the balloon. She'll revive when she gets up aloft."

Saying this he rose up, carrying the

senseless lady in his arms, and hurried down to the street. There he got a cab, and drove to the Place St. Pierre. The lady still continued senseless. Grimes held her in his arms, and allowed himself to indulge in numberless tenderesses, feeling as though such acts and words as these were better adapted to win his loved one back to life than any quantity of the ordinary restoratives, such as burnt feather, cold water, and rubbings.

At last they reached the Place Bastille. A crowd was there. High in the air floated the dark outlines of two balloons, still held to the earth by their ropes, waiting for their passengers, struggling to be free. M. Nadar had been faithful. He rushed forward to the cab. Grimes emerged, carrying his precious burden.

"Haste! haste!" cried M. Nadar. "I've been waiting an hour."

"Have the others come?" asked Grimes.

"No, not yet. Haste, haste."

Grimes was a little surprised, but his anxiety about his lifeless burden drove away other thoughts.

"This lady's fainted," he said; "I want to restore her."

"She'll revive," said M. Nadar; "if you wait now, you cannot go at all."

Grimes said nothing, but hurried to the balloon. He lifted the lady into the car. Then he got in himself.

"Are you ready?" asked M. Nadar.

"Wait," said Grimes, "my friends have not come."

M. Nadar fumed and fussed.

In a few moments, a cab was seen hastening toward the place.

"They have come," said M. Nadar.

"There is the cab. Are you ready?"

Grimes looked out. He saw the cab. He had no other thought than that this was Carrol and Miss Heathcote. He had a dread of Du Potiron and his National Guards.

"Yes," he said quickly.

In another moment the earth sank away, and the everlasting ether received him into its embrace.

XXIV.

A RESCUE.

CARROL had been seized and led away at the beginning of the disturbance consequent upon Mrs. Lovell's arrest, and had not therefore been an eyewitness of the distressing incidents connected with it. Upon him, the impression that was produced by this event was slightly different from the actual fact. When the soldiers entered, his only idea was that it was Maud, and not Mrs. Lovell, for whom they were come; and when he was dragged away the same idea was in his mind.

Such an idea was perfectly natural under the circumstances. In the first place, Carrol, as a matter of course, was morally incapable at that time of bringing his mind to bear upon any other thought than that of Maud. In the second place, a large part of their conversation that afternoon had referred to Du Potiron, for Maud had once more to explain the misdirected letters, and she had also much to tell about Du Potiron's persecution of her in Paris. She herself only knew this from Mrs. Lovell's narrative, but Carrol's idea was that she had been personally annoyed by it all along. She had alluded with some uneasiness to Du Potiron's threats, and they had discussed the possibility of his carrying those threats into execution.

Now, all was lost. Maud was seized. She would be in the power of this vile scoundrel, and no effort of his could possibly save her. This thought created an anguish of soul which could not indeed be greater than that which he had suffered from other causes during the last few weeks, but was certainly quite as great. His guards were too numerous for resistance to be possible. He was dragged along helplessly, almost mad with the emotions that had been wrought within him by this fearful revulsion from the highest bliss to the profoundest misery.

But Carrol, in spite of his highly emotional nature, was essentially a man of action, and wherever there was

the faintest hope of doing anything he caught at it. It occurred to him that his only chance of escape now lay in winning over some one of his captors. But how was this to be done? He could not speak French, and besides there were too many of them; for even if any one should be willing to help him, he could not do so in the presence of the others. Under these circumstances a thought occurred to Carrol as a last resort, and he at once acted upon it. It was a very natural thought. He could not speak French, but some one of them might possibly speak English. This accomplishment was not uncommon in Paris. Any knowledge of English, however slight, would serve his purposes.

So he asked the soldiers nearest him, one after the other, if they spoke English. They shook their heads with the usual *comprend pas*. "Does any one speak English?" he said in a voice loud enough to be heard by all. At this one of those in front turned. As he was the only one of all of them that took any notice of this question, it seemed quite evident that he alone understood it.

"Do you speak English?" said Carrol.

"Oui, monsieur. Yes, I spik Inglis."

Carrol was much encouraged by the face of this man. It was not a high-toned face: it was the face of one who was corruptible, such a face as one often sees among the great population of couriers, cicerones, landlords, waiters, and policemen on the Continent, — the face that is associated with the crafty soul and the itching palm.

"I will give a thousand francs, anything, if you will help me and the lady to escape."

The man's eyes flashed, his countenance lighted up. He hesitated for a moment, and then said in a dry, business-like voice, "Oui, monsieur."

"What does he say?" asked one of the men, walking with him.

"O, nothing; he asked if his lodgings had been searched, and I told

him yes. I don't know, were they searched?"

"I don't know," said the other, "but it's as well to make him think so."

"So I supposed," said the first speaker.

Carrol said no more. This little incident took some of the load of anxiety off his mind. It was a small enough incident in itself, and a rascal-like this was, but a broken reed; yet Carrol could not avoid relying upon this rascal's fortunate rascality, and hoping much from it.

Not long after they reached their destination, which was not far from Mrs. Lovell's. The vast number of *quasi*-military men who now filled Paris rendered necessary a large number of depots for their accommodation, and for the reception of arms and stores. It was to one of these places that Carrol was taken. It was a large edifice, with a court-yard which was filled with baggage-wagons. As Carrol was taken up stairs, he noticed that there were few men to be seen, and from appearances he conjectured that the place was used as a storehouse for commissariat purposes. A single light was burning on each of the stairways which he ascended, and the long halls were dark and gloomy. Boxes and bundles of a miscellaneous description lay around, and other collections of the same kind could be seen in some of the rooms whose doors happened to be open. It was evidently not a regular prison, but merely used by his captors for that purpose, to save themselves trouble. This was a discovery which went still further to encourage him, for it led to the hope that he might not be very closely guarded.

In the mean time Mrs. Lovell had also been arrested in the way above described, and had been led away by her captors. Paralyzed by the suddenness of the event, and by the terror that lay before her, she was for some time almost in a state of unconsciousness. The despairing cry of Maud kept ringing in her ears, and added to her own despair. In her agitation

she addressed the most frantic words to her captors, — expostulations, prayers, entreaties, — but all this met with no response of any kind. They did not treat her with any incivility; they led her along as considerately as was possible under such circumstances, but no effort was made to console her, or to alleviate her distress. About ten minutes after Carrol had been safely deposited in his allotted prison, Mrs. Lovell was conducted into the same house, and put into another room. Then the lock was turned, and she was left to her own meditations.

Gloomy and despairing indeed were those meditations. The room was perfectly dark, and she had not the remotest idea where she was. At first, the horror of her situation overwhelmed her, and she stood motionless, her heart beating wildly, and her brain filled with a thousand ideas of terror.

But at length other and better thoughts came; for, after all, she had a buoyant nature and a sanguine disposition, and now, in spite of the terrors of her position, these began slowly to assert themselves. First, she thought of Maud, and it was with a feeling of immense relief that she thought of her sister's not being arrested. Then her thoughts reverted to Mr. Grimes.

The moment that the stalwart figure of Mr. Grimes stood revealed to her mind's eye, that very moment a thousand hopeful considerations, a thousand encouraging ideas presented themselves. It was the time for Mr. Grimes to come. He would not be late. He must, she thought, even by this time have arrived. He would come there, he would see Maud, and would learn all that had happened. A smile of trust and hopefulness crossed her face as she thought of the eager and energetic way in which Grimes would fly to her rescue. First of all, he would convey Maud to a place of safety, where she would be altogether out of the reach of Du Potiron. Then he would institute a search after her. He would fly to her relief. He would come, and without delay. It surely would not be difficult for

him to learn where she had been taken. He would not leave her here to suffer in imprisonment and in anguish. He would surely come, — yes, even this night, and soon, before many hours, — yes, at any moment. At length, confident and expectant, she felt about the room in the dark till she found a chair, and, drawing this close to the door, she sat there, and watched, and listened, and waited for the appearance of Mr. Grimes.

Meanwhile Carrol had been securely deposited in his room, and had striven with the difficulties of his situation as he best could. There was, of course, only one ray of hope left, and that ray beamed from the rather villanous-looking eye of the man that was able to "spik Inglis." It was, naturally enough, rather a feeble ray; but feeble as it was, it served to throw a little light into the gloom of Carrol's prospects, and all his thoughts and hopes centred upon the possible appearance of this man. That appearance ought to take place on this night if it was going to occur at all; and so while Mrs. Lovell sat waiting for Mr. Grimes, Carrol was waiting with far less confidence, but with equal impatience, for his deliverer.

The thoughts of expectation were mingled with others. His mind constantly reverted to Maud. Where was she now, he thought. Perhaps she is in this very building, confined in a room like this, in the dark, full of despair. O, what bliss it would be if I could but appear to her at such a time as this, and save her from such a fate! This thought was so sweet, that he could scarce lose sight of it. To him it seemed inexpressibly pleasant. To save Maud now would be something that might atone for the anguish that she had endured on his account. What a glorious recompense! How the darkness of that old memory would be swallowed up in the sunlight of this new joy! So he sat there, and he brooded over this thought, and he longed with longing inexpressible that he might be able to do all this for Maud.

And Mrs. Lovell sat, and she listened, and she waited for Grimes full of trust.

And the hours slowly passed, the hours of night.

Midnight came.

The peal of bells from the tower of a neighboring church announced this fact to both of the watchers. Mrs. Lovell gave a sigh of distress. Carrol gave a half-groan.

But scarce had the last stroke died away on the still night air, when Carrol's acute senses, which had been sharpened to an intense degree by his long watch, became aware of a soft shuffling sound along the hall outside.

He listened, breathless!

The sounds approached his room. They were low, shuffling, and regular.

They were footsteps.

As Carrol ascertained this fact, his heart stopped beating, and in the intensity of his anxiety he seemed turned to stone.

The footsteps drew nearer.

Then they reached the door.

Then there was a pause for a time, after which a key was noiselessly inserted, the bolt was drawn back, the door opened, and a voice said in a whisper, "Are you wake?"

"Yes," said Carrol in a low voice, scarce able to speak in the intensity of his excitement.

"S-s-s-st!" said the other in a low voice.

He now came softly in and shut the door behind him, turning the key again.

"I can safe you," said he in a whisper.

"The lady —" said Carrol in the same tone.

"She is here."

"In this house?" asked Carrol, as his heart gave a fierce throb of joy.

"Yes."

"She must be saved too."

"Yes, we sall safe her too," said the man.

"When? when?" asked Carrol, whose impatience was now intolerable.

"Now, — toute suite," said the other.

"Make haste, then; don't keep me waiting any longer," said Carrol feverishly, in a scarce articulate whisper.

"Wait," said the man. "How mooch you gif me for dis?"

"Anything; anything, if you only save me —"

"But how mooch?"

"Anything," said Carrol hurriedly.

"A thousand francs."

"You make him a tousand dollar," said the Frenchman.

"I will, I swear I will. Come."

"Mais, wait. How I know dat you sall gif it?"

"I'm rich. I've got plenty."

"When you gif him?"

"O, as soon as I can get it! To-morrow. Come, make haste."

"O, oui; plenty time. Mais, how I know I sall get him? Can you gif him dis night?"

"To-night; no, I must get it from my banker."

"Mais, eet ees too long to wait."

Carrol ground his teeth in rage and impatience.

"Here," he said, snatching his purse from his pocket, and thrusting it into the man's hand, "there are about a thousand francs in this. I swear to you, by all that's holy, I'll give you the rest the first thing to-morrow. You may stay with me till then, if you're afraid."

The man took it, then he went to a corner of the room and knelt down. Then he drew a match, and, holding this in one hand, he looked over the contents of the purse by the light of the match, with a quick and practised glance. A few moments were enough. He extinguished the match and came back to Carrol.

"Dees sall do for de present," he said. "And now we sall go. But you mus take off your boots."

Carrol tore off his boots as quickly as he could.

"Gif me your hand," said the Frenchman. "I sall lead, you to the lady, and den we sall all go together."

Carrol grasped the outstretched hand

of the other, and in this way they left the room.

Mrs. Lovell listened and waited.

The midnight hour had tolled.

Time still went on.

At last she heard sounds outside, — shuffling sounds.

They approached her door!

"At last! O, at last!" she murmured. "O, how faithful! I knew he'd come!"

The key was inserted, the door gently opened. Mrs. Lovell rose to her feet, and, trembling in every limb, she tottered forward, scarce able to stand, and utterly unable to speak, holding out her cold and tremulous hands eagerly and longingly.

Carrol's heart throbbed with wild and furious agitation. As the door opened he rushed forward. One step inside, and he encountered Mrs. Lovell.

He flung his arms around her in a fervid embrace. He pressed her again and again to his throbbing heart. For a few moments he was utterly unable to articulate one single sound. At last, as he held her once more to his heart, he murmured, "O my darling! O my darling!"

"I knew — you'd come," sighed Mrs. Lovell in a scarce audible whisper.

"O my own dar —"

"S-s-s-st!" said the Frenchman in a low voice. "Make haste. We mus haste. Der is no time. Come, take my hand again, and I sall lead de way."

Carrol grasped Mrs. Lovell's hand and seized the Frenchman's. They went along the hall and down a flight of steps and into a long hall which went to the other end of the court-yard. Here they descended and reached a gate. But Mrs. Lovell was weak, and though she clung to Carrol she could not walk well. The intense excitement of that night had unnerved her.

Carrol murmured in her ear words of love and encouragement, and then raised her in his arms. She was a little woman, and not so heavy but that Carrol was able to carry her. But his own

natural strength was increased by his enthusiasm and joy; and Mrs. Lovell, utterly overcome by contending emotions, twined her arms about his neck, while her head sank upon his shoulder.

XXV.

AN OVERWHELMING DISCOVERY.

THE Frenchman now opened a door at the back of the house, and Carrol passed out into a street.

It was quite dark. The moon, which had been shining bright in the early part of the night, had gone down, and the sky was overcast. There were no lights burning in the street, nor were any visible in any of the houses. The siege had extinguished the one, and the lateness of the hour had extinguished the other.

Into this dark street Carrol passed, bearing his burden. Mrs. Lovell clung to him as though she were afraid that something might still occur to separate them; while Carrol, in his rapturous joy, forgot all danger, and had it not been for his sober, practical, and matter-of-fact guide, would have wandered at random, carrying his burden anywhere as long as he could move. But his sober, matter-of-fact guide had made other preparations so as to complete their escape, and thereby make his own reward the more sure.

"I haf a cab," said he. "Eet ees not far. You carre de lady some time yet, but not mooch. All araight. De next cornaire."

By this Carrol understood that his guide had given to his own performance a completeness that made it positively artistic. This allusion to a cab at once aroused him to the dangers around him and the excellence of the cab as a means of escape from it.

At the next corner they found a cab standing. The guide went forward and spoke mysteriously to the cabman. Then, as Carrol came up, he asked him where he wanted to go. Carrol hesitated for a moment. He thought of Mrs. Lovell's lodgings; but being still

possessed with the idea that danger might be lurking there, and anxious above all to secure the safety of his dear companion, he mentioned the Hotel du Louvre. His idea was to drive there first, and on the following day to send word to Mrs. Lovell about the safety of Maud.

Giving this brief direction, he put down his precious burden, and tenderly lifted her into the cab. Then he followed himself. The door was shut. The guide took his seat beside the driver, and the cab drove off.

Carrol was now once more alone with his dear care. Her silence and her weakness excited his tenderest pity, while the rapturous thought that he had achieved her deliverance filled his whole soul. He flung his arms around her, and drew her close to him and held her there. Mrs. Lovell made no resistance. It was her deliverer who was thus lavishing his tenderness upon her. Her heart was filled with a sense of his devotion to her; and he had a way of appropriating her which she was unable and unwilling to resist.

Thus the cab drove on, and the two sat there, quite silent, each lost in the thoughts that were most natural to each mind. It was a moment of infinite tenderness, of mutual self-devotion, of soft and tranquil thoughts of bliss; in short, a supreme moment that only comes but once in a whole life.

"This is bliss unspeakable," thought Carrol. "What a wonderful life I have had all crowded into a few weeks! The most unutterable misery, and the most exalted happiness; the alternations of utter despair and seraphic joy. Now the darkness is lost in light, and Maud will lose the recollection of the grief that I have caused her in the remembrance of the joy that I have given her."

These were the thoughts that he had as he held her to his heart.

"How faithful and how true he is!" thought Mrs. Lovell; "and what a heart must I have had to have played so recklessly with such a Glorious Being! I knew he would come. I sat there, and

waited, and I knew it. And he came. But how it was that he could have ever managed to come, is something that I never shall understand. And there never was such another man in all the world. O, he is such an utter —" A sigh ended the unspoken sentence.

It was Carrol who first broke the silence.

He thought that his direction to go to the Hotel du Louvre ought to be announced to his companion. He had not thought of it since he gave it. He now thought that she ought to know, so as to have some idea of where she was. He also began now to remember the existence of Mrs. Lovell, and the idea occurred to him that some measures ought to be taken as soon as possible to effect a communication with her, so as to let her know the joyful event that had occurred.

This communication was destined to be effected much more quickly than he had supposed to be possible. With the motive that had just been explained, Carrol gave a long sigh, that was elicited simply and solely by utter happiness, and then for the first time began to speak aloud and in his ordinary voice.

"You know, darling," said he, "I ordered the driver to take us to the Hotel du Louvre, but I've just thought that you might feel anxious about your sister, and would like to go to her first to let her know about your safety. Do you feel inclined to do so, or are you afraid?"

At the first sound of his voice thus audibly expressed, in his natural tones, Mrs. Lovell gave a little start, and then listened with a confused expression. The voice did not seem altogether familiar; she felt puzzled. The thing alarmed her; she did not say one word for some few moments. But as the voice ceased, her fears died out. She began to think that her brain must be affected. These wild suspicions seemed like delirium or madness. But the arms of her preserver were around her, and thus reassured her.

"O dear," she sighed, "I really think that I must be almost insane!

I'm not quite myself yet, I suppose. O yes, do let us first go and see Maudie! O, I want to see poor, poor Maudie! I know that Maudie will be frightened almost to death! Poor, poor Maudie. O yes, let us drive as fast as possible to Maudie!"

This time it was Carrol's turn. He it was who gave the start. The sensation was his. That voice! It was not the voice of Maud. Who was this that spoke of "Maudie"? What did it mean?

Carrol's blood turned cold within his veins, a shudder passed through him, his heart stopped beating, his nerves tingled, his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, and finally all the hairs of his head simultaneously and quite spontaneously rose up and stood on end.

His arms relaxed. He made an effort to withdraw them, and would have done so had he not been almost paralyzed by this new sensation.

What did it mean? Who could it be? Was there a mistake, or was he mad? Had the Frenchman taken him to the wrong woman? What a frightful and abhorrent and abominable idea! And where was Maud? And who in Heaven's name was this woman who talked about "Maudie"? A mistake? How could there be a mistake? He would not, could not believe it. But there must be a mistake. Could such things be?

Mrs. Lovell noticed the shudder that passed through her companion, and felt his arms relax, and observed his astonishing silence. She wondered at first, and then grew alarmed, thinking that the excitement of the search, for her, and the long anxiety, and the final rescue had at last overcome him.

"O," she cried in intense anxiety, "what's the matter? You seem ill? Are you not well? O, why are you so silent? Why do you tremble so? Why do you shudder? O, you are ill? O heavens! you have done so much for me that you are sinking under it. And O, how unhappy I am! And O, what *can* I do?"

The sound of this voice was enough for Carrol. There could no longer be any possibility of doubt. His worst suspicions were confirmed. The terrible fact appeared, full and undeniable.

It was not Maud!

This confirmation of his worst fears broke the spell that had fallen upon him. He tore himself away. He started back, and in a wild voice that was almost a yell shouted out, "What's all this? Who are you? What do you want?"

This act, and the sound of his voice, a second time sent a cold thrill of horror through Mrs. Lovell. She recoiled with a repugnance and an abhorrence as strong as that which animated Carrol, while a terror more dire and more dark took possession of her soul, quite overwhelming her.

"Who are you?" she said in a low moan, and with a wail of anguish, — the utter anguish of intensest fear.

"O great Heaven!" cried Carrol with an anguish as deep as hers.

"Who are you?" wailed Mrs. Lovell again, in the last extremity of her terror, — "who are you? O, who are you? What do you want? O, what do you want?"

These wails of anguish showed plainly to Carrol that this woman, whoever she was, had not intended to deceive him, but had been herself deceived. Strangely enough, he had not yet thought of the truth; for so entirely had the idea taken possession of his mind that it was Maud who had been arrested, and that Mrs. Lovell was safe from all danger, that he did not think of her. As to who it was he was not able to give a thought, so confused, so bewildered, and so overwhelmed was he. That poor brain of his had been sorely tried for many eventful weeks, and could not now be expected to be equal to the sudden demand that was made upon its overtaken energies.

He had but one thought, that of knowing the truth at once. On this he acted instantaneously.

He stopped the cab.

He tore open the door.

He jumped out.

He told Mrs. Lovell to get out.

She got out.

The Frenchman also got down from the box, animated by the one idea that had now become his ruling motive, — the idea of securing his pay.

It was dark. There were no lights in the streets or in the houses. Carrol and Mrs. Lovell remained undistinguishable to one another, though each stared hard at the other. Carrol now seemed to Mrs. Lovell to be not quite so tall as Grimes, but Carrol himself could make nothing out of Mrs. Lovell's appearance.

"Who are you?" asked Carrol, at length, in an excited voice. "This is all a terrible mistake."

At this question Mrs. Lovell was on the point of mentioning her name; but a sudden recollection of the events of her escape, the mutual endearments, and all that sort of thing, effectually deterred her.

"I—I—you—I—" she stammered, "that is, O dear! I thought you were somebody else. I thought you were Mr. — Mr. — Mr. Grimes."

"Mr. Grimes!"

At the mention of that name a flood of light poured into Carrol's soul. In a moment he understood it all. This was Mrs. Lovell. He saw the whole truth. Mrs. Lovell had been arrested also. He had stumbled upon her, and she had mistaken him for Mr. Grimes. About the naturalness of such a mistake he did not stop to think, for his thoughts were turned to his own affairs. If this was Mrs. Lovell, where was Maud? She was still in prison! In his wild excitement he took no further notice of Mrs. Lovell, but turned furiously upon his benefactor, the Frenchman.

"This is the wrong lady," said he, and his words remained fixed in Mrs. Lovell's memory afterwards; "where is the other one?"

"De oder one?"

"Yes, the other lady."

"De oder lady? Dere is no oder lady."

"There were two ladies arrested: I want the other. You must take me back, and rescue her, or I swear I won't pay you anything more. I swear I'll give myself up again and inform about you."

"Mon Dieu!" cried the other, "I say dere is no oder. Dere vas only one lady took. Dis is de one. De oder lady faint. She stay in de house. No one touch her. You go to de house, and ask. She dere now, eef she haf not ron away."

"What is this?" cried Mrs. Lovell, who at last begun herself to understand the state of the case. "You are Mr. Carrol, are you not?"

She spoke rather coldly.

"I am," said Carrol stiffly.

Mrs. Lovell turned to the Frenchman.

"The other lady was not arrested, I think you said?"

"No, madame. I vas back to de house, she vas faint."

"Fainted? Poor darling Maudie!" cried Mrs. Lovell, who now became absorbed in that which had been so long the chief feeling of her heart, — her love for her sister, — "poor darling Maudie! O Mr. Carrol!" she continued, "we must go there at once; she may be there now alone, and in despair. O, come! I must go there at once."

She told the driver her address, and hurried back into the cab.

Mrs. Lovell's belief in the Frenchman's information changed the current of Carrol's thoughts. He now saw that Maud had not been arrested, and that Mrs. Lovell was the one. He saw that the only course left was to hasten without delay to the lodgings; and accordingly, after one or two more questions of the Frenchman, he reiterated Mrs. Lovell's directions and got back into the cab also.

The door was once more closed, and again the cab drove off.

The very same people now occupied the interior of the cab who had occupied it a short time before, but between their former relations and their present ones

there was an infinite difference. In that short time a revelation had taken place which had completely revolutionized their mutual attitudes and turned their thoughts into a totally different channel. They sat now as far as possible away from one another. They felt an unspeakable mutual repugnance and repulsion, and by the intensity of their longing after the absent they measured their abhorrence of the present. Not a word was spoken. It was a situation in which words were a mockery.

Of the two, Mrs. Lovell's case was perhaps the worst. The thoughts of Carrol had reference to one alone, but her thoughts vibrated between two different beings, the one Mr. Grimes, the other Maud. About each she felt an equal anxiety. What had become of Mr. Grimes? How did it happen that this man Carrol, — a man for whom she never had felt any particular respect, a man whose influence over Maud only excited her wonder, — how did it happen that a man like this should surpass the glorious Grimes in daring and in devotion? How did it happen that he should have penetrated to her dungeon, while glorious Grimes had stood aloof? It was a thing which she found inexplicable, and the more she thought of it the more unable she felt to account for it.

In the midst of her anxieties she could not help feeling the bitterest mortification about the events of her escape. First of all, she detested this Carrol, nor could the thought that he had saved her disarm that resentment. Secondly, she felt a resentment against Grimes for the deep disappointment which he had caused her, and for the horrible mortification to which his delinquency had exposed her. The only thing which at this moment saved poor Grimes from sinking forever into the unfathomable depths of contempt in her estimation was the idea that he also might have fallen a victim to the vengeance of Du Potiron.

Carrol drew himself back as far as possible into one corner of the cab,

shrinking from even the slightest contact with his companion, and Mrs. Lovell did the same with an aversion which was, if possible, more intense and persistent. And yet these two but a short time before had been clinging to one another with feelings of illimitable tenderness!

The cab drove on as it had driven before, and at length reached its destination. Carrol flung open the door and sprang out. A gentlemanly instinct came to him in the midst of his excitement, and he turned after two or three steps, with the intention of assisting Mrs. Lovell out. The magnanimous thought occurred to him that, in spite of all her faults and offences, she was, after all, Maud's sister. But Mrs. Lovell took no notice of him. To her Carrol was now a detestable being, — detestable, and that utterly. She quitted the cab unassisted, and hurried toward the house. Carrol hurried there also.

The aspect of the house struck them as being strange and drear and suspicious. What was stranger and more suspicious was the fact that the door was wide open. Mrs. Lovell entered first. The *concierge* was gone. The way was clear. It was dark inside, but Mrs. Lovell knew the way well enough to go in in the dark. Carrol followed her, guided by the sound of her footsteps, and keeping as close to her as possible.

On reaching the door of her apartments, Mrs. Lovell found it wide open. All was still; she faltered for a moment upon the threshold, as a terrible apprehension came to her mind; then overcoming this, she entered.

She said not a word, but walked on. The door leading into the room, beyond was also wide open. It was the ordinary sitting-room, and beyond this was the bedroom. Mrs. Lovell walked on with a quaking heart till she reached the bedroom door. Then she stopped, quite overcome. Then she called, "Maudie!"

No answer!

"Maudie!" she cried again; "are you here?"

There was no answer.

Mrs. Lovell could endure her suspense no longer, she entered the room, and passed her hand over the bed. No one was there. Then she lighted a lamp. The room was empty. Then taking the lamp in her hand, she came back with white face and staring eyes to the outer apartment, where Carrol had been waiting in a state of inexpressible anxiety.

"Where is Maud?" he asked.

"She is not here," said Mrs. Lovell, in a low and tremulous voice; "and I — I am — awfully afraid."

"Let us search the house," said Carrol in a hoarse voice; "she may be somewhere about"

With these words he took the lamp from Mrs. Lovell, and the two walked away, searching for Maud. To their consternation they found all the rooms open. Not a soul was to be seen anywhere. No servants were to be found. All had gone. Madame Guimarin had gone; and as for Maud, there was not the slightest sign of her.

XXVI.

ANXIOUS INQUIRIES.

THE discovery that the house was absolutely deserted, and left thus with all the doors open and no occupants, filled both Mrs. Lovell and Carrol with equal terror. They went all through the house as though they still conceived it possible that Maud might lie concealed in some remote apartment. Faint indeed was their hope as they thus pursued their examination, but still such an examination was not so bad as utter and open despair; and so they continued it, even after all hope of finding her here had left them. During this search there was not the slightest thoughts of their own safety in the mind of either of them. So engrossed were they in their anxiety about Maud, that the idea of personal security was utterly forgotten, and they kept up their business of exploring the house just as

though neither of them had ever been arrested.

But Mrs. Lovell, while she thought about Maud, had thoughts also of a similar nature about Grimes. With her fresh remembrance of Du Potiron's threats, and also of Du Potiron's sufferings, she could not help wondering whether he had not fallen a victim to that vengeance. Against him Du Potiron had a double cause of anger; for in the first place he was connected with her, and in the second place he had done an unpardonable wrong in the personal assault that he had made. All these thoughts came to her as she searched wearily, fearfully, and hopelessly about the house; till at length their weight oppressed her. She could not endure them. The hopeless search grew irksome, and finally she sat down in the hall, and gave herself up to the despairing thoughts that now took complete possession of her. As for Carrol, his state of mind was very similar. The resentment which he had felt against Mrs. Lovell for being the innocent cause of his disappointment had died away, and the one feeling left in his mind was that of inexpressible anxiety about Maud. In this feeling the two found a common bond of union and a common ground of sympathy, so that they were once more drawn together, in spite of the mutual aversion which recent events had created.

As Mrs. Lovell thus sank despairingly into her seat, Carrol stood in equal despair by her side, and for a long time not a word was spoken by either of them. Of the two Carrol was the first to rouse himself.

"Well," said he, "it seems to me that there is no need for us to remain here any longer. I think that we had better do something. Will you allow me to take you to the Hotel du Louvre, while I continue the search elsewhere?"

"Elsewhere?" said Mrs. Lovell. "What do you mean? Where will you look? Have you any idea of any place where information can be gained?"

"Well, I don't know," said Carrol. "I've been thinking it over, and it seems to me that I ought to be making a general search, though I confess I hardly know where. My idea just now is to take you back to the Hotel du Louvre, and then start off and try and find something, — whatever I could, — and I would let you know the result in the morning."

"It is of course, very natural," said Mrs. Lovell, calmly, "that you should wish to get rid of me, but I assure you that you shall do nothing of the kind: for, in the first place, I mean to continue the search; in the second place, I shall keep this cab in my employ; and, in the third place, I shall insist on your accompanying me. For we have the same object in view, and so it seems to me that we had better pursue it together. You can be of service to me, and therefore I ask you to go with me. If you refuse, I shall have to go alone. But knowing what I do of your relations to poor dear Maudie, I do not anticipate a refusal."

Upon this Carrol assured her that his only thought had been for her comfort, and that, if she felt inclined to continue the search for Maudie, he would of course go with her.

"Very well," said Mrs. Lovell, "and now I will tell you what I have been thinking of since I came to this house. It is — a — Mr. Grimes. You see he was to come here to meet us, to make our departure together. Now, you know, when the soldiers came, they came to arrest me. M. Du Potiron threatened that and that only; so they came and took me. They took you also, and I think the reason of that was that you were mistaken for Mr. Grimes, who had, no doubt, been denounced along with me. I can account for your arrest in no other way."

"Well, you know, poor dear Maudie was not arrested; for this man, M. Du Potiron, you know, threatened to have me arrested, and to take poor dear Maudie himself. He may have been waiting outside for my arrest, and have taken away poor dear Mau-

die at once. Or he may have delayed; and this gives me the only hope I have. It is this. You see, Mr. Grimes was to have come here for us; well, you know, we were arrested. Well, it was about the right time for Mr. Grimes to come; and if poor dear Maudie was not taken away, Mr. Grimes must have found her and learned from her what happened, and then taken her away. So the only way to find Maudie is to search after Mr. Grimes."

"Well," said Carrol, "there seems to be something in what you say. As to Grimes, I don't know exactly where to look for him, for he left our lodgings this morning for good, and he does not seem to me the kind of man who would go quietly back there to sleep when he knew his friends were in danger."

"No," said Mrs. Lovell, in a decided voice, "he certainly cannot be sleeping. He is awake somewhere and trying to help — to help — us."

"Yes," said Carrol, "that's a fact; and so it seems useless to hunt him up at our lodgings. The question then remains, where can we find him, or where can we find out about him."

Mrs. Lovell sat thinking now for some time. At last she spoke again. "Did Mr. Grimes say anything to you about what he intended to do to-day?"

"Well, yes, in a general way. He said positively that he was not coming back. He paid his bill and made some arrangements about his luggage, which was to be kept at the house till he should come for it at some future time, or send for it. Some of his valuables I know he had taken away the day before and left with M. Nadar, to be deposited by him in the balloon —"

"M. Nadar?"

"Yes. M. Nadar was to put this in the balloon in which Mr. Grimes was to go. It was something which was very light, yet very important to Mr. Grimes."

At this a strange thought occurred to Mrs. Lovell, a strange and to her at that moment a very affecting thought, opening up to her mind once more a

fresh insight into the devotion of Grimes, and disarming to a great extent the hostile suspicions that had begun to come to her.

"What is that?" she asked somewhat anxiously; "something, did you say, that Mr. Grimes had intended to take with him in the balloon, — something, did you say, that was very light, and yet very important?"

"Yes," said Carrol, who knew perfectly well what this was of which he spoke, yet did not like to mention either the thing itself or his knowledge of it to Mrs. Lovell. "Yes, something of importance to him, you know, that he wished to take with him, you know, but which was not of sufficient weight, you know, to make any difference in a balloon, you know."

"O yes," said Mrs. Lovell, in an absent way.

"Well," said Carrol, "as I was saying, he had taken this away the day before to M. Nadar, leaving directions that this should be placed in his balloon."

"In his balloon?" repeated Mrs. Lovell, absently, but with some emotion.

"Yes," said Carrol; "that is, you know, in the balloon that he intended to travel by, you know."

"O yes," said Mrs. Lovell.

"Well," said Carrol, "and so, you know, he left this morning with the intention of seeing that the balloons were made ready. You see he had not sufficient confidence in M. Nadar, and therefore wanted to be on the spot himself."

"And so you think he went there?" said Mrs. Lovell, with some anxiety.

"I have no doubt about it," said Carrol. "I know he went there, and I know, too, that he must have spent the whole day there; for, you see, he felt that the whole responsibility of this balloon voyage rested upon him, and so, you see, he was, very naturally, quite anxious that everything should be safe, — that is, as safe as possible."

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovell, "that is what he must have done."

"Yes," chimed in Carrol, "he must have been at M. Nadar's all the day, and has probably come here in the evening."

"And in that case," said Mrs. Lovell, "he must have found Maudie. So you see it only proves what I said, that Mr. Grimes is the one whom we must first find. It seems to me that the best thing we can do is to drive to M. Nadar's and make inquiries."

"Yes," said Carrol, "but I suppose we may as well drive to my lodgings first, for it is just possible that he may be there."

To this Mrs. Lovell assented, and the two were soon seated in the cab again. On reaching his lodgings, Carrol waked the *concierge* with some difficulty, and learned that Grimes had not been there at all; so that now it only remained to drive to M. Nadar's.

On reaching M. Nadar's, they found all dark and still, and only obtained admission with extreme trouble. M. Nadar appeared after some delay, and Carrol made known his business as briefly as possible.

M. Nadar's information was full, complete, and final.

First. Monsieur Grimes had not been there at all that day.

Secondly. He had prepared the balloons according to promise, depositing M. Grimes's little package in his balloon, with other necessaries, and had the balloons ready in the Place St. Pierre at the appointed time.

Thirdly. After a long delay M. Grimes at length reached the place with a lady who had fainted. M. Grimes was very anxious to resuscitate her before starting, and to wait for his friends.

Fourthly. At length a cab appeared, which they supposed to be M. Grimes's friends. M. Nadar told him the lady would recover in the upper air, and asked him if he was ready. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, M. Nadar had cast off the lines.

Fifthly. But the cab did not contain the friends of M. Grimes; and M. Nadar, after waiting for them a long

time, had packed up his balloon and returned.

M. Nadar's visitors made suitable acknowledgments for this information, and returned to the cab and drove back to the Hotel du Louvre.

This information had been a crushing blow to both. Mrs. Lovell was speechless with indignation. It was bad enough that she should have suffered the humiliation of this disappointment, that her trust had been mocked and her holiest and tenderest feelings outraged. Bad enough this was; but to find that this had been done with such abominable accompaniments, and that Grimes, while vowing endless devotion to her, had coolly, calmly, and quietly taken some other woman with him and fled with her, — this was, indeed, an intolerable insult and wrong.

Who was this fainting lady about whom he had been so anxious, the one for whom he had given up good faith, and truth, and honor, and all that is most esteemed by high-minded men? Who was she, and what motive could Grimes have possibly had in devoting himself to herself, if another held so much power over him? To think of Grimes as a gay Lothario was absurd, yet from any other point of view his conduct was most inexplicable.

While Mrs. Lovell thus suffered the pangs of wrath and jealousy, Carrol was more than ever disturbed about Maud. Her disappearance was a terrible blow. He did not know where to search for her, or what to do. At length his thoughts reverted to one fact in the narrative of M. Nadar, and that was the mention of the lady who had fainted. Grimes had taken a lady in this state into the balloon, and Carrol now recollected what the guide had said of Maud. She too had fainted. Could the fainting lady of Grimes be Maud? The more he thought of it, the more probable it seemed. He mentioned his suspicions to Mrs. Lovell.

But Mrs. Lovell scouted the idea.

"Maudie! Impossible! What would Mr. Grimes want of Maudie? and in

a fainting-fit too! The idea is absurd. Why, Mr. Grimes would wait till Maudie recovered, so as to find out what had happened. No," concluded Mrs. Lovell, bitterly, "it was some strange lady."

"But Grimes did n't know any ladies in Paris at all, except you and — and Miss Heathcote."

Mrs. Lovell shook her head obstinately, but said nothing.

At length the cab stopped, and Carrol once more questioned the guide about what he had seen in the house after the arrest.

The guide's story was the same as before, without any alteration.

To Carrol there now seemed no doubt about it. Grimes must have gone to the house and found Maud there! He must have taken her, not only away from the house, but into the balloon. Into the balloon! and, if so, where were they now? Into what peril had he borne her in his wild flight? What did he mean? It seemed a thing so terrible, so hazardous, so frantic, and so unintelligible, that Carrol was bewildered.

He dismissed the cabman and took Mrs. Lovell to the hotel. But for neither of them was there any sleep. Mrs. Lovell in her drear solitude wailed for her lost sister, and thought with speechless indignation of the baseness of the man in whom she had trusted. He had deceived her, he had broken his faith and stained his honor. He now deserved only her limitless contempt.

XXVII.

IN SPACE.

As the word was given, the balloon shot up into the air, and ascended to a great height. For this was one necessity at this time and in this place, that in effecting an escape from Paris the balloon should shoot up to as great a height as possible, so as to be out of the reach of Prussian bullets. By day, of course, this would be very difficult; but by night, even amid moonlight, it

did not require any very extraordinary elevation to render a balloon indistinct or even invisible, and the height of a milé was considered sufficient.

Grimes was looking over the side of the balloon when he had seen the cab coming, and had called out in answer to Nadar. The first thing that he was conscious of after this was the astonishing movement of the firm-set earth from beneath him. The crowd in the place below fell away from him, leaving him poised in space. In spite of the efforts that he had made to familiarize himself with the practical details of aerostation, there was an inevitable novelty connected with his present position, which fairly made his brain whirl, and his stout frame tingle through every fibre. His sensations were like those which Phaëton may have had when he had traversed the first few furlongs of his aerial way, or like those which some adventurous yet inexperienced driver of a four-in-hand may have when he finds that his team is bounding away from beneath his control.

So Grimes folded his arms, knit his brows, set his teeth, drew a long breath, and then looked up. Overhead was a network of rigging, the strands that held the car to that buoyant mass that raised it in the air, while beyond this was a great globe, black and shadowy, whose capacious dimensions seemed enlarged to tremendous proportions, shutting out the whole sky. It shut out that infinite expanse into which it was plunging, and the sparkle of the stars; and though its shadow was not projected into the car, yet the blackness of the great overhanging orb clothed it in gloom and darkness.

He now looked into the car, and turned his attention to those duties that immediately demanded his care. Inside this car there were bags of ballast, and two bales containing newspapers, the common burden of every balloon that left the besieged city. There was also a lacquered tin box with the name of Grimes painted on it, — a box of no particular weight, but which showed, from the care with

which Grimes handled it, that it certainly possessed in his estimation a very particular value.

All this time the lady had not moved. Grimes had placed her in a sitting posture at the bottom of the car, with her back against the seat, and had hastily flung over her head one of the shawls which M. Nadar had put in the balloon. The moon was shining, but it was low down in the sky, so that the inside of the car was in shadow, and the lady was but faintly visible. The shawl also that had been thrown over her concealed her face and outline. Grimes, in turning to consider his duties, thought first of all of her, and, stooping over her, he felt her hands and her pulse. She was still senseless, and Grimes now began to be so anxious about her that the recent feeling of awe that had come over him as he first bounded into space gave way to a tender and all-engrossing care for the safety and recovery of the loved one.

With loving hands he drew back the shawl a little from her face. That face was concealed by the shadow of the side of the car, and by the deeper shadow of the overhanging shawl, so that the loved features were not very distinctly revealed. Grimes held his cheek close to her lips, but no breathing, however faint, was perceptible. He began to feel a stronger and deeper care, and to regret that he had left Paris without first having her restored to sense. He sighed heavily, and then kissed with infinite tenderness the unconscious being who was so dear to him. Then with gentle hands he drew the shawl once more over the face, so as to protect her from the night air, and began to rub and chafe the hands.

At this work he continued for what seemed to him a long time, quite forgetful of everything but the work upon which he was engaged, and as careless about the balloon as though there was an aeronaut with him attending to the navigation of the aerial craft. But his work seemed unavailing, and no response of any kind was made, nor did any favorable signs appear. At length

the thoughts of Grimes were turned to his voyage. To him it now seemed as if it ought to be almost time to descend. How long he had been at this employment he did not know, but it seemed long, and he must already be outside the beleaguering lines. He rose up and looked out.

To his surprise he was just passing over the suburbs of Paris. The vast extent of the city lay in the distance. To his far greater surprise the land beneath him, with its houses and trees and fields, was sweeping past at a rate of speed which seemed tremendous. He seemed to be very high above the earth, and he could only account for the rate of speed at which he was going on the ground that some strong wind had arisen since he left the city.

To his disappointment he saw that as yet he could not descend. For beneath him he saw the lines of the fortifications of the city, and beyond these the forts. On which side of the city he was, whether north, south, east, or west, he had not the faintest idea; and he was certainly not sufficiently familiar with the environs to form any correct opinion, even had he been closer to the ground. At that height there was a certain indistinctness in the outlines which would have puzzled even a native of the city.

As Grimes gazed upon the scene, he soon saw that though he might not descend just now, yet his descent could not possibly be delayed for very long. The tremendous rate at which the earth was driving past him would soon sweep away from under him all these lines of battle, the forts, the fortifications, and the armies of besieger and besieged. And even as he gazed he saw that this was the case. For there beneath him, faster and ever faster, the earth fled away; the lines of the besieged disappeared, other lines came into view, and arrays of flashing lights and blazing fires. Suddenly a loud report like a gun-shot sounded almost immediately beneath him, and the sharp quick crack had in it something of awful menace. What if he were be-

ing aimed at? What if another shot should be fired, and a bullet pierce the black orb above him? The danger was altogether too terrific to be slighted. Higher and higher still he must go. Beneath was the hostile country, reaching for an unknown distance, and in passing over this he would be liable incessantly to the shots of the enemy. He might be on the thronged track of the Prussian Army; he might be driving east toward Germany. For the present he must go higher and higher. And now all thoughts of a speedy descent left him. His only thought was to escape from this immediate danger, and remain up as high and as long as possible.

Acting upon this idea he grasped two bags of ballast, and threw them out one after another. He then looked down. He saw a perceptible change. Individual objects beneath him grew far fainter and far more hazy, and soon it was difficult to distinguish anything at all. It seemed to him that on throwing out that ballast he had shot upward an immeasurable distance, and he was filled with astonishment at the exquisite delicacy of sensibility to weight which his balloon had thus manifested. He also was conscious of a slight pride, for this had been the first attempt of which he had been guilty at anything like management of the balloon, and the success which had attended his efforts caused a glow of calm self-satisfaction to pervade his being.

The moon was now so low on the horizon that it was beginning to sink behind the hills. From that horizon it shone fiery red, and clouds, or at least haze, seemed to accumulate there. Its red rays penetrated the sky, and threw themselves upon the rigging, and upon the great orb above, making it seem like some satellite as it thus gleamed with its borrowed robe of lurid red. But the lurid glow did not long endure. The moon sank farther and farther, until at last it went out of sight.

Now the darkness was deeper, and there came to Grimes a sense of desolation. The departure of the moon

seemed like the loss of a friend. He looked up, and then around, and then shook his head. He felt now that it was intensely cold, and thought that he had gone too high. But he was afraid to descend for some time yet, and so he concluded to endure the cold as long as he could. Yet the intensity of the cold roused once more his anxiety for his senseless companion, and he stooped down with the intention of throwing over her some additional wraps. It was now so dark inside the car that nothing could be seen, but as Grimes stooped he heard a low moan and a slight movement. At this a thrill of joy passed through him. She had revived at last. She was herself at last; and the sudden and sharp cold had, no doubt, restored her to consciousness.

He listened again. The figure moved. She raised herself, and the shawl fell back from her face. But in the deep shadow of the car the lineaments of her face were not at all discernible, and Grimes saw nothing but a certain whiteness in the place where the pale face was upturned. And as he looked he felt a thrill of infinite pity and tenderness for the loved one, who now seemed so utterly dependent upon him. And this pity was all the deeper, and this tenderness the more pure and more profound, from the fact of their unparalleled position. Because of the silence of the night, and the majesty of the overhanging heavens, and the sublime solitude of the skies, and the far-reaching infinitude that bordered upon them, — for these and other reasons she seemed joined to him by the unity of a lofty fate, and by the imminence of a possible danger, which, if it did come, could be nothing less than a calamity of tremendous and unspeakable horror.

Grimes, therefore, was profoundly moved. He knelt down close beside her.

She looked up, and said nothing for some time.

"Where am I?" she asked at last in a voice of terror.

"With me," said Grimes in a low voice; and as he said this he twined his arms about her, and, drawing her gently toward him, placed her head soothingly and tenderly upon his breast, and laid his hand upon it as a mother lays her hand upon the head of a feverish child.

Thus it was then that Maud had at length struggled up out of senselessness and back to consciousness. Sense had come but slowly, and when she first moved she felt bewildered; she lay for some time motionless, trying to collect her thoughts and recall the past. The shawl that was over her head shut out all the scene, and as the car seemed motionless to one within it, she had no other idea than that she was lying inside some house. Then at length her memory brought back the events that had preceded her swoon, and a shudder passed through her as she thought of them all. She pushed back the shawl, sat up, and looked around. It was quite dark, but not dark enough to prevent her from seeing the outline of the balloon. At first she thought that she was on the deck of a ship, for there was the rigging, and the orb of the balloon looked not unlike some distended sail. But as she looked longer other thoughts came, and the scene above her resolved itself slowly into what it really was. Then it was that she recollected the project of her flight with Carrol, and wondering how it had happened, and still full of anguish about him, she asked her mournful question.

And the answer came, in a low voice of love, soft and tender in its intonation, "With me." And then came around her the tender clasp of arms encircling her, and the gentle touch of a loving hand upon her head, as though that touch would reassure her and drive away every fear.

"With me": these words were like magic, they chased away every fear, and her whole being thrilled with joy. She forgot where she was, she thought nothing of the sight that had just disclosed itself above her, she thought only of those murmured words, and of the fond encircling clasp, and of

that heart of true and deathless constancy against which her head leaned, whose throbbings she could hear.

And he was safe, after all! He had been arrested, but he had escaped. He had sought her once more, and had carried her off in this hurried flight. Small difference did it now make to her how she was flying, or whither she was flying, so long as she was with him,—now while she felt him upholding her and clinging to her with such fondness, such tenderness. Small need was there for words. The tide of joy that rushed through her heart took away from her the power of speech. But she had no occasion to speak. Her thoughts were too deep for words. This was joy and happiness enough to counterbalance the sorrow of the past, and he who had caused her poor heart such grief now threw all that grief into forgetfulness by the glory of the present joy.

And Grimes thought: After this I'm willing to die. Life has nothing more to offer. I've seen its ups and downs: have been at the deepest depths, and now am at the highest flight of human bliss. I've saved her,—I've saved her! I've got nothing more now to hope for in life that can begin to come up to this in the way of pure, unmitigated, and super-human glory!

And Maud thought: How sweet, how sweet it is! Is it not worth while to know sorrow, if only to be able to experience the joy that may be felt when that sorrow is removed? I wonder if there is any danger. Danger? I neither know nor care. I am willing to meet danger, or even death, so long as I know that he is with me. I could die at this moment, if only his arms should be around me.

Grimes was not altogether neglectful of practical things, in spite of his super-human rapture. But these practical thoughts were simply variations upon the one theme. They were anxious desires to secure the comfort of his companion. He busied himself with arranging the wraps about her so as to

keep her, as far as possible, from the cold night air. To all these acts Maud made no remark. To her they only afforded fresh proofs of the love of Carroll, and consequently each endearing act only afforded her a fresh delight.

In the midst of her great happiness, however, there came one thought that gave her a passing care. It was the thought of Mrs. Lovell. What had become of her? Was she safe? This thought created a sudden agitation.

She removed the shawl from her face, and asked, in a low and agitated voice, "Oh!—my sister!—is she—is she safe?"

Grimes bent low over her and murmured, "Yes, darling, safe."

And drawing her closer to him he kissed fervently and tremulously the one whom he so fondly loved, pressing his lips to hers again and again. Maud murmured some unintelligible words, and with a final kiss, long drawn, rapturous, and never to be forgotten, Grimes drew once more the shawl over her face, and with a sigh of ecstasy restored that dear head to its former place.

The time that had elapsed had not been regarded by either. It seemed short, but it may have been hours. Grimes wondered about this, and tried to form an estimate: he could not. He now cast his eyes upward, and the sight that met them startled him.

The sight that met his eyes was the sight of utter nothingness. It was dark, but not intense darkness. It seemed rather to be an impenetrable and intensely gloomy mist. For a short distance up the outlines of the rigging were slightly perceptible, and then they faded out. He sat motionless and wondering; and now, as he sat and stared up, it seemed to grow darker and dimmer every moment, the shadows growing deeper, the obscurity more profound, the gloom more terrible. At last nothing at all could be seen, not the outlines of the rigging, not even the hand before his face; no visible thing remained; nothing was left but the blackness of darkness.

What was this darkness? What was the meaning of this sudden, this terrific change which had come over the face of the sky so swiftly, snatching from view all that could yet remain to connect them with the lower earth? From what arose this gloom so intense, this inky blackness that made all vision impossible? Such were the thoughts that came to Grimes, but these questions he was unable to answer. At first there was a vague idea in his mind that he had ascended so high that he had reached a place where all light failed and darkness was eternal; but this passed, and others came equally wild and equally unsatisfactory. Of all this Maud was perfectly ignorant, for the wraps that covered her head shut out all this scene. But as for Grimes, his surprise deepened into anxiety, and his anxiety became gradually more and more intolerable, until at length he had to make up his mind to tear himself away from the sweet communion which he was maintaining. But he wished to do so in a way that would not create any alarm in the mind of his companion. How to do this was very difficult, but it had to be done.

So he murmured a few words, speaking in a low voice, for the darkness and the deep drear silence produced an overpowering awe and hushed his voice to solemn tones. He therefore said something about "ropes" and "the balloon," and then gently untwining his fond encircling grasp he tenderly laid Maud so as to let her lean against the seat in her old position, after which he rose to his feet, and, standing there, looked forth into space.

XXVIII.

THE SECRET PLACE OF THUNDER.

OUT of the mutual endearments of softest tenderness, out of the ecstatic interchange of love and longing, out of the silent, voiceless rapture consequent upon that transition which had taken place from profoundest despair to lofti-

est hope and most perfect happiness, — out of all this a rude and resistless power had drawn forth the started and now horror-stricken Grimes. He rose; he stood at the side of the car; and his hands clutched the side, as his head thrust itself forth, and his eyes sought to penetrate what was before him. But that which was before his eyes was a mockery to the eye, and the sense of vision struggled in vain to seize upon something that might yield an image, however vague, an impression, however faint.

So stood Grimes and looked forth into space. But his eyes encountered a wide waste, a drear nothingness, an impenetrable gloom, a darkness utter and inconceivable. It was the abomination of desolation. It was the abyss of the uncreate, the chaos of formless matter; a void direful, abhorrent, tremendous; a void where the darkness shut out all the light of hope, and where the shadow of death seemed to rest upon all beyond.

Now, had there been the fury of the storm mingling with that gloom, or had the wrath of the tempest been manifest, then there would have been something to mitigate the effect of that unparalleled outlook; for then there would have been something which could appeal to some sense, and in the beating of the blast, however pitiless, or in the howling of the tempest, however wrathful, there would have been some indication of the presence of nature and of nature's law. But here no movement arose amid the deep darkness, no wind swept through the void, no hurricane gave forth its voice. All was emptiness, motionless, still. It was as though he had reached the vast realms where chaos only rules, and where nature is unknown.

Yet in the midst of this terrific stillness the awe-struck gazer into space became at length conscious of sounds, and it was with something like relief that he detected that which showed that, though sight was useless, there still remained an occupation for other senses. It was a sound, distant, low,

and almost undistinguishable at first, — a murmur, so faint that he fancied, more than once, that it might be the vibrations of the nerve within himself, rather than the actual waves of sound from without. But the persistency of the sound and its gradual increase showed at last that it was external; and as he listened it grew with startling rapidity, until at last it assumed the character of a steady sustained sound, a low, distant droning sound, of so peculiar a nature that it was quite impossible to attribute it to anything with which he was acquainted. This then was the only thing that indicated the existence of any external world, and to this he directed all his attention.

Poised in mid-air, away from the solid earth, severed from all familiar ties, the force of the wind that swept along was not perceived. All was stillness and quiet around, but the stillness and the quiet arose from nothing like the calm of nature. Nature, on the contrary, was at that time exerting her might, and all the air was in commotion; but the balloon was almost like the air itself, and was driven before the blast with a speed equal to that of the blast. So it was borne upon the wings of the wind, yet for that very reason there was no wind perceptible to him who sought to penetrate the gloom that surrounded him. Wind and tempest are only possible when they beat upon an obstacle; the balloon, however, was no obstacle, but drove along equal with the wind, with the tempest, and with the clouds.

And now the sound, the low, droning sound, drew nearer and nearer, and grew deeper and louder. At length it grew sufficiently definite in its tone to assume a resemblance to things that were familiar, and to Grimes, as he listened, it seemed as though some mighty wave was sweeping toward him, — some wave like the first of those vast surges that may be seen and heard as they sweep up the empty bed of the tidal rivers of America; it seemed thus like a rushing, rolling tide, sweeping toward him with tremendous and re-

sistless violence. It seemed also like the thunderous sound of some vast cataract, like the distant roar of Niagara, which to one approaching is at first a low drone, then a louder sound, until at last the full thunder of the waterfall is apparent to the ear. So to Grimes there came this ever-increasing sound, which grew and deepened and broadened, until at last it seemed as though beneath him and all around him there arose the sound of many waters.

He had no reason now to mourn over the absence of nature and of nature's works; for these sounds were at length unmistakable, and showed that it was no empty void, no chaos, that he was traversing, but the earth itself, his home, with its alternations of land and sea. And now he began to understand what was really the nature of that sound. Yes, it was the sea, and nothing else. He had been swept off the land and out to the sea. Time had fled rapidly indeed, while he had been sitting there, lost to all thoughts of the external world in the flood of tenderness and love; and thus he had allowed himself to be borne to where escape was perhaps impossible. By the short time that had elapsed since first he had heard the sound, he was able to estimate the speed of his flight, and to see that, instead of being poised motionless in some deep calm, he was in reality in the grasp of a terrible hurricane, that was driving him onward with tremendous swiftness in the path of its own progress; though where that path might lead his eyes failed to discern, as they struggled vainly to penetrate through the night, and the darkness, and the enveloping clouds.

The sea!

That was now the one thought that he possessed, the one thought that engrossed all others.

The sea! what sea?

There were several seas around France. Over which of these was he now driving? South was the Mediterranean. Was it indeed possible that time enough had elapsed to allow of

his being carried over the vast distance that separates Paris from the southern border of France? He could not believe this. Had he been driving north then, and was this the British Channel? It might be so. Had he finally been driven west, and was this the Atlantic Ocean? That, indeed, was a thought of horror, yet the thing was only too possible. It seemed to him now that he must be over either the British Channel or else the ocean itself. Of these alternatives the latter meant utter ruin and despair; but the former left some room for hope and even consolation. To be hovering now over the Atlantic, to be sweeping helplessly away over its boundless expanse, driving off to the endless west over an endless sea, all this had such terrific meaning that it could not be entertained by the mind. He rather clung to hope. He chose rather to think that it was the narrower sea, and to hope that beyond the roaring of these waters and the rush of these waves there lay a land like that which he had left behind, where it might be possible to find an escape at last. Yet even if land should arise beyond the waters, could he now hope for escape? How could he descend in this storm? In what way could he hope to reach the solid earth, and not be dashed to pieces? To this he was unable to furnish any answer, and from the darkness and from the roaring sea there came no reply.

Meanwhile Maud had been reclining at the bottom of the car in the position in which Grimes had left her, leaning in as easy a position as possible against the side, and waiting to see what was to be done. The shawl which he had wrapped around her still covered her face, protecting her from the cold and from the damp. To her the balloon seemed motionless. To her the balloon did not avail to distract her thoughts from other subjects which now occupied her mind. For she was thinking of Carrol, of the misunderstanding that had arisen between them, of the dark alienation that had arisen, of the separation and astonishing meet-

ing on board the steamer, of his apparent aversion, of their lives apart, of their chance meeting and their final explanation and understanding. Above all she thought of this last incident in their mutual history, so wonderful, so unaccountable. She had seen him arrested; she had fallen to the floor, in her despair, senseless. She had been long unconscious, but had finally awaked to find herself with him, alone with him, out of the world, in the realms of the upper air.

She recalled every incident of that awakening. She thought how he had been roused by her movement and had come to her. She recalled his words of tenderness, his acts of devotion, his deep and all-absorbing love. His arms had been round her; she had reclined upon him; she had listened to his murmured words of love; she had felt his kisses upon her lips. What happiness, what bliss had been hers! What an ending was this to the sorrow that she had known! Such tender recollections as these were indeed overpowering, and it seemed to her that such happiness must be a dream.

And now, as she no longer felt his encircling arms, she began to feel a sense of loneliness. Where was he? Where had he gone? Why was he so silent? What was he doing? He had gone to arrange something connected with the balloon. What was his task? He made no sound. What had become of him? The deep silence became oppressive, and at length she became conscious of a low deep moan that seemed to sound from beneath her. To this she listened for some time, until at length she could endure it no longer, and began to feel uneasy at the silence. She felt deserted, and a wild fear of danger arose.

She started up and groped around with her hands. The car was not large, and in the darkness her hands touched Grimes, who was unable to repress a start and an exclamation of surprise. But the touch of her hand at once aroused him from the gloomy thoughts in which he had been indul-

ging, and reawakened those tenderer emotions which for a short time had been forgotten. He drew her close to him, and, encircling her fondly with one arm, with the other hand he proceeded very anxiously and carefully to arrange the shawl about her head. He said nothing, however, for the solemn sense of peril was still uppermost in his mind, and he felt that if he spoke he would inevitably speak of this. But he wished to spare his dear love as far as possible all pain, all knowledge of danger; and he hoped yet that the danger might be passed, and that she might reach the land so pleasantly that no thought of the terrors of the journey should ever come to her mind. And so it was that Grimes held his tongue, and contented himself with acts of tender carefulness.

And now Maud, as she stood there, looked forth and saw that darkness and that gloom which had so impressed the stout heart of Grimes: It did not affect her so strongly, for she felt around her the arms of the man whom she loved; and in his encircling clasp there was a sweet sense of protection and of security. And so it was that her emotions at the scene before her were rather those of wonder and perplexity than actual terror. But, the longer she looked, the more did the idea of utter and intense darkness oppress her; and her sense of security grew gradually weaker, and there came over her the sense of awe. Beneath her she again heard, and this time far more impressively than before, the droning cadence of the waves; the sound of many waters, which, penetrating thus through the gloom to her ears, carried a certain dismal warning that awakened strange fears within her soul. She clung closer to Grimes. Her heart throbbed painfully, and at last even his protecting arms could not altogether repel the assault of the advancing terror.

"O, I'm afraid!" she moaned. "I'm so afraid!"

Grimes said nothing. He pressed her closer to his heart. His hand

wandered over her shawl, as though by thus ministering to her comfort he might secure her safety. His silence increased her fears. She shuddered. The darkness was around her, impenetrable, mysterious, dreadful; and the chill environment of the storm-clouds, and the dismal drone of distant seas, and the frailness of this aerial bark that thus held them suspended as they drifted through the air, all combined to weaken her confidence and to increase her terror.

"O, I'm afraid!" she murmured once again. "What will become of us?" And with a shudder she clung more closely to Grimes.

Now Grimes himself had been so overawed by the solemn presence of night and storm and darkness and the shadow of death, and he had experienced such direful emotions at the thought of that angry ocean that lay roaring beneath ready to engulf them, that he had no words of consolation to offer, and nothing to say that might disarm the fears of another. He did not wish her to share his anxiety; but since she had gazed with her own eyes upon the terrors of the scene, he had nothing to offer by which those terrors could be disarmed. He could only follow the natural impulse of his heart, and clasp her closer to him, and say to her in low and loving tones, "O my darling! don't be afraid. I'm with you."

And at the sound of these low words of love Maud felt her fears lessen perceptibly; and as "perfect love casteth out fear," so now she rested on that love, and her fears faded away.

"Sit down again, darling," murmured Grimes; "I have to watch."

"Yes," sighed Maud, "I forgot. I'll try to be patient." And with these words she sat down in her former position at the bottom of the car. Grimes stooped over her, and arranged the wraps about her so as to secure her as far as possible from the cold of these upper regions, and from the chill of the clouds that enveloped them. But even as he bent over her, intent upon this

loving care, there came to his ears the dull roar of the waves below, and the sound served to remind him of the terrible position in which they were.

Once more Grimes arose to confront the peril of his situation, and to plan in his own mind some way of escape. Escape? How was it possible?

Shall I descend? thought he.

Descend?

But why should he descend? What was it that lay beneath him? Was it the ocean or the channel? This was the question, and how could he find any answer to that question? Was it the ocean or the channel? If the one, he was lost, and all his bright hopes shattered, and the blessed future torn forever away from his grasp; if the other, there was a chance, faint indeed, but still a chance of escape. Was it the ocean or the channel? Terrible question! Unanswerable problem!

Shall I pull the valve-string and descend?

Descend? Where? Why? Descend? Why descend? To what place? For what purpose? Descend? Why, in any case a descent now could only mean a fall into the sea, and that sea just now, just here, even if it should happen to be the channel, could only serve one purpose, and that would be to engulf them. To descend now, by night, in this darkness, in the midst of this wind that was driving them along with such speed, would be simple madness. It would be to tempt fate. It would be to court immediately a doom that by waiting longer might be averted, or at least delayed. Descend? No, the thought could not be entertained.

What then? Should he ascend?

This was a different thing altogether. It was a bolder question. A question, indeed, so bold that he might well pause before he decided upon adopting such a course. To descend was death; but to ascend, what was that? Was it death or safety?

Such were the thoughts that agitated the soul of Grimes.

And all the while there came up

from below the voice of the sea, the deep drone of the rolling billows, the noise of many waters, coming up thus to his ears through the gloom, and never ceasing to remind him of the peril of the hour, and of the fate that lay in wait for him — and for her.

Had the balloon kept the same altitude, or had it been gradually descending? This thought came to him. He put his head over the side of the car and listened. There came to his ears the same drone of the waves, but whether he had descended lower or not he could not tell. For a long time now, as it seemed, though how long he could not tell, that sound had come forth from below; but though any exact estimate of his distance from the earth was impossible, yet the sound seemed near enough to suggest the propriety of putting a greater distance between him and it; and so as he arose once more to his former position, and asked himself the question, Shall I ascend? the noise of the waters below gave forth an answer that had an unmistakable meaning.

That meaning which he understood was, Ascend! Avoid us! Keep away, as far as possible, from our pitiless wrath!

And now as he finally asked himself the question, Shall I ascend? he answered, Yes, I must ascend. I will throw out more ballast. I will put a wider interval between me and the sea that menaces us so pitilessly.

Meanwhile Maud sat at the bottom of the car, listening and thinking, listening to the roar of the waves, thinking of Carrol. It seemed strange indeed to her, that, after their prolonged sorrow, they should be joined again, stranger still that they should be joined under such circumstances, but most strange and at the same time most sad, that, being thus joined, they should still be exposed to that merciless fate which, like a Nemesis, seemed ever to pursue them. For ever amid her meditations there came the sound of the waves of the sea, and that sound now signified to her mind nothing less

than renewed disaster, and perhaps complete destruction. It seemed as though the fate that had thus far pursued them was not yet wearied out, but was still following them with unchanged hostility and sleepless pertinacity.

The cold of the upper air and the chill of the enveloping clouds affected her, and she felt them through the shawls which were gathered about her; yet the chill grasp of the hand of Night was robbed of half its power by the hot and feverish influence of the thoughts that passed through her mind. Where were they going? What were they doing? Carrol had madly carried her off in the balloon; but did he understand the balloon, and did he know what was to be done in the dire emergency in which they now found themselves? Did he even understand the management of a balloon under ordinary circumstances? Understand! How could he? Had he ever been in a balloon before? To manage a balloon required experience; and what experience had Carrol ever been able to gain? And what was he doing now? or what was he thinking of as he stood up there aloof from her, striving to see into the darkness? She began to understand that he was puzzled and bewildered, and that he was trying to think of some way of effecting their escape. The thought filled her heart with despair, and as she considered his inexperience and ignorance the last hope of escape died out.

Shall I ascend or not?

Such was the thought of Grimes.

And now with inconceivable abruptness, bursting into the midst of the night, dashing all the dark aside and transforming in one moment all that impenetrable blackness to one universal glow of fiery red, there came a sudden flash, coming from no one direction, but flaming everywhere, for a moment, and then dying out utterly. And then, before Grimes could collect his thoughts that had been scattered and dissipated by the shock of that lurid flash, there followed a long, deep

thunder-peal, that rolled and rumbled all around them, and went volleying on through all the heavens in long reverberations.

Grimes stood motionless until the last peal of the long-reverberating thunder had died away in the distance. Then, at length, he knew what he was to do. In that long, deep, wrathful thunder-volley he had heard the answer to his question. From that answer there was no appeal. It sent forth to his ears a voice, menacing, gloomy, terrific, and even the stout heart of Grimes shrank back from the terrors of its presence. From this his one thought was now to fly; and he stooped down hastily and snatched at several of the ballast-bags, and hurled them out one after another.

Maud had not seen the red flash, for her head was infolded by the shawl; but she had heard the terrible thunder-peal. As its first low, rising sound came to her ears, she thought it was the surf beating upon some rocky shore upon which they were driving. Every nerve thrilled with horror; and she drew herself up with that instinctive movement by which one tries to prepare himself for some inevitable collision. But the collision did not come; and the sound deepened into grander volume till the thunder-peal made itself manifest to her. Yet this discovery lessened her horror not one whit. As well, she thought, might they be driving against the pitiless cliffs of an iron-bound shore, as to be up here in this place of terror, among the withering lightning-flashes, in the secret place of thunder. She was aware of Grimes's exertions, though she did not know what he was doing, and she felt the car oscillate beneath his movements.

She removed the shawl and looked up with a shudder of terrible apprehension, with the fear of one who expected to see Death itself. She said not a word. She looked, with all her being in her eyes.

And as she looked the gloomy folds of night and cloud and darkness that so long had environed them lessened

perceptibly. There came before her sight the dim outline of her companion, and the ropes of the rigging and the network, and the dark figure of the overhanging orb.

All these grew less shadowy and more substantial every moment, until at length something like the actual forms of tangible things could be seen, though as yet the gloom of night kept them indistinct. But beyond this her eyes saw a place where the gloom of night came not; for, looking over the edge of the car, her gaze wandered far away into distant space, and there from that remote infinity there shone full before her a clear, tranquil star. In its calm, cold ray her excited, feverish spirit seemed to sink to rest and quiet; and the light of the star showed her that the horror of great darkness had passed.

XXIX.

OVER THE CLOUDS AND OVER THE SEA.

THUS by throwing out that ballast the balloon had been elevated beyond the region of the storm into one of calm, or at least to one where the clouds did not follow. Grimes once more felt a momentary thrill of self-complacency at this second proof of his power to navigate the machine, but the anxieties of his position were too great to allow such a feeling to last. He was still as ignorant as ever of his whereabouts, and merely knew this, that the sea was beneath him, and between him and that sea a thunder-storm was raging.

For now there came up from beneath sights and sounds that showed him the full terrors of that place which he had left. Flashes of vivid, blinding lightning were flung out from time to time, throwing a ghastly glare over all. To Maud those flashes were terrible, and with renewed fear she once more covered up her head and so shut out the sight. Following close upon the lightning came the thunder, peal after

peal, in long volleys which rolled around them and beneath them and far away in endless reverberations.

Grimes looked over the side of the car upon the scene beneath. There lay a vast abyss, without form, and void, of intense blackness; out from the midst of this abyss he saw the sudden flash of the lightning, now in long forked lines which seemed to pierce the whole misshapen mass with destructive fury, again in one sudden uplifting of universal light. After this followed the deafening thunder. To Grimes it seemed as though this scene of destruction was taking place on the earth itself, as though the world were going to ruin, and that the time had come for the consummation of all things; and though he on the wings of his balloon rode sublime in the crystalline sky, yet he would gladly have exchanged his exaltation for any place, however lowly, upon the solid earth beneath.

Now the deepest anxiety filled his heart. Where was he, and whither was he going? Was he still driving through space at a headlong speed? Was he continuing now on the same course as before? By the lightning-flashes he could see the rolling clouds; but, as far as he could judge, his course was the same as theirs. It was therefore probable that he was in the same current of wind with them, and was going in the same direction.

But where?

Terrific question! Where? How could he answer it? East, west, north, or south, to whatever point he might be driving, whether toward the pole, or the equator, to America or Asia, it was not possible for him to know; and how long would this continue? It could not continue forever, for he knew that there were limits to the duration of a balloon's flight. Every moment some portion of the gas escaped; it grew less and less buoyant; and at last a time would come when, after the last fragment of ballast had been thrown out, the balloon could rise no more, but begin its steady and un-

interrupted descent to the earth or to the sea.

In vain the eyes of Grimes wandered around over every part of the sky. Nothing appeared that could convey any information. If he could but see any sign of land, no matter how bleak and bare it might be, if it was but the peak of some mountain, he would feel relief. But no land appeared; and out of that flaming abysm below no mountain-crest reared itself to meet his gaze. The night also, the long duration of this darkness, troubled him. This night seemed already to have lengthened itself out to an incredible extent; and still it was prolonging itself. Would it never end? Would morning never come? Amid this darkness it was impossible to decide upon any course of action, since his plans had to be made up in accordance with his surroundings; but now his surroundings were hid from view, and whether the sea was beneath him he could not tell. He could no longer hear the roar of waves, even though he tried hard in the occasional pauses between the thunder-peals. Perhaps he had traversed a narrow sea and was now over some land; perhaps he had gone up so far that the sound of the waves could not reach him; or perhaps his ears were so dulled by the thunder that the lesser sound of waves could not be distinguished. But whatever the cause was, he certainly could no longer hear that sound.

And now, as they drove along, the storm raged below as before; and Grimes still watched through the gloom, and Maud crouched in the bottom of the car, hiding her eyes from the lightning-flashes and closing her ears to the thunder-peals. The time seemed endless; and each hour, as it passed, lengthened itself out intolerably. Thus they remained, until at length Grimes began to notice that the lightning flashed less frequently, and that the thunder-peals followed each other with a longer interval between.

The subsidence of the storm aroused

his hope. For if this should die out, then the clouds might also be dissipated; and if he should survive till morning, the earth would not be shut out from his view. He would no longer be in danger of being again caught in the gloomy embrace of the cloud, the remembrance of which even yet made his heart grow cold. With hopes like these he still watched and listened patiently. And the lightning grew rarer and rarer, and the thunder less frequent and less loud, until at length both ceased altogether. But now the scene beneath was no longer lighted up by those vivid flashes which had formerly illumined it, and what lay there was to his sight once more a black abysm, a void of nothingness.

The hours of the night passed on. Maud remained silent and motionless. The storm had ceased, the lightning flashed no more, and the thunder-peals no longer sounded in her ears; but she did not move from her position, nor make a sign. There were two strong feelings in her heart that kept her quiet. One was a feeling of intense terror and apprehension. This journey amid the clouds and darkness, with the dread accompaniment of thunder and lightning, seemed to her mind unable to terminate in anything less than utter ruin. The other feeling was one of deep concern for her dear love, who now had the care of her upon his heart, and was standing there watching and waiting. Perhaps he was bewildered through his ignorance of balloon navigation; perhaps he was silent through despair; perhaps he had some plan, and was devoting all the energies of his mind and body toward carrying that plan into accomplishment. And thus Maud, in her terror for herself and in her love for her dear companion, remained motionless, through the conviction that if there was any possibility of safety it must depend upon her companion's perfect vigilance and absolute freedom from interruption. Well she knew that a word from her would bring him to her side; that at a

cry of fear he would be willing to forget everything but her, and sit by her side with his arms encircling her as he had done when they first left Paris. To do that would be the maddest recklessness. So she resolved to maintain a perfect quiet as far as possible, and neither by word or act to distract his attention.

And now the cessation of the storm had resulted in a quiet so profound that no sound was heard. The quiet reassured her, and gradually the haunting terror of her heart grew fainter. Gradually, too, the fatigue and the excitement through which she had passed produced their natural effect. She was worn out by the events of that day and night; and as the tremendous pressure of excitement and immediate terror was removed, her mind grew more at rest, and slowly she let herself sink into a light and gentle sleep.

Thus Maud, at length slept; but Grimes still watched, and the hours of the night passed slowly on. More than once he had been surprised at the stillness of Maud, and had stooped down, fearing that she might have again fainted. The first time he took Maud's hand, and she returned a gentle pressure without saying a word. The next time she gave no pressure of her hand; but her hand was warm, and by her gentle and regular breathing he knew that she was asleep. This assurance gave him intense delight, for his chief trouble all along was the fear lest his dear love might be suffering.

Thus the hours passed. At length Grimes saw a faint glow of light on the horizon, and hailed with joy the appearance of the dawn. On that quarter lay the east; but it was impossible to tell, even by that assistance, in what direction he was going; still day was coming, and soon it would be light, and then all would be revealed. He therefore fixed his eyes hungrily upon that eastern sky, and watched with indescribable eagerness the faint glimmer of the dawn that appeared in that quarter. But the progress of the dawn seemed painfully slow; and again and again he

impatiently withdrew his eyes, and tried in vain to fix them elsewhere. But there was about the dawn a glory and a charm that Grimes found resistless; and so, as often as he withdrew his eyes, they invariably wandered back again.

Time passed, and it grew steadily lighter. Grimes was now standing with his whole gaze and all his thoughts taken up in the contemplation of the eastern sky, when suddenly there came to his ears a faint plashing sound that made him start. It sounded like the dashing of water. He looked over the side of the car. Again the sound came to his ears, and yet again, yet nothing was visible to his eyes. Beneath him there was a dull, opaque gloom, in which nothing whatever was discernible; nor was he able to make out whether it was land, or sea, or the dense clouds which hours ago had stretched in flame and uproar beneath. Yet there was no mistake about the sound, and again the thought came that it might be the sea.

He had now something else to attract his gaze. The eastern sky lost its ascendancy in his thoughts. The mystery beneath now arose to a prominent place. What was it? He leaned over, and strained his eager eyes into the gloom. He began to notice something like motion there. What was this motion? Was it rolling clouds, or was it the movement of waves? As he listened, he once or twice thought that the sounds seemed surprisingly near. At length the moving objects beneath him became more distinctly revealed in the increasing light; at length he saw the movement all beneath and around him, regular and recurrent, while the sound that accompanied that movement was the sound of dashing waves, of boiling surges, and of foaming, seething billows.

Yes, it was the sea.

Suddenly all was revealed. To his utter amazement he saw that this sea was immediately beneath him. He could see it at last distinctly. Not

more than thirty feet seemed to intervene between him and it, and the balloon was scudding with the speed of the storm-wind over its surface. A moment before it seemed as though the balloon was motionless in a calm. Now he perceived that it was rushing along at a rate of speed such as the hurricane alone may attain.

He understood all now in a moment. The balloon had been losing its buoyancy, and had been gradually descending for hours. He had just noticed this in time. What should he do now? Should he arrest that flight? But how? He had heard of aeronauts throwing out a rope and allowing it to trail in the water. This he thought of, but saw no rope that was adapted for his purpose. There was only one thing left, and that was to lighten the balloon and once more ascend. He threw out several bags of ballast, and the balloon arose once more, and passed up so high that the sight and the sound of the sea was left behind.

But the day was coming on, and soon the sea would reappear in the gathering light. Steadily that light now increased. Grimes watched the scene beneath, and gradually beheld it assume the form of waves, no longer lying close beneath him and sending the din of its billows up to his ears, but far away below, at an immense distance, — so far that, as the waves became defined in the increasing light, they assumed the appearance of wrinkles upon the surface of the water.

The light grew stronger. Day advanced. At last the daylight conquered the darkness; and though the sun was not yet up, still the whole scene beneath him was revealed to the gaze of Grimes.

There was the sea. All around, the horizon. Upon that horizon no signs of land were visible. At one point which lay to the north there was an accumulation of clouds, but what they concealed he could not know. It was the sea, but what sea?

Not the channel, for now he saw that

if he had crossed that place he would see land beneath him by this time, and not water. Could it be the Mediterranean? He thought not, for he had heard the sound of the surf too soon to have had time to reach that sea. What then? Only one thing remained. It must be the Atlantic.

This thought had once before come to him, and he had struggled with it; but now it came again, full, clear, manifest, and attested by the evidence of his senses. At this confirmation of his worst fears he stood perfectly overwhelmed, staring at the world-wide ocean. In one place he saw a ship many miles away, but it grew fainter and fainter.

There was now only one thought in his mind.

The Atlantic!

That meant utter destruction. There was now not one ray of hope. He could do no more. What remained? Nothing but to meet his fate like a man. But since life had thus run out, why should he not enjoy its last brief moments; or why, since he had so short a time left to live, should he keep himself any longer apart from that dear one over whom his soul yearned with such intense fondness.

So you see, with his soul yearning with this intense fondness, and his heart throbbing with its great love, he stooped down, and, stealing his hand under the shawl that enveloped Maud's head, he took her little hand in his, and sat looking at her with a face full of unutterable love and longing, with all the deep and fervent love of his strong nature expressed upon his glowing face.

Maud in her light sleep felt that touch, and it thrilled through her. She waked at once, but the touch was so sweet, and reminded her so tenderly of her dear fond lover, that she remained motionless for some little time, just for the sake of prolonging that exquisite sentiment of bliss and ecstasy. For it was *his* hand. *He* was here. *He* was by her side. *He* was all her own. She did not give one thought to the

very extraordinary fact that both of them were in a balloon, and interchanging their feelings in space. Of the balloon and of space she had no thought. It was her sweet, sweet love only, and the fond encircling clasp of that dear hand:

And now Grimes longed to feast his eyes with a sight of that dear face whose exquisite lineaments were impressed indelibly upon his memory. So he reached forth his other hand, and began gently, and lovingly, and tenderly, to draw aside the shawl which enveloped that face, and concealed it from him. Maud felt the gesture; and as the shawl was slowly removed, she remained still, awaiting the moment when his dear hand, having withdrawn the veil, her eyes should gaze upon his adored face. At this prospect a delicious sense of expectation filled her mind; a sweet confusion gave a zest to her joy; and a delicate flush passed over her face.

The shawl was drawn away.

For an instant Maud sat with a flush mantling her exquisitely lovely face, and her eyes downcast, while a faint smile hovered around her lips. At length, in the full assurance of perfect happiness, she raised her eyes.

The blow of this discovery had already fallen upon Grimes. As he drew back the shawl he saw her face for the first time distinctly, and saw that it was Maud Heathcote. The blow was tremendous. He was stunned. He did n't think of anything. He did n't try to account for anything. He did n't wonder where Mrs. Lovell really was. He did n't have any thought at all. He was simply stunned.

And so it was that, when Maud, in the full assurance of perfect happiness, raised her eyes, this is what she saw.

She saw the man Grimes staring at her. He was still clutching her hand, and holding up the shawl. He was now rigid in that position as though petrified. His eyes were glassy, staring; opposite her, but seeing her not; while on his face there was an expression of dumb, inarticulate amazement;

the expression of a soul in a state of collapse; of a mind in a state of daze; the vacuity of thought; the look of a being who, having gone out of his senses, was approaching the regions of doddering imbecility.

As Maud looked upon this man the flush passed away from her face, and was succeeded by a ghastly pallor and an expression of dull and torpid terror; her ashen lips parted to utter a cry which yet did not escape them; with a frightful shudder she tore her hand away from his clasp, and flung herself back in a recoil of deadly abhorrence.

Of this Grimes took no notice; and so he sat, regarding her with his dazed eyes, while Maud sat staring at him in fixed and rigid horror.

XXX.

LAND HO!

THE two sat thus for some time staring at one another in silence. At length Maud's head fell forward, and burying her face in her hands she burst into a flood of tears. For the bitterness of this heart-breaking disappointment, and the abhorrence which she felt at finding Carrol exchanged for Grimes, and the despair which filled her as she now thought that Carrol after all must still be in the hands of his enemy, — all this was not equal to that anguish of shame that she felt as she thought of all the wealth of sweet and tender sentiment which she had lavished upon this hateful associate. The proud and sensitive soul of Maud experienced now the keenest sense of outraged dignity and wounded self-respect; nor could she forgive herself for the mistake which she had made so innocently.

Maud's outburst of passionate tears served to rouse Grimes from his stupor. He drew a very long breath; stared hard at her, as she sat with her head buried in her hands, and quivering with convulsive sobbings; drew another long breath; and then, without saying a word, he rose to his feet, and leaned

over the side of the car, with his face turned away from her. Beneath him was the sea, above him was the sky, and nothing else was visible save in one part of the horizon where the clouds were gathered in giant masses, and white specks in the distance that looked like the sails of ships. But Grimes, who had a short time before been so keen to scrutinize the face of nature, and so vigilant in his watchfulness, was now blind to all these things that were spread out before his view. His eyes dwelt upon them, but he saw them not, for the thoughts that filled his mind shut out all perception of external nature.

For a long time each preserved this attitude and this silence. Maud sat sobbing. Grimes glared forth over the side of the car. Meanwhile the balloon drove onward, but Grimes paid no attention to this. He did not try to see, by watching his course over the waves, in what direction he might be borne; he did not notice whether he was descending again or not; to all this he remained indifferent, being absorbed in his own thoughts.

At length he turned around and surveyed Maud in silence. By this time he seemed to have overcome the emotions that he had felt. His bewilderment and intellectual stupor, born from that first moment of amazement, had now departed; he had quelled the tumult of his soul. Grimes was himself again; somewhat sad, it is true, almost despairing in fact, but still calm, self-contained, courageous, and capable of sympathizing now to any extent with the one who had so strangely become his companion in this flight.

Grimes turned thus, and stood regarding Maud for some time in silence. She, on her part, sat as before, but she too seemed calmer. Her convulsive sobs had ceased. She sat motionless and in silence.

Grimes cleared his throat, partly by way of preparing to speak, and partly also to rouse her attention.

"What I wish to remark," said Grimes; and he spoke in a very gentle

voice, a voice which was full of kindness and friendliness,— "what I wish to remark is this, that our peculiar position here requires the attention of both of us. I think you do not know that we are over the sea, and it strikes me that you'd best know it now. I'll agree of course to stand by you to the last, and save you if I die for it, just the same, and all the more p'raps, since I brought you here."

"My sister, my sister," said Maud, in a broken voice, and without raising her face.

"What of her?" asked Grimes, with an effort.

"Did you not say that she was safe?"

"When I said that she was safe, I thought I was speakin' to her of you. I meant that you were safe. I saw the cab come with Carrol and you, as I thought, to take the balloon. It must have been Carrol and her.

"O," said Maud with a low moan. "God grant that it may be so!"

"What do you mean?" said Grimes, startled by her tone of voice and her exclamation.

"You cannot possibly know it," said Maud, looking up at him with her pale face and sorrowful eyes; "you could not have known it; or you could never have made the mistake you did." She spoke calmly now, but it was the calm tone of utter hopelessness. "Du Potiron arrested her and Mr. Carrol."

"Du Potiron!" said Grimes, with something like a gasp. This was the first time he had heard of Mrs. Lovell's arrest.

"When I say Du Potiron, I don't mean that he came in person. He informed against her, and sent some soldiers. I suppose of course that he must have done it; no other one could have had any motive for doing it."

"Du Potiron!" cried Grimes again, quite unable to believe this.

Upon this Maud told him the whole story of the arrest, and of her fainting in her grief and terror.

All this was news to Grimes of course, and this story communicated

to him a shock almost as severe as the one which he had but lately received. Once more he was reduced to silence. Thoughts bitter, dark, and furious came to his mind. He could only blame himself. He had acted too hastily and blindly. He had done the very thing that he ought not to have done. He had fled from Paris at the very time when his presence was a thing of vital importance to Mrs. Lovell. Now she was in the power of a miscreant whose thirst for vengeance would be increased tenfold by the recent injuries received from him. And he had fled from her! Worse too, he had carried off her sister, this despairing girl, perhaps to destruction.

Maud now questioned him about the cab. This was her last hope. They might possibly have got away; and in that case they would naturally enough hurry to the rendezvous. But when she heard all that Grimes had to tell about the cab, she saw at once what faint grounds there were for believing that Carrol and her sister were in it; and once more she sank into despondency.

Now the silence was renewed, and once more they took refuge in their own thoughts. Grimes sat down, put his elbows on his knees, and, staring fixedly at the bottom of the car, he gave himself up to all the bitter thoughts that were naturally roused by the recollection of his mad and blind folly.

Maud had thus far remained in the one position. At length the stupor of grief and abhorrence into which she had at first been flung by the discovery of her mistake began to be mitigated, and was succeeded by thoughts that were perhaps less painful, but more lasting. These referred to the possible fate of Carrol and Mrs. Lovell. Over this she wearied herself in the endeavor to make some favorable conjecture, until at length the thoughts became intolerable, and she tried to distract her mind by something else. That distraction lay there above her and all around her, — in the open heavens

wherein she was flying, in the sky, and the sea, and the clouds. Overhead the sky was deeply blue; and the rays of the sun threw a yellow lustre on the vast orb overhead. She looked up to this, and then, half in fear, half in curiosity, she arose, with the intention of looking forth. She did not go close to the side, but stood about in the middle of the car and looked over in that position. She saw the blue sky, and she saw the distant horizon. The sides of the car hid the rest from sight. She moved a little nearer, anxious to see more. As she moved the sea unfolded itself, — a wide waste of dark heaving waters, not bounding into billows or foaming in fierce, tempestuous surges, but undulating rather in irregular yet smooth masses like the upheaval of the sea that is caused by a distant storm. Maud ventured nearer to the edge, till she was able to look down and form some estimate of her position. But the sight made her giddy. It was too terrible. It filled her with fear. She shrank back, and her eyes rested upon the horizon and the overhanging sky.

Now she looked around the horizon, turning as she did so, in order to take in its whole circuit. She had surveyed about one half of that scene, when suddenly, as her glance swept on, it was arrested, and an involuntary cry escaped her, so abrupt, and so peculiar, that Grimes was roused from his profound abstraction.

He had been sitting motionless in the attitude already described, involved in his bitter thoughts and useless regrets, when Maud's sudden cry aroused him. He looked up. He saw her staring at something beyond the balloon. In a moment he started to his feet and looked also in the same direction.

Land!

In spite of the misery that filled the soul of Grimes he felt a strange and singular exultation at the sight that now met his eyes. It was land that he saw, a long coast lying directly before them. This, he thought, may have been that cloud or haze which he had

seen on the horizon at early dawn. It was land then. The prospect filled him with new life, and all the energies of his nature were once more aroused. For an active and courageous man such as he was could not avoid feeling roused at the prospect that now lay before him.

The land was close by. They had been driving steadily toward it, while they had been giving themselves up to their feelings, and thus they had not observed it: It was only a few miles away. The shores arose very gradually; and the land seemed to be largely overspread with forests. In the distance arose lofty heights crowned with snow.

A short survey showed Grimes all this, and then a sudden fear came to him lest in the terrific speed of their career they might be dashed to pieces. His next thought was about what he ought to do,— should he let the balloon descend into the water near the shore and thus check its progress, or should he ascend still higher so as to choose his own place for making a descent on the land.

He sprang to the side of the car and looked down. His last look over the side had shown him the sea several thousand feet beneath. To his surprise he now beheld that sea not more than a hundred feet beneath. Another thing also increased his surprise. As he looked at the water he saw that the motion of the balloon, instead of being one of terrific speed, was in reality so slow that it did not seem faster than an ordinary walk. The wind then must have died away to the gentlest breeze. To land under such circumstances would be easy enough for the merest novice. There was nothing at all for him to do. He had only to let the balloon drift on, and make use of the first convenient place of descent that might present itself.

All this added to the excitement of Grimes, and filled him with hope. This hope, in its first rush, was as boundless as his despair had lately been.

"Cheer up, miss," said, he, in his

old original voice,— a voice full of heartiness and generous enthusiasm. — "cheer up, miss. We're all right; we'll come out right side up after all. We'll land there as easy as gettin' out of a wagon. Cheer up, miss. We'll go back to Paris yet, and be there in time to save them. Only look over the side now, — see how gradual and gentle we move on. It's like a walk. Why, a child might be here now and land there out of this balloon unassisted!"

In spite of Maud's deep dejection, the words of Grimes produced a very cheering effect. She could not be otherwise than excited and cheered at this sudden prospect of escape from a terrific fate. Encouraged by what Grimes had said, she ventured to look over the side, and what she saw was so entirely different from what she had imagined, that she had no fear at all, and not a particle of giddiness. They were so near the surface of the sea, that the distance down was nothing. She had imagined miles to lie between her and the earth, and she saw only a space that can be compared to the height of any common church steeple.

"Now don't you be a bit afraid," continued Grimes. "I'll engage that you put your foot on that ground; and not harm a hair of your head. You only keep cool, and don't let yourself be excited, and we'll be all right."

But little more was said. Each stood watching the land. They drew slowly and gradually nearer. As they drew nearer, they saw here and there openings in the forest, and farm-houses, and finally behind a hill they saw a church with a tower. The houses were all of humble structure, and the church was small. What land it might be they could not tell. The church showed them one thing, and that was that it was a Christian land at any rate. Could it be any part of the British coast? Could it be France? Grimes had even a wild idea of America, for this forest country with its clearings had certainly a strong suggestiveness of the New World.

Nearer they came and still nearer.

They watched with intense anxiety the land to which they were going. They saw that the shore before them was all covered with forests, and that the cleared lands were on one side and out of their course. Still they were not so distant but that they could easily reach them if they once descended.

The balloon moved on. The shore before them was a gradual declivity, covered with forest trees, and ascended steadily as it receded, until far away it rose into high hills, beyond which were those snow-covered mountains which they had seen when they first caught sight of the land.

Nearer and nearer.

They watched and waited.

And now Grimes laid his hand upon one of the grappling-irons so as to be ready to throw it out when he reached the proper place. At length the shore was reached, and slowly and majestically the aerial car conveyed them away from the limits of that terrible sea that they had traversed, into the domain of the friendly land. Over this they passed. Beneath them were the tops of the forest trees. Grimes thought of pulling the valve-rope, but restrained his hand and waited. Before them the land rose higher, and the tree-tops were on a level with the car. In the distance they rose far above that level.

At last!

The moment had come.

There was a rustling and a scraping sound, and then the car tilted slightly. The progress of the balloon was checked a little, but it still moved. "Catch hold of the car," said Grimes; "hold on tight." Maud did so. Grimes then threw out the grappling-iron and pulled at the valve-rope. The balloon stopped, and the vast orb lay along the tops of the forest trees, while the car sank down till it was stopped by the branches beneath. In a few minutes a peculiar smell arose, pungent, distressing, choking.

The car was now lying half on its side, resting upon some tree branches. The trees were lofty and were the kindred of those Miltonic

"Pines
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast
Of some tall ammiral."

"You must go down first," said Grimes, "and quick, too, or we'll be suffocated with this gas."

With these words he threw the shawl around her, passing it under Maud's arms, and over this he passed one end of a coil of rope which was in the car, then he helped her out upon the branch of the tree beneath, and Maud began to make the descent. It was not difficult, especially with the assistance of the rope, and in a short time she was on the solid ground. Grimes then hastily followed, and reached the ground nearly suffocated with the fumes of the gas. And he brought along with him the tin box.

They now walked back through the forest toward the shore, after which they turned off in the direction where the houses were. These they reached without difficulty. The people had seen the balloon, and were in a state of wild excitement. The men had gone into the woods toward the place where it seemed likely to fall, and only the women and children were left behind.

They regarded the balloonists with kindly and sympathetic faces, and Grimes at once began asking them questions in French.

They shook their heads and answered in a language which he had never heard before.

He tried English.

They shook their heads and spoke as before. Grimes's only idea at first was to know where they were, but this was the very thing that he could not know. He then made signs for something to eat. This met at once with a response, and he and Maud were taken to the best house in the settlement. He afterwards found out that it was the pastor's house. Here he was shown into a comfortable room, and was made to understand by signs that he should have something soon. Maud was conducted elsewhere by the kindly and sympathetic women. While waiting here, Grimes saw a box of matches on the

mantel-piece. He noticed a label upon it. A bright idea seized him. He took it up and read the label. To his amazement he read the name "Christiania," and Christiania he knew was in Norway, so that this land must be Norway.

The good people soon furnished a bounteous repast, at which the fugitives, in spite of their anxieties, were able to satisfy the cravings of hunger. By the time their meal was finished the pastor returned. He had been off with the rest after the balloon, which had been brought back in safety. The pastor spoke English; and at once Grimes was able to find out the facts of the case. It was true that he was in Norway. Thus in that dread voyage he had traversed the wide seas, and landed here. A slight variation of the wind might have carried them to the Polar Sea. It was nine o'clock when they descended, and about eight when they left, so that the whole journey of nearly nine hundred miles had been made in thirteen hours.

XXXI.

OUT OF PRISON.

AFTER his recent danger Carrol did not feel safe, nor was he inclined to allow himself to become the helpless victim of Du Potiron and his friends. Under these circumstances he endeavored to find some way of securing safety for himself and Mrs. Lovell. There was no possibility of doing this, however, in any regular way, for all things were now in an irregular condition, and lawlessness prevailed to a greater or less extent. One only hope presented itself; and that was to hide himself under the ample wing of the American eagle, or, in other words, to put himself under the protection of the American minister, who alone of all the diplomatic corps remained in Paris. There was absolutely no other to whom he could look for help, and so he went to the American embassy. The great rush was at last over; most of the

friendless and the unprotected had been cared for as far as possible; and Carrol found a *queue* of not more than seventy-two people. After waiting patiently, his turn came, and he obtained an interview. At that interview he not only gained what he wished, but far more than he even had hoped. For he learned that the American minister, after long and arduous effort, had at length obtained from the Prussians permission for the departure of those Americans in Paris who might wish to go. Now Carrol was not a citizen of the United States, nor was Mrs. Lovell a citizeness, but both were Americans, the one by birth, the other by residence. The little difficulty was generously overlooked by the American embassy, and these applicants were accepted as coming under the Prussian permit, in letter, if not in spirit. Notice was given Carrol of the time appointed for the departure of the favored ones, and of the place at which they were to assemble; and thus that flight upon which Grimes had ventured at such terrible risk, Carrol was able to undertake with the prospect of perfect safety.

Such good news as this roused Mrs. Lovell from her distress, and restored something like her usual life and spirit. Her situation in Paris was full of danger; and the flight of Maud made her all the more eager to depart. Besides, out of the promptings of her jealousy there had arisen an intense desire to find out what had actually become of the fugitives.

Her intention was to go to England. Her dear papa lived there, a few miles away from Southampton. There was no other place to which she could go, and her old home now seemed like a haven of rest; there was the only place in which there was any hope of recovering from the distresses, anxieties, and afflictions of her lot; there, too, she would learn the fate of Maud, and if any calamity had occurred, she would at least be able to offer some consolation to her dear papa, and receive comfort and condolence from him.

It is not necessary to narrate the events connected with the departure of the Americans from Paris. It was quiet, and without any greater excitement than was naturally connected with the joy of escape from prison. As for Carrol and Mrs. Lovell, they made the journey in safety, and at length reached Southampton.

The country seat of Mr. Heathcote was not on the line of rail. To get there it was necessary to go about twenty miles, and then, leaving the rail, to take a carriage for the rest of the way, which was some ten or twelve miles. It was about noon when they reached Southampton, and late in the day when they left. After a ride of about twenty miles they reached the station mentioned, and left the train. They found themselves in a very beautiful little village, the most conspicuous objects in which were a fine old country church and an equally fine old inn. To this they directed their steps.

Mrs. Lovell was excessively fatigued, and at once was shown to a bedroom, where she intended to lie down and rest until it was time to go on. Carrol at once made inquiries about procuring a carriage.

To his great disgust, he learned that he could not procure one that evening, for the only one they had was already engaged by a gentleman who had arrived there that same day. The carriage had been away all day, and the gentleman was to have it the moment it returned.

Carrol was now at a loss what to do; so he sauntered up and down the village street, hoping that something might turn up to help him. But the more he thought, the more certain it seemed that they would have to remain here for the night.

In a restless and impatient state of mind he returned to the inn, and sauntered slowly into the parlor.

A fire was burning there which threw a cheerful glow about the apartment. A sofa was drawn up on one side of this, and on this sofa a lady was seated. Her elbow was resting on one

arm of the sofa, and her hand supported her head. Her eyes were downcast, and so absorbed was she in her own thoughts that she took not the slightest notice of Carrol.

Carrol noticed her with a vague idea of the grace of this figure and the sadness of the beautiful face; but the next instant there came to his mind the shock of an astounding and overwhelming recognition. He uttered an involuntary cry, and stopped, unable to advance another step.

At the sound of this cry of amazement the lady started and looked up. As she saw Carrol, she too could not repress an exclamation. The next moment she sprang to her feet. Carrol rushed toward her and caught her in his arms.

"Maud! Maud! O my darling!"

"Paul! O Paul!"

For about five minutes there was nothing but a torrent of exclamations, expressive of every emotion of love, of tenderness, of joy, of wonder, and of rapture. After this there was a variation; and an equally profuse torrent of eager questions was poured forth, to which no answers were given by either, for each was too intent to ask about the other to satisfy the curiosity of that other.

But in the midst of this, another thought came to Maud.

"My sister. O my sister! O, where is she? Is she safe? O, is she safe?"

"Yes," said Carrol, "safe and perfectly well."

"O, thank God!" cried Maud. "But where is she? Is she here? O, tell me, is she here? O, I must see her, my darling, darling Georgie!"

And Maud started off, she had no idea where, with the vague hope of finding her sister outside.

But Carrol restrained her. He saw her movement with dismay. If Maud should once see Mrs. Lovell, he would certainly not see her again that night. So he tried to detain her a little longer.

"Wait," he said, — "wait, I implore

you. Listen now, be patient. You see, Mrs. Lovell has n't slept any for three or four nights."

"O my poor, sweet darling!" sighed Maud.

"Well, you know, the moment she arrived here, she had to be taken at once to her room, so as to get a little sleep, you know; and it's very important that she should, and you'd better not burst suddenly upon her, you know, on account of the shock, and all that sort of thing, you know; for she's exceedingly nervous just now,—but, that is, you know, of course you won't have to wait long. Just let her have an hour's sleep, and she'll be all right; so, don't you think you can restrain your impatience?"

"O, I must, of course, if poor Georgie is so, poor darling! but I'm awfully impatient, and only to think of her being in the house, why, it fairly drives me wild; but if she is trying to sleep, and so much depends on it, why, I suppose I can wait one hour, but O, may n't I just steal up, and take one little peep at the darling, just one peep, she sha' n't see me?"

But to this Carrol demurred, and he portrayed Mrs. Lovell's excessive nervousness and her need of sleep, and the dangers of a sudden shock, in such alarming colors that Maud was fairly frightened into waiting for a little while at least.

"Come," said Carrol, "do you think you feel strong enough for a little stroll? Come and let us get away from this public place, for I'm crazy to hear how you got here. Will you come? And when we come back, you will be able to see your sister."

Maud demurred somewhat at this, but Carrol begged so hard, that at length she consented, on the understanding that they should not go out of sight of the inn, so that if anything happened she might return.

It was a lovely evening. They strolled along through the little village. All around was scenery of the most attractive description, where was presented all that could please the eye

and delight the taste. Just outside the village the road was overhung by lofty trees; by its side a little streamlet ran, on the borders of which there was a rustic seat. Here Carrol persuaded Maud to sit down. Before them the brook babbled; in the distance were wooded hills; and, beyond these, the splendors of a sunset sky. In this situation Maud's stipulation about not going out of sight of the inn was not regarded very particularly; but they were at any rate not *very* far away, and they were on the edge of the little village.

Here Maud told Carrol the events of her astonishing journey, and that part of her story which referred to their adventures after landing in Norway may be briefly explained. The peasants had packed up the balloon, and the pastor had secured a conveyance for them to Christiania. Here they found the steamer about to leave for London, and had embarked in it. Their adventures had created a great sensation in that town; and Grimes had made the sensation permanent by presenting his balloon to the Museum. They had arrived at London the day before, and, after a night's rest, had come as far as this place, which they had reached at about two o'clock. Grimes had tried to get a carriage, but without success, as the only available one was off on a journey. He had waited for some hours in a desperate state of impatience; and about an hour ago he had told her that he was going to walk up the road in the direction in which the carriage was expected. So he was on that road now, either returning triumphantly in the carriage, or else toiling along impatiently on foot.

Carrol's story then followed, and thus all was explained. It may be as well to state that these narratives were not full and frank on either side; for each found certain reservations necessary; and therefore made no allusion to certain incidents, the remembrance of which was very strong in the minds of both, and could not be thought of without the consciousness on their

parts that they had been in false, humiliating, and excessively silly positions.

Meanwhile Mrs. Lovell had been seeking for rest without finding it. The bedroom was chilly, and, after a vain effort to go to sleep, she determined to go in search of some more comfortable place. So she descended the stairs and entered the inn parlor. Here the comfortable air of the room and the cheerful glow of the fire formed an irresistible attraction. The room was low and large and cosy; the sofa was drawn up by the side of the fire, and seemed to be the very place that was best suited for her, — a place where she could obtain rest and warmth at once.

She took her position in the very place where Maud had recently been sitting, and the warmth and comfort of the room soon began to act most agreeably upon her. It was very quiet also. No noise was heard outside; no stamping footsteps arose inside to irritate her delicate nerves. She thought, to herself that this was the first moment of real comfort that she had known for several days. She thought too, with regret, that she must soon quit this pleasant place; for Carrol was seeking a conveyance, and it would soon be ready. Indeed, in anticipation of this she had come down with her wraps on, and she sat there by the fire all ready to start for her home at a moment's warning.

The fire was flickering in a dull way, and the darkness had increased to some extent, so that objects in the room were not very distinctly visible. Mrs. Lovell was sitting in such a way that her head was a little in the shadow, and not directly illuminated by the firelight. She was lost in thought, and at that moment those painful emotions which had been agitating her ever since the flight of Grimes were once more beginning to disturb her. In the midst of this the roll of carriage-wheels was heard outside. She thought at once that this was Carrol, and felt half vexed at the necessity that there,

now was of leaving this cheerful room for the toilsome road. She sat, however, in the same position. Soon a footstep was heard in the room advancing toward her. Thinking it was Carrol, she did not look up, but sat looking down, lost in thought, and waiting for him to speak.

The new-comer now began to speak, and he did speak to some purpose.

"Wagon's ready at last, miss," said this voice. "They've changed horses. I stuck by them till they did it, and made them look sharp; and now, miss, all you've got to do is to just jump in. I see you've got your things on, and I'm glad you're so prepared. Come along then. I'll see you, as I said, safe home, after which I'll be in a position to bid you good by."

At the first sound of this voice, Mrs. Lovell started as though she had been shot, and looked up with as much amazement as that which Maud had felt at the sudden sight of Carrol. She looked up as he went on talking. He was not looking at her or anything else in particular, but was merely giving her this information. Besides, her face was in the shadow, so that it was not very particularly discernible. Mrs. Lovell looked up then and beheld the manly, the stalwart, and the familiar figure of Grimes. It was the face of Grimes that beamed before her, illuminated by the glow of the firelight. It was the voice of Grimes that addressed her and asked her to go with him.

But this was not all.

Her eyes, as they wandered over the face and form of Grimes, rested at last upon something which he was carrying in his left hand. This was a tin box, round in shape, that is to say cylindrical, lacquered, and bearing his name in large gilt letters. What was this box? What did it mean? What did it contain? Ah! did not her heart bound within her as it gave the answer to those questions? Had she not heard from Carrol about that tin box? How Grimes had deposited it in the balloon in Paris, as the only thing which he intended to take in the shape

of luggage? And now that he appeared with it here, did it not show how, during all his mysterious flight, he must have clung to this? Was he not now clinging to it? Did she not hear him call her miss, thus evidently mistaking her for Maud, and speaking of good by? Maud then was nothing. Her jealousy had been baseless and absurd. By that which he grasped in his strong hand she knew that his heart was true, and in clinging to this she saw that he was clinging to that which in his estimation was the best representative of herself. What was that which he thus bore about with him and clung to with such tenacity? Her chignon. But that chignon now ceased to be a chignon. It became a sacred thing, hallowed by the deathless devotion of a true and constant heart. It became a glorious thing, since it had been glorified by its flight with him through the trackless realms of ether; it became a thing of beauty, a joy forever; in fact, it was the apotheosis of the chignon.

Mrs. Lovell saw exactly how things were. Grimes and Maud had made their journey in safety. By an amazing coincidence they had come to this place at the same time that she and Carrol had come. Maud must even now be here, for Grimes had evidently mistaken her for Maud. He had been procuring a carriage. It was all ready, and he was going to take her home.

And what then?

A wild idea arose in her mind, which had an irresistible attraction for one who was so whimsical. It was to take him at his word. He had mistaken her for Maud. Very good. She would be Maud. She would go with him. She would allow him to drive her home.

And Maud, — did no yearning thought about her arise in her heart? Did she not feel any longing to embrace that lost sister so tenderly loved, so lamented, who had been so wondrously preserved on such an unparalleled voyage? Not at all. In fact,

there were various circumstances which made her feel quite at her ease about Maud. In the first place, she understood that Maud was well. In the second-place, she had not yet got over her resentment, baseless though it was, against Maud, for her usurpation of her place in the balloon; in the third place, Maud was too near home to be in any danger whatever; in the fourth place, Carrol was here, and would inevitably find her out; and in the fifth place, the temptation of going with Grimes in an assumed character, and watching his conduct and demeanor under the circumstances, was irresistible.

She decided at once.

She was dressed, as has been said, for the drive which she had expected to take with Carrol. She dropped her veil, and rose in silence. Grimes took no further notice of her, but walked toward the door. She followed him outside. A brougham was drawn up in front of the house. Grimes opened the door for her. She got in and sat down. Grimes then followed and sat by her side; and she noticed that he placed his precious tin box, with tender and reverential care, on his knees; and leaned his arms upon it, as though he would preserve it from every conceivable danger. Thus they sat there, side by side, and the driver cracked his whip, and the horses started off, and soon they were rolling along the road.

Outside the village they met a gentleman and a lady walking back. It was dusk now, and their faces could not be seen. Neither Grimes nor Mrs. Lovell noticed them. But the gentleman and the lady stopped as the brougham drove by, and the gentleman said to the lady, "There goes that fellow that has appropriated the only carriage in the place."

And the lady answered cheerfully, "O, well, you know it really does n't matter. It will be such perfect delight to see Georgie, that I'm sure I don't care whether I get home to-night or not at all."

And the brougham passed out of sight.

XXXII.

IN A BROUGHAM.

THE brougham drove off with Mrs. Lovell and Grimes inside. Grimes sat in the attitude already described, leaning forward slightly, with the tin box on his knees, and his elbows on the tin box, rigid and silent. For some time nothing was said, and Mrs. Lovell waited patiently for her companion to begin the conversation. But her companion had no idea of doing anything of the kind. In the first place, he of course thought that Maud was with him. Now Maud had only been known to him as silent, sad, and reticent; never volunteering any remark, only answering in monosyllables when addressed, and incapable of carrying on a conversation. Thus she had appeared to him while travelling together recently. But again he had thoughts of his own which occupied his mind thoroughly. These thoughts occupied his mind now. They referred solely and exclusively to Mrs. Lovell, whose fate was a matter of never-ending anxiety to him. His mind was not now in this place. It was in Paris. It was inspecting all the city prisons, and conjecturing with deep anguish the place where Mrs. Lovell might be.

Mrs. Lovell waited and grew impatient. This silence was not what she wanted. From one point of view it was not disagreeable, since it showed what must have been the attitude of Grimes toward Maud. She saw that he must have been indifferent and inattentive, if his present demeanor afforded any clue to the past. At the same time it was disagreeable, for, as a matter of course, she was particularly anxious to converse with him. So, as he did not begin, she volunteered herself.

"It's really very pleasant this evening, is it not, Mr. Grimes?" said she, in a friendly way.

Now it may be supposed that Grimes would have at once detected her by her voice, but as a matter of fact Grimes did nothing of the kind. For as she

and Maud were sisters, their voices had a certain family resemblance, and though there certainly was a difference, yet it was not very glaring. Besides, Grimes was too much occupied with other things to be easily aroused.

"Yes," said he, shortly.

Mrs. Lovell waited for something more, but nothing more was forthcoming. She felt that the subject of the weather afforded not quite enough excitement to rouse her companion, and so she resorted to something else.

"Do you think that the driver knows his way, Mr. Grimes?" she asked, with apparent anxiety.

"O yes," said Grimes, in the same tone as before. After which he changed his position a little. "I'm afraid," he continued, "that I'm crowdin' you. I did intend to ride outside, but unfortunately there's only room for one, so I had to squeeze in here. Any way the ride won't be very long."

This was also flattering, since it gave an additional proof of the indifference of Grimes to Maud. At the same time, however, it was rather disappointing, since it showed a persistent determination to hold aloof from all friendly conversation. So again Mrs. Lovell relapsed into silence.

After a time she tried once more.

"I wonder," said she, mournfully, "what can have become of poor dear Georgie. Do you know, I feel awfully anxious about her, Mr. Grimes?"

This Mrs. Lovell said with an intention of maintaining the character of Maud. Upon Grimes this remark produced an effect which was the very opposite of what she had intended. Instead of rousing him to converse upon some congenial subject, it only served as a fresh reminder of his despair. He heaved a sigh so heavy that it ended in a groan; after which he relapsed into his former silence, and not a word escaped him.

Mrs. Lovell was certainly disappointed at the failure of this attempt, and began to feel a despair about her ability to arouse him. But she was

not one who could give up easily, and so she tried once more.

"I wonder what in the world you've got in that absurd box," said she. "You've really brought it all the way from Paris you know, Mr. Grimes."

At this Grimes started. For there was in these words and in the tone of voice a decided flavor of Mrs. Lovell, and nothing at all of Maud. A wild thought flashed through his mind, but it was at once suppressed.

"What an infernal fool I must be," he thought, "but what a likeness there was to — to her. I'm afraid I'm gettin' delirium tremens. I've taken altogether too much whiskey. I've got to stop my grog, or it'll go hard with me." These thoughts passed through his mind, but he made no reply. This was really rude in him, and so Mrs. Lovell thought, but this rudeness awakened no resentment whatever in her mind. She bore it with exemplary meekness, and patiently returned to the task of rousing him into saying something.

"You really are awfully reticent, you know, and it's horrid; now is n't it, Mr. Grimes?" said she, quite forgetting the rôle of Maud which she had intended to maintain, and speaking more than ever in her own style and manner.

Grimes noticed the tone of voice again, and the style and manner of the words. How like they were to the well-known and fondly remembered idioms and expressions of Mrs. Lovell! Grimes thought of this, and heaved another of those sighs which were peculiar to him now, — a sigh deep, massive, long-drawn, and ending in a kind of groan.

"It's somethin', miss," said he, in words that seemed wrung out of him, — "it's somethin', miss, that is very precious. It's my most precious treasure."

"O dear, Mr. Grimes, what a very, very funny way that is for one to be carrying money, you know! But do you really think it's safe, and do you not feel just a little bit afraid of rob-

bers and all that sort of thing, Mr. Grimes?"

This struck Grimes as being more like Mrs. Lovell than ever. He could not account for it. For the solemn and mournful Maud to rattle on in this style was to him unaccountable. And how had she acquired that marvellous resemblance to her sister in tone and in expression? He had never noticed any such resemblance before. There was also a certain flippancy in the remark and in the tone of voice which jarred upon him. He was still puzzled, but finally concluded in a vague way that Maud's joy in at last approaching her home was so excessive that it had quite changed her.

"I wonder why you didn't leave it at the inn," she continued, as she saw that he said nothing; "it would be really far safer there and far less troublesome, you know, Mr. Grimes, and you could get it again. I'm sure, I can't imagine why one should carry all one's property with one wherever one goes, Mr. Grimes."

"It is n't money," said Grimes, "it's something far more precious."

"Is it really? How very funny! Only fancy; why really, Mr. Grimes, do you know, you are speaking positively in riddles."

"There are things," said Grimes, solemnly, "in comparison with which jewels are gaudy toys and gold is sordid dust. And this is one of them."

"Well, I must say," remarked Mrs. Lovell, "I never heard any one express himself in such an awfully mysterious way. And so you brought it all the way from Paris. How very funny! Well, really, Mr. Grimes, I can only say that travelling in a balloon must be a very trivial thing, since you have been able to keep that with you all the time and produce it now; and really, you know, it's so awfully absurd, when one comes to think of it, — now is n't it, Mr. Grimes?"

This was not Maud at all. Mrs. Lovell knew it, yet for the life of her she could not help speaking as she did. Grimes knew it too. He knew

that there was no delirium, and that Maud Heathcote would never have uttered those words to him. That mixture of teasing absurdity and inconsequential badinage, with evident knowledge of the secret contents of the tin box, could not possibly be expressed by any person except one. Yet what possibility was there that this one should be here by his side calmly driving home? The thought was so bewildering that his brain reeled.

In an instant all his gloom and abstraction vanished. His heart beat fast. A wild idea, a wilder hope, filled mind and heart. Yet in the midst of this excitement one thought was prominent. He remembered his past mistakes. He was aware that they had arisen from a too credulous yielding to his own belief or fancy. He was now resolved to accept nothing from credulity, or hope, or fancy, or even belief; but to see with his own eyes the actual fact. Who was this person who was here with him? That was what he wanted to know.

He was intensely excited, yet he was resolved to undergo no more deceptions. He determined to see for himself. It was now quite dark, and, though he peered through the gloom, yet nothing satisfactory was revealed. He certainly saw the outline of a lady's figure, — but what lady? Was it Miss Heathcote, or was it — could it be, — might it be, — dare he hope, — was it possible?

He could endure his suspense no longer.

With trembling fingers he fumbled in his waistcoat-pocket! He found a match! — a thing he always carried there! He drew it forth! He struck it wildly against the side of the brougham!!!

The light flashed forth! He held up the blazing match, and with eager gaze looked at the face of his companion.

Astounded at this unexpected incident of the match, and confounded by this abrupt discovery, Mrs. Lovell, though not unwilling to be discovered,

shrank back and made a faint effort to drop her veil, which had been raised since she had entered the brougham. But Grimes arrested her hand.

And there, illuminated by the blaze, close beside him, just before him, he saw unmistakably the face of Mrs. Lovell. Her eyes were downcast, there was a flush of confusion and timid embarrassment upon her face, yet that face was the face of the one being on earth who was worth far more to him than all the earth and all that it contained; yea, verily, and even more than life itself.

The sensation was tremendous. How came she here? It was unaccountable. It was miraculous. A thousand emotions of wonder rushed through him, but all at length found utterance in one exclamation.

“Wal! I’ll be darned!”

The burning match dropped from his hands, and he caught her in his arms. Mrs. Lovell uttered a little deprecatory shriek.

“I’ve got you now at last,” murmured old Grimes, in a dislocated sort of way, doddering, in fact maundering, and all that sort of thing. — “I’ve got you now, and I ain’t goin’ to let you go. I don’t know how’n thunder you got here, and I don’t want to. I only know it’s you, and that’s enough. Don’t explain, I beg; let me only have the rapture of knowin’ that this is really my darling and no other —”

“O dear! I’m sure I don’t know what in the world I am *ever* to do,” sighed Mrs. Lovell.

* * * * *

On the return of Carrol and Maud to the inn, the latter had at once gone to find her sister. On seeing no signs of her she had become terribly alarmed; and Carrol was utterly bewildered. They had questioned everybody, and at last found out that the gentleman who had engaged the carriage had returned with it, and had gone off with some lady. Several of the people of the inn had seen the lady enter the carriage, and the gentleman go in after her. After this they had driven away.

At first both Carrol and Maud were utterly stupefied; but at length, as the facts of the case suggested themselves, their stupefaction faded away, and there came in its place a calm, rational, and intelligent apprehension of the event, a sweet and exquisite appreciation of the situation. Whether it had been a blunder or a distinct understanding between the two, they could not tell. They preferred, however, to think that Grimes in the dusk had taken Mrs. Lovell for Maud, and that Mrs. Lovell had in the same way taken Grimes for Carrol. The idea of this possible blunder afforded delicious enjoyment to both; and they both lost themselves in conjectures as to the mode in which these two might finally discover the truth.

On the following day a carriage came from Heathcote Hall, and Maud and Carrol drove there. On their arrival they found Mrs. Lovell and Grimes, who had reached the place of their destination in safety. Maud's papa was there to welcome her, and to welcome them all in fact; for he turned out to be a fine, warm-hearted, and truly hospitable old boy, who doted on his daughters, and had been quite wild with anxiety about them when they

were in Paris. Grimes and Carrol were received by him with all the honors and all the welcomes that he could offer them as the saviors and deliverers of his daughters from a cruel and terrible fate.

Frail human nature might exult in pausing here for the sake of gloating over the raptures of these lovers on their final reunion after such tremendous adventures; but duty forbids; and I, as a conscientious novelist, must hasten to a close.

I beg to remark then, that, as a matter of course, these lovers were all united in holy matrimony at the earliest possible time. The event took place on the 27th of November, 1870, as may be seen by referring to any old number of the local paper. It was a deeply interesting occasion.

The happy pairs then scattered. Two or three days after the event Mrs. Lovell wrote a rapturous letter to Maud.

"Dear Seth," she wrote, "is *all* that my *fondest fancy* wished, and *far more*. Do you know, Maudie darling, he has *not yet spoken one cruel word* to me, — *not one*."

Maud's reply to this consisted of glittering generalities.

THE END.

